

### GEF EO Terminal Evaluation Review Form

1. PROJECT DATA				
GEF Project ID: 794		Review date:		09/13/2006
IA/EA Project ID: 217		at endorsement (Million US\$)		at completion (Million US\$)
Project Name: Catalyzing Conservation Action in Latin America: Identifying priority sites and best management alternatives in five globally significant ecoregions		GEF financing:	0.750000	0.750000
Country: LAC (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Panamá, Paraguay, Perú)		IA/EA own:	-	-
Operational Program: 1, 3		Government:	-	-
		Other*:	0.680000	0.698489
		<b>Total Co financing</b>	0.680000	0.698459
		<b>Total Project Cost:</b>	1.430000	1.448459
IA	UNEP	<u>Dates</u>		
Partners involved:	Administration: The Nature Conservancy (TNC) Execution: the Conservation Data Centers (CDC) in all 6 participating countries	Work Program date		03/2000
		CEO Endorsement		03/29/2000
		Effectiveness/ Prodoc Signature (i.e. date project began)		09/2000
		Closing Date	Proposed: <b>09/2003</b>	Actual: <b>09/2003</b>
Prepared by: Ines Angulo	Reviewed by: Antonio del Monaco	Duration between effectiveness date and original closing: <b>36 months</b>	Duration between effectiveness date and actual closing: <b>36 months</b>	Difference between original and actual closing: <b>0 months</b>
Author of TE:	Fabian Rodriguez	TE completion date: <b>02/2005</b>	TE submission date to GEF OME: <b>12/14/2005</b>	Difference between TE completion and submission date: <b>10 months</b>

\* 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	IA Terminal	Other IA	GEF EO
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		Evaluation	evaluations if applicable (e.g. IEG) <sup>1</sup>	
2.1 Project outcomes	<b>HS</b>	<b>S</b>	-	<b>MS</b>
2.2 Project sustainability	<b>N/A</b>	<b>S</b>	-	<b>U</b>
2.3 Monitoring and evaluation	-	<b>S</b>	-	<b>U/A</b>
2.4 Quality of the evaluation report	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>MU</b>

**Should this terminal evaluation report be considered a good practice? Why?**

No. The TE did not present enough evidence to support some of its ratings and lacked a thorough assessment of the financial and M&E components of the project. Also, as is acknowledged in the evaluation, it did not directly involve targeted stakeholder groups such as local government representatives, NGOs or community groups, and was conducted as a desk review with interviews to project staff only.

The Evaluator's TOR is included twice (as Annex 1 and again as Annex V).

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

No.

**3. PROJECT OBJECTIVES, EXPECTED AND ACTUAL OUTCOMES**

**3.1 Project Objectives**

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

According to the TE, the overall objective was to “catalyze science-based decision-making and conservation action on landscape management alternatives in the important ecoregions, particularly in the development and implementation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAP)”.

The project brief mentions the same objective.

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

The primary objectives of the project are to:

- 1) scientifically analyze and identify priority sites with globally significant biodiversity in the five ecoregions (Chocó/Darien tropical forest, Eastern Andes Cordillera Real mountain forest, Peruvian and Bolivian Yungas, and Chaco Savannas);
- 2) develop and recommend a set of conservation management alternatives and protection strategies for the identified sites to the project stakeholders;
- 3) Catalyze the adoption of strategies to protect and conserve the globally significant biodiversity of the identified sites in the five ecoregions.

The same objectives are described in the project brief.

According to the last PIR (2003) the project objectives were (1) Identify geographic conservation needs in 5 priority one ecoregions (involving 6 countries) in Latin America and (2) Help governments and stake-holders to implement conservation action by providing a set of best management alternatives of the selected sites to decision-makers and stake holders.

**3.2 Outcomes and Impacts**

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

1. Identification of priority unprotected sites: After compilation and analysis of vast quantities

<sup>1</sup> UNEP EOU Quality assessment of the project Terminal Evaluation

<p>of data five sites were selected including the enclave of xerophytic vegetation of Dagua in Colombian Chocó; the Shuar zone of Tsurakú in the Eastern Slopes of the Andes of Ecuador; the high Huallaga spurs in the Peruvian Yungas; the Irupana zone in the Bolivian Yungas and the Chaco Dunes in the Dry Chaco.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Identification of plans for conservation management alternatives: management alternatives were designed for every priority site and divided in general strategies and specific initiatives for each critical site of conservation.</li> <li>3. Increased capacity of the CDCs to catalyze conservation actions at national level: CDCs have been strengthened from both the technical and institutional viewpoint (enhanced regional cooperation, networking information exchange on the use of spatial technologies, protocols, common methodologies, etc.) The CDC Network is the only one of its kind in Latin America committed to the distribution of scientifically based information for conservation purposes on aspects such as social issues, legal parameters, and biological and geographic data, among others.</li> <li>4. Building NGO support for science-based decision making and promoting application of project outputs: TNC, WWF, and NatureServe have used project's methodology and information in some of their projects.</li> </ol>
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#### 4. GEF EO ASSESSMENT

<b>4.1 Outcomes</b>	
<b>A Relevance</b>	<b>Rating: S</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>In retrospect, were the project's outcomes consistent with the focal areas/operational program strategies? Explain</b></li> </ul>	
<p>According to the Project brief, the project encompasses biodiversity OP 1, 2, 3 and 4, but has a primary focus on OP1 (arid and semi-arid zone ecosystems).  The project was extremely successful in developing scientific and technical geographic and biological analysis; information that is essential to supporting the policy-making process. This is of high relevance because present lack of detailed biodiversity information can result in attempts to protect critical habitats that are ineffective, fragmented and poorly planned and managed. In addition, the project introduced an innovative methodology for ecosystem analysis.</p>	
<b>B Effectiveness</b>	<b>Rating: MS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>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)?</b></li> </ul>	
<p>The project was very successful at producing the necessary information needed to analyze and identify the conservation priority areas, and in substantially improving the capacities of participating CDCs.  Conservation management alternatives and protection strategies were identified for all priority sites, but not enough information is provided in the TE to assess the level of achievement of this outcome (which were the strategies identified, how were the stakeholders involved in the process, possibilities of implementing these strategies, etc).  The TE concludes that the dissemination of project information to stakeholders was merely informative, and as a result limited support has been achieved from mainstream governmental institutions, as well as little use of project's findings in policy-making.</p>	
<b>C Efficiency (cost-effectiveness)</b>	<b>Rating: MU</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>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?</b></li> </ul>	
<p>According to the TE, the amount of data and information produced by this project was enormous, and the methodology used to identify priority unprotected sites was cheap, fast and allowed for near real-time detection of new threats to habitats.  But the TE also identifies some failings: UNEP/GEF took longer than expected to transfer the first allotment and this delayed some of the activities. The regional and local participants did not get</p>	

the opportunity to discuss and design their plan of activities at the beginning of the project and as a result each CDC followed their own administrative plan. This had a negative effect on the overall administrative performance. Similarly, during project design, the multi-country nature of the project was not fully taken into account and insufficient funds were allocated to travel expenses for the project coordinator and technical coordinator. Dissemination was not considered an important part of the project in the design and as a result was not prioritized in the budget so that at the end of the project there were insufficient funds to disseminate all the results and outputs. Partners did not only provide in-kind matching funds, but also had to invest additional money, which was not part of the initial agreement between TNC and CDCs.

<b>Impacts</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Has the project achieved impacts or is it likely that outcomes will lead to the expected impacts?</b> According to the TE, overall, the project failed to have a clear impact on a national level, but its innovative eco-regional approach and methodology are now being used by international NGOs (TNC and WWF) to plan their conservation activities.</li> </ul>

**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.

<b>A Financial resources</b>	<b>Rating: ML</b>
A follow-up project to analyze the viability and sustainability of the projects to be implemented in the selected areas has been funded by the IADB, and all CDCs were able to apply and receive funding from other international environmental institutions to continue with their conservation activities.	
<b>B Socio political</b>	<b>Rating: U</b>
The project was not able to build government support for science-based decision making and promoting application of project outputs (with the exception of Paraguay). The TE also mentions that, in general, there was a lack of endorsement and sense of ownership among national institutions such as local NGOs, regional and national agencies and institutions.	
<b>C Institutional framework and governance</b>	<b>Rating: MU</b>
Although capacity of all CDCs was improved, the policy management component to engage government officers was not prioritized and as a result it is not certain if/how the vast information produced will be used in the process of designing policies to improve current conservation practices.	
<b>D Environmental</b>	<b>Rating: UA</b>
The TE does not provide information on this criteria.	

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

<b>A Financial resources</b>	<b>Rating: L</b>
<b>B Socio political</b>	<b>Rating: MU</b>
<b>C Institutional framework and governance</b>	<b>Rating: L</b>
<b>D Environmental</b>	<b>Rating: N/A</b>
Overall Rating on Sustainability as calculated by the old methodology: <b>ML</b>	

**4.3 Catalytic role**

<b>1. Production of a public good</b> All data produced by the project is available through an internet site managed by NatureServe.
<b>2. Demonstration</b>
<b>3. Replication</b> TNC is currently using the information gathered in this project for its eco-regional conservation plans. WWF and NatureServe are implementing projects that incorporate the information

gathered through this project in Colombia.

#### **4. Scaling up**

Findings and information produced by the project was used by the government of Paraguay to declare the Chaco Dunes as a national park despite the presence of gas reserves underground. The Regional Government of San Martin in Peru used the maps and management plans produced by the project to establish a regional reserve at the site of Alto Huallaga.

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

**A. In retrospect, 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)**  
Rating: U/A

Not enough data is presented to make this assessment.

**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?**  
Rating: U/A

The TE mentions that the project was regularly monitored through UNEP/GEF Biannual Progress Reports but that there were some concerns regarding the delay of feedback and follow-up on the reporting. It also states that the suggestions and changes identified in the reports were adopted but provides no examples for this.

**C. Was M&E sufficiently budgeted and was it properly funded during implementation?**  
Rating: U/A

U/A

**Can the project M&E system be considered a good practice?**

Unable to assess.

#### **4.5 Lessons**

Project lessons 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?**

- Dissemination is a very important part of a project, and most of the project's shortcomings came from its inability to reach a wider audience. In this case, limited government participation and ownership are a result of limited dissemination funds.

**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.

#### **4.6.1 Comments on the summary of project ratings and terminal evaluation findings**

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.

No additional information was available to the reviewer.

4.6.2 Quality of terminal evaluation report	Ratings
<p><b>A. Does the report contain an assessment of relevant outcomes and impacts of the project and the achievement of the objectives?</b> The TE fails to give a comprehensive assessment of all the project outcomes, especially regarding differences between countries/priority areas (what worked in what country, what didn't and why).</p>	MU
<p><b>B. Is the report internally consistent, is the evidence complete/convincing and are the IA ratings substantiated?</b> In general the TE is consistent, but sometimes it does not include enough evidence to support some of its findings. For example, it describes the project as being highly participatory, but it does not provide information to identify which stakeholders were involved in project design and implementation. It rates the project as "very good" in the category of stakeholder participation while at the same time describes the lack of country ownership. Also, cost effectiveness is rated as excellent even though the TE concludes that there were not enough funds available to achieve all the project outcomes.</p>	MU
<p><b>C. Does the report properly assess project sustainability and /or a project exit strategy?</b> The assessment of sustainability covers financial, social and institutional categories but is not discussed in sufficient detail.</p>	MS
<p><b>D. Are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive?</b> Lessons, conclusions and recommendations were not always properly categorized. Lessons in particular were very vague and of little use.</p>	MU
<p><b>E. Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used?</b> No. There is no information on project costs per activity. The only assessment provided in the TE is that "all financial resources were allocated properly in order to achieve major project's goal and objective"</p>	U
<p><b>F. Does the report present an assessment of project M&amp;E systems?</b> The assessment of M&amp;E provides no detail. It is ranked as "very good", but no supporting evidence is included.</p>	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: It is recommended to do a follow-up assessment on the implementation of projects in the identified priority conservation areas that are currently in progress.

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

Project brief, PIR 2003, UNEP EOU Quality Assessment of TE