

Conservation, Restoration and Wise Use of Rich Fens in the Slovak Republic

Slovak Republic

**GEF Agency: United Nations Development Programme
Executing Agency: DAPHNE – Institute of Applied Ecology
Government Partner Agency: State Nature Conservancy**



**GEF Biodiversity Focal Area (OP2)
GEF Strategic Objective BD-I
Medium-sized Project
GEF ID: #1681
UNDP Atlas ID: # 43875 / UNDP PIMS: #1998**

Terminal Evaluation

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Table of Contents

I. Executive Summary	IV
II. Introduction: Evaluation Scope and Methodology	1
III. Project Overview and Development Context	2
A. Development Context	2
B. Concept Development and Project Description	3
i. Concept Background and Project Description	3
ii. Stakeholder Participation in Development	5
IV. Project Design and Implementation	6
A. Assessment of Project Strategy and Design	6
B. Rich Fens Project Implementation Approach	7
C. Project Relevance	8
D. Project Management and Cost Effectiveness (Efficiency)	9
E. Financial Planning by Component and Co-financing	10
F. Flexibility and Adaptive Management	10
G. UNDP Project Oversight	10
V. Project Performance and Results (Effectiveness)	13
A. Summary of Key Factors Affecting Implementation and Achievement of the Project Objective	13
i. Outcome 1 and Outcome 2: Restoration Plans for Pilot Sites Prepared; and Restoration of hydrological regime and restoration management of sites	13
ii. Outcome 3: Monitoring system established, including monitoring of crucial stakeholder groups' reactions	17
iii. Outcome 4: GIS component of National Peatlands Database enhanced	17
iv. Outcome 5: The capacities of the SNC offices and Regional Departments of the MoA are strengthened	18
v. Outcome 6: Awareness about the maintenance of Slovakia's peatland biodiversity increased	18
vi. Outcome 7: Important peatland sites included into Natura 2000 network and National Agri-environmental program	19
VI. Key GEF Performance Parameters	20
A. Sustainability	20
i. Financial Risks to Sustainability	20
ii. Sociopolitical Risks to Sustainability	21
iii. Institutional Framework and Governance Risks to Sustainability	21
iv. Environmental Risks to Sustainability	22
B. Catalytic Role: Replication and Scaling-up	22
C. Monitoring and Evaluation	23
i. Project Monitoring, Reporting, and Evaluation	23
ii. Environmental Monitoring	25
D. Project Impacts and Global Environmental Benefits	26
E. Capacity Development	27
VII. Main Lessons Learned and Recommendations	27
A. Lessons from the Experience of the Rich Fens Project	27
B. Recommendations for Follow-up of the Rich Fens Project	28
C. Rich Fens Project Terminal Evaluation Ratings	30
VIII. Annexes	32
A. Annex 1: Rich Fens Terminal Evaluation Terms of Reference	33
B. Annex 2. GEF Operational Principles	40
C. Annex 3: Rich Fens Project Logframe: Self-assessed and Evaluated Level of Achievement	41
D. Annex 4. List of Persons Interviewed	82
E. Annex 5. Rich Fens Project Terminal Evaluation Field Visit Schedule	82
F. Annex 6. Evaluation Documentation	83
G. Annex 7. Evaluator Curriculum Vitae	83
H. Annex 8. Management Response (if any)	83

Acronyms

CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
COP	Conference of Parties
DAPHNE	Institute of Applied Ecology (Slovakia)
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
EU	European Union
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIS	Geographic Information System
GPS	Geographic Positioning Systems
ha	hectares
K	Potassium
Km	Kilometers
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
mg/l	Miligrams per liter
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoE	Ministry of Environment
MSP	Medium-sized Project (of the Global Environment Facility)
NEX	National Execution
N/A	Not Applicable
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NO ₃	Nitrates
NPD	National Project Director
N/S	Not Specified
OP	Operational Program (of the GEF)
PDF-A	Project Development Funding Block A
PIR	Project Implementation Report
RAF	Resource Allocation Framework
RDP	Rural Development Programme
SNC	State Nature Conservancy
SOP	Sectoral Operational Programme
STAR	System for a Transparent Allocation of Resources
SWMA	Slovak Water Management Authority
UA	Unable to assess
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USD	United States dollars

I. Executive Summary

1. The project is a Global Environment Facility (GEF) Medium-size Project (MSP), with \$0.98 million in GEF funding and proposed co-financing of \$1.46 million, for a total budget of \$2.43 million. The project is implemented under UNDP's National Execution (NEX) modality, and the national executing agency was DAPHNE – Institute of Applied Ecology (a civil society organization with roots in academia), in partnership with the State Nature Conservancy (SNC) (under the Ministry of Environment). The Rich Fens project manager was hired in January 2005, and implementation began in March 2005. With a 60-month implementation period the project was completed in December 2009, as anticipated.

2. The “mid-term” evaluation for the Rich Fens project took place six months before the end of the project, and was very comprehensive. Therefore this terminal evaluation will focus on results produced or consolidated during the final stages of the project. It is recommended that the mid-term evaluation be considered an important complementary resource to this terminal evaluation for any desk reviews assessing project results.

3. As stated in the project document, the project's objective is “*Representative habitats of unique calcareous rich fens are maintained through the promotion of restoration, conservation and sustainable management practices.*” To achieve the objective, the project was designed around seven main outcomes (below). The project was designed before current UNDP-GEF project development guidelines were in place, which recommend limiting the number of outcomes in a project design to four. However, in the Rich Fens project, outcomes 1, 3, 4, and 7 have limited scope.

- **Outcome 1:** Restoration Plans for Pilot Sites Prepared
- **Outcome 2:** Restoration of hydrological regime and restoration management of sites
- **Outcome 3:** Monitoring system established, including monitoring of crucial stakeholder groups' reactions
- **Outcome 4:** Geographic Information System (GIS) component of National Peatlands Database enhanced
- **Outcome 5:** The capacities of the SNC offices and Regional Departments of the Ministry of Agriculture are strengthened
- **Outcome 6:** Awareness about the maintenance of Slovakia's peatland biodiversity increased
- **Outcome 7:** Important peatland sites included into Natura 2000 network and National Agri-environmental program

4. The project design included both national level and demonstration site level activities, with three demonstration sites selected: 1. Abrod; 2. Kláštorské lúky; 3. Belianske lúky. Each site is relatively small, and is set in an agricultural/rural landscape mosaic. Abrod is a National Nature Reserve, designated in 1964, covering 92 hectares. Kláštorské lúky is part of a larger (467 hectare) wetland complex that was designated as a Ramsar site in 1974. Going back to 1974, 86 hectares have been established as a National Nature Reserve. Belianske lúky is also a National Nature Reserve of approximately 100 hectares, as well as a Ramsar site.

5. The project design was well-suited to the scope of the project and the threats to be addressed. The project was designed prior to current GEF and UNDP project design guidelines

and standards, but still represents a well-substantiated approach to the issue of fens conservation.

6. On the whole the project represents a great example of a GEF project with excellent implementation and strong results. Not everything during project implementation went according to plan, and there were some minor issues (due to exogenous factors and assumptions) that do not permit “perfect” ratings on the main GEF evaluation criteria, but there were also numerous areas where the project excelled, as the multiple “highly satisfactory” sub-ratings in the ratings table below demonstrate.

7. Project **relevance** is considered to be *satisfactory*. The project is relevant to local and national priorities and policies in the Slovak Republic, as well as European Union environmental directives, and regional policy mechanisms such as the Carpathian Convention. The project further supports international conventions such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Ramsar Convention, and is relevant to GEF policies and strategic objectives for the biodiversity focal area.

8. Project **efficiency** is rated *satisfactory*. The project management procedures and financial management are judged to be cost-effective and efficient. DAPHNE is an executing organization with a strong history of implementing international donor funded conservation projects, and has well-developed project and financial management systems. The collaboration and support with the government partners and with UNDP as the GEF agency were also strong. Financial management, procurement, and financial reporting were undertaken in line with international development project standards and norms.

9. Project **effectiveness** is considered *satisfactory*. Nearly all project indicator targets were met or exceeded. The project greatly benefited from a strong and well-established executing agency with the technical and management capacity to successfully implement such a project. The project’s success also resulted from good stakeholder participation and development of local ownership. One additional factor is that the project was designed with a realistic scope and level of ambition – on-the-ground activities were focused in relatively small geographic areas, which limited the potential for stakeholder conflicts and other setbacks. At the same time, the experiences in the demonstration sites were leveraged to influence national level policy.

10. Key project **results** included the completion of hydrological and vegetation restoration measures at the pilot sites, the completion of the national peatlands database, extensive education and awareness activities with communities around the pilot sites and relevant government institutions, and positive developments in applying agri-environmental measures to grassland/peatland ecosystems. The logframe also included a number of impact level indicators. The project sought to maintain 120 hectares of rich fens habitat in good conservation status (up from a baseline of 80 hectares). A second impact indicator was the maintenance at baseline levels of six flora species. Third was the percentage inclusion of two rich fens representative vegetation types in Slovakia’s protected area system - Caricion davallianae (target of 60% inclusion up from a baseline of 49%), and Molinion (target of 70% inclusion up from a baseline of 60%).

11. According to data provided by the project, and verified to the extent possible within the scope of this evaluation, the targets for all impact indicators were exceeded (for specific data,

see the level of project achievement columns reported in Annex 3). Additional anecdotal and preliminary monitoring data indicates that the project is contributing to impact level results. For example, according to the vegetation monitoring, after one year of restoration in a portion of the Belianske lúky site, “The changes of species composition in all three observed habitats were analyzed. The overall species composition moved towards well preserved alkaline fens after removal of willows and mulching.” However, the same quarterly progress report notes “the results are very preliminary only after one year of treatment. It is too early for any serious conclusions.”

12. **Sustainability** is rated *likely*, as there are at present limited financial, sociopolitical, institutional and governance, or environmental risks to sustainability.

13. **Lessons and Recommendations:** Below are the lessons and recommendations identified in this evaluation report. Considering that this is the terminal evaluation there is limited scope for extensive follow-up recommendations. The project has been completed, although DAPHNE and other project partners continue their ongoing efforts to improve the management of rich fen peatland ecosystems and ensure their conservation. The specific target audience is included in brackets for each recommendation.

14. **Lesson:** Establishment of site level stakeholder steering committees at each of the demonstration sites proved to be an effective approach to building local ownership and buy-in to the proposed restoration and management measures. This was critical because the land tenure of the majority of the sites was private ownership.

15. **Lesson:** Working with individual small-scale farmers can be more efficient for nature conservation measures than working with larger-scale commercial farms. Based on the experience of this project, even if the larger commercial farms are interested or willing to support nature conservation measures, the specialized attention to administrative and field management matters necessary to implement agri-environmental measures does not integrate well with the standardized efficient management systems of large farms.

16. **Lesson:** The process in Belianske lúky of establishing a successful collaborative agreement with a local farmer, through mutual support and the financial incentives linked to the agri-environmental measures, represents a good example that could be scaled up at the national level.

17. **Lesson:** Have an experienced and well-qualified executing organization is a great asset to a project. In the case of the Rich Fens project, DAPHNE had the necessary experience and technical and administrative capacity to ensure that the project was implemented as successfully as possible. This is not to say that no challenges were encountered, but the involvement of DAPHNE, with its long history of successful collaboration, brought the project legitimacy in the eyes of many stakeholders.

18. **Lesson:** The development and approval of the site-based management plans can be seen as a lesson and good practice in Slovakia and for the SNC, as prior to this experience only a few Natura 2000 sites had site-based management plans. In addition, the collaborative process through which they were developed, with direct input from land owners and land users, represents a good practice, compared to the typical model of management plans prepared by technocrats with no direct input from local land users.

19. **Key Recommendation:** Building on the positive work carried out thus far and the successful piloting and demonstration of the agri-environmental schemes, this evaluation recommends that DAPHNE and project stakeholders further develop and emphasize the ecosystem services aspects related to peatlands management and restoration, particularly related to carbon sequestration and storage. As the prospect of payments for ecosystem services gains understanding and acceptance, this approach could be leveraged for further additional revenue to support management and conservation. A starting point for this approach would be to conduct an economic valuation of the cultural, provisioning and regulating ecosystem services provided through the existence and functioning of the demonstration sites. Such an analysis could then be shared with stakeholders to demonstrate the economic value such sites provide, and which requires investment to maintain. [DAPHNE]
20. **Recommendation:** Even though the awareness survey conducted in 2007 cannot be replicated in a directly comparable way, this evaluation recommends that DAPHNE conduct another peatlands awareness survey in the demonstration sites to gauge current levels of awareness, and identify future needs and priorities. [DAPHNE]
21. **Recommendation:** 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. At the same time, to assess changes in environmental status in a meaningful way, long-term monitoring data is required to identify trends over time. Although the Rich Fens project focused on flora species for impact indicators that are inherently less mobile, when indicators focus on highly mobile or migratory species (e.g. birds), populations can vary significantly by season and from year to year. By contrast, for plant species and overall flora composition within an ecosystem, changes occur in a more gradual manner over multiple years. [UNDP, GEF Secretariat, and GEF Evaluation Office]

Rich Fens Project Terminal Evaluation Rating Summary

Project Component or Objective	Rating
Project Formulation	
Relevance	S
Conceptualization / design	S
Stakeholder participation	S
Project Implementation	
Implementation Approach (Efficiency)	S
The use of the logical framework	S
Adaptive management	S
Use / establishment of information technologies	HS
Operational relationships between the institutions involved	S
Financial management	HS
Monitoring and Evaluation	MS
M&E design	MU
M&E budgeting	S
M&E implementation	S
Stakeholder Participation	S
Production and dissemination of information	HS
Local resource users and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) participation	S
Establishment of partnerships	HS
Involvement and support of governmental institutions	S
Project Results	
Overall Achievement of Objective and Outcomes (Effectiveness)	S
Objective: Representative habitats of unique calcareous rich fens are maintained through the promotion of restoration, conservation and sustainable management practices	S
Outcome 1: Restoration Plans for Pilot Sites Prepared	MS
Outcome 2: Restoration of hydrological regime and restoration management of sites	MS
Outcome 3: Monitoring system established, including monitoring of crucial stakeholder groups' reactions	S
Outcome 4: GIS component of National Peatlands Database enhanced	HS
Outcome 5: The capacities of the SNC offices and Regional Departments of the MoA are strengthened	HS
Outcome 6: Awareness about the maintenance of Slovakia's peatland biodiversity increased	HS
Outcome 7: Important peatland sites included into Natura 2000 network and National Agri-environmental program	S
Sustainability	L
Financial sustainability	L
Socio-political sustainability	L
Institutional and governance sustainability	L
Ecological sustainability	L
Overall Project Achievement and Impact	S

Ratings explanation: HS – Highly Satisfactory; S – Satisfactory; MS – Moderately Satisfactory; MU – Moderately Unsatisfactory; U – Unsatisfactory; HU – Highly Unsatisfactory; UA – Unable to Assess; N/A – Not Applicable

II. Introduction: Evaluation Scope and Methodology

22. GEF and UNDP monitoring and evaluation policies stipulate that all GEF funded projects must undergo a terminal evaluation. The present exercise and report, initiated by UNDP at the end of the Rich Fens project, fulfills this requirement. The evaluation assesses project design, the five-year project implementation period, and the post-implementation outlook, based on the relevant evaluation criteria: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, results and sustainability. One note regarding the focus of this evaluation is that the “mid-term” evaluation for the Rich Fens project took place only six months before the end of the project, and was very comprehensive, with a two-week field mission. Therefore this terminal evaluation will focus on results produced or consolidated during the final stages of the project. It is recommended that the mid-term evaluation be considered an important complementary resource to this terminal evaluation for any desk reviews assessing project results.

23. The evaluation will assess project results in relation to the planned project activities and outputs, expected outcomes and overall project objective, as well as any unanticipated results. The evaluation will identify relevant lessons for other similar future projects in Slovakia and elsewhere, and will provide recommendations as relevant and appropriate in the context of the fact that the project implementation period has been completed.

24. In addition to assessing the main GEF evaluation criteria, 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 such as country-drivenness, and stakeholder ownership, as summarized in Annex 2.

25. 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 three project pilot sites spread among western and central Slovakia. The desk review began in October 2010, and the evaluation mission was from November 15 - 19, 2010.

26. The primary limitation faced by the evaluation was that, understandably, some documents were available only in the Slovak language. Secondly, with additional time, more stakeholder viewpoints and relevant data could have been gathered. However, these issues were not significant for this evaluation (particularly considering the comprehensiveness of the mid-term evaluation), and the evaluation is believed to represent a balanced and accurate assessment of the project.

27. 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.

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

III. Project Overview and Development Context

A. Development Context

28. In Slovakia, as in many eastern European countries (as well as other countries throughout the world) the mid-20th century saw a large government-supported effort to turn “unproductive” wetland ecosystems into arable agricultural land. This was typically attempted through the construction of extensive drainage infrastructure, such as channels and networks of pipes. In Slovakia, peatland ecosystems once estimated at 260 square kilometers have been reduced to less than 3,000 hectares (less than 10% of the original). The destruction of these ecosystems led, over time, to a greater realization and understanding of the value they provide in terms of provisioning and regulating ecosystem services. Through this project, attempts are being made to conserve remaining peatland ecosystems and carry out restoration measures to turn back the clock on humans’ miscalculated environmental engineering efforts.

29. The Slovak Republic has a relatively low population density (compared to many of its regional neighbors), with an area of approximately 49,000 square kilometers, and an estimated population of 5.4 million. Along with its neighbors, Slovakia underwent a significant period of socio-economic and political upheaval in the last decade of the 20th century, following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Slovakia went on to join the EU in May 2004, and adopted the euro in January 2009. Per capita Gross Domestic Product is approximately \$21,000, which ranks 61st globally. National elections resulted in changes in government in 2006 and 2010, which has created some political turmoil affecting the implementation of the Rich Fens project.

30. According to project stakeholders, now that the country has joined the EU, the majority of development support funding (mostly EU sectoral operational program funding) is channeled through the government, which creates bureaucratic challenges for civil society organizations in accessing funding support. Prior to the country joining the EU, civil society organizations had more direct support to donor funding, which was at that time not channeled through the government. During the accession period for Slovakia there was a lot of positive reform and planning activity, but, ironically, now that the country has actually joined the EU, there is little EU leverage to censure the government for failing to meet policy commitments (including nature conservation). In Slovakia multiple government institutions have mandates to deal with environmental issues, and according to one source, there is “no clear policy with respect to nature conservation in Slovakia.” As one example, according to one source, upon joining the EU Slovakia had approximately 23% of national territory under some form of environmental protection; after joining the EU Slovakia actually applied to reduce its area under protection, while at the same time the rest of the EU was working to increase territory under protection.

31. The Rich Fens project included national-level, and site-specific activities, with pilot sites in three separate regions of Slovakia. The basic characteristics of the three pilot sites are summarized in Section III.B.i below, which describes the project design.

B. Concept Development and Project Description

i. Concept Background and Project Description

32. According to the project team, the project concept grew out of an initiative by the international NGO Wetlands International in the late 1990s / early 2000s to create a regional central and eastern European peatlands / wetlands program to be funded by the GEF. The GEF requested individual projects to be funded instead of a regional project, and this project concept grew from this original idea.²

33. The threats to rich fen biodiversity and ecosystems, and associated root causes, are identified in the project document as the following:

- Ongoing drainage of wetlands for agricultural purposes;
- Low productivity of land;
- Land tenure and privatization;
- Rapidly changing legislation;
- Opening of markets and loss of traditional agricultural methods;
- Policies that undervalue natural services of wetlands;
- Inappropriate management of protected areas;
- Insufficient authority of managers of protected areas to regulate land use activities in buffer zones and areas of influence;
- Insufficient funds to finance the management of protected areas;
- Lack of awareness by local stakeholders of the actual and potential values of peatlands.

34. According to the project document, the project sought to address 1. Drainage of fens; 2. Lack of appropriate management of protected fen areas; 3. Lack of public awareness and appreciation of peatland biodiversity; 4. Low institutional capacity to address threats to fen biodiversity; and 5. Weak policy environment to ensure adequate protection of fen biodiversity. The project strategy was to develop capacity of government and other stakeholders to restore and manage critical fen ecosystems within the agricultural landscape.

35. As stated in the project document, the project's objective is "*Representative habitats of unique calcareous rich fens are maintained through the promotion of restoration, conservation and sustainable management practices.*" To achieve the objective, the project was designed around seven main outcomes (below). The project was designed before current UNDP-GEF project development guidelines were in place, which recommend limiting the number of outcomes in a project design to four. However, in the Rich Fens project, outcomes 1, 3, 4, and 7 have limited scope.

Outcome 1: Restoration Plans for Pilot Sites Prepared;

Outcome 2: Restoration of hydrological regime and restoration management of sites;

Outcome 3: Monitoring system established, including monitoring of crucial stakeholder groups' reactions;

Outcome 4: GIS component of National Peatlands Database enhanced;

² This original regional peatlands concept had a significant influence on the GEF biodiversity portfolio in the region, with multiple national projects resulting, including GEF project ID 2057 (Belarus), and 1027 (Ukraine).

Outcome 5: The capacities of the SNC offices and Regional Departments of the MoA are strengthened;

Outcome 6: Awareness about the maintenance of Slovakia's peatland biodiversity increased;

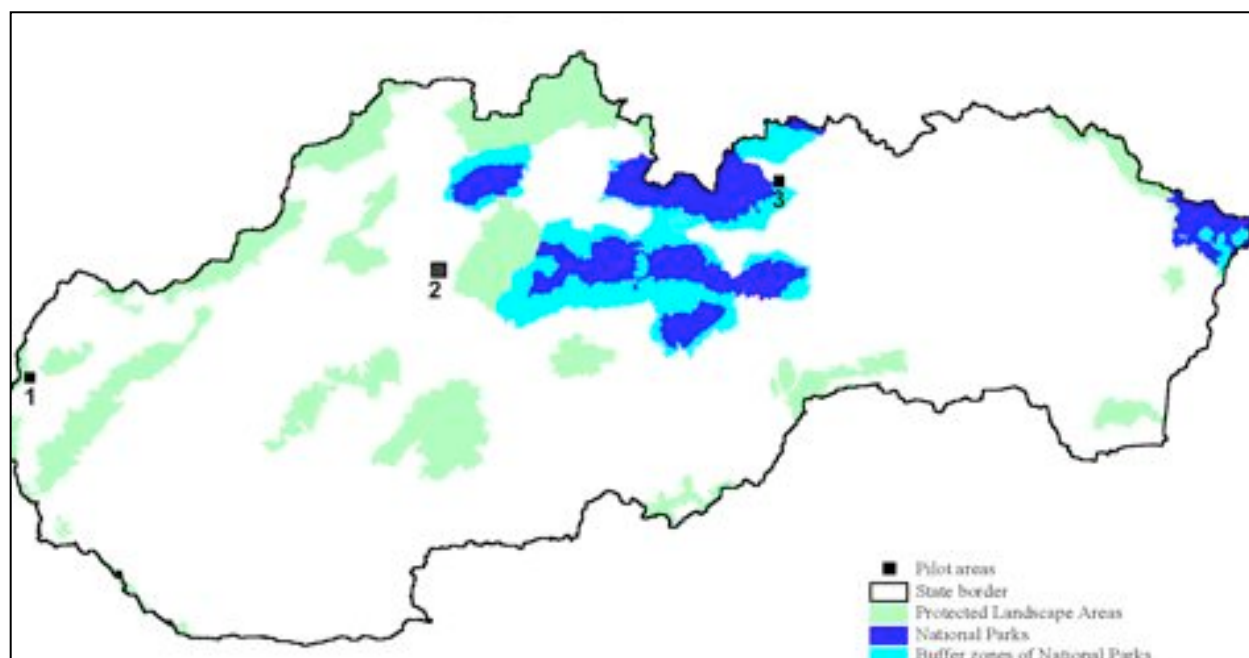
Outcome 7: Important peatland sites included into Natura 2000 network and National Agri-environmental program.

36. The project is a GEF MSP, with \$0.98 million in GEF funding and proposed co-financing of \$1.46 million, for a total budget of \$2.43 million. Table 2, after Section IV.G below, breaks down the anticipated project budget by outcome, and shows a complete breakdown of expected and actual project co-financing. The project is implemented under UNDP's NEX modality, and the national executing agency was DAPHNE – Institute of Applied Ecology (a civil society organization with roots in academia), in partnership with the SNC (under the Ministry of Environment). DAPHNE was founded in the mid-1990s, and has approximately 15-20 employees. The organization partially came in to being as the result of capacity development during a previous GEF project, the "Biodiversity Protection Project" implemented by the World Bank from approximately 1993 – 1998. This former GEF project included a small grants program, from which DAPHNE received two grants. DAPHNE was then selected as the executing agency for a subsequent GEF project implemented by the World Bank, the "Conservation and Sustainable Use of Central European Grasslands" project, from 2000 to 2006.³ DAPHNE is registered as an "expert organization" for the government under the Ministry of Justice.

37. The overall expected project results are identified as the indicator targets in the project results framework, as shown in Annex 3. The project design included both national level and demonstration site level activities, with three demonstration sites selected (numbered in Figure 1 below): 1. Abrod; 2. Kláštorské lúky; 3. Belianske lúky. Each site is relatively small, and is set in an agricultural/rural landscape mosaic. Abrod is a National Nature Reserve, designated in 1964. The site covers 92 hectares, which includes 480 taxa of vascular plants; of these, 104 are threatened. There is a rich diversity of fauna species as well, particularly for insects. For example, there are more than 800 recorded beetle species, and large number of spider, butterfly, and dragonfly species. Kláštorské lúky is part of a larger (467 hectare) wetland complex that was designated as a Ramsar site in 1974. Going back to 1974, 86 hectares have been established as a National Nature Reserve. The site includes threatened and critically endangered plant species, from the more than 223 taxa of vascular plants that have been recorded at the site. Belianske lúky is also a National Nature Reserve of approximately 100 hectares, as well as a Ramsar site. At the time of project development, 220 plant species had been recorded in the site, including 51 taxa of higher plants including orchids, in addition to threatened mosses.

³ Under this project the national grasslands GIS database was developed, to which the national peatlands database was linked under the current project.

Figure 1 Rich Fens Project Demonstration Site Locations



38. The Rich Fens project manager was hired in January 2005, and implementation began in March 2005. With a 60-month implementation period the project was completed in December 2009, as anticipated. The key project dates from development through project financial closing are shown in Table 1 below. The project development period, from PDF-A to implementation start, was approximately 29 months, one month shorter than the GEF average for MSPs.⁴ Although the project began implementation more quickly than the GEF average, project stakeholders indicated that the significant gap between the GEF approval date and actual project start-up was partly due to a problematic national approval process related to the fact that the minister of environment had ties to environmental organizations other than DAPHNE; ultimately the technical merits of the project won out and government approval was received.

ii. Stakeholder Participation in Development

39. All relevant stakeholders interviewed during the terminal evaluation indicated that they felt that they had been adequately consulted and involved during the project development phase. According to the project document, consultation meetings and regional workshops with various stakeholder groups were held, which contributed to the development of the project concept. As stated in the project document, “In general, local stakeholders expressed their positive attitude, and the aims of the proposed project were found to be compatible with the ideas and in some cases the intentions of landowners.” The baseline study conducted in the development phase provided information on the land tenure and stakeholder activities influencing the pilot sites.

⁴ GEF Evaluation Office. 2007. “Joint Evaluation of the GEF Activity Cycle and Modalities,” Evaluation Report No. 33. Washington, D.C.: GEF Evaluation Office.

Table 1 Rich Fens Project Key Dates

Milestone	a. Expected date	b. Actual date
i. PDF-A Approval	Not Applicable	October 23, 2002
ii. CEO endorsement/approval	Not Specified	May 21, 2003
iii. Agency approval date	June 2003	June 25, 2004
iv. Actual start date	July 2003	January 21, 2005
v. Implementation start (first disbursement)	August 2003	March 16, 2005
vi. Mid-term evaluation	September 1, 2008	May, 2009
vii. Project completion	December 31, 2009	December 31, 2009
viii. Terminal evaluation conducted	Not Specified	November 2010
ix. Project closing	December 31, 2010	December 31, 2010

Sources: i.a. N/A; i.b. GEF online project database; ii.a. N/S; ii.b. 2010 PIR; iii.a. Assumed; iii.b. 2007 PIR; iv.a. Assumed; iv.b. 2010 PIR (date project manager hired); v.a. Assumed; v.b. 2010 PIR; vi.a. 2010 PIR; vi.b. Timing of mid-term evaluation field visit; vii.a. 2010 PIR; vii.b. Confirmed during terminal evaluation; viii.a. Not specified; viii.b. Terminal evaluation field mission carried out; ix.a. 2010 PIR; ix.b. Confirmed by UNDP.

IV. Project Design and Implementation

A. Assessment of Project Strategy and Design

40. The project design was well-suited to the scope of the project and the threats to be addressed. The project was designed prior to current GEF and UNDP project design guidelines and standards, but still represents a well-substantiated approach to the issue of fens conservation. There are multiple political and institutional factors that limit the potential for dramatic change in environmental management in Slovakia (e.g. the previously described institutional limitations of the SNC, as well as frequent political turnover), but within this context the project was designed (and adaptively managed) to find practical on-the ground solutions to threats to fen ecosystems by working with local landowners and stakeholders.

41. The risk assessment and mitigation strategy section of the project document was not well-developed (Section 2.4 of the project document); the project document states “risks related to activities connected with nature conservation are not so significant.” Although significant challenges have not been encountered, this appears to have been more due to the proper engagement of stakeholders and a practical and adaptive management approach by the executing agency, rather than the true absence of risks. Notable risks would have included technical uncertainties related to restoration measures, the process of application of agri-environmental schemes, land tenure issues, technical capacity issues, and issues related to the institutional mandate of the SNC. In fact, in the Klášterské lúky demonstration site there have been some setbacks related to conflicts with a local land owner (further discussed in Section V.A.i).

42. While on the whole the project was well-designed, one caveat to mention is that the project was actually quite limited in its on-the-ground scope in the pilot sites – the three sites total between 600-700 hectares only. Some GEF-supported MSPs have effectively targeted areas covering well-over 100,000 hectares. In the Rich Fens project this “focused” coverage can be justified through two key points: To start with, the extent of peatland ecosystems, the target of the project, is quite limited in Slovakia with less than 3,000 total hectares (although as

previously described these sites represent important biodiversity resources). Many of the currently recognized sites were actually not formally documented prior to the project activities supporting a national peatland inventory, and the project demonstration sites represent some of the biologically richest peatland ecosystems in Slovakia. Second, the project approach and design leveraged the limited on-the-ground coverage by scaling up into national policy lessons and good practices from these sites. Through the experience of this project DAPHNE was able to significantly influence national policy through the establishment of wetland-focused measures in the national agri-environmental schemes.

B. Rich Fens Project Implementation Approach

43. As previously highlighted, DAPHNE is the national executing partner, with the SNC (an advisory body the Ministry of Environment) as the government partner. The SNC was recently made self-dependent for funding (i.e. without a guaranteed government budget allocation), which has presented some budgetary challenges. The SNC is the government body theoretically mandated with overseeing management of protected areas and other environmental resources, but is not institutionally empowered to do this effectively. According to project stakeholders, the SNC does not have decision-making power regarding permitting, development rights, and other management issues related to nature conservation; the SNC serves only as an advisory body to the regional environmental agency offices. In addition, this issue is particularly challenging because the majority of Slovak protected areas are under private land tenure, and the SNC does not have any significant land tenure rights of its own. The SNC has approximately 450 staff across 24 local offices. The National Project Director (NPD) was responsible for the overall government support and oversight, and was represented by a member of the Ministry of Environment.

44. According to multiple stakeholders, especially at the national government level, a key element of success for this project was having DAPHNE as the executing agency. It was pointed out that DAPHNE has been around for many years, has good experience in implementing international donor projects and is respected within the country as an independent technical authority; DAPHNE is a research institute, rather than an activist NGO. It was noted that DAPHNE “doesn’t organize protests,” they “just do good work.” DAPHNE was particularly well-suited for the project since they actually served as the government agent in administering the pilot agri-environmental schemes for grasslands from 2004-2006, during which time over 100,000 hectares of grasslands were subscribed under agri-environmental measures. This success ultimately led to a significant administrative burden, which was subsequently handed off to the government.⁵ Thus DAPHNE had the appropriate technical experience for working on agri-environmental schemes for peatlands.

45. From DAPHNE, a single project manager oversaw implementation, including work planning and financial management. There were individual site-level managers deployed in the field for each of the demonstration sites. The DAPHNE finance and administration infrastructure was used for project management (i.e. precluding the need for the set-up of a

⁵ According to the project team there was an institutional “miscommunication” between the Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Agriculture on this issue, which was ultimately resolved through intervention by UNDP, representing one example of UNDP’s positive oversight role, discussed later.

separate project administrative structure). Technical staff and resources within DAPHNE were leveraged for specific project components, such as the development and management of the peatlands database. Other partner organizations, such as the Slovak Technical University, were contracted to support specific aspects of the project, such as the development and implementation of proposed technical restoration measures for the demonstration sites.

46. A project steering committee, made up of national level stakeholders, guided the project on high-level national policy and support. Institutions represented on the steering committee were: Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, Slovak Technical University, Slovak Water Management Authority (SWMA), Slovak Hydromelioration Enterprise, and the SNC. The steering committee met once or twice per year, and adequately filled the necessary oversight role, although some institutions were not active – apparently the SWMA participated in only one steering committee meeting. A second oversight mechanism was the typical annual UNDP tri-partite review, although in this case there were four participating entities: the project team, the SNC, the Ministry of Environment, and UNDP.

47. At each of the project demonstration sites a local site steering committee was established, involving around 10 local stakeholders. These local groups were leveraged to build stakeholder ownership for the conservation and management of the demonstration sites, and to build local consensus on the particular restoration and management measures to be implemented. According to multiple stakeholders interviewed, these local level involvement and feedback structures, although not time or resource intensive, were key to successful restoration activities at the demonstration sites; the development of this approach can be considered one of the positive lessons from the Rich Fens project.

C. Project Relevance

48. Based on the assessment of project relevance to local and national priorities and policies, priorities related to relevant international conventions, and to the GEF's strategic priorities and objectives, overall project **relevance** is considered *satisfactory*. The mid-term evaluation of this project provides an extensive analysis of project relevance from the local to international levels. This terminal evaluation supports the conclusions of this analysis, and encourages any readers of this terminal evaluation who may be particularly interested in relevance issues to reference this previous evaluation.

49. The project contributes to European goals for the protection of biodiversity set out in the Pan European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (Council of Europe / United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, 1993), in particular the aim endorsed by the Fifth European Ministerial Conference on the Environment (Kiev, 2003) to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010. This ministerial conference led to the signing of the Carpathian Convention, and the Rich Fens project is relevant to Slovakia's support for this environmental conservation measures under this convention, particularly Articles 4 (conservation of biodiversity) and 13 (education and awareness). The project is relevant to the European Commission Directives "Council Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds" (79/409/EEC) commonly known as the "Bird Directive"; and the "Council Directive on Conservation of Natural habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora" (92/43/EEC) commonly known as the "Habitats Directive".

50. The Rich Fens project contributes to Slovakia's implementation of the CBD (ratified 1994), as well as supporting the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (ratified 1993). The project supports these conventions at multiple levels, but is specifically relevant to CBD Article 7 (Identification and Monitoring), Article 8 (In-situ Conservation), Article 10 (Sustainable Use), Article 11 (Incentive Measures), and Article 13 (Public Education and Awareness). Considering the high carbon storage value of peatlands, the project could also be considered relevant to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which Slovakia ratified in 1994.

51. The Rich Fens project falls within the GEF's Operational Program 2 (OP2) covering wetland ecosystems, and at approval was identified as being relevant to first GEF biodiversity strategic objective, catalyzing the sustainability of protected areas. The restoration and rehabilitation measures undertaken to improve ecosystem quality in the project area also directly link the project with the GEF strategies. The biodiversity resources in the project area have been classified as globally significant, and thus there is the potential to generate Global Environmental Benefits.

D. Project Management and Cost Effectiveness (Efficiency)

52. As described in Section IV.B, the project is implemented under NEX arrangements, with DAPHNE as the national executing partner. DAPHNE has a long track record of executing international donor funded projects, and has strong systems in place for project and financial management. All necessary and appropriate measures were taken to ensure cost-effectiveness during project implementation, and the project management arrangements and procurement procedures were within international norms and standards, as supported by UNDP.

53. The project team submitted quarterly progress and financial reports (copying the national government partners – the Ministry of Environment and SNC). Quarterly workplans and budget proposals for the following implementation period were also submitted to facilitate the appropriate quarterly disbursement amounts from UNDP. Annual Combined Delivery Reports were submitted to UNDP, which show a summary of annual expenditures. Table 3 below shows a summary of project actual expenditures. UNDP financial management and reporting requirements and procedures necessitated the aggregation of project outcome budget lines from the seven outcomes in the project document into three operational budget lines and one management and evaluation budget line. The management and evaluation budget line equates to 20.2% of actual GEF expenditures, of which evaluation was 3.2%. Typically GEF projects are required to limit management expenditures to 10% of the project budget; however it is not possible to distinguish from the project financial records whether the "management" budget line includes exclusively expenditures that should be attributed as management costs versus technical costs. For example, a significant portion of the project manager's time was spent implementing technical aspects of the project.

54. The quarterly progress reports were comprehensive and well prepared, with risk monitoring and lessons learned sections that facilitate adaptive management. The project team indicated that the reporting requirements were not excessively burdensome, and provided adequate information on the level of implementation of project activities.

55. Reviewing the project management and financial management procedures, and results produced, the project **efficiency** is rated *satisfactory*.

E. Financial Planning by Component and Co-financing

56. The total planned project budget was allocated across the seven project components; monitoring and evaluation and project management were not specifically broken out in the budget information available in the project document. As shown in Table 2, Outcome 2 related to the hydrological restoration measures and management of the demonstration sites was the largest component, with approximately 40% of the planned budget. The remaining outcomes were each allocated approximately 3% - 20% of the planned budget. Monitoring and evaluation was not specifically included as an aggregate figure line item in the various budget formats in the project document, but the project document states that the monitoring and evaluation budget is \$20,000 which corresponds to approximately 2% of GEF resources. The actual project expenditure is broken down in Table 3, below. For a variety of reasons, the project expenditure was not tracked according to the seven originally planned outcomes, but was aggregated into three project activities, plus management and evaluation. Thus it is not possible to directly compare planned versus actual project expenditures.

57. Total planned co-financing for the project was \$1.46 million, as shown in Table 4. As of June 30, 2010, the actual co-financing received was \$1.53 million, or approximately 105% of the expected co-financing.

F. Flexibility and Adaptive Management

58. The project was implemented in a flexible, results-based manner, which contributed to its overall success. One key example of adaptive management was the decision by the local management committee in September 2009 to not undertake the hydrological restoration measures at the Belianske lúky demonstration site (also discussed in Section V.A.i below). Three options for hydrological restoration measures had been proposed, but the uncertainty surrounding the overall effects of the restoration measures on the site and surrounding landscape led to a decision to not proceed. Instead, the funds slated for this activity were shifted into vegetation restoration measures on the site, including the cutting and cleaning of 8 additional hectares of abandoned fen grassland, which would be further integrated with the area under agri-environmental scheme management at the site (as managed by the local farmer).

59. The project logframe was revised in 2006, as the logframe included in the project document was not sufficient to meet GEF and UNDP M&E standards at the point of project implementation.

G. UNDP Project Oversight

60. As previously mentioned, UNDP is the project's GEF Agency, consistent with GEF policy, which identifies UNDP's comparative advantage among GEF Agencies in the capacity building / technical assistance type of intervention in all focal areas.⁶ As the GEF agency, UNDP was responsible for shepherding the project through the GEF approval process during the development phase, including primary oversight of the project design process.

⁶ GEF. 2007. "Comparative Advantages of the GEF Agencies," GEF/C.31/5, May 15, 2007.

61. All project stakeholders interviewed gave positive feedback on the communication and collaboration with UNDP during implementation. It was noted that UNDP was always available to provide guidance or support on administrative and financial procedures, and provided a helpful and flexible approach in all matters. UNDP also assisted in organizing a national press conference. Stakeholders noted that UNDP was always there to support the project team, and ensure the achievement of positive results.

62. There were no significant reported problems with the disbursement procedures, and reporting and monitoring has been overseen in an appropriate manner. Project stakeholders report that reporting procedures and requirements have been reasonable, although UNDP's new PIR format in MS Excel is very difficult to work with. Progress and financial reporting has been timely and comprehensive.

Table 2 Rich Fens Project Planned Expenditure (all amounts in millions USD)

	GEF Amount Planned	% of GEF Amount Planned	Total Planned	% of Total Planned
Outcome 1: Restoration plans for pilot sites prepared	0.20	20.2%	0.69	28.2%
Outcome 2: Improvement of hydrological regime and restoration management of sites	0.39	39.5%	0.47	19.4%
Outcome 3: Monitoring system established including monitoring of crucial stakeholder groups' reactions	0.08	8.3%	0.33	13.6%
Outcome 4: GIS component of National Peatland Database enhanced	0.03	2.5%	0.09	3.5%
Outcome 5: Capacities of SNC offices and regional departments of MoA are strengthened	0.13	13.5%	0.52	21.5%
Outcome 6: Awareness about the maintenance of Slovakia's peatland biodiversity increased	0.11	11.2%	0.16	6.7%
Outcome 7: Important peatland sites included into Natura 2000 network and National Agri-environmental program	0.05	4.9%	0.17	7.1%
Monitoring and Evaluation*	0.02	2.0%	0.02	0.8%
Project Management**	n/s	n/s	n/s	n/s
Total	0.98		2.43	

Table 3 Rich Fens Project Actual GEF Expenditure (all amounts in millions USD)

	Actual GEF Expenditure	% of Actual GEF Expenditure
"Activity 1: Restoration Plans"	0.51	53.0%
"Activity 2: Strengthening State Authority"	0.13	13.4%
"Activity 3: Public Awareness"	0.12	12.2%
"Activity 4: Management and Evaluation"	0.20	20.2%
Evaluation sub-expenditure	0.03	3.2%
Total	0.97	

Sources for Table 2 and 3: "GEF Amount Planned" and "Total Planned": Project Document, Annex 1: Incremental Cost Matrix; "GEF Amount Actual": Rich Fens project Combined Delivery Reports, 2005 - 2010. Note: Actual co-financing contributed was not tracked by project component, thus calculating total actual expenditure by component is not possible.

* The monitoring and evaluation budget was included amongst the individual outcome budgets provided in the project document, but is broken out here for the sake of transparency and analysis related to M&E budgeting.

** Project management was not specifically broken out in the project document budgets in a way that would allow a totaling of the planned management cost.

Table 4 Rich Fens Project Planned and Actual Co-financing Through June 30, 2010 (all amounts in millions USD)

Co-financing (Type/Source)	IA own Financing		Multi-lateral Agencies (Non-GEF)		Bi-lateral Donors		National Government*		Local Government		Private Sector		NGOs		Other Sources		Total Co-financing		Percent of Expected Co-financing
	P	A	P	A	P	A	P	A	P	A	P	A	P	A	P	A	P	A	Actual share of proposed
Grant			0.08	0.09	0.89	0.89											0.97	0.98	101.0%
In-kind							0.27	0.30					0.22	0.26			0.49	0.56	114.3%
TOTAL			0.08	0.09	0.89	0.89	0.27	0.30					0.22	0.26			1.46	1.53	104.8%

P=Planned; A=Actual. Source: Planned amounts from project Prodoc; actual amounts from 2010 PIR.

V. Project Performance and Results (Effectiveness)

63. The target value for the logframe indicators was met or exceeded for nearly all indicators. The project logframe with indicators, targets, and levels of achievement is included as Annex 3 to this evaluation report. Based on the project's achievement of the objective and planned indicator targets, project **effectiveness** is rated *satisfactory*. One notable additional positive unplanned result is that, according to the project team, the Slovak Technical University (one of the key project partners) has begun to incorporate wetland management in its curriculum, which should result in a long-term benefit for the conservation of peatlands and other wetland types in Slovakia.

"This project is an example of the new approach to collaboration, because it is true that our municipality alone would not have been able to realize such a project."
– Mayor of Spisska Bela
(Belianske lúky demonstration site)

A. Summary of Key Factors Affecting Implementation and Achievement of the Project Objective

64. The overall original project objective is *"Representative habitats of unique calcareous rich fens are maintained through the promotion of restoration, conservation and sustainable management practices."*

65. As described previously in Section IV.B on implementation arrangements, the project greatly benefited from a strong and well-established executing agency with the technical and management capacity to successfully implement such a project.

66. The project's success also resulted from its good stakeholder participation and development of local ownership (or at least acceptance). As one project participant noted, municipalities frequently see nature conservation as an obstacle, as this can increase the burden of restrictions and regulations, and limit the physical area for economic development. During the evaluation mission local government representatives expressed their support and appreciation for the project activities, and indicated their understanding of the importance of conserving biodiversity and promoting sustainable development.

67. One additional factor is that the project was designed with a realistic scope and level of ambition – on-the-ground activities were focused in relatively small geographic areas, which limited the potential for stakeholder conflicts and other setbacks. At the same time, the experiences in the demonstration sites were leveraged to influence national level policy.

i. Outcome 1 and Outcome 2: Restoration Plans for Pilot Sites Prepared; and Restoration of hydrological regime and restoration management of sites

68. Outcome 1 and Outcome 2 are closely linked, as the planning and implementation phases of restoration measures. With the support of the Slovak Technical University, hydrological restoration options were analyzed for each of the pilot sites, and appropriate restoration plans were developed. Multiple hydrological restoration measures were carried out at the Abrod site in consultation with the SWMA (which is responsible for the hydrological management of the watershed), with earthen dams constructed on the channels in the headwaters of the Porec creek (see Photo 1), and additional work done on the creek to channel a part of the stream flow to the original stream bed. A significant portion of the hydrological

restoration measures were completed in the latter part of 2009, after the mid-term evaluation. According to the 2010 PIR, additional discussions on restoration measures are ongoing with the Slovak Water Management Enterprise, which is responsible for implementing further measures. The objective of the hydrological restoration activities for Porec creek is to slow the rate of water discharge so there is a more consistent flow to the Abrod site between wet and dry seasons.

Photo 1 Earthen Restoration Dam, Abrod Pilot Site



69. In Belianske Lúky, three hydrological restoration measure alternatives were prepared for consideration by the local management committee. Each of the hydrological restoration measures carried some risks, and after discussion at the September 2009 meeting, it was determined that the risks were too great (including the risk of flooding the site with over-nitrified agricultural runoff, and the risk of water logging nearby agricultural lands) to warrant implementation of the restoration measures. These considerations are important keeping in mind that the land is primarily privately owned, even if the SNC has a mandate for environmental management of the site. As previously discussed in Section IV.F on adaptive management, funding for the restoration measures were then channeled into the vegetation management activities under the agri-environmental measures implemented on the site in partnership with a local farmer.

Photo 2 Fen Vegetation Restoration Through Mowing

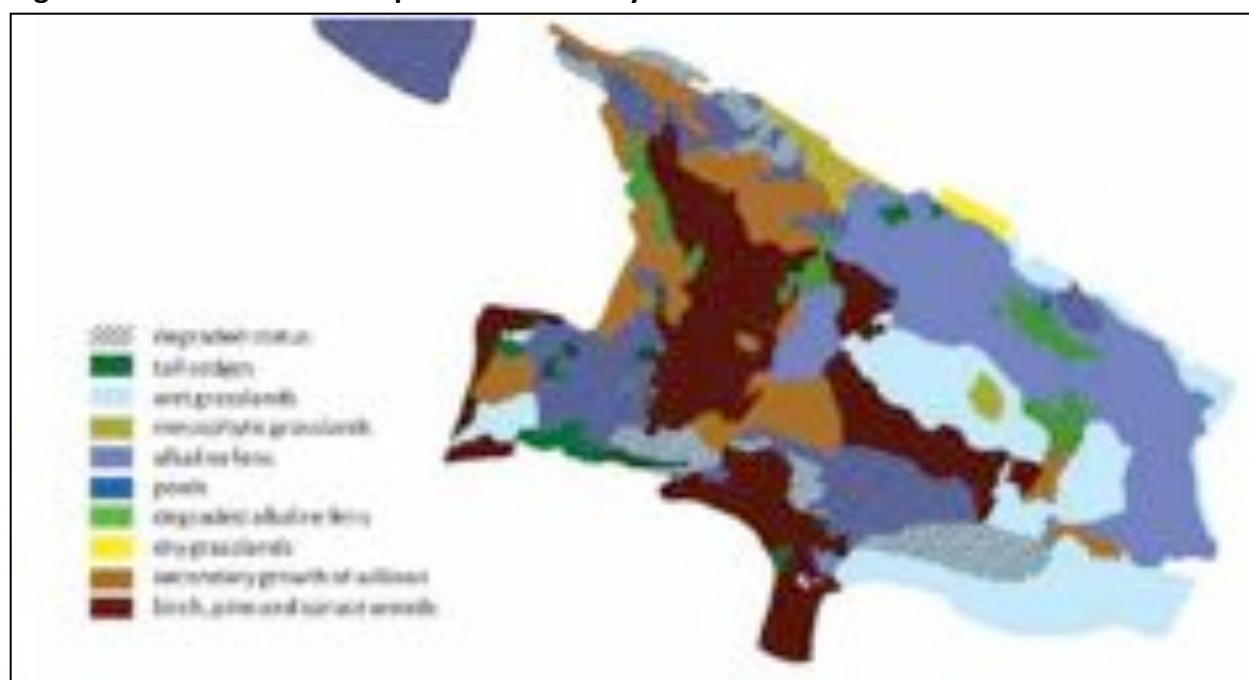


70. Among the demonstration sites, the most significant steps in terms of implementing agri-environmental schemes to support peatland management was in Belianske lúky (Photo 2), where the total area of managed fen grassland currently under agri-environmental measures is 48 hectares. The project team held a local stakeholder meeting at the beginning of the project and fortunately a single local farmer stepped forward as interested in

entering into a management agreement linked to agri-environmental schemes. The farmer entered into a lease agreement for a portion of the demonstration site area with the Slovak Land Fund, and DAPHNE assisted in applying for and securing the relevant agri-environmental subsidies to support the environmental management measures. The project team developed a detailed vegetation map of the site (see Figure 2⁷) to identify promising areas for restoration. The management measures primarily consist of mowing and harvesting grass in the area to make hay, a process that takes approximately two months and employs 12 people. The current agri-environmental measures contracts go to 2013, but the farmer has indicated his interest in participating long-term, as evidenced by a \$23,000 USD capital investment in equipment specialized for peat grassland management. Various vegetation restoration measures are being tested at the demonstration site, for example, mowing followed by mulching vs. mowing with no mulching afterwards. One lesson from the project is that there was greater success in establishing collaborative working relationships for environmental management with small independent farmers than with large commercial agricultural enterprises.

71. At the Kláštorské lúky site, in collaboration with the SWMA a small dam was built on the stream on the side of the site, with the intention of slowing water flow and increasing the groundwater level at the site. Additional measures could not be undertaken because of a conflict with a private landowner, whose land adjacent to the site includes the groundwater spring that is critical to the site. The project team and partners at the site have attempted to work in a collaborative way with the landowner (reportedly a regional business owner with high level political connections), but have so far met with resistance. The project team has not yet succeeded in establishing a management agreement with any local farmers or organizations that might be willing to undertake management measures to receive agri-environmental

Figure 2 Detailed Habitat Map of Belianske lúky Demonstration Site



⁷ The map scale is not indicated in the figure, but the entire site area is approximately 100 hectares.

subsidies. Initial promising discussions with a local charity ran into bureaucratic barriers, and DAPHNE continues to explore other options.

72. Management plans were developed for each of the sites, and as of the end of the project were in various stages of approval: In Belianske lúky the 10-year management plan (to 2018) has been approved by the district environmental office and necessary local government bodies; in Kláštorské lúky the management plan has been submitted for approval, and in Abrod the management plan has been developed (including the approach of managing the site under the Natura 2000 designation), but has not yet been submitted for approval. Once the plans are approved, it is the SNC's responsibility to implement them. The development and approval of the site-based management plans can be seen as a lesson and good practice in Slovakia and for the SNC, as prior to this experience only a few Natura 2000 sites had site-based management plans. In addition, the collaborative process through which they were developed, with direct input from land owners and land users, represents good practice, compared to (according to the project team) the typical model in Slovakia of management plans prepared by technocrats with no direct input from local land users.

73. The approval of the management plans raises the question of sustainability in terms of whether there is the financial and technical capacity to actually implement them. As further discussed in Section VI.A.i on financial sustainability, the SNC is mobilizing funds for ongoing management at the demonstration sites, and indications are positive that this will take place. There remain limitations in terms of institutional and technical capacity of the SNC's local offices; for example, the SNC office responsible for the Belianske lúky site is also primarily responsible for the nearby 73,800 hectare Tatra National Park, which already easily stretches the available resources.

74. In collaboration with the SNC, some additional small-scale vegetation management activities have been carried out at two small peatland / fen sites that were not originally part of the project design - Raková Zemanov in the Kysuce Protected Landscape Area, and the Šujské rašelinisko nature reserve within Mala Fatra National Park. Contracts were signed with local farmers for restoration measures in both sites, and using the specialized mowing and mulching equipment acquired by the project, approximately 12 hectares of additional area were mowed and mulched. The local farmers have indicated their preliminary interest in securing agri-environmental payments to manage these sites in the future.

75. Building on the positive work carried out thus far, and the successful piloting and demonstration of the agri-environmental schemes, this evaluation recommends that DAPHNE and project stakeholders further develop and emphasize the ecosystem services aspects related to peatlands management and restoration. As the prospect of payments for ecosystem services gains understanding and acceptance, this approach could be leveraged for further additional revenue to support management and conservation. A starting point for this approach would be to conduct an economic valuation of the cultural, provisioning and regulating ecosystem services provided through the existence and functioning of the demonstration sites. Such an analysis could then be shared with stakeholders to demonstrate the economic value such sites provide, and which requires investment to maintain.

ii. Outcome 3: Monitoring system established, including monitoring of crucial stakeholder groups' reactions

76. Environmental monitoring carried out by the project is also discussed in Section VI.C.ii, on environmental monitoring. The project established a hydrological monitoring system, with 68 probes spread across the three pilot sites (see Photo 3). Hydrological monitoring has been carried out regularly during the project, and is expected to be continued both by DAPHNE and the SNC. Other monitoring systems established by the project include the monitoring of the results from vegetation management techniques (mowing vs. mulching, etc.), and associated floral monitoring. Although the monitoring period is so far still quite short, it was found that mulching has no negative impact on fen vegetation compared to mowing.

77. Ad-hoc monitoring of stakeholder reactions and involvement was carried out through the site-based local management committees, and through the project team's regular interaction with local stakeholders. However, a follow-up survey to the original awareness survey has not been conducted. This is further discussed under Outcome 6 below.

Photo 3 Hydrological Monitoring Probe at Abrod Demonstration Site, Marked by Tire



iii. Outcome 4: GIS component of National Peatlands Database enhanced

78. This outcome built directly on DAPHNE's experience producing a national grasslands database, under the previous World Bank-GEF Slovakia grasslands project. The grasslands database is used in administration of agri-environmental schemes in Slovakia.

79. To create the peatland database DAPHNE deployed a network of national experts (41 individuals) to collect on-the-ground data about the biological and physical characteristics of peatlands around Slovakia. This information was consolidated in a GIS-based database, managed by DAPHNE, with various and extensive quality control procedures. Since DAPHNE GIS experts were also supporting SNC national environmental databases (linked to the grasslands database), the peatlands database was constructed to ensure technical compatibility so data could easily be exported and shared with the SNC. DAPHNE continues to update and maintain the peatlands database, and indicated that they export updated data to the SNC once per year. One stakeholder noted that by developing the peatlands database DAPHNE is effectively doing work that is the responsibility of the SNC, but for which the SNC doesn't have adequate capacity. The database is also partly publicly accessible as a Google Maps layer. To

ensure technical sustainability, at least six individuals have operational knowledge of the database, and all data is adequately backed up on mirrored servers and extra computers. As noted under Section v. below, the results of the database with site species compositions was published with the overall results of the project.

iv. Outcome 5: The capacities of the SNC offices and Regional Departments of the MoA are strengthened

80. The project supported a number of trainings available to SNC staff members as part of the capacity development efforts. Trainings were held on legislative aspects related to the Water Framework Directive. Initial trainings were held in 2007 and 2008, including a February 2008 training on funding mechanisms for nature conservation within the rural development plan, with 54 participants from the SNC. A training was held in May 2009 for SNC employees, titled “Management, restoration and monitoring of fens,” and had 40 participants. Near the end of the project, the final project conference was held from November 16-19, 2009, as a joint effort with the Carpathian Wetlands Initiative. There were 65 participants from all seven Carpathian countries, including participation of the secretariats of the Ramsar Convention and Carpathian Convention.

81. Linking with the site-based management plans from the pilot sites (under outcome 1), general standardized management guidelines for fen grasslands in Slovakia were prepared with expert input, and will be used as a model for the preparation of other site-based management plans in Slovakia.

82. According to the SNC stakeholders, the project’s capacity development support was greatly needed and much appreciated. The project support was also linked with the SNC’s work on the Carpathian Wetlands Initiative, and the Rich Fens project fit well with the SNC priorities. The SNC noted it was helpful to have concrete results related to practical on-the-ground management practices; the sharing of lessons related to the development of educational materials was also considered valuable. On the whole the SNC stated that their expectations for the project had been fulfilled in terms of expanding knowledge and experience related to peatland management issues in Slovakia.

v. Outcome 6: Awareness about the maintenance of Slovakia’s peatland biodiversity increased

83. The project awareness activities were cited by multiple stakeholders, and particularly by the local mayor near the Belianske lúky site, as being among the most important long-term contributions of the project for the long-term benefit of peatlands in Slovakia. At the beginning of the project in 2007 a public awareness survey was carried out (with 185 respondents), the results of which were used to help plan appropriate education and awareness activities to be implemented during the project. Unfortunately the survey was not designed and carried out in a way such that it could be replicated at the end of the project to assess progress on this issue. Even though this survey cannot be replicated in a comparable

“What is really important is the awareness about the site was increased among the local inhabitants.”
- Local mayor near the Kláštorské lúky demonstration site

way, this evaluation recommends that DAPHNE conduct another peatlands awareness survey in the demonstration sites to gauge current levels of awareness, and identify future needs and priorities. A follow-up survey could also provide at least some additional context for the efforts and results of the project in the area of education and awareness.

Photo 4 Belianske lúky Educational Sign



84. In the early stages of the project, 11 training sessions were held for primary school teachers, involving 248 teachers. Awareness activities such as seminars and outdoor educational programs were held involving more than 500 students. To further support education and awareness about the importance of peatlands in schools, the project created a “toolbox” for elementary-level teachers – 20 “World of Peatlands” boxes were created and distributed, including material, for example, on identification of invertebrates and peat plants, and water quality testing materials. A teacher’s handbook was also produced, with an initial printing of 500 copies, and a secondary printing of 500 additional copies (responding to a recommendation of the mid-term evaluation). The handbook was certified by the Ministry of Education. School field visits were also conducted to the demonstration sites.

85. A short public awareness and information walkway (250 meters) was constructed at the Belianske lúky site (see Photo 4), including information boards discussing the environmental

characteristics of the site. Additional awareness activities included the hosting of the annual meeting and field trip of the International Mire Conservation Group in Slovakia in July 2010, and the hosting of a study tour from another UNDP-GEF peatlands project from Bosnia and Herzegovina in October 2009.

86. At the end of the project, the project experience was published in a book with 500 copies printed. The book covers the results from the national peatland inventory, and the experiences from management, restoration, research and monitoring of the pilot sites.

vi. Outcome 7: Important peatland sites included into Natura 2000 network and National Agri-environmental program

87. The Slovak Nature Conservation Act entered into force December 1st, 2007. Linked with Slovakia’s EU accession, this legislation was developed through an expedited process at the parliamentary level, without the input of the Ministry of Environment, public comment, or expert input. As a result, the legislation was not consistent with EU legislation and international agreements. DAPHNE contracted an independent legal analysis of the legislation (which demonstrated the various conflicts), and raised the issue to the EU level, along with other

stakeholders. The EU then began a dialogue with the government to resolve these issues through promulgation of legislation that is consistent with the EU Natura 2000 Directives. DAPHNE, again with other stakeholders, provided input to the process, which remains ongoing. With information from the project, the SNC also prepared the list of new proposed Natura 2000 areas, covering the variety of habitat types in Slovakia. The proposal is currently under discussion within the government.

88. A case study on the application of agri-environmental measures in Slovakian fen ecosystems was conducted through interview with nature conservation managers and farmers, with the conclusion that the agri-environmental measures have had a positive contribution to the management of these areas, but that there are still many instances of unsuitable management measures being applied, or where the use of inappropriate machinery is an issue.

VI. Key GEF Performance Parameters

A. Sustainability

89. While a sustainability rating is provided here as required, sustainability is a temporal and dynamic state that is influenced by a broad range of shifting factors. It should be kept in mind that the important aspect of sustainability of GEF projects is the sustainability of results, not necessarily the sustainability of activities that produced results. 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. When evaluating sustainability, the greater the time horizon, the lower the degree of certainty possible. Aggregate analysis of the GEF portfolio⁸ has shown that sustainability is likely when relevant national and local stakeholders have strong ownership of the project objective and results, and have the financial and technical capacity to ensure results are sustained.

90. Based on GEF evaluation policies and procedures, the overall rating for sustainability cannot be higher than the lowest rating for any of the individual components. Therefore the overall **sustainability** rating for the Rich Fens project for this terminal evaluation is *likely*.

i. Financial Risks to Sustainability

91. There are some financial risks to sustainability, but based on current conditions, financial sustainability is considered *likely*.

92. The most significant financial risk is the fiscal status of the SNC, which is responsible for carrying out site-based management. On the whole, the SNC's resources for activities beyond day-to-day operations are quite limited. However, the SNC is pursuing multiple potential sources of financing to support ongoing efforts related to peatland conservation in Slovakia, and the management of the project demonstration sites. According to the SNC, a proposal has been developed requesting 1 million euros from EU Sectoral Operational Programme (SOP) funds to support wetlands management in Slovakia, including further development of the peatlands database. A project proposal has also been developed for 2.5 million euros from Switzerland to manage approximately 41 peatland and forest sites in Slovakia of international significance. This project is expected to include the three demonstration sites from the Rich

⁸ E.g. the Third and Fourth Overall Performance Studies of the GEF, in 2005 and 2009, respectively.

Fens project. In addition, a specific proposal for 50,000 euros has been submitted to the national environmental fund for implementation of the management plans at the three demonstration sites, which will also be supported by co-financing from the SNC; the SNC has already planned and budgeted its portion and this will go ahead whether or not the request from the environmental fund is successful.

93. A second financial risk is the long-term structure of the agri-environmental measures in Slovakia, related to fen grassland and peatland management – specifically the level of payments under these measures. The current agri-environmental period goes through 2013, and it is expected that a process of revising the measures will be undertaken prior to this to be ready for implementation in 2014.

ii. Sociopolitical Risks to Sustainability

94. Sociopolitical risks are currently considered low, and sustainability in this regard is considered *likely*. In general, local stakeholders at the pilot sites from private sector land-users to local government officials appear to be accepting and supportive of the project objectives. There are some minor issues related to illegal resource use by ethnic minorities, the intransigence of one land owner at the Kláštorské lúky site, and the issue of the turf production operation at the Abrod site.

95. One long-term sociopolitical risk will be the capacity of farmers interested in implementing agri-environmental measures to actually access and successfully leverage these policy mechanisms. It is impossible to know at this stage what the long-term prospects on this front are, though one hopes that the system will continue to be improved over time, with greater access and enhanced management measures.

96. One of the main factors supporting long-term sustainability of the project results from a sociopolitical point of view are the outcomes of the education and awareness, and capacity development aspects of the project. Although a quantitative assessment of awareness results is lacking, qualitative and anecdotal evidence indicates that this has been a positive element of the project, and was cited by multiple stakeholders as one of the project's main contributions. Awareness of the importance of peatland ecosystems and appropriate management techniques has been raised among children and communities near the demonstration sites, and within the SNC and other government institutions relevant in the management of these ecosystems. The awareness and capacity created will be sustained although the project has been completed.

iii. Institutional Framework and Governance Risks to Sustainability

97. A key issue in this area is the frequent changes in government in Slovakia and therefore frequent changes of policies and political priorities. The most recent change of government was in June 2010. According to project stakeholders, over the past five years there have been five environment ministers and five or six directors of environmental protection. This level of turnover at the highest levels of leadership within an institution makes the development of meaningful and sustained strategies and approaches extremely challenging. One government stakeholder noted that he felt like Don Quixote when trying to galvanize government institutions to fulfill Slovakia's environmental mandates. On the whole, institutional framework and governance sustainability is considered *likely*, with the current government expected to be

in power over the coming years, and institutional structures (for example, the internal structure of the MoE) to be further solidified.

98. A related institutional issue is the structure and implementation of agri-environmental measures in Slovakia in the future. The current programming period will end in 2013, and there will need to be a review and revision of the structure of the measures. For the grassland measures relevant to peatlands, DAPHNE hopes to have the opportunity to work with the agriculture research institutes responsible for revising the measures to ensure that the necessary financial incentives are in-place to support conservation and management in critical ecosystems, based on the experience and lessons from this project. The outcome of the revision process will only be known a few years down the line.

iv. Environmental Risks to Sustainability

99. Although the overall risks at the demonstration sites, and to peatlands broadly in Slovakia, have not been fully addressed, there are few immediate environmental risks to sustainability, and the respective rating is *likely*. In all of the demonstration sites vegetation management measures must be maintained – the natural tendency in these ecosystems, in the absence of regular human intervention, is for woody shrubs and trees to overgrow the peatland grasslands (i.e. “succession”); thus, in many peatland ecosystems throughout Slovakia where traditional agricultural practices have been abandoned, potentially the most significant environmental threat is nature itself. It is however anticipated that in the near term, the management measures started during the project will be maintained by the local farmers engaged in the agri-environmental measures and the SNC, through support of additional external resources (see financial risks to sustainability, above).

100. There are continuing minor environmental risks at each of the demonstration sites. In Abrod, the existence and operations of the turf production facility continues to discharge pollution to the surface and ground water. In Belianske lúky there is illegal wood cutting, which has included some damage to the educational path boardwalk constructed by the project. During the evaluation mission this was discussed with the local government and local SNC office, both of which have committed to addressing the issue. In addition, the (understandable) decision to not undertake hydrological restoration measures means that the compromised hydrological system remains as is. In Kláštorské lúky the primary water source is on the property of a local land owner who is unsympathetic to the objectives of the project, and who has taken subtle counter-active measures.

B. Catalytic Role: Replication and Scaling-up

101. The project had multiple elements that contribute to the overall catalytic role of the project results. In the broad picture, the project was able to raise the issues of peatland management to the national policy level, and this will have long-term ripple effects in the implementation of the Natura 2000 network in Slovakia and the future implementation of the agri-environmental schemes for fen grasslands and peatland ecosystems. In addition, DAPHNE is an active organization in nature conservation in Slovakia, and the lessons and experiences from the project will be carried on in other areas of DAPHNE’s national portfolio. The capacity development work supporting the SNC will also promote replication and up-scaling, as the SNC staff will continue to apply the knowledge gained to peatland management in Slovakia,

especially with the standardized management guidelines that were produced. The education and awareness activities of the local communities will also have a long-term positive influence. Finally, as previously mentioned, the Slovak Technical University has begun incorporating wetland management in its curriculum, which will also have a long-term benefit in the country.

102. The knowledge, lessons, and experience of the Rich Fens project will also be integrated in and disseminated through the Carpathian Wetlands Initiative,⁹ for which the SNC and DAPHNE are also key partners in Slovakia.

C. Monitoring and Evaluation

i. Project Monitoring, Reporting, and Evaluation

103. The project's M&E design, as outlined in the original project document, is considered moderately unsatisfactory. The M&E system was not well-developed in the original project document, and did not include a clear and specific M&E plan with identified responsibilities. The project document states only that "monitoring activities will consist of regular reports on the development of project activities and achieved outcomes" and that "an internal assessment of project progress will be conducted annually." It is further noted that project financial audits will be conducted annually, and that external evaluations will be conducted at the mid-term and end of project. The inclusion of a mid-term evaluation, when one was not necessary since the project was an MSP, is a positive aspect to the design. However, at a planned cost of \$20,000 USD, the M&E activities were underbudgeted, particularly considering that two external evaluations were planned. The project logframe included in the original project document did include indicators, but these did not meet SMART criteria, and baseline values and targets were not included. It may be noted that the project was designed prior to the establishment of the GEF's current M&E minimum standards.

104. Fortunately, M&E implementation has exceeded the original design, as a number of the initial shortcomings have been rectified, and this aspect is rated satisfactory. A revised logframe was produced in April 2006 (for the 2006 PIR), with impact indicators, baseline data, and target values that met SMART criteria. There was still room for improvement, particularly on the relevance criteria, and with greater substantiation and rationale for indicator targets. The originally planned M&E budget was revised drawing from other areas of the project, with the total cost of the two external evaluations totaling approximately 1.5 times the originally planned total M&E budget, and this aspect is therefore rated satisfactory.

105. With respect to project monitoring, the project team submitted quarterly progress and financial reports to UNDP, which were timely, complete and comprehensive. The annual PIR was completed according to UNDP and GEF standards, and UNDP's standard Tripartite Review mechanism carried out annually (with participation from UNDP, the Ministry of Environment, the SNC, and DAPHNE). At least two annual audits were completed (in April 2007 and 2008); it is unknown if audits were completed for the final two years of the project.

106. One significant shortcoming in the implementation of the M&E plan was the timing of the mid-term evaluation, which, as previously noted, was conducted in May 2009. This was only seven months before the planned completion of the five-year project – approximately 87%

⁹ The CWI is a regional initiative of the Ramsar convention; see <http://www.sopsr.sk/cwi/index.php> for more info.

through the implementation period. While the mid-term evaluation was of excellent quality, there is little a “mid-term” evaluation can do at this point to identify and recommend measures to improve project implementation, or ensure the greatest likely results. The mid-term evaluation did produce a set of recommendations, and a review of the project team’s follow-up and implementation of the recommendations is analyzed in Table 5 below. This analysis indicates that the mid-term evaluation recommendations were substantively, if not completely, implemented.

Table 5 Rich Fens Project Follow-up on Mid-term Evaluation Recommendations

Mid-term Evaluation Recommendation	Level of Follow-up
Recommendation #1: The Evaluation Team supports the planned conference on the management of wetlands in the Carpathians Mountains and recommends extending the participation to the conference of experts and practitioners from Central and Eastern European countries with, possibly, the support of UNDP.	The project wrap-up conference was held in November 2009, as planned, in collaboration with the Carpathian Wetlands Initiative, with 65 participants from all seven Carpathian countries. In addition, a study tour was hosted for the UNDP-GEF project on Karst areas in Bosnia Herzegovina.
Recommendation #2: It is recommended that the book to be published on the management of wetlands in Slovakia be published not only in Slovak but also in English (and possibly in Russian) to have a greater coverage.	The project results book is published in English.
Recommendation #3: It is recommended to produce a case study on the mainstreaming of fen biodiversity conservation into the agriculture policy of Slovakia through the Agri-environmental schemes of the Rural Development Programme.	A case study was carried out under outcome 7 of the project. It was determined that agri-environmental schemes have had a positive contribution to the management of fen grasslands in Slovakia, but that there is still a need to improve management knowledge and capacities among farmers.
Recommendation #4: It is recommended to discuss with SNC the possibility of presenting the project findings and achievements at their next annual national meeting.	No information. The SNC was directly involved as a project partner, and approximately 10% of SNC staff were involved in project implementation or received project training.
Recommendation #5: Following discussion with an Officer at SNC, the International Mire Conservation Group is interested in having their annual field trip in Slovakia in 2010. It is recommended to pursue this idea with IMCG and explore the possibility to have the annual field trip in Slovakia.	The International Mire Conservation Group annual meeting was held in Slovakia in mid-2010.
Recommendation #6: It is recommended to emphasize knowledge and information dissemination during the last phase of the project; particularly through web-based mediums; including information in English for a broad international access. Based on the applied research and demonstration activities in the pilot sites, the project accumulated a lot of knowledge about peatlands and how best to manage rich fens. It is important that this knowledge be available through the web. A first step is recommended to add a full page on project findings on the DAPHNE web site but also link this information to other web sites such as the ones for the municipalities surrounding the pilot sites. For instance the municipality of Spisska Bela has a web site, which in 17 months had 600,000 hits.	This was completed to an extent through the publication of the project results book, and the project wrap-up conference. Information about the project is available on the DAPHNE website, but it is not extensive.
Recommendation #7: It is recommended to work with SNC – particularly the department of international treaties - to explore the contribution that the project (<i>case study – see Recommendation #6</i>) could make within the COP process of the RAMSAR Convention (next COP in 2011?).	The Ramsar Secretariat participated in the final project conference.
Recommendation #8: It is recommended that DAPHNE collaborate with SNC in developing projects related to peatland conservation and rich fens management, applying the project findings to other peatlands in Slovakia and seek funding from the OPE. OPE is the parallel programme to RDP funded by EU structural adjustment funds in the environmental sector. It is a 1.8B euros operational programme implemented by the Ministry of Environment with an indicative budget of about 60M euros for environmental protection. SNC is the only implementing agency in Slovakia but SNC can sub-contract other entities to execute projects or part of projects.	The SNC has developed project proposals for the future management of peatlands in Slovakia, building on the experience of the project. One of these proposals is for EU funding for the environment.

Recommendation #9: It is recommended to emphasize long-term sustainability during the last phase of the project; particularly the institutionalization of project results such as the management plans, the management model for rich fens and the participation process developed with the support of the project to establish a local management system to manage these rich fens.	The management of the demonstration sites has been solidified through the approval of the management plans, and the agreements for the SNC to continue providing management inputs. In addition, the standard peatland management guidelines were developed and disseminated within SNC.
Recommendation #10: It is recommended to produce a project exit plan before September 2009 detailing the plan for ending the project.	Result unknown. It is not clear if a formal exit plan was produced, but the project exit process has been smooth, with DAPHNE continuing to be involved in a range of peatland conservation issues in Slovakia.
Recommendation #11: If there is a remaining budget at project end, it is recommended to duplicate the “World of Peatlands” toolbox and give these sets to schools in the surrounding municipalities in the pilot site areas; assuming that there is a demand for it.	Additional educational awareness materials were produced with project funding, including the toolbox and teachers handbook.
Recommendation #12: Considering that final evaluation of GEF funded projects are mandatory and the extensive review conducted for this mid-term evaluation in May-June 2009, it is recommended to minimize the scope (and by extension its cost) of the final evaluation.	The terminal evaluation was reduced in scope relative to the mid-term evaluation.
Recommendation #13: Based on the experience of the 2-week field mission in the context of this evaluation and other assignments conducted by the Evaluation Team Members, it is recommended to plan a maximum 5 to 7 working days for field missions for the evaluation of projects of this size.	The terminal evaluation field visit was conducted over a five-day period.

ii. Environmental Monitoring

107. Under the Rich Fens project some project-level environmental monitoring was carried out – primarily hydrological monitoring, which was originally developed with support from the project technical partner University of Groningen (Netherlands). There are 10 monitoring probes at the Abrod site, 13 probes at the Belianske lúky site, and 18 probes at the Kláštorské lúky site. Monitoring at the pilot sites has not been carried out for long enough to adequately analyze data and identify potential impact level results; however, according to project team members, preliminary indications are that even in the demonstration sites where hydrological restoration measures were carried out, surface ground water levels continue to decrease or are stable, potentially linked to decreases in annual precipitation in the country, and increasing temperatures. One exception to this is some portions of the Abrod pilot site, where increases have been measured at approximately half of the monitoring sites. Additional exceptions are found in areas around the demonstration sites where the European beaver (*Castor fiber*) is recolonizing its former range and creating dams and ponds (this is also a broader trend in Slovakia, and central Europe in general, resulting from protective measures established for the beaver).

108. Bird monitoring was conducted in August 2009 at Kláštorské lúky and Belianske lúky pilot sites. At Kláštorské lúky monitoring has been carried out regularly since 2002 in the context of various projects; at Belianske lúky the current effort was an initial test sampling. The bird monitoring is expected to continue in both sites under the framework of future projects.

109. Vegetation monitoring in areas where restoration measures were conducted was carried out (as highlighted in Section V.A.ii previously), with data entered into the peatlands database. Monitoring was established in three by three meter plots. In Belianske lúky monitoring was done three different vegetation cover types: 20-30 year natural succession willow growth, reed dominant (non-woody shrub) areas, and 10-year natural succession birch growth. In Kláštorské lúky two vegetation types were monitored: an area where 30-40 year old

willow growth was removed as a restoration measure, and an area where reeds predominated (which were mulched under restoration measures) with small willows (removed by hand).

110. According to project stakeholders, within Slovakia there are project level environmental monitoring systems (particularly for DAPHNE projects), but there is no national level monitoring system. DAPHNE has taken steps to support further development of a national system, for example by creating an information system for habitat evaluation, but thus far central government financial support has been lacking. Contributing to this challenge, according to project stakeholders, is that under the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (the overarching policy mechanism covering agri-environmental schemes), there are no EU indicators for the environmental benefits produced under the agri-environmental schemes.

D. Project Impacts and Global Environmental Benefits

111. For the GEF biodiversity focal area, impacts are defined as documented sustained changes in environmental status of species or ecosystems. In addition to delivering on-the-ground environmental impacts, GEF projects are expected to deliver results at a scale considered sufficient to constitute Global Environmental Benefits.

112. The Rich Fens project logframe included a number of impact level indicators, as shown in Annex 3. The project sought to maintain 120 hectares of rich fens habitat in good conservation status (up from a baseline of 80 hectares). A second impact indicator was the maintenance at baseline levels of certain species – the flora species: *Gladiolus palustris*, *Liparis loeselii*, *Pedicularis sceptrum-carolinum*, *Orchis palustris*, *Dactylorhiza ochroleuca*, and *Sesleria caerulea*. Third was the percentage inclusion of two rich fens representative vegetation types in Slovakia's protected area system - *Caricion davallianae* (target of 60% inclusion up from a baseline of 49%), and *Molinion* (target of 70% inclusion up from a baseline of 60%).

113. According to data provided by the project, and verified to the extent possible within the scope of this evaluation, the targets for all impact indicators were exceeded (for specific data, see the level of project achievement columns reported in Annex 3). Additional anecdotal and preliminary monitoring data indicates that the project is contributing to impact level results. For example, according to the vegetation monitoring described in Section VI.C.ii above, after one year of restoration in a portion of the Belianske lúky site, "The changes of species composition in all three observed habitats were analyzed. The overall species composition moved towards well preserved alkaline fens after removal of willows and mulching." However, the same quarterly progress report notes "the results are very preliminary only after one year of treatment. It is too early for any serious conclusions."

114. Identifying and including species and ecosystem level impact indicators, as the Rich Fens project did, is a positive approach, and such indicators should continue to be included in GEF project design to facilitate the assessment of impact level results. At the same time, to assess changes in environmental status in a meaningful way, long-term monitoring data is required to identify trends over time. Although the Rich Fens project focused on flora species for impact indicators that are inherently less mobile, when indicators focus on highly mobile or migratory species (e.g. birds), populations can vary significantly by season and from year to year. By contrast, for plant species and overall flora composition within an ecosystem, changes occur in a more gradual manner over multiple years. 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.

115. The Rich Fens project represents an interesting discussion point in the question of what constitutes “Global Environmental Benefits” in the GEF’s biodiversity focal area. As highlighted above, this question is often considered to relate to scale – in the case of this project, a relatively small area of a specific ecosystem type was targeted. Of the specific species targeted, few are rare to the extent of being globally endangered. On the other hand, the rich fens ecosystem is highly biologically diverse from multiple points of view, and is rare and under threat within Slovakia, as well as the region as a whole. Many of the targeted species are rare within Slovakia and the region, although in aggregate throughout the region they may not be considered globally endangered.

116. Generally speaking, global biodiversity conservation efforts are focused biodiversity “hot spots” or highly threatened ecoregions – areas where, the thinking goes, every scarce dollar invested in biodiversity conservation will do the most good. The GEF has built on much of this science in the development of Global Environmental Benefits indicators for the System of a Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR) (and its predecessor, the Resource Allocation Framework, or RAF). While seeking the most bang for the conservation buck by focusing on the most concentrated areas of the most highly endangered species and ecosystems is a worthy goal, caution and balance must be applied to ensure this approach does not become counter-productive. What will happen when once-prevalent species and ecosystems come crashing into rarity, due to having been neglected in conservation efforts for decades as a result of their “misfortune” of at one time having been relatively abundant? This is to say that not only the rarest of species in the most biologically diverse hectare of tropical rainforest should be considered “globally significant” from a biological point of view.

E. Capacity Development

117. There were multiple capacity development activities carried out under the project under Outcome 5, which was focused on strengthening the capacities of the SNC and regional departments of the MoA. See section V.A.iv for additional information on results in this area. In addition, DAPHNE has continued to grow and strengthen its institutional capacity.

VII. Main Lessons Learned and Recommendations

A. Lessons from the Experience of the Rich Fens Project

118. **Lesson:** Establishment of site level stakeholder steering committees at each of the demonstration sites proved to be an effective approach to building local ownership and buy-in to the proposed restoration and management measures. This was critical because the land tenure of the majority of the sites was private ownership.

119. **Lesson:** Working with individual small-scale farmers can be more efficient for nature conservation measures than working with larger-scale commercial farms. Based on the experience of this project, even if the larger commercial farms are interested or willing to support nature conservation measures, the specialized attention to administrative and field

management matters necessary to implement agri-environmental measures does not integrate well with the standardized efficient management systems of large farms.

120. **Lesson:** The process in Belianske lúky of establishing a successful collaborative agreement with a local farmer, through mutual support and the financial incentives linked to the agri-environmental measures, represents a good example that could be scaled up at the national level.

121. **Lesson:** Have an experienced and well-qualified executing organization is a great asset to a project. In the case of the Rich Fens project, DAPHNE had the necessary experience and technical and administrative capacity to ensure that the project was implemented as successfully as possible. This is not to say that no challenges were encountered, but the involvement of DAPHNE, with its long history of successful collaboration, brought the project legitimacy in the eyes of many stakeholders.

122. **Lesson:** The development and approval of the site-based management plans can be seen as a lesson and good practice in Slovakia and for the SNC, as prior to this experience only a few Natura 2000 sites had site-based management plans. In addition, the collaborative process through which they were developed, with direct input from land owners and land users, represents a good practice, compared to the typical model of management plans prepared by technocrats with no direct input from local land users.

B. Recommendations for Follow-up of the Rich Fens Project

123. Considering that this is the terminal evaluation there is limited scope for extensive follow-up recommendations. The project has been completed, although DAPHNE and other project partners continue their ongoing efforts to improve the management of rich fen peatland ecosystems and ensure their conservation. The specific target audience is included in brackets for each recommendation.

124. **Key Recommendation:** Building on the positive work carried out thus far and the successful piloting and demonstration of the agri-environmental schemes, this evaluation recommends that DAPHNE and project stakeholders further develop and emphasize the ecosystem services aspects related to peatlands management and restoration, particularly related to carbon sequestration and storage. As the prospect of payments for ecosystem services gains understanding and acceptance, this approach could be leveraged for further additional revenue to support management and conservation. A starting point for this approach would be to conduct an economic valuation of the cultural, provisioning and regulating ecosystem services provided through the existence and functioning of the demonstration sites. Such an analysis could then be shared with stakeholders to demonstrate the economic value such sites provide, and which requires investment to maintain. [DAPHNE]

125. **Recommendation:** Even though the awareness survey conducted in 2007 cannot be replicated in a directly comparable way, this evaluation recommends that DAPHNE conduct another peatlands awareness survey in the demonstration sites to gauge current levels of awareness, and identify future needs and priorities. [DAPHNE]

126. **Recommendation:** 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. At the same time, to assess changes in environmental

status in a meaningful way, long-term monitoring data is required to identify trends over time. Although the Rich Fens project focused on flora species for impact indicators that are inherently less mobile, when indicators focus on highly mobile or migratory species (e.g. birds), populations can vary significantly by season and from year to year. By contrast, for plant species and overall flora composition within an ecosystem, changes occur in a more gradual manner over multiple years. *[UNDP, GEF Secretariat, and GEF Evaluation Office]*

C. Rich Fens Project Terminal Evaluation Ratings

Rating Topic	Rating	Qualitative Summary
Project Formulation		
Relevance	S	The project was relevant to local, national, regional, international and GEF priorities and strategies for biodiversity conservation.
Conceptualization / design	S	The project strategy was well-structured to address the specific threats to rich en ecosystems, and their root causes.
Stakeholder participation	S	Relevant stakeholders were engaged in the project development process, setting the foundation for the overall long-term strong stakeholder participation during project implementation.
Project Implementation		
Implementation Approach (Efficiency)	S	Management and implementation procedures were in-line with international norms and standards, and the achieved results represent an excellent return on investment for the GEF contribution.
The use of the logical framework	S	The project was implemented in a result-based approach, focusing on the achievement of identified targets rather than just carrying out prescribed activities.
Adaptive management	S	There were not significant changes to the project approach or strategy, but when minor changes were necessary the appropriate decision-making process was followed. One notable example is the modified approach related to the hydrological restoration measures at the Belianske lúky demonstration site.
Use / establishment of information technologies	HS	The process of establishing the peatland inventory feeding into the GIS database was well developed. The technical analysis related to the planned hydrological measures was also technologically impressive, and represents an excellent example for potential future work in the country.
Operational relationships between the institutions involved	S	DAPHNE and the SNC have a strong and positive working relationship, and the Ministry of Environment has been supportive as necessary, within its capacity. The relationship with the MoA vis-à-vis agri-environmental schemes has not historically been strong, though continuous efforts are made in this direction.
Financial management	HS	There were no financial management issues, and well-established international norms and standards were followed in the budgeting, procurement, and reporting processes.
Monitoring and Evaluation	MS	The original M&E plan and design was lacking, but was significantly improved in implementation.
M&E design	MU	The original project M&E system was not specific, and the project logframe indicators did not meet SMART criteria. The planned budget was insufficient. The project was approved prior to the establishment of GEF M&E minimum standards.
M&E budgeting	S	In implementation the M&E budget was revised to the necessary level.
M&E implementation	S	Project monitoring and reporting was carried out in a timely and comprehensive manner, with the exception of the mid-term evaluation, which was carried out after 87% of the project implementation period.
Stakeholder Participation	S	As a whole, stakeholder participation was appropriately addressed and managed throughout the project.
Production and dissemination of information	HS	The project had a strong approach to education and awareness, at the level of schools in the areas around project pilot sites, as well as within the SNC in terms of promoting awareness and lessons regarding peatland management.
Local resource users and NGOs participation	S	Local resource users were actively engaged through the pilot site local management committees, and this contributed to positive outcomes, particularly at the Belianske lúky site. At the other two sites there are some remaining challenges in finding common ground with local resource users, but the project has taken a productive, collaborative approach in all cases.
Establishment of partnerships	HS	The full range of stakeholders considers DAPHNE to be a highly capable partner, and this was demonstrated on multiple fronts during the project.
Involvement and support of governmental institutions	S	The project team was actively engaged with the main government partner, the SNC, and by extension, the Ministry of Environment. Collaboration was also pursued with the MoA with respect to the agri-environmental measures, with some positive results. On the whole any challenges encountered can be attributed to the somewhat dysfunctional nature of the government institutional framework vis-à-vis the issues addressed by the project, as well as the political turmoil at the national level during the project implementation period.

Rating Topic	Rating	Qualitative Summary
Project Results		
Overall Achievement of Objective and Outcomes (Effectiveness)	S	The project successfully contributed to multiple positive notable results. There were some minor areas where the full expected results were not achieved (as a result of shifting assumptions or other exogenous factors), while there were also areas where expected results were exceeded.
Objective: Representative habitats of unique calcareous rich fens are maintained through the promotion of restoration, conservation and sustainable management practices	S	The impact level indicators for the overall project objective were met or exceeded. The approach of establishing sustained restoration and management at each of the three project sites reached varying levels of success between the three sites, but indications for future progress are positive. The completion of the technically planned and implemented hydrological and vegetation restoration measures is also a significant achievement. Also important is the project's contribution of integrating site-level lessons and experience into national policy related to agri-environmental measures for grassland/peatland ecosystems.
Outcome 1: Restoration Plans for Pilot Sites Prepared	MS	Restoration plans for the pilot sites were prepared, with restoration measures implemented. Of equal significance however is the preparation and approval of the site management plans. Only one of the management plans for the sites was approved by the end of the project, but the others are expected to be within the near future.
Outcome 2: Restoration of hydrological regime and restoration management of sites	MS	Moderate results were realized with respect to the hydrological regime restoration measures, with technical indicators of water nutrient levels partially achieved or nearly achieved. The project exceeded the expectations with respect to vegetation restoration management, although targets were relatively modest. Further arrangements for adequate and sustained vegetation restoration management are required at the Kláštorské lúky site.
Outcome 3: Monitoring system established, including monitoring of crucial stakeholder groups' reactions	S	The hydrological and environmental monitoring system was established as planned. Ad-hoc monitoring of stakeholder awareness and feedback occurred through multiple project activities; there was no other clear indicator for this part of this outcome.
Outcome 4: GIS component of National Peatlands Database enhanced	HS	The database was completed and is regularly updated, with technical compatibility with the national system and regular information sharing.
Outcome 5: The capacities of the SNC offices and Regional Departments of the MoA are strengthened	HS	The target values for the indicators under this outcome were exceeded. The target values were not clearly rationalized, but it is certain that good progress was made under this outcome as a result of multiple specific project activities.
Outcome 6: Awareness about the maintenance of Slovakia's peatland biodiversity increased	HS	The indicator targets under this outcome were exceeded. The education and awareness activities were among the many strengths of the project, with innovative and extensive awareness activities carried out within schools, communities and relevant institutions.
Outcome 7: Important peatland sites included into Natura 2000 network and National Agri-environmental program	S	The indicators under this outcome were either met or partially met, although the project's actual contribution to the achievement of these targets is not clear, as the indicators under this outcome were not immediately relevant to the project activities. It is likely that the efforts under the project will contribute to additional results in this area in the future, due to the identified influences on national policy.
Sustainability	L	The overall sustainability rating cannot be higher than the lowest rating among the four sub-criteria.
Financial sustainability	L	There are limited immediate financial risks to the sustainability of project results.
Socio-political sustainability	L	There are limited immediate socio-political risks to the sustainability of project results.
Institutional and governance sustainability	L	There are limited immediate institutional and governance risks to the sustainability of project results.
Ecological sustainability	L	There are limited immediate ecological risks to the sustainability of project results.
Overall Project Achievement and Impact	HS	

VIII. Annexes

Annex 1: Rich Fens Terminal Evaluation Terms of Reference

Annex 2. GEF Operational Principles

Annex 3: Rich Fens Project Logframe: Self-assessed and Evaluated Level of Achievement

Annex 4. List of Persons Interviewed

Annex 5. Rich Fens Project Terminal Evaluation Field Visit Schedule

Annex 6. Evaluation Documentation

Annex 7. Evaluator C

Annex 8. Management Response (if any)

A. Annex 1: Rich Fens Terminal Evaluation Terms of Reference

Note: For space considerations the annexes of the TORs have not been included.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

for Project Final Evaluation of UNDP/GEF Project of the Government of the Slovak Republic

Project Title:	Conservation, Restoration and Wise Use of Rich Fens in the Slovak Republic
Functional Title:	Consultant for Independent Evaluation
Duration:	estimated 15 working days over the period of: August – October 2010.
Terms of Payment:	Lump sum payable upon satisfactory completion and approval by UNDP of all deliverables, including the Evaluation Report
Travel costs:	The costs of in-country mission(s) of the Consultant are to be included in the lump sum.

INTRODUCTION

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.

The Final Evaluation is intended to assess the relevance, performance and success of the project. It looks at signs of potential impact and sustainability of results, including the contribution to capacity development and the achievement of global and national environmental goals. The Final Evaluation also identifies/documents lessons learned and makes recommendations that project partners and stakeholders might use to improve the design and implementation of other related projects and programs.

The evaluation is to be undertaken in accordance with the “GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy”(see <http://thegef.org/MonitoringandEvaluation/MEPoliciesProcedures/mepoliciesprocedures.html>).

This Final Evaluation is initiated by UNDP Bratislava Regional Centre as the GEF Implementing Agency for this project and it aims to provide managers (at the level of regulatory bodies of the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture, and UNDP/GEF) with a comprehensive overall assessment of the project and with a strategy for replicating the results. It also provides the basis for learning and accountability for managers and stakeholders.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The UNDP/GEF project aims at the conservation of Carpathian peatland biodiversity. Carpathian rich fens are a unique ecosystem with its center of distribution in Slovakia and possess the highest level of

species diversity, through enforcement of policy and improved practices.

From the point of view of the design and implementation of the project, the key stakeholders are:

- Ministry of the Environment
- State Nature Conservancy (SNC)
- Slovak Technical University, Dpt. of Land and Water Resource Management
- UNDP/GEF Regional Center for Europe and CIS (Bratislava)
- The GEF Secretariat, who is not involved in project implementation, but to whom the Final Evaluation Report to be prepared under this Terms of Reference will be submitted.

The Project Document was signed between the Ministry of the Environment of Slovak Republic and UNDP/GEF Regional Center for Europe and CIS in June 2004. The Project was planned for five years (January 2005 to December 2009).

Seven project outcomes are defined in the Project Document:

1.	Restoration plans for pilot sites prepared
2.	Improvement of hydrological regime and restoration management of sites
3.	Monitoring system established including monitoring of crucial stakeholder groups' reactions
4.	GIS component of National Peatland Database enhanced
5.	The capacities of State Nature Conservancy (SNC) offices and Regional Departments (RD) of MoA are strengthened
6.	Awareness about the maintenance of Slovakia's peatland biodiversity increased
7.	Important peatland sites included into Natura 2000 network and National Agri-environmental program

Associated with these outcomes there are a number of Outputs (please see [Annex 1](#) for the Revised Logical Framework of the project). Progress towards them is reported in 2009 Annual Project Implementation Review (to be available for the evaluator)

OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

The objective of the Evaluation is to assess the achievement of project objective, the affecting factors, the broader project impact and the contribution to the general goal/strategy, and the project partnership strategy.

Project success will be measured based on Project Logical Framework (see [Annex 1](#)), which provides clear performance and impact indicators for project implementation along with their corresponding means of verification.

The evaluation will assess the aspects as listed in evaluation report outline attached in [Annex 2](#).

The evaluation will also assess how recommendations of the Mid-Term Evaluation have been implemented.

The Evaluation will focus on the following aspects:

- Project design and its relevance in relation to:
 - a) *Development priorities* at the national level;

- b) *Stakeholders* – assess if the specific needs were met;
- c) *Country ownership / drivenness* – participation and commitments of government, local authorities, public services, utilities, residents;
- d) *UNDP mission to promote sustainable human development (SHD)* by assisting the country to build its capacities in the focal area of environmental protection and management;
- Performance - look at the progress that has been made by the project relative to the achievement of its objective and outcomes;
 - a) *Effectiveness* - extent to which the project has achieved its objectives and the desired outcomes, and the overall contribution of the project to national strategic objectives;
 - b) *Efficiency* - assess efficiency against overall impact of the project for better projection of achievements and benefits resulting from project resources, including an assessment of the different implementation modalities and the cost effectiveness of the utilisation of GEF resources and actual co-financing for the achievement of project results;
 - c) *Timeliness* of results,
- Management arrangements focused on project implementation:
 - a) *General implementation and management* - evaluate the adequacy of the project, implementation structure, including the effectiveness of the National Steering Committee and Consultative Forum, partnership strategy and stakeholder involvement from the aspect of compliance to UNDP/GEF requirements and also from the perspective of “good practice model” that could be used for replication
 - b) *Financial accountability* – extent to which the sound financial management has been an integral part of achieving project results, with particular reference to adequate reporting, identification of problems and adjustment of activities, budgets and inputs
 - c) *Monitoring and evaluation on project level* – assess the adoption of the monitoring and evaluation system during the project implementation, and its internalization by competent authorities and service providers after the completion of the project; focusing to relevance of the performance indicators, that are:
 - Specific: The system captures the essence of the desired result by clearly and directly relating to achieving an objective and only that objective.
 - Measurable: The monitoring system and indicators are unambiguously specified so that all parties agree on what it covers and there are practical ways to measure it.
 - Achievable and Attributable: The system identifies what changes are anticipated as a result of the intervention and whether the result(s) are realistic. Attribution requires that changes in the targeted developmental issue can be linked to the intervention.
 - Relevant and Realistic: The system establishes levels of performance that are likely to be achieved in a practical manner, and that reflect the expectations of stakeholders.
 - Time-bound, Timely, Trackable and Targeted: The system allows progress to be tracked in a cost-effective manner at desired frequency for a set period, with clear identification of particular stakeholders group to be impacted by the project.
- Overall success of the project with regard to the following criteria:
 - a) *Impact* - assessment of the results with reference to the development objectives of the project and the achievement of global environmental goals, positive or negative, intended or unintended changes brought about by the project intervention, (number of households benefiting, number of areas with the new technology in place, level of sensitization and awareness about the technology; any change at the policy level that contributes to sustainability of the tested model, impact in private/ public and/ or at individual levels);
 - b) *Global environmental benefits* - reductions in green house gas emissions.

- c) *Sustainability* - assessment of the prospects for benefits/activities continuing after the end of the project, static sustainability which refers to the continuous flow of the same benefits to the same target groups; dynamic sustainability use and/or adaptation of the projects' results by original target groups and/or other target groups;
- d) *Contribution to capacity development* - extent to which the project has empowered target groups and have made possible for the government and local institutions (municipalities) to use the positive experiences; ownership of projects' results;
- e) *Replication* – analysis of replication potential of the project positive results in country and in the region, outlining of possible funding sources; replication to date without direct intervention of the project;
- f) *Synergies* with other similar projects, funded by the government or other donors.

In addition to a descriptive assessment, criteria should be rated using the following divisions: Highly Satisfactory, Satisfactory, Marginally Satisfactory, and Unsatisfactory with an explanation of the rating. Also the Overall Rating of the project should be indicated. Criteria, which have to be rated are indicated in the evaluation report outline attached in [Annex 2](#).

Issues of special consideration:

The Evaluation will review and assess changes in development conditions, by addressing the following questions, with a focus on the perception of change among stakeholders:

- Have population of globally significant species characteristic to rich fens been maintained within the pilot sites? (With a special attention to indicator species mentioned in the Tracking Tool and the Logframe Matrix, see [Annex 1](#).)
- Have representative vegetation types of rich fens habitat been integrated in the protected area network of Slovakia?
- Have there been changes in local stakeholder behavior (i.e. threats, land use management practices, ...) that have contributed to improved conservation? If not, why not?
- Has the project established a management basis for long term sustainability and development of project outcomes?
- Has the project elaborated innovative incentives to motivate land use change to biodiversity friendly land use practices?
- Is there distinct improvement in biodiversity information turnover and use in decision making among the local stakeholders?
- Has awareness on biodiversity conservation and subsequent public participation in biodiversity monitoring and management increased as a result of the project?
- Is there adequate territorial planning in place, or in progress, ensuring long-term conservation of biodiversity and cultural values?
- Assess the underlying factors beyond the project's immediate control that influence outcomes and results, especially the recent changes in the governmental policy on the implementation of the agri-environmental scheme. Consider the appropriateness and effectiveness of the project's management strategies for these factors.

For future development support in the region, UNDP is especially interested in the assessment of the support model applied in the project, its implications for the long-term impact and sustainability of the project results.

The Evaluation Report will present recommendations and lessons of broader applicability for follow-up and future support of UNDP and/or the Government, highlighting the best and worst practices in addressing issues relating to the evaluation scope.

PRODUCTS EXPECTED FROM THE EVALUATION

The key product expected from this final evaluation is a comprehensive analytical report in English that should, at least, follow minimum GEF requirements as indicated in [Annex 2](#).

The Report of the Final Evaluation will be stand-alone document that substantiates its recommendations and conclusions. The report will have to provide to the GEF Secretariat complete and convincing evidence to support its findings/ratings.

The Report will include a table of planned vs. actual project financial disbursements, and planned co-financing vs. actual co-financing in this project, according the table attached in [Annex 3](#) of this TOR

The Report will be supplemented by Rate Tables, attached in [Annex 4](#) of this TOR.

The length of the final evaluation report shall not exceed 30 pages in total (not including annexes).

EVALUATION APPROACH

An outline of an evaluation approach is provided below; however it should be made clear that the evaluator is responsible for revising the approach as necessary. Any changes should be in-line with international criteria and professional norms and standards. They must be also cleared by UNDP before being applied by the evaluation team.

The evaluation must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful. It must be easily understood by project partners and applicable to the remaining period of project duration.

The evaluation should provide as much gender disaggregated data as possible.

The evaluation will take place mainly in the field. The evaluator is expected to follow a participatory and consultative approach ensuring close engagement with the government counterparts, the National Project Manager, Steering Committee, project team, and key stakeholders.

The evaluator is expected to consult all relevant sources of information, such as the project document, project reports – incl. Annual Reports, project budget revision, progress reports, Mid-Term Evaluation Report, project files, national strategic and legal documents, and any other material that s/he may consider useful for evidence based assessment. The list of documentation to be reviewed is included in [Annex 5](#) of this Terms of Reference

The evaluator is expected to use interviews as a means of collecting data on the relevance, performance and success of the project. S/He is also expected to visit the project sites.

The methodology to be used by the evaluation team should be presented in the report in detail. It shall include information on:

- ♣ Documentation reviewed;
- ♣ Interviews;
- ♣ Field visits;
- ♣ Questionnaires;
- ♣ Participatory techniques and other approaches for the gathering and analysis of data.

Although the Evaluator should feel free to discuss with the authorities concerned, all matters relevant to its assignment, it is not authorized to make any commitment or statement on behalf of UNDP or GEF or the project management.

The Evaluator should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent in using the resources of the evaluation.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATION

- University degree in environment related issues;
- Recent knowledge of the GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy;
- Recent knowledge of UNDP's results-based evaluation policies and procedures
- Recent experience in evaluation of international donor driven projects;
- Experience with multilateral or bilateral supported conservation projects
- Recognized expertise in the management and sustainable use of wetlands in temperate ecosystems;
- Familiarity with protected area policies and management structures in EU, especially in Slovakia;
- Work experience in relevant areas for at least 8 years;
- Conceptual thinking and analytical skills;
- Fluency in Slovak will be considered an asset;
- Excellent English communication skills;
- Computer literacy;

Implementation Arrangements

The principal responsibility for managing this evaluation lies with UNDP Regional Center for Europe and CIS (Bratislava). UNDP will contract the evaluator. UNDP and the Project Manager will be responsible for liaising with the Evaluator to provide the project documentation, set up stakeholder interviews, arrange field visits, coordinate with the government counterparts, etc.

The evaluation will be conducted within the period of August – October 2010.

The activity and timeframe are broken down as follows:

Activity	Timing	Estimated duration
Desk review	August 2010	2 days
Briefings for evaluators by UNDP and the Project manager	Till 30 August 2010	1 day
Field visits, interviews, questionnaires, de-briefings	week of 30 August – 3 September OR week of 13-17 September 2010	5 days
Drafting of the evaluation report	Within 10 working days after the mission, but latest on 4 October 2010	3 days
Validation of preliminary findings with stakeholders through circulation of draft reports for comments, meetings and other types of feedback mechanisms	Till 22 October 2010	2 days
Finalization of the evaluation report (incorporating comments received on	Till 31 October 2010	2 days

Activity	Timing	Estimated duration
first draft)		
		15 days

The report (draft and final version) shall be submitted to the UNDP Country Support Team (Ms. Klara Tothova, address: Grosslingova 35, 811 09 Bratislava, Slovakia, tel.: 00421-2-59337 220, e-mail: klara.tothova@undp.org)

Prior to approval of the final report, UNDP contact person will circulate the draft for comments to government counterparts and project management: project manager, National Project Director, Ministry of Environment of the SR, UNDP Country Support Team and UNDP/GEF RTA.

UNDP and the stakeholders will submit comments and suggestions within 10 working days after receiving the draft.

The finalised Evaluation Report shall be submitted latest on 31 October 2010

If any discrepancies have emerged between impressions and findings of the evaluation team and the aforementioned parties, these should be explained in an annex attached to the final report.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Applicants are requested to apply online on <http://jobs.undp.org> by **7 June 2010, 12:00 CET**

The application should contain current and complete C.V. in English with indication of the e-mail and phone contact.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to present a price offer indicating the total cost in USD of the assignment (including the daily fee, per diem and travel costs) preferably according the template attached in [Annex 6](#)

UNDP applies fair and transparent selection process that would take into account the competencies/skills of the applicants as well as their financial proposals.

Qualified women and members of social minorities are encouraged to apply.

UNDP is a non-smoking work environment.

Due to large number of applicants, UNDP regrets that it is unable to inform the unsuccessful candidates about the outcome or status of the recruitment process.

B. Annex 2. 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.

C. Annex 3: Rich Fens Project Logframe: Self-assessed and Evaluated Level of Achievement

Outcome	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Self-reported Level of Achievement (2010 PIR)	Evaluation Assessed Level of Achievement
Objective: Representative habitats of unique calcareous rich fens are maintained through the promotion of restoration, conservation and sustainable management practices.	1. Number of hectares of rich fens maintained in good conservation status: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not over- grown with shrubs; • No succession of grasses; • Species composition; • Hydrology 	80 ha	120 ha	157 ha of peatlands influenced by implementation of project activities is in a good conservation status.	Target exceeded. The target value was based on areas of the pilot sites where restoration activities were planned. The exact number of hectares “maintained in good conservation status” varies over time depending on the resources available each year, but during the core years of project implementation conservation status was improved in the number of hectares indicated. All indications are the project reported number of hectares is accurate, particularly considering that the demonstration sites have been ground-truthed with Geographic Positioning Systems (GPS).
	2. Population of globally significant species characteristic to rich fens (will be measured as area of species habitat) are maintained at the baseline level: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gladiolus palustris • Liparis loeselii • Pedicularis sceptrum-carolinum • Orchis palustris • Dactylorhiza ochroleuca • Sesleria caerulea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 ha • 1.5 ha • 113 ha • 37 ha • 0.9 ha • 50 ha 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 ha • 1.5 ha • 113 ha • 37 ha • 0.9 ha • 50 ha 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 93.5 ha • 1.5 ha • 161.2 ha • 120.9 ha • 0.9ha • 220.3ha 	Target exceeded. The target value was set with the rationale of at least maintaining the baseline level. The evaluation did not have the scope to undertake an independent technical assessment of the reported results, but all indications are that the reported level is accurate, particularly, as noted above, DAPHNE’s well-developed GIS capacity – according the project team, the values are based on an analysis of database polygons. According to the project team, the one species that did not increase in area, Dactylorhiza, did at least increase in the number of individuals.

Outcome	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Self-reported Level of Achievement (2010 PIR)	Evaluation Assessed Level of Achievement
	3. Percentage of area of representative vegetation types of rich fens habitat integrated in the protected area network of Slovakia to total area of distribution • Caricion davallianae • Molinion	• 49 % • 60 %	• 60 % • 70 %	• 67.3 % • 72.3 %	Target exceeded. The target value was based on a preliminary estimate of the potential level of achievement using analysis from the database. The evaluation did not have the scope to undertake an independent technical assessment at this level, but all indications are that the reported level is accurate.
Outcome 1: Restoration plans for pilot sites prepared	4. Management plans prepared, negotiated and approved	No valid management plans for pilot sites	Three management plans negotiated and approved	Internal evaluation and quality check of management plan for Belianske and Kláštorské lúky was made at State Nature Conservancy Headquarters. Comments were incorporated into final version of documents. Finalized documents were delivered to Regional Environmental Office in Prešov and Žilina for approval. Final discussion and clarification of proposed management measures was done between experts from Protected Landscape Area Záhorie and DAPHNE. Document was finalized and prepared for internal evaluation at State Nature Conservancy Headquarters.	Target underachieved within project timeframe, but expected to be met. The district environment offices must undertake stakeholder consultation prior to approval. The Belianske lúky management plan is approved; the Kláštorské lúky management plan is at the district environment office; the Abrod management plan is yet to be sent to the district environmental office.
	5. Restoration plans are prepared based on scientific surveys undertaken in the pilot peatland sites	No restoration plans	Biodiversity surveys Hydrological surveys	Restoration plans, based on hydrological and biodiversity surveys, were made for all 3 pilot sites. Small-scale dam to improve water levels in the fen system of Kláštorské lúky was built. Technical plan for restoration of water regime by blocking of drainage schemes above the reserve Belianske lúky was prepared in three alternatives, but hydrological restoration was not realized due to possible threatening of the site. Deficiencies of first two alternatives are based on risk of too intensive cultivation of arable land and using of manure in the area	Target met. All the sites were studied and analyzed by the Slovak Technical University, which focused on hydrological elements. DAPHNE addressed the biological restoration elements. Approval for restoration measures undertaken was received from land co-owners and the district environmental office. Implementation of the restoration measures was verified in the field during the evaluation field visit to each of the demonstration sites. As mentioned in the evaluation report, hydrological restoration measures were not

Outcome	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Self-reported Level of Achievement (2010 PIR)	Evaluation Assessed Level of Achievement
				where drainage system is located. Newly proposed pipelines would make reserve to receive the water which is too rich in nutrients, which represents a major risk to sensitive habitats of peatland. Deficiency of third solution lies in the possibility of water logging of drained land. It could cause problem for using of privately owned land. Implementation of restoration of water regime was carefully considered by project team and discussed during steering committee meeting. It is not recommended to realize any of proposed alternatives for restoration of water regime, as it may be risky. Big scale restoration management was realized. Hydrological restoration of catchment area for Abrod site was realized.	carried out in Belianske lúky; the project team will be monitoring the effects of vegetation restoration and management on the site's hydrology.
Outcome 2: Improvement of hydrological regime and restoration management of sites	6. Stabilization of ground water table	The ground water table is not stable: decrease in the summer time, flooding in the spring time (expert assessment , there were no exact data)	50% of pilot site areas (represented by number of probes) will have stable water table: stable in summer time, no flooding in the spring time	Abrod (10 probes evaluated with complex data set) – 5 with positive trends, 3 without changes, 2 with negative trends – 80 % of the area with stable water regime Belianske lúky (13 probes) – 4 with positive trends, 4 without changes, 5 with negative trends - 62 % of the area with stable water regime Kláštorské lúky (18 probes evaluated) – 1 with positive trend, 4 without changes, 13 with negative trends - 28 % of the area with stable water regime. Set of monitoring was evaluated in June 2009.	Concur with self-reported results. Target partially met. The target of 50% of pilot site hydrological probes having a stable water table was an initial guesstimate because at the time the project was developed there was not any real understanding of how the hydrology of the sites functioned, or what restoration measures would be implemented. Even with the current hydrological monitoring it is hard to assess what areas are affected by restoration measures, and at this time no significant conclusions can be drawn about the project's contribution to changes in water levels. The data from 2010 monitoring was still to be analyzed at the time of this evaluation, and some of the data previously reported in the PIR was collected prior to the restoration activities. Some restoration activities were only implemented in late 2009 in Abrod, minimal hydrological

Outcome	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Self-reported Level of Achievement (2010 PIR)	Evaluation Assessed Level of Achievement
					restoration activities were carried out in Kláštorské lúky, and no hydrological restoration activities were implemented in Belianske lúky. This indicator is not considered to be highly relevant at this time; it is necessary to see what the longer-term impact will be, if any. The collecting of hydrological data through regular monitoring is highly valuable however, and should be continued.
	<p>7. Surface water quality in Porec (Abrod)</p> <p>Nitrate concentration (NO₃, mg/l)</p> <p>Potassium concentration (K, mg/l)</p>	<p>NO₃ – 16 mg/l</p> <p>K – 25 mg/l</p>	<p>NO₃ – 8 mg/l</p> <p>K – 12 mg/l</p>	<p>NO₃ – 1.63 mg/l</p> <p>K – 18.5 mg/l</p>	<p>Concur with self-reported results. Target met for nitrate concentration, not met for potassium concentration. Target values based on EU water standards. The Abrod demonstration site is serving as a defacto water filtration area for polluted water coming from the village. The issue for this specific site relates to the location of an Austrian private sector turf production operation – DAPHNE opened discussions with the company owner, and made progress in initial negotiations (resulting in the dismissal of the company manager that had been hiding the issue), but issues related to the technical capacity of oversight and enforcement agencies at the site has limited further progress.</p>

Outcome	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Self-reported Level of Achievement (2010 PIR)	Evaluation Assessed Level of Achievement
	<p>8. Underground water quality in Abrod (in part affected by intensive grassland production)</p> <p>Nitrate concentration (NO₃, mg/l) Potassium concentration (K, mg/l)</p>	<p>NO₃ – 47 mg/l K – 23 mg/l</p>	<p>NO₃ – 5 mg/l K – 3 mg/l</p>	<p>NO₃ – 65.5 mg/l K – 3.2 mg/l High contents of nitrate and lower level of potassium were recorded in groundwater just above the north border of the reserve. Measuring point is positioned in the alder wooded terrain depression below the field, where the farmers grow the grass turf using fertilizers. The polluted water flows further to topographically lower parts, located directly in the Abrod reserve. Thus, concentration of nitrate highly exceeds the target level. Nitrate appears to be highly variable in time, which probably reflects fertilization events at the field. Nutrients in this sampling point will be monitored periodically also in future, because the fertilization at field represents risk for the vegetation of north part of the reserve.</p>	<p>Concur with self-reported results. Target nearly met for potassium concentration, target not met for nitrate concentration.</p> <p>Relates to above issue, see discussion for previous indicator.</p>
	<p>9. No. of hectares of rich fens under restoration management (shrub replacement; mowing, etc)</p>	<p>0 ha</p>	<p>50 ha</p>	<p>Project realized restoration management on total area of 172 ha.</p>	<p>Target exceeded. The target value was based on the expected combined annual site (vegetation) management measures (e.g. hay cutting, mulching wood shrubs, etc.) for the three pilot sites. The target value averages to less than 5 hectares per site per year over the life of the project, a quite modest value.</p> <p>The area of restoration management achieved represents coverage of the main areas that require management in the three sites. DAPHNE has produced a detailed vegetation map for each of the sites, identifying key areas for restoration. Some area requiring management at the Kláštorské lúky site was not achieved due to lack of funding and identification of a permanent local partner to implement the agri-environmental measures.</p>

Outcome	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Self-reported Level of Achievement (2010 PIR)	Evaluation Assessed Level of Achievement
					The site management has now been handed off to the SNC, which will sustain the effort with external funding, as described in the financial sustainability section of the evaluation report.
Outcome 3: Monitoring system established including monitoring of crucial stakeholder groups' reactions	10. Number of ground water probes established	No active monitoring system on pilot sites	65 probes monitored and evaluated	68 probes monitored each 2 weeks from April till November and monthly during the winter time. Because monitoring is focused on longer term impact of changes in hydrology, the number of the probes is not changing.	Target value exceeded. The target value was based on what was expected to be required across the demonstration sites to achieve adequate coverage. There were a limited number of probes in the Belianske lúky and Kláštorské lúky sites, but the monitoring network in both sites was expanded and improved from a technical point of view. A new monitoring network was created in Abrod, where there had been no monitoring.
	11. Number of monitoring plots established	No active monitoring system on pilot sites	20 monitoring plots established and evaluated	44 plots established for monitoring of vegetation changes at Kláštorské and Belianske lúky. Because monitoring is focused on longer-term impact of vegetation changes in respect to different management techniques, the number of the monitoring plots is not changing.	Target exceeded. The target value was only a guesstimate because at the time of project approval it was not known what the optimal approach for vegetation monitoring would be, because the management measures had not been determined. Following the purchase of the mulching machine it was decided to monitor the impact of various management techniques, including mulching and mowing with or without biomass removal. The management measures and monitoring were implemented through the development of detailed vegetation maps for each of the demonstration sites.
	12. Decisions on conservation management of rich fens are based on the information obtained from the monitoring system	Limited overview about stakeholder opinion	Decisions on conservation management of rich	On the local pilot site level decisions were made in the platform of local steering committees. On the national level, data from peatland inventory are available for the use of both sectors - Ministry for the Environment (establishment and extension of Natura 2000	Concur with self-assessment. Target met. This indicator was included as a general indicator to focus on local stakeholder involvement.

Outcome	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Self-reported Level of Achievement (2010 PIR)	Evaluation Assessed Level of Achievement
			fens are based on the information obtained from the monitoring system	network) and Ministry of Agriculture (agri-environmental support scheme for management of fen grasslands).	
Outcome 4: GIS component of National Peatland Database enhanced	13. Number of peatland sites included in database	885 sites in database	1500 sites in database	1512 sites in peatland database	Target exceeded. The target value was an educated estimate, based on the knowledge of the project team and the initial work completed through the previous grasslands database effort, which gave the baseline value. The methodology for creating the database was verified during the evaluation mission.
	14. Area of peatland sites included in database	2004 ha	3000 ha	3088.13 ha of peatlands were mapped and are included into database	Target exceeded. Target value was again an initial educated estimate based on the previous experience of the project team and the baseline status of the database.
Outcome 5: The capacities of SNC offices and Regional Departments of MoA are strengthened	15. METT Scores - Abrod - Kláštorské lúky - Belianske lúky	35 33 34	48 (max. 87) 45 (max. 87) 50 (max. 90)	Evaluation will be made for purposes of Final project evaluation, which will be in November 2010.	Target exceeded. The target value was a guesstimate, rather than being based on an initial analysis of the potential level of project achievement.
	16. No. of hectares under agri- environmental schemes	0 ha	250 ha	Fens are managed within agro-environmental schemes with total area of 451.3 ha.	Target exceeded. The reported level of achievement is based on expert analysis using the peatlands database – it is impossible for any institution to determine the level definitively, including the certification body (the SNC) as they are lacking data from the MoA. The reported level relates to the total area of peatlands under agri-environmental schemes in Slovakia, not just in the project demonstration

Outcome	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Self-reported Level of Achievement (2010 PIR)	Evaluation Assessed Level of Achievement
					<p>sites. Additional analysis showed that as of 2009, 4308 hectares of wet and fen grasslands were contracted under agri-environmental schemes for the 2007-2013 period.</p> <p>The target value did not have a clear rationale – the optimal area in Slovakia of peatlands under agri-environmental schemes to maximize conservation has not been analyzed. The peatlands database developed under the project shows that there is over 3000 hectares of peatlands in Slovakia, but not all of these areas require management measures or would benefit from agri-environmental schemes.</p>
Outcome 6: Awareness about the maintenance of Slovakia's peatland biodiversity increased	17. Level of teachers' satisfaction with the training process assessed	80% of teachers were satisfied and highly satisfied	90% of teachers were satisfied and highly satisfied	248 teachers were trained and 98 % of teachers were satisfied and highly satisfied. Level of satisfaction was evaluated immediately at the end of training session. Training for school teachers was finalized by the end of 2008.	Target exceeded. The baseline and target values do not have clear rationale.
	18. Integration of peatlands conservation module in the school curricula in pilot schools (measured in terms of the number of schools)	0	30 schools where it is integrated.	Peatlands conservation module was integrated in the school curricula in 32 schools in the vicinity of all pilot sites and into curricula of approximately 40 schools in other parts of Slovakia. Training for school teachers was finalized by the end of 2008.	Target exceeded. The target value was based on the approximate number of schools in the vicinity of the demonstration sites.
Outcome 7: Important peatland sites included into Natura 2000 network and National Agri-environmental program	19. Peatland area under effective management in Natura 2000 (measured in terms of number of sites, and the % with regular management)	367 peatland sites in N2000, 25% with limited management	400 peatland sites in N2000, 50% with regular management	609 peatland sites within Natura 2000 network. 126 sites are managed by local farmers within agro-environmental schemes. 134 sites are managed by State Nature Conservancy and/or by conservation projects. 39 sites can be maintained without any management. We can conclude that 49.1 % of Natura 2000 peatland sites is managed and maintained by	Target met. There is not a clear definition or objective indicator of "effective" management, but the level of achievement provided is based on the expert assessment of the project team. The project's contribution to effective management on the ground beyond the demonstration sites is not clear, and is so far likely limited. However, the up-scaling of the project experience into the national agri-

Outcome	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Self-reported Level of Achievement (2010 PIR)	Evaluation Assessed Level of Achievement
				proper way.	environmental schemes and management practices is expected to occur in the future.
	20. Percentage of peatland area under the agri-environmental program	No peatland area under agri-environmental program	20% peatland area under agri-environmental program	14.6 % of peatlands is under agri-environmental program	Target not fully met. The target value was a preliminary estimate, as there was not a clear understanding of how the agri-environmental schemes would be implemented. Also see discussion under indicator number 16, above.

D. Annex 4. List of Persons Interviewed

Bratislava

Ms. Klara Tothova, *Country Support Team, UNDP*
Mr. Milan Janak, *DAPHNE*
Ms. Martina Badidova, *DAPHNE*
Ms. Jana Dirbakova, *DAPHNE*
Ms. Viera Sefferova Stanova, *Rich Fens Project Manager, DAPHNE*
Mr. Jan Seffer, *Director, DAPHNE*
Ms. Kamila Hlavčová, *Slovak Technical University*
Ms. Jana Skalová, *Slovak Technical University*
Mr. Peter Jány, *Rich Fens Project Steering Committee Member, Ministry of Environment, GEF Operational Focal Point*
Mr. Igor Ferenčík, *Rich Fens National Project Director, Ministry of Environment*

Project Field Sites

Mr. Milan Janák, *Abrod Demonstration Site Manager, DAPHNE*
Mr. Dušan Valachovič, *Director of Protected Landscape Area Záhorie*
Mr. Tomáš Dražil, *Belianske lúky Demonstration Site Manager, State Nature Conservancy*
Mr. Jasnák, *Local Farmer*
Mr. Slavomír Celer, *Tatra National Park Administration, State Nature Conservancy*
Mr. Bielak, *Mayor, City of Spisska Bela (Belianske lúky Demonstration Site)*
Mr. Dobromil Galváne, *DAPHNE Office in Zvolen*
Mr. Rastislav Lasák, *GIS Specialist, DAPHNE Office in Zvolen*
Mr. Daniel Balaz, *Rich Fens Project Steering Committee Member, State Nature Conservancy*
Mr. Jan Kadlecik, *Department of International Treaties, Ramsar and Carpathian Wetland Initiative, State Nature Conservancy*
Ms. Viktória Chilová, *Kláštorské lúky Demonstration Site Manager, Administration of National Park Veľká Fatra, State Nature Conservancy*
Mr. XXX, *Mayor, City of XXX (Kláštorské lúky Demonstration Site)*

Phone Interview

Maxim Vergeichik, *Regional Technical Advisor, UNDP*

E. Annex 5. Rich Fens Project Terminal Evaluation Field Visit Schedule

Date	Activity
Monday, November 15	AM – Meeting with UNDP; meeting with DAPHNE project team PM – Meeting at Slovak Technical University
Tuesday, November 16	AM – Meetings at Ministry of Environment PM – Visit to Abrod demonstration site; travel to Poprad
Wednesday, November 17	AM – Visit to Belianske lúky demonstration site; meeting in Spisska Bela PM – Travel to Zvolen; meeting with DAPHNE project team in Zvolen
Thursday, November 18	AM – Meeting at State Nature Conservancy Headquarters PM – Travel and visit to Kláštorské lúky demonstration site
Friday, November 19	AM – Return to Bratislava PM – Debriefing with DAPHNE project manager

F. Annex 6. Evaluation Documentation

Photo 5 Evaluator with Project Manager, Belianske Lúky Site Manager, Regional Representative of State Nature Conservancy, and Mayor of Spisska Bela



G. Annex 7. Evaluator Curriculum Vitae

Please see the following pages of this report.

H. Annex 8. Management Response (if any)

Joshua E. Brann

16 S. Knoll Road, Suite 115
Mill Valley, CA, 94941, USA
(c) + 202-276-0241
Brann.Evaluation@gmail.com
Skype: wchinook

Nationality: American
Civil Status: Single
Children: None
Birthplace: Alaska, USA

Professional Experience

Independent Consultant

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

- Ten years experience in biodiversity conservation, climate change and other global environmental issues, with a focus on evaluation and strategy consulting
- Extensive field work in Asia-Pacific and Eastern Europe regions; additional work in Central Asia and Africa
- Expertise in monitoring and evaluation design and execution, including indicator development, logical frameworks and logic chains, results-based management, baseline development, quantitative analysis, impact evaluation, theory-based evaluation, design of monitoring tools, and electronic surveys
- Led teams in evaluation of multi-million dollar donor-funded environmental projects, in addition to working effectively as an individual or as a supporting team member
- Experience in integrated environmental issues, such as deforestation, peatland management, and watersheds
- Experience with multilateral institutions such as the World Bank and United Nations

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, and chemicals
- 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.