

GEFM&E Terminal Evaluation Review Form

1. PROJECT DATA				
			Review date:	11/1/05
GEF ID:	907		at endorsement (Million US\$)	at completion (Million US\$)
Project Name:	Arun Valley Sustainable Resource Use and Management Pilot Demonstration Project	GEF financing:	\$0.625	\$0.596
Country:	Nepal	Co-financing:	\$0.175	N/S
Operational Program:	3	Total Project Cost:	\$0.800	\$0,00
IA	UNEP	<u>Dates</u>		
Partners involved:	Rural Reconstruction Nepal (RRN)	Work Program date		11/30/00
		CEO Endorsement		N/A
		Effectiveness/ Prodoc Signature (i.e. date project began)		February 2001
		Closing Date	Proposed: February 2004	Actual: May 2004
Prepared by: Josh Brann	Reviewed by: A Zazueta	Duration between effectiveness date and original closing: 36 months	Duration between effectiveness date and actual closing: 39 months	Difference between original and actual closing: 3 months
Author of TE: Mahesh Banskota		TE completion date: December 2004	TE submission date to GEF OME: 6/13/05	Difference between TE completion and submission date: Approx 6 months

2. SUMMARY OF PROJECT RATINGS

GEFME 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). GEFME 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 Evaluation 5 point scale, 3=Good	Other IA evaluations if applicable (e.g. OED)	GEFME
2.1 Project impacts	N/A	Good		U/A
2.2 Project outcomes	S	Good		S
2.3 Project sustainability	N/A	Good		MS
2.4 Monitoring and evaluation	N/A	Good		MS

2.5 Quality of the evaluation report	N/A	N/A		MS (4.2)
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Should this terminal evaluation report be considered a good practice? No. Why? Although the TE does highlight and cover some important aspects of the project, there are many aspects that are not given sufficient attention. In particular the evaluation of the project M&E systems is incomplete and offline.

3. PROJECT OBJECTIVES, EXPECTED AND ACTUAL OUTCOMES

3.1 Project Objectives

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

Logframe: "The proposed project aims to mitigate the major threats to natural resources, especially the forest and the water from anthropogenic activities, and design and evolve a pilot management project with locally tested and proven solutions for integrating local community participation in the management of natural resources (forest, soil, and water) which will integrate traditional knowledge, skills and the ecological principles."

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

N/S – same as environmental objectives? (UNEP project)

3.2 Outcomes and Impacts

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

"The project has fully met this objective of generating baseline information, which consists of two types. The baseline information of social and economic status was obtained using the community and scientific assessment of forest and agricultural biodiversity, including the area's general biology and ecology."

"Evolving community-based sustainable management: The indicator under this objective was effective community-based approaches to forest management. The fact that community forest user groups have been the most important mechanism for the implementation of all the project activities indicates that this objective has been satisfactorily met. Under the outcomes, three of the groups identify testing and demonstration, the indicators also strongly pointing towards a greater community participation, wider benefit-sharing and increased capability among stakeholders."

"Working primarily through local community groups, there has been an extensive documentation of traditional knowledge in the areas of forest management, agro-biodiversity preservation, use of medicinal herbs and collection of non-timber forest products."

"Creating an enabling condition for the conservation of biodiversity: The project pursued this goal by first establishing the community forest user groups, local-level organizations which were more or less responsible for implementing most of the activities. At a time when there was a growing absence of government organization at the local level because of political problems and insurrection, establishing the community forest user groups under the village development committees helped to overcome the institutional vacuum for local natural resources management."

"Providing economic support for both in-situ and ex-situ cultivation of chiraito and using the traditional knowledge of the people through the community forest user groups were both important activities of the project. The people have found the initial result to be quite encouraging both in in-situ and ex-situ cultivation. Some of the shifting cultivation areas have also been brought under this test and demonstration."

"Women have been encouraged to participate in the community forest user groups. Particular income generating activities were supported due to the demands of the women. It is not clear to what extent the disadvantaged groups have benefited from the project activities."

"Promoting the use and development of alternative energy renewable resources: This is clearly the most successful aspect of the project. Electricity is now available to some of the households in the project area. The extent of reduction in fuelwood needs to be assessed separately. The combined effects of regulated harvesting, a micro-hydro power supply, the use of solar systems and the planting of fast growing trees will contribute towards conservation of the forest resources of the area and needs to be monitored in the future."

"The project has supported livelihood-related activities such as beekeeping, vegetable growing, fruit cultivation, livestock improvement, irrigation and drinking water projects."

4. GEF OFFICE OF M&E ASSESSMENT

4.1 Outcomes and impacts

Rating: S

A Relevance

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

The overall project objective is consistent with the focal area, although the means by which the project sought to address this seems to be much more along the lines of "development" than most activities in the GEF portfolio. According to the TE the most successful aspect of the project was the provision of electricity to households in the project area. This would be consistent with the focal area and operational program strategies if this had been able to significantly reduce community dependence on forest resources for fuelwood, but it is not clear that this is the case, and the TE states that this aspect needs to be further addressed. The (mostly) successful establishment of Community Forest User Groups under the project to address the sustainable management of formerly open access resources, is also an important outcome in line with operational program strategies.

B Effectiveness

- 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)?

Most of the project outcomes expected in the project document have been achieved, at least according to the TE. The TE rated all completed project activities as "good" or "very good" on a 5 point scale. According to the described "UNEP rating system" these ratings may be accurate, but appear to be optimistic in relation to the GEFO rating scale. The UNEP rating system is as such:

1 = Excellent (90– 100 per cent achievement) 2 = Very good (75–89 per cent) 3 = Good (60–75 per cent) 4 = Satisfactory (50–59 per cent) 5 = Unsatisfactory (less than 49 per cent)

A few project activities were not completed, and some of the activities that were completed were not entirely successful, especially with regard to equitable sharing of benefits.

C Efficiency (cost-effectiveness)

- 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?

Considering the remoteness of the project area, the project appears to have accomplished quite a lot with not even a full MSP budget. The TE includes a small section on financial management, but no specific discussion on cost-effectiveness. The annual rate of disbursement was relatively low compared to most GEF projects, even compared to other MSPs. From a very superficial analysis based on information provided in the TE it appears that the project was very cost-effective. It is unclear what the size of the project target area was though (definitely not the entire Arun Valley), but the number of people in the communities targeted by the project is approximately 9,000.

4.2 Likelihood of sustainability. Using the following sustainability criteria, include an assessment of project sustainability based on the information presented in the TE.

A Financial resources

Rating: 2

In the TE there is no identification of future financial resources or external support that has been planned for

continuing to support some of the project outcomes. According to the TE, “although the community groups are likely to continue with some of the activities, the overall achievements of the project are quite fragile if not supported by continuing internal (community level) and external inputs.” The TE recommends that the partners involved in the project hold a meeting to identify ways of continuing the activities. In other words, without additional donor support, which has not been identified, it is unlikely for project outcomes to be sustained. It is clear that options for financial sustainability of project outcomes were not identified in the planning stages of the project.	
B Socio political	Rating:5
The important project objective of mobilizing women and addressing equity considerations was not very successfully completed. As described in the TE “The fact that community forest user groups have been the most important mechanism for the implementation of all the project activities indicates that the objective of [community based management] has been satisfactorily met.”	
C Institutional framework and governance	Rating: 5
Other than the continuation of the community based management mechanisms and groups, this aspect was not specifically addressed by the project. There is some discussion in the TE about the difficulty of working with local-level government, but building capacity was not part of the objectives of the project.	
D Ecological (for example, for coffee production projects, reforestation for carbon sequestration under OP12, etc.)	Rating: N/A
E Examples of replication and catalytic outcomes suggesting increased likelihood of sustainability	Rating: MU
There is strong potential for replication and scaling-up of project approaches and outcomes within the entire Arun Valley, though this would require a lot more financial resources which do not appear to be forthcoming.	

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

A. Effective M&E systems in place: What were the accomplishments and shortcomings of the project's M&E system in terms of the tools used such as: indicators, baselines, benchmarks, data collection and analysis systems, special studies and reports, etc.?	Rating: 2
The project supported a number of scientific studies on the environment and resources of the area, though many of these studies were not completed until late in the project, and thus can not be used as a baseline for the project. According to the TE, “indicators were provided for all the objectives and outcomes. While some were specific, others were vague.” Tables 2 and 3 in the TE show the objectives and outcomes and their respective indicators. The indicators listed are primarily output-level indicators, or are not indicators at all. For example, the indicator for objective 2 relating to equitable sharing of benefits is “Increased benefit sharing among stakeholders.” In addition, the TE makes the point that some of the shortcomings of the project could have been prevented or at least identified if the project had had a mid-term evaluation, which it did not. Monitoring of the project implementation seems to have been satisfactory, according to the TE “Monitoring through progress report and substantive report reasonable. No evaluation by UNEP. Internal evaluation reports were not kept. Discussion with individual project staff-members revealed regular evaluations and feedback, however.” The TE notes that the project was successful in generating baseline information, which is true, although the information was generated throughout the course of the project, and so in this sense the data collected could serve as a baseline for any further interventions in the project area, but the data is not particularly useful for determining project impact.	
B. Information used for adaptive management: What is the experience of the project with adaptive management?	Rating: 5
The project had to adapt to certain conditions in the project area, such as working in a conflict situation. The TE lists some lessons learned by the project for coping with the areas unstable conditions. At the same time, the lack of mid-term evaluation hindered the project's ability to identify other opportunities for adaptive management during the course of the project.	
Can the project M&E system be considered a good practice? No.	

4.4 Quality of lessons

Weaknesses and strengths of the project lessons as described in the TE (i.e. lessons follow from the evidence presented, or lessons are general in nature and of limited applicability, lessons are comprehensive, etc.)

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?

Lessons for working in conflict situations:

- (a) Low-profile programme implementation (i.e., getting on with activities and avoiding too much fanfare, political visibility, large public gatherings, etc.);
- (b) Strong participation of the community in all aspects of project planning and implementation;
- (c) Transparency of decisions based upon open discussions by the community and the respecting of the community’s decisions;
- (d) Constant sharing of project related information with all stakeholders including the district government line agencies;
- (e) Committing community investments in the project to ensure greater ownership;
- (f) Ensuring early flow of some benefits from the project to households so that community members commit themselves to long-term activities.

Other lessons:

“The project has supported numerous studies, thereby providing valuable information. Some of these studies, however, were only completed towards the latter end of the project period making it unlikely that much benefit could have been derived from them.”

“Unless a deliberate effort is made to identify [marginalized, disadvantaged and indigenous ethnic] groups, understand their current condition and target activities accordingly, they may be left out.”

Annual evaluations or at least a mid-term evaluation should be conducted.

“It is a question of commitment and the establishment of high-level structures like the programme advisory committee should be granted a more careful review thus aiding it to play a more effective role in guiding the project.”

4.5 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.

4.5.1 Comments on the summary of project ratings and terminal evaluation findings

In some cases the GEF Office of M&E may have independent information collected for example, through a field visit or independent evaluators working for the Office of M&E. If substantial independent information has been collected, then complete this section with any comments about the project.

4.5.2 Quality of terminal evaluation report

A. Does the report contain an assessment of relevant outcomes and impacts of the project and the achievement of the objectives? Yes,

Ratings

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although impact in terms of “changes in environmental status” are not clearly discussed or identified.	
B. Is the report internally consistent, is the evidence complete/convincing and are the IA ratings substantiated? The report identifies a number of problems and difficulties under the project, but all project outcomes are rated as good or very good.	4
C. Does the report properly assess project sustainability and /or a project exit strategy? This is discussed though not in very much detail. Although there is a specific heading including sustainability, only discussed in a very limited sense.	4
D. Are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive? Yes.	5
E. Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used? Yes, but there is no discussion of why all the project money was not spent and what happened to the leftover.	5
F. Does the report present an assessment of project M&E systems? Yes, but the TE focuses on project M&E systems in terms of monitoring project implementation, and not as much on project systems for monitoring and evaluating project outcomes and impacts.	4

4.6 Is a technical assessment of the project impacts described in the TE recommended? Please place an "X" in the appropriate box and explain below.

Yes:

No:
X

Explain:

Is there a follow up issue mentioned in the TE such as corruption, reallocation of GEF funds, etc.? No.

4.7 Sources of information for the preparation of the TE review in addition to the TE (if any) GEF online database.