Strengthening Romania's Protected Area System by Demonstrating Best Practices for Management of Small Protected Areas in Măcin Mountains National Park

Romania

IA: United Nations Development Programme
EA: Romanian National Forest Administration

GEF Biodiversity Focal Area
Strategic Objective BD-1 / Operational Program 1 & 3
Medium-sized Project

GEF ID: 1034
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Terminal Evaluation

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I. Executive Summary

1.   The project "Strengthening Romania's Protected Area System by Demonstrating Best Practices for Management of Small Protected Areas in Măcin Mountains National Park" (MMNP) was implemented with $1.00 million in Global Environment Facility (GEF) financing (including PDF-A) and $2.10 in expected co-financing. Implementation was planned for approximately 48 months (November 2005 – December 2009). Romania's National Forest Agency (NFA), which is responsible for managing the majority of Romania's protected areas, executed the project. The project objective was "A landscape-oriented method of managing small protected areas and improving conservation effectiveness is demonstrated in Măcin Mountains National Park and constitutes a model for replication across the emerging national system of protected areas." The project's three expected outcomes were:

- **Outcome 1:** Productive landscape around MMNP is made more biodiversity friendly
- **Outcome 2:** Măcin Mountains National Park management capacity and conservation effectiveness is secured
- **Outcome 3:** Replication of small protected area management best practices across national PA system is ongoing

2.   Măcin Mountains National Park was established under the national legislation Act Number 5/2000, and the final revision to the protected area was finalized by Government Decision 1529 dated November 1st, 2007. MMNP is an IUCN Category II protected area, covering 11,321 hectares, and is 99.6% owned by the Government of Romania. More than 39,000 people live in the surrounding landscape area distributed among 15 communities, and current land-use on the borders of the park includes forestry, grazing, agriculture, mineral exploitation and urban area.

3.   This terminal evaluation was conducted as required by, and in coherence with, GEF and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) monitoring and evaluation procedures using a participatory mixed-methods approach. The evaluation assesses the actual performance and results of the MMNP project against the planned project activities and outputs, at the national and local levels based on the relevant evaluation criteria. Project results are assessed based on the expected outcomes and objectives, as well as any unanticipated results. United Nations Evaluation Group norms and standards were followed throughout the evaluation.

4.   The MMNP project **relevance** is <u>satisfactory</u> with respect to Romanian national environmental and development priorities, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and GEF biodiversity focal area strategies and priorities. There are multiple Romanian government policy documents supported by the project objective, including Romania's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), and the Romanian Rural Development Strategy for 2007 – 2013. The project supports the implementation of the CBD in Romania. By securing the management capacity and conservation effectiveness of the protected area, and making the productive landscape around MMNP more biodiversity friendly, the project is relevant to both the operational strategy of the GEF, and the strategic objectives of the biodiversity focal area.

5.   MMNP project **efficiency** is rated <u>highly satisfactory</u>. The project was implemented in a cost-effective manner, and the project results achieved are commensurate with (or exceed) the level of investment from the GEF and co-financing partners. The project team implemented a

number of innovative approaches that saved resources where possible. The project was carried out according to the timeframe originally planned, without any extensions. Financial management and reporting were carried out with professionalism and responsibility. Procurement was conducted without problem.

6.   MMNP project **effectiveness** at the project level effectiveness is considered <u>highly satisfactory</u>, as described below for each project outcome. The project objective has been achieved, and the necessary conditions are in place for Global Environmental Benefits to be achieved in the long-term, even though risks do remain, as discussed in relation to sustainability. MMNP's robust environmental monitoring system has shown that the impact level indicators have been met.

7.   <u>**Outcome 1:**</u> "Productive landscape around MMNP is made more biodiversity friendly" is among the strongest aspects of the project, and is considered highly satisfactory. This outcome is highlighted by the team's work with local resource users to initiate and build a local environmentally friendly agriculture industry in the periphery of the park. Although the organic farmers' association is at present a small percentage of overall landowners, it is a well-organized and strategically important local initiative. This was done in partnership with an international private sector company, which is supporting the market for organic products. In addition, the project team has achieved important tangible results on the issue of stone quarries on the park border. A third issue in this regard, wind energy development, is also being handled in a positive manner to achieve the best possible outcomes from an environmental point of view. Finally, the park administration has worked with the county NFA office to develop a methodology of biodiversity-friendly sustainable timber harvesting that will be employed not just in and around MMNP, but throughout the county.

8.   <u>**Outcome 2:**</u> This outcome, "Măcin Mountains National Park management capacity and conservation effectiveness is secured" has been completed at a satisfactory level. There are multiple important results under this outcome, including the development and implementation of a landscape scale conservation management plan for MMNP and the surrounding area. Most importantly, the park administration has developed effective working relationships with local institutions and stakeholders, such as the nearby municipalities. Management of the protected area effectively involves local stakeholders through the Consultative Council, which acts as the primary mechanism for stakeholders to provide input to the management process. Management decisions are also well-informed using analysis from the relational environmental monitoring database developed by the project. Management policies are enforced through regular patrols of the park rangers, and the park has developed joint enforcement protocols with the 10 other relevant local enforcement agencies such as the local police and forest inspectorate. The park staff has a high level of technical capacity, and this has been enhanced through further development of park infrastructure, such as a ranger station and tourism infrastructure. The park administration team has also developed the capacity to apply for and access new financing sources available from the European Union (EU). One indicator of conservation effectiveness, the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) score, has increased significantly since the start of the project.

9.   <u>**Outcome 3:**</u> "Replication of small protected area management best practices across national protected area system is ongoing" is considered highly satisfactory. There are multiple

specific examples of best practices from the MMNP project being replicated within the region or throughout Romania's national protected area system, a number of which are expected to have highly catalytic and even transformative results within Romania over time, contributing to Global Environmental Benefits. These include, but are not limited to, the rollout of the project-developed biodiversity monitoring database to other national-level protected areas; reliance on the MMNP's Scientific Council decisions to guide management in other small protected areas in Tulcea County; and the development of sustainable forestry methodologies to be applied throughout Tulcea County. Few GEF projects achieve such tangible replication results in as short a period of time. Outcome 3 was specifically designed to proactively replicate best practices and lessons at the national level, a conscious catalytic approach that is lacking in most GEF projects. One advantage for the MMNP in this regard is that there are 22 other protected areas in the national network overseen by the NFA, so the NFA can act as a central coordinating mechanism for bringing representatives from the various protected areas together and for disseminating information. Even with the important progress made to date, there remains further opportunity for identification, documentation, and dissemination of best practices from the MMNP project experience.

10.   The **sustainability** of project results is considered <u>moderately likely</u>, with financial sustainability considered likely. There are a number of ongoing environmental risks that the park administration will need to continue focusing on such as impacts from quarries and the increasing development of wind power, but at present it is it expected these can be addressed.

11.   **Key lessons and recommendations:** Note that in addition to the "key" lessons and recommendations highlighted in the executive summary, there are more "lower level" lessons and recommendations included at the end of this report.

12.   ***Key Lesson:*** The MMNP project has demonstrated the potential value of protected areas working with private sector partners to create win-win-win approaches to sustainable environmental and economic development. Such solutions are not possible in all circumstances, but in Măcin the requisite incentives are aligned. MMNP promotes organic agriculture by conducting outreach and education activities with farmers whose lands surround the national park. The farmers work with a wholesale exporter, gaining economically from the premium on organic vs. conventional products. The area's environment in turn benefits from the reduction in chemicals applied to the wheat fields. This three-way partnership provides an excellent example for other protected areas.

13.   ***Key Lesson:*** Effective environmental monitoring programs can be developed and implemented in protected areas in a cost-effective manner. There is a general perception that comprehensive biodiversity monitoring is an expensive endeavor, but the experience of MMNP shows that a useful monitoring program can be implemented for little more than the baseline cost of protected area operations. With a trained biologist on staff, and park rangers with some taxonomic training, structured monitoring protocols can be applied and data collected and analyzed to inform management decisions. MMNP's expertise in developing an effective monitoring program should be shared among protected areas in Romania and elsewhere.

14.   ***Key Lesson:*** When designed with a realistic scope and timeframe, GEF projects can be implemented in an effective manner within the planned period. GEF project designs are often overambitious both in scope and timeframe, leading to either scaling back of expected

outcomes, extensions in timeframes, or both. The comparative experience in Romania of the Măcin Mountains National Park project, and the Maramureş Mountains Natural Park project provide a good example of this lesson.

15.   ***Key Lesson:***   Romania's system of Scientific Councils supporting protected area management decision-making is an effective approach to de-politicizing (to the extent possible) sometimes controversial issues facing protected area administrations. Once appointed, the Scientific Council functions independently from the park administration, and provides independent technical oversight and input to key park management processes such as the revision of the management plan, development approvals, and environmental impact assessments. The separation of the Scientific Council from the park administration facilitates "unbiased" and transparent park management decision-making based on solid technical grounds. At the same time, this structure provides the park administration with an institutional buffer for potential stakeholder backlash to any particular decision.

16.   ***Key Lesson:*** Protected areas with sustainable use zoning can serve as important examples of ways to mainstream biodiversity concerns into broader production sectors. In the case of MMNP, biodiversity-friendly timber harvesting methods were developed and are being demonstrated, and the NFA has accepted and expanded this sustainable use approach to forest areas under their management throughout Tulcea County.

17.   ***Key Recommendation:*** The Park administration should develop, and implement, an outreach strategy that supports direct face-to-face interaction between the park's community outreach officer and members of the communities surrounding MMNP. There are currently multiple mechanisms that contribute to positive stakeholder involvement in MMNP management issues, but the initial stakeholder survey showed there is still much room for increased awareness and education within local communities. This could be achieved through a regular MMNP staff presence within the communities, which is exactly the role of the community outreach officer. [*For MMNP Administration*]

18.   ***Key Recommendation:*** In conjunction with the above recommendation about public outreach, MMNP should ensure another stakeholder survey is carried out in the next two years. Such a survey, implemented regularly, can be considered the park's socio-economic monitoring to go with the environmental monitoring program. Monitoring socio-economic trends is critical and can over time, with appropriate data collection methods and analysis, help to identify MMNP's economic value to the region, and inform effective management. [*For MMNP Administration*]

19.   ***Key Recommendation:*** Throughout the new EU member countries regional branding has begun to demonstrate value, as has been seen in western EU countries. With the goal of creating incentives for nature protection and realizing value in the region's natural capital, MMNP should explore the possibility of partnering with local producer groups and tourism organizations to develop a regional trademark or ecolabel for Măcin. This could be done for both products and tourism services. Relevant examples include the regional brand developed for Poland's Barycz Valley protected landscape (http://barycz.pl/main/), the regional brands in the Czech Republic's Carpathian protected landscapes of Beskedy and Bilé Karpaty (http://www.tradicebk.cz and http://www.domaci-vyrobky.cz), and the "Living Tisza" brand

developed in the upper Tisza watershed in Hungary (http://www.elotiszaert.hu). [*For MMNP Administration and Regional Stakeholders*]

20.   ***Key Recommendation:*** Ecological evidence shows that many species have significant short-term natural population fluctuations, which leaves single species indicators with little value in evaluating the effectiveness of a biodiversity conservation project with a time scale of two to four years. In addition, natural systems often take years to demonstrably respond to conservation measures. Nonetheless, impact level indicators are valuable, and indeed are ultimately the only way to measure success in conserving biodiversity. For project logframe indicators, either biodiversity monitoring data should be considered over a longer period of time (10-15 years), or data on a range of factors such as habitat assessment or population dynamics model simulation should further inform short-term assessments of species level biodiversity trends. [*For UNDP and GEF*]

Summary Project Ratings

Project Component or Objective	Rating
Project Formulation	
Relevance	S
Conceptualization/design	S
Stakeholder participation	S
Project Implementation	
Implementation Approach (Efficiency)	HS
The use of the logical framework	S
Adaptive management	S
Use/establishment of information technologies	HS
Operational relationships between the institutions involved	S
Technical capacities	HS
Monitoring and Evaluation	**S**
Stakeholder Participation	**HS**
Production and dissemination of information	S
Local resource users and NGOs participation	HS
Establishment of partnerships	HS
Involvement and support of governmental institutions	S
Project Results	
Overall Achievement of Objective and Outcomes (Effectiveness)	**HS**
Objective: A landscape-oriented method of managing small protected areas and improving conservation effectiveness is demonstrated in Măcin Mountains National Park and constitutes a model for replication across the emerging national system of protected areas	HS
Outcome 1: Productive landscape around MMNP is made more biodiversity friendly	HS
Outcome 2: Măcin Mountains National Park management capacity and conservation effectiveness is secured	S
Outcome 3: Replication of small protected area management best practices across national PA system is ongoing	HS
Sustainability	**ML**
Financial sustainability	L
Institutional sustainability	L
Socio-economic sustainability	L
Ecological sustainability	ML
Overall Project Achievement and Impact	**HS**

II. Introduction: Evaluation Scope and Methodology

21.   GEF and UNDP monitoring and evaluation policies stipulate that all GEF funded projects must undergo a terminal evaluation. The present exercise and report, instigated by UNDP at the end of the MMNP project, fulfills this requirement. The evaluation covers project design, the four-year project implementation period, and post-implementation sustainability and results. The actual performance and results of the MMNP project are assessed against the planned project activities and outputs based on the relevant evaluation criteria, and in relation to expected outcomes and objectives, as well as any unanticipated results. The evaluation identifies relevant lessons for related future projects in Romania and elsewhere, and provides recommendations as necessary and appropriate.

22.   The evaluation Terms of Reference did not specifically include key evaluation questions, but the following key questions were developed based on the project objectives, to guide the overall scope and framework of the evaluation:

- How and to what extent has a landscape-oriented method of managing small protected areas been demonstrated in MMNP, and is it a replicable model?
- To what extent has the productive landscape around MMNP been made more biodiversity friendly?
- Has MMNP management capacity and conservation effectiveness been ensured?
- Have small PA management best practices been replicated across the national PA system?

23.   In addition to broadly answering these key questions, the evaluation provides the required ratings on key elements of project design and implementation. Further, the evaluation will, when possible and relevant, assess the project in the context of the key GEF operational principles, as summarized in Annex 3.

24.   The evaluation methodology was based on a participatory mixed-methods approach, which included three primary elements: a) a desk review of relevant project documentation and other documents;[1] b) interviews with key project participants and stakeholders; and c) a field visit to the project site.

25.   The primary limitation faced by the evaluation was that, understandably, some documents were available only in Romanian. Secondly, with additional time, more stakeholder viewpoints and relevant data could have been gathered. However, these issues were not significant for this evaluation, and the evaluation is believed to represent a fair and accurate assessment of the project.

26.   The evaluation was conducted in accordance with UNDP and GEF monitoring and evaluation policies and procedures, and in-line with United Nations Evaluation Group norms and standards. The intended users of this terminal evaluation are the GEF Evaluation Office, UNDP, project participants, and others who may find the lessons and experienced documented herein useful in the context of other projects.

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[1] Inputs included internal project documents such as quarterly progress reports, PIRs, mid-term evaluation, etc. Documents referenced in this report other than the internal project documents are cited in footnotes.

III. Development Context and Project Background

A.   Development Context

i.   MMNP Overview and Environmental Values

27.   A portion of the mountainous regional of Măcin was established as a county-level protected area in 1996, by the Tulcea County Council. The area of a national park in the region was further proclaimed under National Act Number 5/2000. The official boundaries and characterization of Măcin Mountains National Park were established by Romanian Government Order 230/2003, and finalized by Government Decision 1529 dated November 1st, 2007. The map in Figure 1 shows the location of MMNP in Romania. The park covers 11,149.15 hectares, which are divided in the management plan into four zones of protection, as shown in Table 1 below, and is considered an IUCN Category II protected area (see Box 1). Of the total area, the Romanian government owns 99.6%, with the remainder owned by municipalities in the area. The full area of MMNP is managed by the NFA, as discussed below.

Table 1 MMNP Management Zones and Hectares

Zone	Hectares	Percentage
Strictly Protected Zone	448.6	4.0%
Protected Zone	3418.8	30.7%
Sustainable Conservation Zone	7272.8	65.2%
Human Activities Zone	8.95	0.1%
Total	11,149.15	100%

28.   The Măcin Mountains are the oldest in Romanian, characterized by folds and faults of schists and granite, with loess deposits at lower altitudes. The elevation ranges from 7 to 467 meters. **Figure 2** below shows the outline of the park boundaries and key features overlaid on a shaded relief landform map of the area. The climate is temperate-continental with sub-Mediterranean influences, resulting in hot and dry summers, long dry autumns, and cold winters with little snow.

29.   With its relatively small size and characterized as an elevated landform in the middle of the Danube plain, the MMNP is a biological "island" in the surrounding landscape. There are five main habitat types: rockland, steppe, forest, forest steppe and wetlands. The park's geographic location gives both Mediterranean and Balkan-pontic steppe climatic influences, and the geomorphology and geologic age result in an area rich in biodiversity – the location

Box 1 IUCN Category II Definition

> Category II protected areas are large natural or near natural areas set aside to protect large-scale ecological processes, along with the complement of species and ecosystems characteristic of the area, which also provide a foundation for environmentally and culturally compatible spiritual, scientific, educational, recreational and visitor opportunities.
> *(Source: Dudley, N. (Editor) (2008). Guidelines for Applying Protected Area Management Categories. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. 86pp.)*

represents the interface between the southern limit of central-European and Caucasian species, the northern limit of Mediterranean, Balkan and Pontic species, and the western limit of some Asian species. The area includes more than 1,770 plant species, accounting for approximately 50% of Romania's flora growing on less than 0.5% of the country's area. Of these 72 species are protected as rare or vulnerable, and 27 species are endemic to the region. Known fauna species number more than 1680: 1436 insects, 7 amphibians, 10 reptiles, 181 birds, and 47 mammals. Four species are endemic to the region – three insects and the Dobrudjan tortise (*Testudo graeca ibera*). Many species are protected internationally, with 70 species protected under the EU wild birds and habitats directive, and 15 species listed on the IUCN Red List. The bird species represent approximately 50% of Romania's avifauna, and the Măcin Mountains are an important migratory corridor.

Figure 1 Location of Măcin Mountains National Park in Romania[2]
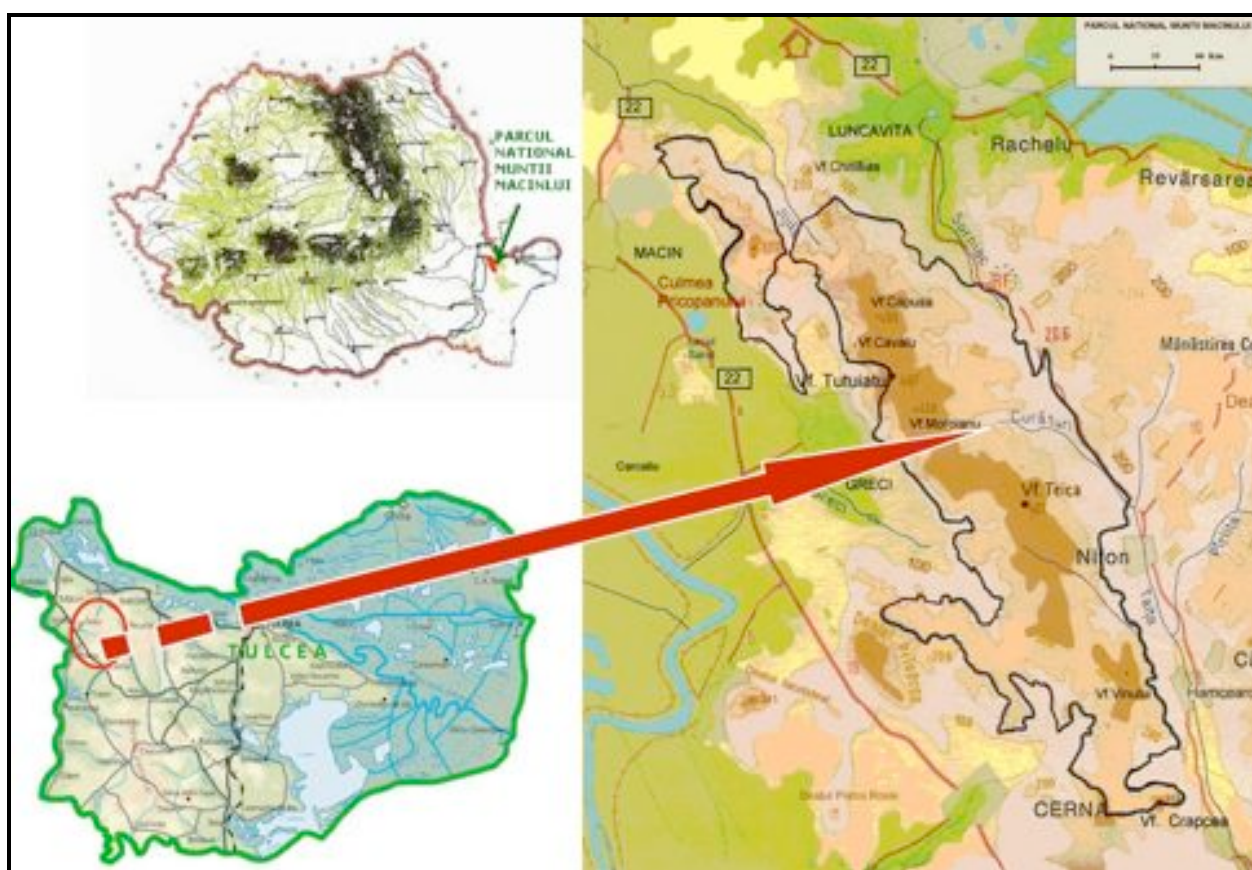
Figure 2 Măcin Mountains National Park Boundaries and Surrounding Area[3]
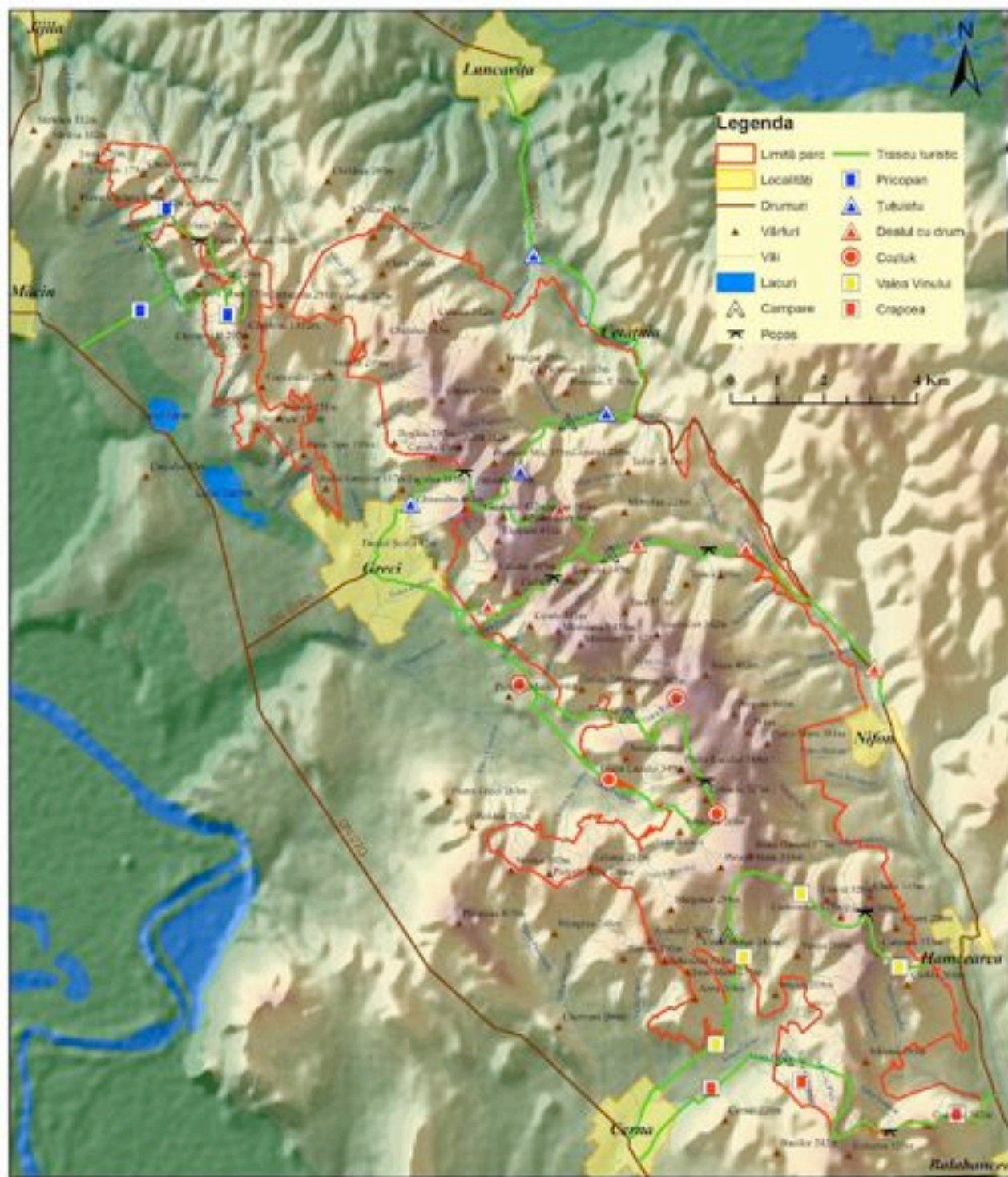
ii.   MMNP Socio-economic Context

30.   The Măcin area has been inhabited since pre-history, and humans have influenced the landscape of the area in a variety of ways. The Dobrudja region was included in the Ottoman Empire in the early 15th century, which led, for the first time, to a forest management regime. According to information in the park's management plan, the Turkish-Russian wars of the second-half of the 19th century lead to depopulation of the area, but also of deforestation of some important areas around the Măcin Mountains. At the end of the 19th century, with the establishment of the Romanian Kingdom, the area was repopulated with increased agricultural pressure on the landscape. The first quarries also appeared in the area at this time, resulting in new forms of landscape degradation. In the early 20th century, agriculture was intensified through draining of wetlands, which also may have affected the climate. Afforestation efforts from the mid-20th century introduced non-native species, including the lime trees and black pine. In the late 20th century, political and economic liberalization fed high demand for road and construction materials, leading to the development and re-opening of quarries in the area.

31.   In the present day, more than 39,000 people[4] inhabit the area around MMNP, distributed between 14 communities among which there are six villages and one town (the town of Măcin). Because of its history as a crossroads, the area is ethnologically diverse, and includes Turks, Macedonian-Romanians, Hungarians, Tartars, Italians, Russians, Lipovans, Roma, Ukrainians, Greeks, Armenians, Hebrews, Germans, and Bulgarians. Many of the ethnic groups have their own special folk traditions, dress, music and values that contribute to the tourism potential of the region.

32.   On the whole, there are limited economic opportunities in the region, and infrastructure is underdeveloped; consequently the average age of the population is increasing as young people migrate to urban areas to find more diverse employment and education opportunities. Tulcea County, where MMNP is located, is more than 80% covered by protected areas of one level or another (a large portion of this is the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve), which also limits the diversification of economic activity. Current land-use on the borders of the park includes forestry, grazing, agriculture, mineral exploitation and urban area. According to the head of organic agriculture association, the average farm size is approximately two hectares, with the largest being 600 hectares, and around ten farms that are 200 hectares in size.

33.   Sustainable use economic activities within the park include biodiversity-friendly forestry in the sustainable conservation zone and harvesting of non-timber forest products. Apiculture is an important activity, and local people as well as apiarists from other parts of the country set up 40-50 beehives in or in the vicinity of the park when the lime trees are in bloom; beehives can only be set up within the park with permission from the MMNP administration. There are hunting reserves on the border of the protected area, but hunting is not allowed inside the park, except when carried out in support of ecological management activities. Grazing is also forbidden in the park boundaries, except in the 30-hectare integral protection zone on Pricopanului Crest, linking the northwest portion of the park with the main body. The previously mentioned quarrying activity is another important economic activity in the region.

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[4] According to data collected in face-to-face interviews with mayors during the 2007 stakeholder survey.

There is also increasing interest in wind energy investment, as the area has characteristics that make it attractive for renewable energy development.

iii.   MMNP Institutional Structure

34.   In Romania the National Forest Administration is responsible for overseeing the majority of Romania's national parks and protected areas, and in this role that NFA was the executing agency for the project. This institutional structure had multiple benefits for the MMNP project, as it did for the related Maramureş Mountains Natural Park project, also supported by the GEF and UNDP. The NFA is an independent state institution, under the Ministry of Agriculture, and is responsible for managing Romania's public forestland, including harvesting and selling timber, which provides the agency's revenue. According to information in the mid-term evaluation, it is estimated that the NFA contributes about 3% of Romania's Gross Domestic Product. Although Romania's experience with the modern vision of protected areas is relatively new, the NFA has proven itself to be a reliable partner in this endeavor.

35.   The NFA has a ten-year contract, through 2014, with the Ministry of Environment (MoE) to manage 23 of Romania's 26 national-level protected areas (national and natural parks). The current overall institutional structure is represented in Figure 3, below. The NFA is responsible for the budget and management of the individual protected areas under this contract. According to NFA sources, the annual minimum budget is approximately $3 million euros. Within the past year there have been some changes and proposed changes to the protected area institutional structure in Romania, which are discussed in Sections V.B.i and VI.A.iii.

Figure 3 Romanian Protected Area Institutional Oversight Structure

36.   The international economic and political context also has relevance for the Măcin project, and relates to the macro-level issues that will be faced in coming years. An overarching element is Romania's accession to the EU on January 1, 2007, which brought new funding opportunities for environmental conservation, but also new requirements. Romania was required to designate its Natura 2000 and other protected sites when it joined the EU, but has

not consistently met its environmental obligations to the EU.[5] For 2007 – 2013, EU Sectoral Operational Programme funding for the environment in Romania is 157 million euros, and the Romanian government is required to match this with an additional approximately 63 million euros. The NFA plans to allocate 60-70 million euros in direct support of biodiversity conservation, such as through infrastructure for protected areas.

37.   The global economic crisis has had its effects in Romania as well. The NFA's budget declined in 2009, and some cuts were made to protected area budgets. In addition, in November 2008 elections the Social Democratic Party edged out the incumbent Democrat-Liberal Party, creating turnover in many government institutions. Romania again had elections in November / December 2009, this time for president. This time the Democrat Liberal Party candidate prevailed, with a 50.33% majority, but an effective national government is likely to remain elusive. In the current economic and political climate Romanian society appears nearly evenly divided, which makes effective governance a challenge as no party has a strong mandate to lead. As discussed in Section VI.A on sustainability, government restructuring and limited financial resources have long-term implications for institutional arrangements for protected area management in Romania.

B.   Project Background

38.   According to individuals involved in the project design phase, the project originated from a visit in 1999 from UNDP's regional office to explore the possibility for GEF-supported biodiversity conservation projects. At the time of the Project Development Facility Block A (PDF-A) funding proposal in 2001, the idea was just to get the national park established, and up and running. The protected areas law passed in 2003 created the park before the project was approved, allowing the project to contribute to the development of a more holistic approach to protected area management in the region.

> "The project went different, and better, than imagined in the PDF-A."
> - *Stakeholder directly involved in PDF-A*

39.   The MMNP project was developed around the same time as an EU-funded "LIFE" project. LIFE, initiated in 1992, is the EU's financial instrument for environmental policy.[6] The LIFE project "LIFE03NAT/RO/000026" titled "Participatory Management for Măcin Mountains Protected Area" was approved in early 2003, with a LIFE contribution of 300,000 euros, and a 600,000 euro total budget. The project was executed from July 1, 2003 to June 30th 2006 by the Tulcea County branch of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the ECOS youth organization.[7]

40.   With the given timing, the LIFE project overlapped with the GEF-funded Măcin project by approximately seven months. The off-setting timing of both projects was unfortunate because it did not allow for fully synergistic efforts. There were some elements of the two

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[5] In 2007, for example, the EC commission took action against Romania for failing to designate any Special Protected Areas for migratory and vulnerable birds (Europa. 2007. "Nature protection: Commission takes legal action against Romania for infringement of biodiversity legislation." Press Release.)

[6] For more information on the LIFE program, see http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/, as accessed on January 4, 2010.

[7] Environmental Protection Agency Tulcea. 2006. "Final Report - Layman Report: Participatory Management for Macin Mountains Protected Area - LIFE03NAT/RO/000026," September 2006.

projects that were complementary, such as the development of a management plan for MMNP, but on the whole it was difficult to integrate them because of the small overlap in time. According to project participants, UNDP and the Romanian Ministry of Finance did have copies of both project documents to allow coordination of activities, but ultimately the situation represents a disconnect in donor coordination which may have led to a lack of full incrementality of the GEF-funding.

41.   According to participants of the Măcin project, when the GEF-funded project first started there was not a clear understanding of how the two projects related or were supposed to work together. There were some initial conflicts between the agencies executing the two projects (the NFA and the Tulcea County EPA) as to how and in what scope the overlapping activities would be combined. The issue was resolved partially by time and resource constraints – the Government of Romania failed to fully provide their share of co-financing for the LIFE project, which caused a portion of the LIFE funds to revert to the EU. According to participants of the LIFE project, the project ended up not spending approximately two-thirds of its budget, and the corresponding activities were later carried out by the MMNP project; the MoE's contribution was counted as co-financing for the MMNP project, but the EU's LIFE funds were not. The LIFE project did, however, help set the foundation and initial activities for the MMNP project, allowing a more advanced starting point. For example, under the LIFE project a literature review was carried out which contributed to the theoretical framework and first version of the MMNP management plan, also developed under the LIFE project. The GEF-funded project is mentioned multiple times in the LIFE project's "After-LIFE Conservation Plan" as supporting the continuation and strengthening of activities begun under the LIFE project.

IV. Project Design and Implementation

A.   Project Concept and Design

42.   As described in Section III.A on the development context, the main threats addressed by the project were habitat fragmentation and degradation due to non-environmentally friendly agricultural and forest management practices, as well as specific activities such as quarrying and wind power development. According to the project document, the project's overall goal was "To conserve globally significant biological diversity by strengthening Romania's emerging national system of protected areas." The project objective was *"A landscape-oriented method of managing small protected areas and improving conservation effectiveness is demonstrated in Măcin Mountains National Park and constitutes a model for replication across the emerging national system of protected areas."*   The project was executed by the NFA, and implementation began in November 2005. Table 2 shows key project dates. The project was funded as a GEF Medium-sized Project (MSP), with $0.975 million in GEF funding, and proposed co-financing of $2.10 million from various sources, for a total cost of $3.10 million (plus $0.025 in GEF PDF-A funding). Table 5 in Section IV.B shows a complete breakdown of expected and actual project co-financing.

Table 2 MMNP Project Key Dates

Milestone	Expected date	Actual date
PDF-A Approval	n/a	July 26, 2001
CEO endorsement/approval		August 16, 2005
Agency approval date	n/a	November 9, 2005
Implementation start (first disbursement)	n/a	November 10, 2005
Mid-term evaluation	December 2007	March 17, 2008
Project completion	December 31, 2009	December 31, 2009
Terminal evaluation completion	December 2009	December 2009
Project Operational Closing	December 31, 2009	December 31, 2009
Project Financial Closing (in ATLAS)	n/s	December 31, 2010

43.   Three outcomes were planned to support the overall objective:

**Outcome 1:** Productive landscape around MMNP is made more biodiversity friendly;

Outcome 2: Măcin Mountains National Park management capacity and conservation effectiveness is secured;

Outcome 3: Replication of small protected area management best practices across national PA system is ongoing.

44.   The project document does not specifically articulate the intended strategy – but based on the threats addressed and the proposed outcomes the strategy can be surmised. Because MMNP is a relatively small protected area without a distinct corridor to a larger protected area, MMNP is in essence an "island" in the landscape, with the surrounding area acting as a biodiversity "sink." Thus, to maintain or improve the conservation status of the park's biodiversity in the long-term, it is necessary to manage the entire landscape both in and outside the park. Outcome 1 of the project was directed to improve the environmentally friendliness of the production activities in the surrounding landscape. To ensure effective management of the protected area itself, as well as contribute to improved management of the surrounding area, Outcome 2 of the project was directed to developing the management capacity of the protected area. Finally, because MMNP is a small protected area, the project sought to achieve Global Environment Benefits by scaling up and replicating MMNP best practices throughout Romania's protected area system.

45.   Figure 4 below summarizes the overall project intervention logic, retrospectively constructed by this evaluation. The project outputs are designed to contribute to the achievement of anticipated outcomes. Once outcomes are achieved, there is a period of implementation and ongoing management that necessarily occurs in the timeframe beyond the life of the project. From a theory-based evaluative point of view, if the project assumptions remain valid and the project successfully achieves the outcomes, it can be anticipated that the expected impact will eventually be achieved. For GEF projects, it is anticipated that projects will contribute at a scale sufficient to comprise "Global Environmental Benefits." Impacts and the contribution to Global Environmental Benefits by the MMNP project are discussed further in Section VI.D on impacts.

Figure 4 MMNP Project Intervention Logic Chain
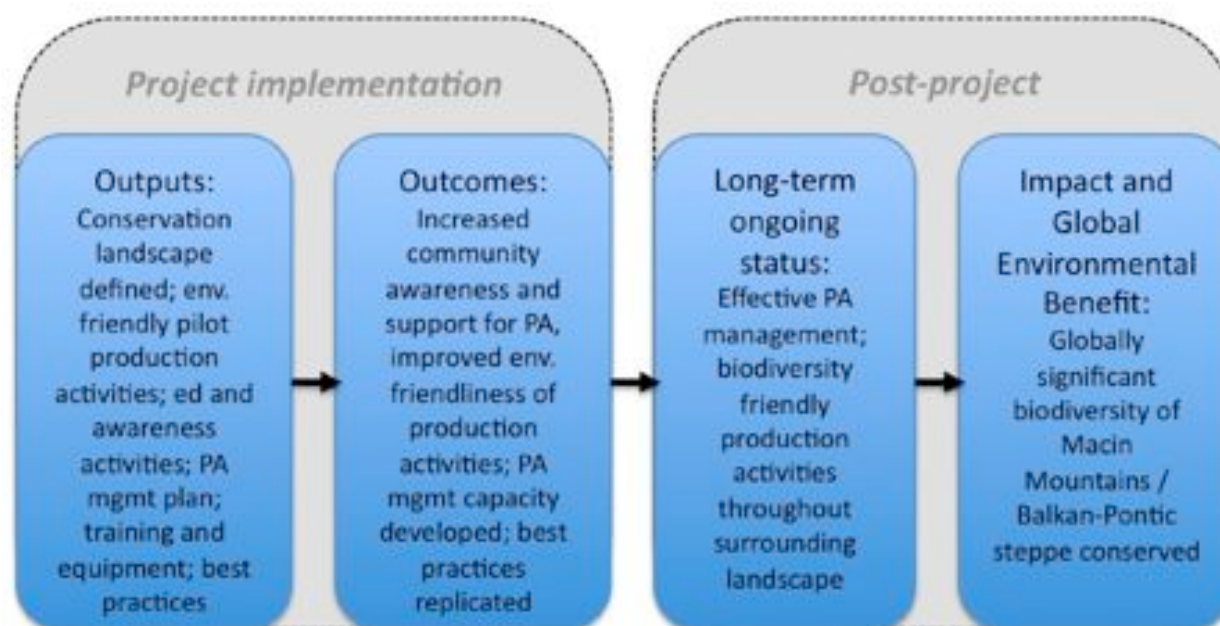
i.   Timeframes from Development to Implementation

46.   Like many GEF projects, the MMNP project faced an extended period of time between project design and implementation. As highlighted in Table 2 above, the PDF-A was approved in July 2001, and the project was approved by the GEF in August 2005, with implementation beginning in November 2005. This indicates a 53 month period between PDF-A approval and project start-up. This is significantly longer than the average for GEF MSPs – a 2006 GEF evaluation identified the average amount of time for MSPs to go from PDF-A to project startup as 30 months.[8] The time between design and approval was partially due to GEF resource allocation issues related to entry into the EU in 2005 by some countries. Countries like Poland and the Czech Republic were not eligible for GEF funding once they joined the EU in 2005, so GEF funding in the region as a whole was prioritized in line with the EU access process, with countries like Romania, that would be joining the EU later, received funding for their GEF projects later.

47.   Despite the long development period, the conditions on the ground did not change significantly during the period from PDF-A to approval, and few changes to the planned project activities were required during the inception phase. Although a formal decision was never taken on the matter, one important adjustment was the abandonment of the NFA's forestry certification activities, due to changed assumptions at the national level related to the land restitution process. This is further discussion in Section IV.B.i below on implementation approach and Section IV.C on adaptive management.

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[8] GEF Evaluation Office. 2007. "Joint Evaluation of the GEF Activity Cycle and Modalities," Evaluation Report No. 33. Washington, D.C.: GEF Evaluation Office.

ii.   Relevance to Romanian Development Objectives, International Conventions, and the GEF Biodiversity Focal Area

48.   The project's overall objective is "A landscape-oriented method of managing small protected areas and improving conservation effectiveness is demonstrated in Măcin Mountains National Park and constitutes a model for replication across the emerging national system of protected areas."   The MMNP project relevance is <u>satisfactory</u> with respect to Romanian national environmental and development priorities, the CBD, and the GEF biodiversity focal area.

49.   There are multiple Romanian government policy documents supported by the project objective. The Romanian National Development Plan for 2004-2006 identified environmental protection as the second national priority.   Environmental protection in this context was defined as including nature conservation and sustainable development, including eco-tourism and sustainable forest resource use. The Romanian Rural Development Strategy for 2007-2013 identifies four "axes" of which the second is "improvement of the environment and rural areas through the sustainable use of agricultural and forestry land." The strategic objectives of this axis are "Ensure the continuous sustainable use of agricultural land," "Preserve and improve the state of the natural resources and habitats" and "Promote the sustainable management of the forest land."[9]

50.   As part of the EU accession process Romania also had to further specify its environmental priorities.   Romania's Sectoral Operational Programme for the Environment 2007 – 2013 includes as its fourth axis "Implementation of Adequate Management Systems for Nature Protection," and states:

> *Romania has to ensure the establishment of Natura 2000 network, in accordance with Birds and Habitats Directives and to prepare relevant protection measures for sites of community interest. Natura 2000 sites are estimated at about 15% of the national territory. As the future Natura 2000 network and its management will be closely linked to the national protected area network, appropriate management and monitoring system has to be developed and implemented for the entire protected areas network, supported by a well development management infrastructure.[10]*

51.   Although Romania continues to struggle with meeting its EU commitments with regard to environmental protection, the MMNP project objectives support these commitments.

52.   Romania ratified the CBD on August 17th, 1994. By becoming a signatory to, and ratifying with Law 58/1994, the CBD, Romania signaled its intention to support the objectives of the convention. Romania elaborated its first NBSAP in 1996, and this was revised in 2000. Romania is currently implementing a GEF-supported project to further revise and update its NBSAP titled "Support to alignment of National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan with the Convention on Biological Diversity and development of Clearing House Mechanism." The 2000 version of Romania's NBSAP, the version in existence during project development, included nine priority objectives which are supported by the objectives of the MMNP project:

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[9] Government of Romania. 2007. "National Strategy Plan for Rural Development, 2007-2013," Ministry of Agriculture Forests and Rural Development.
[10] Government of Romania. 2007. "Sectoral Operational Programme: Environment, 2007 – 2013, Final Version 2007," Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development.

1. *Development of the legislative framework and strengthening the institutional capacity for biological diversity conservation and sustainable use of its components.*

2. *Organisation of the national network of protected areas and ensuring their efficient and adequate management for the natural habitats protection and biological diversity conservation.*

3. *Conservation of threatened, endemic, and/or rare species with a high economic value "in situ" and "ex-situ".*

4. *The integration of the National Strategy for the Biological Diversity Conservation and Sustainable Use of its Components within the National Strategy, as well as within the departmental and local strategies, plans, programmes and policies for the national and local sustainable development.*

5. *The protection, conservation and restoration of the terrestrial and aquatic biological diversity outside protected areas through (1) reducing the negative impacts of pollution, natural resources overexploitation and inappropriate land-use practices and (2) restoring altered ecosystems and habitats.*

6. *Protection, conservation and restoration of the biological diversity specific to agro-systems through the implementation of the technologies which favour sustainable agriculture.*

7. *Training specialists and the general population in the spirit and techniques of biological diversity conservation and sustainable use of its components.*

8. *Involvement of NGOs and local communities in programmes and actions for biological diversity protection, conservation and restoration.*

9. *Conducting of special research and monitoring programmes for improving the knowledge of the biological diversity status.*[11]

53.   The ongoing GEF-supported project highlighted above will bring the NBSAP in closer alignment with the objectives of the convention. As noted in the project document for this project, "the main methodological approach of an update exercise will be to look into the possibilities and entry points for the BSAP integration into the wider development of Romania, such as country's national strategy as well as local and sectoral strategies, plans, programmes and policies for the country development."[12]

54.   Although further coherence between Romanian national strategies and the CBD is needed, the MMNP project supports implementation of the convention on various issues. Table 3 below shows the articles of the CBD related to the MMNP project; this analysis was conducted by the mid-term evaluation, and has been verified by the terminal evaluation.

Table 3 MMNP Project Support for CBD Implementation *(Source: MMNP Mid-term Evaluation)*

CBD Articles	MMNP Project Outcomes Outcome 1: Productive landscape around MMNP is made more biodiversity friendly	Outcome 2: MMNP management capacity and conservation effectiveness is secured	Outcome 3: Replication of small protected area management best practices across national PA system is ongoing
Article 1: Objectives	X	X	X
Article 5: Cooperation	X	X	X
Article 6: General measures for Conservation	X	X	X

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[11] Government of Romania. 2000. "Approximation Strategy for the Nature Conservation Sector," Ministry of Waters, Forests, and Environmental Protection, Directorate of Nature and Biological Diversity Conservation, July 2000.

[12] See http://www.gefonline.org/projectDetailsSQL.cfm?projID=3421 (as accessed on September 8, 2009).

and Sustainable Use			
Article 7: Identification and Monitoring	X	X	X
Article 8: In-situ Conservation	X	X	X
Article 10: Sustainable Use of Components of Biological Diversity	X	X	X
Article 11: Incentive Measures		X	X
Article 12: Research and Training	X		X
Article 13: Public Education and Awareness	X	X	
Article 17: Exchange of Information	X		X

55.   Romania is party to multiple other international conventions to which the MMNP project is broadly relevant, including the Ramsar Convention (ratified by Romania in 1991), the Bern Convention on Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (ratified in 1993), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (ratified in 1994), and the Bonn Convention for the Conservation of Migratory Species (ratified in 1998).

56.   Since the GEF is the financial mechanism for the CBD, the GEF's objectives for the biodiversity focal area derive from the CBD, i.e. the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources. The GEF's operational strategy identifies multiple strategic considerations for the biodiversity focal area, including "integration of the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity within national and, as appropriate, subregional and regional sustainable development plans and policies" and "helping to protect and sustainably manage ecosystems through targeted and cost-effective interventions."[13]

57.   The GEF's strategic priorities for biodiversity have continued to evolve through each phase of the GEF. The MMNP project was approved during GEF-3 (2003 – 2006), but the strategic priorities for biodiversity for GEF-4 (2007 – 2010) have not changed significantly. The GEF's current strategic objectives in the biodiversity focal area include 1. To catalyze sustainability of protected area systems; and 2. To mainstream biodiversity in production landscapes / seascape and sectors.[14] By increasing community support for biodiversity conservation, improving the biodiversity friendliness of activities in the production landscape surrounding MMNP, and implementing a management plan for MMNP informed by environmental data, the MMNP project is relevant to both the operational strategy of the GEF, and the strategic objectives of the biodiversity focal area.

58.   Overall, the MMNP project is relevant to Romania's local and national environmental conservation and development priorities, the objectives of the CBD and other conventions, and the policies and priorities of the GEF for the biodiversity focal area.

iii.   Stakeholder Participation and Country-Drivenness in Design

59.   Stakeholder participation in project development was difficult for the terminal evaluation to assess – this process would have taken place approximately eight or nine years earlier, and there was not significant previous documentation of this aspect available from

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[13] GEF. 1994. Operational Strategy of the Global Environment Facility.
[14] GEF. 2007. Biodiversity Focal Area Strategy and Strategic Programming for GEF-4. October 2007.

which to draw evaluative evidence. With that limitation in mind, the available indications are that the level of stakeholder input and participation in the project design phase was satisfactory. The project concept did not exactly originate from the local level and was not specifically "country-driven" as it resulted from outreach by UNDP, but the project supported a conservation initiative in the Măcin region that had been underway (going back to the establishment of the Măcin Mountains as a protected area by Tulcea County in 1996), and which was gaining momentum during the MMNP project development process. The project development process was led by the county EPA, and the national level stakeholders, such as the NFA, MoE and Ministry of Finance were also adequately involved, indicating positive "country-ownership."

60.   According to information in the project document, multiple stakeholder meetings were held during the project development phase, and relevant stakeholders had the opportunity to comment on the project document. The project document includes a table identifying relevant stakeholders involved in project implementation by their roles and responsibilities. There are some groups of stakeholders not mentioned which were later included in the consultative council – notably quarry operators and farmers. As stated in the project document, "This involvement of local stakeholder will continue and expand through the participatory management process envisaged by this project."

B.   Project Management and Cost-Effectiveness (Efficiency)

61.   MMNP project efficiency is rated <u>highly satisfactory</u>. The project was implemented in a cost-effective manner, and the project results achieved are commensurate with (or exceed) the level of investment from the GEF and co-financing partners. One particularly good example is the highly valuable html-based Global Information Systems (GIS) biodiversity monitoring database that was developed from scratch by the project, all for a budget of approximately $12,000. The project team implemented a number of innovative approaches that saved resources where possible. In addition, because the project team was employed from the beginning by the NFA, resources originally planned for human resources were transferred to other activities. The project was carried out according to the timeframe originally planned, without any extensions. This may have due to the project being originally planned for a four-year period, rather than three years as many GEF MSPs are designed. Financial management and reporting were carried out with professionalism and responsibility. Procurement was conducted without problem. The park administration team has developed the capacity to apply for and access new financing sources available from the EU.

i.   MMNP Project Implementation Approach

62.   The project was implemented under National Execution arrangements, with the NFA as the designated national institution responsible for execution. A small division of the NFA (based in Bucharest) focuses on nature protection and supports the NFA's obligations to the MoE to manage the majority of Romania's protected areas. Overall, the project was managed in an effective and appropriate manner, which can be seen from the fact that the project was fully and effectively implemented according to the original timeframe.

63.   Implementation was slowed during the project's first year due to delays in reaching full staff capacity. The management staff of MMNP made up the "project team" and was based at

the park's headquarters in the city of Tulcea, approximately 40 km from the park. Some park staff members, such as rangers and the chief biologist, are based in communities on the periphery of the park. During project development a key decision was made for the project team to be employed by the NFA from the beginning of implementation. This critical decision is a primary driver of project sustainability - operational costs are included in under the NFA's annual protected areas budget. This issue is further highlighted in Section VI.A.i on financial risks to sustainability. Information in the Project Implementation Reports (PIRs) indicates that $113,000 was committed each year to support MMNP operating costs, including park staff salaries. All indications are that the NFA will continue providing this basic level of funding, barring further exogenous economic shocks.

64.   The NFA agreement to support MMNP operating costs from the beginning was similar to the implementation arrangements for a World Bank – GEF project implemented from 1999 – 2006, "Biodiversity Conservation Management Project" for which it was negotiated that the NFA would pay for seven protected area management staff members at each of the three protected areas involved. It was foreseen that this model would then be replicated with other projects such as the Măcin project (as well as the Maramureş Mountains MSP). The willingness of the NFA to accept this additional financial responsibility can only be theorized, but presumably the arrangement provides the NFA with more substantial leverage vis-à-vis other government bodies such as the MoE.   The NFA's contract with the MoE is one way of mainstreaming biodiversity considerations in the forestry sector in Romania.

65.   Similar to the implementation approach for the Maramureş project, the NFA directly paid MMNP project staff salaries which had positive effects for sustainability, but presented a challenge for project staff who, in comparison to the staff of an average protected area in Romania, took on a significant additional workload to carry out the project activities. As with the Maramureş project, the Măcin project manager did not take personal leave time while the project was implemented to ensure project results were fully and effectively delivered. The original project budget provided for project staff salaries, but in agreement with the NFA this money was reprogrammed for additional project activities. This arrangement was also in-line with the GEF's policy of not paying for or topping up government staff salaries for individuals involved in project implementation.

66.   There were two project oversight bodies envisioned in the project document – a project board, and a project steering committee. At the inception workshop stakeholders agreed that the project board was an unnecessary additional structure, and that the project steering committee could adequately cover oversight. Steering committee meeting minutes were not available for this evaluation, but the steering committee did apparently fulfill its role. According to the project team, the steering committee met twice per year – at the mid-year meeting the budget was reviewed and approved, and at the end of the year meeting the following year's annual workplan was approved. Steering committee meeting date information included in the PIRs confirms this approach.

67.   Other project implementation bodies, namely the scientific council and consultative council, were directly relevant to the implementation of Outcome 2, and are discussed in Section V.B.ii below. The project's use of the logframe is highlighted in Section IV.C below on adaptive management and Section VI.C.i on project monitoring and evaluation.

ii.   Financial Management, Reporting Disbursement and Procurement

68.   The MMNP project's planned expenditure by outcome is broken down in Table 4 below. Outcome 1 was budgeted for 29.6% of GEF funding, 42.1% for Outcome 2, 22.3% for Outcome 3, and 6.1% was budgeted for monitoring and evaluation. Because the NFA was covering the staff costs for the project, there were no GEF funds budgeted for project management. The MMNP project was efficient and cost-effective, with accurate and timely financial reports delivered to UNDP. The project conformed to UNDP financial accounting standards and practices, including working with the ATLAS financial management system, and budget lines in UN format by activity. As mentioned above, workplans and budgets were approved biannually by the steering committee. There was generally an annual budget revision to adjust planning based on actual costs incurred during the year. Quarterly operational and financial reports and were submitted to the UNDP country office, as well as cash-advance requests. Financial reports were submitted directly to UNDP without review from the NFA, although there were two NFA representatives on the steering committee. The only significant budget shift had to do with an increase in the amount budgeted for the renovation of the Cetatuia building, for which cost savings were realized from various other activities.

69.   Although there was a general depreciation of the dollar relative to European currencies during the period of project implementation, the project team did not identify exchange rate issues as having presented a significant problem for budgeting (in contrast to many GEF projects during the past seven years of dollar depreciation). As described by the audit reports, for invoices in local currencies the ATLAS system automatically calculates a realized gain/loss at the time the payment is made.

70.   When compared to other similar projects in the region, project budgeting and expenditures were well in-line with international and national norms and standards. In relation to the scale and quality of results produced, the project was implemented in a highly efficient manner. This was due, in significant part, to a large amount of (undocumented) personal in-kind co-financing by the project team, contributed by regularly working far in excess of a standard work-week and the project manager foregoing personal leave time during the four-year implementation period.   Innovative approaches to producing results were also implemented to save financial resources and achieve efficient results – the most notable example, which bears repeating, was the full development of a sophisticated and effective html-based GIS monitoring database system for only $12,000.

71.   The project used NFA procurement procedures, which are considered to be more rigorous than UNDP procurement procedures, and there were no issues identified with procurement. The county NFA office helped the project team to understand and comply with government procurement procedures during the project start-up phase. During the first year the project was able to receive an exception to the national VAT for a project supported by foreign funds; following a legislative change in January 2007 the project team had to recover the VAT with the help of the NFA. External parties contracted by UNDP conducted audits annually.   The audits identified some required corrections to the financial records (e.g. misclassification of payment as UNDP disbursement instead of government disbursement), and these were resolved in an appropriate manner.

iii.   Co-financing and Leveraged Resources

72.   Table 5 below shows MMNP project expected and actual co-financing by source and type. The level of co-financing received was 189% greater than anticipated at CEO endorsement, with total actual co-financing of $3.94 million – a co-financing ratio of approximately 4:1. The reported in-kind co-financing does not include personal co-financing by the project team, which was likely significant, as mentioned above. This evaluation was not able to independently verify the transfer or expenditure of all co-financing resources, as this would have been beyond the scope and resources available for this exercise, but there is <u>no indication</u> that co-financing levels below, taken from the PIRs and discussions with the project team, are unsubstantiated.

73.   More than 80% of the reported co-financing was in-kind, and much of this was from the opportunity cost of foregone revenue to the NFA for non-use of timber and lime flower in the protected area. The originally planned NFA in-kind co-financing was for $113,000 in annual MMNP operations (including staff), and $285,000 annually in non-use of resources. Once the project started, the NFA realized an additional annual non-use contribution of $485,000 ($462,000 in non-use of timber, and $23,000 in non-use of lime flower), as indicated in Table 5, below. The value of the foregone revenue opportunities was calculated based on a formula taking into account reasonable assumptions about the annual value of these resources. The cash co-financing from the NFA for project team salaries, etc. was tracked through the documentation of the financial transfers between the NFA and the project account. Following project approval, the NFA also contributed unplanned $250,000 cash co-financing to support afforestation by MMNP. This co-financing was tracked through a direct transfer to MMNP, for which the NFA subsequently provided invoices for each afforestation activity. The co-financing from the MoE was $0.30 million the government matched to the LIFE project funding, plus an additional $0.12 million.

74.   At project approval it was anticipated that the NFA would also work to certify forests in the project area, which ultimately was not possible because of the NFA's suspension of forest certification at the national level, for reasons related to the land restitution process. According to the project manager, NFA forest certification will begin in 2010, including areas in MMNP.

75.   The in-kind co-financing received from partner NGOs was estimated (as is the case for in-kind co-financing in many GEF projects). This evaluation recommends that UNDP institute a system for documenting in-kind co-financing in GEF projects in a consistent and transparent manner, including taking into account personal co-financing from project staff (see recommendations at end of report).

76.   During project implementation a small amount of additional funding was leveraged for associated initiatives supporting the project objectives. In one particular example, with the support of the project a local non-governmental organization (NGO) called "Nature Smiles" received 20,000 euros from the MoE to help protect biodiversity outside and around the protected area through public awareness. In 2007 – 2008 a project to reforest 30 hectares was funded in Luncavita, with 45% of the funding coming from the central government, 45% from national environmental funds, and 10% from the town of Luncavita.

Table 4 MMNP Project Expenditures by Outcome *($ USD)*

	GEF Amount Planned	% of GEF Amount Planned	GEF Amount Actual	% of GEF Amount Actual	Total Planned	% of Total Planned	Total Actual	% of Actual Total
Outcome 1: Productive landscape around MMNP is made more biodiversity friendly	289,000	29.6%	305,750	31.4%	1,625,823	53.7%	N/A	N/A
Outcome 2: Măcin Mountains National Park management capacity and conservation effectiveness is secured	410,000	42.1%	417,550	42.8%	965,000	31.9%	N/A	N/A
Outcome 3: Replication of small protected area management best practices across national PA system is ongoing	217,000	22.3%	140,700	14.4%	437,000	14.4%	N/A	N/A
Monitoring and Evaluation	59,000	6.1%	111,000	11.4%	0	0%	N/A	N/A
Total	975,000		975,000		3,027,823			

Source: Project Document for planned amounts. Actual amounts are based on paper budget files provided by the project team in November 2009, and thus do not reflect final project accounting since the project did not financially close until the end of January 2010. Please check any attached management response for possible final project accounting. Co-financing was not channelled through individual project components, so it is not possible to calculate total actual expenditure by component.

Table 5 MMNP Project Expected and Actual Co-financing, as of June 30, 2009 *($ millions USD)*

Co-financing (Type / Source)	IA own Financing		Multi-lateral Agencies (Non-GEF)		Bi-laterals Donors		Central Government		Local Government		Private Sector		NGOs		Other Sources		Total Co-financing		Percent of Expected Co-financing
	Proposed	Actual	Proposed	Actual	Proposed	Actual	Proposed	Actual	Proposed	Actual	Proposed	Actual	Proposed	Actual	Proposed	Actual	Proposed	Actual	Actual share of proposed
Grant	0.05	0.05*					0.42	0.67									0.47	0.72	153%
Credits																			
Loans																			
Equity																			
In-kind							1.59	3.19**					0.03	0.03			1.62	3.22	199%
Non-grant Instruments																			
Other Types (UNDP Trust Fund)																			
TOTAL	0.05	0.05					2.01	3.86					0.03	0.03			2.09	3.94	189%

Note: "Proposed" co-financing refers to co-financing proposed at CEO endorsement.

* UNDP TRAC funds. $0.02 disbursed by June 30, 2009; $0.05 estimated to be disbursed by project end, not independently confirmed by this evaluation.

** 1.59 from ProDoc, plus salaries and infrastructure (0.06) and non-use (0.25) from June 30, 2009 to end of project, plus additional 1.29 more than originally committed from non-use of timber and lime flower (0.49 in 2008, 0.49 in 2007, and 0.31 in 2006)

Source: 2009 PIR.

C.   Flexibility and Adaptive Management

77.   The project was implemented in a flexible manner, and the logframe, along with other monitoring tools, were used to ensure the project stayed focused on the desired results. Implementation progress and progress toward outcomes was monitored annually in the PIRs, as further discussed in Section VI.C on monitoring and evaluation. In addition, the quarterly operational reports allowed regular monitoring of progress and potential risks. The project logframe was significantly revised and improved in the inception workshop, but no changes were made to the logframe beyond this. The post-mid-term evaluation adaptive management report identified key issues for the project to focus on during its final year based on the findings of the mid-term evaluation. This was an excellent innovation that could be replicated in other GEF projects; such stock-taking should be done by all projects in conjunction with the mid-term evaluation.

78.   Minor adjustments to project outputs and activities were made during implementation. One significant shift was that the project board was not constituted (as planned in the project document) because adequate stakeholder committees were already established and operational, in the form of the project steering committee and consultation committee. Another example is that under activity 2.4.4, the input was re-oriented from an international contractor to complete the ecotourism plan, and instead the Romanian Association for Ecotourism was contracted, which resulted in a savings of $19,000, which was then put towards the reconstruction of the Cetatuia visitor center. The cost of the visitor center was more than initially budgeted, and savings realized from the high cost-effectiveness of other project activities were re-oriented toward the renovation project. It was also agreed at the start of the project that Output 3.3 "Regulatory and policy mechanisms requiring the NFA and MoE to adopt best practices" was beyond the scope of the project, and it was agreed to limit the extent of this output.

D.   Use of Information Technologies

79.   The MMNP project made excellent use of modern information technologies. The most significant use was in the development of the html-based GIS-enabled biodiversity monitoring database system (discussed in greater detail under Section V.B.ii on Outcome 2), which was developed entirely under the auspices of the project. Not only does the database itself make use of innovative technical approaches, the methods of recording biodiversity monitoring data in the field for upload to the database are also impressive. The MMNP has a number of handheld GIS-enabled personal data devices[15] that the rangers "check-out" when going into the field on patrol or when specific monitoring visits are undertaken. Data is entered into the handheld device as it is collected, according to the specifics of the established monitoring protocols. The data is later uploaded to the database upon return to the park headquarters.

80.   Another innovative use of information technology by the project was the application of software modeling to develop a small-scale three-dimensional model of the park, which will be

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[15] The specific device used by MMNP is the Trimble Recon Handheld, see
http://www.trimble.com/recon_mgis_handheld.shtml, as accessed on January 6, 2010.

displayed in the visitor center. This project was undertaken by two MMNP staff members, and four community volunteers.

81.   Two   websites   were   established   with   information   about   MMNP, http://www.muntiimacin.ro   (under   the   auspices   of   the   regional   EPA   office),   and http://www.parcmacin.ro (managed by MMNP administration). At various times throughout the terminal evaluation period the website managed by the EPA was not accessible, at least from within the US. The website managed by the project team includes extensive information about the environmental aspects of the park, information about park administration, and provides some information to support tourism, such as the map of tourism features developed under the project.   The website is produced in both Romanian and English, which greatly enhances its utility.   Overall there is still much greater potential to provide information and create a valuable internet presence than is currently leveraged. For example, additional value could be derived by functioning as a knowledge portal on MMNP good practices and lessons, and the MMNP management plan could be provided for download.

82.   The website could also be leveraged to much greater extent in support of tourism – the internet is one of the main resources for information on tourism and foreign travel, and the park administration is well-positioned to provide information relevant to tourists. For a region such as Măcin, which is not widely known outside Romania, having a prominent and useful internet presence would be highly valuable.   Translating key sections of the website into German should also be a priority. There are other internet resources for tourism in Romania, but these also currently do not draw attention to MMNP. For example, the national Romania tourism website, http://www.romaniatourism.com, includes good information on tourism in Dobrogea, but only briefly mentions MMNP and doesn't even link to the MMNP website. There is currently no tourism website with information for the Măcin area, and the majority of web-based tourist information for Tulcea County focuses on the Danube Delta.

83.   Instead of taking on the large burden of developing a full-service tourism website, the park could consider supporting and leveraging partnerships with relevant local and regional organizations to develop an internet presence that would draw attention and visitors to the park. Key potential partners would be the Romanian Ecotourism Association, the Tulcea County tourism board, the Romanian national tourism agency, local tourism entrepreneurs (such as Alcovin Vineyards), and the regional chamber of commerce.

E.   UNDP Project Oversight and Comparative Advantage

84.   According to GEF terminology, UNDP was the "implementing agency" for the MMNP project, responsible for providing oversight and back-up, and working with the project on implementation and financial reporting. The effective and efficient results of the project, as well as the testimony of those directly involved, indicate a positive working relationship between the project team, UNDP, and the NFA. A UNDP-NFA cost-sharing agreement was implemented in which the NFA agreed to provide UNDP $250,000 USD to support project implementation. The UNDP country office provided extensive support in the early days of the project, when it was slow to start implementation, UNDP reporting and accounting procedures had to be explained, and there were issues, such as the legal battle with the quarry, that were distractions from implementation. Representatives from all three organizations and the MoE

stated that they were appreciative of the excellent communication and cooperation throughout the implementation period. The UNDP country officer responsible for project oversight visited the region multiple times – three times in 2006, three times in 2007, at least twice in 2008 and at least twice in 2009. The relevant officer also worked collaboratively with the project team to complete the annual Project Implementation Report (PIR) in a complete and rigorous manner to ensure this was an effective tool for monitoring and adaptive management.

85.   UNDP also undertook the recruitment and hiring of the international experts required to assist the project in capacity development in the areas of protected area management, landscape conservation planning, economic valuation of environmental resources, project implementation and adaptive management, as well as audits and external evaluation. Recruitment was carried out in a timely and cost-effective manner.

86.   UNDP's Energy and Environment country officer position had high turnover during the project implementation period, with three different individuals filling the position during the project's four-year implementation period. The project handovers throughout these transitions presented no significant problems for supporting and overseeing project implementation.

V. Project Performance and Results

A.   Key Factors Affecting Project Implementation

87.   The strong stakeholder participation has been highlighted throughout this evaluation report as one of the aspects of the MMNP project most significantly responsible for the high level of success achieved. Participation and support from the mayors of the communes in MMNP, and from the regional institutions in Tulcea County is a positive sign for the future. By respecting and understanding the needs of communities in MMNP, the project team has been able to develop buy-in and understanding of biodiversity conservation needs in the region.

88.   As discussed elsewhere in this report, the reality of EU accession presented multiple opportunities and constraints for biodiversity conservation in Romania in general, and the MMNP project in particular. By being designated as part of Romania's Natura 2000 network, MMNP is likely to have additional opportunities for financial support through EU compensation payments. At the same time, Romania's failure to meet its EU environmental conservation obligations in a timely manner means such support may be restricted in the short-term.

B.   Achievement of Project Objective and Anticipated Outcomes (Effectiveness)

89.   At the project level effectiveness is considered highly satisfactory, as described below for each project outcome. The overall project objective was "A landscape-oriented method of managing small protected areas and improving conservation effectiveness is demonstrated in Măcin Mountains National Park and constitutes a model for replication across the emerging national system of protected areas." The project objective has been achieved, and the necessary conditions are in place for Global Environmental Benefits to be achieved in the long-term, even though risks do remain, as discussed in Section VI.A on sustainability. MMNP's robust environmental monitoring system has shown that the impact level indicators have been met.

90.   The indicators identified for the overall project objective were at the ecosystem and species level:

- Number of hectares of grasslands managed to enhance habitat of priority species

- Number of hectares of forest in and around the Măcin Park under Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified management

- Populations of target species within national park maintained at baseline levels or increased: Dobrudjan turtle, long-legged buzzard, Romanian dragon snake, short-toed eagle, lesser spotted eagle, Dobrudja bellflower, rockpink

91.   Project impacts and contributions to Global Environmental Benefits are discussed further in Section VI.D, and it can be said that the objective-level indicators have been met with the exception of FSC certification of forest in and around Măcin Park. Because of remaining uncertainties in the land restitution process at the national level, the NFA halted forest certification because it is a waste of resources to certify forest area that may end up being restituted. This indicator was never formally revised, but in the early stages of the project it was recognized that the achievement of this indicator was beyond the scope of the project and subject to assumptions that were no longer valid.

92.   While certification was not carried out the project has made another notable contribution to sustainable forest management in the region. The park administration worked with the local NFA office to develop a methodology for sustainable forest management, and the technique has since been shared within the NFA. The management technique is initiated through the planting of saplings in 1.5 meter circles throughout the plot. After five to seven years the trees are thinned, with new saplings planted in the open areas between the original central points. As thinning and planting is carried out over many years a heterogeneous forest structure develops, with a fully stratified age profile, similar to the way in which a forest develops naturally. Under this successional harvesting technique, the forest is managed for full regeneration over a 25-year period, with annual harvesting of trees that have reached the targeted size. Large trees that have specific biodiversity values, such as raptor nest sites, etc. are left standing. The regional NFA office plans to apply this approach to all NFA lands in Dobrudja, but the extent to which the technique can and will be applied to all NFA managed forest lands remains to be seen. However, if the harvesting technique is scaled up even a small amount at the national level it would have a significant impact due to the large amount of land managed by the NFA.

i.   Outcome 1: Productive landscape around MMNP is made more biodiversity friendly

93.   Achievement of Outcome 1 is rated <u>highly satisfactory</u>. Project activities under this outcome have contributed to one of the strongest results of the project – the expansion of eco (organic) agriculture on the farms in the surrounding area. The indicators for outcome 1 were:

- Number of priority habitats under special management by local stakeholders and MMNP in surrounding landscape, with a target of five habitats

- Number of farms replicating agro-environmental organic practices in Măcin, with a target of 10 farms

- Percentage improvement in level of support for park and priority biodiversity conservation issues in local communities, with a target of a 10% annual increase in the level of support. Two sub-indicators were identified: (i) agreements with local authorities; (ii) number of ecological farms.

94.   By the end of the project 15 farmers were members of the local organic agriculture association, which covers an area of over 1100 hectares around MMNP (see Photo 1). Organic agriculture provides multiple environmental benefits such as improvement in water quality in the area, but a particularly important aspect in the Măcin area is the health of the ground squirrel population and other rodents, which in turn support the raptor population. Activities supported by the project included awareness raising and outreach activities about the benefits of eco-agriculture. The positive results in the expansion of organic agriculture cannot be attributed solely to the project, as there are other important partners involved in the venture, which also strengthens the initiative and its prospects for the future. The most important partner is the Danish firm Schreiber Tours,[16] which is expanding into the market for organic wheat and other grains.

95.   In the Măcin area, Schreiber has paid for the costs of organic certification for the farmers participating in the local organic farmers association, and has entered into contracts with local farmers to purchase organic grains at a 30% premium to conventionally produced products. The price for conventionally produced wheat is 0.1 euros per kilogram. In the contracts, however, Schreiber does not oblige the farmers to sell to them, and they have indicated they will outbid any other sellers. According to the MMNP park manager, other companies have indicated interest in the organic market in the region (e.g. Suolo e Salute, an Italian company), but the farmers have remained loyal to Schreiber based on their observance of the consistency and transparency of Schreiber's conduct. The fact that there are other companies interested in the market is an important factor for the long-term economic sustainability of the initiative, in case of the loss of Schreiber's ability to sustain the market for any reason. Organic production requires a three-year conversion period, and 2009-2010 is the first year the farmers will be able to sell the certified organic wheat. Only a one-year conversion period is required if organic seeds are required, and MMNP initially supported the movement to organic agriculture by loaning money for purchasing a stock of

Photo 1 Organic Agriculture Field Bordering MMNP

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[16] According to information available online, Schreiber Tours is owned by Torben Schreiber, the Danish consul in Romania. http://www.trade-romania.biz/news_list.php?lang=2&page=1380&newsId=7186, as accessed 12/29/09.

organic seeds for farmers, but this was determined to be an unnecessary step. The local organic association also plans to organize a single distribution point with Schreiber's assistance to increase efficiency. This is an excellent example of public-private partnership supporting both economic and environmental objectives. According to the project team, the approach of supporting organic agriculture around protected areas in partnership with local farmers has already been replicated in six other protected areas in Romania. According to the Prefect of Tulcea County, the county is one of the top three regions in Romania for organic agriculture.

96.   Although there is no specific indicator related to these results, another significant victory for the park management was the agreement reached with the quarry on the border of the park. In the early days of the project, the quarry owners legally disputed the park boundaries with the government. The court agreed that the protected area boundaries, as they were originally demarcated, were in infringement of the quarry operator's previous lease agreement, and the park boundaries were redrawn accordingly. However, as part of this agreement, the park administration reached an agreement with the quarry owners on multiple aspects that would limit the environmental impact of their operations – in particular, limiting the elevation up to which they can extract rock which thereby limits the total potential footprint of the quarry, and other measures related to noise and dust, which have a significant impact on the flora and fauna in the area of the quarry. The MMNP administration also applied the concept of "biodiversity offsets" in the negotiations and as a result of having the park boundaries partially redrawn with respect to the quarry, secured oversight of 10 additional hectares of comparable habitat in agreement with the municipality of Greci. It has even been mentioned that the quarries are now using environmentally friendly dynamite in their operations.[17] During the evaluation visit with the Tulcea environmental protection agency, it was noted that the quarry is facing financial decline due to the cost of the environmental measures imposed, and may go out of business, though this has not been objectively verified.

97.   As highlighted in Section III.A on the development context of the Măcin region, along with quarrying and agriculture, another important economic development activity, and one that is growing in importance, is wind power. Although wind power development is not likely to take place inside the park boundaries, because the park is relatively small, wind power development in the nearby areas can also have negative environmental effects, particularly on bird and bats,[18] for which the official park boundaries are meaningless. According to Romanian development and planning regulations, municipalities that have a protected area in their local area plan must include the protected area administration in their local investment and economic development approval procedures. Romania's protected area regulations further require that no matter how far from the protected area development activities are planned, if it is demonstrated that there may be an environmental impact on the protected area, approval

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[17] Although the environmentally friendliness of dynamite in general is a point for further discussion, there are some methods for reducing the environmental impact of TNT and such explosives used in quarry operations. For example, see Nyanhongo, G.S. et al. 2008. "A novel environmentally friendly 2,4,6-trinitrotoluene (TNT) based explosive," *Macedonian Journal of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering*, Vol. 27, No. 2, pp. 107-116.

[18] For information on issues related to bats and wind energy, see http://www.fort.usgs.gov/BatsWindmills/, as accessed on December 30, 2009. For an example of issues related to birds of prey and wind energy, see Ritter, John. 2005. "Wind turbines taking toll on birds of prey," USA Today, January 5, 2005. Available at http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2005-01-04-windmills-usat_x.htm, as accessed on December 30, 2009.

for the development is required from the protected area administration. As pointed out by the MMNP manager, this is a difficult situation for investors because there is no clear definition of what types of activity require protected area approval at what distance from the park. In the Măcin area, MMNP is one of ten entities from which approval is required, and MMNP's approval is contingent on the scientific council's review of the Environmental Impact Assessment, which is contracted by the EPA.

98.   The MMNP management has had some initial success in at least limiting planned wind energy investments in the vicinity of the park. So far the nearest of these have been planned in the southwest portion of the park, near the municipality of Cerna.   For the proposed investment, the park administration (with support from the Scientific Council) rejected four of 24 planned windmills. The park administration has also negotiated with the wind developers to create a 1.5km buffer zone for the park, and to limit the density of windmills within a larger boundary. These measures are based on hard scientific data collecting through park's biological monitoring program, and analyzed using the relational GIS database in which the data is stored. An example of the area analyzed for windmill placement, with zoning and raptor observance, can be seen in Figure 5 below. The future development of wind energy in the Măcin region will require constant vigilance by the park management, as discussed in Section VI.A.iv on risks to environmental sustainability.

99.   The park administration has established key relationships and agreements with authorities in the surrounding communities related to various aspects of park management, based on priority habitats identified in the process of surveying the landscape for conservation management.   The municipality of Greci has agreed to provide 1800m^2 on which the planned visitor information center can be built (under the currently submitted proposal for EU environmental SOP funds – see Section VI.A.i on financial sustainability).   The municipality of Cerna has granted use of a 2500m^2 field for 49 years as the home of the park management's equestrian contingent. The municipality of Greci provides support in serving as one of the main entry points to the park, and has contributed 10 hectares to be managed by the park to which the municipality of Jijilla has added 40 hectares, which creates an ecological corridor between the smaller northwest section of the park and the main body of the park. These positive relationships have been built through

Figure 5 Area Zoned With 1.5km Wind Energy Buffer
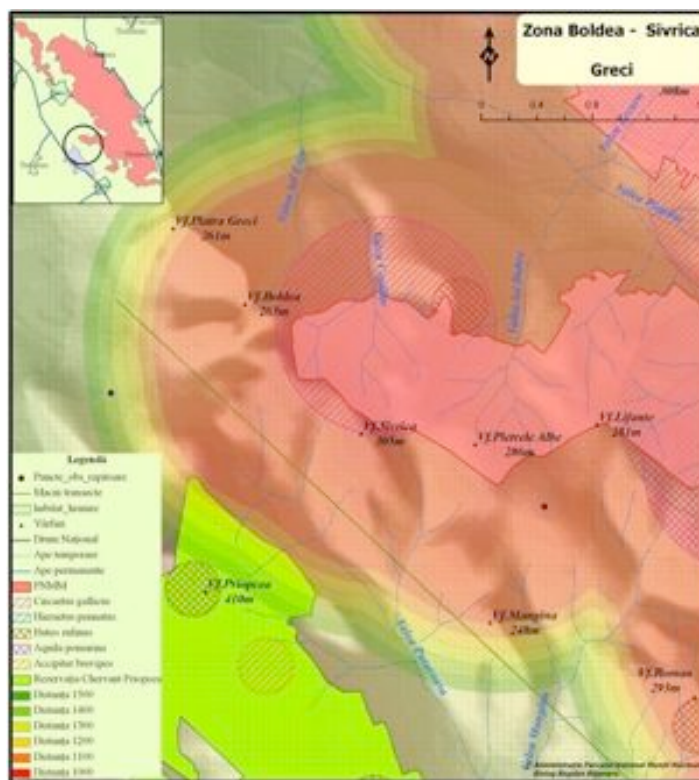
good communication and cooperation, but the park also has something to offer the local municipalities in the form of support for their own development proposals. When municipalities submit their proposals to

> "For the first time in my life, one mayor said, 'ok, I will give you something just to use.' "
> - *National level stakeholder, re: donation of space for proposed visitor center*

central government sources seeking resources for infrastructure, etc., they receive "bonus points" in the proposal scoring system if they are within the vicinity of a national park and can obtain a letter of support from the park.

100.   Another novel approach taken by the project for improving the environmental management of areas surrounding the national park was the development of controlled grazing agreements with some surrounding municipalities that own sheep grazing pastures bordering MMNP. The park administration offered to conduct an assessment of the pastures carrying capacity to support the municipalities' responsible and sustainable management of their lands, covering a total of 458 hectares. Through the MMNP project the foremost national expert to

> "Each partner in the region has their specialty, and their role to play. The protected area's role is to protect the environment."
> - *Mayor of Cerna*

conduct such an assessment was contracted, and the municipalities have since provided the shepherds with only the recommended number of sheep for the pastures based on the carrying capacity analysis.

101.   Other activities undertaken under Outcome 1 included the elaboration of a landscape conservation plan by a contracted international expert (further highlighted with respect to the management plan in the following section), and the promotion of local traditions in conjunction with nature conservation.

ii.   Outcome 2: Măcin Mountains National Park management capacity and conservation effectiveness is secured

102.   MMNP project effectiveness for Outcome 2 is considered <u>satisfactory</u>. There are multiple concrete results supporting this outcome, which have been achieved in a highly efficient manner. The increasing METT score provides some indication of this, but does not fully capture the extent of results achieved to increase capacity and support conservation effectiveness in MMNP.

103.   There are two bodies that play crucial roles in the effective management of MMNP - the Consultative Council, and the Scientific Council. According to the MMNP management plan, "Based on Law 462/2001 (art.18, indent 4b and indent 6), the [Consultative Council] is the management structure that includes representatives of the main stakeholders. The role of this Council is to allow the participation of stakeholders in park management activities." The membership for both councils is proposed by the MMNP administration to the Ministry of Education and Sustainable Development (MESD), which confirms nominations through a Ministry Order. The nomination for the scientific council is first sent to Romanian Academy (Commission for Monuments of Nature) before being sent to the MESD.

104.   The Consultative Council officially has 26 members representing the full range of stakeholders in the park, though council meetings were attended by approximately 50 people.

Notably, membership includes representatives of the quarry operations, the mayors of the communities around the park, the county EPA, and representatives from farmers' groups. Meetings are held at least twice per year. The Consultative Council was critical for the participatory process of developing the management plan, and was one of the keys to successful MMNP project implementation because it provided a mechanism by which a wide variety of local stakeholders could provide input to the overall protected area management and decision-making process. However, this body does not have the power to make binding decisions, and all agreements by the Consultative Council are considered "recommendations" to the Scientific Council and park administration. This regular communication channel allowed the project manager to build support for protected area management objectives, and raise awareness on key issues facing the park so local stakeholders could also support the project implementation in their own work.

105.   Experience in other GEF-supported projects has shown that to successfully implement integrated ecosystem management principles and mainstream biodiversity in development, there must be a central mechanism for communication and coordination between key stakeholders. Since it is provided for under Romania's protected area legislation, it is anticipated that the Consultative Council will be an ongoing mechanism supported by the MMNP administration to facilitate effective management and community awareness about the park's activities.

106.   Again, according to the MMNP management plan, the Scientific Council "is established on the basis of Law 462/2001. The Scientific Council includes representatives of governmental, scientific and administrative structures and is in charge of approving and assessing the management activities established in accordance with the management plan." The scientific council consists of nine academic specialists who review all proposed actions or decisions that have environmental impact implications; in particular, it reviews environmental impact assessments conducted for proposed investments within the park's geographic remit. The Scientific Council reviews the available data on a particular issue and can take three actions – approve, deny, or request more information. Decisions are taken by vote, and, according to one member there are often vigorous debates, and some issues have been decided 5 to 4.

107.   Romania's protected area scientific councils are highly valuable aspects of protected area management because, at least for Măcin, a.) The Scientific Council is made up of professionally well-respected individuals who can be counted on to provide expert and authoritative technical advice and decision-making for MMNP management; b.) The technically based decisions of the Scientific Council are difficult for external parties to refute; and c.) The Scientific Council also provides a sort of "backstage blame buffer" for the MMNP administration for decisions that may be unpopular with certain stakeholders; the park administration has to meet stakeholders face-to-face, the Scientific Council does not.

108.   Perhaps the most foundational aspect to improving management effectiveness in the future has been the elaboration and finalization of the management plan for MMNP, for the period 2009 – 2013. The management plan was developed with input from an international expert, and has been approved by the consultative council and scientific council, and submitted to the MoE. The management plan has also been developed in close coordination with the

county branch of the NFA, which manages a large tract of forest contingent to MMNP. There were five main steps to the development of the management plan:

1. *Organizing workshops with members of the Scientific Council and Consultative Council in the initial stage of the planning work, followed by discussion and completion of the plan draft with the representation of local stakeholders.*

2. *Conducting special work sessions in small groups with representatives of stakeholders.*

3. *Requesting comments/suggestions from stakeholders and specialists in various domains.*

4. *Adapting from the management plan previously developed by the LIFE Project information concerning habitats and priority species, monitoring and ecotourism that the Scientific Council proposed should be included in the management plan.*

5. *Consulting stakeholders before requesting the approval of the Management Plan, according to the legal requirements.[19]*

109.   Addressed in the plan are the purpose of the protected area, the legal framework, a description of the park, an assessment of environmental and anthropogenic values of the area, and the management strategy. It is easy to forget the significance of the management plan's holistic approach to conservation at the landscape scale, and the involvement of surrounding communities in protected area management. Capacity development for a landscape approach to conservation, and the specifics for the Măcin area, were developed with the support of an international expert contracted for the project by UNDP. As stated in the PIR, "For the first time at national protected areas network level, a small protected area such as MMNP clearly spells out integrated conservation measures for the protected area and surrounding area, including conservation measures for priority species and habitats, and sustainable-use measures for natural resources." Figure 6 shows the park's internal zoning scheme based on analysis of environmental monitoring data. While covered by the management plan, managing the sustainable use of non-timber forest products remains challenging.

110.   All protected areas in Romania are required to have their management plans approved by the central agency for protected areas, under the MoE, which was initially constituted at the beginning of 2009 (although such an agency had been under discussion for many years) to support Romania's implementation of Natura 2000 following EU accession. Unfortunately, as discussed in Section VI.A.iii on institutional sustainability, the funding for this organization has been eliminated due to the economic crisis, and the organization is no longer in existence. Therefore it is impossible for the agency to approve the management plan for Măcin or any other protected area in Romania, which presents a catch-22 for the park administration. Although lack of national approval weakens the institutional and legal framework of the park administration, the park administration is, appropriately, basing current management approaches on the plan and should continue to move ahead with implementation. For example, timber harvesting and hunting have been stopped in the core areas of the park.

111.   To support implementation of the management plan, the capacity of the MMNP staff has been increased significantly through the project at both the individual and institutional levels.   Staff members have received specific training (for example, the park manager participated in a communication / conflict management training), but the majority of the

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[19] Macin Mountains National Park Management Plan, 2009 - 2013

increase is less tangible – as stated by the project manager, "we have learned how to implement a large international funded project." The MMNP management plan calls for a total of 12 staff, and the staffing-up of the park administration has naturally extended the capacity for effective management.

Figure 6 MMNP Management Zoning Based on Environmental Monitoring Data[20]

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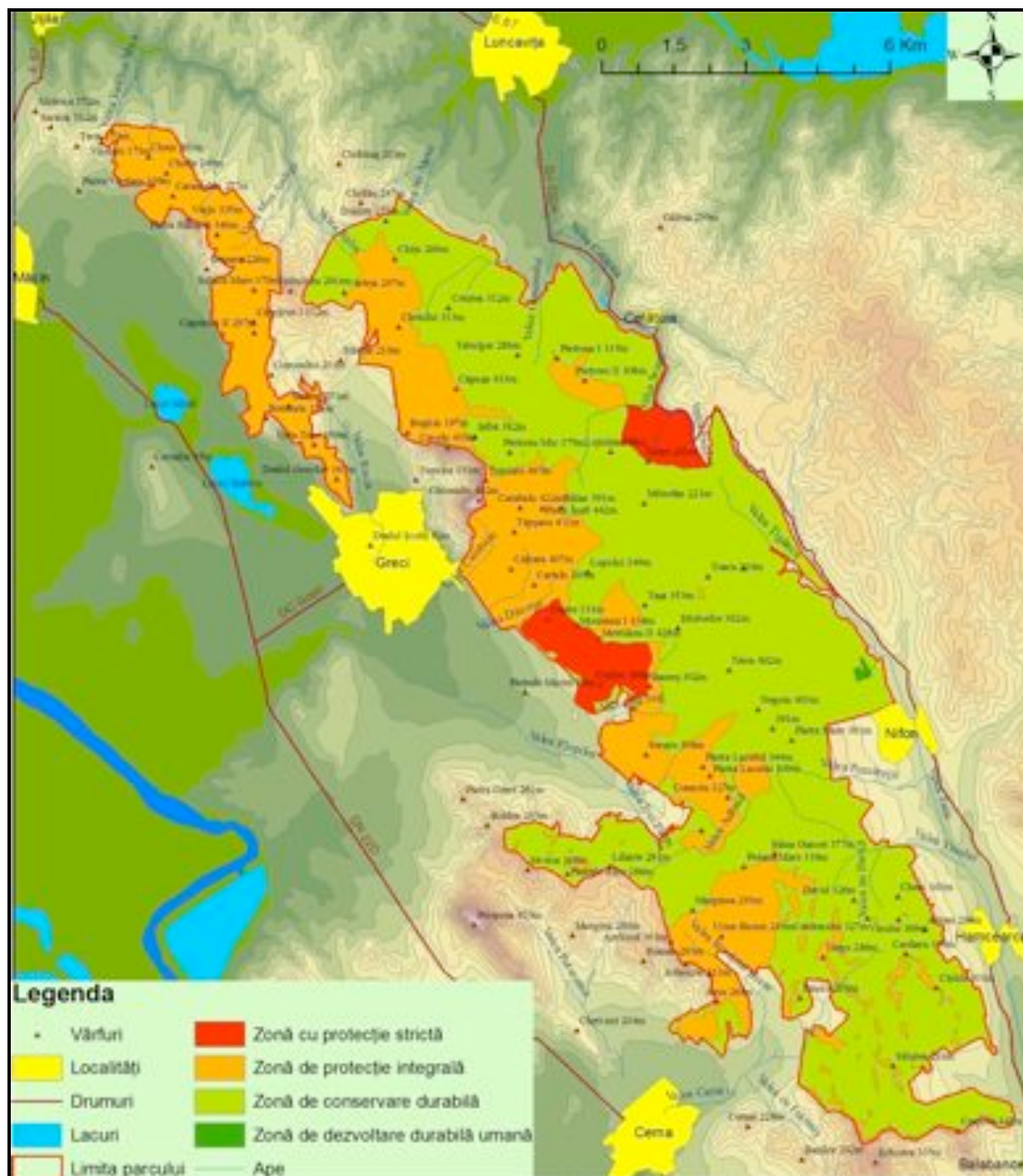
[20] Source: Macin Mountains National Park Management Plan, 2009 - 2013

112.   In addition, several technical and infrastructure enhancements have facilitated improved management. These include the establishment of the park administration offices in a refurbished office space in Tulcea, the renovation of the Cetatuia ranger offices / education facility near the Beech Valley (see Photo 2), construction of the horse shelter, and purchasing of field equipment to support the rangers in the field and assist with biological data collection (e.g. video cameras, handheld computer/GIS devices, etc.). The park administration has additional plans for a much larger visitor center on the land provided by the town of Greci if the EU environment SOP proposal is approved. This type of infrastructure could be a great resource for the community and the park, but a high level of attention should be paid to related future infrastructure operational and maintenance costs.

113.   Among the most impressive results of the project is the development of the Linux-based, html-interfaced, GIS-compatible relational database for environmental monitoring data, (highlighted throughout this report). The project invested just $12,000 in hiring a local IT professional to assist in the creation of the database, with significant design input from the MMNP rangers and biologists. Version 1.0 of the database has been used by MMNP since December 2008, and version 2.0 was to be rolled out in late November 2009. This most recent version will also be rolled out to all NFA protected areas.

Photo 2 Renovated Cetatuia Ranger Station

114.   Monitoring data collected in the field can be entered manually or through electronic upload, for example, from the handheld GIS-enabled computers the MMNP administration has acquired (see Section IV.D on use of information technologies). Monitoring records can include photos or other types of files. When new data is introduced on, for example a particular species, the old data records are maintained. Data entered in the database is stored on the MMNP local server, and backed up using mirroring techniques. Originally the concept for the database was to run the system from a centralized NFA server, which could then be accessed remotely from any location. However, the internet connections between the central NFA servers in Bucharest and the MMNP headquarters in Tulcea were found to be too slow to be useful in uploading and processing monitoring data. Now that the system has been developed, the only real maintenance costs are the IT costs, which are part of the MMNP administration's normal operations budget. This evaluation recommends that MMNP ensure that the intellectual property rights to this software are appropriately secured. The NFA should also consider, with MMNP taking the lead, turning the software into a potential revenue stream through licensing to protected areas in other countries in the region.

115.   Such a system is only as useful as the quantity and quality of the data it contains, which continues to improve for MMNP, though it is likely MMNP is well ahead of the majority of protected areas in Romania, if not the region as a whole in terms of the comprehensiveness and robustness of its monitoring program. One of the indicators for Outcome 2 was that "Park management decisions are being made based on the results of the monitoring system (i) monitoring protocols for indicator species; (ii) monitoring protocols for human activities and impact; (iii) database," which has been accomplished. The MMNP administration has established a solid baseline dataset for MMNP, and has developed more than 20 monitoring protocols, with surveys covering environmental parameters, distribution and abundance of species, habitat conditions, and natural resource use patterns. By analyzing the current body of monitoring data with the database, MMNP is able to improve management decision-making, such as identifying areas requiring strict protection under the park's zoning scheme (the red areas shown in Figure 6).

116.   The project team, as part of the annual PIR, used the protected area METT to gauge improvements toward an effective protected area management regime in MMNP. The METT is one of the key tools used by the GEF to aggregate portfolio level results under the first strategic objective in the biodiversity focal area, "Catalyzing the sustainability of protected area systems." The World Wildlife Fund and the World Bank originally developed the METT to assess progress on improving the management of protected areas. The assessment form is broken down into 30 management issues for which the status is assessed on a four point scale (0, 1, 2, 3). The maximum score achievable is 99, but a final score can also be converted as a percentage of the possible score from questions relevant to a particular protected area.

117.   The METT score was one of the key indicators in the project logframe under the second project outcome. The project team found the METT to be helpful as an objective measure to identify areas for improvement and see where progress has been made Table 6 below shows the project's METT score progression over time. The baseline score was 32 and the original target score was 50. The indicator was defined as "the METT score increases significantly over time" implying the target value was abstractly chosen; thus the fact that the project met the target is not in itself particularly meaningful. The logframe target was not officially revised once the target had been surpassed in the first full year of implementation; this points to the need for indicator targets to be clearly rationalized based on analysis of relevant data and assumptions prior to an intervention, rather than being chosen as the "best guess" of project designers. The "significant" increase in the METT score for MMNP does imply valuable improvements in the effectiveness of the protected area management, and with the biological monitoring system in place, it is expected that a corresponding improvement in environmental status of biodiversity resources in and around MMNP would also be documented over time.

Table 6 MMNP Progress on METT Score 2006 - 2008

	Baseline (2006)	Original Target	2007	2008	2009
METT Score	32	50	57	63	69

118.   To assist in enforcing MMNP regulations and management decisions, the park administration has signed joint enforcement protocols with relevant local enforcement

agencies, including the gendarmerie, the police, forestry inspectorate and environmental inspectorate (the enforcement branch of the EPA). The logframe target for the number of enforcement protocols was six by year four; at present 10 protocols are in place (and renewed as necessary), which is the maximum possible considering the number of potential partners. Park rangers conduct joint patrols and enforcement actions with other agencies. According to the park manager, the presence of any of the agencies in the field creates a deterrence aspect. Another innovative approach to enforcement that has had a strong deterrence aspect, according to the project manager, is the carrying of video cameras by park rangers. When stakeholders know that park rangers have the potential to collect video evidence of law breaking they are less likely to take chances doing something they know is against regulations.

119.   A third indicator for Outcome 2 was an increase in supplementary revenue to the protected area, from sources such as tourism. The baseline level was $200, with a target of $2,000 by year four. As reported in the 2009 PIR, this amount had only reached $700 by mid-2009, but the project team expected revenue of around $2,000 in 2009-2010. In 2009 for the first time the park developed a list of tariffs, with fees for services such as third-party guides bringing tourists into the park, and the shooting of commercial video footage in the park. The park does not have any entry fees because there is no single point of entry, and the cost of collecting fees would likely be higher than the actual fees collected.

120.   Outcome 2 included the development of a 10-year MMNP ecotourism strategy, produced by the Romanian Association of Ecotourism under contract for the project. The strategy has been submitted to the County Council for inclusion in its local development strategy to improve sustainability; according to County Council sources, tourism is a major part of the region's economic development strategy. Tourism in MMNP has increased from 2,000 tourists in 2004 to 10,000 (primarily national tourists) in 2009, and under the tourism strategy, the park administration has set a goal of 20,000 tourists annually in the near future. This is estimated to be the number tourists that could be monitored and managed with the park staff capacity.   The strategy to increase revenue from tourism is to expand the services in the area, so that the tourists that come stay longer. Key tourism draws, in addition to the park, are the Alcovin Winery (which has also invested in developing accommodations), the possibility for bicycle tourism in the flat plains around the park, locally produced organic goods (apparently honey from Măcin wins prizes in Germany), and the diverse cultural folk traditions of the area.

Photo 3 MMNP Bilingual Tourism Information Signs

121.   Project activities included the development of tourism infrastructure, such as bilingual information boards at Valea Fagilor and other sites (see Photo 3), tourist maps, 15 well-marked kilometers of hiking trails, ecological toilets, camping and picnic sites, and the aforementioned education building. Another "smart" approach of the project team was to develop hiking trails that cross the park laterally from one municipality to another, which is intended to draw hikers to these communities and support potential tourism-related economic activities, rather than, for example, developing one single hiking trail the length of the park. According to the mayor of Luncavita, courses in agrotourism have been introduced in the local schools. It is envisioned that Greci, the community most closely bordering the park, will be a "gateway" to the park.

122.   One interesting activity to support increasing tourism in the park is a joint initiative with the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority to develop a combined site tourism itinerary, which would bring tourists visiting Dobrudja to both the Danube and the Măcin Mountains, which are only approximately 50 km apart. The MMNP team continues working with local stakeholders to encourage investments by households willing to host tourists or open small pensions, as the tourist accommodation infrastructure in Măcin is poor at present.

123.   There is tangible tourism potential in the Măcin region and tourism is likely to be a growing industry.   At the same time, this evaluation recommends that the MMNP administration be cautious about raising community members' expectations about the likely economic benefits. Benefits are likely to develop over an extended period of time and will be, for the foreseeable future, only a minor contributor to the regional economy.

124.   Another successful activity that promoted the tourism potential of the region, increased awareness about biodiversity conservation, and expanded community participation was the park's sponsorship and organization of an annual context for children of local villages to promote their traditional costumes and culture through dance and folk music.

125.   Multiple stakeholders and project participants identified the Total Economic Value (TEV) study supported by the project as an important achievement, among the first of its kind in Romania along with a similar study carried out for the Maramureş project. This study, conducted by an external expert, is comprehensive and technically robust (although the final report appears to be in incomplete draft form), employing such concepts as a travel cost analysis to assess the economic value of scenic beauty. In Măcin the study identified six ecosystem services and four ecosystem goods for inclusion in the economic valuation, of which four were considered Key Ecosystem Services for the region: 1. Sustainable wildlife and nature tourism; 2. Carbon sequestration; 3. Ecoagriculture and agrotourism; 4. Medicinal plants. The total direct use of ecosystem services was estimated to be approximately 1.4 million RON ($0.5 million USD[21]).   Indirect and non-use benefits, not including carbon sequestration, were estimated as approximately 4.8 million RON ($1.6 million USD). The carbon sequestration valuation of the area was estimated based on two different methodologies (one more conservative), and provided values of 1.9 million RON ($0.6 million USD) or 12.1 million RON ($4.2 million USD). Using the conservative estimate for carbon sequestration, the total

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[21] US dollar amounts are calculated based on current exchange rates found at http://finance.yahoo.com/currency-converter#from=USD;to=RON;amt=1.

economic value of the ecosystem services of MMNP is 8.1 million RON ($2.8 million USD), or 18.3 million RON ($6.3 million USD) with the less conservative carbon sequestration estimate.

126.   The study provided recommendations for follow-up and further exploitation of ecosystem services, including exploring incentives (such as EU subsidies) for ecoagriculture and agrotourism, and the branding of local produce. Throughout the TEV study there are many specific recommendations the MMNP administration should follow-up on. Recognizing that concepts such as ecosystem services take a long time to be fully socialized, and then to be leveraged, on the whole the results of the study have not yet been put into action.

127.   Being the first study of its kind in Romania, it will take time for the concepts and results to be incorporated in environmental and financial management, not just in Măcin but other regions in Romania as well. This evaluation recommends that the MMNP administration develop a 1 – 3 page policy brief on the results of the TEV study, and distribute it to regional and local decision-makers, such as the County Council and economic development council, and local mayors. The results of the study can on the one hand show stakeholders who place a lower priority on environmental conservation the economic value intact ecosystems can bring, and on the other hand provide fodder for those who do prioritize environmental conservation to support their arguments in debate with other stakeholders.

128.   Building on the recommendation of the TEV study and the experience of other GEF projects in the region, one avenue the park administration should explore to further leverage the financial benefits of the region's natural capital is initiating and supporting the development of a regional trademark for locally made products or approved tourism-related services. Regional branding is a growing tool in new EU countries to support local producers and expand market opportunities through increased awareness of regional identities and products, and can be a highly effective marketing tool. Examples of regional branding supported by GEF projects that could be reviewed as examples for Măcin are the Dolni Baryczy brand in Poland's Barycz Valley (http://www.barycz.pl), regional brands developed in Beskedy and Bilé Karpaty Protected Landscape Areas in eastern Czech Republic (http://www.tradicebk.cz and http://www.domaci-vyrobky.cz), and the "Living Tisza" brand developed in the upper Tisza watershed in Hungary (http://www.elotiszaert.hu).

iii.   Outcome 3: Replication of small protected area management best practices across national protected area system is ongoing

129.   Achievement of Outcome 3 for the MMNP project is considered <u>highly satisfactory</u>. There are multiple specific examples of best practices from the MMNP project being replicated throughout the national protected area system, a number of which are expected to have highly catalytic and even transformative results within Romania over time, contributing to Global Environmental Benefits, as discussed further in Section VI.D. Few GEF projects achieve such tangible replication results in as short a period of time.

130.   Unlike many GEF projects, the MMNP project has a specific outcome designed to proactively replicate best practices and lessons at the national level. As previously mentioned, one specific advantage in this regard is that there are 22 other protected areas in the national network overseen by the NFA, so the NFA can act as a central coordinating mechanism for bringing representatives from the various protected areas together and for disseminating

information.   The Măcin Mountains National Park project, as well as its sister project also funded by the GEF, the Maramureş Mountains Natural Park project, have both had the broad opportunity to share experiences, lessons and best practices with other protected areas in Romania. These two projects, in turn, drew on the experience of an earlier GEF-funded project in Romania involving three other national parks.

131.   The most significant specific best practice from the Măcin project being replicated in Romania's national protected area system is the rollout of the relational GIS-based biodiversity monitoring database. As of November 2009 the second version of the database was about to be finalized, and subsequently disseminated to the 26 other protected areas of the NFA network. As noted in Table 7 below, some trainings on the use of the database have already been conducted, and it is anticipated more trainings will be required. This tool has the potential to greatly improve the scientific basis on which protected area management decisions are made throughout Romania. Along with rolling out the technical capabilities of the database itself, the MMNP team will need to work with other protected areas to ensure robust monitoring protocols and overall monitoring programs are established; the utility of the database and any analysis conducted using it, will only be as good as the biological monitoring data collected and entered.

132.   The sustainable forest management technique developed by the project in collaboration with the NFA is also another high point that is having catalytic effects. As discussed in Section V.B, the technique will be scaled up regionally within Dobrudja, and could be replicated at the national-level in the future, although such transitions take significant time. As cited in the 2008 annual adaptive management report, "Ecologically oriented forest harvest practices were included in new forest management plan covering MMNP, thanks to the efforts of the Park team. This year will be the first year that this multi-age forest stand management treatment will be applied in the Park.   This is the first time this kind of biodiversity-oriented forest management practices will be applied in an NFA forest. Măcin is the first National Park to secure approval from the NFA for this. This is a very important point. This is one of the most important lessons learned that the Park and the Project can share with other protected areas."

Table 7 National Training Sessions Held by the MMNP Project

Date	Topic	Number of Attendees
October 22, 2009	Technical Practice of Biodiversity Monitoring in Tulcea	31 attendees
December 18-19, 2008	Best Practices Demonstrated in Măcin Mountains National Park – Database Design and Cooperation of Protected Areas	58 attendees
November 27 – 28, 2008	Ecological Agriculture as a Modality for Conserving Biodiversity and Serving the Environment	75 attendees

133.   Another project lesson that has been replicated is the experience of contracting the national expert for carrying capacity assessments of municipal sheep grazing lands around protected areas. The national expert brought in by the MMNP project team in Măcin has since

been contracted for carrying capacity assessments by other protected areas in Romania working with their own surrounding communities.

134.   To disseminate some of the lessons and experiences from the project, the MMNP team organized and carried out three training sessions with participants from throughout the NFA's protected area network. Table 7 above highlights the main training sessions held.

135.   Other logframe indicators under Outcome 3 included the adoption of best practices as a criterion in NFA protected area management performance evaluations, and the number of protected areas replicating best practices. The relevance of the first of these is difficult to ascertain without a better understanding of the NFA's protected area management performance evaluations, but the indicator target of having best practices included as a criterion by year three of the project has not been met. According to the project team, this is primarily related to institutional shifts and changes within the NFA. Government ordinance Number 229 of March 2009 provided the basis for a reorganization of the NFA, under which individual protected areas within the NFA's network can establish independent legal status. This status, in turn, allows individual protected areas to apply directly for donor funds, for example, EU environment SOP funds distributed in Romania.

136.   For the latter indicator mentioned above, the number of protected areas adopting best practices, the target of 10 protected areas has been met. First, all 23 NFA protected areas will begin utilizing the biodiversity monitoring relational database developed under the MMNP project. In addition, as mentioned in Section III.A on development context, approximately 80% of Tulcea County consists of protected areas at some level, whether they are Natura 2000, national, regional, or local protected areas. In addition to MMNP, the NFA is responsible for 16 other small protected areas in Tulcea County (not national parks), covering 2000.1 hectares. The MMNP park manager has, based on lessons and best practices from MMNP, drafted regulations for these protected areas, and developed management plans for five of them.

137.   Protected areas in Tulcea managed by the EPA are also benefiting from MMNP best practices. When a protected area in Romania is designated, if there is not also an authority designated as specifically responsible for it, the county EPA becomes responsible. The Tulcea County EPA is currently responsible for 17 protected areas, which is well beyond their capacity to manage. Therefore the EPA looks to examples from MMNP when specific issues arise; for example, if there is a management question that has come before MMNP's scientific council, the county EPA will apply the council's decision to other protected areas in Tulcea County that don't have the benefit of their own scientific council. Decisions taken by the MMNP scientific council have a strong scientific basis and grounding, and cannot therefore be easily disregarded by the economic division of the County Council.

138.   Other specific examples include replication the tourism strategy by Calimani National Park and Putna Vrancea Nature Park, and the dissemination of the economic valuation study among stakeholders within Măcin and at the national level the study was shared with 10 other NFA-supported protected areas.

VI. Key GEF Performance Parameters

A.   Sustainability

139.   As an aggregate of the four below components of sustainability, the results of the MMNP project are assessed as <u>moderately likely</u> to be sustained. On the four point sustainability rating scale, three of the sustainability sub-factors are considered likely, while the fourth (related environmental risks) is considered moderately likely. The overall rating for sustainability cannot be higher than the lowest sustainability rating among the four sub-factors.

140.   While a sustainability rating is provided here, as required, it must be kept in mind that sustainability is a temporal and dynamic state, which is influenced by a broad range of shifting factors. In the context of GEF projects there is no clearly defined timeframe for which results should be sustained, although there is the implication that they should be sustained indefinitely. However, as the time horizon from the point of intervention is extended, a number of factors come into play: a.) The level of certainty surrounding sustainability ratings is inherently reduced; b.) Results are absorbed and influenced by other actors; and c.) There is a greater chance for relevant un-anticipated events and circumstances to arise. An assessment of near-term sustainability risks can be provided with a reasonable level of confidence, which is as much as this evaluation report attempts to do.

i.   Financial Risks to Sustainability

141.   There are limited financial risks to the sustainability of MMNP project results, and sustainability in this area is considered <u>likely</u>. Because the project team was, from the beginning, hired directly as NFA employees, the NFA has and will continue budgeting for basic operating costs of the protected areas, including salaries and maintenance of infrastructure. In its agreement with the MoE, the NFA is under contract through 2014 to support the protected areas in its network, although, according to NFA sources, this only equates to about 30% of the optimum level of budget for each protected area. In the 2008-2009 economic downturn the NFA's revenue and thus budget has declined leading to a 15% budget cut for MMNP, and the park administration had to eliminate two ranger positions. It is anticipated that the park will rehire the rangers once the resources are again available. Taking the current financial crisis into consideration, it is still expected that the NFA will provide the necessary minimum level of funding in the near term.

142.   The NFA is the park's primary source of funding for baseline operating costs, but to undertake any "extra" activities, such as education and awareness programs, etc., the park administration is required to raise funding on its own, and is encouraged to do so by the NFA. Independently seeking of funds is facilitated by the 2009 change in institutional status of protected areas, now recognized as entities with their own legal status. Through the project experience the park staff has developed the capacity to produce applications for large-scale donor funding, through EU supported opportunities, and other external programs. Significant new externally supported park initiatives have not yet been approved, but the park administration has developed multiple project proposals for various funding sources, in particular for funding from the environmental SOP funding from the EU. The MMNP administration has submitted a proposal for $4.23 million in EU environment SOP funds, a final

decision on which is expected in early 2010. According to the project manager the initial feedback on the proposal has been positive. The short-term financial sustainability of active MMNP management efforts clearly hinges heavily on the success of this proposal.

ii.   Socio-Economic Risks to Sustainability

143.   Based on the assessed socio-economic risks, the sustainability of the MMNP project results is considered <u>likely</u>. There are limited socio-economic risks to the sustainability of project results, though there are socio-economic issues that the MMNP administration will need to continue to be aware of and integrate for effective protected area management. The communities around MMNP are not economically well-developed, and continue to seek expanding economic opportunities. MMNP will need to ensure that economic development is carried out in a sustainable manner, but if community members begin to perceive MMNP as an obstacle to economic development rather than as an asset, there could be negative backlash from local stakeholders. For example, if environmental regulations cause quarries to go out of business and jobs are lost as a result, or if alternative energy investment is severely limited in the region because of environmental concerns.

144.   Another risk in this regard is that local stakeholders' expectations regarding economic benefits derived from MMNP (such as from the potential for tourism) could be raised too high,

> "When people have economic problems they don't think about nature."
> - *Mayor of Luncavita*

and when economic benefits are slow to develop, as they likely will be, there could be negative feedback. One of the recommendations of this evaluation (see recommendation section at the end of the report) is that the MMNP administration should take care in communicating with stakeholders to maintain realistic expectations regarding economic benefits from tourism.

145.   A second risk is park administration human resources. There is currently a well-qualified contingent of staff employed by the NFA in the MMNP administration, but turnover in time is inevitable. Finding technical specialists willing to work for the low wages available in park administration positions is expected to be an ongoing challenge. Though this evaluation does not have specific data on MMNP staff salaries, a park ranger's salary in Romania is approximately one-tenth of Romania's per capita GDP, and even a park manager's salary may be only one-third to one-fifth the per capita GDP. A park ranger salary is barely enough to make a living even in rural Romania, and generally in the countryside incomes are supplemented by subsistence agriculture and livestock. Because protected area staff salaries are paid by the NFA, which must pay salaries for the staff of all protected areas in its network, lobbying for an increase in salary levels for any individual protected area would not be expected to be an effective approach to the issue.

iii.   Institutional Framework and Governance Risks to Sustainability

146.   In relation to institutional and governance risks the sustainability of MMNP project results is considered <u>likely</u>. Any risks at the local or regional level can be considered low-level, as MMNP has the support of local mayors, the regional prefect, the County Council, the county EPA, the county NFA, and other relevant institutions. The regional-level institutional structures and policies in place appear to be adequately facilitating effective protected area management,

but stakeholders concerned with environmental conservation must be ever vigilant. Under the current process, as described in Section V.B.ii on Outcome 2, those wishing to make economic investments in the region must have an independent environmental impact assessment carried out, which is then reviewed by the MMNP scientific council. The scientific council then comes to a recommendation on whether the investment in question should be allowed to proceed. The scientific council is not the only body with input on the final overall decision, but it is an excellent way for the MMNP to have input to the process.

147.   Institutional and governance risk at the national level is more prominent, though still does not present significant risk to the results of the project in the near term. The primary issue is the role and structure of the national protected areas agency, which has been created to fulfill Natura 2000 requirements related to EU accession. The national protected areas agency was in existence for the first three months of 2009, but currently has no funding and is not operational. The situation remains fluid in light of ongoing national-level political machinations in Romania, but as of August 2009 it was expected that the agency would be a Bucharest-based department of the MoE, despite some internal apprehension about the effectiveness of centrally administering almost 19% of Romania's territory (the amount of area covered by Natura 2000 sites). All national-level protected areas in Romania must have their management plans approved by this body, but since the agency is currently non-existent, the approval for implementation of protected area management plans in Romania is indefinitely on hold. Fortunately the individual protected area administrations are moving ahead with implementation while awaiting official national-level approval, at least in Măcin and in Maramureş , the other protected area that received GEF support. The specific institutional risks to MMNP of the new agency are limited, but, combined with the recent weakening amendments to the national protected areas legislation, the institutional framework for protected area management in Romania as a whole remains uncertain.

iv.   Environmental Risks to Sustainability

148.   Based on an assessment of potential environmental risks, the sustainability of MMNP project results is considered <u>moderately likely</u>. While the integrity of MMNP's boundaries is not in question, and management within the park boundaries is considered effective, the small size of the protected area means that the park's biodiversity is highly vulnerable to threats coming from outside the park boundaries. There are multiple external environmental threats, though two of these can be considered more prominent – quarry operations and alternative energy development.

149.   MMNP has made progress in improving the environmentally friendliness of quarry operations, at least of the one quarry on the park border, but the quarries must still be considered to have a negative effect on the area's biodiversity. First and foremost, quarry operations inherently create nearly irreparable damage to the landscape where they operate. In addition, the noise and dust created by both blasting operations and large trucks used for hauling have negative impacts on birds and flora in the vicinity of the operations. There is some indications that quarrying may be a declining industry in the future, but it is expected to be present for many more years. Interestingly, in the stakeholder survey conducted in 2007,

"protection of nature" was ranked eighth among community needs, just ahead of "quarry development."

150.   Alternative energy development, particularly wind power development, is a growing threat in the area. The Măcin area has a high potential for wind energy due to its location and elevation profile. Thanks to climate change, European policies are creating incentives for investment in alternative energy sources. Plans for initial investments in wind energy in Măcin are already being made, though wind turbines have not yet appeared on the horizons. According to the project manager, even modern wind turbine designs, which are larger and turn more slowly to reduce the chances of harm to birds, can be problematic because the disruption in the landscape can cause raptors to leave the area. MMNP has had some initial success in influencing the number and location of proposed wind turbines to minimize environmental impacts, but wind development will be an ongoing and growing issue, with the potential for significant negative environmental impacts, particularly on birds and bats. This evaluation recommends MMNP should ensure its monitoring protocols are well-structured and implemented to document over time environmental impacts related to wind energy development in the region. Sound biological data will provide the primary rationale for adjusting wind energy development to be as environmentally friendly as possible.

151.   Other long-term threats that are more diffuse may be a homogenization and degradation of the surrounding landscape from commercial agriculture and urban development. Climate change may also present a threat, as some species shift their ranges to cope. For example, according to a long-time NFA researcher, jackals used to be found no further north than Bulgaria, but have now expanded their range all the way to MMNP, which may upset the delicate ecology of the region. Some more common protected area threats to biodiversity inside park boundaries, such as illegal logging and illegal hunting are not considered to be significant threats to MMNP, thanks to the effective ranger patrols and enforcement protocols with local law enforcement organizations.

B.   Catalytic Role: Replication and Scaling-up

152.   The MMNP project's third outcome specifically addressed a proactive approach to replicating project experiences, and scaling-up of best practices to the national level. Please refer to Section V.B.iii covering Outcome 3 for detailed information regarding catalytic effects; because this topic has been covered in this previous section, it is not repeated here.

153.   As previously described, the MMNP project has a built-in replication mechanism thanks to the project's oversight by the NFA, which is also responsible for the majority of Romania's other protected areas. In this way the positive lessons and examples from the MMNP project are disseminated through the NFA to other park administrations, as well as through national-level events held involving representatives from all of the protected areas in the NFA's network.

154.   Another example of the catalytic effect of the GEF's support is the fact that MMNP's application for EU environment SOP funding successfully passed the first round of the application because of the experience and capacity gained in implementing the GEF project.

C.   Monitoring and Evaluation

155.   Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) for the MMNP project is considered <u>satisfactory</u>. M&E procedures were clearly outlined in the project document and were adequately budgeted. The logframe was complete, with indicators that mostly met SMART criteria. Reporting was complete and timely.

i.   Project Monitoring, Reporting, and Evaluation

156.   The MMNP project document outlines M&E procedures in a specific section which details the required elements of the M&E plan, and the associated roles and responsibilities. The elements of the M&E plan include:[22]

- An inception workshop and report, to assist the project team to understand and take ownership of the project's goals and objectives, as well as finalize preparation of the first annual workplan, and detail the roles and support services of UNDP
- The project logframe (further discussed below)
- Quarterly progress reports submitted by the project manager to UNDP
- Bi-annual steering committee meetings
- UNDP field visit missions
- Annual tripartite review meetings
- Annual Project Reviews / PIRs (including use of the METT), and a Terminal Report
- Independent mid-term and terminal evaluations
- Financial audits

157.   Project monitoring, reporting and evaluation were carried out in an adequate manner, if not exactly according to the M&E plan. For example, the tripartite review mechanism was never instituted; it was determined to be unnecessary based on the sufficiency of other annual monitoring tools, and the regular communication between UNDP, the NFA and the project team. At the same time, another valuable tool not originally foreseen was implemented – the "work planning report," with support from an external consultant. These reports identified key issues for progress in each coming year, and made recommendations for focusing on results.

158.   Annex 4 of the project document outlines the budget, responsible parties, and timeframe for the elements of the M&E plan. Any elements of the M&E plan requiring financing beyond the project team's staff time are adequately budgeted. For example, the mid-term and terminal evaluations are budgeted for a total of $34,000; benchmarking from other GEF MSPs indicates this is a reasonable amount for such exercises for projects of this size. One notable aspect of the M&E budget is an amount for $2,000 per year for documentation of lessons learned; unfortunately it is not clear how or if these resources have been applied.

159.   The project's monitoring and reporting was timely, with quarterly progress reports, financial reports, and PIRs completed on schedule and in a comprehensive manner. The

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[22] Note: In the project document, "Technical Reports" are also included in the M&E plan; in the view of the evaluator these should not be considered part of the M&E plan, but rather outputs under one of the project outcomes.

external mid-term evaluation was also extremely comprehensive and completed on schedule, and served as an important input to this terminal evaluation. Where specific actions were required, the majority of the mid-term evaluation and annual work planning report recommendations were followed up on and addressed in a satisfactory manner, while some remain on the project team's radar for future action. A complete analysis of project follow-up to the mid-term evaluation and annual work planning report recommendations can be found in Annex 8.

160.   On the whole, the MMNP project logframe was moderately satisfactorily designed, including the indicators and targets. The inception report version of the logframe was a significant improvement over the version in the project document, and no further revisions were undertaken. The logframe indicators mostly follow SMART criteria,[23] though they are most lacking on the "relevant" criteria, as the indicators included do not fully reflect project results under some outcomes.

161.   The inclusion of "impact" level indicators (e.g. population levels of certain species) at the project objective level is especially welcome, although there are a multitude of issues relating to environmental monitoring that affect the "measurable" aspect of these impact indicators (as further discussed in Section VI.D below). However, some indicators are output focused instead of outcome focused, such as those related to the number of farms replicating organic practices and the number of enforcement protocols in place. Also, as with many other GEF project logframes, the indicator targets are not clearly rationalized: what is the basis for the number of farmers, enforcement protocols, number of hectares of effectively managed grassland, the METT score target, and the other targets in the logframe? A clear analytical approach to the identification of these targets is not evident.

162.   Other specific shortcomings are that the baseline values for some indicators were not indentified until the first work planning report, more than a year into project implementation. In addition, it would have been relevant to include some socio-economic indicators, considering the involvement of local stakeholders and the long-term objective of contributing to environmentally sustainable economic development in the region. Socio-economic indicators could also provide the park administration with important insights for effective management purposes, and this evaluation recommends that a limited number of SMART socio-economic indicators be identified and included in the MMNP's monitoring program.

163.   The original project logframe, associated adaptive management measures, and a summary of the assessed level of achievement for each indicator is included as Annex 7 to this report.

ii.   Environmental Monitoring

164.   Information regarding environmental monitoring is primarily discussed in the following section on impacts. The MMNP administration includes highly trained scientists, who have developed and implemented a robust environmental monitoring program in MMNP. The robustness of the monitoring program also benefits from the relatively small size of the

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[23] "SMART" criteria for indicators are Specific; Measurable; Achievable and Attributable; Relevant and Realistic; Time-bound, Timely, Trackable, and Targeted.

protected area, which means fewer resources are required to cover it comprehensively. Protected area management is consequently well-informed by environmental monitoring data, which can be analyzed in multiple ways using the GIS-based relational monitoring database. The park administration has made the monitoring program part of its regular operations, and thus the monitoring program is expected to continue, at least in the near term.

D.   Project Impacts and Global Environmental Benefits: Documenting Positive Environmental Change

165.   For the GEF biodiversity focal area, project impacts are defined as documented changes in environmental status of species, ecosystems or genetic biodiversity resources. The MMNP management regime influences development decisions around the park and will continue to have positive environmental impacts. In some cases impacts are difficult to quantify because they take the form of avoided negative impacts, such as reductions in the numbers and change of positioning of windmills proposed for the park vicinity, which has been influenced by the park administration.

166.   Table 8 below provides data on some key species monitored by MMNP. Current data indicates positive trends for six of the seven indicator species listed, with the seventh remaining stable. Because the MMNP administration consists of well-qualified biologists and scientists, the MMNP is one of the few GEF projects ever encountered by the evaluator in which the biological monitoring data can be considered fully robust, which provides accurate, if conservative, data on population trends and environmental status. For example, there are two methods for monitoring birds – using transects for observed individuals, and through the documentation of nests. The identified increase in bird populations highlighted in Table 8 is based on documentation of nest sites, which is more realistic but conservative methodology because it represents permanent population increases, not just observance of transitory individuals. The evaluator has no reservations regarding the quality of the monitoring data below, and the ongoing monitoring program should facilitate the future identification of trends on a relevant time scale.

Table 8 Indicator Species Trends in MMNP, Level at June 30, 2009

Species	Baseline (2005)	Target	Current Estimate
Testudo graeca (Dobrodjan turtle)	100 individuals	100 individuals	205 individuals
Buteo ruffinus (Long-legged buzzard)	18 pairs	18 pairs	21 pairs
Elaphe quatorlineata sauromates (Romanian dragon snake)	6 individuals	6 individuals	8 individuals (very difficult to document, likely more)
Circaetus gallicus (Short-toed eagle)	5 pairs	5 pairs	8 pairs
Aquila pomarina (Lesser spotted eagle)	5 pairs	5 pairs	7 pairs
Campanula romanica (Dobrudja bellflower) (coverage in polygons; Total Value Abundance / Dominance)	11	11	11

Dianthus nardiformis (Rockpink) (coverage in polygons; Total Value Abundance / Dominance)	21	21	69

167.   Although only species identified as indicator species in the project logframe are highlighted above, the MMNP monitoring program includes a larger set of parameters, such as, for example, the ground squirrel populations on which the raptors depend for food. While the increasing population numbers may partially be due to continuously improving monitoring methodologies and increased monitoring effort as part of the project, the park manager also had the following hypotheses for the observed increases in species: For the raptors, the increase may be due to an increase in the ground squirrel population, their main food source, as a result of decreased use of agricultural chemicals relating to the expansion of organic agriculture. The raptor population may also have benefited from reduced noise as part of the environmental measures agreed to by the quarry operators. The Dobrodjan turtle population may be increasing due improved public awareness and education – one of the turtle's favorite foods is cabbage, and when local residents would find it in their garden they used to kill it. The implication is that thanks to the project's education and awareness efforts the local population has a better appreciation for the importance of the turtle, and now takes less lethal approaches to resolving the turtle's depredation of cabbage.

168.   To assess changes in environmental status in a meaningful way, long-term monitoring data is required to identify trends over time, rather than attempting a single point-in-time snapshot. Particularly with regard to highly mobile or migratory species (e.g. birds), populations can vary significantly by season and from year to year. Furthermore, short-term population trends are much more likely to be influenced by short-term variable exogenous factors such as annual climatic conditions, than by the underlying quality and quantity of the ecosystem, which often experiences changes in a more gradual manner. Therefore, one of the key recommendations of this evaluation is that for GEF projects populations of indicator species should be evaluated regularly over an extended period of time, and/or should be accompanied by other related indicators such as habitat quality. The MMNP project provides an excellent example of a technically robust but cost-effective monitoring program that is well on-track to provide insights on long-term trends in environmental status.

169.   In addition to delivering on-the-ground environmental impacts, GEF projects are expected to deliver results at a scale considered to constitute Global Environmental Benefits. For many projects, particularly GEF MSPs, this requires a degree of scaling up or replication of project lessons and results. For the biodiversity focal area the concept of Global Environmental Benefits has not been clearly defined, but is linked to the scale of the impacts delivered. While sustained effective management of the MMNP area alone could be considered of sufficient scale to constitute a Global Environmental Benefit, there are other potentially larger scale outcomes as well.

170.   The achievement of Global Environmental Benefits as a result of the MMNP project is considered highly likely. As discussed in Section V.B.iii, one of the project's primary outcomes (Outcome 3) was the replication and scaling-up of best practices in Romania. This has already

taken place to some extent through the scaling-up throughout Tulcea County of the sustainable forest management practices developed collaboratively by MMNP and the regional NFA. These practices may also be taken up by the NFA in other regions of the country, though the likelihood and timeframe for this cannot be determined. It is also expected that the biodiversity monitoring database developed by the project will be rolled out to all other protected areas in the NFA network, which, combined with increased efforts on environmental monitoring, should in the long-term improve the management of Romania's protected area system as a whole. Other best practices implemented by the project have also been shared within the national protected area network, such as the analysis of the carrying capacity of municipal grazing areas, and collaboration with local farmers in developing an organic agriculture industry in the areas surrounding the protected area.

E.   Stakeholder Participation in the MMNP Project

171.   As has been described in Sections IV.A.iii and V.A, stakeholder participation has been one of the most valuable and highly effective aspects of the MMNP project, and there are multiple key ways in which stakeholders have been involved. For example, during the evaluation field visit, multiple mayors of communities in the region spoke of how they hope to continue their excellent partnership with MMNP.

172.   At the same time, the results of the stakeholder survey from 2007 indicate that there remains significant room for additional education and awareness building amongst the population about the park's objective, its regulations, and other aspects. For example, approximately 20% of survey respondents indicated they had knowledge about the activities of the park; of these, six had received the park's newsletter, which is produced and distributed throughout the community.

173.   The park staff includes a community outreach officer based at the headquarters in Tulcea, but there is unfortunately at present little time spent directly interacting with community members on a regular (i.e. weekly) basis. According to the report on the stakeholder survey, "one of the directions for progress towards a better relationship with the surrounding communities can be the creation of outreach programmes with concrete non-utilitarian benefits for the communities." Overall, the stakeholder survey report identifies multiple opportunities and recommendations for MMNP with respect to community involvement and awareness, and these should be closely heeded by the MMNP administration.

174.   The broadest mechanism to involve relevant stakeholders has been the MMNP's consultative council, as discussed in Section V.B.ii on Outcome 2, which officially has 26 members representing diverse relevant groups, including, for example, quarry operators; in practice, however, as many as 50 people participated in the council meetings. Through the consultative council all relevant stakeholders at the local and regional level in the area around MMNP have the opportunity to hear first hand the plans and management activities being carried out by the park administration, and to provide feedback on activities. The consultative council has no binding authority, but the opportunity for direct communication with the park administration and to have voices heard is an excellent

> "We want to preserve the park in its natural condition, the way it was granted by God."
> - *Tulcea County Prefect*

mechanism to develop buy-in among stakeholders for the park's objective of conserving biodiversity in the area; for example, the consultative council reviewed and approved the MMNP management plan. The consultative council meetings are also an opportunity for the park administration to educate stakeholders on critical issues affecting the park, and create awareness about what individuals living in the communities around the park can do to help. At the same time, the 2007 stakeholder survey indicated that only a small percentage of the broad community (approximately 5%) is aware of the consultative council. As stated by the survey report, "[Protected area] outreach to communities via community fora / committees is a very complex and dynamic undertaking. The process of creating and defining community-based organizations and developing competent institutions, that both represent diverse local interests and are sensitive to the community dynamics and power relations, is often arduous and time-consuming."

175.   A key activity to help build support from local decision-makers was the study tour organized by the project in collaboration with the Maramureş project. The project supported the local mayors in a group visit to protected areas in Austria and Slovenia to demonstrate real-world examples of local communities working in positive collaboration with protected areas in their vicinity.

176.   Another area with positive stakeholder involvement has been the park administration's support for the organic agriculture association. The association has grown to approximately 15 farmers, supported by education and awareness building by the park staff on the economic and environmental value of organic agriculture. The relationship between the organic farmers and the park is symbiotic, and this is an area that is expected to continue as a focus for the park administration.   Other MMNP supported activities have involved community members and contributed to education and awareness-raising, a prime example being the park-sponsored contests for young people to highlight folk traditions from the communities in the area.

177.   The stakeholder survey conducted in July 2007 was an important step toward identifying and quantifying stakeholder awareness and attitudes vis-à-vis MMNP. As noted by the study's authors, no formal study regarding the relationship of a protected area with its neighboring

> "We attract the parents with the help of the children."
> - *MMNP Park Manager*

communities had previously been conducted in Romania. There were 374 respondents to the survey, representing slightly less than 1% of the total population in the area. According to the stakeholder survey report, "Most of the people believe that the MMNP has neither done anything of great benefit, nor anything particularly costly for their communities." There were positive views towards wildlife protection in general (approximately 80% in support), but also negative attitudes related to restrictions on wood collection and grazing. In addition to information on attitudes towards conservation, the study results include highly valuable data on the regions demographics, socio-economic aspects and community needs that should greatly inform MMNP management (and, for that matter, regional development planning). The study was also valuable in that it provided community members with another opportunity to express their views and provide input related to the national park.

178.   The evaluation recommends that such stakeholder surveys be carried out regularly (e.g. every three to four years, or whatever is determined to be a relevant, appropriate, and

affordable interval) to inform MMNP management, and to demonstrate change over time. Thus another survey should be planned in 2010 or 2011. To the extent possible, the same survey questions should be used and data collected in a similar manner to increase the comparability of results over time. MMNP could consider asking for support to undertake the survey from local governments and regional institutions, with the trade-off that the results would be summarized for them as well. Such direct information about the communities in the area is incredibly valuable, and the results of the surveys should be distilled into a policy brief and shared with local and regional decision-makers. This should also be done for the 2007 survey, if it has not already.

VII. Main Lessons Learned and Recommendations

179. There are many specific lessons from the experience of the MMNP project that could be further identified and documented in an end-of-project exercise by the project team. In particular, Section IX of the 2007 PIR and Section 12 of the 2008 PIR include excellent information on numerous specific positive lessons from the project. Similarly, there are many specific recommendations from the stakeholder survey report, the TEV report, the annual workplanning reports (produced with support of an external consultant), and the mid-term evaluation that should be followed up on by the MMNP administration, and UNDP. It is not possible or necessary to repeat all of these recommendations in this terminal evaluation.

A.   Lessons from the Măcin Mountains National Park Project

180. ***Key Lesson:*** The MMNP project has demonstrated the potential value of protected areas working with private sector partners to create win-win-win approaches to sustainable environmental and economic development. Such solutions are not possible in all circumstances, but in Măcin the necessary incentives are aligned. MMNP promotes organic agriculture by conducting outreach and education activities with farmers whose lands surround the national park. The farmers work with a wholesale exporter, gaining economically from the premium on organic vs. conventional products. The area's environment in turn benefits from the reduction in chemicals applied to the wheat fields. This three-way partnership provides an excellent example for other protected areas that can and should be replicated when circumstances allow.

181. ***Key Lesson:*** Effective environmental monitoring programs can be developed and implemented in protected areas in a cost-effective manner. There is a general perception that comprehensive biodiversity monitoring is an expensive endeavor, but the experience of MMNP shows that a useful monitoring program can be implemented for little more than the baseline cost of protected area operations. With a trained biologist on staff, and park rangers with some taxonomic training, structured monitoring protocols can be applied and data collected and analyzed to inform management decisions. MMNP's expertise in developing an effective monitoring program should be shared among protected areas in Romania and elsewhere.

182. ***Key Lesson:*** When designed with a realistic scope and timeframe, GEF projects can be implemented in an effective manner within the planned period. GEF project designs are often overambitious both in scope and timeframe, leading to either scaling back of expected outcomes, extensions in timeframes, or both. The comparative experience in Romania of the Măcin Mountains National Park project, and the Maramureş Mountains Natural Park project

provide a good example of this lesson – the Maramureş project was originally designed for three years, but within the first year it was apparent that more time would be required to complete the project, and a one year no-cost extension was granted. The Măcin project was originally designed for four years, and although the project was slow to get up and running due to difficulty in staffing up, the project was able to "catch-up" on implementation and was completed in the originally expected timeframe.

183.   _**Key Lesson:**_   Romania's system of Scientific Councils supporting protected area management decision-making is an effective approach to de-politicizing (to the extent possible) sometimes controversial issues facing protected area administrations. Once appointed the Scientific Council functions independently from the park administration, and provides independent technical oversight and input to key park management processes such as the revision of the management plan, development approvals, and environmental impact assessments. The separation of the Scientific Council from the park administration facilitates "unbiased" and transparent park management decision-making based on solid technical grounds. At the same time, this structure provides the park administration with an institutional buffer for potential stakeholder backlash to any particular decision.

184.   _**Key Lesson:**_ Protected areas with sustainable use zoning can serve as important examples of ways to mainstream biodiversity concerns into broader production sectors. In the case of MMNP, biodiversity-friendly timber harvesting methods were developed and are being demonstrated, and the NFA has accepted and expanded this sustainable use approach to forest areas under their management throughout Tulcea County.

185.   _**Lesson:**_   Surveys of community attitudes and socio-economic indicators can be extremely valuable for protected areas for multiple reasons.   Such surveys are rarely conducted, and therefore they provide unique insight into the character and context of the communities around protected areas. This type of data can greatly enhance the effectiveness of protected area management by ensuring that the needs and concerns of the community are addressed. In addition, a community survey gives stakeholders an opportunity to voice their thoughts and concerns, and to feel that their input about the protected area is valued.

186.   _**Lesson:**_ Engaging key stakeholders in education and awareness activities, and demonstrating a vision for environmentally sustainable economic development can have high value for developing local support and ownership of conservation initiatives. In the case of MMNP the project engaged local mayors in a study tour to locations in Austria and Slovenia where long-established protected areas are contributing to the economic development of local economies, and municipalities have strong partnerships with protected area administrations. The project also undertook a study tour with mayors to another location in Romania to demonstrate the environmental and economic potential of organic agriculture. Such exercises are most valuable when conducted in the early stages of a conservation initiative.

187.   _**Lesson:**_ Effective enforcement of protected area regulations can be achieved through deterrence measures. In Măcin this has been achieved in an innovative way by park rangers carrying video cameras on patrol, as well as by establishing enforcement protocols with all relevant local agencies and carrying out joint patrols.

B.   Recommendations for Future Actions Supporting Măcin Mountains National Park

188.   ***Key Recommendation:*** The Park administration should develop, and implement, an outreach strategy that supports direct face-to-face interaction between the park's community outreach officer and members of the communities surrounding MMNP. There are currently multiple mechanisms that contribute to positive stakeholder involvement in MMNP management issues, but the initial stakeholder survey showed there is still much room for increased awareness and education within local communities. This could be achieved through a regular MMNP staff presence within the communities, which is exactly the role of the community outreach officer. [*For MMNP Administration*]

189.   ***Key Recommendation:*** In conjunction with the above recommendation about public outreach, MMNP should ensure another stakeholder survey is carried out in the next two years. Such a survey, implemented regularly, can be considered the park's socio-economic monitoring to go with the environmental monitoring program. Monitoring socio-economic trends is critical and can over time, with appropriate data collection methods and analysis, help to identify MMNP's economic value to the region, and inform effective management. [*For MMNP Administration*]

190.   ***Key Recommendation:*** Throughout the new EU member countries, regional branding has begun to demonstrate value, as has been seen in western European countries. With the goal of creating incentives for nature protection and realizing value in the region's natural capital, MMNP should explore the possibility of partnering with local producer groups and tourism organizations to develop a regional trademark or ecolabel for Măcin. This could be done for both products and tourism services. Relevant examples include the regional brand developed for Poland's Barycz Valley protected landscape (http://barycz.pl/main/), the regional brands in the Czech Republic's Carpathian protected landscapes of Beskedy and Bilé Karpaty (http://www.tradicebk.cz and http://www.domaci-vyrobky.cz), and the "Living Tisza" brand developed in the upper Tisza watershed in Hungary (http://www.elotiszaert.hu). [*For MMNP Administration and Regional Stakeholders*]

191.   ***Key Recommendation:*** Ecological evidence shows that many species have significant short-term natural population fluctuations, which leaves single species indicators with little value in evaluating the effectiveness of a biodiversity conservation project with a time scale of two to four years. In addition, natural systems often take years to demonstrably respond to conservation measures. Nonetheless, impact level indicators are valuable, and indeed are ultimately the only way to measure success in conserving biodiversity. For project logframe indicators, either biodiversity monitoring data should be considered over a longer period of time (10-15 years), or data on a range of factors such as habitat assessment or population dynamics model simulation should further inform short-term assessments of species level biodiversity trends. [*For UNDP and GEF*]

192.   ***Recommendation:*** Tourism is a growing industry in the area and is expected to be an important long-term economic contributor to the region. MMNP should continue supporting tourism development in the region (particularly environmentally responsible eco-tourism), but should avoid raising too great of expectations among the local communities about the scale and

timeframe in which economic benefits from tourism may be seen. For the foreseeable future tourism will remain a minor component of the regional economy, employing a small percentage of the population. [*For MMNP Administration*]

193. ***Recommendation:***   With the goal of supporting a cost-effective environmental monitoring system, MMNP should explore the feasibility and utility of expanding community-based water-monitoring programs (e.g. waterkeeper programs, adopt-a-stream, etc.), as well as programs like annual community bird counts. Such programs also help increase community awareness and can be integrated with environmental education programs. [*For MMNP Administration*] Information on community-based water-monitoring programs can be found at:

- http://www.epa.gov/owow/monitoring/volunteer/
- http://www.inletkeeper.org/CEMP/overview.htm
- http://www.georgiaadoptastream.org/home.html

194. ***Recommendation:*** The MMNP administration (through the NFA) should explore the possibility of securing intellectual property rights to the html-based biodiversity monitoring database application developed by the project. The NFA should explore the possibility of gaining revenue for protected areas in Romania by licensing the database application to other countries in the region for use by their protected area systems. [*For NFA and MMNP Administration*]

195. ***Recommendation:*** UNDP should implement an agency wide-system for tracking in-kind co-financing in GEF projects in a systematic and well-documented manner. There are examples where this has been done in other GEF projects (see, for example, UNEP's South China Sea regional international waters project completed in 2008). Instituting an in-kind co-financing tracking system would bring accountability and transparency to the in-kind co-financing figures currently reported for GEF projects. It would also likely demonstrate that much greater in-kind co-financing is committed in GEF projects than credit is currently given for. [*For UNDP and GEF*]

C.   Măcin Mountains National Park Project Ratings

Project Component or Objective	Rating	Summary
Project Formulation		
Relevance	S	The project was relevant to Romania's environment and development priorities, CBD objectives, and the GEF's strategic priorities and policies.
Conceptualization/design	S	The design was relatively straightforward with no significant flaws; there was a logical integration of project components to meet objective. The project concept developed from initial external request for ideas.
Stakeholder participation	S	The relevant local, regional and national institutions were involved; local communities less involved in design process.
Project Implementation		
Implementation Approach (Efficiency)	HS	Implementation was done in a highly efficient manner, and outcomes are significant relative to the amount of resources invested. There are multiple specific examples of efficient uses of funds, and the level of effort committed by the project team on a personal basis further increased the efficiency.
The use of the logical framework	S	The logframe was used appropriately as a tool to monitor project progress and assess adaptive management options when necessary.

Project Component or Objective	Rating	Summary
Adaptive management	S	The project was implemented in a flexible manner, and although there was not significant adaptive management required, there were a few occasions where effective adaptive management decisions were taken.
Use/establishment of information technologies	HS	The park administration is a national leader in the development and use of information technologies to support protected area management, particularly in biodiversity monitoring. The biodiversity monitoring database developed by the project, and the methods of data collection in the field, are at a high level of capacity.
Operational relationships between the institutions involved	S	There was a positive working relationship between UNDP and NFA, the two main project partners. There were also positive interactions between the local and regional stakeholder institutions in supporting the protected area management team, including those on the project oversight committee.
Technical capacities	HS	The MMNP administration has an excellent level of technical capacity with respect to biological monitoring, and has also built the necessary capacity to effectively manage the protected area.
Monitoring and Evaluation	**S**	Project level M&E was carried out as planned and on time, and there is a program in place for excellent long-term environmental monitoring. The M&E budget was adequate, but some logframe indicators do not meet SMART criteria.
Stakeholder Participation	**HS**	A strong aspect of the project, as positive relationships were built with the local communities, and support was garnered through support of community events such as contests highlighting cultural traditions. The project directly involved and supported local mayors and other local stakeholders through the consultative council. The collaborative working relationship with local farmers on organic agriculture was another key element of success.
Production and dissemination of information	S	Public awareness building was an important aspect of the project, and helped build community awareness and support in the surrounding communes.
Local resource users and NGOs participation	HS	The involvement and partnership developed with local farmers in support of organic agriculture has been one of the many highlights of the project.
Establishment of partnerships	HS	Positive working relationships were developed with mayors and institutions such as the Tulcea County EPA. Another critical partnership, which the project is not fully responsible for but helped cultivate, is the support from Schreiber, the Danish company, which has entered into agreement with the local farmers to support organic agriculture.
Involvement and support of governmental institutions	S	The NFA has supported the project as required, and there has been the requisite support from the MoE as well. Regional institutions, such as the County Council and county EPA have also been involved and supported the project through the POC and the consultative council, in addition to direct one on one support as necessary.
Project Results		
Overall Achievement of Objective and Outcomes (Effectiveness)	**HS**	Significant progress has been made toward the overall objective, which is likely to be achieved in the near future.
Objective: A landscape-oriented method of managing small	HS	The protected area has effectively engaged stakeholders throughout the landscape surrounding the protected area, and has influence on

Project Component or Objective	Rating	Summary
protected areas and improving conservation effectiveness is demonstrated in Măcin Mountains National Park and constitutes a model for replication across the emerging national system of protected areas		resource management decisions made outside of the immediate boundaries of the protected area. Măcin Mountains National Park is seen as an asset by local communities, and a successful collaborative approach has become the paradigm for conservation in the area.
Outcome 1: Productive landscape around MMNP is made more biodiversity friendly	HS	There have been key gains in making the surrounding landscape more biodiversity friendly. The most important are steps agreed with quarries in the area to improve the environmental friendliness of their operations, the development and expansion of organic agriculture in the region, and steps taken to limit the negative effects of wind energy development in the region. Although there remains work to be done, the steps taken have had positive effects for biodiversity.
Outcome 2: Măcin Mountains National Park management capacity and conservation effectiveness is secured	S	The park administration team has developed the necessary capacity at personal, technical, and management levels to improve the management of the protected area. A management plan has been developed, and positive operational partnerships with relevant stakeholders built. One indicator of the increase in capacity is the improvement in the management effectiveness tracking tool score for the protected area. There does, however, remain room for further improvement.
Outcome 3: Replication of small protected area management best practices across national PA system is ongoing	HS	There are multiple specific examples of best practices replicated through the NFA's system of protected areas in Romania, in particular the biodiversity monitoring system, and sustainable forest management techniques.
Sustainability	**ML**	Sustainability of project results
Financial sustainability	L	There are limited financial risks to sustainability. The protected area management team, supported by the NFA from the start of the project, will continue to be included in the NFA's annual protected area system budget, at at least a minimum operational level. The park administration has also developed the capacity to seek additional external funding to support an expanded level of effort toward realizing the full vision of effective management in the area.
Institutional and governance sustainability	L	There are limited risks to institutional sustainability – the protected area administration is well established, and the institutional framework for continued effective management is in place. Any institutional risks relate to the overall state of the Romanian government, which has been in turmoil, and the overall macro-economic situation in the country.
Socio-economic sustainability	L	The buy-in and support from the local communities is contributing to a reduction in socio-economic risks over time in the region. There are still limited employment opportunities, and a need to continue focusing on economic benefits that can be catalyzed through the protected area, such as increasing tourism, but overall socio-economic risks are not expected to threaten sustainability.
Ecological sustainability	ML	There are some environmental threats that continue to be outstanding, and will remain a priority focus for the protected area administration. Quarries continue to operate throughout the area, but appear to be diminishing over time as a threat. On the other

Project Component or Objective	Rating	Summary
		hand, green energy development, in particular wind power, will be an ongoing and potentially increasing threat that the protected area administration will continue to focus on. The risks to environmental sustainability are still limited, but ecological sustainability must be considered moderately likely.
Overall Project Achievement and Impact	**HS**	

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VIII. List of Annexes

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A.   Annex 1: Evaluation Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference
Final Evaluation of the UNDP/GEF Project

"Strengthening Romania's Protected Area System by Demonstrating Best Practices for Management of Small Protected Areas in Măcin Mountains National Park (MMNP)"

I. INTRODUCTION

UNDP/GEF Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) policy
The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) policy at the project level in UNDP/GEF has four objectives: i) to monitor and evaluate results and impacts; ii) to provide a basis for decision making on necessary amendments and improvements; iii) to promote accountability for resource use; and iii) to document, provide feedback on, and disseminate lessons learned. A mix of tools is used to ensure effective project M&E. These might be applied continuously throughout the lifetime of the project – e.g. periodic monitoring of indicators -, or as specific time-bound exercises such as mid-term reviews, audit reports and final evaluations.

In accordance with UNDP/GEF M&E policies and procedures, all regular and medium-sized projects supported by the GEF should undergo a final evaluation upon completion of implementation. A final evaluation of a GEF-funded project (or previous phase) is required before a concept proposal for additional funding (or subsequent phases of the same project) can be considered for inclusion in a GEF work program. However, a final evaluation is not an appraisal of the follow-up phase.

Final evaluations are intended to assess the relevance, performance and success of the project. It looks at early signs of potential impact and sustainability of results, including the contribution to capacity development and the achievement of global environmental goals. It will also identify/document lessons learned and make recommendations that might improve design and implementation of other UNDP/GEF projects.

Project objectives
The objective of the Măcin Mountains National Park (MMNP) project is to demonstrate a landscape-oriented method of managing small protected areas and improving the conservation effectiveness of protected areas and to serve as a basis for replication across the emerging national system of protected areas in Romania.

A modern, national protected area (PA) system is emerging in Romania. The challenge of maintaining and conserving biodiversity in landscapes dominated by human land-use is of paramount concern to this emerging protected area system. Small protected areas, when managed as "islands" in a productive landscape "sea," lose biodiversity over time. This project is designed to catalyze the adoption of best practices to meet this challenge by focusing on the Măcin Mountain National Park (MMNP) and its surrounding landscape.

The problem of MMNP is that - as a small protected area - it loses biodiversity over time when managed as "islands" in productive landscape. The main threat to the biodiversity in these small protected areas is the forest and grassland habitat degradation and low-level species loss to the surrounding landscape.

The main barriers for an effective management of small protected areas include: absence of established PA management practice; top-down, narrow management, lacking participatory and cross-sectoral protected area management approach; economic and financial with a narrow valuation of forest products and benefits; and, regulation and policy providing management practitioners with few tools that can help to apply new approaches.

The project is to demonstrate in MMNP the application of landscape ecology and biology-inspired conservation tools, with emphasis on community and civil society participation and cross-sectoral collaboration, and prioritization of the replication of lessons learned and best practices across the emerging network of over 800 protected areas of various types in Romania.

Project location: Măcin Mountains National Park

The main expected outcomes of the project are:
- the productive landscape around Măcin Mountains National Park is made more biodiversity friendly;
- Măcin Mountains National Park management capacity and conservation effectiveness is secured;
- replication of small protected area management best practices across national PA system is ongoing.

The UNDP/GEF project "*Strengthening Romania's Protected Area System by Demonstrating Best Practices for Management of Small Protected Areas in Măcin Mountains National Park (MMNP)*" is funded by the GEF, UNDP, the National Forest Administration (NFA) and others partners. The UNDP Country Office in Romania is the implementing agency and the NFA is the National Implementing Agency for this project. The Project was signed in November 2005 and will end in December 2009. It has a total budget of US$3.64M of which US$1.0M is funded by GEF; including $23,970 to fund the PDF-A phase and US$2.66M co-financed by project partners.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

This Final Evaluation is initiated by the UNDP Romania as the Implementation Agency for this project and it aims to provide managers (at the Project Implementation Unit, UNDP Romania Country Office and UNDP/GEF levels) with a comprehensive overall assessment of the project and an opportunity to critically assess administrative and technical strategies, issues and constrains associated with large international and multi-partner initiatives.

The purpose of the Evaluation is:
- To assess overall performance against the Project objectives as set out in Project Document and other related documents
- To assess the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the Project
- To critically analyze the implementation management and evaluation arrangements of the Project
- To assess the sustainability of the Project's outcomes
- To assess the catalytic or replication effect of the project
- To assess the processes that affected the attainment of the project results
- To present lessons and recommendations on all relevant aspects of the project

Project performance will be measured based on Project's Logical Framework, which provides clear performance and impact indicators for project implementation along with their corresponding means of verification.

The Report of the Final Evaluation will be stand-alone document that substantiates its recommendations and conclusions.

III. EXPECTED DELIVERABLES AND TENTATIVE TIMEFRAME
1. **Short strategy and approach of the assignment (max 5 pages)**, upon the desk review of relevant project documents and previous to the in-country mission
2. **Draft evaluation report**, after the in-country mission
3. **Final evaluation report**, after the incorporation of stakeholders comments

The Final Evaluation Report should be structured along the following lines:
1. Executive summary
2. Introduction
3. The project(s) and its development context
4. Findings and Conclusions
   a. Project formulation
   b. Implementation
   c. Project Finances
   d. Results
5. Recommendations
6. Lessons learned
7. Annexes

The length of report normally should not exceed 50 pages in total. The draft report will be submitted to UNDP/GEF no later than **November 30th, 2009.** Based on the feedback received from stakeholders a final report will be prepared by **December 20th, 2009**.

The report will be submitted both electronically and in printed version in ~~Romanian and~~ English.

The report will be supplemented by Rating Tables (see Annex 3).

Tentative timeframe: Estimated consultancy time = 25 work-days

Briefing for the evaluator and desk review, with the submission of the short consultancy strategy and approach (home-based work)	20 - 31 October
5 days mission to Romania, with a trip to the project site, interviews with stakeholders, questionnaires	1-7 November
Preparation of the draft evaluation report	7 – 30 November
Validation of preliminary findings with stakeholders through circulation of the draft evaluation report for comments, (home-based work)	1 – 10 December
Preparation of final report	10 - 20 December

B.   Annex 2: Acronyms

CBD	United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency (of Tulcea County)
EU	European Union
FSC	Forest Stewardship Council
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIS	Global Information Systems
MESD	Ministry of Education and Sustainable Development
METT	Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool
MMNP	Măcin Mountains National Park
MoE	Ministry of Environment
MSP	Medium-sized Project
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NFA	National Forest Agency
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
PDF-A	Project Development Facility Block A (from the GEF)
PIR	Project Implementation Report
SOP	Structural Operational Programme
TEV	Total Economic Value
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USD	United States dollars

C.   Annex 3: GEF Operational Principles

http://www.gefweb.org/public/opstrat/ch1.htm

**TEN OPERATIONAL PRINCIPLES FOR DEVELOPMENT
AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GEF'S WORK PROGRAM**

1. For purposes of the financial mechanisms for the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the GEF will **function under the guidance of, and be accountable to, the Conference of the Parties** (COPs). For purposes of financing activities in the focal area of ozone layer depletion, GEF operational policies will be consistent with those of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer and its amendments.

2. The GEF will provide new, and additional, grant and concessional funding to meet the agreed **incremental costs** of measures to achieve agreed global environmental benefits.

3. The GEF will ensure the **cost-effectiveness** of its activities to maximize global environmental benefits.

4. The GEF will fund projects that are **country-driven** and based on national priorities designed to support sustainable development, as identified within the context of national programs.

5. The GEF will maintain sufficient **flexibility** to respond to changing circumstances, including evolving guidance of the Conference of the Parties and experience gained from monitoring and evaluation activities.

6. GEF projects will provide for **full disclosure** of all non-confidential information.

7. GEF projects will provide for consultation with, and **participation** as appropriate of, the beneficiaries and affected groups of people.

8. GEF projects will conform to the **eligibility** requirements set forth in paragraph 9 of the GEF Instrument.

9. In seeking to maximize global environmental benefits, the GEF will emphasize its **catalytic role** and leverage additional financing from other sources.

10. The GEF will ensure that its programs and projects are **monitored and evaluated** on a regular basis.

D.   Annex 4: MMNP Evaluation Matrix and Interview Guide

MMNP Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation Criteria	Key Questions	Indicators	Potential Sources	Methodological Approach
I. Relevance: By effectively conserving biodiversity of Măcin Mountains National Park, how does the project support and contribute to the objectives of the UNCBD and GEF focal areas, and to environment and development priorities at the local, regional and national levels?				
Is the project relevant to UNCBD and other international convention objectives?	• How does the project support the objectives of the UNCBD? • Does the project support other international conventions, such as the Carpathian Convention and the UNFCCC?	• UNCBD priorities and areas of work incorporated in project design • Level of implementation of UNCBD in Romania, and contribution of the project • Priorities and areas of work of other conventions incorporated in project design • Extent to which the project is actually implemented in line with incremental cost argument	• Project documents • National policies and strategies to implement the UNCBD, other international conventions, or related to environment more generally • UNCBD and other international convention web sites	• Document review • Interviews with project team, UNDP and other partners
Is the project relevant to the GEF biodiversity focal area?	• How does the project support the GEF biodiversity focal area and strategic priorities	• Existence of a clear relationship between the project objectives and GEF biodiversity focal area • Identified project contribution to GEF biodiversity strategic priorities' portfolio targets	• Project documents • GEF focal areas strategies and documents	• Document review • GEF website • Interviews with UNDP and project team
Is the project relevant to Romania's environment and sustainable development objectives?	• How does the project support the environment and sustainable development objectives of Romania? • Is the project country-driven? • What was the level of stakeholder participation in project design? • What was the level of stakeholder ownership in implementation? • Does the project adequately take into account the national realities of institutional and policy frameworks in its design and implementation?	• Degree to which the project supports national environmental objectives • Degree of coherence between the project and national priorities, policies and strategies • Appreciation from national stakeholders with respect to adequacy of project design and implementation to national realities and existing capacities • Level of involvement of government officials and other partners in the project design process • Coherence between needs expressed by national stakeholders and UNDP-GEF criteria	• Project documents • National policies and strategies • Key project partners	• Document review • Interviews with UNDP and project partners
Is the project addressing the needs of target beneficiaries at the local and regional levels?	• How does the project support the needs of relevant stakeholders? • Has the implementation of the project been inclusive of all relevant stakeholders? • Were local beneficiaries and stakeholders adequately involved in project design and implementation?	• Strength of the link between expected results from the project and the needs of relevant stakeholders • Degree of involvement and inclusiveness of stakeholders in project design and implementation	• Project partners and stakeholders • Needs assessment studies • Project documents	• Document review • Interviews with relevant stakeholders
Is the project internally coherent	• Are there logical linkages between expected results of the project (logframe) and the project design (in terms of project components, choice of partners, structure, delivery	• Level of coherence between project expected results and project design internal logic • Level of coherence between project design and project	• Program and project documents • Key project stakeholders	• Document review • Interviews

Evaluation Criteria	Key Questions	Indicators	Potential Sources	Methodological Approach
in its design?	mechanism, scope, budget, use of resources etc)? • Is the length of the project sufficient to achieve project outcomes?	implementation approach		
How is the project relevant with respect to other donor-supported activities?	• Does the GEF funding support activities and objectives not addressed by other donors? • How do GEF-funds help to fill gaps (or give additional stimulus) that are necessary but are not covered by other donors? • Is there coordination and complementarity between donors?	• Degree to which program was coherent and complementary to other donor programming nationally and regionally	• Documents from other donor supported activities • Other donor websites and representatives • Project documents	• Document review • Interviews with project partners and relevant stakeholders
Does the project provide relevant lessons and experiences for other similar projects in the future?	• Has the experience of the project provided relevant lessons for other future projects targeted at similar objectives?		• Data collected throughout evaluation	• Data analysis
II. Efficiency: Was the project implemented efficiently, in-line with international and national norms and standards?				
Was project support provided in an efficient way?	• Was adaptive management used or needed to ensure efficient resource use? • Did the project logical framework and work plans and any changes made to them use as management tools during implementation? • Were the accounting and financial systems in place adequate for project management and producing accurate and timely financial information? • Were progress and other reports produced accurately, timely and responded to reporting requirements including adaptive management changes? • Was project implementation as cost effective as originally proposed (planned vs. actual) • Did the leveraging of funds (co-financing) happen as planned? • Were financial resources utilized efficiently? Could financial resources have been used more efficiently? • Was procurement carried out in a manner making efficient use of project resources? • How was results-based management used during project implementation?	• Availability and quality of financial and progress reports • Timeliness and adequacy of reporting provided • Level of discrepancy between planned and utilized financial expenditures • Planned vs. actual funds leveraged • Cost in view of results achieved compared to costs of similar projects from other organizations • Adequacy of project choices in view of existing context, infrastructure and cost • Quality of results-based management reporting (progress reporting, monitoring and evaluation) • Occurrence of change in project design/ implementation approach (i.e. restructuring) when needed to improve project efficiency • Cost associated with delivery mechanism and management structure compare to alternatives	• Project documents and evaluations • UNDP • Project team	• Document review • Interviews

Evaluation Criteria	Key Questions	Indicators	Potential Sources	Methodological Approach
How efficient are partnership arrangements for the project?	• To what extent partnerships/linkages between institutions/ organizations were encouraged and supported? • Which partnerships/linkages were facilitated? Which ones can be considered sustainable? • What was the level of efficiency of cooperation and collaboration arrangements? • Which methods were successful or not and why?	• Specific activities conducted to support the development of cooperative arrangements between partners, • Examples of supported partnerships • Evidence that particular partnerships/linkages will be sustained • Types/quality of partnership cooperation methods utilized	• Project documents and evaluations • Project partners and relevant stakeholders	• Document review • Interviews
Did the project efficiently utilize local capacity in implementation?	• Was an appropriate balance struck between utilization of international expertise as well as local capacity? • Did the project take into account local capacity in design and implementation of the project? • Was there an effective collaboration between institutions responsible for implementing the project?	• Proportion of expertise utilized from international experts compared to national experts • Number/quality of analyses done to assess local capacity potential and absorptive capacity	• Project documents and evaluations • UNDP • Beneficiaries	• Document review • Interviews
What lessons can be drawn regarding efficiency for other similar projects in the future?	• What lessons can be learnt from the project regarding efficiency? • How could the project have more efficiently carried out implementation (in terms of management structures and procedures, partnerships arrangements etc.)? • What changes could have been made (if any) to the project to improve its efficiency?		• Data collected throughout evaluation	• Data analysis
III. Effectiveness: To what extent have/will the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been/be achieved?				

Has the project been effective in achieving the expected outcomes and objectives?	• Has the project been effective in achieving its expected outcomes?
	   o 1. To make productive landscapes around Măcin Mountains National Park more biodiversity friendly?
	   o 2. To secure Măcin Mountains National Park management capacity and conservation effectiveness?
	   o 3. To have ongoing replication of small protected area management best practices across the national protected area system
		• See indicators in project document results framework and logframe	• Project documents
			• Project team and relevant stakeholders
			• Data reported in project annual and quarterly reports
				• Documents analysis
				• Interviews with project team
				• Interviews with relevant stakeholders

How was risk and risk mitigation managed?	• How well were risks, assumptions and impact drivers managed? • What was the quality of risk mitigation strategies developed? Were these sufficient? • Are there clear strategies for risk mitigation related with long-term sustainability of the project?	• Completeness of risk identification and assumptions during project planning and design • Quality of existing information systems in place to identify emerging risks and other issues • Quality of risk mitigations strategies developed and followed	• Project documents • UNDP, project team, and relevant stakeholders	• Document review • Interviews

Evaluation Criteria	Key Questions	Indicators	Potential Sources	Methodological Approach
What lessons can be drawn regarding effectiveness for other similar projects in the future?	• What lessons have been learned from the project regarding achievement of outcomes? • What changes could have been made (if any) to the design of the project to improve the achievement of the project's expected results?		• Data collected throughout evaluation	• Data analysis
IV. Results: What are the current actual, and potential long-term, results from activities supported by the project?				

How is the project effective in achieving its long-term objectives?	• Will the project achieve its overall objective of "A landscape-oriented method of managing small protected areas and improving conservation effectiveness is demonstrated in Măcin Mountains National Park and constitutes a model for replication across the emerging national system of protected areas"?
	• Is the globally significant biodiversity of the target area likely to be conserved?
	• What barriers remain to achieving long-term objectives, or what necessary steps remain to be taken by stakeholders to achieve sustained impacts and Global Environmental Benefits?
	• Are impacts or anticipated impacts at a scale to be considered Global Environmental Benefits?
	• Are there unanticipated results achieved or contributed to by the project?
		• Change in capacity:
		  ○ To pool/mobilize resources
		  ○ In protected area management effectiveness
		  ○ For related policy making and strategic planning
		  ○ For environmental governance in the project area
		• Change in use and implementation of sustainable livelihoods
		• Change in the number and strength of barriers such as:
		  ○ Knowledge about biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity resources, and economic incentives in these areas
		  ○ Cross-institutional coordination and inter-sectoral dialogue
		  ○ Knowledge of biodiversity conservation and sustainable use practices by end users
			• Project documents
			• Key stakeholders
			• Monitoring data
				• Documents analysis
				• Meetings with UNDP, project team and project partners
				• Interviews with project beneficiaries and other stakeholders

How is the project effective in achieving the objectives of the UNCBD?	• What are the impacts or likely impacts of the project?
	  ○ On the local/regional environment
	  ○ On economic development
	  ○ On other socio-economic issues
		• Provide specific examples of impacts at species, ecosystem or genetic levels, as relevant
		• Provide data on economic benefits from sustainable use of biodiversity
			• Project documents
			• UNCDB documents
			• Key Stakeholders
			• Monitoring data
				• Data analysis
				• Interviews with key stakeholders

Future directions for results	• How can the project build on its successes and learn from its weaknesses to enhance the potential for impact of ongoing and future initiatives?	•	• Data collected throughout evaluation	• Data analysis

Evaluation Criteria	Key Questions	Indicators	Potential Sources	Methodological Approach
V. Sustainability: Are the conditions in place for project-related benefits and results to be sustained, and what are the current risks to sustainability?				
Are sustainability issues adequately integrated in project design?	• Did the project have a sustainability strategy incorporated into design and implementation?	• Evidence / effectiveness of sustainability strategy • Evidence / effectiveness of steps taken to ensure sustainability	• Project documents and evaluations • UNDP and project personnel and project partners • Beneficiaries	• Document review • Interviews
Financial sustainability	• Did the project adequately address financial and economic risks to sustainability? • Do certain aspects of project results require ongoing financial support? • Are any recurrent costs after project completion sustainable? • Are any financial resources expected after project completion adequate?	• Level and source of future financial support for protected area management after the project ends • Evidence of commitments from international partners, governments or other stakeholders to financially support relevant sectors of activities after project end • Level of recurrent costs after completion of project and funding sources for those recurrent costs	• Project documents and evaluations • UNDP and project personnel and project partners • Beneficiaries	• Document review • Interviews
Institutional and governance sustainability	• Are there identified institutional or governance risks to the sustainability of project results? • Were project results integrated by partner organizations, institutions, and government bodies into their internal systems and procedures? • Is there evidence that project partners will continue their activities beyond project support? • What degree is there of local ownership of initiatives and results? • Were laws, policies and frameworks addressed through the project, to address sustainability of key initiatives and reforms? • Are laws, policies and frameworks address through the project implemented and enforced? • What is the level of political commitment to build on the results of the project? • Are there policies or practices in place that create perverse incentives that would negatively affect long-term benefits?	• Degree to which project activities and results have been taken over by local counterparts or institutions/organizations • Efforts to support the development of relevant laws and policies • State of enforcement and law making capacity • Evidences of commitment by government enactment of laws and resource allocation to priorities • Quality of governance at local, regional and national levels	• Project documents and evaluations • UNDP and project personnel and project partners • Beneficiaries	• Document review • Interviews
Social-economic sustainability	• Did the project contribute to key building blocks for socio-economic sustainability? • Did the project contribute to local stakeholders' acceptance of MMNP as a protected area? • Are there adequate market opportunities and incentives to ensure sustained environmental and economic benefits achieved through the project?	• Example of contributions to sustainable socio-economic changes in support of national development goals and strategies • Examples of contributions to sustainable socio-economic changes in support of the objectives of the UNCBD and other conventions	• Project documents and evaluations • UNDP, project personnel and project partners • Beneficiaries	• Interviews • Documentation review

Evaluation Criteria	Key Questions	Indicators	Potential Sources	Methodological Approach
Environmental sustainability	• Are there risks to the environmental benefits that were created or that are expected to occur? • Are there long-term environmental threats that have not been addressed by the project? • Have any new environmental threats emerged in the project's lifetime?	• Evidence of potential threats such as infrastructure development • Assessment of unaddressed or emerging threats	• Project documents and evaluations • Threat assessments • Government documents or other external published information • UNDP, project personnel and project partners • Beneficiaries	• Interviews • Documentation review
Individual, institutional and systemic capacity development	• Is the capacity in place at the regional, national and local levels adequate to ensure sustainability of the results achieved to date? • Were the necessary related capacities for policy creation and enforcement built?	• Elements in place in those different management functions, at the appropriate levels (regional, national and local) in terms of adequate structures, strategies, systems, skills, incentives and interrelationships with other key actors	• Project documents • UNDP, project personnel and project partners • Beneficiaries • Capacity assessments available, if any	• Interviews • Documentation review
Replication	• Were project activities and results replicated nationally and / or scaled up? • Was the project contribution to replication or scaling up actively or passively promoted? • Were project activities and results replicated or scaled-up in other countries?	• Extent /quality of replicated initiatives • Scale of additional investment leveraged	• Other donor programming documents • Beneficiaries • UNDP, project personnel and project partners	• Document review • Interviews
Barriers to sustainability of project results	• What are the main challenges that may hinder sustainability of results? • Have any of these been addressed through project management? • What could be the possible measures to further contribute to the sustainability of efforts achieved with the project?	• Challenges in view of building blocks of sustainability as presented above • Recent changes which may present new challenges to sustainability of results	• Project documents and evaluations • Beneficiaries • UNDP, project personnel and project partners	• Document review • Interviews
Future directions for sustainability and a catalytic role	• Which project results show the strongest potential for lasting long-term benefits? • What are the key challenges and obstacles to the sustainability of results of the project initiatives that must be directly and quickly addressed? • How can the experience and good project practices influence the strategies for biodiversity conservation through an effective protected area management model? • Are national decision-making institutions prepared to continue improving their strategy for effective biodiversity conservation in MMNP and throughout Romania's protected area system?		• Data collected throughout evaluation	• Data analysis

MMNP Terminal Evaluation Interview Guide

<u>Overview:</u> *The questions under each topic area are intended to assist in focusing discussion to ensure consistent topic coverage and to structure data collection, and are not intended as verbatim questions to be posed to interviewees. When using the interview guide, the interviewer should be sure to target questions at a level appropriate to the interviewee. The interview guide is one of multiple tools for gathering evaluative evidence, to complement evidence collected through document reviews and other data collection methods; in other words, the interview guide does not cover all evaluative questions relevant to the evaluation.*

<u>Key</u>
Bold = GEF Evaluation Criteria
Italic = GEF Operational Principles

I.   PLANNING / PRE-IMPLEMENTATION
    A. **Relevance**
        i.   Did the project's objectives conform to the priorities of the local government and local communities?
        ii. Did the project's objectives conform to national priorities?
    B. *Incremental cost*
        i.   Did the project create environmental benefits that would not have otherwise taken place?
        ii. Does the project area represent an example of a globally significant environmental resource?
    C. *Country-drivenness / Participation*
        i.   How did the project concept originate?
        ii. How did the project stakeholders contribute to the project development?
        iii. Do local and national government stakeholders support the objectives of the project?
        iv. Do the local communities support the objectives of the project?
        v.   Are the project objectives in conflict with any national level policies?
    D. Monitoring and Evaluation Plan / Design *(M&E)*
        i.   Were monitoring and reporting roles clearly defined?
        ii. Was there either an environmental or socio-economic baseline of data collected before the project began?

II.   MANAGEMENT / OVERSIGHT
    A. Project management
        i.   What were the implementation arrangements?
        ii. Was the management effective?
        iii. Were workplans prepared as required to achieve the anticipated outputs on the required timeframes?

      iv. Did the project develop and leverage the necessary and appropriate partnerships with direct and tangential stakeholders?

      v. Were there any particular challenges with the management process?

      vi. If there was a steering or oversight body, did it meet as planned and provide the anticipated input and support to project management?

      vii. Were risks adequately assessed during implementation?

      viii. Did assumptions made during project design hold true?

      ix. Were assessed risks adequately dealt with?

      x. Was the level of communication and support from the implementing agency adequate and appropriate?

B. *Flexibility*

      i. Did the project have to undertake any adaptive management measures based on feedback received from the M&E process?

      ii. Were there other ways in which the project demonstrated flexibility?

      iii. Were there any challenges faced in this area?

C. **Efficiency** *(cost-effectiveness)*

      i. Was the project cost-effective?

      ii. Were expenditures and procurement in line with international standards and norms?

      iii. Was the project implementation delayed?

      iv. If so, did that affect cost-effectiveness?

      v. What was the contribution of cash and in-kind co-financing to project implementation?

      vi. To what extent did the project leverage additional resources?

D. Financial Management

      i. Was the project financing (from the GEF and other partners) at the level foreseen in the project document?

      ii. Were there any problems with disbursements between implementing and executing agencies?

      iii. Were financial audits conducted with the regularity and rigor required by the implementing agency?

      iv. Was financial reporting regularly completed at the required standards and level of detail?

      v. Did the project face any particular financial challenges such as unforeseen tax liabilities, management costs, or currency devaluation?

E. Co-financing *(catalytic role)*

      i. Was the cash and in-kind co-financing received at the level anticipated in the project document?

      ii. Did the project receive any additional unanticipated cash or in-kind support after approval?

F. Monitoring and Evaluation *(M&E)*

      i. Project implementation M&E

         a. Was the M&E plan adequate and implemented sufficiently to allow the project to recognize and address challenges?

      b. Were any unplanned M&E measures undertaken to meet unforeseen shortcomings?

      c. Was there a mid-term evaluation?

      d. How were project reporting and monitoring tools used to support adaptive management?

   ii. Environmental and socio-economic monitoring

      a. Did the project implement a monitoring system, or leverage a system already in place, for environmental monitoring?

      b. What are the environmental or socio-economic monitoring mechanisms?

      c. Have any community-based monitoring mechanisms been used?

      d. Is there a long-term M&E component to track environmental changes?

      e. If so, what provisions have been made to ensure this is carried out?

  E. *Full disclosure*

   i. Did the project meet this requirement?

   ii. Did the project face any challenges in this area?

III.   ACTIVITIES / IMPLEMENTATION

  A. **Effectiveness**

   i. How have the stated project objectives been met?

   ii. To what extent have the project objectives been met?

   iii. What were the key factors that contributed to project success or underachievement?

   iv. Can positive key factors be replicated in other situations, and could negative key factors have been anticipated?

  B. Stakeholder involvement and public awareness *(participation)*

   i. What were the achievements in this area?

   ii. What were the challenges in this area?

   iii. How did stakeholder involvement and public awareness contribute to the achievement of project objectives?

IV.   **RESULTS**

  A. Outputs

   i. Did the project achieve the planned outputs?

   ii. Did the outputs contribute to the project outcomes and objectives?

  B. Outcomes

   i. Were the anticipated outcomes achieved?

   ii. Were the outcomes relevant to the planned project impacts?

  C. Impacts and Global Environmental Benefits

   i. Was there a logical flow of inputs and activities to outputs, from outputs to outcomes, and then to impacts?

   ii. Did the project achieve its anticipated/planned impacts?

   iii. Why or why not?

    iv. If impacts were achieved, were they at a scale sufficient to be considered Global Environmental Benefits?

    v. If impacts or Global Environmental Benefits have not yet been achieved, are the conditions (enabling environment) in place so that they are likely to eventually be achieved?

  D. Replication strategy, and documented replication or scaling-up *(catalytic role)*

    i. Did the project have a replication plan?

    ii. Was the replication plan "passive" or "active"?

    iii. Is there evidence that replication or scaling-up occurred within the country?

    iv. Did replication or scaling-up occur in other countries?

V.   LESSONS LEARNED

  A. What were the key lessons learned in each project stage?

  B. In retrospect, would the project participants have done anything differently?

VI.   SUSTAINABILITY

  A. Financial

    i. To what extent are the outcomes dependent on continued financial support?

    ii. Do "results owners" have the necessary resources to continue their efforts?

    iii. What is the likelihood that any required financial resources will be available to sustain the project outcomes/benefits once the GEF assistance ends?

    iv. Was the project successful in identifying and leveraging co-financing?

    v. What are the key financial risks to sustainability?

  B. Socio-Economic

    i. To what extent are the outcomes dependent on socio-economic factors?

    ii. What is the likelihood that the level of stakeholder ownership will allow for the project outcomes/benefits to be sustained?

    iii. Is there sufficient public/stakeholder awareness in support of the long-term objectives of the project?

    iv. What are the key socio-economic risks to sustainability?

  C. Institutions and Governance

    i. To what extent are the outcomes of the project dependent on issues relating to institutional frameworks and governance?

    ii. What is the likelihood that institutional and technical achievements, legal frameworks, policies and governance structures and processes will allow for the project outcomes/benefits to be sustained?

    iii. Are the required systems for accountability and transparency and the required technical know-how in place?

    iv. What are the key institutional and governance risks to sustainability?

  D. Ecological

    i. Are there any environmental risks that can undermine the future flow of project impacts and Global Environmental Benefits?

Interview Guide Appendix: GEF Evaluation Criteria and Key Definitions

Evaluation Criteria

Relevance: The extent to which the activity is suited to local and national development priorities and organizational policies, including changes over time.

Effectiveness: The extent to which an objective has been achieved or how likely it is to be achieved.

Efficiency: The extent to which results have been delivered with the least costly resources possible. Also called cost-effectiveness or efficacy.

Results: The positive and negative, and foreseen and unforeseen, changes to and effects produced by a development intervention. In GEF terms, results include direct project outputs, short- to medium term outcomes, and longer-term impact including global environmental benefits, replication effects and other, local effects.

Sustainability: The likely ability of an intervention to continue to deliver benefits for an extended period of time after completion. Projects need to be environmentally as well as financially and socially sustainable.

Key Definitions

Output: Tangible product (including services) of an intervention that is directly attributable to the initiative. Outputs relate to the completion (rather than the conduct) of activities and are the type of results over which managers have most influence. An example of an output for a GEF biodiversity project is a training session held in environmental monitoring, or an environmental education video.

Outcome: Actual or intended changes in capacity, behavior, awareness, knowledge or other condition that an intervention(s) seeks to address. Using the same example, an outcome could be the implementation of a community-based monitoring program, or an increase in awareness about a particular environmental issue.

Impact: Actual or intended changes in environmental status as measured by broadly accepted indicators, such as keystone species' population trends, species density, ecosystem extent or quality (or rate of expansion / contraction), etc.

E.   Annex 5: List of Persons Interviewed

Bucharest, Romania

Ms. Monica Moldovan, *Energy and Environment Program Officer, UNDP Romania*

Mr. Andrei Blumer*, President, Romania Ecotourism Association*

Mr. Dragos Mihai, *Head of International Cooperation Department, National Forestry Association, Project Director*

Mr. Mihai Zotta, *Protected Areas Unit, National Forestry Association*

Mr. Silviu Megan, *Director, Directorate of Nature Protection, Biodiversity and Biosafety, Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development*

Mrs. Maria Elena Teodorescu, *Vice President, National Environmental Protection Agency, Ministry of Environment, GEF Operational Focal Point* (interviewed in July 2009)

Măcin Mountains National Park and Tulcea, Tulcea County, Romania

Mr. Viorel Roca, *MMNP Project Manager / Park Manager, Măcin Mountains National Park*

Mr. Bogdan-Stefan Bajenara*, Chief Biologist, Măcin Mountains National Park*

Mr. Vasile Badilas, *Ranger, Măcin Mountains National Park*

Ms. Adela Balan, *Public Awareness and Communities, Măcin Mountains National Park*

Ms. Valentina Luchici, *Finance Specialist, Măcin Mountains National Park*

Ms. Alina Ungureanu, *Information Technology Specialist, Măcin Mountains National Park*

Ms. Gretel Enck, *Peace Corps Volunteer, Măcin Mountains National Park*

Mr. Dumitru Pangrate, *Head of Măcin Organic Farmers Association, Măcin area farmer*

Mr. Ivan Feodor, *Măcin area farmer*

Mr. Nicolea Musat*, Mayor of Cerna*

Mr. Ion Borodin, *Deputy Mayor of Cerna*

Mr. Dan Jalea, *Financial Director, Alcovin*

Mr. Stefan Ilie, *Mayor of Luncavita*

Mr. Dumitru Nicoara, *Deputy Mayor of Jijilla*

Mr. Vasile Gudu, *Prefect, Tulcea County*

Mr. Ioan Boieru, *Vice President, Tulcea County Council*

Mr. Costel Petcu, Forest Manager, Tulcea Forest Department

Mr. Veronel Parpala, *Biodiversity Division, Tulcea Environmental Protection Agency*

Ms. Elena Micu, *Director, Tulcea Environmental Protection Agency*

Mr. Mihai Filat, *Office of Forest Research and Management, Tulcea*

Mr. Marian Tudor, *National Institute of Research and Development of the Danube Delta, Tulcea*

F.Annex 6: Evaluation Field Visit Schedule

Date	Activity
Monday, November 2	Meetings with UNDP and national level stakeholders in Bucharest, travel to Tulcea
Tuesday, November 3	Meetings with farmers, local government officials and local wine producer
Wednesday, November 4	Meetings with local government officials, visit to MMNP Beech Valley and Culmea Pricopanului sites
Thursday, November 5	Meetings with country government stakeholders and monitoring database demo
Friday, November 6	Discussions with project team, return to Bucharest

G. Annex 7: Măcin PIR Ratings and Logframe Summary of Results

PIR Ratings of Project Progress towards Meeting Objective

	2007 Rating	2008 Rating	2009 Rating
National Project Manager/Coordinator	S	HS	HS
UNDP Country Office	S	HS	HS
UNDP Regional Technical Advisor	S	HS	HS

PIR Ratings of Project Implementation

	2007 Rating	2008 Rating	2009 Rating
National Project Manager/Coordinator	S	HS	HS
UNDP Country Office	S	HS	HS
UNDP Regional Technical Advisor	S	HS	HS

Logframe Summary *(Note: This logframe is drawn from the inception report version)*

Objective/Outcomes	Indicators	Baseline	Target Goal	Adaptive Management	Self Reported in 2009 PIR	Terminal Evaluation Assessment
Objective: A landscape-oriented method of managing small PA and improving conservation effectiveness is demonstrated in MMNP and serves as a basis for replication across the PA system.	# grassland ha managed to enhance habitat of priority species.	0 ha	400 hectares.		458 ha are secured with written agreements with the local councils and farmers associations. 350 ha were already verbally agreed since 2007-2008; besides this area, an additional 108 ha were added under special management regime: a total of 458 ha are formed by: 290 ha-dealul Stanila, 117 ha-Crucele; 51 ha-Pietrele Mariei.	Verified by terminal evaluation. The MMNP administration provided data-based assessments (by contracting a national expert) of the carrying capacity of municipal sheep fields, following which the municipalities provided the shepherds only the amount of sheep recommended for the area. Following this experience, the national expert contracted to conduct the assessments was retained by other protected areas to carry out similar assessments.
	# hectares of forest in and around the Măcin Park under (FSC) certified management.	0 ha	25,000 hectares	The project document logframe described this indicator as "# of forest hectares where monoculture forests are being diversified." This indicator should have been further revised or removed with approval from the steering committee at some point during the project once it was recognized there would be no certification.	0 ha. The certification process is still delayed by the process of settling the claim on the restitution of land to former land owners- according to the land restitution law. Măcin certification will be part of a national certification exercise carried out by NFA which has been already triggered.	Verified by terminal evaluation. Although a total of only 4.04 hectares of MMNP has been restituted, the NFA's national strategy on certification vis-à-vis restitution has not yet shifted. It is not expected that there will be any additional restitution in Măcin. Once the restitution situation has been clarified at the national level, it is anticipated the NFA will reassess priorities for certification among its remaining holdings.

Objective/Outcomes	Indicators	Baseline	Target Goal	Adaptive Management	Self Reported in 2009 PIR	Terminal Evaluation Assessment
	Populations of target landscape species within NP maintained at baseline levels or increased. *Testudo graeca* (Dobrodjan turtle) *Buteo ruffinus* (Long-legged buzzard) *Elaphe quatorlineata sauromates* (Romanian dragon snake) *Circaetus gallicus* (Short-toed eagle) *Aquila pomarina* (Lesser spotted eagle) Coverage in polygons (Total Value Abundance/ Dominance) *Campanula romanica* (Dobrudja bellflower) *Dianthus nardiformis* (Rockpink)	100 (indiv) 18 (pairs) 6 (indiv) 5 (pairs) N/S 11 (m2) 21 (m2)	#s of individuals, pairs, or square meters the same or increased from project start levels.	*Aquila pomarina* added as indicator species	205 individuals The number of individuals increased to 205 with 38 individuals more than last year; results documented according to the monitoring protocols. 21 pairs 8 individuals 8 pairs 7 pairs 11 m^2 21 m^2	Concur with PIR assessment. The MMNP biological monitoring program is technically robust, and monitoring data can be considered as realistic as is possible using standard monitoring procedures.
OUTCOME 1: Productive landscape around MMNP is made more biodiversity friendly.	# of priority habitats under special management by stakeholders and MMNP in surrounding landscape.	0	5 by end of project.	In the project document logframe there were additional outcome 1 indicators which were dropped or revised at the inception workshop to those presently listed.	5 habitats The fifth habitat added during this reporting period is: Western pontic mixed forests with Quercus pubescens with Peonia peregrina is spreading over some 153 ha- approximately 40% of the total 382 ha of forest-steppe habitat characterized by woodlands and open steppe areas.	Verified by terminal evaluation.
	# of farms replicating agro environmental/organic practices in Măcin.	0	At least 10 farms by Year 4.		15 farms Total ha of eco-farms is 1100 ha around the park. In total 380 ha at Horia; 300 ha at Cerna; 145 ha at Luncavita; 20 ha at Greci; 90 ha at Hamcearca; 115 ha at the vegetable farm in Măcin and 50 ha vine at Măcin (Carcaliului hill). The number of farmers increased to 15: Close contact was kept with farmers and continuous awareness raising on the benefits of ecological agriculture was promoted -- resulting in more farmers wanting to enroll in this pilot programme promoted by the project; there is a hope among farmers that the ecological segment of the market products will continue	Verified by terminal evaluation. According to the project team, this is the minimum amount that can be verified for certain.

Objective/Outcomes	Indicators	Baseline	Target Goal	Adaptive Management	Self Reported in 2009 PIR	Terminal Evaluation Assessment
					growing, so that they will be able to cover that niche of the market. The farmers are in the 2nd year of conversion and will be able to sell certified products as of next year (2010).	
	% improvement in level of support for 5 basic biodiversity issues in local communities.	Not measured.	10% annually		There has been an 100% increase in local community support. The increasing local community support tendency was maintained, and reported against the established two sub-indicators in the baseline survey of 2007: (i) The 2007-2008 verbal agreements with local authorities have finalized in written agreements during this reporting period; an additional written agreement with the local authorities over 108 ha donated to the park in order to improve its management was signed during the reporting period; (ii) increase in the number of farmers registered in the programme (the number of farmers doubled, which represents a 100% increase) - increase in the converted agricultural surface from 7 farms to 15 farms (8 more farms enrolled in the pilot programme)	There is no question that local support for MMNP and biodiversity conservation in the area has increased, though it this is difficult to assess quantitatively, in particular when there was no baseline data. To truly gauge changing attitudes a second community survey should be conducted (the first was conducted in late 2007), and MMNP should consider conducting a survey semi-annually, or at some given time interval. The project team does apparently plan to conduct another survey, once sufficient time has passed to possibly see changes over time. The change in the first sub-indicator mentioned does indicate community support, but cannot be extrapolated as a percentage increase. The second sub-indicator is already covered under other aspects of the project and may not be considered a relevant indicator of support for biodiversity issues; discussions with farmers imply it is more likely an indicator of local agricultural economic conditions.
OUTCOME 2: Management capacity and conservation effectiveness of Măcin Mountains National Park is secured.	METT score increases annually to a significant degree.	METT Baseline score of: 32	50 or higher by yr 4.	This indicator was originally organized in the project document under the overall project objective.	69	Concur with PIR assessment.
	# of cross-sectoral hunting enforcement/poaching prevention agreements.	2	6 by year 4.		10 Protocols have been renewed, which indicates the strong local support of law enforcement authorities.	Concur with PIR assessment. Enforcement, as well as deterrence measures, in effect.
	Staff performance standards in place.	No standards.	In place by year 4.	This indicator was eliminated at the project specific level, as the MMNP staff are NFA employees, and thus are subject to national institutional performance standards. Originally articulated in project	[Not reported]	Since the staff are full NFA employees, NFA staff performance standards are applied at the organizational level, rather than having MMNP specific standards.

Objective/Outcomes	Indicators	Baseline	Target Goal	Adaptive Management	Self Reported in 2009 PIR	Terminal Evaluation Assessment
				document as "staff skills improvement underway and skilled staff retaining policy in place."		
	Supplementary funding for PA increased. – e.g. tourism revenue.	US$200	At least $2,000/year by year 4.	In the project document, two related indicators were identified, which were later revised to the present form. These include: "MoAF budget level for MMNP is stable in years 2 and 3" and "Non-timber resource revenue for MMNP."	US$700 -permits for economic activities in the park's surroundings - tourist guidance in the park - equine tourism	Concur with PIR assessment (target not met). Also, the majority of this revenue is from the economic permits, not tourism revenue. The park administration estimates that revenue will reach $2000 in 2009, which was the first year a full tariff schedule was developed and introduced. The tariff schedule includes fees for things such as third-party tour guides bring groups of tourists into the park, and activities like using the national park in commercial video footage. According to the park administration the number of tourists has increased from 2,000 in 2004 to 10,000 in 2009, but the majority of these are still national tourists, not international tourists. The park's objective is to reach 20,000 visitors a year, which is estimated as the maximum the current park staff has the capacity to control.
	Park management decisions are being made up to date monitoring system.	No monitoring system or database	Database has basic annual survey data on location and condition for at least 5 species and habitats for four years.	Originally articulated in project document as "adaptive management practices being applied in MMNP."	(i) 6 more monitoring protocols for 6 bio-indicator species have been added (*Calimorpha quadripunctalia* (vulnerable to habitat change), *Morimus funereus* and *Rosaria alpine* (detect forest level of vulnerability) *Mustella eversmanii* and *Vormella peregusna* (bio-indicators for steppe and rocky ecosystems, very vulnerable to noise and dust) and *Rhinolophus ferrumeqinum* (bio-indicator for complex grasslands)). (ii) monitoring protocols on: timber harvesting, fire, grazing, tourism, poaching, and plants harvesting (iii) Database finalized and replicated; currently used by 26 PAs.	Verified by terminal evaluation. The biological monitoring system is technically robust, and is setting standards for biological monitoring in Romania's national protected area system.
Outcome 3. Replication of small protected area	Best practices and new training curriculum for PAs and surrounding landscape.	Do not exist.	Adopted by NFA by year 4.	Note: Indicators for Outcome 3 were significantly revised and improved in the inception report.	The training needs assessment study will be shared with the NFA network of PAs in order to assess the capacity building needs of PA staff.	

Objective/Outcomes	Indicators	Baseline	Target Goal	Adaptive Management	Self Reported in 2009 PIR	Terminal Evaluation Assessment
management best practices across national PA system is ongoing.	# of PA whose staff successfully completed new training module.	None; Knowledge baseline TBD	Increasing to 20 by yr 4. Measurable knowledge Improvement.		None; Training module for PAs staff was shared with NFA headquarters. A training session on biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of natural resources, based on the developed training module is foreseen for September 2009.	Trainings have been held for national protected area staff, particularly regarding the biological monitoring system.
	NFA PA management performance evaluations include adopting best practices (BP) as a criterion.	No performance evaluations	Evaluations include adopting BP as important criterion by year 3.		BPs developed and shared with other parks who have partly implemented them. Lack of funding is preventing their implementation of the BP. The mechanism for institutionalization of PAs performance evaluation is still to be identified. The delay in setting up this mechanism is mainly NFA reorganization during last months which took precedent over other internal changes. The Government Ordinance no. 229 of March 2009 was the basis for the NFA reorganization. The Park administrations will continue to remain under NFA management however they will now have legal status and therefore will be able to submit projects under EU funding mechanism. After the reorganization will be finalized, NFA will look into a number of internal measures among which the institutionalization of BP and mechanisms to share and added to the already existing set of PAs performance assessment indicators. The BPs of the project will be mainstreamed in the NBSAP set of measures for biodiversity conservation.	As indicated, best practices have been shared within the national protected area network, and the main barriers to implementation are funding and institutional changes.
	# of protected areas replicating best practices.	None	At least 10 protected areas replicating at lease one BP by year 4.	This indicator was originally organized under the overall project objective.	23 PAs are applying Măcin BP Besides the PAs, the following institutions are applying the BPs shared by the project: Environmental Protection Agency –Tulcea (managing the Natura 2000 sites and other PAs) Environmental Guard – will consider the BPs as framework for reference during their monitoring and checks in the field.	As mentioned above, best practices are being shared within the national protected areas network overseen by the NFA. The most notable example is the rollout of the biological monitoring database system within the network. It is difficult to quantify and specify other best practices that are being implemented. As mentioned, other local institutions are also leveraging MMNP best practices in protected area management

H.   Annex 8: Project Follow-up to Mid-term Evaluation and Annual Adaptive Management Report Recommendations

Mid-term Evaluation Recommendation	Present Level of Follow-up	Terminal Evaluation Notes
MTE: 1. It is recommended to undertake a review of international practices for managing similar protected areas as additional potential best practices for managing the park and its surrounding areas and monitoring its biodiversity. Few examples could be the Niagara Escarpment (Ontario, Canada), the North Vidzeme Biosphere Reserve in Latvia – particularly for their own experience with their ecological landscape planning process and their Eco-watch programme to monitor the biodiversity in the reserve based on local volunteers with the support of thematic experts. A review of international practices would enrich the landscape conservation plan and the management plan for MMNP, which are currently under development.	Already included, specific action not required.	The conservation plan should generally have been based on global best practices in the field of landscape conservation planning. This was part of the contribution of the external consultant for landscape planning.
MTE: 2. As per the "Year 3 work plan", it is recommended to finalize as soon as possible the main initiatives under outcome 1 & 2 and kick-start activities under outcome 3. The project is already in its second half and it is necessary to undertake the portfolio of activities under outcome 3 as soon as possible. Despite that these outcomes should sequentially be implemented; it is possible that activities under outcome 3 overlap with the finalization of some initiatives under outcome 1 & 2. In addition to the development of a list of emerging best practices generated by the project (Activity 1 of WP2008), it is recommended to: a. Organize a national workshop in collaboration with NFA and the Maramureş Project to review these emerging best practices and identify the needs for the network of protected areas in Romania. The objective would be to identify the national needs in term of best practices, validate the emerging best practices in both UNDP/GEF projects and identify a plan of action to "package" these best practices: format (case study, fact sheet, study tours, web sites, etc…), resources, responsibilities and schedule. The timing of this workshop should also be done after the review of international practices to be able to also use this input into the workshop.	Project team focused on Outcome 3 from May 2008. The training workshops were held with staff from other protected areas in the NFA network.	Training sessions were held, but identification and sharing of best practices should be an ongoing activity within the MMNP administration.
MTE (?) There should be a case study on the negotiations with the quarry regarding economic activities.	No specific case study yet produced.	An important success was the outcome of the negotiation with the quarry because a significant area was preserved from what otherwise would have been exploited. Now there are significant economic requirements to meet the environmental standards following the negotiation. Quarry operations only continue up to 200m elevation instead of the higher original level.
MTE: 3. It is recommended that the MMNP Administration review the participation of local stakeholders in the management of the park. The need for a greater participation of local stakeholders in the management of the park as reviewed during this MTE (see Section 4.3.7) was confirmed by the recent survey on "conservation attitudes in the communities neighboring the MMNP". It was also emphasized in the October 2007 report of the Consultant Phillip Desmet as a key element determining the long-term success of the park. Dr. Desmet recommended that "a framework for stakeholder involvement in the management and development/ utilization of the park" be integrated into the management plan; including an initial list of elements for a greater stakeholder involvement.	Stakeholder participation and communication has remained a priority of MMNP management.	Stakeholder participation has continued to expand and grow throughout the implementation period. This is and should continue to be a priority of park activities. Farmers are involved in the Consultative Council. The rangers know who the relevant stakeholders in the field are, and the park administration invites them to participate. Representatives covering all relevant areas are invited and represent various stakeholder constituencies. Also on the consultative council are representative from the stone quarries – they even offered

		space for a visitor center – but the MMNP management declined because a similar offer had been received from the community, which was a better option. Farmers who participate in the consultative council meetings then discuss the issues with other farmers. The MoE approves the membership of the scientific and consultative council. If members don't participate for three consecutive meetings they are replaced by a new representative. The consultative council approved the management plan.
MTE: 4. In parallel to the previous recommendation, it is recommended to explore the possibilities to monitor the surrounding areas through community/municipality committees or other forms of local associations (NGOs?) with the participation of the MMNP Administration. It will develop a greater participation of stakeholders in monitoring and preserving the surrounding areas and a greater local ownership to conserve these areas.	[Project team misunderstood recommendation]	The terminal evaluation recommends exploration of participatory monitoring, which can be a cost-effective way to expand a basic level of environmental monitoring, and is useful as an awareness raising tool. In Măcin, the park area is small enough and park administration team is well-equipped to undertake in-depth and robust monitoring protocols covering the most relevant aspects of the ecosystem.
MTE: 5. Support the production of a compendium (profile) on MMNP and the surrounding communities to expand people's access to information on the area. Currently, information on the region exists but it is scattered throughout agencies and ministries and not easily accessible. For instance, MMNP has now an inventory of most flora and fauna existing in the park, the recent survey on conservation attitudes is also with the park, the legislation on national patrimoine contains a list of all cultural monuments in the region, etc. This compendium should be for the most part a compilation of existing data covering, for instance, the governance aspects, history and culture, social environment, services and infrastructure, economic conditions, a summary description of the natural environment and the human impacts on the environment (agriculture, forestry, tourism, waste water management, etc.). This compendium could become the environment and socio-economic baseline for the Măcin area and be used to identify the long term management strategies for the park but also for the local communities such as the development of local sustainable development plans. It could also be packaged as a book on Măcin and be sold as a reference book on the area.	Some materials like maps produced, but to do this would have been too expensive and was not originally foreseen in the project. This has been proposed for the new EU SOP project.	Not within scope of project.
MTE: 6. The information produced by the project should be made more accessible to the public; particularly through the MMNP web site. The park newsletter should be disseminated largely in the local communities.	Panels and quarterly newspapers, documentary film, have been produced. The website includes a significant amount of information about the park in both Romanian and English.	The website is an important tool, but could be used even more effectively as an information portal for potential visitors to the park and surrounding area.
MTE: 7. On the basis of the training needs assessment, recommendations for the development of a training programme were made with two levels of priorities: (1) essential for meeting major current capacity gaps and (2) important for the successful completion of the project objectives. It is recommended to go ahead with the first level of priorities that includes basic training for rangers and field workers, communication skills and working with communities. However, it is also recommended to develop this training programme in close collaboration with NFA	Trainings have been completed for staff.	Capacity-needs assessments and support for staff professional development should be a continuous element of MMNP management. The MMNP administration will also be expected to regularly share

and explore the possibility to develop this training programme in partnership with an existing training institution such as a training organization that is developing/delivering training courses to the public service or an academic institution specialised in environment and/or forestry. The concept would be to develop jointly this training, deliver it to the MMNP staff but also opening this training to all staff involved in managing protected areas in Romania; including NFA staff but also staff from MESD. Instead of being a one time delivered course – which is costly – the programme could be used for the years to come to transfer know-how on PA management and raise the capacity of staff involved in PAs.		insights and best practices with other protected areas in the NFA network through collaborative national-level training sessions.
MTE: 8. In addition to the training recommendation above, it is recommended to support capacity development activities to strengthen the management of the MMNP Administration; using the proposed institutional and project management skills training module identified through the training needs analysis. It should include topics such as management systems, management information system, GIS, human resource management system and project life cycle.	Trainings completed for staff.	See previous comment on ongoing capacity development.
MTE: 9. As discussed in Section 4.1.2, the identification of the national network of Natura 2000 sites was conducted without much public consultation. As a result, there is a limited "buy-in" from the local communities such as those in the Tulcea County. However, the N2000 Măcin site exists and in addition to the MMNP area (11,000ha), it covers another 7,000ha of land in the surrounding areas to the park, mostly private land. Under the current jurisdiction, the MMNP Administration is becoming the custodian of the N2000 site. It is recommended that the project support the integration of the two concepts (N2000 and MMNP); particularly in the management plan that is under development. The MMNP Administration needs also to be more proactive on this issue and support some awareness campaign to increase the communities' knowledge about the N2000 network and its obligations and opportunities.	Followed up. Met with farmers, and included presentation.	Once MMNP is formally designated as the custodian of the nearby area covering the Natura 2000 sites, the MMNP management plan should be revised to incorporate this expanded area.
MTE: 10. The communities in the Măcin area are dynamic. Local leaders and local government agency staff are promoting the development of plans, programmes and projects. They also expect the support of the MMNP Administration to help them identifying funding sources and developing project proposals. It is recommended that the project continue to support these community needs. Opportunities exist, particularly with the EU structural funds. The main one is the rural development strategy and action plan that will be funded by the GOR and the EU. Also under the Natura 2000 programme funds are available under the SOP Environment to help local landowners to preserve sensitive habitats.	Project has supported community initiatives through letters of support.	There continues to be a positive collaborative relationship between MMNP and various surrounding communities. Over time MMNP will need to continue applying energy to these partnerships, and to expand relationships with all relevant communities.
MTE: 11. Regarding the study of the value of the environmental services, it is recommended to fast track its last phase. According to the 2008 work plan, the target date for the completion of the study is October 2008. It is late if we consider the implementation of any proposed recommendations within the project's lifetime. It is recommended to discuss with the consultant and explore the possibility to launch some proposed initiatives in parallel to the completion of the study. Also a target date of mid-summer 2008 for the completion of the study would be recommended if possible.	Carried out.	Completed.
MTE: 12. It is recommended to monitor the possible institutional reorganization for the management of the protected areas in Romania. According to MESD, this change may occur this year (2008) with the set-up of this new national agency and a staff of 300 people. Continuity of the MMNP Administration should be ensured but, as with all institutional reorganizations, changes should be expected. The project team in collaboration with UNDP-CO need to maintain a dialogue with MESD; including their involvement in the POC.	Ongoing.	National level institutional arrangements in Romania remain in flux through ongoing political turmoil.
MTE: 13. As described in Section 4.3.8, it is recommended to review the performance indicators of the project and to add one indicator to measure the progress of the relationship between the MMNP Administration and the local communities such as "Local communities understand better why to protect the Măcin Mountain National Park and are active in its management".	Not clear, not carried out.	Recommended indicator not specific or clear. Agree that indicators for gauging community awareness and support could be improved.
MTE: 14. The project is using the METT scorecard to track the management effectiveness of the MMNP Administration. As discussed in Section 4.3.8, the current score is 56 that is higher that the target set for the end of the project (50). It is recommended to review and set new targets for each indicator for the end of the project (Dec. 2009); particularly for the areas where the project is supporting capacity development initiatives such as the strengthening of the Administration and the relation with the local communities.	Not done, not necessary.	It is expected that MMNP will continue using the METT to identify priorities for improving management.
OPPORTUNITIES		

MTE: 15. It is recommended that the project team in collaboration with UNDP-CO and NFA explore the possibility to access the environment SOP funds to strengthen the network of PAs and build on the achievements of the MMNP project. As discussed in Section 4.1.5, the environment SOP was approved by the EU in July 2007 with an indicative budget of 4.5B euros from the EU and 1B euros from GOR for the period 2007-2013. The priority axis #4 is about nature protection with a budget of 215M euros to implement adequate management framework for PAs; including N2000 sites.	MMNP has submitted an extensive EU SOP proposal, on which a final decision is expected in early 2010.	Carried out. In 2009 protected areas within the NFA network gained individual legal status, which gave them to possibility to individually apply for resources such as the EU SOP funds.
MTE: 16. It is recommended that a case study be done on the UNDP/GEF experience in Romania; including the identification of lessons learned. One strong characteristic of this experience is the excellent partnership between the international implementation agency/donor (UNDP/GEF) and the national implementing agency (NFA). The partnership is the basis for truly joint projects, whereby, both partners are investing resources. The results seem to be: (1) a good response to address national priorities; (2) an integrated approach for project implementation leading to good stakeholder participation and ownership; (3) a great potential for replicating project achievements; (4) an easier project exit with minimal disruption of the work of local partners; and (5) a better long-term sustainability of the project achievements, due to an early institutionalization of these results into the local structures, procedures, skills and knowledge.	No specific case study carried out.	Recommendation for UNDP Romania country office, or UNDP Bratislava regional office.
Annual Adaptive Management Report Recommendations	**Present Level of Follow-up**	**Terminal Evaluation Notes**
2008 AMR: 3) Follow up on training needs assessment recommendations as quickly as possible.	Trainings have been completed.	Carried out. Always potential for additional efforts.
2008 AMR: 5) Quantify and qualify changes in stakeholder support/knowledge/participation. It is important for the project to document progress in improved stakeholder support of Park and participation in management discussions. We discussed different ways of doing this. First, the Park is considering working with the University in Cluj to conduct a second survey to follow up on the one done last year. Second, the Park Manager suggested that the Park describe/document the noticeable increase in participation among stakeholders in the Park's management advisory committee. I encouraged that both actions be taken, since this is a key indicator in the log frame and for the METT questionnaire and relates to such important concepts as sustainability.	Quantifying and qualifying changes in stakeholder support and awareness remains a priority area for the future.	It is anticipated a second survey will be completed in the next one or two years, but additional measures could be applied.
2008 AMR: 6) Look into environmental offsets for the voluntary carbon market. As the Park works with the ecological economist to complete the study, it should consider building on this with some activities focused on actually raising revenue from generating and selling environmental offsets. To illustrate this point, I attach an article describing how the Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve in Mexico is looking to help finance its ambitious biodiversity conservation program by selling carbon and environmental offsets. We discussed this altogether and the Park Director decided to earmark a small portion of the remaining budget to investigate the feasibility of MMNP doing something similar, building upon the work being done by the ecological economist (See Output 2.4, Activity 6).	To be followed-up in the EU SOP project – money included for carbon sequestration project (with help of Jeffrey Griffin).	Planned. Also partially addressed by the TEV study.
2008 AMR: 7)   Learning from and collaborating with other GEF protected area projects in Romania.
The project team should continue to draw upon the experiences of the larger network of protected areas at NFA. There are many issues of concern to this project that were also of concern to the larger network – e.g. database development and design, making of base maps, ecotourism, public awareness campaigns, management planning, organizing trainings. GEF strongly encourages this kind of learning. Also strongly encouraged and required is the kind of lessons learned and replication work included under Outcome 3 of the project. The project team needs to really increase its work level with respect to developing the training program as recommended in the training needs assessment and also developing the lessons learned notes. Involve BCM and/or Maramureş people in multiple workshops or visits to MMNP or send MMNP staff to BCM PA to discuss specific issues if and when appropriate.	Inter-protected area learning does take place to some extent through the NFA national-level network.	This is in some sense a recommendation for the NFA, as sharing of experiences between all protected areas in the national-level network should be a priority and be continuously improved and facilitated over time.
2007 AMR: 1. The quarry issue continues to absorb a significant amount of the protected area director's time.
Legal wrangling over the Măcin quarry issue has required a significant amount of the Park Director/Project Manager's time. Owners of a quarry on the edge of the park have applied for approval to re-start operations. The park finds itself in the middle of the controversy over whether to approve the quarry's application that scientists feel will seriously harm the park. Currently, a second EIA is being	Quarry issue was resolved.	Lessons from this experience should be applied within MMNP management when addressing other similar issues in the future.

conducted related to re-starting the quarry operations. The results are due at the end of 2007. In the meantime, the issue promises to demand a significant portion of the director's time. I recommend that project and UNDP staff consider how to minimize the time required on this issue by the park director in 2007.		
2007 AMR: 2. Increased restitution of government forestlands to private owners in 2006 has caused the NFA to cancel it's forest certification plans nationwide. NFA cancelled its forest certification work nation-wide in 2006 due to uncertainty caused by the ongoing restoration of state forestlands to their previous private owners. At the same time, the cost of certification has dropped dramatically. During our discussions we explored ways that the NFA could co-fund certification for the forestlands surrounding MMNP. I recommend that the project team work with NFA's office in Măcin and the International Relations department of NFA to convince them to co-fund certification for Măcin and Cerna Forest Units at least – GEF co-funding can be used to make this certification "biodiversity friendly."	No specific action taken on certification; the NFA has not yet significantly shifted its approach to addressing certification in view of the restitution process.	Changed assumptions resulted in non-applicability.
2007 AMR: 3. Continue learning from other GEF protected area projects in Romania (BCM and Maramureş) The project team should continue to draw upon the experiences of the former WB/GEF BCM project – there are many issues of concern to Măcin that were also of concern to BCM – e.g. database development, making of base maps, ecotourism, database design, public awareness campaigns, management planning, organizing trainings. GEF strongly encourages this kind of learning and the project team should actively take advantage of the experience of their colleagues in the other 2-3 protected areas that were included in the BCM project. This need not be limited to one visit by the project team to the BCM protected areas or to Maramureş. Involve BCM and/or Marmaures people in multiple workshops or visits to MMNP or send MMNP staff to BCM PA to discuss specific issues if and when appropriate.	Carried out.	As discussed previously, this should continue to be a priority for the NFA and all protected areas in the national-level network. Experience sharing could be further extended to other non-national level protected areas in Romania, as well as protected areas in neighboring countries.
2007 AMR: 4. POC Meetings. The POC meeting on Jan 19 was well attended by national, regional and local stakeholders. POC members felt free to offer comments and questions. But there is room for improving the efficacy and usefulness of these meetings to the project. The services of the POC (with representation of all important stakeholders) in the remaining 3 years of the project will be crucial. It would benefit the project more if future POC meetings were both a mechanism for reporting project progress and an opportunity for more in-depth strategic thinking and guidance regarding project direction in achieving project objectives. I recommend that the project team organize future POC meetings so that the POC members are asked to respond to specific questions and requests for guidance. I recommend that the meetings be run like a Board meeting, with a chair and a secretary and a specific agenda. POC members should be asked to endorse the workplan and to offer up advice on how key issues the project manager identifies in advance. A report should be circulated to POC members it should be more of a discussion -- the POC should be asked to endorse the new workplan. They should be asked to give some responses and make some decisions.	The consultative council has been a more important input body for the project than the POC, but there have not been specific process issues raised by POC members in the recent period.	Specific information on level of follow-up not available.
2007 AMR: 6. Project office space in Tulcea Currently, the project team is working in extremely cramped conditions. NFA has been promising to move them to a new building with more office space, but this has been delayed repeatedly in 2006. As this has a negative effect on staff productivity, I suggest that UNDP lend its weight to prodding NFA to move as quickly as possible in moving the Park staff into a reasonable amount of office space.	The MMNP management team is currently operating out of the new headquarters office space.	Carried out.
2007 AMR: 7. List of To-Dos Prior to the PIR/APR in June 2007: • Finalize all "Baseline" figures for all the project's indicators in need of specific baseline figures. Regarding the public awareness/public knowledge, I recommend that the project team utilize UNDP's own EE-Net to ask for other country offices' and projects' best practices. Consider carefully how to measure public support for the Park and biodiversity conservation issues in the area of the Park. Conduct a well-designed basic survey to measure this support. Consult with local mayors as to the best way to do this in their opinion. • Consider including in Park's own monitoring work, the grassland ecosystem health indicator – the small mammal population. A local NGO suggested this at the POC. It is a good idea to have this as an "un-official" indicator. • Fill-out the Protected Area Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool	Baseline figures were finalized, and the community survey was carried out. The small mammal population is included in the park's monitoring protocols, but was never formally incorporated in the project logframe	Completed.

questionnaire and record new score in the logframe indicator tracking table at the end of this report. This needs to be done annually. • Take part in the ecological economist's visit to Maramureş and decide whether her expertise is appropriate for Măcin as well. • Review the PIR documentation that we obtained in the coming weeks and be ready to complete this report in June.	indicators. The METT has been completed annually. The TEV study was carried out by the same international expert who carried out the Maramureş study. PIRs were completed appropriately.

I. Annex 9: Evaluation Documentation

Photo 4 From L to R: Mayor of Luncavita, MMNP Chief Biologist, Evaluator, Project Manager

J. Annex 10: Evaluator Curriculum Vitae

Please see following pages.

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Professional Experience

Independent Consultant
Conservation and Evaluation Specialist; Mill Valley, CA December 2006 – Present

➢ Ten years experience working on environmental conservation issues, evaluation, and strategy consulting

➢ Extensive field work in Asia-Pacific and Eastern Europe regions; additional work in Central Asia and Africa

➢ Experience leading evaluation teams in project evaluation, and working independently and as a team member

➢ Expertise in monitoring and evaluation design and execution, including impact evaluation, indicator development, logical frameworks and logic chains, baselines, quantitative analysis, theory-based evaluation, results-based management, knowledge management, design of monitoring tools, and electronic surveys

➢ Knowledge of and experience with multi-lateral institutions' monitoring and evaluation policies and procedures, including the Global Environment Facility, United Nations, and World Bank

➢ Experience in all Global Environment Facility focal areas, with particular emphasis in biodiversity, international waters, and multi-focal areas

➢ Full understanding of key Global Environment Facility principles such as global environmental benefits, incremental costs, catalytic role, stakeholder participation and project sustainability

Keystone Strategy, LLC / North Harvard Group, LLC
Analyst; South San Francisco, CA, July 2006 – September 2008

➢ Business Strategy Consulting

Conducted market opportunity modeling and strategic analysis for Fortune 100 technology firms

➢ Litigation Support

Performed quantitative analyses of technology markets to support clients in intellectual property litigation

Contributed written qualitative analyses to leverage expertise of Harvard Business School professors serving as expert witnesses

Global Environment Facility
Monitoring & Evaluation Analyst, Evaluation Office; Washington, DC, May 2004 – May 2006

➢ Monitoring and evaluation of the GEF portfolio, covering the main GEF focal areas: conservation of biodiversity, climate change, international waters, land degradation, ozone depletion, and persistent organic pollutants

➢ Evaluation team member on major GEF programmatic evaluations:

Pilot Phase of GEF Impact Evaluation (2006): Developed conceptual model for analyzing project-level biodiversity impacts with global-level biodiversity status; Developed evaluation concept paper and terms of reference; Recruited external consultants for evaluation support

Joint Evaluation of the GEF Activity Cycle and Modalities (2006): Primary responsibility for organization of field visits, external stakeholder survey, and desk review of previous evaluation evidence; Organized and carried out field visit to Macedonia and Turkey; Contributed to evaluation management including budget planning for multiple evaluation components

> Evaluation of the GEF Support for Biosafety (2005): Organized and carried out stakeholder consultation field visits in Tajikistan, Croatia, India and China; Contributed to evaluation planning and management; Managed publication of evaluation report

> Third Overall Performance Study of the GEF (2005): Organized regional stakeholder consultation workshops in Bangkok, Cairo and Pretoria; Provided support to external firm carrying out evaluation

> Biodiversity Program Study 2004: Conducted statistical analysis of GEF biodiversity portfolio; Reviewed and analyzed over one hundred project terminal evaluations and progress implementation reports

➢ Analysis, input and support for additional GEF Evaluation Office evaluations:

> GEF Annual Performance Report 2004, 2005 and 2006: Carried out Terminal Evaluation Reviews of million dollar GEF biodiversity projects; Provided statistical portfolio analysis

> Review of the GEF Project Cycle: Conducted statistical analysis of GEF project cycle timeframes

> Evaluation of Operational Program 12 – Integrated Ecosystem Management: Provided management support and analysis to external evaluation team

➢ Portfolio monitoring, strategic priority tracking, and biodiversity indicators

> Contributed to development of biodiversity portfolio strategic priority tracking tools, with emphasis on sustainable use of biodiversity; Updated and maintained indicators and protected areas databases

Global Environment Facility
***Consultant, Biodiversity Team/Monitoring & Evaluation Unit**; Washington, DC, October 2002 – May 2004*

➢ Produced and contributed to several GEF biodiversity public relations publications:

> *Forests Matter*: Wrote and produced GEF publication on forest ecosystems component of the GEF biodiversity portfolio

> *Making a Visible Difference in Our World – The GEF and Protected Areas:* Researched and analyzed the protected areas component of the GEF portfolio; Developed text for publication

> *GEF and the Convention on Biological Diversity: A Strong Partnership with Solid Results:* Provided research and text for publication distributed at the Conference of Parties of the CBD

➢ Represented the GEF at major international conservation forums, including:

> World Parks Congress (2003); Seventh Conference of Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity (2004); World Conservation Congress (2004); World Wilderness Congress (2005)

➢ Supported GEF biodiversity portfolio internal data management systems; Updated and managed GEF biodiversity protected areas database; Researched GEF biodiversity portfolio

World Wildlife Fund – US
***Research Assistant, Asia-Pacific Program;** Washington, DC, September 2000 – June 2001*

➢ Edited grant proposals for landscape conservation projects requesting funds from US Government agencies, foundations, and international organizations

➢ Developed reports and educational brochures

Alaska Rainforest Campaign
***Consultant;** Washington, DC, June 2000 – August 2000*

➢ Advocated for increased federal protection for Alaskan forests

National Wildlife Federation
***Conservation Intern;** Washington, DC, January 2000 – June 2000*

➢ Advocated for enactment of federal conservation funding legislation

Education

M.A., International Relations, Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies
Bologna, Italy & Washington, DC, August 2001 – May 2003
  ➤ Concentrations: Energy, Environment, Science & Technology (EEST) and International Economics
  ➤ Language Proficiency: French
  ➤ Independent Study: Human-Wildlife Conflict and Protected Areas

B.A., Environmental Studies, Dartmouth College
Hanover, NH, September 1995 – June 1999
  ➤ Major: Environmental Studies; Minor: French
  ➤ Rufus Choate Scholar for Academic Achievement; Citations for Academic Achievement in three courses
  ➤ Foreign study: Zimbabwe and South Africa (Environmental Studies); France (French)

Certificate, French Language Studies, University of Nice Sophia-Antipolis
Nice, France, July 2001

Microeconomics and French coursework, United States Department of Agriculture Graduate School
Washington, DC, September 2000 – December 2000

High School Diploma - Salutatorian, Homer High School
Homer, AK, September 1991 – May 1995

Skills and Activities

Professional Associations
  International Development Evaluation Association (IDEAS)
  American Evaluation Association

Language Skills
  French: Speaking (Fair), Writing (Basic), Reading (Good)
  Spanish: Speaking (Basic), Reading (Good)

Computer Skills
  Microsoft Office applications, Adobe Photoshop, HTML

International Experience
  Field Work: Extensive experience in Asia-Pacific region, additional experience in Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and Africa
  Travel: Field work and/or tourism in 38 countries, including all major developing regions

Activities and Interests
  Professional: Former founding co-chair of International Young Professionals in Conservation initiative
  Recreational: Hiking; camping; fishing; running; cross-country skiing; alpine skiing/snowboarding

Publications

Evaluation

2007. "Joint Evaluation of the GEF Activity Cycle and Modalities," Washington, D.C.: GEF Evaluation Office.

2006. "Evaluation of GEF Support for Capacity Building for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety," Washington, D.C.: GEF Evaluation Office.

2004. "Biodiversity Program Study 2004," Washington, D.C.: GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Unit.

Professional

Brann, J. and Matambo, S. T. "Securing the Future of Protected Areas: A commitment to younger generations," in Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (2004). Biodiversity issues for consideration in the planning, establishment and management of protected area sites and networks. Montreal, SCBD, 164 pages and i to iv. (CBD Technical Series no. 15).

Brann, J., Kugler, L., and Matambo, S. T. "Youth and Young Professional Involvement," in Mulongoy, K.J., Chape, S.P. (Eds) 2004. Protected Areas and Biodiversity: An overview of key issues. CBD Secretariat, Montreal, Canada and UNEP-WCMC, Cambridge, UK.

Brann, J. "Trade Policy in Indonesia: Implications for Deforestation," *The Bologna Center Journal of International Affairs,* (Bologna: The Bologna Center of The Johns Hopkins University Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies) Vol. 5, Spring 2002, pp. 77-94.

Public Relations

2004. "Forest Matters: GEF's Contribution to Conserving and Sustaining Forest Ecosystems," Washington, D.C.: GEF Secretariat.

2004. "GEF and the Convention on Biological Diversity: A Strong Partnership with Solid Results," Washington, D.C.: GEF Secretariat.

2003. "Making a Visible Difference in Our World," Washington, D.C.: GEF Secretariat.

Presentations

International Development Evaluation Association (IDEAS); Impact Evaluation Workshop; Presentation title: "National and Global Biodiversity Indicators," April 4, 2008, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

8th World Wilderness Congress; Closing plenary presentation: "Wilderness and Young Professionals," October 6, 2005, Anchorage, Alaska, USA.

K.   **Annex 11: Management Response (if any)**