

## Terminal Evaluation Review form, GEF Evaluation Office, APR 2014

### 1. Project Data

Summary project data			
GEF project ID		567	
GEF Agency project ID		P008842	
GEF Replenishment Phase		Pilot Phase	
Lead GEF Agency (include all for joint projects)		World Bank, IBRD	
Project name		Biodiversity Protection	
Country/Countries		Slovak Republic	
Region		ECA	
Focal area		Biodiversity	
Operational Program or Strategic Priorities/Objectives		STRM – Short Term Response Measures	
Executing agencies involved		Department of Nature and Landscape Conservation; Ministry of Environment (PMIS)	
NGOs/CBOs involvement		WWF, IUCN, (Project Document pg. 19), DAPHNE Center for Applied Ecological Research (TE pg. 5)	
Private sector involvement		Not involved	
CEO Endorsement (FSP) /Approval date (MSP)		Sept. 16, 1993	
Effectiveness date / project start		Oct. 20, 1993	
Expected date of project completion (at start)		Dec. 31, 1997	
Actual date of project completion		Jun. 30, 1998	
Project Financing			
		At Endorsement (US \$M)	At Completion (US \$M)
Project Preparation Grant	GEF funding		
	Co-financing		
GEF Project Grant		2.3	2.45
Co-financing	IA own		
	Government	0.06 (Slovak Govt.)	0.06
	Other multi- /bi-laterals		
	Private sector	0.31 (MacArthur Foundation)	0.35
	NGOs/CSOs	0.5 (Austrian Ecofund)	0.03
Total GEF funding		2.3	2.45
Total Co-financing		0.87	0.44
Total project funding (GEF grant(s) + co-financing)		3.17	2.89
Terminal evaluation/review information			
TE completion date		April 28, 1999	
TE submission date		April 28, 1999	
Author of TE		Andrew Bond, Kerstin Canby, Martin Fodor, Stephen Berwick. Reviewed by John Hayward, Gottfried Ablasser, Mahesh Sharma.	
TER completion date		October 21, 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/R	S	MS	MS
Sustainability of Outcomes	N/R	L	Uncertain*	MU
M&E Design	N/R	N/R	N/R	MU
M&E Implementation	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R
Quality of Implementation	N/R	S	S	MS
Quality of Execution	N/R	HS	S	S
Quality of the Terminal Evaluation Report	N/R	-	S	MS

\* Until 2001, the World Bank IEG used a 3-point scale for sustainability: likely, unlikely, and uncertain.

## 3. Project Objectives

### 3.1 Global Environmental Objectives of the project:

The Global Environmental Objective is to protect and strengthen forest and related ecosystem biodiversity in the Slovak Republic. (Project Document pg. 2) The project will target three priority ecosystems: the Eastern Carpathians National Park has been recently established; the Slovak Tatra National Park has sites of specific biodiversity and species rich meadows; and the Morava floodplains contain Ramsar designated wetlands of international importance. These three areas face threats from pollution, excess visitation, development pressure, and impacts from adjacent land uses.

### 3.2 Development Objectives of the project:

The Project Document lists five Development Objectives:

- 1- Foster systems of financially sustainable biodiversity protection in the Slovak Republic, and to evaluate the role the economic mechanisms might play maintaining visitation levels at carrying capacity.
  - 2- Establish a three country mechanism (Ukraine, Poland, Slovak Republic) through the development of an International Trust for the Biodiversity Protection of the Eastern Carpathians.
  - 3- Protect three zones of representative threatened ecosystems: alpine meadows (Tatra), wetlands (Morava Floodplain), and mountain forests (Eastern Carpathians)
  - 4- Support the activities of three transnational biodiversity protected networks: Eastern Carpathians Biosphere Reserve (Poland, Slovak Republic, Ukraine), Tatra Biosphere Reserve (Poland, Slovak Republic), and Morava Floodplain (Slovak Republic, Czech Republic, Austria).
  - 5- Develop a conservation program to address priority issues.
- (Project Document pg. 2)

The specific immediate objectives of this project include: developing management plans for key ecosystems, developing community support biodiversity conservation, develop revenue generating mechanisms to maintain visitor levels at carrying capacity, developing demonstration activities for sustainable development, and providing institutional and infrastructure support at the three targeted sites.

To achieve the project's development objectives, the Project Document outlines the following activities (Project Document pg. 15-26)

#### 1- **Biodiversity Protection Program**

- Development of management plans and strategies for the three target areas- Eastern Carpathians National Park, Slovak Tatra National Park, and the Morava Floodplains- and also for the Eastern Carpathians Biosphere Reserve (shared with Poland and Ukraine).
  - Support forest restoration activities, silviculture systems, and restoration activities in the East Carpathians, the Tatra National Park, and the Morava river ecosystems, including seed collection and development of sustainable forest ecosystems.
  - Implement two trial programs in the mountain meadow ecosystems of the East Carpathians.
  - Implement a catchment and water management restoration program in the East Carpathians
  - Implement professional development and training programs for managers, specialists and administrators.
  - Fund environmental research and monitoring activities in the Tatra National Park.
- 2- **Conservation Program:** including developing of revenue generating mechanisms for managing visitors in the protected area system, fostering interactions with local communities and land management, and instituting model demonstration activities
- Develop models for buffer zone management in biosphere reserves and surrounding areas, including the effect of land redistribution in buffer zones. These will be experimental areas where human activities will be monitored to identify sustainable practices.
  - Determine the carrying capacities of the targeted areas, and to examine economic mechanisms to maintain carrying capacities at an acceptable level.
  - Establish the Foundation for Eastern Carpathian Biodiversity Conservation, including an initial work plan.
- 3- **Institutional and Infrastructure Improvement Program:**
- Provide infrastructure for the various target areas, including a Nature Center at Tatra National Park, an Education and Research Facility at Eastern Carpathians National Park, and communications systems and computerization and data management tools in the targeted protected areas.
  - Establish a Joint Scientific Advisory Committee that would make recommendations to all participating governments.
  - Establish an Environmental NGO Small Grants Program, and disburse 15-20 small grants towards innovative approaches to biodiversity conservation in the country.

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 Objectives and Development Objectives.

#### **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.

<b>4.1 Relevance</b>	Rating: <b>Satisfactory</b>
----------------------	-----------------------------

**Relevance.** Were project outcomes consistent with the focal area/operational program strategies and country priorities? Explain.

The Project outcomes were consistent with the GEF focal area of Biodiversity. The three priority zones targeted by the project contain a diversity of plant and animal species that are important examples of the evolutionary processes of Eastern Europe. (Project Document pg. 1) Although the areas are theoretically protected, they are being degraded through pollution, overuse by visitors, and complex impacts from adjacent land uses. The privatization of land will increase development pressures, particularly from tourism, agriculture and forestry. This project is one of five World Bank/GEF projects in this region that would assist countries transitioning from centrally planned economies to market-based economies in forest biodiversity conservation and the protection of Transboundary ecosystems. The other four countries are Poland, Belarus, the Czech Republic, and Ukraine. (TE pg. 1)

The project outcomes were in line with country priorities. The Project Document states that the GEF project was accorded high priority by the government, but that funds were not available from government resources to carry out the proposed work. (Project Document pg. 1) The Slovak Republic could not have funded such activities on its own at the time. (TE pg. 9) The project will complement other activities in the region, including a World Bank financed forestry development loan, and GEF supported protected activities. (Project Document pg. 9) The Slovak Republic has been developing a broad and comprehensive approach to the conservation of natural resources, as demonstrated by the efforts at the time of the project to establish international biosphere reserves, networks of protected areas, new legislation, international agreements, policies and practices to address environmental problems. (Project Document pg. 9)

<b>4.2 Effectiveness</b>	Rating: <b>Moderately Satisfactory</b>
--------------------------	--

The TE assesses a rating of Satisfactory for overall outcomes, finding that overall, project outcomes are commensurate with the expected outcomes described in the project document, and that at project closure, ecosystem biodiversity in the Slovak Republic is better protected. However, this TER assesses a rating of Moderately Satisfactory for project effectiveness, finding that the project had moderate shortcomings: it was not able to foster systems of financially sustainable biodiversity protection, and a few of its major project components were unsuccessful.

The TE reports that the **Biodiversity Protection Program** had mixed results. Implementation in the Eastern Carpathians and Morava Floodplain was successful, but less successful at Tatra National Park. (TE pg. 4) The project funded the planning activities for the Eastern Carpathians, restoration of forest and riparian ecosystems, alternatives for alpine meadow management, professional development and training, and research and monitoring activities. (TE pg. 4) In the Eastern Carpathians, three countries developed the framework conservation strategy for the International Biosphere Reserve. The Slovakia Poloniny National Park was established in 1997 and the Ministry of the Environment will present a management plan by 1999. Economic cost-benefit analysis and demonstration activities resulted in the project's recommendations for silviculture being adopted by the Biodiversity Strategy/Action Plan, which has been endorsed and supported by the government. NGOs carried out the mowing of meadows project component. (TE pg. 4) The TE reports that the Morava Floodplain project component was highly successful: Flooding regimes were expanded and, with the help of restoration activities, floodplain ecosystems are now returning. (TE pg. 4)

The TE explains that the project expectations for Tatra National Park were not fully met due to "institutional weaknesses during implementation". (TE pg. iv) Although the Nature and Landscape Protection Act No. 287/94 stipulated that all national parks were to be supervised by the Ministry of Environment, at the time, Tatra National Park was under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Land Management, which changed the status of existing institutional arrangements to favor forest management instead of nature conservation. (TE pg. 5) This situation lowered staff morale at the Trata Research Station, and caused resistance to equipment sharing between the project staff and the staff of the Ministry of Land Management. (TE pg. 5) The TE concludes that the lack of cooperation between the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Land Management's Forest Department were detrimental to project implementation. (TE pg. 3)

The **Conservation Program** had three subcomponents: the models for buffer zone management and the evaluation of endangered species; the carrying capacity component; and the permanent financing mechanism component. The TE reports that, of these three components, the third component was satisfactory, but the first two were not. The project established the Foundation for Eastern Carpathians Biodiversity Conservation and achieved significant international cooperation and collaboration. However, activities carried out under the buffer zone and carrying capacity subcomponents were unsatisfactory and did not meet expectations. (TE pg. iv, 3, 6) These two areas were combined into the Strategic Development Strategies Program, which proceeded slowly, with mixed results. The TE reports that this was likely due to the complexity of the issue, lack of understanding of the underlying social customs, the changing land ownership context and local/national budget law which prevented the implementation of many revenue-generating mechanisms. (TE pg. 6-7) Although much progress was reported during the last 18 months of the project, the TE reports that it is not yet possible to make a final judgment on the Strategic Development Strategies Program. (TE pg. 7)

Finally, the TE reports that the **Institutional and Infrastructure Program** sub-components were successful, mostly within the original timeframe of the project and without implementation difficulties. (TE pg. 7) The infrastructure improvement activities were relatively straightforward and well implemented. Protected area facilities and equipment improved, including new radio communication system, computerization, monitoring and data management including GTS capabilities. The program supported the Joint Scientific Advisory Committee for the three project areas, the launching of a Small Grants Program for

environmental NGOs, and the design and operation of the Project Management and Coordination Unit (PMCU).

The TE reports that the Environmental NGO Small Grant Program was particularly successful, since it contributed to the immediate objective of biodiversity conservation, and also to a broader strengthening of the civil society in Slovakia. The NGO Small Grant represented a nationally important source of financing for NGOs in a context with a general lack of funding for the NGO sector and unfriendly tax laws towards NGO investment. (TE pg. 7)

<b>4.3 Efficiency</b>	Rating: <b>Moderately Satisfactory</b>
-----------------------	--

The project end date was extended to 18 months, on account of many socio-political and environmental implementation challenges. The TE reports that the establishment of the international Foundation for Eastern Carpathians Biodiversity Conservation yielded a modest \$30,000 USD net per year after an initial endowment of \$600,000. (TE pg. 6) Start-up and recurrent costs of the Foundation have proven costly, due to expensive establishment and Swiss banking fees, and the administrative burden of convening a 14-person committee with quorum requirements of nine country representatives (out of 12 country representatives) and either WWF or the MacArthur Foundation present. (TE pg. 6) This is a point of high inefficiency.

However, in general the project seems efficient. The expected total budget was \$3.1 million USD, but the project was implemented with \$2.89 million USD, despite a delay of 18 months. The NGO Small Grants Program was generally matched by substantial in-kind contributions from implementing organizations. The TE notes that this was an ambitious project which faced multiple socio-political challenges, and yet still managed to produce important results. Therefore, efficiency is rated moderately satisfactory.

<b>4.4 Sustainability</b>	Rating: <b>Moderately Unlikely</b>
---------------------------	------------------------------------

The TE rates project sustainability as “Likely”, and concludes that project investments are expected to be sustainable in the mid- to long-term. (TE pg. 10) The TE reports that many project activities will continue, as beneficiaries have a direct interest in pursuing them. (TE pg. 12) However, it seems that, while some project activities are assured to continue after project end, others face significant challenges.

**Financial Risks (Moderately Unlikely)**

TE finds that financial sustainability is ensured for selected project activities, while other project components face significant financial risks. The restoration and management of the Morava Floodplain meadows is likely to continue, since it will be funded by the EU for three years, and will involve agreements with farmers. (TE pg. 12) Cooperative sheep keeping in Vychodna village will also continue, spurred by local need for job opportunities and income. (TE pg. 12) The mowing of meadows by NGOs is not self-financing, but it is expected to continue due to the high historic, cultural and biodiversity value of this traditional modified land use practice. (TE pg. 4) The Biodiversity Action Plan adopted in August 1998 may continue may operations initiated under the project, but will need foreign financing, due to serious constraints on the national budget. (TE pg. v, 12) New paradigms of forest management will not be widely

accepted unless financial support for the incremental cost or regulatory incentives are developed. (TE pg. 4) Although a strategy has been produced for the successful NGO small grants program, governments have yet to cohesively approach the donor community for further capitalization. (TE pg. 6)

**Institutional Risks (Moderately Unlikely)** Water management authorities in Slovakia and Austria have committed to further restoration of Morava River ecosystems. (TE pg. 12) Waste treatment in Eastern Carpathian Biosphere Reserve, and monitoring and management of meadows at the Poloniny National Park Eastern Carpathians Biosphere Reserve will continue. (TE pg. 12) To continue the environmental benefits in the Morava Floodplain, the Slovak government must clarify landownership to facilitate dispersion of project initiatives which appear successful. (TE pg. 5) The future of the GIS facility at Tatra National Park seems dependent on the amount of time the single trained technician will be permitted to devote to GIS analysis, particularly to non-forestry related research, such as wildlife, and the degree to which other biologists are trained. Currently, GIS is used for scientific and research purposes, and not yet for managerial and planning decisions. (TE pg. 8) The TE reports that project accomplishments cannot currently be translated into policies and management interventions because they are constrained by the current administration and its system of incentives. Sales of forest products generate revenues and career enhancement, whereas few incentives are seemingly attached to nature conservation or promotion of alternative sustainable use. (TE pg. 10) The sustainability of Tatra National Park will depend on the ability to implement changes in forest management more focused on conservation objectives and like Poland, less reliant on direct revenues deriving from silvicultural operations purportedly designed to maintain forest health and integrity. (TE pg. 10)

**Environmental Risks (Likely)** The long-term biological integrity of the three national park/reserve areas selected is undeniably better protected than prior to the project, although one cannot say definitely if it is adequately protected for perpetuity. (TE pg. 10) In the Morava Floodplain, the TE reports that, in order to secure the restoration gains and environmental benefits, a few issues must be addressed, including mitigating the effluent input of a neighboring sugar plant, and revised engineering and expansion of the sites to reduce silt load. (TE pg. 5)

**Socio-political Risks (Moderately Likely)** The TE reports that, at project end, the “Recipient” was interested in a GEF Enabling Grant to support a project idea for a World Bank/GEF/NGO program aimed at mapping and sustainable management of natural and semi-natural meadows nationwide. (TE pg. 12) The TE does not discuss any other significant socio-political risks to project sustainability.

In general, the likelihood of continuation of project benefits after project completion depends on the particular project component: some are likely to continue, some are unlikely to continue. Because of existing significant risks to sustainability, the overall sustainability for project accomplishments is rated moderately unlikely.

## **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 Austrian Eco-Fund promised \$500,000 USD, but delivered \$30,000 USD. According to the TE, this was due to changes in the Fund's program priorities. (TE pg. iv) As a result, the initial GEF grant was increased, that the total project grant fell from \$3.17 million USD to \$2.89 million USD. However, the TE does not report that this loss of co-financing affect project outcomes or sustainability. No project components were cancelled, and unsatisfactory performance was not tied to lack of funds.

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, with a final project completion delay of 18 months. (TE pg. 3) The TE explains that the causes for this delay are predominantly due to institutional weaknesses. On-going institutional changes were detrimental to the realization of project objectives. These changes included the reform and re-organization of the environment sector early in the project, unresolved issues surrounding respective responsibilities of the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Land Management's Forest Department, frequent staff changes within the Ministry of Environment, and weakening of the Project Management and Coordination Unit position within the Ministry of Environment's organizational structure. (TE pg. iv) These institutional weaknesses not only delayed project implementation, but affect the sustainability of outcomes.

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 does not discuss country ownership directly, but does offer sufficient evidence to conclude that government support and ownership of this project was mixed, and fluctuated throughout implementation. The TE reports that weakened government commitment was observed in relation to conflict resolution, such as the uncertain institutional situation at Tatra National Park. (TE pg. 11)

The TE notes that the Project Management Coordination Unit's position was consistently degraded within the Ministry of Environment's organizational structure, from reporting directly to the Deputy Minister to later becoming subordinated to the Nature and Landscape Conservation Department, and later disappearing from the Ministry organizational chart altogether. (TE pg. 9) These changes delayed project implementation, and affect the sustainability of outcomes.

## **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: <b>Moderately Unsatisfactory</b>
------------------------------------	--

The Project Document describes the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan in Annex 2. (Project Document pg. 58-59) 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 October/November 1993. Specific expected milestones are listed for each of these two missions, including a Joint Scientific Committee Workshop procurement of equipment and infrastructure, initiation of the Biodiversity Protection Program. (Project Document pg. 59)

The Project Document does not include specific indicators with which to measure the progress towards the achievement of project objectives. The TE notes this several times:

“Explicit targets and indicators for measuring progress against the implementation plans and project objectives help managers identify the success, cost-effectiveness and basic usefulness of most components throughout implementation. These 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, 13)

“The objectives did not enumerate measurable and verifiable indicators of achievement which would have greatly assisted with devising mid-project adjustments and management responses to changing conditions. It should be noted that a requirement of subsequent GEF biodiversity projects has required the identification of monitorable indicators.” (TE pg. 3)

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, 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.

<b>6.2 M&amp;E Implementation</b>	Rating: <b>Unable to Assess</b>
-----------------------------------	---------------------------------

The TE notes that the Project Document does not include specific indicators with which to measure the progress towards the achievement of project objectives, and comments that the absence of indicators for measuring progress is a shortcoming of project design. (TE pg. vi, 3, 13) Table 12 on page 22 records the length and cost of five supervision missions, as prescribed by the Project Document. Besides Table 12, there is no other mention of any monitoring and evaluation system, or any M&E activities during project implementation. The TE does not mention annual project reports, or any other evaluations that rated the project during implementation. It is uncertain whether M&E activities beyond the five supervising missions occurred, or whether the TE failed to evaluate these activities. 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.

<b>7.1 Quality of Project Implementation</b>	Rating: <b>Moderately Satisfactory</b>
--	--

The TE rates the WB's performance as satisfactory (TE pg. v, 11) The TE reports that communication between the World Bank and the Recipient was intensive and Bank staff proved open to provide advice as needed. Although the Bank management staff changed four times during project implementation, the Bank's core team remained essentially the same, and thus the Recipient did not view these changes as detrimental to the overall project. (TE pg. 11)

However, there are moderate shortcomings in the World Bank's performance. TE finds that the World Bank's performance with respect to formal management reporting was unsatisfactory. Requisite forms were not always completed. Occasional but very untimely delays were critical when Bank approvals were needed. The Bank provided additional training in project management and Bank procedures, but these came too late into project implementation. Although the Bank's biodiversity and/or economic specialists were considered highly qualified, the Recipient noted that they had no experience with Central European ecosystems and local management traditions, lacking a solid understanding of underlying social, political and budget processes. The TE notes that this may have contributed to weaker design elements.

The TE notes that the ICR mission involved discussions with officials and institutional staff, NGOs and interlocutors, but did not include local communities or people affected by the project, thus it could not directly evaluate the influence of project activities. (TE pg. 11) Finally, the TE notes that the World Bank did not secure an effective partnership with the forestry sector for a subsequent Bank financed loan, which affected project sustainability. (TE pg. v)

<b>7.2 Quality of Project Execution</b>	Rating: <b>Satisfactory</b>
---	-----------------------------

The project execution agency was the Project Management Coordination Unit (PMCU), and organization created for this project and housed within the Ministry of Environment. (TE pg. 8) The TE rates the PMCU's performance as satisfactory in general, deficient in project preparation, and highly satisfactory with respect to implementation and covenant compliance. (TE pg. v, 14)

The TE notes documents that the PMCU faced multiple challenges that affected project implementation. Roadblocks ranged from ineffective computer and communication systems, to lack of government support and subsequent demoralization as the PMCU was degraded from a

high organizational level to disappearing from the Ministry's organizational chart. (TE pg. 9) Other institutional challenges include the reform and re-organization of the environment sector early in the project, unresolved issues surrounding respective responsibilities of the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Land Management's Forest Department, frequent staff changes within the Ministry of Environment, and the on-going re-privatization of land that prevented forest restoration activities within the Morava Flood plain and the establishment of a Central Forest Nursery at Tatra National Park. (TE pg. iv)

In addition to institutional challenges, project management experienced a slow start because the PMCU staff had little experience in dealing with international donors and understanding of the GEF mission. Bank/GEF procedures and international practices in biodiversity conservation were all new to the PMCU. There were initial steep learning curves for new concepts, technical tools and approaches, and the PMCU's "real understanding of agreed project activities". (TE pg. 13)

Despite challenging conditions, the TE reports that the PMCU's performance was satisfactory. The TE reports that the commitment and experience of the PMCU director and the highly qualified and highly committed staff ensured a smooth and successful implementation of the project and consistency of its activities with the original design and objectives. (TE pg. 9, 11) The Slovak PMCU provided assistance to the Czech PMCU, and in 1994 was designated as the National Biodiversity Secretariat which, while increasing the workload of staff, ensured the integration of the project into the national biodiversity process (National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan) and continuity after project completion. (TE pg. 8) There has been good continuity of staff and consultants at the local and central level, which has contributed to maintaining the benefits of the project's investments in human resources. (TE pg. 10) Project area staff engaged local stakeholders, NGOs, research institutions, universities and other local entities. (TE pg. 11)

## 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 reports improvements in environmental stress and environmental status. The Slovakia Poloniny National Park was established in 1997 and the Ministry of the Environment will present a management plan by 1999. (TE pg. 4) In the Morava Floodplain, flooding regimes were expanded and, with the help of restoration activities, floodplain ecosystems are now returning. (TE pg. 4) The project restored 4 of the 17 river oxbows over 19km of the flood plain by reconnecting the river and original floodplain environments. This has resulted measurable

restoration of riparian vegetation, fish and breeding birds. Over 250ha of arable land is being restored to native meadow. (TE pg. 5) In the Eastern Carpathians, forest and riparian ecosystems were restored. (TE pg. 4) In Tatra National Park, GIS, remote sensing, and a focused study tour supported under the project have produced radical models for change in forest practice to more adequately attain conservation objectives and mitigate the effects of pollution and visitor pressure. (TE pg. 7) The TE states that project support for the various studies and plans not only confirmed the targeted protected areas' biological value at the genetic, species, association and ecosystem levels, but also furthered their protection in numerous ways. (TE pg. 8)

The TE concludes that the long-term biological integrity of the three national park/reserve areas selected is undeniably better protected than prior to the project, although one cannot say definitely if it is adequately protected for perpetuity. (TE pg. 10)

**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 reports that cooperative sheep keeping in Vychodna village is likely to continue after project completion, spurred by local need for job opportunities and income. (TE pg. 12) The TE also notes that the project exposed local communities to the value of the Slovak natural heritage through public education and awareness programs. Restoration activities, such as in Morava, received high attention from stakeholders (farmers, water management authorities) who now show commitment to sustaining these activities after project completion. (TE pg. 10)

**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:

- Institutionally, the capacity-building elements of the project were successful and built a solid ground from which future operations can be based. (TE pg. 10)
- The GIS tools developed by the project are being used to train scientists from institutions around the country. (TE pg. 5)
- The project funded a significant amount of high-quality biological, ecological and economic research and training activities, intended to provide knowledge and expand the human capital base with which to construct and implement plans for future conservation and sustainable use. However, it is unclear if all the research conducted had direct relevance to the management planning process. More than 60 staff participated in high value national and international professional development training programs. Whether trainees were able to train others appeared to be dependent on personal commitment as well as management decisions that would allow trainees to devote staff time to training. (TE pg. 6)

- Participation through the formal surveys and consultations during the development of the Sustainable Development Strategies provided a new approach for reserve managers to interface and work with local communities, a key lesson to be maintained and indeed expanded by the protected area managers in the future. (TE pg. v)
- The Institutional and Infrastructure Improvement Program improved protected area facilities and equipment, including new radio communication system, computerization, monitoring and data management including GTS capabilities. (TE pg. 7)
- The NGO Small Grant Program contributed to the immediate objective of biodiversity conservation, and also to a broader strengthening of the civil society in Slovakia. (TE pg. 7)
- In Tatra National Park, GIS, remote sensing, and a focused study tour supported under the project have produced radical models for change in forest practice to more adequately attain conservation objectives and mitigate the effects of pollution and visitor pressure. (TE pg. 7)
- The project introduced new paradigms of forest management to national levels through the Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan, which should have a positive long-term impact on all the biodiversity contained in Slovak state-owned and managed forests. (TE pg. 8)
- The project was innovative in: (i) the introduction of transboundary integrated conservation approaches, and improved collaboration with neighboring country counterparts, exemplified in the first tri-national conservation trust and a tri-national Conservation Strategy; (ii) experiments and demonstrations in ecologically sound and sustainable land uses, e.g., agricultural practices in areas adjacent to protected areas; (iii) support to NGOs via competitive small grants; (iv) truly innovative research such as documentation of bird and chamois ecology employing telemetry; and (v) unique efforts at hydrologic restoration by reopening oxbows which is now being replicated in neighboring countries. (TE pg. 8)
- The new field station in Nova Sedlica village is a favorite venue for local and national events, including training and education programs. It provides the opportunity for ongoing dialogues between protected areas staff and local communities, assists with conflict resolution and addresses the need for communities to directly benefit from the protected area itself. (TE pg. 10)

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

- Trilateral international cooperation for transboundary conservation management between Slovakia, Poland and Ukraine led to formal institutional arrangements, including the Foundation for Eastern Carpathians Biodiversity Conservation, a Conservation Strategy for the Eastern Carpathians plan awaiting government endorsement, and easing of border restrictions between Ukraine and Slovakia to facilitate tourism. (TE pg. 4)
- In the Eastern Carpathians, three countries developed the framework conservation strategy for the International Biosphere Reserve . The Slovakia Poloniny National Park was established in 1997 and the Ministry of the Environment will present a management plan by 1999. (TE pg. 4)
- The project directly contributed to the production of the National Biodiversity Strategy and associated documents and laws - part of a mosaic of such documents enacted in a cumulative regional commitment to ensure the maintenance of biological diversity under conditions of sustainable development. (TE pg. 8)

**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.

**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 Biodiversity Action Plan adopted in August 1998 contains a number of activities to continue operations initiated under the project. Many project activities will continue, the restoration and management of the Morava Floodplain meadows, the re of Morava River ecosystem, waste treatment in Eastern Carpathian Biosphere Reserve, cooperative sheep keeping in Vychodna village, and monitoring and management of meadows at the Poloniny National Park Eastern Carpathians Biosphere Reserve. (TE pg. v) **Mainstreaming, Adopted**
- There has been interest on the part of the Austrians, the Slovakian Water Authority and the NGO DAPHNE to duplicate the water management and meadow restoration activities of the Morava Floodplain project component elsewhere. (TE pg. 4) The Austrian river managers are using project results to develop their own program. (TE pg. 5) The European Union's Program in Restructuring Economies has provided the financing to continue certain activities. The TE reports that DAPHNE will be supported through a GEF Medium Grant to extend restoration by harnessing farmer and local community support to implement management regimes. (TE pg. 4) **Replication, Adopted**
- The GIS tools developed by the project are being used to train scientists from institutions around the country. (TE pg. 5) **Replication, Adopted**
- Oxbow reconstruction is now being employed in Austria and the Water Authority. (TE pg. 8) **Replication, Adopted**
- Watershed conservation demonstrations showed high benefits, although they may not be replicated until it becomes financially attractive. (TE pg. 8) **Mainstreaming, Established**

## 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 explicitly lists the following lessons learned:

- The project brought to light early in project implementation the importance of cooperation between agencies responsible for the stewardship of the Slovak Republic's forests. (TE pg. 5)
- In retrospect, the training program could have been more effective - a needs assessment may have targeted the appropriate skills and courses needed and assisted in getting training programs underway earlier in the project. (TE pg. 6) A needs assessment should occur early in the project in order to better design the component and to provide more

focus to these activities to ensure new skills/knowledge are better integrated into design and implementation. It was also apparent that issues such as budget constraints, understaffing, etc. constrained the full application or transfer of knowledge obtained in the training process. (TE pg. v)

- Institutional stability is a key condition for project success. The Bank should be notified of institutional changes that the Recipient decides to implement, and their implications on the Project. (TE pg. v)
- Clear terms of reference for the Project Management Coordination Unit are desirable to minimize outside negative influences on the Unit's work. (TE pg. v)
- In-situ conservation remains a primary approach to Biodiversity conservation in Slovakia (supported by ex-situ conservation measures as needed). In changing social and economic conditions, more players' behavior can now be influenced, as the Project proved, through proper incentives. Nature-based tourism is becoming an important source of revenue for remote communities, and the economic value of nature areas is beginning to be recognized. Participation through the formal surveys and consultations during the development of the Sustainable Development Strategies provided a new approach for reserve managers to interface and work with local communities, a key lesson to be maintained and indeed expanded by the protected area managers in the future. (TE pg. v)
- GIS training should be expanded so that more than one staff member per site are trained, which reduces the risk of subsequent loss to the private sector. Users who best understand its applications also need to be trained as they are more likely to remain in the job and justify such expensive training investments. (TE pg. v)
- Involving NGOs during implementation and through the Small Grants Program were keys to project successes. Such involvement also made a significant contribution in increasing public awareness of general biodiversity conservation issues. (TE pg. vi)
- The establishment of a successful and permanent financial mechanism to support biodiversity conservation requires, at the outset, an assessment of conservation needs, the production of an agreed funding plan and identified commitments to finance these needs. (TE pg. vi)
- Explicit targets and indicators for measuring progress against the implementation plans and project objectives help managers identify the success, cost-effectiveness and basic usefulness of most components throughout implementation. These need to be established at the outset. However, long term success or impact of a project activity relative to its stated goals cannot be fairly assessed at project completion. For example, professional development and training enables the immediate prosecution of some project tasks such as GIS use, but will not be fully realized for at least several years when the long-term influence can be better evaluated. Nonetheless, the absence of indicators can at best be characterized as a short coming of project design. (TE pg. vi, 13)
- The fundamental changes that occurred in the country during the implementation of the project created both opportunities and constraints. In this context, the project objectives can be seen as somewhat ambitious. (TE pg. vi, 13)
- 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. These early projects of the GEF Pilot Phase uniformly required longer implementation timeframes (circa 5 years) as witnessed by the value of the extensions which all the regional projects requested. Much of the value and achievement of project objectives were realized in the final 18 months. Nonetheless, an over optimistic implementation schedule is a design flaw and a critical lesson learned and should be taken into account in preparing subsequent operations. (TE pg. vi, 13)

## 9.2 Briefly describe the recommendations given in the terminal evaluation.

The TE states the following recommendations:

- A needs assessment should occur early in the project in order to better design the component and to provide more focus to these activities to ensure new skills/knowledge are better integrated into design and implementation. (TE pg. v)
- The Bank should be notified of institutional changes that the Recipient decides to implement, and their implications on the Project. (TE pg. v)
- Clear terms of reference for the Project Management Coordination Unit are desirable to minimize outside negative influences on the Unit's work. (TE pg. v)
- GIS training should be expanded so that more than one staff member per site are trained, which reduces the risk of subsequent loss to the private sector. Users who best understand its applications also need to be trained as they are more likely to remain in the job and justify such expensive training investments. (TE pg. v)
- Explicit targets and indicators for measuring progress against the implementation plans and project objectives help managers identify the success, cost-effectiveness and basic usefulness of most components throughout implementation. These 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, 13)



## 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 contains an assessment of relevant outcomes and impacts of the project, and reports on the achievements of the objectives. It reports on most, though not all, of the expected project results outlined in the Project Document.	S
To what extent is the report internally consistent, the evidence presented complete and convincing, and ratings well substantiated?	The TE is internally consistent, the evidence is complete and convincing, with explanatory reasons for project performance and results. However, a few of the ratings seem to be insufficiently critical, as noted in the IEG evaluation ratings. 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 adequately, although the final TE rating differs from the IEG and TER ratings. The TE does not discuss project exit strategy.	S
To what extent are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive?	The lessons learned comprehensive, and are very well supported with evidence presented in the TE, and are immediately recognizable in the project's implementation experience.	HS
Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used?	The TE includes a summary of expected and actual project costs, broken down by major project programs, and source of financing. (TE pg. 19) 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 has one instance of documentation of M&E activities, reporting only the cost and length of supervising missions. (TE pg. 22) No other information is provided on M&E activities.	U
<b>Overall TE Rating</b>		<b>MS</b>

$$0.3 \times (a + b) + 0.1 \times (c + d + e + f) = 0.3(9) + 0.1(17) = 2.7 + 1.7 = 4.4 \sim 4$$

## 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.