

Terminal Evaluation Review form, GEF Evaluation Office, APR 2015

1. Project Data

Summary project data			
GEF project ID		795	
GEF Agency project ID		766	
GEF Replenishment Phase		GEF-2	
Lead GEF Agency (include all for joint projects)		UNDP	
Project name		Biodiversity conservation and sustainable natural resource management in Algeria	
Country/Countries		Algeria	
Region		Africa	
Focal area		Biodiversity	
Operational Program or Strategic Priorities/Objectives		BD1- Catalyzing Sustainability of Protected Area OP-1: Arid and semi-arid zone ecosystems	
Executing agencies involved		National Committee of Algerian NGOs members of the International Network of NGOs for the fight against desertification (CNOA-RIOD).	
NGOs/CBOs involvement		Network of NGOs acted as executing agency.	
Private sector involvement		NA	
CEO Endorsement (FSP) /Approval date (MSP)		February 16, 2000	
Effectiveness date / project start		December 2002	
Expected date of project completion (at start)		December 2004	
Actual date of project completion		December 2007	
Project Financing			
		At Endorsement (US \$M)	At Completion (US \$M)
Project Preparation Grant	GEF funding	0.025	0.025
	Co-financing	0.010	NA
GEF Project Grant		0.725	0.725
Co-financing	IA own	0	0
	Government	1.005	1.005
	Other multi- /bi-laterals	0.158	0
	Private sector	0	0
	NGOs/CSOs	0.200	0.210
Total GEF funding		0.75	0.750
Total Co-financing		1.373	1.215
Total project funding (GEF grant(s) + co-financing)		2.123	1.965
Terminal evaluation/review information			
TE completion date		December 2014	
Author of TE		Eric Gardette	
TER completion date		March 25, 2016	
TER prepared by		Caroline Laroche	
TER peer review by (if GEF EO review)		Molly Watts	

2. Summary of Project Ratings

Criteria	Final PIR	IA Terminal Evaluation	IA Evaluation Office Review	GEF EO Review
Project Outcomes	HS	S	--	MS
Sustainability of Outcomes	NR	NR	--	UA
M&E Design	NR	NR	--	MS
M&E Implementation	NR	NR	--	UA
Quality of Implementation	NR	NR	--	UA
Quality of Execution	NR	NR	--	S
Quality of the Terminal Evaluation Report	--	--	--	MS

3. Project Objectives

3.1 Global Environmental Objectives of the project:

The environmental goal of this project is “to conserve and sustainably use globally significant biodiversity and to fight against land degradation in three priority areas in the arid and semi-arid zone ecosystems of Algeria” (PD p.5).

The three project sites (Taghit-wilaya of Béchar, Mergueb-wilaya of M'sila, and Oglat Ed Daïra-wilaya of Naâma) were established as conservation areas by the Government of Algeria in the 1980s. However, the resources allocated to the sites were not sufficient to meet all conservation and management needs, and staff members and local actors do not have sufficient capacity and experience in biodiversity conservation.

This project proposes to “address the capacity of the local stakeholders in each site, including grassroots community associations, local communities, local authorities and the protected areas staff” (PD p.5).

3.2 Development Objectives of the project:

More specifically, the project objectives are (1) biodiversity conservation in three natural reserves (Taghit , Mergueb and Oglat Ed Daira) in Algeria, and (2) sustainable use of biodiversity and natural resource management in the buffer zone of the three reserves. In order to meet these objectives, the project planned to work towards the following five outcomes:

1. Management plans for the three reserves updated in line with biodiversity conservation.
2. Legal protection measures for the reserve of Oglat Ed Daira are implemented.
3. Environmentally conscious local populations.
4. Capacity of NGOs RIOD and concerned local institutions improved to assist in nature reserve management
5. Biodiversity resources are used sustainably and natural resource base protected.

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

There were no changes in project objectives or planned activities during implementation.

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
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The TE does not rate relevance. This TER rates relevance as satisfactory as the project is well aligned with the priorities of the government of Algeria, as well as with the GEF objectives related to biodiversity.

Indeed, the project is “based on the priority given by the government of Algeria to protect biodiversity in arid and semi-arid zone ecosystems as well as its commitment to promote the participation of the civil society through the associations emanating from it, in particular in the area of environmental protection. The project intervention sites are accorded national priority by the biodiversity strategy and action plan, which is under finalization by the GoA” (PD p.1). The government already provided about \$350,000 of funding to the three reserves; its commitment to sustainable resources management was also made clear from “its many programmes launched on environmental education, sustainable development, renewable energy technologies, poverty alleviation and in specific its programme for sustainable development of the Saharan regions. The latest is over \$ 2.5million government-funded project that covers to large extent oases rehabilitation and small food production farms in the west and south Algeria Sahara.” (PD p.9)

The project was also developed in conformity with the GEF biodiversity focal area, and in particular the Operational Program 1, dealing with arid and semi-arid zone ecosystems. It also has secondary relevance to the issue of land degradation. Project activities directly aim to conserve biodiversity in the three project areas and reduce improve land conditions.

4.2 Effectiveness	Rating: Moderately Satisfactory
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TE rates effectiveness as satisfactory. The TE rates effectiveness as moderately satisfactory due to most of the project targets having been met. Overall, while the project did meet several of its objectives, evidence is lacking for the realization of many project targets, and a few project objectives have not been met. For this reason, this TER rates effectiveness as moderately satisfactory. Achievements under each of the project's outcomes are discussed below.

Outcome 1: Management plans for the three reserves updated in line with biodiversity conservation.

During the project, several mechanisms were put in place to improve management at the three project sites. Management plans were completed for the three sites, and local coordinating committees were set up. Participatory workshops with local populations were held to ensure local buy-in. Project objectives for this outcome appear to have been met.

Outcome 2: Legal protection measures for the reserve of Oglat Ed Daira are implemented.

A study was conducted on this reserve, and its ecological importance was confirmed. The site is now classified as a humid zone of importance. The TE is unclear as to the extent to which objectives under this outcome were met.

Outcome 3: Environmentally conscious local populations.

Several awareness workshops with local communities were held at the three sites. 10,000 information bulletins, created with experts and local NGOs, were produced and disseminated. Information posters were designed, as well as an environmental education guide. The TE does not specify what percentage of the population was served by those awareness activities.

Outcome 4: Capacity of NGOs RIOD and concerned local institutions improved to assist in nature reserve management

Four workshops were held on the topics of desertification, biodiversity and participatory approaches. Those workshops were held with local NGOs. A network of national and local NGOs was created. A document and environmental education center were created, as well as a website. Project objectives under this outcome have been met.

Outcome 5: Biodiversity resources are used sustainably and natural resource base protected.

10 watering holes have been rehabilitated, as well as 50 hectares of degraded land. This is lower than the project objective of 150 hectares. A study was done on the potential for eco-tourism at the Daira and Taghit-Guir sites. The TE does not report on the number of families having benefited from the project.

4.3 Efficiency	Rating: Unable to Assess
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The TE does not rate efficiency, nor does it provide much information on this topic. The only information provided is that “work and activities were realized according to schedule and effectively spread between 2004 and 2005. Costs were in line with estimates made during the project design stage” (TE p.23). The PIRs do not provide any supplementary information on this topic.

4.4 Sustainability	Rating: Unable to Assess
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The TE does not rate sustainability, but discusses long-term risks to the project. As the TE fails to discuss financial risks, this TER is unable to assess sustainability.

Financial Risks – Unable to Assess

The TE, which was written seven years after the end of the project, does not report project activities having continued following project end. However, as the TE does not specifically report on financial risks, this TER is unable to make an assessment of financial sustainability.

Socio-Political Risks – Sustainability Likely

According to the TE (p.26), the population in the project districts wishes to maintain project operations so as to secure tourism-related jobs. The local population also appears keen to maintain project achievements. No risks related to the socio-political climate have been identified.

Institutional Risks – Sustainability Moderately Likely

According to the TE (p.26), some of the infrastructure built or restored during the project is likely to continue to be maintained following project completion. The capacity building activities done with local NGOs and communities will help maintain interest and project gains (TE p.33).

Environmental Risks – Sustainability Likely

No environmental risks to project outcomes were recorded.

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?

All expected co-financing came through. Co-financing came from the government, with some in-kind support from local communities. The TE does not describe the way in which co-financing contributed to project outcomes.

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?

A three-year project extension was necessary. According to the PIR "the project launching registered a delay in relation to the initial schedule" (PIR 2007 p.10). This does not fully explain the three-year delay, but no additional information was available to the TER.

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:

The government of Algeria supported the project and provided co-financing. It also supported project execution by acting as a coordinator for the National Committee of Algerian NGOs members of the International Network of NGOs for the fight against desertification (CNOA-RIOD).

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 Satisfactory
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The TE does not rate M&E design at entry. This TER rates it as moderately satisfactory, as the M&E plan is adequate for a project of this size, although it is lacking some important information, and because some of the evaluation indicators chosen are lacking specificity.

The project document (p.20) presents an M&E plan for the project. This plan features a description of basic M&E responsibilities, but fails to describe the M&E budget, a timeline of M&E activities, or a list of M&E activities to be undertaken.

The project matrix (PD p.30) presents a list of indicators at objective and outcome levels. Those objectives are verifiable and include means of verification. However, those indicators are sometimes too vague, for example the indicator “variety of support measures designed”, which is completely open to interpretation.

For those two reasons, M&E design is rated as moderately satisfactory.

6.2 M&E Implementation	Rating: Unable to Assess
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The TE does not rate M&E implementation, nor does it describe M&E activities that took place during project implementation. The documents provided as part of this TER include 3 PIRs, which is a sign that at least a few basic monitoring activities did take place during the project. The final TE was written 7 years after project completion. This was due to terrorist attacks in Algeria, which postponed end-of-project activities. Overall, this TER does not have sufficient evidence to assign a rating.

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: Unable to Assess
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The TE does not describe the UNDP’s performance as project implementer. The PIRs also fail to describe their role or contribution to the project. This TER cannot assess the quality of project implementation.

7.2 Quality of Project Execution	Rating: Satisfactory
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The TE does not rate project execution, but describes it in some length. On the basis of those descriptions, a satisfactory rating is assigned.

According to the TE, the project execution team kept records up to date, submitted activity reports and followed recruitment procedures. Procurement procedures were also respected. Overall, the TE gives the impression that the project's management was sound.

No additional information is provided on the way in which the executing agency managed the project's activities or dealt with implementation delays.

8. Assessment of Project Impacts

Note - In instances where information on any impact related topic is not provided in the terminal evaluations, the reviewer should indicate in the relevant sections below that this is indeed the case and identify the information gaps. When providing information on topics related to impact, please cite the page number of the terminal evaluation from where the information is sourced.

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.

The TE reports that 10 years after project start, some of the infrastructure developed (fences, etc.) have allowed for the vegetation to grow back and for an improvement in the water reserves for wildlife. (TE P.26)

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.

No socioeconomic change has been reported.

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 building was an important component, and one of the most successful ones, as part of this project. In particular, local NGOs benefited from several capacity-building activities.

Workshops were held on the topics of participatory methods, desertification, land degradation and project management. The new skills and knowledge they gained will certainly contribute to the continuation of their work at the project sites and to the continuation of project benefits. (TE p.27)

b) Governance

No change in governance was reported.

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 recorded.

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.

This project has not yet been scaled up, nor is there any evidence that it was replicated.

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 presents very detailed lessons on several topics, which are summarized below.

1. Setting up management plans at the three project sites (TE p.27)

The management structure chosen to manage the three project sites was successful, and it was useful to involve the local population by hosting participatory workshops. The project's success is due to its participatory nature.

2. Defining the concept of 'ecological viability' (TE p.28)

The use of the concept of 'ecological viability' was useful and should be used as part of other conservation projects in Algeria. Analyzing 'ecological viability' allowed to define specific conservation objectives and thereby better target the measures to adopt to ensure conservation.

3. Legal protection measures (TE p.31)

In 2004, legal measures were established to protect the three project sites. The arrangements in each of the three sites are different, but all three measures stipulate that agriculture, herding, hunting, logging, and any other kind of habitat-altering activities are prohibited within the protected sites.

4. Raising awareness in local populations (TE p.32)

Several tools and activities were put in place to better raise awareness in local populations. Seven awareness workshops were organized to ensure local population's buy-in to the project. Information bulletins were produced, as well as an environmental education guide for kids. The project team is still trying to make this environmental guide part of the national curriculum.

5. Strengthening the capacity of local NGOs and organizations (TE p.33)

Only a few local NGOs are active in the area of environmental education. They benefited from training sessions and workshops done as part of this project.

6. Sustainable natural resources management (TE p.34)

The Mergueb natural reserve benefited from three project activities. First, a first was built around a 20 hectare area in Zimmerman. This was successful in restoring the vegetation. Second, surface waters were rehabilitated. This is still helping the local fauna find water more easily. Third, various pastoral improvements were done on a 50 hectare piece of land. Legumes were planted, which helped restore the soil.

9.2 Briefly describe the recommendations given in the terminal evaluation.

The TE presents a long list of recommendations for the project. Those are summarized below.

1. Recommendations related to governance and regulation

- Algeria should do a follow-up study on the state of the three project areas
- The local coordination committees should be revived
- The project management plans should be revised and re-implemented
- The concept of 'ecological viability' should be integrated to the national strategy and the National Action Plan on Biodiversity
- More financial resources should be granted to the local and national NGOs that work on conservation.

2. Recommendations for capacity-building workshops

- Awareness workshops should be held again in the three project sites.
- Workshops should be held on specific themes (desertification, biodiversity, etc) for NGOs and national experts.

- Multidisciplinary exchanges between researchers, students, experts, local population and NGOs should be held.

3. Recommendations for environmental education

- Educational materials should be more widely disseminated to students, local NGOs and local communities.
- The personnel and documentary resources of the environmental education center in Reghaia should rotate between the three project sites.
- More educational material, including videos, should be developed and shared online.

4. Recommendations for socio-economic development

- Eco-tourism should be developed on the three sites
- Local products should be better developed and marketed. This could include dates from the Taghit oasis, crafts, and medicinal plants.
- Work towards strengthening the livelihoods of the people living on the project sites.

5. Recommendations to protect biodiversity

- The concept of ‘ecological viability’ should be used in other conservation sites in Algeria.
- Successful project activities (restoring surface waters, etc) should be reproduced on other sites
- Key species should be monitored to better understand biodiversity trends and help restore populations.
- The Taghit-Guir oasis should be restored and better water management principles should be implemented.

(TE pp.40-42).

10. Quality of the Terminal Evaluation Report

A six point rating scale is used for each sub-criteria and overall rating of the terminal evaluation report (Highly Satisfactory to Highly Unsatisfactory)

Criteria	GEF EO comments	Rating
To what extent does the report contain an assessment of relevant outcomes and impacts of the project and the achievement of the objectives?	The report claims the relevant outcomes have been achieved but provides little supporting evidence to that effect. Higher-level impacts are discussed, without discussing clearly how project activities have contributed to those higher-level impacts.	MS
To what extent is the report internally consistent, the evidence presented complete and convincing, and ratings well substantiated?	The report does not provide any ratings, and several assessment topics are missing, including M&E and the performance of implementing and executing agencies.	U

To what extent does the report properly assess project sustainability and/or project exit strategy?	The report has a sustainability section, which provides information on some of the factors that will contribute to project sustainability going forward. However, nothing is said about the financial sustainability of the project, and no systematic assessment of sustainability risks is made.	MU
To what extent are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive?	The lessons learned and recommendations section of the report is very detailed and comprehensive. The section includes all the recommendations and lessons mentioned in other sections of the report.	HS
Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used?	Total final project costs are included, but costs per activity are not provided.	MU
Assess the quality of the report's evaluation of project M&E systems:	The report does not assess the project's M&E design and implementation.	HU
Overall TE Rating		MS

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

No additional sources were used in the preparation of this TER.