

GEF EO Terminal Evaluation Review Form

1. PROJECT DATA				
		Review date:		10/24/2006
GEF Project ID:	979		at endorsement (Million US\$)	at completion (Million US\$)
IA/EA Project ID:	PO61315	GEF financing:	0.725	0.725
Project Name:	Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable production in small, indigenous organic Cacao farms in the Talamanca-Caribbean Corridor, Costa Rica	IA/EA own:	0.357	0.338
Country:	Costa Rica	Government:	-	-
		Other*:	1.936	0.414
		Total Cofinancing	2.293	0.752
Operational Program:	3, 4	Total Project Cost:	3.018	1.477
IA	World Bank	<u>Dates</u>		
Partners involved:	Centro Agronómico Tropical de Investigación y Enseñanza (CATIE)	Work Program date		-
		CEO Endorsement		02/01/2001
		Effectiveness/ Prodoc Signature (i.e. date project began)		02/21/2001
		Closing Date	Proposed: 02/28/2004	Actual: 02/28/2004
Prepared by: Ines Angulo	Reviewed by: Neeraj Negi	Duration between effectiveness date and original closing: 36 months	Duration between effectiveness date and actual closing: 36 months	Difference between original and actual closing: No difference
Author of TE:	-	TE completion date: 05/2004	TE submission date to GEF OME: 09/21/2005	Difference between TE completion and submission date: 16 months

* 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 (Trust Fund Completion Report)	IA Terminal Evaluation	Other IA evaluations if applicable (e.g. IEG)	GEF EO
2.1 Project	S	-	-	S

outcomes				
2.2 Project sustainability	N/A	-	-	ML
2.3 Monitoring and evaluation	-	-	-	S
2.4 Quality of the evaluation report	N/A	N/A	-	S

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

Yes. It provides all necessary information in a concise, yet comprehensive manner. It also includes an Incremental Cost Analysis Evaluation and a Cost Effectiveness analysis.

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 project's overall objective was to promote and maintain on-farm biodiversity while improving the livelihood of organic cacao producers (indigenous, Latin mestizos and Afro Caribbean) in the Talamanca-Caribbean corridor of Costa Rica.

A review of the Project Brief shows that there were no changes during implementation.

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

Both the TE and Project Brief describe that the specific objective was to improve the management of cacao-based poor indigenous small farms according to both ecological and organic production principles by (i) increasing the number of indigenous and non-indigenous small farmers supporting biodiversity conservation within diverse, structurally complex cacao agroforestry ecosystems, (ii) increasing use of on-farm production practices that favor biodiversity-friendly organic cacao production and that stimulate markets for biodiversity-friendly products, (iii) strengthening, and improving organization of local indigenous associations in order to maintain indigenous socio-cultural values and traditional land use management, and (vi) collecting, systematizing, and synthesizing ecological information for the development of guidelines and practices for biodiversity-friendly organic cacao production.

Thus, there were no changes in the development objectives during implementation.

3.2 Outcomes and Impacts

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

According to the TE, activities and recommendations of this project included over 400 families as direct beneficiaries, introducing improvements in agricultural management practices on 344 cacao farms, and identifying those agroforestry cacao systems that needed immediate intervention at the family/community level to reverse the degradation of these ecosystems. It also designed and implemented a participatory monitoring program in order to scientifically document the ability of indigenous cacao farms to conserve biodiversity of flora and fauna, and was successful at improving the capacities of local people, co-implementing agencies, and other relevant stakeholders.

4. GEF OFFICE OF M&E ASSESSMENT

4.1 Outcomes

A Relevance

Rating: S

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

Project outcomes were consistent with focal areas/operational program strategies because they

<p>focused on demonstration and development of a sustainable use method (agroforestry) as part of integrated land management in agricultural and forest landscapes. In addition, the government of Costa Rica identified the Talamanca-Caribbean corridor as critical for protecting biodiversity along the Atlantic Coast of Costa Rica because it is an area of high biological diversity and serves as a continuation of the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor.</p>	
B Effectiveness	Rating: S
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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)? 	
<p>Information provided in the TE shows that, in general, the project achieved its expected outcomes and that it was particularly successful at strengthening farmers and producers associations, and implementing a biodiversity monitoring program that increased the awareness of the importance of protecting biodiversity in the region. For example, it mentions that the participating farmers and producers' associations' leaders have acquired greater managerial skills and are in better position to negotiate for their interests, and that biodiversity conservation, the need for pesticide-free, healthy agriculture and other environmental and ecological topics have become regular items in the political discussions among these co-implementing agencies.</p>	
C Efficiency (cost-effectiveness)	Rating: S
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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? 	
<p>The TE explains that in-kind co-financing, as planned in the Project Brief, was only 30% the amount anticipated due to changes in strategy – focusing more in local coordination and defining local organizations before seeking external cooperation. Despite this, the TE doesn't mention any shortcomings on project implementation due to this cut on the budget. It assesses that operational costs were low because mostly local labor, goods and services were used; salaries were austere; mobilization of project staff was minimized by contracting local promoters and conducting training events directly in farms of each community. In addition, it states that the project attracted a long list of universities, whose students developed their research in topics of immediate interest to it and tripled the technical and operational capacity of the project at a minimum cost. It also mentions that farmers made a great in-kind contribution by participating in the rehabilitation of the cacao plantations in a collective mechanism of labor sharing.</p>	

Impacts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the project achieved impacts or is it likely that outcomes will lead to the expected impacts? <p>The TE mentions that, as programmed, the activities carried out by the project strengthened local processes by being a community executed project (working closely in the family-cocoa farms and with the indigenous families), and also strengthened the technical role of indigenous women (cocoa fermentation, cocoa drying and elaboration of handcrafted chocolate for family consumption and local markets). It also introduced improved methodologies for cacao cultivation that are now being replicated in other countries.</p>

4.2 Likelihood of sustainability. Using the following sustainability criteria, include an assessment of **risks** to sustainability of project outcomes and impacts based on the information presented in the TE.

A Financial resources	Rating: ML
<p>According to the TE, the project's success led other organizations to finance additional activities related cocoa agroforestry conservation and sustainable production. For example the IDB is funding a follow-up project to encourage planting grafted cacao in improved agroforestry designs, and there is a new initiative to develop a payment model to compensate carbon capture in biologically diverse productive cacao agroforestry systems.</p> <p>On the other hand, the 2003 review mission found that the lack of micro-credit to farmers and the volatility of premiums for organic cacao could pose a risk to the profitability of cacao agroforestry.</p>	

It also identified that unless an extra premium price is paid for “biodiversity-friendly” cacao, then farmers will not have the economic incentive to monitor and improve biodiversity in their plantations.	
B Socio political	Rating: L
The Project brief describes that a general perception of conflict among local organizations was noted during the social assessment. But information provided in the TE shows that this risk was greatly diminished because of the project’s highly participatory and inclusive implementation	
C Institutional framework and governance	Rating: ML
The TE mentions that the indigenous organizations have a limited capacity and very few operational resources to implement their strategic plans.	
D Environmental	Rating: ML
The TE mentions that there is some threat to the sustainability of the region’s environment due to commercial banana production, non-sustainable extraction of timber and non-timber products, and conversion of forestland to agricultural production.	

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

A Financial resources	Rating: L
B Socio political	Rating: L
C Institutional framework and governance	Rating: L
D Environmental	Rating: L
Overall Rating on Sustainability as calculated by the old methodology: L	

4.3 Catalytic role

1. Production of a public good
The TE states that a large volume of technical information was published, as well as popular information, which was massively disseminated in the indigenous territories and before numerous audiences.
2. Demonstration
According to the TE, a series of workshops, demonstration and training events on many project related subjects were held. These events linked local organizations with both the international scientific community and several relevant local projects and organizations.
3. Replication
The TE mentions that the CATIE-OEA/CICAD project to modernize cacao cultivation in Alto Beni, Bolivia, was designed and implemented following several operational strategies perfected in the Talamanca cacao project. The TE also mentions that some 250 Belizean farmers now carry out “Talamanca pruning” and the exchange of technicians and promoters has stimulated cacao cultivation among 500 small producers of organic certified cacao in Nicaragua. In addition, “Talamanca pruning” is now being used by 1300 organic cacao producers in Alto Beni, Bolivia.
4. Scaling up
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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: MS
According to the TE, the project had a complete logical framework, an M&E system that included annual operational plans, staff performance, internal and external audits, World Bank supervision and project closure, and identified project indicators to allow for monitoring of achievement of project’s outcomes.	

<p>But the 2003 mission review questioned the utility of some of the project indicators. For example it noted that it would have been important to have an indicator for the volume of biodiversity friendly cacao sold because it would reflect both changes in production practices and market demand necessary for sustaining these practices. Also it opined that the indicator of farmers trained in monitoring is not that valuable as the monitoring will not continue after the project so this skill is not an essential outcome. It would only be important if biodiversity friendly certification and/or sales depended on such monitoring and the farmers could and would continue it by themselves.</p>
<p>B. Did the project M&E system operate throughout the project? How was M&E information used during the project? Did it allow for tracking of progress towards projects objectives? Did the project provide proper training for parties responsible for M&E activities to ensure data will continue to be collected and used after project closure? Rating: S</p>
<p>Information provided in the TE shows that the project M&E system operated successfully throughout the project. The leaders of the co-implementing organizations formed the Project Advisory Council to discuss all strategic and operational aspects of the project implementation; more than 30 monthly meetings were held during the project's life. Training and capacity building of APPTA (Indigenous cooperative in Talamanca) members was one of the project's components and therefore many local farmers were trained to monitor biodiversity in their plantations. The project's M&E system also benefited from the input of research done by students collaborating with the project.</p>
<p>C. Was M&E sufficiently budgeted and was it properly funded during implementation? Rating: S</p>
<p>According to the project brief a total of \$239,000 was budgeted for biodiversity monitoring (and the 2003 review mission concluded that the cost of implementing the biodiversity monitoring program was \$50,000 per year). Information provided in the TE indicates that even though the total final budget was reduced in half, the M&E plan was implemented successfully (it explains that the biodiversity monitoring program relied heavily on the participation of students and farmers themselves).</p>
<p>Can the project M&E system be considered a good practice? Yes. The project carried out a dynamic program of applied-strategic research which provided up-to-date and relevant information to improve the decision making process at two levels: the project coordination unit, and the Project Advisory Council. In addition, the formation of this Project Advisory Council which, according to the TE, provided the political support to project activities in the indigenous territories, assured there was consistency in decision making on project matters. But it is also important to note that the 2003 review mission questioned the utility of some of the project indicators, and found that the monitoring is too expensive (\$50,000/yr) for the Coop or CATIE to continue after project termination. It concludes that unless a more streamlined low cost system can be developed or a way found to internalize the costs (i.e. sell on through premiums) then data will cease to be gathered and the long-term impacts of the project will never be known.</p>

4.5 Lessons

Project lessons as described in the TE

<p>What lessons mentioned in the TE that can be considered a good practice or approaches to avoid and could have application for other GEF projects?</p>
<p>The TE presents the following lessons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gender participation at the community and institutional levels is needed throughout all stages (late participation of women was one of the shortcomings of this project). - Large initial community meetings, radio programs and public information centers which allow local people to have better access to information on project objectives can improve participation. 2. Sustainability: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Projects focused on promoting conservation through market mechanisms should put

- emphasis on making participants proactive in developing and accessing markets, rather than merely connecting products to markets.
- Diversify production (sell more than one thing). For example this project combined cacao-chocolate with other eco-tourism attractions, integrated exchange with colleges, and neighboring projects in order for farmers to have different income-generating activities in case of a drop in the price of certified cacao.
 - Make use of local academic professionals and assist indigenous graduate students with their thesis. The emphasis on working with local professionals was key to achieving outcomes at a lower cost than planned. Students produced valuable, up-to-date, scientifically supported information, and disseminated it on a mass scale to several key audiences.
3. Replicability:
- Execute plans with immediate or short-term impacts first, monitor the dynamic closely with stakeholder criteria, and take care of local culture.
 - Having multiple partners and integrating them into ongoing projects improves realism, replicability and sustainability.

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>A. Does the report contain an assessment of relevant outcomes and impacts of the project and the achievement of the objectives?</p> <p>The TE contains a detailed description of the achievement of outputs in relation to each project component. It also presents an assessment of the project's impact.</p>	S (5)
<p>B. Is the report internally consistent, is the evidence complete/convincing and are the IA ratings substantiated?</p> <p>In general the TE is consistent, but it sometimes fails to present complete evidence. For example it gives no explanation of what were the consequences of the substantial difference between planned and actual budget, and fails to include specific evidence on what were the findings from the biodiversity monitoring system (even though it states that the project made a “significant contribution in conserving globally significant biodiversity in indigenous cacao agroforestry systems”).</p> <p>The TE has no ratings.</p>	MS (4)
<p>C. Does the report properly assess project sustainability and /or a project exit strategy?</p> <p>The TE provides an assessment of all the project's activities that are likely to contribute to the project sustainability, and of the new projects (and funding) attracted to the area to compliment and expand critical activities.</p>	S (5)
<p>D. Are the lessons learned supported by the evidence presented and are they comprehensive?</p>	MS (4)

Some of the lessons identified in the TE are very general and not supported by relevant evidence.	
E. Does the report include the actual project costs (total and per activity) and actual co-financing used? The TE includes a summary of GEF funds used per project component and of co-finance, but does not provide data on the total costs per activity.	MS (4)
F. Does the report present an assessment of project M&E systems? The TE includes an assessment of M&E activities implemented, both for monitoring biodiversity and project's objectives and performance.	S (5)

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:

Explain: It is important to get information as to whether the project results in a viable biological corridor and buffer zone. Also, follow-up on the success (or failure) of biodiversity-friendly certification of cacao beyond the duration of this project is needed, especially since many of its technical and operational strategies are being replicated in other areas (for example the "Talamanca pruning" methodology).

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

Project brief, Trust Fund Completion Report 2004, Review mission 2003