

# GEF IEO Terminal Evaluation Review form (retrofitting of APR2004 cohort)

This form is for retrofitting of the TERs prepared for APR2004. While several topics covered in this form had already been covered in the earlier form, this revised form adds several other performance and impact related concerns.

## 1. Project Data

Summary project data			
GEF project ID		628	
GEF Agency project ID		57024	
GEF Replenishment Phase		GEF-2	
Lead GEF Agency (include all for joint projects)		World Bank	
Project name		Wetland Priorities for Conservation Action	
Country/Countries		Ecuador	
Region		LAC	
Focal area		Biodiversity	
Operational Program or Strategic Priorities/Objectives		OP-2: Coastal, Marine, and Freshwater Ecosystems	
Executing agencies involved		EcoCiencia	
NGOs/CBOs involvement		EcoCiencia: lead executing agency	
Private sector involvement		n/a	
CEO Endorsement (FSP) /Approval date (MSP)		February 11, 1999	
Effectiveness date / project start		April 26, 1999	
Expected date of project completion (at start)		July 15, 2002	
Actual date of project completion		November 1, 2002	
Project Financing			
		At Endorsement (US \$M)	At Completion (US \$M)
Project Preparation Grant	GEF funding	25,000	25,000
	Co-financing		
GEF Project Grant		718,388	716,840
Co-financing	IA/EA own	191,500	UA
	Government		UA
	Other*		UA
Total GEF funding		743,388	741,840
Total Co-financing		191,500	636,616
Total project funding (GEF grant(s) + co-financing)		909,888	1,378,456
Terminal evaluation/review information			
TE completion date		May 14, 2003	
TE submission date		May 14, 2003	
Author of TE		Team Leader Gabriela Arcos	
Original GEF IEO TER (2004) preparer		Baastel	
Original GEF IEO TER (2004) reviewer		Josh Brann	
Revised TER (2014) completion date			
Revised TER (2014) prepared by		Shanna Edberg	
TER GEF IEO peer review (2014)		Neeraj Negi	

\*Includes contributions mobilized for the project from other multilateral agencies, bilateral development, cooperation agencies, NGOs, the private sector, and beneficiaries.

## 2. Summary of Project Ratings

Criteria	Final PIR	IA Terminal Evaluation	IA Evaluation Office Review	GEF EO Review
Project Outcomes	S	n/a	n/a	S
Sustainability of Outcomes	ML	n/a	n/a	ML
M&E Design	n/a	n/a	n/a	MU
M&E Implementation	S	n/a	n/a	MS
Quality of Implementation	S	n/a	n/a	S
Quality of Execution	S	n/a	n/a	S
Quality of the Terminal Evaluation Report	n/a	n/a	n/a	MU

## 3. Project Objectives

### 3.1 Global Environmental Objectives of the project:

The project's global environmental objectives as stated in the project document are "to conserve globally significant biodiversity in wetlands in Ecuador" (project brief, page 2). Wetlands in Ecuador "display characteristic species that considerably increase native biodiversity," rendering them of "top global biodiversity importance" (project brief, page 5). But 50% of the area covered by wetlands in Ecuador is threatened by agriculture, livestock, oil exploitation, and population expansion, and there was also a lack of information of Ecuador's wetlands at all levels of government prior to the project. The project planned to accomplish wetland conservation through identification, characterization, and prioritization of Ecuador's wetlands, which would provide the basis for devising the most appropriate wetland management regime.

### 3.2 Development Objectives of the project:

According to the project document, the expected outcomes are as follows:

1. Identify wetlands, as proposed through a participatory process, which require the government's protection and assign the most appropriate management system to these wetlands.
2. Identify wetlands requiring restoration.
3. Increase the number of Ecuadorian wetlands in the Ramsar list of wetland sites of international importance.
4. Conduct economic valuations of the identified wetlands.
5. Circulate project results.

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

No changes were reported.

## 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>
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This project contributes to GEF Operational Program 2, the objective of which is “the conservation and sustainable use of the biological resources in coastal, marine, and freshwater ecosystems” (Operational Program Number 2, page 2-3). The project contributes to the operational program’s outputs by identifying wetlands, collecting information on them, and designating management and restoration systems as needed for each of them. This identification and information collection is necessary for the conservation and sustainable use of the wetland areas.

The project is also linked to Ecuadorian priorities. The Ecuadorian government designated wetlands as “special use areas” within the Forestry and Natural Areas Law, and programs were created at several levels of government for the sustainable management of wetlands. Ecuador also ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Ramsar Convention and created a National Management Plan for Natural Areas and Wildlife, which the project will support by providing needed information on Ecuador’s wetland sites.

<b>4.2 Effectiveness</b>	Rating: <b>Satisfactory</b>
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The project satisfactorily completed its objectives, according to the TE and final PIR. Information on “botanical, zoological, limnological and socio-economic evaluation, diagnosis and characterization” was gathered on 150 wetland sites in the country, and a database with a GIS was developed (TE, page 5). Public and private organizations have access to this database, although the TE did not state which or how many organizations received access and have the capability to use it. The project also collected information on the socio-economic value of wetlands to the surrounding communities. The information system “was designed to allow an easy access and use and is open and flexible to further updating at local and regional levels” (TE, page 7). This data allowed organizations to determine which wetlands required action for preservation or restoration. The information system also supported the development of specific regional wetland management strategies.

Workshops were conducted on both local and national levels. The national workshops crafted a policy proposal for the National Wetlands Conservation Action Plan, which was presented to the Ministry of the Environment. The project also wrote passages for the draft forest and biodiversity management laws and “developed a ten year policy on wetlands which was included in the National Environmental

Strategy (2001-2010)” (TE, page 6). The local workshops were meant to both gain knowledge on the historical management of wetlands by local communities, and also to build consensus on future wetland management. The TE does not report on the success of the local workshops.

For raising awareness, the project produced three books on the characterization and conservation of two wetland sites, three publications based on the workshops, two posters, and a video on Ecuadorian wetlands. The project also disseminated information through “massive communication media as TV, Radio, and printed press and magazines” (TE, page 7). Eight – or maybe ten, the TE is unclear – wetland sites were added to the Ramsar Convention list of internationally important wetlands, and two wetland sites were included into the National Reserve System as a result of the project’s lobbying efforts.

The project included participation by multiple stakeholders, including “small scale fisheries (including their national organization), the Galapagos National Park Service, Ministry of Environment, and several NGOs working in conservation, among others” (PIR 2003, page 3). A National Wetlands Working Group was created from among the project stakeholders, which is intended to continue promoting conservation activities following the project’s closure.

Although the TE is occasionally lacking in specifics, it is clear that the project succeeded in its efforts to create a wetlands information system from which to base conservation policy, made inroads toward protecting Ecuador’s wetlands through government policies, added several wetlands to national and international conservation lists, and raised awareness of wetlands conservation among stakeholders and the general public.

4.3 <b>Efficiency</b>	Rating: <b>Satisfactory</b>
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The project received about \$1,500 less than expected from the GEF grant, due to payment of ineligible expenses. The closing date was extended by six months, although the TE does not mention the delay or explain it. The PIRs suggest that the delays may have been caused by a lack of cooperation from the Charles Darwin Station, an early need to reorient the collection of socio-economic data to be more focused on the project, a need for more quantitative indicators, and compliance with safeguards involving indigenous communities.

Overall, the project did a capable job of producing its expected results while under pressure from political and financial instability. The Minister of the Environment changed 7 times over the course of the project’s 3 years, and hyperinflation and the subsequent dollarization of the Ecuadorian economy required EcoCiencia to scramble for additional cofinancing to complete the project.

4.4 <b>Sustainability</b>	Rating: <b>Moderately Likely</b>
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Financial: **Moderately likely**; the final PIR lists the failure of the government to provide financial contributions as a potential risk, mitigated by “permanent coordination with government and donors”

that took place to ensure counterpart funds (PIR 2003, page 15). The PIR also states that EcoCiencia and the government are seeking additional funding to continue project activities.

**Sociopolitical: Likely;** The National Wetlands Working Group is one mechanism for sociopolitical sustainability. The Directorate of Biodiversity and Protected Areas has a permanent representative in the group, which also includes other stakeholders. In addition, many of the project's stakeholder organizations have signed cooperation agreements with each other; for example, between EcoCiencia and the National Confederation of Indigenous Organizations, and between the government and NGOs. One positive signal for sociopolitical sustainability is the shift that occurred among small scale fisheries during the course of the project. They were initially skeptical of the project's goals, but shifted their position toward sustainable resource use and had becoming frequent participants in workshops and meetings. The TE reports that organizations such as the Ministry of Environment, National Fisheries Institute, and others "constantly showed interest" and contributed to making the project fit national and local priorities, which is a positive signal for continuation of activities.

**Institutional: Likely;** the project has contributed to the creation of laws and policies promoting wetland conservation, and the database that was created has been integrated into government and other stakeholders' information systems. The data feeds directly into the government's Environmental Information System. The TE states that "the methodology...does not require high level expertise for future application," which will make it easy to use and train others for future monitoring activities (TE, page 13). Regarding Ecuadorian policy, wetlands were incorporated as Special Use Areas into the government's biodiversity and forestry laws. The National Biodiversity Strategy included wetlands as priority ecosystems in sustainable development, with plans to integrate the Biodiversity Strategy into all levels of government. Adding several wetland sites to an international conservation list and to Ecuador's national reserve system also increases the likelihood of sustainability.

**Environmental: Not applicable,** as this was an information collection and awareness-raising project rather than direct conservation action.

## **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?

Cofinancing was essential to completing the project's outputs. Hyperinflation in Ecuador during the period project was about to start resulted in obsolescence of the initial project cost estimate by the time project started. EcoCiencia overcame the funding gap by soliciting cofinancing from a multitude of other organizations. According to the TE, "Organizations such as the Comitato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo dei Popoli (CISP), the National Federation of Artesanal Fisheries (FENACOPEC), The Nature Conservancy, the National Army, the Ministry of Tourism, the Galapagos National Park Service, the Presidency's Secretariat of Sustainable Development, the Dutch Cooperation Agency (through the Biodiversity Protection Project), several universities and municipalities, became among the strongest supporters of

the project, providing important in-kind and cash contributions” (TE, page 4). However, planned cofinancing from the government of Ecuador did not materialize due to “the shortage of budgetary allocations to the Ministry of the Environment” (TE, page 4).

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 closing date was extended by six months, but neither the PIRs nor the TE give the reason why. The delay did not appear to affect project outcomes, as all of the objectives were completed satisfactorily.

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:

Country ownership is essential to project sustainability because stakeholders must be willing to continue information-gathering activities as needed and to implement the policies proposed by the project. All of the policies developed and proposed by the project included inputs and collaboration with the relevant stakeholders, which increases the likelihood of their passage and enforcement. Also, the TE states that a “repatriation process” took place after project closure, and that new initiatives have been developed as a result of the agreements signed between the project’s stakeholder organizations (TE, 15).

## 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>
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The design of the M&E system lacked quantitative indicators, which required revision during implementation. The first PIR recommended that indicators be quantitative as much as possible since that was “the only realistic way of measuring project impact” (2000 PIR, page 4). The subsequent PIR indicated that significant progress was made in quantifying indicators following this recommendation.

EcoCienca used its internal monitoring and evaluation system for the project, buttressed by external monitoring from Ramsar Convention and the Instituto Ecuatoriano Forestal y de Areas Naturales. However, baseline data does not appear to have been collected, and the indicators in the log frame do not appear sufficient for monitoring the project’s accomplishments, as noted in the 2000 PIR.

<b>6.2 M&amp;E Implementation</b>	Rating: <b>Moderately Satisfactory</b>
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The PIRs report that the lack of quantifiable indicators was resolved, and targets for each phase of the project were set as instructed by the World Bank supervision mission. The TE states that monitoring reports and meetings were used to assess implementation progress, but does not mention whether any changes were made as a result of the monitoring information. Since the TE also fails to mention any problems in implementation, it is difficult to assess whether adaptive management took place at any point.

## **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>Satisfactory</b>
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Aside from the aforementioned weak indicators in the log frame, project design was well-conceived for advancing wetland conservation in Ecuador. The project filled much-needed gaps in data and promoted wetland conservation at the national and local levels. The TE cites the World Bank’s supervision as a helpful factor in improving EcoCiencia’s accounting policies and improving their efficiency in dealing with international donors.

<b>7.2 Quality of Project Execution</b>	Rating: <b>Satisfactory</b>
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Project execution is rated satisfactory for EcoCiencia’s ability to meet project objectives in the midst of political and economic chaos in Ecuador, notably their ability to leverage additional finance when hyperinflation eroded the grant’s purchasing power and their persistence in the face of seven changes in government with seven different environmental agendas.

Execution flaws noted in the PIRs include the need to re-orient the socioeconomic assessment to better fit the project objectives and the delay in complying with safeguards for projects located in indigenous areas. The TE’s audit report also states that EcoCiencia lacked some of the internal procedures required for World Bank project executors and made a mistake in the procurement procedures. However, these

issues were resolved by the end of the project. The TE reports that “EcoCiencia is now seen as an important source of information and expertise on wetlands management” as a result of their experience in executing the project (TE, page 17).

## **8. Assessment of Project Impacts**

**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.

Unable to assess. Environmental changes were not monitored by the project, although the TE implies that the project has contributed to biodiversity conservation in Ecuador’s wetlands.

**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.

Unable to assess. Socioeconomic changes were not monitored by 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**

Increasing the capacity of stakeholders by updating their knowledge base was one of the main components of the project. The project succeeded in creating a database of 150 wetlands and distributing it to the government, NGOs, and trade associations. The data is now integrated into the Ministry of Environment’s information systems, and was used to create new policies for wetland conservation.

### **b) Governance**

The governance of wetlands was also improved as a result of the project. Several policies were developed and proposed by the project, with a high likelihood of being passed and enforced: for instance, wetlands were incorporated as Special Use Areas into the government’s biodiversity and



forestry laws, the National Biodiversity Strategy included wetlands as priority ecosystems in sustainable development, and a National Coastal Zonal Proposal was developed. In addition, two wetland sites were included as part of Ecuador's national reserve system.

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.

No unintended impacts were reported.

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 states that the project's methodology for identifying and characterizing wetlands was "accepted by the Ramsar Convention as a tool for identification and characterization of wetlands" and that "several countries are interested in learning from the methodology developed by EcoCiencia" (TE, page 5).

## **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.

One of the approaches that contributed to project's success was to "keep a low profile" and allow other stakeholders to maintain their leading roles without viewing the project as competition or interference with their work (TE, page 17). This allowed EcoCiencia to be seen as a source of expertise.

The project's participatory approach and continuous dialogue with stakeholders was essential to ensuring commitment to wetland conservation. Different collaboration strategies were developed for different stakeholders, which strengthened relations between EcoCiencia and civil society.

Having a good technical team and recognizing staff for their work was important for enhancing performance.

9.2 Briefly describe the recommendations given in the terminal evaluation.

Wetland characteristics are dependent on the local geography and culture, so conservation strategies must be targeted at the local level on a site-by-site basis. Country and regional characteristics must also be considered when crafting policy.

## 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 does not provide ratings. Specifics on the level of compliance for each indicator is lacking (e.g. it does not say who or how many organizations received access to the wetlands database).	<b>MU</b>
To what extent is the report internally consistent, the evidence presented complete and convincing, and ratings well substantiated?	The TE is not always internally consistent; for example, at different points in the paper it gives a different number of wetlands included as new Ramsar sites. It also does not discuss any shortcomings, which (if shortcomings were indeed present) casts some doubt on the report's objectivity. It also directly copies several sentences from the final PIR without citation.	<b>MU</b>
To what extent does the report properly assess project sustainability and/or project exit strategy?	The sustainability analysis could have used some details on EcoCienca's adoption of project activities after the project closed. Like the rest of the TE, positive impacts are reported but not in detail and often without substantiation of the claim.	<b>MS</b>
To what extent are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive?	The lessons learned are somewhat comprehensive, but most of them are vague, e.g. having a good technical team or recognizing the country context leads to good results.	<b>MS</b>
Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used?	The per-component costs are reported. However, the TE does not disaggregate the sources of cofinancing. It is unknown which organization contributed what.	<b>MS</b>
Assess the quality of the report's evaluation of project M&E systems:	EcoCienca's M&E system was described. The TE does not report any of the M&E issues that are discussed in the PIRs, such as the lack of quantifiable indicators. Since the TE does not report any shortcomings or challenges to the project (aside from the political and economic environment), it is impossible to tell from the TE whether adaptive management took place.	<b>MU</b>
<b>Overall TE Rating</b>		<b>MU</b>

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

No additional information was used.