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		73	
GEF Agency project ID		P008326	
GEF Replenishment Phase		GEF-1	
Lead GEF Agency (include all for joint projects)		World Bank	
Project name		Water and Environmental Management in the Aral Sea Basin	
Country/Countries		Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan	
Region		ECA	
Focal area		International Waters	
Operational Program or Strategic Priorities/Objectives		9 – Integrated Land and Water Multiple Focal Area	
Executing agencies involved		Executive Committee of the Interstate Council for the Aral Sea Basin	
NGOs/CBOs involvement		Not involved	
Private sector involvement		Not involved	
CEO Endorsement (FSP) /Approval date (MSP)		May 15, 1998	
Effectiveness date / project start		September 17, 1998	
Expected date of project completion (at start)		June 30, 2003	
Actual date of project completion		June 30, 2003	
Project Financing			
		At Endorsement (US $M)	**At Completion (US $M)**
Project Preparation Grant	GEF funding	0.525	0.525
	Co-financing		
GEF Project Grant		12.2	11.3
Co-financing	IA/EA own		
	Government	4.1	(TE states impossible to assess in-kind country contributions (pg 28))
	Other*	4.9	4.2
Total GEF funding		12.725	11.825
Total Co-financing		9.0	4.2
Total project funding (GEF grant(s) + co-financing)		21.725	16.025
Terminal evaluation/review information			
TE completion date		February 2004	
TE submission date			
Author of TE		Peter Whitford et al.	
Original GEF IEO TER (2004) preparer		Antonio del Monaco	
Original GEF IEO TER (2004) reviewer		Aaron Zazueta	
Revised TER (2014) completion date			
Revised TER (2014) prepared by		Joshua Schneck	
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	U (ICR notes that MS would have been applied if rating option were available)	MU	MU
Sustainability of Outcomes		L	L	ML
M&E Design	N/R	N/R	N/R	MU
M&E Implementation	S	N/R	N/R	MU
Quality of Implementation	N/R	U (ICR notes that MS would have been applied if rating option were available)	U	MU
Quality of Execution	S	U	U	U
Quality of the Terminal Evaluation Report	-	-	S	MS

3. Project Objectives

3.1 Global Environmental Objectives of the project:

The Global Environmental Objectives (GEOs) of the project, as stated in the Project Document (PD), are to contribute to the stabilization of the Aral Sea Basin environment and rehabilitate wetlands of the Amu Darya delta. The Aral Sea Basin covers an area of 2.2 million kilometers and is home to some 38 million people (1995 census, PD, pg 1). The Lake Sudoche area, one of the official wetlands of the Amu Darya, provides habitat to several globally threatened bird species (PD, pg 22). The basin is the site of one of the world's worst environmental disasters, as water from the basins two contributing rivers, the Amu Darya and Syr Darya, has, since the breakup of the Soviet Union, increasingly been diverted to agriculture. Today 90 percent of the basin water is diverted for agriculture. The result is increasing salinization of the basin, and a rapid drying up of the Aral Sea, which, at the time of the PD, had shrunk by 70 percent in volume.

3.2 Development Objectives of the project:

The DO of the project, as stated in the PD, is to address the root causes of the overuse and degradation of the international waters of the Aral Sea Basin by assisting the Central Asian States in implementing the Aral Sea Basin Program (ASBP), which was approved by the five heads of the participating states in 1994. Following an initial pre-project phase of ASBP, this project's overall objective is to "stimulate and achieve substantive and concrete progress" towards the four long-term objectives of the ASBP:

1. Stabilize the environment of the Aral Sea basin;
2. Rehabilitate the disaster zone around the Sea;
3. Improve the management of the international waters of the Aral Sea Basin; and

4. Build the capacity of regional institutions to plan and implement the above programs.

The focus of the GEF project is on objectives 1 and 3, with contributions to the other two objectives. Objectives 2 and 4 are to be pursued primarily by the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Aral Sea (EC-IFAS) and national governments with help from UNDP and other donors. The PD states that the ASBP leadership is expected to set a target of reducing water withdrawals for irrigation by 15% by closure of the project (PD, pg 17).

The project's activities were grouped into one lead component (A) and five support components:

A. *Water and salt management* – supporting development of regional and national water management strategies and piloting of water conservation efforts.
B. *Public awareness* – development of public awareness campaign in the five states.
C. *Dam safety and reservoir management* – supporting safety assessment of selected dams in the five countries and upgrading of monitoring/warning systems.
D. Trans-boundary water flow monitoring – supporting the purchase and installation of water flow and water quality monitoring equipment at 25 trans-boundary monitoring stations.
E. Wetlands restoration – supporting restoration of Lake Sudoche, and delta lake on the border of the Southern Aral Sea which has become desiccated due to poor water management.
F. Project management support – a project management and coordination unit (PMCU) was to be established within EC-IFAS.

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

Yes. During project implementation, various components were adjusted. Components C, D and E, for which implementation went well, were scaled up, while components A-2 (providing grants for pilot water conservation projects) and B, which faced difficulties, were scaled down. Changes in the objectives of revised activities are as follows:

A. *Water and salt management* – supporting development of regional and national water management strategies and a competition was planned for farms and water agencies to propose low-cost water conservation measures.
B. *Public awareness campaign* – was to be started with the goal of convincing water users to reduce water consumption by 5% by the end of 2002 (1 year before project closure).

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 is relevant to both the GEF and the five partnering countries. For the five countries, relevance is seen in that the project is supporting what is largely a nationally-driven and designed parent project (ASBP) – one that was approved by the five heads of the participating states in 1994. For the GEF, the project is consistent with Operational Program 9: Integrated Land and Water Multiple Focal Area Operational Program. The project meets the criteria of this OP, which include diversity of threats, severity, irreversibility, capacity building, and consistency with national environmental plans. In addition, the wetland restoration activity supports GEF biodiversity goals as the threatened wetland provides habitat to several globally threatened bird species (PD, pg 22).

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

As assessed in the TE, the project was successful in achieving its principle objective – to support the implementation of the ASBP. In fact, the TE notes that a rating of "moderately satisfactory" would have been applied to outcomes had this category been available at the time of the ICR (TE). While the TE states that the objective of reducing water withdrawals for irrigation by 15% over the project period was not met, it also states that at the time of the TE, water withdrawals from irrigation have been reduced in the Syr Darya Basin (one of the two basins that comprise the Aral Sea Basin), primarily because of reductions in the area irrigated and increased releases of water for hydropower generation in the winter (TE, pg 2). In any case, project achievements were substantial, and include: production of several reports on key water management issues in the Basin that "will be of great value in future water resource management programs in the region"(TE, pg 9); a road map for addressing these issues; restoration of key wetlands that has led to additional investments in wetland restoration by the Uzbek Government in the Amu Darya delta; improved dam safety; and improved monitoring of water flows.

This is not to say the project was without shortcomings, several of which are described below in section 4.3 on project efficiency. Achievements and shortcomings under each of the six project components are detailed below:

A. *Water and salt management* – several reports were prepared including 2 regional reports, five national reports (one for each country), a joint regional and national report, a report on water losses and development strategies, and a report on the Action Plan. In addition a database and

set of models were developed to improve analytical capacity in the region. TE states that these studies provided a few key messages that that "will be of great value in future water resource management programs in the region"(TE, pg 9). At project closure, the EC-IFAS, with assistance from UNDP, is holding discussions with the countries on the results of the strategy. A second sub-component under this project activity – the competition for farmers and water agencies to propose low-cost water conservation measures, was closed 2 years early because of concerns about insufficient financial management and major delays in paying award money. At the same time, TE reports that the program demonstrated that farmers will conserve water if given a financial incentive and showed the effectiveness of a number of low-cost options for doing so.

B. *Public awareness* – according to the TE, a large and multi-faceted media campaign was conducted under this activity grouping, and surveys showed that the work was effective in increasing stakeholders' awareness of the amount of wasted water in the Basin, the Aral Sea disaster, and the ASBP project. However, no attempt was made to measure impact on water usage, including the component's 5% target, and TE states that an impact on water usage is doubtful (TE, pg 10).
C. *Dam safety and reservoir management* – under this activity, assessments were made at 10 dams that helped create awareness among governments about the urgency of dam safety, and led to several follow-up investments. According to the TE, safety of at least 9 dams has been improved, and rehabilitation of dams is also helping to improve overall water management in the basin as conflicts between upstream and downstream users are being addressed through changed management of water flows (TE, pg 10).
D. *Trans-boundary water flow monitoring* – under this activity grouping, all 25 trans-boundary water monitoring stations called for in the PD were installed and equipment was procured for an additional 12 stations. Data from the installed stations is currently being used by the basin water management organizations and national water agencies to improve the timing and scheduling of irrigation releases.
E. *Wetlands restoration* – according to the TE, restoration of Lake Sudoche was a big success, meeting its biodiversity and socio-economic targets. TE states that environmental and socio-economic monitoring was well managed, and that the local population is now able to use the restored area for fishing, hunting, and grazing. The component provided a model for similar restoration efforts, and has led to additional investments by the Government of Uzbekistan in the Amu Darya delta (3 new projects are underway) (TE, pg 11).
F. *Project management support* – According to the TE, project financial management was extremely cumbersome, not timely, and not transparent. At the same time, PMCU is reported to have become competent in project management through the course of the project.

4.3 **Efficiency**	Rating: **Unsatisfactory**

TE describes many aspects of project implementation that were inefficient and plagued with difficulties. Issues cited are as follows:

- Financial management and auditing remained a problem throughout the project, and the ability to monitor the project's progress and financial disbursements on a day-to day basis was never established. Reporting was infrequent and inadequate and this made it difficult to update work plans and fully utilize the grant funds (TE, pg 14).
- As stated in TE, the public awareness campaign was based on the incorrect assumption that lack of public awareness was driving wasteful water use practices. The true drivers, revealed during project implementation, were degraded irrigation systems and lack of effective public policies. As a result of this failure to correctly assess the situation in the design stage, funds were spent on what has thus far yielded little in terms of efficiencies in water usage (TE, pg 10).
- A decision was made to rotate the EC-IFAS – the regional body charged with coordinating the larger ASBP – to a different country every two years, including movement of offices and staff. This was done while the project management unit (and much of the expertise) for the GEF project stayed in Tashkent. As a result, the EC-IFAS was "greatly weakened" and the larger objective of strengthening the EC-IFAS was not achieved (TE, pg 8 & 11). During the three years (1999-2002) when EC-IFAS was in Turkmenistan, "all momentum and capacity built during the preparation phase of ASBP for addressing regional issues in a cooperative way was lost" (TE, pg 13). Following this, in 2002, when the EC-IFAS was moved to Dushanbe it tried to reassert control over the project, creating a conflict between EC-IFAS and the PMCU that "brought costly delays" to several project components and the loss of trained staff who were demoralized during the course of the conflict (TE, pg 13 & 20).
- TE describes issues with procurement delays during the project's first year that affected key project components and were partly due to inexperience of the PMCU but also the result of policy differences with the Bank that were not fully resolved in the design stage of the project (TE, pg 13).
- One sub-component under activity group A - the competition for farmers and water agencies to propose low-cost water conservation measures, was closed 2 years early because of concerns about insufficiently robust financial management and major delays in paying award money.

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

TE states that overall, sustainability of the activities supported by the project appears likely, although a number of risks remain. Works that have been constructed under components C, D and E (dam safety; flow monitoring; wetlands restoration) have been transferred to national governments with uptake, and continued support likely. Results from the assessment of water and salt management in the basin are being disseminated, and cooperation, while challenging, is judged to be better than many other similar river basins throughout the world (TE, pg 16). As evidence of this, in the Styr Darya basin, there have been a series of agreements between host states since 1995 to address the energy-irrigation operational

conflicts. In particular, a bilateral agreement between Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan in 1996 that clarified the sharing arrangements of Amu Darya waters has thus far worked without any major disputes.

Sustainability is further assessed along the following four dimensions:

- *Environmental* (**ML**) – sustainability of wetlands appears likely, as the results have been taken up by Uzbekistan which has expanded the program and created a permanent body to manage the wetlands. Water quality of the lake is still dependent upon fresh water flows from the Amu Darya River which appears likely, though not without moderate risks (TE, pg 17). As to the health of the overall Aral Sea Basin, the PD states very clearly that the best outcome that can be hoped for is a retardation of the rate of the Sea's decline and future maintenance of the lake at a sustainable level (PD, pg 4-5). What little gains the project made towards this overall long-term goal appear sustainable (better information, monitoring, action plans, etc.).
- *Financial* (**ML**) – TE states that the IFAS branches (national offices responsible for ASBP project) in each country receive "substantial" financial contributions from their governments for implementing national projects. Of more concern is financing for the EC-IFAS regional office, where to date no long-term mechanism has been found.
- *Socio-Political* (**ML**) – All 5 participating countries have a stake in the outcome and success of the ASBP. Moreover, TE reports that the local population in Uzbekistan is already benefiting greatly from the restored wetlands as hunting and fishing are their main sources of income (TE, pg 17). Of more concern is the difficulty of arriving at a sustainable partnership agreement among states for water management, and while the project has contributed to this long-term goal, much work remains.
- *Institutional* (**ML**) – TE states that the decision by EC-IFAS to take a lead role in managing dissemination of the project's studies, with UNDP, should allow it to maintain and further develop the technical capacity it needs. Funding for EC-IFAS is still in question (see above). Nationally, the project's work in developing monitoring stations and training ministry workers in this regard appears to have strong state support. Moreover, TE notes that additional assistance for trans-boundary water monitoring is being provided by USAID.

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?

Co-financing was provided by a consortium of international donors as well as contributions from the five partnering governments where project implementation took place. According to the TE, the Dutch Government provided around $1.5 million in additional co-financing and the Swiss Development Corporation provided $1.1 million for completion of the Lake Sudoche rehabilitation. Co-financing

commitments appear to have been largely met, and facilitated project outcomes, as they were well-integrated into each of the project activity groupings.

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 was completed on its expected date of completion at project start. However, specific activities undertaken as part of the project did entail delays. TE notes several instances of procurement delays and conflicts between the PCMU, World Bank, and the EC-IFAS. TE states that procurement schedule for onboarding consultants to support Activities under group A was unrealistic and took longer than anticipated. TE also states that conflict between EC-IFAS and the PMCU that "brought costly delays" to several project components and the loss of trained staff who were demoralized during the course of the conflict (TE, pg 13 & 20). Lastly, the competition for farmers and water agencies to propose low-cost water conservation measures was closed 2 years early because of concerns about insufficient financial management and major delays in paying award money. Overall, it seems that delays experienced during implementation were a factor limiting achievements of some of the project's objective (for example, the piloting of demonstration activities and dissemination of reporting materials), however, the TE is not clear on the extent to which these delays contributed to under achievement.

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:

TE states that country ownership was not strong for the work of the EC-IFAS and the PCMU, and that this limited achievement of some project components. Again, the TE is not clear on the extent to which this was a factor in limiting achievement. TE notes that while the EC-IFAS appears strong on paper, it was relatively weak because the five countries, despite declarations from their heads of states, were unwilling to delegate decision making powers to IFAS or its secretariat (EC-IFAS). Moreover, TE states that there were concerns regarding Uzbek domination of the PMCU that were never adequately addressed, which limited country ownership for the project. Lastly, the project relied heavily upon consultants and in doing so missed an opportunity to strengthen local ministries and increase country ownership of the project (TE, pg 12). The failure to ensure greater country ownership through a more carefully tailored project design likely limited some outcomes (piloting of water conservation efforts and uptake of action plans in particular) and did not strengthen the institutional parties responsible for continued sustainability of project 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.

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

The design of the project's M&E system was insufficiently detailed for a project of this complexity, with activities spread in 5 countries and involving many stakeholders with somewhat overlapping mandates. PD states that WB mission in Uzbekistan will supervise the project on a continuing basis and that results will be measured against performance indicators shown in the PIP (not found on PMIS, 6/12/14). However, TE states that outcome and activity indicators were not included in the project document (verified) – they were later added during a supervision mission in 1999 (TE, pg 24). A separate budget for M&E is not provided in the PD, nor are timetables for when key project activities and monitoring is expected to take place.

6.2 **M&E Implementation**	Rating: **Moderately Unsatisfactory**

One component of the project's M&E appears to have been well managed, that of the biological and socio-economic monitoring of the restoration activities. Other areas of M&E implementation were not satisfactory. As TE notes, financial management and auditing remained a problem throughout the project, and the ability to monitor the project's progress and financial disbursements on a day-to day basis was never established. Reporting was infrequent and inadequate and this made it difficult to update work plans and fully utilize the grant funds (TE, pg 14). There was no attempt to measure any impact from the project's awareness raising campaign on water usage, despite there being a target of 5% reductions from this component. Results from the project's MTR were, on the other hand, taken up in changes to the allocation of project resources for the second half the project. On balance, M&E implementation is rated as moderately unsatisfactory.

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: **Moderately Unsatisfactory**

As TE notes, design at entry was problematic in several regards. The public awareness campaign (component B) was based on the incorrect assumption that lack of public awareness was driving wasteful water use practices. The true drivers, revealed during project implementation, were degraded irrigation systems and lack of effective public policies. Consequently, funds were spent on what has thus far yielded little in terms of efficiencies in water usage (TE, pg 10). Moreover, the project's M&E systems, as described above, were not sufficiently detailed or adequate for a project with this level of complexity and stakeholders (5 countries, numerous implementation partners). Project design can also be faulted for giving the PMCU responsibility for implementing activities that would have been better served had they been done by national agencies – thus providing an opportunity for greater project ownership and capacity building (TE, pg 12). At the same time, TE notes that project was regularly supervised by the Bank 2x per year, and with a mid-term review in 2001. Lastly, TE faults Bank for not provided sufficient expertise in hydrology or financial management in the early years, with negative consequences for project quality (TE, pg 18).

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

Project execution was unsatisfactory in several regards. As noted above, financial management and auditing remained a problem throughout the project, and the ability to monitor the project's progress and financial disbursements on a day-to day basis was never established. Reporting was infrequent and inadequate and this made it difficult to update work plans and fully utilize the grant funds (TE, pg 14). In the last year of project implementation, the PMCU refused to implement components A and D as part of its ongoing battles with the Bank and with EC-IFAS. As a result, "trained staff were demoralized and left and the Bank and POE technical advice on A-1 issues was ignored" (TE, pg 20).

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.

According to the TE, the project's restoration of Lake Sudoche was a big success, meeting its biodiversity and socio-economic targets. TE states that the local population is now able to use the restored area for fishing, hunting, and grazing. (TE, pg 11). TE states that while the objective of reducing water withdrawals for irrigation from the two rivers by 15% over the project period was not met, at the time of the TE, water withdrawals from irrigation have been reduced in the Syr Darya Basin (one of the two basins that comprise the Aral Sea Basin), primarily because of reductions in the area irrigated and increased releases of water for hydropower generation in the winter (TE, pg 2). It is unclear if any of this reduction is due to the project. As assessed in the TE, the goal of reduction water with withdrawals from the Aral Sea basin by 15% would have been impossible for the project to achieve by itself since this

would require substantial physical investments in rehabilitation of irrigation and drainage systems in addition to the efforts supported by the project (TE, pg 2).

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.

Restoration of the Lake Sudoche wetlands has allowed the local population to use the restored area for fishing, hunting and grazing, and these activities are the main sources of income for this community (TE, pg 17). In addition, the project is seen to have led to improvements in dam safety. Assessments were made at 10 dams that helped create awareness among governments about the urgency of dam safety, and led to several follow-up investments. According to the TE, safety of at least 9 dams has been improved, and rehabilitation of dams is also helping to improve overall water management in the basin as conflicts between upstream and downstream users are being addressed through changed management of water flows (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 – Capacity of local ministries in the five participating countries to monitor water quality and flow was enhanced through the project's procurement and installation of monitoring equipment and training in the usage of this equipment. However, TE states that systemic activities designed to strengthen national institutions were not included in the project, to the detriment of project sustainability and capacity building (TE, pg 12). In addition, EC-IFAS was actually weakened over the course of the project due to the decision to pull the PCMU out of the EC-IFAS. Several reports were prepared during the course of the project, including 2 regional reports, five national reports (one for each country), a joint regional and national report, a report on water losses and development strategies, and a report on the Action Plan. In addition a database and set of models were developed to improve analytical capacity in the region. TE states that these studies provided a few key messages that that "will be of great value in future water resource management programs in the region" (TE, pg 9).

b) Governance – Plans for addressing water and salt management issues in the Aral Sea basin were prepared although with limited dissemination to date. Discussions are ongoing, facilitated by EC-IFAS and with assistance from UNDP, on the results of these studies and action plans.

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 to have occurred as a result 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.

TE states that the restoration component provided a model for similar restoration efforts, and has led to additional investments by the Government of Uzbekistan in the Amu Darya delta (3 new projects are underway) (TE, pg 11).

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 provides the following lessons:

- Developing a detailed operational strategy among five countries is a daunting effort under any circumstance, but even more so when there are asymmetries in power, wealth and political systems. Therefore, it may be wasteful to spend substantial resources developing a detailed strategy in these situations.
- Multi-donor project are extremely difficult to implement. This is a lesion in particular for the GEF, where GEF policy places great emphasis on the need for substantial co-financing.
- Inadequate preparation of project components before appraisal adds greatly to the burden of project agency and Bank supervision staff during implementation.
- GEF support can have a catalytic role, as evidenced by the impressive number of parallel and spin-off projects generated from this project. Among these was a decision by Uzbekistan to expand wetlands restoration with its own funds, investments under the Bank-supported Uzbekistan Drainage, Irrigation and Wetlands Improvement project, and the Kazakhstan SYNAS projects.
- PMCU was given responsibility for implementing activities which would have been more appropriately implemented by country-level line agencies. Project components C, D, and E for example could have been implemented by the countries' Ministries of Agriculture/Environment or National Hydromet. This would have enhanced country ownership and resulted in strengthened national institutions, improving sustainability.

9.2 Briefly describe the recommendations given in the terminal evaluation.

TE provides no recommendations.

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?	Report does a moderately good job of assessing relevant outcomes, impacts, and achievement of objectives. One exception is on the development of a strategic action plan – one of the principle outputs. TE notes on pg 24 that plans were prepared, not all consistent with the regional plan. More detail is needed on this important output.	**MS**
To what extent is the report internally consistent, the evidence presented complete and convincing, and ratings well substantiated?	Ratings on sustainability appear too high given that several risks (which are discussed) are present. TE describes in the text that ratings on outcomes and bank supervision would have been higher if category existed.	**MS**
To what extent does the report properly assess project sustainability and/or project exit strategy?	TE does a good job of assessing project sustainability and project exit strategy, with discussion of key risks and parallel projects that may provide continuing assistance.	**S**
To what extent are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive?	Lessons appear to be supported by the evidence presented. TE notes that multi-donor projects are extremely difficult to implement, but TE does not describe in text why this is so (possibly due to difficult reporting requirements, conflicting priorities – none of which is discussed.)	**MS**
Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used?	TE notes that actual project costs are extremely difficult to arrive at due to faulty financial management. In light of this difficulty, TE reports on actual grant disbursements and co-financing.	**MS**
Assess the quality of the report's evaluation of project M&E systems:	Unsatisfactory. M&E system is barely discussed.	**U**
Overall TE Rating		**MS**

Overall TE rating = (0.3 * (4+4)) + (0.1 * (5+4+4+2)) = 2.4+1.5 = 3.9 = MS

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