

GEF EO Terminal Evaluation Review Form for OPS4

1. PROJECT DATA				
		Review date:		October 9, 2008
GEF Project ID:	837		at endorsement (Million US\$)	at completion (Million US\$)
IA/EA Project ID:	PO53349	GEF financing:	\$10.62, plus \$0.51 in PDFs	\$10.8
Project Name:	CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF THE MESOAMERICAN BARRIER REEF SYSTEM (MBRS) PROJECT	IA/EA own:	\$0	UA
Country:	Regional – Central America	Government:	\$3.66	\$4.13
		Other*:	\$3.5	UA
		Total Cofinancing	\$7.16	\$4.15
Operational Program:		Total Project Cost:	\$17.78	\$14.95
IA	IBRD	<u>Dates</u>		
Partners involved:	WWF, Government of Canada, Oak Foundation, University of Miami	Effectiveness/ Prodoc Signature (i.e. date project began)		11/30/01
		Closing Date	Proposed: 6/30/06	Actual: 6/30/07
Prepared by:	Reviewed by:	Duration between effectiveness date and original closing (in months): 55	Duration between effectiveness date and actual closing (in months): 67	Difference between original and actual closing (in months): 12
Author of TE:		TE completion date:	TE submission date to GEF EO: April 2008	Difference between TE completion and submission date (in months): One month
		3/26/08		

* 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 AND KEY FINDINGS

Please refer to document GEF Office of Evaluation Guidelines for terminal evaluation reviews for further definitions of the ratings.

Performance Dimension	Last PIR	IA Terminal Evaluation	IA Evaluation Office evaluations or reviews	GEF EO
2.1a Project outcomes	S	S	S	S
2.1b Sustainability of Outcomes	N/A	Moderate	Significant risk	MU
2.1c Monitoring and evaluation	S	S	Not specified	S
2.1d Quality of implementation and Execution	N/A	N/A	N/A	S
2.1e Quality of the evaluation report	N/A	N/A	U	MS

2.2 Should the terminal evaluation report for this project be considered a good practice? Why?

No. The TE has a number of minor shortcomings. In some areas the body of the report lacks organization, and evidence is not always sufficiently presented to support conclusions. The TE also does not sufficiently assess the

project M&E system. The ICR also neglected to provide sufficient analysis of the efficiency of the project.

Overall, the ICR provided scant evidence on the achievement of ecological objectives and equally scant evidence on policy and institutional outcomes, as opposed to outputs (the adoption of the common policy framework, the drafting of management plans, the signing of the Tulum + 8 Declaration etc.). The ICR Review held an email exchange with the Task manager to supplement the ICR Review's failure to report on co-financing data. And the lessons did not seem to be based on the analysis in the ICR.”

2.3 Are there any evaluation findings that require follow-up, such as corruption, reallocation of GEF funds, mismanagement, etc.?

None noted.

3. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

3.1 Project Objectives

a. What were the Global Environmental Objectives of the project? Were there any changes during implementation?

According to the project document, “The global objective of the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef Project is to enhance protection of the ecologically unique and vulnerable marine ecosystems comprising the MBRS, by assisting the littoral states to strengthen and coordinate national policies, regulations and institutional arrangements for the conservation and sustainable use of this global public good.”

No revisions during implementation.

b. What were the Development Objectives of the project? Were there any changes during implementation? (describe and insert tick in appropriate box below, if yes at what level was the change approved (GEFSEC, IA or EA)?)

According to the project document, “The Project development objective is to assist the countries of Belize, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico to manage the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System (MBRS) as a shared, regional ecosystem, safeguard its biodiversity values and functional integrity, and create a framework for its sustainable use.”

No revisions during implementation.

Overall Environmental Objectives	Project Development Objectives	Project Components	Any other (specify)
			According to the TE, “Some adjustments were introduced after the Mid-term Review, in the Output Indicators in order to better account for the activities being supported by the project.”

If yes, tick applicable reasons for the change in objectives

Original objectives not sufficiently articulated	Exogenous conditions changed, causing a change in objectives	Project was restructured because original objectives were over ambitious	Project was restructured because of lack of progress	Any other (specify)
				To better account for the activities being supported by

				the project
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4. GEF EVALUATION OFFICE ASSESSMENT OF OUTCOMES AND SUSTAINABILITY

4.1.1 Outcomes (Relevance can receive either a satisfactory rating or a unsatisfactory rating. For effectiveness and cost efficiency a six point scale 6= HS to 1 = HU will be used)

a. Relevance (of outcomes to focal areas/operational program strategies and country priorities) Rating: S

The project objectives were highly relevant to environmental threats and country priorities. According to the TE, a threat and root cause analysis carried out in the mid-1990s identified multiple causes of environmental degradation to the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System, including “rapid and unregulated coastal development, overfishing, pollution from land-based sources, habitat loss, and climate change.”

In 1997, the leaders of the four countries (Belize, Mexico, Honduras, and Guatemala) pledged their commitment to protecting the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System in the Tulum Declaration, and a 15 year action plan was developed. The action plan was adopted in 1999 by all four ministers of Environment under the sponsorship of the Central American Commission on Environment and Development.

According to the TE, “The project enjoyed a high level of political support, and reflected the shared objectives of the four countries.”

It was also consistent with the Country Assistance Strategies for all four countries.

In addition, the project fit clearly within the GEF’s strategic priorities.

The project continues to be relevant for the environmental pressures facing the ecosystem. The TE also indicates that the baseline environmental monitoring carried out by the project was the first of its kind in the region, and has indicated “that human pressures on the reef are increasing, and climate change is having a significant impact on coral reefs throughout the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System region.”

A.1. What is the relevance of the project outcomes/results to:

(i) the national sustainable development agenda and development needs and challenges?

The project was highly relevant to the national sustainable development agendas of the countries involved. The project was responsive to the Tulum Declaration, which was agreed to and signed by each of the countries involved. The project outcomes also helped the countries meet objectives established under international frameworks such as the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Millennium Development Goals.

(ii) the national environmental framework, agenda and priorities?

The project had a high level of political support within each of the countries, which indicates that it was relevant to the national environmental agenda and priorities of each country. In addition, the project was relevant to the Country Assistance Strategies, developed in cooperation with the World Bank.

(iii) the achievement of the GEF strategies and mandate?

The project was relevant to the GEF’s strategies in the biodiversity focal area, particularly on the conservation of marine resources, as well as catalyzing the sustainability of protected areas.

(iv) the implementation of the global conventions the GEF supports (countries obligations and responsibilities towards the convention as well as the achievement of the conventions objectives)

The project outcomes were relevant to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

A2. Did the project promote of International (Regional and / or Global) Cooperation and Partnership¹

The project was a regional project, and thus inherently included promotion of regional cooperation and partnership. According to the TE, “The project would further seek to reduce fragmentation in the governance of the MBRS and promote regional integration by creating a platform for regional coordination, improving regional information systems

¹ Please consider for regional and global project only

for decision-making, and harmonizing policy frameworks across the four countries in line with principles of environmental and social sustainability.”

The project was implemented through a regional coordinating body, the Central American Commission on Environment and Development. The project was in some sense an implementation of the 1997 Tulum Declaration agreed to by the four countries.

b. Effectiveness

Rating: S

The TE indicates that the project was effective in achieving its objectives. According to the TE, “The project has been highly successful in achieving its Global Objective. It catalyzed international cooperation among Belize, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico and is widely regarded as a model for regional coordination and joint management of a transboundary resource.”

As described by the TE, “Strengthening the management of Marine Protected Areas has significantly improved the potential effectiveness of these tools for conservation. In many instances, the project turned Marine Protected Areas from marginally operating, well-intentioned efforts into functional Marine Protected Areas that were able to attract new funding.”

The TE identifies multiple key achievements of the project, including the establishment of monitoring programs and a Regional Environmental Information System. The project strengthened the management capacity of 16 Marine Protected Areas, and harmonized primary and secondary school curriculums in all four countries regarding the value of the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System.

The project component focused on developing the Synoptic Monitoring Program and the Regional Environmental Information System was effective in achieving its objectives. This component constituted approximately 1/3rd of the project budget at appraisal. Unfortunately, as discussed in the section on sustainability, it is unlikely that the achievements from this component will be sustained without further external investment.

There were some areas in which the project did not fully achieve its objectives, however. According to the TE, the project was “less successful in its attempts to manage tourism impacts, promote sustainable tourism development, or create alternative livelihoods for those engaged in unsustainable natural resource extraction, such as fisheries. In particular, it was felt that one of the shortcomings of the project was its inability to bring the tourism sector into strategic discussions and engagement in implementation of tourism-related activities and alternative livelihoods.”

The shortcomings in the tourism component of the project apparently related to the failure of anticipated institutional partnerships. According to the TE, “While less effort was put into the design of this subcomponent, it was always anticipated that capacity building in the tourism sector would come from a parallel investment project prepared as co-financing for the MBRS Project—Sustainable Coastal Tourism—in Honduras. Unfortunately, the Instituto Hondureño de Turismo, which was implementing the latter project, chose not to become involved in the regional tourism forum that was to bring stakeholders in the industry together, with the result that this component of the MBRS project had little technical support or institutional buy-in.”

The components of the project with shortcomings are primarily in Component 3, which constituted approximately 1/6th of the project’s budget at appraisal.

The TE also states that “The project also brought public awareness of the value of the reef to a much higher level throughout the region, from the elementary classroom to the highest levels of government” but the TE does not provide evaluative evidence to support this conclusion.

c. Efficiency (cost-effectiveness)

Rating: S

The TE considers the project to have been highly efficient given that “the project was able to catalyze additional investments by the countries and other partners in the region, to achieve substantial, concrete results in capacity building, policy reform, and collection of baseline data on the reef system.”

According to information presented in the TE, the project received \$4.13 million in co-financing, which was 112% of the level of co-financing anticipated at project appraisal.

The delays experienced by the project were relatively minor, and do not appear to have negatively impacted the achievement of project objectives.

d. To what extent did the project result in trade offs between environment and development priorities / issues (not to be rated)

The TE notes that there were some trade-offs between environment and development priorities, but does not specifically identify these trade-offs. Presumably, given the shortcoming in the tourism component of the project, it was in this area that there were some trade-offs. As stated by the TE, “The Heads of State of the four participating countries gave the project strong political support; however, this did not always filter down to the line ministries with jurisdiction over Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System resources. More often than not, economic interests in one ministry trumped efforts by another to protect valuable but threatened resources. This underscored the need in the future to include all relevant ministries in project implementation and as part of the Steering Group.”

4.1.2 Results / Impacts² (Describe Impacts) (please fill in annex 1 – results scoresheet and annex 2 – focal area impacts (against GEF Strategic Priority indicators, where appropriate and possible)

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= Likely (no or negligible risk); 3= Moderately Likely (low risk); 2= Moderately Unlikely (substantial risks) to 1= Unlikely (High risk)). The ratings should be given taking into account both the probability of a risk materializing and the anticipated magnitude of its effect on the continuance of project benefits.

a. Financial resources	Rating: MU
<p>The evidence presented by the TE indicates that there is great financial uncertainty about the future continuation of project activities. As described by the TE, “a second-phase project following on the heels of phase 1 was anticipated at the outset and is now in the early stages of preparation. However, a key determinant of whether the Project will move forward with GEF support is the identification of adequate co- financing. Donors often wish to leverage their resources and are reluctant to make a commitment until there is already evidence of strong financial support from one or more partners. Several partners have indicated their interest in supporting a second phase and have committed to raising funds if core funding is forthcoming.”</p> <p>The improved access to financial resources for Marine Protected Areas is notable. As described by the TE, “The capacity of Marine Protected Areas to raise funds [from self-generating mechanisms such as entrance fees, and from other sources such as the Mesoamerican Reef Fund] is far greater now than when the project started.”</p> <p>As discussed under technical sustainability, monitoring and data collection that feeds the Synoptic Monitoring Program and the Regional Environmental Information System are not likely to be sustained without further financial support in the form of an additional phase of the project.</p> <p>The TE states that additional financial support was currently being sought, and “while some commitments have been made...and pledges to raise funds have been obtained, a critical mass of core funding will need to be identified soon to secure the additional co-financing required.”</p>	
b. Socio-economic / political	Rating: ML
<p>There appears to be a high level of political support for the project, but it is not clear that this will translate to long-term political and socio-economic sustainability. As described by the TE, “The Heads of State of the four participating countries gave the project strong political support; however, this did not always filter down to the line ministries with jurisdiction over Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System resources. More often than not, economic interests in one ministry trumped efforts by another to protect valuable but threatened resources. This underscored the need in the future to include all relevant ministries in project implementation and as part of the Steering Group.”</p>	
c. Institutional framework and governance	Rating: L
<p>The project successfully contributed to regional policy frameworks, as well as contributed to the development of relevant national policies such as fishing regulations. The relevant evidence presented in the TE indicates that these</p>	

² Please consider direct and indirect global environmental results; any unexpected results; local development benefits (including results relevant to communities, gender issues, indigenous peoples, NGOs and CBOs)

policies will be sustained, and further developed in the future.	
d. Environmental	Rating: MU
The sustainability of the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System ecosystem has not been secured. According to evidence presented in the TE, there remain many threats to ecological sustainability, including tourism development. The strengthening of the marine protected areas has likely had some positive effect toward reducing environmental degradation, but because of the transboundary nature of the marine environment, activities undertaken outside of the marine protected areas, such as overfishing and sedimentation due to coastal development, can still have a negative impact on environmental quality within the marine protected areas.	
e. Technological	Rating: MU
The future sustainability of the technical contributions of the project is among the weakest areas of the project outcomes. According to the TE, “some outcomes will most likely not be sustained in the absence of continued external support. The Synoptic Monitoring Program (SMP) and the Regional Environmental Information System (REIS) do not currently have a dedicated source of funds to continue beyond phase 1. While the Governments of Belize and Mexico are committed to funding basic monitoring in the absence of external support, this is not the case in Guatemala and Honduras. A second phase project was regarded as essential to creating a market demand for data to be generated by the SMP.”	

4.3 Catalytic role³

a. INCENTIVES: To what extent have the project activities provide incentives (socio-economic / market based) to catalyze changes in stakeholders
The project attempted to develop alternative livelihoods to reduce pressure on marine resources. According to information presented in the TE, this objective was only partially achieved.
b. INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE: To what extent have the project activities changed institutional behaviors
One of the key achievements of the project was fostering “new mechanisms for coordination and multi-stakeholder representation within the countries themselves via the National Barrier Reef Committees, comprised of representatives from both the public and private sectors.” As described by the TE, “The Project made important contributions to institutional strengthening in the region, first by setting a standard for regional cooperation in addressing issues of common concern over a shared resource. With the help of CCAD, the executing agency for the Project, it created the political space for unprecedented regional coordination and progress toward policy harmonization in the governance of marine resources in the region. Second, the project strengthened the technical capacity of MPA managers and facilitated public access to key information about the value of the MBRS and its condition. This, in turn, has empowered civil society to demand greater accountability from policymakers on MBRS resource governance.”
c. POLICY CHANGE: To what extent have project activities led to policy changes (and implementation of policy)?
According to the TE, one of the project’s key achievements was catalyzing the “adoption of a common policy framework for sustainable management of resources in the areas of fisheries, tourism, and Marine Protected Areas among the three countries of the Gulf of Honduras; adoption in Mexico is pending.” The project had a positive impact on fisheries regulations, as described by the TE: “As a result of new information from spawning aggregation studies supported by MBRS and other partners, new fishing regulations to protect remaining spawning aggregations of the threatened Nassau Grouper in Belize have been issued. Other reforms [for other species] are pending.”

³ Please review the ‘Catalytic Role of GEF: How is it measured and evaluated – A conceptual framework’ prior to addressing this section.

Furthermore, “Closure of fishing seasons and gear restrictions have been harmonized across the four countries, reducing poaching opportunities and destructive fishing.”

d. CATALYTIC FINANCING: To what extent did the project led to sustained follow-on financing from Government and / or other donors? (this is different than co-financing)

The TE indicates that follow-on financing has not been secured. The TE does not explain why this is the case, in light of the fact that the project succeeded, for the most part, in meeting its objectives. The TE indicates that each of the countries involved has significant resource constraints, but there are many other partners involved in the region that could also contribute to the continuation of project benefits.

e. PROJECT CHAMPIONS: To what extent have changes (listed above) been catalyzed by particular individuals or institutions (without which the project would not have achieved results)?

According to the TE, “The World Bank Task Manager has been with the Project since its inception and was acknowledged by all interviewed as highly committed to the project and an important driving force in the project’s success. The long-standing relationship with the project provided important continuity, which was even more essential given the complex nature of the Project.”

In addition, “The Project Coordinating Unit Executive Director was both highly qualified and efficient, and provided strong leadership and direction to the Project.”

4.4 Assessment of processes and factors affecting attainment of project outcomes and sustainability.

a. Co-financing. To what extent was the reported cofinancing (or proposed cofinancing) essential to 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 it did, then in what ways and through what causal linkages?

The TE indicates that the project received 112% of government financial support compared to what was anticipated at approval.

The financing and co-financing information provided in the TE is somewhat unclear, but it does not appear that the TE includes a clear breakdown of co-financing. The TE states that approximately \$10 million was received in co-financing, which is \$1 million more than was anticipated at project approval.

According to the ICR review, co-financing was to be programmed in according to opportunities and needs arising throughout the implementation process. There is little documentation of this process.

b. 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 it did, then in what ways and through what causal linkages?

The project faced some delay in start-up, and thus was granted a one-year extension at the end of the project. As described by the TE, “Project effectiveness was delayed six months due to the unusual amount of coordination necessary for this unprecedented regional effort involving four countries managing a complex ecosystem. Part of this delay was due also to the project aligning its financial management (FM) with the World Bank’s FM requirements. Although this six-month delay did not substantially affect project implementation once the project was launched, it did affect the disbursements schedule, resulting in the need for a one-year project extension to fully disburse project funds.”

According to the TE, “The project was granted a one-year extension to allow for disbursement of the remaining funds and preparation of a follow-on phase, which had been anticipated from the beginning.”

c. 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.

There was a high degree of commitment from the countries involved to take action on the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System. The initial 15-year action plan was adopted in 1999 by the Ministers of Environment from all four countries.

Furthermore, as described by the TE, “The National Barrier Reef Committee (NBRC), which provided input into the Project’s annual work plans through representation on the regional Technical Working Groups (comprised of NBRC

members according to their technical expertise), also lent stability, credibility, and a high degree of local ownership to this regional initiative.”

The strong country ownership at high levels within the government allowed the project to make good progress in the policy areas related to international coordination and cooperation, such as regional harmonization of management of marine resources. The level of country ownership is also demonstrated by the higher-than-anticipated level of government co-financing the project received, which allowed for the achievement of the main objectives of the project. However, it appears that the country ownership has not been sufficient to ensure sustainability of outcomes after the GEF funding support finished.

4.5 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): S
<p>The TE considers the M&E design to be of high quality, which was a result of the participatory nature of the project preparation process. According to the TE, “the project’s preparation had a strong participatory nature, with technical working groups contributing to annual work plans, the review of project benchmarks, and, in the Synoptic Monitoring Program of the Project, the identification of key indicators. The M&E design benefited from this participatory nature, resulting in a set of indicators that was widely agreed, succinct, and targeted.”</p> <p>Annex 1 of the Project Appraisal Document includes the project design summary in table form, and identifies the key performance indicators and M&E processes required to validate progress toward objectives. Annex 2 of the Project Appraisal Document includes additional description of the M&E activities, in particular the environmental monitoring activities the project anticipated undertaking.</p> <p>The TE states that “The Key Performance Indicators were robust enough to track progress toward reaching the project’s goals, but they did not provide enough information to monitor the long-term financial sustainability of the project.”</p>	
b. M&E plan Implementation	Rating (six point scale): S
<p>The TE states that the M&E plan was put into effect as planned, and tracked project outputs and outcomes. In addition, it was carried out in a timely and transparent manner. As described by the TE, “[Results and progress] were tracked through a log frame matrix and Annual Progress Reports (Annex 11). Another important aspect of the M&E program was its state-of-the-art website (http://www.mbrs.org.bz/), which not only posted a rich array of technical and scientific reports, but also was used to post progress reports, agreements, and other administrative documents.”</p> <p>The TE also includes evidence indicating that the environmental monitoring component of the project was successful and valuable.</p> <p>One area for improvement of the M&E system was the Mid-term Evaluation. According to the TE, “The project’s Mid-Term Review provided extensive guidance with some 50 recommendations. In the end, fewer, more targeted recommendations, and more systematic follow-up would probably have been more effective.”</p>	
<p>b.1 Was sufficient funding provided for M&E in the budget included in the project document?</p> <p>This does not appear to have been an issue.</p>	
<p>b.2a Was sufficient and timely funding provided for M&E during project implementation?</p> <p>This does not appear to have been an issue.</p>	
<p>b.2b To what extent did the project monitoring system provided real time feed back? Was the information that was provided used effectively? What factors affected the use of information provided by the project monitoring system?</p> <p>The project monitoring appears to have provided sufficient and timely feedback.</p>	
<p>b.3 Can the project M&E system (or an aspect of the project M&E system) be considered a good practice? If so, explain why.</p> <p>There is nothing particularly remarkable about the project M&E system, but it appears to have met the standard for</p>	

World Bank and GEF projects.

The environmental monitoring system set up by the project appears to have been highly useful and relevant, though the post-project sustainability of this system is highly in doubt.

4.6 Assessment of Quality of Implementation and Execution

a. Overall Quality of Implementation and Execution (on a six point scale): S

b. Overall Quality of Implementation – for IA (on a six point scale): S

Briefly describe and assess performance on issues such as quality of the project design, focus on results, adequacy of supervision inputs and processes, quality of risk management, candor and realism in supervision reporting, and suitability of the chosen executing agencies for project execution.

The quality of implementation from the World Bank should be regarded as satisfactory, considering the achievement of objectives and the level of effort required for supervision of such a large and complex project. As summarized by the TE, the World Bank provided a “commendable effort on a complex project in a multinational setting, contending with difficult ecological conditions and institutional arrangements.” When shortcomings were identified through the mid-term review process, these were addressed.

According to the TE, “Because adequate preparation and stakeholder buy-in was considered essential for a regional project of this scope, significant effort went into project preparation and planning. This was carried out over a 26-month period at a cost of \$US1.2 million, or 10 percent of the total GEF amount.” The GEF financing of preparation activities was approximately \$519,000, provided through a PDF-A and two PDF-B grants. The TE states that “Both the Mid-Term Review and the Terminal Evaluation teams judged the participatory decision-making and coordination among the four countries to be one of the key factors in the project’s success.”

The ICR review identifies some shortcomings in project design – notably that the project components on alternative livelihoods and sustainable use of resources was overly ambitious and insufficiently funded. Based on information in the TE and considering the experience of other GEF projects with similar objectives, it is not clear whether insufficient funding was the true cause of shortfalls in this area. In fact, the TE indicates that the breakdown of some institutional partnerships related to tourism may have had a greater negative impact.

In addition, the ICR review suggests that the public sector entities for tourism and fisheries should have been involved in project implementation in order to create greater political buy-in. Information in the TE and the project document indicate that these ministries were at least involved to some degree however. According to the TE, progress was made on policies involving these entities, including fisheries regulations and cruise ship policies.

The TE also identifies key lessons from previous experiences that the project preparation process took into consideration, including the need for a long-term sustained effort, and the need to include a strong focus on regional coordination and activities in order to avoid a tendency to focus on national approaches.

The TE notes that “The biggest constraint in terms of Bank performance was the lack of a policy dialogue between the Country Departments and the governments on key policy reforms.”

c. Quality of Execution – for Executing Agencies⁴ (rating on a 6 point scale): S

Briefly describe and assess performance on issues such as focus on results, adequacy of management inputs and processes, quality of risk management, and candor and realism in reporting by the executive agency.

The executing arrangements were complex and involved multiple levels of partnerships and institutional arrangements. There were some challenges at various points, but overall the executing arrangements were sufficient to allow achievement of the majority of project objectives. According to the TE, “The Central American Commission on Environment and Development (CCAD) was selected to execute the project after a detailed institutional analysis during project preparation indicated that CCAD was the only organization in Central America that had the mandate and government buy-in to deal with environmental policy at the regional level.”

According to the TE, “CCAD proved to be invaluable in facilitating agreement on the Common Policy Framework in

⁴ Executing Agencies for this section would mean those agencies that are executing the project in the field. For any given project this will exclude Executing Agencies that are implementing the project under expanded opportunities – for projects approved under the expanded opportunities procedure the respective executing agency will be treated as an implementing agency.

the Southern Transboundary Area, and in bringing Mexico on board as an Observer to CCAD.”

A Project Coordinating Unit (PCU) of technical experts drawn from each of the countries was created within CCAD. Data and evidence presented in the TE indicates that the PCU operated effectively, and according to the TE, “At the operational level, National Coordinators were unanimous in expressing their satisfaction with the way the PCU carried out its responsibilities.” Furthermore, “The feedback received from government officials indicated that the PCU was respectful of their countries’ sovereignty, receptive to their input, and responsive to their needs.” One shortcoming was in the area of procurement, but this did not substantially detract from project implementation. There were also some challenges with financial management at the end of the project, but this was ultimately resolved through a final independent audit which found no outstanding issues.

Multiple additional elements of the executing arrangements, such as the National Barrier Reef Committees, Technical Committees and the Consultative Group, did not function effectively or as planned in each of the countries. However, these shortcomings do not appear to have had a negative impact on the achievement of project outcomes.

Once the project got past the initial 6-month start-up delay, the main implementing organization (CCAD) facilitated good coordination between the four countries. As described by the TE, “The quick recovery from the six-month effectiveness delay can be directly linked to the substantial investments during project preparation in consultation, representative decision-making, and coordination among the four countries. Housed in new facilities in Belize City, which also included the Coastal Zone Management Authority and the Belize Fisheries Department, the Project was able to coordinate effectively with both the Ministry of Environment (as a member of CCAD) and the Ministry of Agriculture, whose Director of Fisheries served as the MBRS National Coordinator.

According to the TE, “The Steering Committee provided an essential mechanism for coordination among the participating countries and was an effective tool for project implementation and regional-level oversight of the Project Coordinating Unit.”

Among some of the challenges identified, the TE states, “All the National Coordinators mentioned that, in retrospect, the lack of a dedicated person to the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System Project hampered their country’s ability to participate optimally. The project was deliberately designed not to finance National Coordinators salaries in deference to sustainability concerns.”

The level of engagement of the National Barrier Reef Committees (established by Ministerial decree at the outset of the project), varied from country to country. According to the TE Belize had a strong and active committee, while those in the other countries met irregularly.

In addition, “The Technical Committees met with varying degrees of success. One limitation was that the members in these committees served in an honorary capacity, and as such, were not always able or willing to give the project the level of attention needed.”

Finally, according to the TE, “The benefits envisioned in the Project Appraisal Document of the Consultative Group were not fully realized. While the group met formally on two occasions on how to improve collaboration and increase synergy, these meetings were not sustained.”

5. LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Assess the project lessons and recommendations as described in the TE

a. Briefly describe the key lessons, good practice or approaches mentioned in the terminal evaluation report that could have application for other GEF projects

The TE identifies multiple lessons learned, which are summarized below:

- Implementing regional projects with the World Bank is difficult since the Bank’s processes and institutional arrangements are primarily designed for single country operations. Differences in countries’ capacity levels are also important, and there is a tendency to prioritize national interests over regional ones.
- Overcoming challenges to implementation requires flexibility in designing and allocating budgets.
- Regional data collection and dissemination should be demand-driven to ensure use of information and markets to pay for it.

- To reduce pressure on targeted resources, alternative livelihoods must be introduced in tandem with restrictions on former resource use and closures to new entrants.
- “The private sector must be involved in setting codes of conduct for sustainable tourism and in generating investments in greener operations.”

b. Briefly describe the recommendations given in the terminal evaluation

The TE does not include a specific section on recommendations, but at least one important recommendation is found in the body of the text. As described by the TE, “The Project was deliberately designed not to finance National Coordinator salaries in deference to sustainability concerns. Perhaps an arrangement can be considered in the future, whereby the National Coordinator is provided resources to employ help for specific project-related activities. While this means additional costs to the project, strengthening the capacity at the national level may be a cost-effective investment.”

6. QUALITY OF THE TERMINAL EVALUATION REPORT

6.1 Comments on the summary of project ratings and terminal evaluation findings based on other information sources such as GEF EO field visits, other evaluations, etc.

None used.

The ICR review states that the ICR relies heavily “on the GEF Terminal Evaluation” which indicates that there is a separate final evaluation document. However, this separate “GEF Terminal Evaluation” was not available for review for this TER.

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 terminal evaluations review for further definitions of the ratings. Please briefly explain each rating.

6.2 Quality of the terminal evaluation report	Ratings
a. To what extent does the report contain an assessment of relevant outcomes and impacts of the project and the achievement of the objectives?	S
b. To what extent the report is internally consistent, the evidence is complete/convincing and the IA ratings have been substantiated? Are there any major evidence gaps? The TE provides an extensive annex that documents the level of project achievements under each component, but this evidence is not sufficiently tied to conclusions and assertions in the body of the report. Also, the TE does not cover, or does not sufficiently cover, some key aspects of the project such as all of the sustainability elements.	MU
c. To what extent does the report properly assess project sustainability and /or a project exit strategy? The TE primarily discusses financial sustainability, without giving sufficient consideration to other aspects of sustainability other than how they are impacted by financial sustainability.	MU
d. To what extent are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive? The lessons learned are supported by the evidence presented in the TE, but they are not comprehensive based on the full extent of the project experience.	MS
e. Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used? The TE does provide a breakdown of GEF and government financing by component. The TE does not provide a breakdown of co-financing received, only indicating that it was approximately	MS

\$10 million, which is \$1 million more than anticipated at project appraisal.	
<p>f. Assess the quality of the reports evaluation of project M&E systems?</p> <p>The TE does assess the M&E system, but the evidence presented regarding both the quality of M&E design and the success of M&E implementation is limited. The TE includes a limited assessment M&E design, stating only that the M&E design benefited from the participatory project preparation process, and that the indicators were “widely agreed, succinct, and targeted.” The TE’s assessment of M&E implementation includes assertions such as “Results and progress were a vital part of the national and regional M&E program.” The meaning of this statement is not clear, and there is no evidence presented to support the statement. The TE states only that the Key Performance Indicators were “robust enough” to track progress toward reaching the project’s goals.</p>	<p>MU</p>

7. SOURCES OF INFORMATION FOR THE PRERATATION OF THE TERMINAL EVALUTION REVIEW REPORT EXCLUDING PIRs, TERMINAL EVALUATIONS, PAD.

8 Project stakeholders and Key Contacts (Names, addresses, emails etc – mandatory for field visit countries)

9. Information Gaps (for Field visit countries only)