

GEF EO Terminal Evaluation Review Form

1. PROJECT DATA					
				Review date:	Nov, 01, 2006
GEF Project ID:	791		at endorsement (Million US\$)	at completion (Million US\$)	
IA/EA Project ID:	UNEP 225	GEF financing:	3.923	3.93	
Project Name:	Formulation of strategic action programme for the integrated Management of the San Juan River Basin and its Coastal Zone	IA/EA own:	0.175	0.22	
Country:	Regional	Government:	0.985	0.642	
		Other*:	0.275	0.375	
		Total Cofinancing	1.435	1.237	
Operational Program:	8	Total Project Cost:	5.364	5.167	
IA	UNEP	Dates			
Partners involved:	GS/OAS, MARENA, MINAE	Work Program date		05/01/2000	
		CEO Endorsement		12/18/2000	
		Effectiveness/ Prodoc Signature (i.e. date project began)		January, 2001 ¹	
		Closing Date	Proposed: Jan, 2004	Actual: Dec, 2005 ²	
Prepared by: André Aquino	Reviewed by: Antonio del Monaco and Aaron Zazueta	Duration between effectiveness date and original closing: 3 years	Duration between effectiveness date and actual closing: 4 years and 11 months	Difference between original and actual closing: 1 year and 11 months	
Author of TE: Manuel Paulet-Iturri		TE completion date: Sep, 2005	TE submission date to GEF OME: 12/14/2005	Difference between TE completion and submission date: 3 months ³	

* 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

GEF EO Ratings for project impacts (if applicable), outcomes, project monitoring and evaluation, and quality of the terminal evaluation: Highly Satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S), Moderately Satisfactory (MS), Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), Unsatisfactory (U), Highly Unsatisfactory (HU), not applicable (N/A) and unable to assess (U/A). GEF EO Ratings for the project sustainability: Highly likely (HL), likely (L), moderately likely (ML), moderately unlikely (MU), unlikely (U), highly unlikely (HU), not applicable (N/A), and unable to assess (U/A). Please refer to document "Ratings for the achievement of objectives, sustainability of outcomes and impacts, quality of terminal evaluation reports and project M&E systems" for further definitions of the ratings.

	Last PIR (2005)	IA Terminal Evaluation ⁴	Other IA evaluations (UNEP EOU)	GEF EO

¹ From TE, pg. 3.

² From PIR 2005.

³ It should be noted that the report was written in Sep., 2005, but the field visit occurred in October, 2004!

⁴ Based on a 5-point scale (1=Excellent, 2=Very good, 3=Good, 4=Satisfactory and 5=Unsatisfactory).

2.1 Project outcomes	S	Satisfactory (4)	U/A	MU
2.2 Project sustainability	N/A	Satisfactory (4)	U/A	MU
2.3 Monitoring and evaluation	U/A	Good (3)	U/A	U/A
2.4 Quality of the evaluation report	N/A	N/A	MS	MS

Should this terminal evaluation report be considered a good practice? No.

Why? The information is not well presented. Outcomes and issues about sustainability are presented throughout the report, but not consolidated. M&E in the project is not addressed at all. The TE did not discuss the relevance of the project for the GEF IW Focal Area program strategy.

Is there a follow up issue mentioned in the TE such as corruption, reallocation of GEF funds, etc.?

It would be interesting to check whether the SAP has been accomplished and to assess its quality (which the present TE did not do since the SAP was not ready by the time it was prepared).

3. PROJECT OBJECTIVES, EXPECTED AND ACTUAL OUTCOMES

3.1 Project Objectives

- **What are the Global Environmental Objectives? Any changes during implementation?**

The purpose of this project is the formulation of a **Strategic Action Program for the Integrated Management of Water Resources and the Sustainable Development of the San Juan River Basin and its Coastal Zone**. The ultimate objective of the SAP is to ensure the availability of the goods and services provided by water resources for conserving natural ecosystems and social and economic development in order to satisfy present and future demands as agreed by all parties involved. The objective was not changed during implementation.

- **What are the Development Objectives? Any changes during implementation?**

Key results will include:

- Improved environmental functioning of SJRB through preservation and protection of the river system and its coastal zone, by implementation of strategic activities addressing the root causes of the current degradation;
- Improved individual capacities for economically sustainable development, and environmental protection, conservation and management through sustainable economic development in SJRB;
- Improved public awareness, stakeholder participation, and organizational development
- Reduced conflict over transboundary waters.

3.2 Outcomes and Impacts

- **What were the major project outcomes and impacts as described in the TE?**

- The main outcome, the Strategic Action Program for the Basin, had not been achieved by the time the TE was written. The draft SAP presented in September 2004 was extensive and descriptive but did not clearly indicate of future projects that could be implemented. The SAP was expected to be completed by early 2005.
- *Basic studies* have been carried out assessing water quality and water flows in the river and sedimentation in the lake. Activities to determine the plume of sedimentation in the coastal area; to get information for the sustainable management of critic aquatic habitats and to study the coastal and marine resources of the Tortuguero Conservation Area and Indio-Maíz Reserve were successful in terms of binational cooperation among scientific and other institutions.
- Good coordination has been achieved between institutions in Costa Rica and Nicaragua, which is an important step for cooperation between countries that have historical conflicts of national interest in transboundary basin management. The Steering Committee has had

representation of the Ministry of Environment and Foreign Affairs of both countries. According to the TE, they have committed themselves to “ensure the adequate integration of PROCUENCA-SAN JUAN to the policies of relations between the two countries; and to advance in a sustainable manner towards the formulation of a proposal for the binational management of the SJRB”.

- Stakeholder involvement and public participation of poor community resulted in positive experiences. The TE mentions the protection of the banks of the Sarapiquí River, as a successful experience, even further information about the outcomes of the intervention is not given. However, the participation of the private sector and large landowners should have been envisaged in the design of the project.

4. GEF OFFICE OF M&E ASSESSMENT

4.1 Outcomes

A Relevance

Rating: MS

- **In retrospect, were the project’s outcomes consistent with the focal areas/operational program strategies? Explain**

Many activities dealt directly with transboundary water issues, such as data collection about measurements of current and previous water flows in the river, sedimentation in the lake, the plume at the maritime outlet and critical aquatic habitats in both countries. However, there seems to have been a mixture of specifically national objectives (without global environmental benefits concerns) and GEF objectives. The overarching transboundary objective, the improved environmental functioning of SJRB through preservation and protection of the river system and its coastal zone, does not seem to have been satisfactorily achieved.

B Effectiveness

Rating: MU

- **Are the project outcomes as described in the TE commensurable with the expected outcomes (as described in the project document) and the problems the project was intended to address (i.e. original or modified project objectives)?**

Only to a certain degree. As mentioned in 3.2, the main outcome, the SAP, has not yet been achieved. As explored by the TE, limitations in outcomes could be noticed in each project component:

1- Basic Studies: Even though important information was produced, it was often based on previous records at stations that have now been discontinued, giving only an approximate idea of water flows and sediment loads. According to the TE, “many conclusions could be derived from a system of information that continuously reports the water balances in these bodies of water”. Moreover, additional information is still missing on hydrology, soils and land use and the locations and degrees of land deterioration by erosion.

2- Stakeholder involvement and public participation – Most community education and participation envisaged was achieved. However, private sector, which is largely responsible for soil and environmental degradation and the contamination of water sources, was not engaged, since the bulk of activities were targeted at the poor. Information on land use, tenure, and investment by sectors should have also been collected, since it directly influences activities for the sustainability of the project.

3- The formation of Basins Council has not been achieved. According to the TE, this is due to a misinterpretation of the prodoc by project coordinators, who believed the Basin Councils should be within the municipal councils.

C Efficiency (cost-effectiveness)

Rating: U

- **Include an assessment of outcomes and impacts in relation to inputs, costs, and implementation times based on the following questions: Was the project cost – effective? How does the cost-time Vs. outcomes compare to other similar projects? Was the project implementation delayed due to any bureaucratic, administrative or political problems and did that affect cost-effectiveness?**

According to the TE, implementation had several problems. Some activities started with a 12-month delay due to lack of experience of national and binational institutions in cooperating and to

IAS regulations about disbursements. The project has also received two extensions of one year. The structure for the administration and coordination of the project was also criticized due to its complexity. The TE suggests that the establishment of an office in San Jose (Costa Rica) may have been a mistake, since that city does not lie within the SJRB. Duplication of efforts in reporting was also detected. . The project Technical Units were not well staffed and equipped. The project coordination relied heavily on consultants, which, according to the TE, may have resulted in project coordinators' losing intimate familiarity with the variety of activities in the project.

The TDA prepared with PDF-B resources proved of little use for the project, since data collection was fraught with difficulties and eventually was abandoned.

More importantly is the fact that the main objective of the project, the establishment of Strategic Action Program for the Basin, had not been achieved by the time the TE was written and that the project has already be given two one-year extensions. These issues raise important concerns about the cost-effectiveness of the project.

Impacts

- **Has the project achieved impacts or is it likely that outcomes will lead to the expected impacts?**

Unable to assess, since the SAP has not been accomplished yet.

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.

A Financial resources	Rating: MU
According to the TE, the lack of the private sector and large landowners in the project seriously undermines the project's financial sustainability. The purpose of the 'stakeholder involvement' component was to <i>'develop economic mechanisms contributing to the sustainable management of natural resources'</i> . However, the project failed to demonstrate potential investor that it is in their own interest to participate in the sustainable development of their territory. Tourism should also have been explored more deeply, since it may be an important source of income for the project.	
B Socio political	Rating: ML
The project seems to have been able to achieve a certain degree of political sustainability in a conflict-laden area. The TE stated that "there is clear evidence that both countries have shown, on numerous occasions, their will for the continuation of these activities, to sign bi-national agreements and to connect them to national policies and other efforts (...)".	
C Institutional framework and governance	Rating: MU
It is not clear from the project's website whether the SAP was approved by the governments. The envisaged basin councils have not been formed, raising doubts as to the project's institutional framework sustainability.	
D Environmental	Rating: U/A

Provide only ratings for the sustainability of outcomes based on the information in the TE:

A Financial resources	Rating: MU
B Socio political	Rating: ML
C Institutional framework and governance	Rating: MU
D Environmental	Rating: U/A

4.3 Catalytic role

1. Production of a public good. Information assembled about the environmental situation of the basin and the main sources of stress. Establishment of an institutional framework for future binational initiatives.

2. Demonstration. Demonstration of river banks reforestation and productive activities of small farmers (including fish ponds, biogas, crops and fruits),

3. Replication – Not clear whether governments would replicate any of the experiences.

4. Scaling up - Not clear whether governments would scale up any of the experiences.

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

<p>A. In retrospection, was the M&E plan at entry practicable and sufficient? (Sufficient and practical indicators were identified, timely baseline, targets were created, effective use of data collection, analysis systems including studies and reports, and practical organization and logistics in terms of what, who, when for the M&E activities)</p>	Rating: U/A
<p>B. Did the project M&E system operate throughout the project? How was M&E information used during the project? Did it allow for tracking of progress towards projects objectives? Did the project provide proper training for parties responsible for M&E activities to ensure data will continue to be collected and used after project closure?</p>	Rating: U/A
<p>C. Was M&E sufficiently budgeted and was it properly funded during implementation?</p>	Rating: U/A
<p>Can the project M&E system be considered a good practice? U/A</p>	

4.5 Lessons

Project lessons as described in the TE

<p>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?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstration projects have to include the whole range of stakeholders, including the large landowners and the private sector, which are a major source of environmental stress. Even through targeting activities at the poor is important for many reasons, it may not address the main sources of environmental stress.

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 the "Criteria for the assessment of the quality of terminal evaluation reports" in the document "Ratings for the achievement of objectives, sustainability of outcomes and impacts, quality of terminal evaluation reports and project M&E systems" for further definitions of the ratings.

<p>4.6.1 Comments on the summary of project ratings and terminal evaluation findings</p>
<p>In some cases the GEF Evaluation Office may have independent information collected for example, through a field visit or independent evaluators working for the Office. If additional relevant independent information has been collected that affect the ratings of this project, included in this section. This can include information that may affect the assessment and ratings of sustainability, outcomes, project M&E systems, etc.</p>
<p>N/A</p>

4.6.2 Quality of terminal evaluation report	Ratings GEF EO	Ratings UNEP
<p>A. Does the report contain an assessment of relevant outcomes and impacts of the project and the achievement of the objectives?</p> <p>The report presents a throughout annex realistically assessing all project components and expected outcomes. In the main report, an assessment of each component is presented. The TE should have explored more the relation between outputs and environmental outcomes.</p>	S	S
<p>B. Is the report internally consistent, is the evidence</p>	S	MS

<p>complete/convincing and are the IA ratings substantiated?</p> <p>The project is analytical, insightful and most ratings are well substantiated. It gives a good account of implementation problems and provides important recommendations. However, it is very badly organized. Outcomes and issues about sustainability are presented throughout the report, but not consolidated. Sometimes it is not clear whether the TE is assessing what has actually been observed or prescribing what the author thinks should have happened (as when he criticizes the 'useful but limited' outcomes of the education and training component by indicating how conservation programs ought to be implemented).</p>		
<p>C. Does the report properly assess project sustainability and /or a project exit strategy?</p> <p>The project discussed financial, political and institutional sustainability, even though the issue is not consolidated in a section. It should have been more explicit about environmental sustainability.</p>	MS	MU
<p>D. Are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive?</p> <p>Lessons learned were not written by the TE author, but rather extracted from the draft of the SAP of 2004. They are not lessons learned but a confusing mix of causes for project delays and recommendations of future actions.</p>	U	MU
<p>E. Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used?</p> <p>Yes, the project includes a table with planned and actual costs, and the sources of the co-financing. However, project costs are not presented per activity.</p>	MS	S
<p>F. Does the report present an assessment of project M&E systems?</p> <p>M&E is not addressed, but in a single paragraph in the annex without further evidence of the rating given by the TE.</p>	HU	HU

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: X	No:
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Explain: After the SAP is accomplished, it will be interesting to see whether activities are implemented and their environmental impact as part of IW projects in Latin America.

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

- 1- Terminal Evaluation Of The Project: "Formulation Of A Strategic Action Programme For The Integrated Management Of Water Resources And The Sustainable Development Of The San Juan River Basin And Its Coastal Zone";
- 2-UNEP EOU Quality Assessment of the San Juan Terminal Evaluation Report;
- 3- PIR 2005 for the San Juan Project;
- 4- San Juan Project Document.
- 5- <http://www.oas.org/sanjuan/english/implementation/structure/unep.html>