GEF EO Terminal Evaluation Review Form

1. PROJECT DATA				
			Review date:	12/20/07
GEF Project ID:	770		at endorsement (Million US$)	at completion (Million US$)
IA/EA Project ID:	219	**GEF financing:**	6.96	6.96
Project Name:	Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA)	IA/EA own:	0.03	1.07
		Government:	0.75	2.73
		Other*:	13.14	9.37
Country:	Global	**Total Cofinancing**	13.97	13.17
Operational Program:	3	**Total Project Cost:**	20.93	20.13
IA:	UNEP	Dates		
Partners involved:	World Resources Institute in collaboration with UNEP,UNDP, WB, WRI, IUCN, FAO, UNESCO, ICSU	Work Program date	NA	
		CEO Endorsement	05/01/00	
		Effectiveness/ Prodoc Signature (i.e. date project began)	12/10/01	
		Closing Date	Proposed: 03/05	Actual: 9/31/2005
Prepared by: Ines Angulo	Reviewed by: Neeraj Negi	Duration between effectiveness date and original closing: 48 months	Duration between effectiveness date and actual closing: 54 months	Difference between original and actual closing: 6 months
Author of TE: Michael P. Wells David Grossman Hugo Navajas		TE completion date: 09/20/06	TE submission date to GEF OME: 12/15/06	Difference between TE completion and submission date: 3 months

* Other is referred to contributions mobilized for the project from other multilateral agencies, bilateral development cooperation agencies, NGOs, the private sector and beneficiaries.

2. SUMMARY OF PROJECT RATINGS				

Please refer to document "GEF Office of Evaluation Guidelines for the verification and review of terminal evaluations" for further definitions of the ratings.

	Last PIR	IA Terminal Evaluation	Other IA evaluations if applicable (e.g. IEG)	GEF EO
2.1 Project outcomes	S	MS	MS	MS
2.2 Project sustainability	**N/A**	MU	MU	MU
2.3 Monitoring and evaluation	HS	S	S	S
2.4 Quality of the evaluation report	**N/A**	**N/A**	HS	HS

Should this terminal evaluation report be considered a good practice? Why?
Yes. It presents a comprehensive assessment of the project achievements, implementation, and sustainability. Ratings are backed up by convincing evidence and the TE provides an insightful analysis of a complex global project such as this one.
Is there a follow up issue mentioned in the TE such as corruption, reallocation of GEF funds, etc.?
No.

3. PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND ACTUAL OUTCOMES				

3.1 Project Objectives

- **What were the Global Environmental Objectives of the project? Were there any changes during implementation?**

According to the Project Document, the Global Environmental Objective of the Millennium Ecosystem

Assessment (MA) is to improve the management of ecosystems and their contribution to human development. No changes during implementation.
• **What were the Development Objectives of the project? Were there any changes during implementation?** According to the Project Document , the Development Objectives were to: (1) help to bring the best available information and knowledge on ecosystem goods and services to bear on policy and management decisions, and (2) build capacity at all levels to undertake integrated ecosystem assessments and to act on their findings. No changes during implementation.
3.2 Outcomes and Impacts
• **What major project outcomes and impacts are described in the TE?** According to the TE, the project major achievements were: • The MA has produced a series of credible, authoritative and high quality reports, with a very considerable volume of material well packaged for different audiences at varying levels of complexity. • The MA emphasis on ecosystem services and their significance for human well-being is widely recognized as having made a major contribution to linking biodiversity conservation with poverty mitigation. • The MA Conceptual Framework is widely regarded as an innovative and excellent technical analysis that seems likely to have a significant impact on the direction and approach of future applied research, which in turn may lead to more effective ecosystem management decisions and policies. • The MA responded to and has successfully engaged the secretariats of the CBD and Ramsar. • The level of interest in carrying out sub-global assessments (SGAs) as well as the number of SGAs actually undertaken (34) far exceeded expectations. Many of these SGAs are still continuing. • The MA led to the emergence of a genuine global community for multi-scale ecosystem assessment that had not existed previously. • The Project's capacity building goals appear to have been largely met. • The MA and its implications are being discussed by various OECD government agencies and may be adopted in various forms. The MA also seems likely to have an impact on future GEF programming. • The MA Project was awarded the Zayed Prize for Environment in 2005, with the recognition that it was "one of the largest volunteer coordinated efforts in the history of international and interdisciplinary science".

4. GEF EVALUATION OFFICE ASSESSMENT
4.1.1 Outcomes (use a six point scale 6= HS to 1 = HU)
A Relevance   **Rating: S**
The project responded to requests for assessment information from the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD) and the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar) and is relevant to the GEF Operational Strategy and Operational Programmes 1, 2, 3 and 4.
B Effectiveness   **Rating: MS**
The TE assesses that some of the project objectives now appear overambitious and inconsistent with the time and resources available, although they may reflect the kinds of ambition that needs to be shown to attract funding. It concludes that the MA was effective in substantially achieving its expected outcomes. However, it also finds some weaknesses that affected the achievement of outcomes: • There is little evidence so far that the MA has had a significant direct impact on policy formulation and decision making, especially in developing countries. • The Project objectives call for the MA to be used in management and policy decisions, and anticipate the development of 'implementation strategies'. Problems with these objectives include: (i) policy and decision makers were not a part of the MA process; and (ii) the MA has not produced tools, models or methods that can readily be applied by practitioners in the field. • The lack of specific policy guidance in the MA has contributed to uncertainty on what should happen next and who is supposed to do what with the MA findings. • Adequate financial resources were not available for communications and outreach after the

assessment's major products were released starting in 2005.

- Few developing country SGAs were adequately funded. The quality of SGA products has been variable and most did not connect effectively with the global assessment. Relatively few of the SGAs engaged with local or national decision makers.
- The objectives, outcomes and initial expectations of the MA were probably too ambitious for a four-year project, even allowing for a six month extension.

C Efficiency (cost-effectiveness)	Rating: MS
The TE assesses that implementation and management were generally very cost-effective and that leveraging inputs from the global scientific community on voluntary basis contributed to project efficiency and the legitimacy / credibility of its outputs. On the other hand, international meetings absorbed considerable proportion of resources, and SGAs and publication and dissemination activities were under funded.	

4.1.2 Impacts

The TE concludes that it is too early to assess the impacts of the Project. Nevertheless it includes the results of the 'Millennium Ecosystem Assessment: Survey of Initial Impacts' by Walter Reid (March 2006)

- *Conventions*: The MA has had a significant impact on the CBD and Ramsar. A significant amount of MA information and material has been utilized in decisions and recommendations taken by both of these conventions. There has been less impact on the CCD.
- *Regional, National and Sub-national governments*: Among governments, the impact of the MA appears to be greatest in regions and countries where MA SGAs were conducted, including the Caribbean, South Africa, China, Sweden and Norway, although significant impacts are also noted in regions and countries that did not undertake SGAs such as the European Union, UK and France. At a national level, there is little evidence of impact among several other economically and politically influential countries, including the USA, India, Japan and Brazil.
- *Business*: The MA findings were well received by business journalists but the impact to date in the business sector has been relatively limited. The most significant impact of the MA within business and industry is the incorporation of the concept of ecosystem services in the environmental policy issued by Goldman Sachs in November 2005. The World Business Council for Sustainable Development is also working with companies on MA follow-up activities.
- *Donors*: The MA has had a notable impact on the multilateral (particularly GEF) and bilateral (particularly Scandinavian) donors and to a lesser extent on foundations.
- *NGOs*: The MA has had a notable impact on international conservation-oriented NGOs but much less impact on national NGOs. To date there is no evidence of any impact on NGOs focused on development, poverty reduction or health issues.
- *International Agencies*: All of the UN agencies involved in the MA process (UNEP, UNDP, FAO, WHO and UNESCO) have incorporated the MA findings and process into their activities. There appears to have been no impact at all within the Bretton Woods institutions.
- *Capacity Building*: The MA SGAs and the MA fellows program were the primary mechanisms established by the MA to build assessment capacity and these were generally successful. A handful of additional training and capacity building activities have been established by partners and by experts involved in the MA.
- *Education*: MA materials are being used extensively in university courses and curricula. There is less evidence of use at other levels of education.
- *Scientific research*: The MA is having a notable impact on research directions and priorities.

4.2 Likelihood of sustainability. Using the following sustainability criteria, include an assessment of **risks** to sustainability of project outcomes and impacts based on the information presented in the TE. Use a four point scale (4= no or negligible risk to 1= High risk)

A Financial resources	Rating: MU
Additional financial support is needed, whilst this could probably be mobilized, MA findings are unlikely to be transferred into policy processes and follow up actions without such support.	
B Socio political	Rating: MU
Working outside an inter-governmental process resulted in a significant lack of awareness or engagement by political actors in both developed and developing countries. Also, stakeholder ownership needs to be further built among key policy actors & MA findings made more 'useable' for these audiences.	
C Institutional framework and governance	Rating: MU
MA findings are viewed as having a high level of legitimacy in policy constituencies – but further initiatives are needed to effect change. Also the limited engagement of government stakeholders in the project's implementation and oversight has limited opportunities for institutional mainstreaming	
D Environmental	Rating: NA

Not applicable

4.3 Catalytic role

a. Production of a public good
Products include an excellent web site (www.millenniumassessment.org); publications on the MA Conceptual Framework and the findings of the working groups (i.e., Conditions and Trends, Scenarios, Responses and SGAs); a summary report for decision makers (Our Human Planet); and a series of synthesis reports for specific audiences (i.e., biodiversity, desertification, wetlands, the private sector and human wellbeing). Products have also included the production and dissemination of CDs, booklets, posters and a video. Additional documents are still being generated from the SGAs.
b. Demonstration
Not applicable
c. Replication
Not applicable
d. Scaling up
Not applicable

4.4 Assessment of the project's monitoring and evaluation system based on the information in the TE

A. M&E design at Entry	**Rating (six point scale): MS**
According to the Project document, monitoring of progress in execution of the project would be undertaken through UNEP and GEF requirements of quarterly and half-yearly reports on substantive and financial matters. A mid-term internal evaluation would be undertaken under the supervision of the MA Board to diagnose problems and suggest necessary corrections. It would evaluate the efficiency of project management including delivery of outputs and activities in terms of quality, quantity, and timeliness. The Board would receive the outcome of the evaluation and discuss any required remedial action, if necessary. Final desk evaluation of the project would be undertaken by UNEP according to UNEP approved Monitoring and Evaluation procedures.	
One of the project's advantages regarding M&E was that its governance structure and management arrangements drew from the experience of the IPCC among others, and enabled relatively smooth implementation of a very large and complex global initiative.	
Some indicators for project objectives are not verifiable (for example, one of them is "Rate of habitat conversion and watershed degradation is slowed"). On the other hand, the project logframe includes indicators for outcomes that are SMART (identifying targets and timelines).	

B. M&E plan Implementation	**Rating (six point scale): S**
Monitoring and evaluation was a challenging task given the MA's scale and complexity, yet was adequately addressed, contributing to the project's effective implementation. The mid-term evaluation was carried out as planned, with detailed responses prepared to each of the recommendations, all of which were considered by the MA Board.	
Attention was given to M&E through exhaustive reviews of assessment findings and draft reports; periodic meetings of the Executive, Budget and Oversight committees to discuss progress and adjust work plans, and the general interest of the core team in achieving quality. The reports of Executive Committee meetings convey detailed and in-depth discussions on implementation and delivery issues.	
The Board played also a major role in assuring quality control for the MA outputs, a very time-consuming but critically-important process.	
According to the TE, a shortcoming of the M&E system is that evidence of achievement of some goals (such as the use of MA findings in policy and management decisions on different scales) is not clear or easy to verify.	

C.1 Was sufficient funding provided for M&E in the budget included in the project document?
According to the Project Document, $40,000 was budgeted for project M&E activities.

C.2 Was sufficient and timely funding provided for M&E during project implementation?
There is no mention of lack of funding for M&E activities in the TE.

C.3 Can the project M&E system be considered a good practice?
The project objectives and goals were too ambitious and had few verifiable indicators, and therefore the TE concludes that it was a great challenge to evaluate their achievement.
But given the uniqueness, scale and complexity of this project, the M&E system set in place by the project was a great achievement in itself. The ability of the project to coordinate the scale of participation among scientists, research institutions, environmental organizations and development agencies was an indicator of capacity of the staff.
A clear example of the complexity of the project M&E is the system set in place to ensure the accuracy and scientific integrity of the MA's technical volumes. Each volume underwent two rounds of review by experts

and governments, coordinated by the Technical Support Units (TSUs), making up the distributed secretariat. Together with 44 governments and 9 affiliated scientific organizations, over 600 individual reviewers worldwide provided around 18,000 individual comments.

4.5 Lessons and Recommendations
Project lessons and recommendations as described in the TE

What lessons mentioned in the TE that can be considered a good practice or approaches to avoid and could have application for other GEF projects?
Any future MA assessments should strive to ensure that: 1. Broad consultations are conducted during the design phase. 2. Project objectives are consistent with the availability of time and resources. 3. Decision and policy makers are involved from an early stage if they are expected to act on the results. 4. If sub-global assessments are included, adequate resources and time should be budgeted for their design and implementation. 5. Activities best carried out in sequence should not be forced into parallel implementation by timing or resource constraints. 6. Honorariums should be provided for developing country participants if possible. 7. A capacity building program for junior scientists should be included. 8. Specific capacity building may be needed to engage government staff expected to ultimately implement approaches developed. 9. Government participation should go beyond environment ministries to involve key decision makers in national planning and finance as well as all sectors with an impact on ecosystem management. 10. Exceptionally able Project staff is essential. 11. Effective use is made of the global community of scientists that emerged as a result of the MA process.
List (or if detailed summarize) the recommendations given in the terminal evaluation
1. An MA communications and outreach effort that engages more effectively with decision and policy makers, especially in developing countries. 2. Using the MA findings to develop sets of operational tools and methods that can be adopted and applied by practitioners. 3. Training potential users of these tools and methods, and implementing case studies to demonstrate their value and broader applicability, especially in developing countries.

4.6 Quality of the evaluation report Provide a number rating 1-6 to each criteria based on: Highly Satisfactory = 6, Satisfactory = 5, Moderately Satisfactory = 4, Moderately Unsatisfactory = 3, Unsatisfactory = 2, and Highly Unsatisfactory = 1. Please refer to document "GEF Office of Evaluation Guidelines for the verification and review of terminal evaluations" for further definitions of the ratings.

4.6.1 Comments on the summary of project ratings and terminal evaluation findings from other sources such as GEF EO field visits, etc.
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4.6.2 Quality of terminal evaluation report	Ratings
A. Does the report contain an assessment of relevant outcomes and impacts of the project and the achievement of the objectives? Relevant outcomes were fully assessed and well substantiated. The additional Annex 4, documents the outcomes of the project very well.	HS
B. Is the report internally consistent, is the evidence complete/convincing and are the IA ratings substantiated? TE is consistent and evidence convincing and complete, presenting information on all project activities. Ratings are given and supported	HS
C. Does the report properly assess project sustainability and /or a project exit strategy? The TE presents a sound assessment of the sustainability of outcomes and impacts. It also describes several follow-up options for the project	HS
D. Are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive? Lessons were formulated. Recommendations were well supported by the evidence presented.	HS
E. Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used? Actual project costs and details of co-financing were presented.	S

F. Does the report present an assessment of project M&E systems? M&E issues were discussed and evaluated.	S

4.6.3 Assessment of processes affected attainment of project outcomes and sustainability.

Co-financing and Project Outcomes & Sustainability. 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, and if it did affect outcomes and sustainability then in what ways and through what causal linkage did it affect it?
According to the information presented in the TE, there is a negative difference of $800,000 between the levels of planned and actual co-financing. The TE does not provide any explanation for this but does mention that the SGAs and publication and dissemination activities were under funded.
Delays and Project Outcomes & Sustainability. If there were delays in project implementation and completion, then what were the reasons responsible for it? Did the delay affect the project's outcomes and/or sustainability, and if it did affect outcomes and sustainability then in what ways and through what causal linkage did it affect it?
There were delays in editing and clearing documents, partly because the review process was very meticulous. Additional time led to additional costs and delivery pressures. Activities that should have happened in sequence were instead implemented in parallel, somewhat reducing their combined value. Working groups and assessments were sometimes unable to build on each other's findings.   The SGAs did not feed into the findings of the global assessments and only a few SGAs had been completed when the global assessments were printed. Such 'disconnects' have probably lowered the project's effectiveness, but were an inevitable result of the relatively brief project time frame.

4.7 Is a technical assessment of the project impacts described in the TE recommended? Please place an "X" in the appropriate box and explain below.	**Yes:**	**No: x**
Explain: The current unavailability of working models that can readily be used by policymakers to analyze ecosystems services and their trade-offs with development policies and resource allocations constrains the MA's potential for influencing environmental trends on the ground. Unless significant progress can be catalyzed in this area, the main legacy of the MA may be to influence the direction of research, and not to "improve the management of ecosystems and their contribution to human development".		

4.8 Sources of information for the preparation of the TE review in addition to the TE (if any)

Project Document, PIR 2005