# Conservation of Biological Diversity of Carpathian Mountain Grasslands in the Czech Republic Through Targeted Application of new EU Funding Mechanisms

## *Czech Republic*

**Ministry of Environment of the Czech Republic**
**United Nations Development Programme**

**GEF Biodiversity Focal Area**
**Strategic Objective BD-1 / Operational Program 4**
**Medium-sized Project (MSP)**

**GEF ID: 1705**
**UNDP Atlas ID: 00046799/ UNDP PMIS: 2255**

# Terminal Evaluation

**January 27, 2009**

**Josh Brann,** *International Consultant, Team Leader*
**Miroslava Cierna-Plassman,** *National Consultant*

## Table of Contents

## Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| AOPK | Agency for Landscape Protection |
| CAP | Common Agricultural Policy (of the European Union) |
| CBD | Convention on Biological Diversity |
| ČSOP | Czech Union for Nature Conservation |
| CZK | Czech Crown |
| EAFRD | European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development |
| EU | European Union |
| FOA | Foundation for Organic Agriculture |
| GEF | Global Environment Facility |
| GIS | Geographic Information Systems |
| GMAU | Grassland Management Advice Units |
| HA | hectare |
| HRDP | Horizontal Rural Development Plan |
| IA | Implementing Agency |
| KM | kilometer |
| LFA | Less Favoured Areas |
| METT | Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool |
| MoA | Ministry of Agriculture |
| MoE | Ministry of Environment |
| MSP | Medium-sized Project |
| NBSAP | National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan |
| NGO | Non Governmental Organisation |
| PA | Protected Area |
| PDF-A | Project Development Funding Block A |
| PIR | Project Implementation Report |
| PLAs | Protected Landscape Areas |
| RDP | Rural Development Program of the Czech Republic |
| SFA | State Forest Administration |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| USD | United States dollars |
| VÚZE | Research Institute of Agricultural Economics |

# I. Carpathian Grasslands Project Terminal Evaluation Executive Summary

1. Global Environment Facility (GEF) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) monitoring and evaluation policies stipulate that all GEF funded projects must undergo a terminal evaluation. The present exercise and report, instigated by UNDP at the end of the Carpathian Grasslands project, fulfills this requirement. The evaluation covers project design, the three-year project implementation period, and post-implementation sustainability and results. This evaluation seeks to assess the actual performance and results of the Carpathian Grasslands project against the planned project activities and outputs, at the national and local levels based on the relevant evaluation criteria. The evaluation examines project results based on the expected outcomes and objectives, as well as any unanticipated results. The evaluation identifies relevant lessons for related future projects in the Czech Republic and elsewhere, provides recommendations as necessary and appropriate, and includes the required ratings on key elements of project design and implementation.

2. The project "*Conservation of biological diversity of Carpathian Mountain grasslands in the Czech Republic through targeting of new* [European Union] *(EU) funding mechanisms*" was carried out with UNDP as the GEF Implementing Agency, under national execution arrangements with the Ministry of Environment (MoE) of the Czech Republic as the designated institution (and GEF Executing Agency), and with the Foundation for Organic Agriculture (FOA), a national non-governmental organization (NGO), as the national implementing organization. The project was approved with a total budget of $10.37 million United States dollars (USD), with $974,300 in GEF financing and co-financing of $9.38 million USD.[1] The first disbursement was in November 2005, and the project was completed in December 2008. Although the project did not formally close until December 2008 and a few activities continued until this time, the majority of project activities came to a close in July 2008 due to the budget shortfall that resulted from the reduction in the US dollar exchange rate.

3. The objective was to "*strengthen the conservation management of globally significant biodiversity in species-rich mountain grassland habitats (grasslands and pastures), in two protected landscape areas (PLAs) in the Carpathian Mountains of the Czech Republic.*" The project strategy was described in the project document as "*drawing in, on a demonstration basis, targeted support from newly available EU funding opportunities for integrated rural development (principally* [Common Agricultural Policy] *(CAP) support payments and Natura 2000/LIFE programme grants) and making the lessons learned and best practices developed widely available for replication throughout the Czech PLA system and the Carpathian ecoregion as a whole.*" The two PLAs targeted by the project were Beskydy PLA and Bílé Karpaty PLA.

4. The project employed the following outcomes to support achievement of the objective:

- **Outcome 1:** Institutional capacity is in place to assess, plan and implement priority conservation management of mountain grasslands taking full advantage of newly available funding mechanisms under the EU CAP and Natura 2000

[1] This level of co-financing is unusual among GEF projects; the level of resources considered as co-financing in this project is further discussed in Section IV.B on efficiency and financial management.

- **Outcome 2:** Farmers' capacity and incentives for and participation in conservation-oriented management of mountain grasslands is improved
- **Outcome 3**: Monitoring and evaluation programme for mountain grassland biodiversity conservation management in place
- **Outcome 4:** National policy for agro-environment schemes incorporates project experience

5. Each of the project's components logically complemented each other and supported the overall objective. According to MoE sources, the strategy also filled a gap in the MoE's activities that existed due to resource limitations.

6. The Carpathian Grasslands project **relevance** is satisfactory with respect to the Czech Republic's environment protection and development objectives, as well as the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and other relevant international conventions, and the strategic priorities of the GEF. At the local/regional level the project focused on the key relevant issues, including: a) Improvement of institutional capacity and improvement of technical capacity of PLA offices, notably in Beskydy PLA which had a lower baseline level of capacity; b) Better understanding of the interaction between extensive farming and biodiversity and enhancement of local grassland databases to complete data on habitat status and species diversity in the PLAs; c) Improvement of livelihoods of small farmers living in synergy with semi-natural grasslands by better targeting of agricultural subsidies and improvement of socio-economic conditions; and d) Analyses of policy instruments in relation to the maintenance of grassland biodiversity by extensive grazing farming.

7. At the national level, the Carpathian Grasslands project supported improved integration of biodiversity priorities in agri-environmental measures and Less Favored Area (LFA) payments administered by the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) for the Horizontal Rural Development Plan (HRDP) 2007-2013 programming period, as well as in the planning process for the 2014 – 2020 programming period. The project objectives and outcomes supported the Czech Republic's commitments to and implementation of the CBD and Carpathian Convention, and the project was consistent with the GEF's strategic priorities and policies in the biodiversity focal area.

8. The Carpathian Grasslands project was implemented in a highly efficient and cost-effective manner, and the overall **efficiency** rating is considered to be highly satisfactory. The project leveraged local stakeholder capacity in the region, and the project outputs are commensurate with the resources allocated. Given the project's potential to influence agricultural subsidy policies in the Czech Republic in the 2014 – 2020 timeframe, the future project leverage may be quite large compared to the relatively small amount of GEF resources invested. The implementation approach of a central node coordinating multiple sub-contracted project partners facilitated a cost-effective project management structure by leveraging capacity already in place, though it did require a high level of coordination and communication which was fortuitously well executed by a highly capable project team. Project reporting and financial management were completed on time and without problems. The project was implemented in a flexible but effective manner, taking appropriate measures to address, for example, budget shortcomings created by a decline in the value of the US dollar. Project co-financing exceeded what was initially planned at the time of project approval, primarily due to a much larger amount of agricultural subsidies than anticipated disbursed to the region covering

the project target areas following EU accession. Based from the regional office in Bratislava, UNDP fully met its oversight and backstopping obligations supporting the project.

9. At a broad level the project objective was achieved, and the rating of **overall project effectiveness** is satisfactory. The majority of project indicator targets have been met, particularly those that can be actually linked to the project's contributions. Although the project would have benefited from improved indicators that better reflected achievements under the project objective, the project did undoubtedly strengthen conservation management in the Czech Republic's Carpathian Grassland ecosystems, and specifically within the two target PLAs. There was excellent stakeholder participation at the regional and local levels, and the project was extremely valuable in opening communication channels, and building partnerships and networks, amongst different stakeholder groups, such as conservationists and farmers. In addition, the project's contribution to improved capacity and level of knowledge for environmental and biodiversity monitoring the PLAs was much needed; such work is critical to understanding human-ecosystem interactions, as well as gaining a true understanding of the status of biodiversity in globally significant ecosystems. Finally, while the full extent of success of the project's efforts to influence national level policy on agri-environmental measures remains to be seen, stakeholders have leveraged insights gained from the project to make a positive contribution to the planning process, as recognized by both the MoE and MoA.

10. **Outcome 1**, "Institutional capacity is in place to assess, plan and implement priority conservation management of mountain grasslands taking full advantage of newly available funding mechanisms under the EU Common Agricultural Policy and Natura 2000," was successfully achieved, and completion is rated satisfactory. There were two main indicators: the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) score, and the development and institution of a cross-compliance system. The baseline METT score for both PLAs was 43 and the target was set at a score of 48, which was significantly exceeded in both PLAs, with an end-of-project score of 62 in Beskydy PLA, and 57 in Bílé Karpaty PLA. The cross-compliance system was also completed by the end of the project in December 2008, although this occurred once the majority of project activities had come to an end and the project manager was contracted as an external advisor to the MoA.

11. The project sought, under **Outcome 2**, opportunities for the improvement of farmer participation in local initiatives and in policy incentives aimed at extensive grazing, as small and medium farmers are crucial to the conservation of grasslands. The target levels of indicators for Outcome 2 were achieved and the associated results are rated satisfactory. Achievements included specifically maintaining the number of farmers and other land users taking advantage of subsidies for agri-environmental measures, increasing the number of certified organic farms, supporting further development of regional trademarks and logos, and improving methods of analysis on farmers' incomes in relation to sustainable grassland management.

12. **Outcome 3** focused on the enhancement of the PLA administrations' environmental databases, and research on the character and effects of extensive grazing to gain a greater understanding of the different practices, the interaction between biodiversity and grazing farming systems, and the way in which these systems could be more adapted to special species protection. Outcome 3 included two main activities: a) comprehensive survey of grassland plant

species, invertebrates and birds, and b) monitoring of impact of farming practices on biodiversity. Outcome 3 was completed at a satisfactory level.

13. **Outcome 4** attempted to improve the national agri-environmental measures, which are a key step in addressing biodiversity conservation in both PLAs. While the full results of the project's efforts under Outcome 4 cannot yet be determined because the current policy planning process for agri-environmental measures in the Czech Republic for the 2014 – 2020 programming period is ongoing, based on the results seen thus far, results under Outcome 4 are considered moderately satisfactory. The project identified concrete problems in implementation of agri-environmental measures in mountains areas, and thus underlined the urgency for a better understanding of habitat and species conservation. Coupled with long-term negotiations, the project team sent a strong message to the MoA.

14. Based on the analysis of the four aspects of sustainability considered, the **sustainability** of results for the Carpathian Grasslands project is considered moderately likely. There are limited financial risks to sustainability of project results, but the financial sustainability of the association "Moravské Karpaty," formed as a result of project efforts, and the long-term sustainability of the regional branding and trademark associations are not yet certain. There are a number of socio-economic risks to sustainability, but these generally apply broadly to the region addressed by the project and do not specifically threaten the immediate results of the project; they are, nonetheless, critical long-term considerations. Institutional and governance risks to sustainability are generally low, but, as mentioned previously, there is not yet a clear direction about future biodiversity conservation measures in agri-environmental policies in the Czech Republic. There are no identified acute risks to environmental sustainability in Bílé Karpaty and Beskydy PLAs; the main environmental risks are long-term, and will require sustained efforts by concerned citizens, local organizations, and the PLA administrations to eventually successfully address.

15. ***Key Lesson:*** While the Carpathian Grasslands project significantly increased the breadth and depth of environmental monitoring data available to scientists and thereby to decision-makers, further biological and ecological research is needed to improve understanding of the complexity of natural systems, and to determine what management measures are actually needed to maximize biodiversity conservation and environmental benefits. It is anticipated that it will take significant time and effort before humans learn how to manage nature for maximum benefit to humans and nature. Moreover, the overall prospects for success of a centralized approach to nature planning should be critically analyzed (see recommendations).

16. ***Key Lesson:*** The Carpathian Grasslands project implementation structure proved to be an effective and efficient means of mobilizing technical capacity already in place amongst stakeholders and building partnerships, while contributing to the sustainability of project results. The specific structure employed was a central coordinating organization, which sub-contracted other stakeholders and partner organizations to carry out project activities.

17. ***Key Lesson:*** The most effective means of communicating with stakeholders is through one on one meetings and contacts. This is particularly true in the case of farmers, who often don't have time to take out of their workweek to attend workshops and meetings. In the case of the Carpathian Grasslands project, the advisory units created to provide one-on-one advice

to farmers through on-the-ground farm visits proved more useful than organized seminars or workshops for communicating critical information and raising awareness.

18. ***Key Recommendation:*** As much flexibility as possible should be built into agro-environmental scheme structures, and these need to be better adapted for biodiversity conservation in grasslands. Five-year contracts are restrictive in many ways, and a small number of landscape management titles broadly applied to the diversity of the Czech agricultural landscape is inhibiting; local environmental conditions and needs must be taken into account. A limitation on the "horizontalness" of measures does imply some increased administrative burden, but efficient management structures can limit this administrative increment. [*For MoA, VÚZE and MoE*]

19. ***Key Recommendation:*** Ecological evidence shows that population numbers of many species reflect significant short-term natural fluctuations, which leaves short-term data on species level indicators with limited value in evaluating the long term effectiveness of conservation initiatives with time scales of two or three years. Either biodiversity monitoring data should be accounted for over a longer period of time (10-15 years), or some complementary data such as habitat assessment or population dynamics model simulation should further inform short-term assessments of biodiversity trends. *[For UNDP and GEF]*

20. ***Key Recommendation:*** While progress is always possible, there are time and bureaucratic limitations to the rate and magnitude of change that stakeholders can generate at centralized levels. To help support and create change on the ground "ahead of the curve," stakeholders should place a priority on education and awareness-raising of resource users and local policy makers. Appropriately structuring financial incentives related to centralized resource disbursement does depend on national policy measures, but much good can result when local level stakeholders better understand the relationships between land management and environmental impacts. [*For FOA, regional NGOs, and PLA administrations*]

## Summary Carpathian Grasslands Project Ratings

| Project Component or Objective | Rating |
|---|---|
| **Project Formulation** | |
| **Relevance** | S |
| Conceptualization/design | S |
| Stakeholder participation | S |
| **Project Implementation** | |
| **Implementation Approach (Efficiency)** | HS |
| The use of the logical framework | S |
| Adaptive management | HS |
| Use/establishment of information technologies | HS |
| Operational relationships between the institutions involved | S |
| Financial management | S |
| **Monitoring and Evaluation** | MS |
| **Stakeholder Participation** | HS |
| Production and dissemination of information | S |
| Local resource users and NGOs participation | HS |
| Establishment of partnerships | S |
| Involvement and support of governmental institutions | S |
| **Project Results** | |
| **Overall Achievement of Objective and Outcomes (Effectiveness)** | S |
| Objective: Strengthen the conservation management of globally significant biodiversity in species-rich mountain grassland habitats (grasslands and pastures) in two Protected Landscape Areas in the Carpathian Mountains of the Czech Republic | S |
| Outcome 1: Institutional capacity is in place to assess, plan and implement priority conservation management of mountain grasslands taking full advantage of newly available funding mechanisms under the EU Common Agricultural Policy and Natura 2000 | S |
| Outcome 2: Farmers' capacity and incentives for and participation in conservation-oriented management of mountain grasslands is improved | S |
| Outcome 3: Monitoring and evaluation programme for mountain grassland biodiversity conservation management in place | S |
| Outcome 4: National policy for agro-environmental schemes incorporates project experience | MS |
| **Sustainability** | **ML** |
| Financial sustainability | ML |
| Institutional and governance sustainability | ML |
| Socio-economic sustainability | ML |
| Ecological sustainability | ML |
| **Overall Project Achievement and Impact** | **S** |

## II. Introduction: Carpathian Grasslands Evaluation Scope and Methodology

21. GEF and UNDP monitoring and evaluation policies stipulate that all GEF funded projects must undergo a terminal evaluation. The present exercise and report, instigated by UNDP at the end of the Carpathian Grasslands project, fulfills this requirement. The evaluation covers project design, the three-year project implementation period, and post-implementation sustainability and results. This evaluation seeks to assess the actual performance and results of the Carpathian Grasslands project against the planned project activities and outputs, at the national and local levels based on the relevant evaluation criteria. The evaluation examines project results based on the expected outcomes and objectives, as well as any unanticipated results. The evaluation identifies relevant lessons for related future projects in the Czech Republic and elsewhere, and provides recommendations as necessary and appropriate.

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

- Has conservation management for the mountain grassland PLAs been strengthened as anticipated, and how effective is it?
- Is the institutional capacity in place to assess, plan and implement conservation management of mountain grasslands using EU funding mechanisms?
- To what extent has farmers' capacity and incentives for participation in conservation-oriented management of mountain grasslands been improved?
- Is an M&E program for management of mountain grassland biodiversity in place?
- Has the project experience been incorporated in national policies for agro-environmental schemes?

23. In addition to broadly answering these key questions, the evaluation includes 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 (summarized in Annex 2).

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

25. As in any such evaluation, the primary limitation faced by the evaluators was the time available for interviews and field visits, which did not allow for detailed investigation into all aspects of project activities and results. However, this was not considered a significant limitation for this evaluation, and the evaluation report is considered to represent a fair, independent and accurate assessment of the project.

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

# III. Project Overview and Development Context

## A. Development Context

27. With the development of agricultural practices over time, the open pasturelands and meadows in Czech Carpathians have been shaped into a variety of habitats, which include exceptional species diversity including a number of rare and endemic species. However, as mountain habitats have progressively degraded, the biodiversity of these valuable ecosystems is declining, mostly as the result of inappropriate agricultural practices and inappropriate urban planning, but also in part due to socio-economic conditions (depopulation of rural areas, decreasing number of farmers). The Carpathian Grasslands project addresses biodiversity conservation in Carpathian mountain grasslands ecosystems, with a focus on two PLAs, Bílé Karpaty and Beskydy. Given that these areas include large tracts of semi-natural and natural habitats, they belong to the European patrimony (Special Protected Areas under the EU Habitats Directive) and are protected by national legislation (designated as PLAs governed by the Nature and Landscape Conservation Act No. 114/1992 Co; IUCN Category V protected areas). Bílé Karpaty and Beskydy PLAs host globally significant species such as *Crex Crex*, *Gentianella lutencens*, *Serratula lycopifolia*, and *Maculinea arion*.

28. The Czech Republic is a relatively new member state of the EU (since 2004), which went through important political and economic changes in the second half of the last century. After fall of the communist regime, following the political changes in the 1990s and the transformation to a market-based economy, unique problems have been created in the region of the Carpathian Mountains. In the 1990's, the changes in agricultural policy drastically affected the land use and the agricultural production systems. The decrease of subsidies coupled with increasing prices of agricultural inputs has led to declines in the number of cattle and sheep, and less use of agricultural inputs, like pesticides and fertilisers. This evolution resulted in some positive changes such as less intensive agriculture on grasslands; however, in some regions, notably marginal and less productive, it also led to land abandonment. Positively, the political changes also led to the introduction of ecological agriculture or reintroduction of traditional forms of agriculture by small farmers that restarted farming in mountains regions. On one hand, land restitution led to a break down of the big cooperatives created during communism, and on the other hand, to the establishment of small and medium sized farms managing smaller plots of land. However, land use changes also caused widespread abandonment of unprofitable meadow areas and consequently, the biodiversity of grasslands, which has evolved over many centuries in conjunction with some forms of human modification of ecosystems, has declined. Since 2001, there has been an attempt to counterbalance the decline in agriculture through policy measures for the enhancement of multifunctionality of

**Box 1 Czech Republic in Brief**

- Established in 1993, member state of the EU since May 1, 2004
- Total area: 76,866 $km^2$
- Population: 10.5 million
- National protected area: Nearly 15% of territory in 24 PLAs and four national parks
- The Czech Republic has 4,264 ha of agricultural land, which constitutes approximately half (54 %) of the state's area

(*Source: Rural Development Programme*)

agriculture (Law coll. No 505/2000) that would prevent degradation of high nature value habitats and enhance landscape protection, notably in the protected areas. These measures have included support of extensive grazing and wise-use mowing.

29. At the same time, the country has undergone significant socio-economic changes. There have been sharp reductions in employment in agriculture, and depopulation of the rural areas. Amongst the main reasons are the absence of services, limited accessibility of healthcare and schools, inadequate public transportation and the lack of basic technical infrastructure. Overall statistics show that recently the depopulation of rural areas has decreased, a trend also influenced by a widespread construction of family houses in the surroundings of big towns. The intermediate and remote rural areas, however, still face depopulation, in particular regions with higher unemployment rates, and marginalized regions. Notably, rural areas are at risk of migration of young people as a consequence of the lack of job opportunities. [2]

30. Various activities and measures to support the non-productive functions of agriculture have been undertaken within individual sectors, such as infrastructure development, environmental protection and agricultural subsidies. However there has been a lack of effective cooperation and integrated action among state institutions. Currently, the important rural development measures that include environmental elements, like the Rural Development Programme (RDP), are coordinated at a national level. The enhancement of rural development is particularly important for the revitalization of agriculture in mountain areas that often lack other economic investments.

**Box 2 Agriculture Sector Employment in the Czech Republic**

In 2004, the share of agricultural jobs in the national economy decreased to 3.8 % in the Czech Republic. Limited job opportunities in agriculture and a lack of jobs in rural areas generally, coupled with aging of persons working in agriculture, are the primary reasons for the reduction in the agrarian share of employment.
(*Source: Rural Development Programme*)

31. Given that agricultural development plays a crucial role in the development of grassland types and maintaining biodiversity values, there is concern around the European CAP, since the Czech Republic is a member state of the EU. EU policy implementation at the national level in the Czech Republic is the key to whether future agricultural development will improve land management and enhance biodiversity, or will intensify and unify industrial agricultural production on Carpathians grasslands. Despite significant progress in the CAP regarding environmentally friendly agriculture, both agricultural intensification and abandonment still threaten high nature value farming systems. One particular challenge in the Czech Republic in developing agricultural policies is that there is not a strong correlation between land ownership and use - approximately 90% of agricultural land is leased, so resource users are often limited in their ability to respond to policies.

32. Existing gaps in policy design could contribute to a further decline of globally important species. The rural development component of the CAP includes a variety of measures that are beneficial to extensive farming. Agri-environmental measures are especially designed to

[2] Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic. 2008. "Rural Development Programme of the Czech Republic 2007 – 2013: Working Document," Prague, November 2008.

support extensive agriculture that benefits biodiversity, but their efficiency depends greatly on the structure of the measures, and the associated level of support. From 2005 there has been a need to analyze how such instruments can better address extensive grassland farming and deliver more targeted grazing schemes benefiting habitat and species conservation.

33. Agricultural policy instruments will only be successful if the interaction between policy measures and farming systems, and the impact of such interactions on the ecological functions of grasslands, is understood in complex terms. There is limited knowledge about the effects of different grazing regimes and mowing techniques on the diversity of habitats. Enhancement of research is thus crucial for a greater understanding of grassland ecosystems. As noted in the recommendations at the end of this report, research is required on grassland complexity, and how different grassland types respond to grazing and mowing practices. Therefore, the Carpathian Grasslands project focused on research that analyzes the effects of animal breeds and grazing management systems on the vegetation composition of different types of grasslands to identify optimal grazing practices in relation to species diversity on grasslands.

34. In addition to the contribution to global biodiversity, the Carpathian grasslands have also proven to be a socio-economic and cultural resource with the power to facilitate rural development; thus the enhancement of grassland conservation is no longer a focus only for the sake of nature protection. In the Czech Republic, for years these grasslands have not been recognized for the unique services they deliver: landscape protection, enhancement of rural development and the local economy (tourism, agricultural production), conservation of cultural traditions, and protection of cultural and natural patrimony. The mains reasons for this are a lack of public awareness, insufficient promotion of value-added agricultural products, and insufficient cooperation among local stakeholders. Therefore, the Carpathian Grasslands project proposed ways to better integrate nature protection priorities into local economies and rural initiatives, notably those associated with agriculture.

35. The threats and root causes summarized in Table 1 interrelate with various socio-economic and political factors (i.e. gaps in the national legislation, inadequate allocation of financing, social appraisal in society, etc.). Grassland biodiversity is also threatened by a lack of environmental awareness and capacity amongst representatives of governmental institutions, farmers and other stakeholders. To respond to this problem, the project sought to enhance information exchanges, especially for inter-sectoral cooperation between the MoA and the MoE, and improve knowledge about the complexity of grassland conservation.

**Table 1 Threats and Root Causes of Biodiversity Loss in Carpathian Mountain Grasslands**

| Threats | Root Causes |
|---|---|
| • Land abandonment<br>• Inappropriate grassland management, grazing and mowing in terms of the species protection<br>• Decreasing of small scale farmers (high age of farmers without successor)<br>• Disappearance of traditional agricultural systems<br>• Inappropriately targeted financing of agricultural subsidies that lead to degradation of habitats and species diversity of grasslands<br>• Inappropriate urban planning | • Small-scale and semi-subsistence farms essential for the biodiversity conservation in mountain areas are often on the limit of collapse due a non-adapted agricultural subsidy system and unfavourable socio-economic conditions<br>• Relatively low agricultural productivity of grasslands<br>• Lack of scientific knowledge of the interactions between grazing practices and changes in species diversity of grassland habitats<br>• Lack of understanding of the biodiversity conservation in the agricultural policy instruments<br>• Land restitution and changes in land use<br>• Lack of public awareness of diverse services that mountains grasslands deliver |

## B. Project Background and Stakeholder Participation in Development

36. The Carpathian Grasslands project concept originated from FOA, a national-level NGO, based on a call for proposals from UNDP through the MoE sometime at the end of the 20th century. According to original project stakeholders the concept was designed to leverage initiatives and activities already in place, and to promote the incremental effort that would generate increased environmental benefits. The project concept faced typical GEF / UNDP obtuse and non-transparent project development process, i.e. limited communication and unclear/shifting guidelines and requirements over a long period of time, but through a high level of patience, fortitude and naïve faith on the part of the national level stakeholders the project eventually made it through the full GEF approval process. However, project developers noted that UNDP was supportive throughout the extended development period.

37. The project benefited from a strong level of stakeholder involvement in the development of the project concept and design. As cited in the project document, "During the [Project Development Funding Block A] (PDF-A) local communities and farmers demonstrated a strong support to and ownership over the proposed project. It was agreed that the local farmers' associations will be involved during the [Medium-sized Project] (MSP) in the capacity building and dissemination activities." The project document's Annex 4 is a stakeholder participation plan, and describes the stakeholder consultations carried out during the PDF phase. Project stakeholders verified participation activities in the project design period during the evaluation mission.

38. It was not possible for all stakeholders to be involved throughout all stages of the approval process, and when the GEF approved the project in its final form there was initially some uncertainty and disappointment among some stakeholders, notably the PLA administrations, who were concerned whether the project would provide them with the resources they needed and would place too great of demands on their limited staff capacity. Following the project approval, the inception workshop "revealed worries of the PLA representatives to participate in the project implementation without the possibility of creating new posts and without expanding the PLA personnel in order to solve the project objectives." Ultimately, however, the PLA administrations agreed to move forward with the project as it was approved, and eventually were quite happy with the implementation of the project. One of the PLA representatives noted that when they saw the final approved project document their expectations were not great, but that by the end of the project they had been proved wrong.

39. The PDF-A was approved July 23, 2002, and the project received GEF approval June 14, 2005 – a period of approximately 36 months. There was then another five months until the first project disbursement (project startup) See Table 2 below for a full timeline of key project dates. A 2006 GEF evaluation identified the average amount of time for MSPs to go from PDF-A to project startup as 30 months.[3] Thus the full Carpathian Grasslands project development took 11 months longer than the average GEF MSP.

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

# IV. Project Design and Implementation

## A. Project Concept and Design (Relevance)

### i. Project Description and Implementation Data

40. The project "*Conservation of biological diversity of Carpathian Mountain grasslands in the Czech Republic through targeting of new EU funding mechanism*" was a joint initiative of UNDP, the MoE of the Czech Republic and FOA. The project was approved with a total budget of $10.37 million USD, with $974,300 in GEF financing and co-financing of $9.38 million USD.[4] The first disbursement was in November 2005, and the project was completed in December 2008 (see Table 2 for all project dates). Although the project did not formally close until December 2008 and a few activities did continue until this time, the majority of project activities came to a close in July 2008 due to the budget shortfall that resulted from the reduction in the exchange rate.

**Table 2 Carpathian Grasslands Key Project Dates**

| Milestone | Expected date | Actual date |
|---|---|---|
| PDF-A Approval | n/a | July 23, 2002 |
| CEO endorsement / GEF approval | | June 14, 2005 |
| Agency approval date (ProDoc signature) | n/a | August 29, 2005 |
| Implementation start (first disbursement) | July 2005 | November 2005 |
| Mid-term evaluation | n/a | n/a |
| Project completion | August 31, 2008 | December 31, 2008 |
| Terminal evaluation completion | October 2009 | December 2009 |
| Project closing | August 31, 2008 | December 31, 2008 |

41. The project was executed according to UNDP national execution arrangements, with the MoE as the Designated Institution, which was therefore responsible for project coordination both at the national level and at the local level in both PLAs. FOA carried out on-the-ground implementation. The MoE considered that there was good coordination, collaboration, and communication between UNDP, MoE, and FOA in implementing the project.

42. The objective was to "strengthen the conservation management of globally significant biodiversity in species-rich mountain grassland habitats (grasslands and pastures), in two PLAs in the Carpathian Mountains of the Czech Republic." These unique sites are included in the Czech candidate list of Special Protection Areas under the EU Habitats Directive.

43. The project strategy was described in the project document as "drawing in, on a demonstration basis, targeted support from newly available EU funding opportunities for integrated rural development (principally CAP support payments and Natura 2000 / LIFE programme grants) and making the lessons learned and best practices developed widely

[4] This level of co-financing is unusual among GEF projects. The actual level of resources that could truly be considered co-financing in the case of this project is further discussed in Section IV.B on efficiency and financial management.

available for replication throughout the Czech PLA system and the Carpathian ecoregion as a whole."

44. The project employed the following outcomes to support achievement of the objective:

- **Outcome 1:** Institutional capacity is in place to assess, plan and implement priority conservation management of mountain grasslands taking full advantage of newly available funding mechanisms under the EU Common Agricultural Policy and Natura 2000
- **Outcome 2:** Farmers' capacity and incentives for and participation in conservation-oriented management of mountain grasslands is improved
- **Outcome 3**: Monitoring and evaluation programme for mountain grassland biodiversity conservation management in place
- **Outcome 4:** National policy for agro-environment schemes incorporates project experience

45. Each of the project's components logically complemented each other and supported the overall objective. According to MoE sources, the strategy also filled a gap in the MoE's that existed due to resource limitations.

### ii. Carpathian Grasslands Project Implementation Approach

46. The project implementation approach was predicated on strong collaboration among governmental bodies (MoA, MoE), research institutes (e.g. Institute of Agricultural Economics and Information (which has the acronym "VÚZE" in Czech), protected areas administrations (Bílé Karpaty and Beskydy PLAs), NGOs (such as Foundation for Partnership) as well as farmers, and other local initiatives (similar to Local Action Groups under the EU's LEADER program), to develop a common understanding of biodiversity protection and support comprehensive data on grasslands. Box 3 below provides a summary of some of the key project partners.

47. The project structure was arranged with FOA as a centralized node, with each of the partner organizations sub-contracted to carry out specific activities and elements of the overall project design. This was an effective approach in that it limited the need for a highly resourced project management unit, took advantage of expertise and contacts of people already in the field, and developed stakeholder ownership through participation in the execution of project activities and achievement of outcomes. The trade-off was that this structure required a demanding centralized coordination role, which was, thankfully, carried out successfully with a high degree of professionalism by the FOA project manager with support from the FOA team. As was seen in this project, involving a large number of partner organizations in the execution of a project often leads to high requirements for coordination and communication by the central coordination point.

48. This approach is also interesting in incorporating input from expert networks and local initiatives, which are already well established in the region, which allows the integration of existing and ongoing activities (i.e. research), even those not directly associated with biodiversity protection. Further, the project also aimed to transfer experiences to other interested partners, like nature conservation offices of PLA in the Czech Republic, and sharing experiences with other international partners, notably within the countries of Carpathian Convention. To support the project objectives, the project manager also provided input to a joint committee of the MoE and MoA set up to supervise implementation of the agri-environmental measures.

**Box 3 Project Partner and Stakeholder Organizations**

- **Foundation for Organic Agriculture (FOA)**: Overall project coordination and management
- Selected **farmers** in the region: Implementation of farm activities, disseminators of outputs and ideas in farm communities
- **PLA Beskydy** and **PLA Bile Karpaty**: Involvement of the state administration at the operational level
- **PLA Administrations**: Partner at the regional level, head of the PLAs, influencing the creation of agro-environmental measures
- **MoE**: Partner at the central level, influencing the creation of agro-environmental measures
- **MoA**: Partner at the central level, influencing the revision of agricultural policy
- **Agency for Landscape Protection (AOPK)**: Located within the MoE, the AOPK's mission is to provide technical support to conservation work by providing information, training, research, advisory services and methodology advice, and finally documentation, regarding nature conservation and landscape protection. During implementation of the project, AOPK offers its network for sharing information with other PLAs and for dissemination of best practices.
- **Goat and Sheep Breeders' Association**: Excellent source of information and contact point with goat and sheep breeders in the Czech Republic
- **Marketing cooperative OVEKO**: Marketing cooperative of the Goat and Sheep Breeders Association
- **Marketing cooperative ROMNEY**: Marketing cooperative ROMNEY has been active in the region for several years and is an established name amongst farmers and processors
- **Marketing cooperative Tradice Bilych Karpat**: Successfully supports production and marketing of local regional natural products
- **Association of advisors in organic agriculture**: Association of experts on both technical issues of the sheep and goat breeding and legislative and state subsidy issues
- **Control of Organic Agriculture:** The only licensed organization in the Czech Republic to confer "bio" certification
- **Czech Union for Nature Conservation (ČSOP)**: Ekocentrum KOSENKA, Ekocentrum ČSOP Bílé Karpaty, ČSOP Salamandr: Organizations working on the voluntary principle in the regions, very good knowledge of the countryside, local people and traditions
- **Research Institute of Agricultural Economics (VÚZE):** Research service organization of the MoA, involved in preparation of agro-environmental measurements, good data source

*(Source: Project Document)*

49. Project oversight was carried out at the national level by a Steering Committee, which was supposed to meet twice annually. Though twice annual physical meetings did not actually

occur during the first 18 months of the project, the Steering Committee still adequately fulfilled its oversight role because the project was being successfully implemented and did not require a high level of attention, and there was otherwise informal communication between the representatives of the institutions and organizations of the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee was made up of representatives from the following organizations:

- Steering Committee Chair: Global Relations Department, MoE
- Steering Committee Vice-Chair: Department Manager controlling the HRDP body, MoA
- Section for Nature Conservation and Land Protection, MoE
- Managing Director, VÚZE
- Department of Land Protection, AOPK
- Department of Projects and Studies, AOPK
- Chairman of Board of Directors, FOA
- Manager of the foundation "Partnerství Foundation"
- Member of Central Executive Board, ČSOP
- UNDP Regional Coordination Center, Bratislava, Slovak Republic

### iii. Relevance to Local Needs / Priorities in Beskydy and Bílé Karpaty PLAs

50. Mountains grasslands occurring extensively in both pilot project areas are particularly rich in habitat and species diversity. Semi-natural grasslands depend primarily on continuous human interaction with the landscape through farming, in which extensive grazing is of particular importance. Developments in the second half of 20$^{th}$ century have stripped the Czech Republic's eastern Carpathian mountain grasslands of species and landscape diversity and caused the decline in globally important biodiversity. Additionally, both pilot areas suffer from land abandonment due to a decreasing number of small and medium sized farms that are crucial to the biodiversity of grasslands, which allows afforestation. Inappropriate urban development is primarily an issue in Beskydy PLA.

51. Thus there is an urgent need to enhance extensive agricultural practices, and support their application through agricultural policy and expansion of non-productive functions of agriculture in rural areas. The protection of particular species, relevant to both sites, is not merely a matter of site specific but also farm adjusted management practices. Both protected landscape managers and farmers have strongly criticized inappropriate adjustments of policy measures aimed at the maintenance of grassland biodiversity. Also, a lack of integration of specific regional conditions into horizontal (national) designation and implementation of agri-environmental measures has contributed to their as yet limited positive effects on biodiversity.

52. The most obvious motivation to identify semi-natural grasslands of high biodiversity value in Europe is linked to the implementation of the Natura 2000 network.[5] In the Czech Republic a national grassland inventory has been conducted for a number of years, but the national database is still not finalized and results are therefore partial and incomplete for some

[5] Natura 2000 mapping of natural habitats 1:10 000 (due in 2004) realized by the Agency for Nature Conservation and Landscape Protection. Source : http://www.natura2000.cz/, Czech Statistical Office

regions. Databases on grassland habitat and species distribution in two project areas are advanced, however, to different extents, and not completed. It should be acknowledged that a lack of funds has been a common handicap in the establishment of a comprehensive information system/database, an effective monitoring system, and an overall functional information network. Between the two pilot sites, the more advanced (and almost comprehensive) grassland database is in Bílé Karpaty PLA. It provides information on species composition, succession, and management practices. The data were mostly collected from mapping carried out in 2003-2006 during the establishment of the Natura 2000 network.[6] In Beskydy PLA, data on the vegetation communities and plant species of grazed grassland habitats, including those that are threatened and rare, were also collected for Natura 2000 but are less comprehensive. Likewise, information on fauna species in grassland habitats (i.e. invertebrates and birds) is partial.

**Box 4 Bílé Karpaty PLA Key Facts**

- Established in 1980, biosphere reserve since 1996
- Total area: 715 km$^2$
- Area of species-rich grassland habitats: 1,352 ha
- European importance: Natura 2000, IBA site
- Main habitats: ancient forest, semi-natural meadow and pasture habitats
- Globally significant species: *Crex crex, Gentianella lutescens, Maculinea arion*

53. Although the PLAs share common priorities for biodiversity protection, they have experienced different histories in designation, and have a different evolution of the socio-economic context and rural development. Bílé Karpaty PLA was established in 1980, and designated as a United Nations Biosphere Reserve in 1996 based on its significant landscape diversity and grasslands of exceptional habitat and species diversity. Although there is relatively well-developed data on habitats and species occurrence for the PLA region, there is only partial research on farming impacts on semi-natural habitats. NGOs, mostly based in Brno, focused on rural development have an important presence in the region and contribute to local initiatives supporting non-productive functions of agriculture.

54. In Beskydy PLA, established in 1973, the situation is different. The PLA lacks comprehensive data on habitats and species occurrence, as well as their interaction with agricultural practices. Coupled with insufficient technical and software equipment, the PLA managers did not have enough information to establish best management practices for biodiversity conservation. Compared with Bílé Karpaty PLA, the grasslands (estimated to cover up to 17% of the Beskydy PLA area) are mostly managed by big

**Box 5 Beskydy PLA Key Facts**

- Established in 1973
- Total area: 1197 km$^2$
- Area of species-rich grassland habitats: 2,249 ha
- European importance: Natura 2000, IBA site
- Main habitats: ancient forest, semi-natural meadows and pastures habitats
- Globally significant species: *Gentianella lutescens*

[6] Jongepier and Pechanes 2006. Atlas rozšíření cévnatých rostlin v CHKO Bílé Karpaty. *In: Jongpierova I. [ed.] (2008): Louky Bílých Karpat (Grasslands of the White Carpathian Mountains). - ZO ČSOP Bílé Karpaty, Veselí nad Moravou.*

cooperatives, and small and medium sized farmers that manage approximately half of the grassland area. Many of the areas managed by small-scale farmers are without agricultural subsidy support due to gaps in the design of agri-environmental measures.

55. Consequently, small farmers in both protected areas often have a special contract with the PLA office that defines the management requirements for grasslands with high biodiversity values. These contracts are financed under the "Landscape Maintenance Programme" funded by the MoE and, in part, fill gaps in the agri-environmental measures. In core areas of the PLAs Natura 2000 subsidies are applied, whereas agri-environmental measures are applied in the PLAs outside of the core areas.

56. The urgent needs for better protection of globally important species can be summarized for both protected areas as follows:

- Improvement of institutional capacity building and technical improvement of PLA offices, notably in Beskydy PLA;
- Better understanding of the interaction between extensive farming and biodiversity and enhancement of local grassland databases to complete data on habitat status and species diversity in the PLAs;
- Improvement of livelihoods of small farmers living in synergy with semi-natural grasslands by better targeting of agricultural subsidies and improvement of socio-economic conditions;
- Analyses of policy instruments in relation to the maintenance of grassland biodiversity by extensive grazing farming.

57. The project focused on addressing all of the important needs for improvement of biodiversity conservation in a comprehensive way through the different projects components. It is interesting to note that both PLA directors confirmed positive outputs of the project and considerable improvement of the professional capacities of the PLA administration, despite doubts at the beginning of the projects related to perceived insufficient capacity to achieve project objectives. At the same time, both PLA directors were skeptical that the future changes in agri-environmental measures at the national level would effectively improve management of high biodiversity value areas.

### iv. Project Relevance to National Environment and Development Policies and Priorities

58. Nature conservation and biodiversity has been progressively integrated into other national policies in the Czech Republic since the 1990's, but the process has been considerably accelerated during the harmonization of the national legislation with the European "*aquis communautaire*" in the framework of EU accession process. Today, 15% of the national territory is designated as protected, comprising four national parks and 24 PLAs, that are governed by national legislation, international conventions, and other policies like the Agricultural and Rural Development Strategy. The two PLAs included in this project, Bílé Karpaty and Beskydy, contain some 13,360 hectares of mountain grassland that are the focus of different environmental and rural development policies, strategies and plans that also define the allocation of national or European funds (or both).

59. Within the context of the CAP, the concept of cross-compliance is based on the fact that the receipt of direct payments by the farmer is conditional upon compliance to environmental (and other) standards. The application of cross-compliance rules in EU member states was not obligatory before 2003-2004 reforms. Recognized as an important step towards biodiversity integration in agriculture, a new cross-compliance mechanism has been in force in the Czech Republic since 2009 (this was one of the outcomes of the project, see Section V.B.ii on Outcome 1). The policy obliges farmers benefiting from agricultural subsidies to apply extensive farming in Natura 2000 sites. As the project experts were included in the working group of the MoE in developing the cross-compliance mechanism, the project experience has been considered in the design of new cross-compliance rules. However, cross-compliance is more appropriate for preventing damaging practices than for persuading farmers to maintain beneficial practices.

60. Under its second pillar, rural development, the CAP presents a menu of measures from which countries can pick and choose their priorities. The Czech Republic's RDP is composed of three mains axes (Axis I-III and a "LEADER" component) that offer a capital and annual payments to specific development projects or activities. The second axis (Axis II focused on land management) includes measures proposing land-based payments made on annual basis (agri-environmental measures, LFA compensation, etc). As rural development incorporates broad grassland areas and proposes higher payments for farmers than any environmental funds, extensive farming systems could significantly benefit from the measures designed under the second pillar. However, even though Pillar II refers to environmental protection and biodiversity conservation, disbursement is not properly targeted and thus large tracts of semi-natural grasslands are managed without attention to habitats or species protection. The Carpathian Grasslands project addresses better integration of biodiversity priorities for agri-environmental measures and LFA payments for the HRDP 2007-2013 programming period, as well as the planning process for the 2014 – 2020 programming period.

### v. Project Relevance to Objectives of the CBD and Carpathian Convention

61. The GEF is the financial mechanism of the CBD, and thus is responsible for supporting implementation of the CBD. All GEF projects must be responsive and relevant to elements of the convention. The Czech Republic ratified the CBD on December 4, 1993 and is therefore eligible for GEF support, and required to implement and abide the objectives of the convention; full implementation of the CBD is of course a long-term process. The Carpathian Grasslands project supported multiple aspects of the CBD, as shown in Table 3 below.

62. In addition to directly supporting the articles of the convention, the project should also fit within the framework of the Czech Republic's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), which is the country's plan for implementing the CBD at the national level. The Czech Republic's NBSAP was approved by the government as Resolution No. 620 on May 25, 2005, and accepted by the CBD on April 26, 2006. The NBSAP includes a specific chapter on grassland ecosystems, which highlights current conditions, problem issues, and nine specific objectives within the NBSAP to conserve grassland biodiversity.

**Table 3 Carpathian Grasslands Project Relevance to the CBD**

| **Carpathian Grasslands Project Outcomes** / **CBD Articles** | **Outcome 1:** Institutional capacity is in place to assess, plan and implement priority conservation management of mountain grasslands taking full advantage of newly available funding mechanisms under the EU Common Agricultural Policy and Natura 2000 | **Outcome 2:** Farmers' capacity and incentives for and participation in conservation-oriented management of mountain grasslands is improved | **Outcome 3:** Monitoring and evaluation programme for mountain grassland biodiversity conservation management in place | **Outcome 4:** National policy for agro-environment schemes incorporates project experience |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Article 1: Objectives | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** |
| Article 5: Cooperation | **X** | | | **X** |
| Article 6: General measures for Conservation and Sustainable Use | **X** | **X** | **X** | **X** |
| Article 7: Identification and Monitoring | | | **X** | |
| Article 8: In-situ Conservation | | **X** | **X** | |
| Article 9: Ex-situ Conservation | | | | |
| Article 10: Sustainable Use of Components of Biological Diversity | **X** | **X** | | **X** |
| Article 11: Incentive Measures | **X** | **X** | | **X** |
| Article 13: Public Education and Awareness | **X** | **X** | | |
| Article 14: Impact Assessment and Minimizing Adverse Impacts | | | **X** | **X** |
| Article 15: Access to Genetic Resources | | | | |
| Article 16: Access to and Transfer of Technology | | | | |
| Article 17: Exchange of Information | **X** | **X** | | **X** |
| Article 18: Technical and Scientific Cooperation | **X** | | **X** | |

63. The Carpathian Grasslands project objective and outcomes support multiple NBSAP objectives on grasslands:

- *Maintenance of vegetation with high plant diversity - important for the future stability and resilience of vegetation under the conditions of global climate change.*
- *Preservation of the existing species rich vegetation to ensure the attractiveness of the landscape for tourism use and for recreation and leisure.*
- *Stopping the spreading of expansive bushes to selected sites on white slopes.*
- *Concentration of scientific research primarily at Natura 2000 sites, permitting identification of the patterns governing the coexistence of flora and fauna in well-preserved ecosystems. Using targeted management of the vegetation, evaluation of the effectiveness of management procedures at selected sites. Continuous study on the effects of traditional management procedures methods and techniques as proposed optimal measures*
- *In general, respecting and maximal maintenance of farming procedures and activities that have led to stabilization and subsequently the existence of the relevant components in the vegetation cover over the*

*centuries. Emphasizing and monitoring compliance with the principles of sustainable harvesting of grass vegetation (i.e. select a frequency of mowing or pasturing or a combination of these so as to prevent excessive damage to and impoverishment of the vegetation).*

- *In the framework of education of habitat managers raising awareness of the necessity of preserving grassland ecosystems and of the advantages of their existence for the development of the area, increasing the feeling of responsibility in public for the appearance and functioning of landscape structures.*[7]

64. Beyond the CBD there are other international conventions to which the Czech Republic is party that support environmental and biodiversity conservation, notably the Carpathian Convention, signed in Kiev, Ukraine in May 2003. The objective of the Carpathian Convention is to "pursue a comprehensive policy and cooperate for the protection and sustainable development of the Carpathians with a view to inter alia improving quality of life, strengthening local economies and communities, and conservation of natural values and cultural heritage."[8] Table 4 below highlights the Carpathian Grasslands relevance to the objectives of the Carpathian Convention. In particular, the project enhances the implementation of the Article 4 "Conservation and sustainable use of biological and landscape diversity" and the Article 7 "Sustainable agriculture and forestry". First, the project improved knowledge and better understanding of the ecological and socio-economic interactions of extensive farming in mountain areas (Article 7), and second, the project pursued policies aimed at conservation and sustainable use of biological and landscape diversity in the Carpathians (Article 4).

65. As highlighted by the two tables, and by the project's coherence with the Czech Republic's NBSAP, the project relevance to the CBD and other conventions is considered to be satisfactory.

**Table 4 Carpathian Grasslands Project Relevance to the Carpathian Convention**

| **Carpathian Grasslands Project Outcomes**<br><br>**Carpathian Convention Articles** | **Outcome 1:** Institutional capacity is in place to assess, plan and implement priority conservation management of mountain grasslands taking full advantage of newly available funding mechanisms under the EU Common Agricultural Policy and Natura 2000 | **Outcome 2:** Farmers' capacity and incentives for and participation in conservation-oriented management of mountain grasslands is improved | **Outcome 3:** Monitoring and evaluation programme for mountain grassland biodiversity conservation management in place | **Outcome 4:** National policy for agro-environment schemes incorporates project experience |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Article 2: General objectives and principles<br>(a) the precaution and prevention principles,<br>(b) the 'polluter pays' principle,<br>(c) public participation and stakeholder involvement,<br>(d) trans-boundary cooperation,<br>(e) integrated planning and management of land and water resources, | **X** | **X** | | **X** |

[7] Government of the Czech Republic. 2005. "National Biodiversity Strategy of the Czech Republic," Ministry of the Environment.

[8] Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians. 2003. "Article 2: General Objectives and Principles," May 22, 2003, Kiev, Ukraine.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| (f) a programmatic approach, and (g) the ecosystem approach. | | | | |
| Article 3: Integrated approach to land resources management | x | x | x | x |
| Article 4: Conservation & sustainable use of biological & landscape diversity | x | x | x | x |
| Article 5: Spatial planning | x | | x | x |
| Article 6: Sustainable and integrated water/river basin management | | | | |
| Article 7: Sustainable agriculture and forestry | x | x | x | x |
| Article 8: Sustainable transport and infrastructure | | | | |
| Article 9: Sustainable tourism | x | x | | x |
| Article 10: Industry and energy | | | | |
| Article 11: Cultural heritage and traditional knowledge | | x | | x |
| Article 12: Environmental assessment information system, monitoring and early warning | | | x | |
| Article 13: Awareness raising, education and public participation | x | x | | x |

### vi. Project Relevance to GEF Strategies and Priorities

57. The GEF's biodiversity focal area strategy is based on four long-term objectives for biodiversity conservation, which have been refined throughout each phase of the GEF. The Carpathian Grasslands project was approved during GEF-3 (2003 – 2006), but the strategic priorities for biodiversity for GEF-4 (2007 – 2010) did not change significantly. The GEF's current strategic objectives in the biodiversity focal area include are outlined in Table 5.[9]

**Table 5 GEF-4 Biodiversity Focal Area Strategic Priorities**

| Long-term Objectives | Strategic Programs for GEF-4 |
|---|---|
| 1: To catalyze sustainability of protected area (PA) systems | 1. Sustainable financing of PA systems at the national level<br>2. Increasing representation of effectively managed marine PA areas in PA systems<br>3. Strengthening terrestrial PA networks |
| 2: To mainstream biodiversity in production landscapes / seascapes and sectors | 4. Strengthening the policy and regulatory framework for mainstreaming biodiversity<br>5. Fostering markets for biodiversity goods and services |
| 3: To safeguard biodiversity | 6. Building capacity for the implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety<br>7. Prevention, control and management of invasive alien species |
| 4: To build capacity on access and benefit sharing | 8. Building capacity on access and benefit sharing |

[9] GEF. 2007. "Biodiversity Focal Area Strategy and Strategic Programming for GEF-4," October 2007.

66. In the Carpathian Grasslands project document approved by the GEF Secretariat the project is considered to have been relevant to Strategic Priority 1, catalyzing the sustainability of protected areas. By developing institutional and technical capacity within the PLA administrations, increasing stakeholder awareness, and improving knowledge in support of effective management the project did support this strategic priority. The second strategic priority, on mainstreaming biodiversity, can also be considered to have been supported however, since the project objective was to improve the environmental considerations in the agricultural sector in the Czech Republic, and ultimately the project's influence is likely to be felt beyond the boundaries of the Czech Republic's protected area system, if it is felt at all. The project's relevance to the GEF's objectives and priorities is considered satisfactory.

## B. Project Management and Cost-Effectiveness (Efficiency)

67. The Carpathian Grasslands project was implemented in a highly efficient and cost-effective manner, and the overall efficiency rating is considered to be **highly satisfactory**. The project leveraged local stakeholder capacity in the region, and the project outputs are commensurate with the resources allocated. Given the project's potential to influence agricultural subsidy policies in the Czech Republic in the 2014 – 2020 timeframe (see Section V.B.v on Outcome 4), the future project leverage may be quite large compared to the relatively small amount of GEF resources invested.

### i. Carpathian Grasslands Project Management

68. The project management structure has been previously described in Section IV.A.ii on the implementation approach. As mentioned, the implementation approach of a central node coordinating multiple sub-contracted project partners facilitated a cost-effective project management structure by leveraging capacity already in place. For example, the project team relied on the commercial association of sheep and goat breeders for communication with farmers. Project reporting was carried out as required with standardized-format quarterly progress reports submitted to UNDP. UNDP's quarterly report format includes a summary of progress made during the reporting period, and annexes of a risk log, issues log, and monitoring and communication plan. All of these annexes are updated as necessary at each quarterly reporting period, so key risks and any significant issues were regularly monitored and addressed. The project logframe was updated multiple times, and was used as tool to support results-based and adaptive management during implementation of the Carpathian Grasslands project. Oversight monitoring and reporting procedures are further discussed in Section VI.C on monitoring and evaluation.

69. All project partners and stakeholders interviewed considered the project management team to have been effective and professional, which is further indicated by the fact that the project was completed on schedule, with no extensions once the project started. While it is only possible to surmise, the excellent project management may have been related to the fact that the project manager was a well-known and respected professional in the country, with extensive professional and technical experience in fields related to biodiversity and agriculture.

### ii. Financial Management, Disbursement and Procurement

70. Table 6 provides an overview of proposed and actual project expenditures by component, including project management. The majority of GEF resources, 44.4%, supported Outcome 2 to enhance farmers' capacity to participate in conservation oriented agricultural management practices. The remaining outcomes were budgeted for between approximately 11% - 16% each of the total GEF resources. Project management, at 17.1% of GEF resources, was on the high end of the range normally seen for international development project management costs, which typically range from approximately 10% – 14%.[10] However, the Carpathian Grasslands project management costs also included evaluation costs.

71. Quarterly financial reports were submitted to UNDP with the quarterly progress reports, at which point the project also requested the quarterly cash advance. The project budget was revised annually based on the annual workplan. In turn, based on the project's financial status tracked in the Atlas system, UNDP produced annual "Combined Delivery Reports" which were signed by the National Project Director at the MoE. The project concluded with a final end-of-project financial statement. Some challenges were faced in budgeting due to exchange rate fluctuations, which caused a decrease in the value of the dollar during the project implementation period. The reduction in budget negatively affected the project in two ways – first, some project activities had to be scaled back, although some project partners increased their co-financing to help minimize shortfalls. Second, some project contracts with partner organizations (such as the PLA administrations) were concluded in dollars, and thus these organizations received lower compensation in real terms for the work performed. Specifically, for whatever reason, the Beskydy PLA contracts had been concluded in dollars, while the Bilé Karpaty PLA contracts had been done in Czech crowns (CZK), so with the drop in value of the dollar it is easy to see how this created challenges. This issue was frequently raised at the Steering Committee meetings; to partially compensate for the budget reduction, some project activities were brought to a close in July 2008 rather than December 2008.

72. Financial audits were conducted in 2006, 2007 and 2008. The audits found no significant problems in the financial management of the project, and determined that procedures were followed according to UNDP and Czech government policies. According to the 2008 audit report, "The project management maintains appropriate financial management structure, internal controls, and record keeping systems." The audits identified a small number of minor corrections required in financial records due to human error, and these were appropriately resolved. The audit reports also noted that there were no issues having to do with procurement.

### iii. Co-financing Mobilization and Leveraged Resources

73. Overall the level of co-financing expected at project approval was surpassed. The co-financing associated with this project is atypical in multiple ways compared to co-financing for most GEF biodiversity projects. The project premise is that the project will influence the Czech Republic's agro-environmental measures (i.e. subsidies) to enhance environmental aspects for the conservation of biodiversity in Carpathian grasslands. Thus, by attempting to influence a

[10] For example, large international conservation NGOs usually have annual overhead costs of 10% - 12%.

major government policy, the ratio of resources that can be considered "co-financing" is significantly higher than the average GEF project.

74. The GEF considers three approaches to "co-financing" that may be counted in a project's co-financing calculations; the first of these is "Finance for baseline activities is included in the definition only when such activities are essential for achieving the GEF objectives, as shown in the project logical framework within the project document." Second among accepted types of co-financing is "Government co-finance (counterpart commitments) e.g., for baseline or foundational activities upon which the project would build or without which the project could not be implemented." According to the GEF, "Associated financing" is "finance for other activities that are related to the project or to similar commitments but which is not essential for the project's successful implementation" and cannot be counted as project co-financing.[11]

75. Based on the above definition, the Czech government's subsidies supporting the agro-environmental measures must be counted as Carpathian Grasslands project co-financing, because they are inherently essential for achieving the project's objectives. The funding for this government program is the baseline level of activity, to which the GEF increment was added in the attempt to achieve Global Environmental Benefits. To track this co-financing, official letters were received from the ministry that stated the level of subsidies disbursed in the area, and other partners reported co-financing annually based on their internal accounting systems. Because it was not possible to exactly map subsidy disbursement in specific geographic terms, subsidies applied to the entire region have been counted as co-financing; thus it is possible that any single co-financing dollar was actually disbursed outside of the specifically targeted project area. As shown in Table 7 below, the subsidies disbursed were in even greater amounts than was anticipated at the time of project approval ($18.16 million instead of $7.70 million USD), thus resulting in a project co-financing ratio of 1:20.[12] Typical co-financing ratios for GEF biodiversity projects are between 1:1 and 1:1.5; according to UNDP sources, at the time of project development it was indicated that expected co-financing ratios for EU candidate countries was 1:4. In general, there are not strong systems in place for tracking co-financing, in particular in-kind co-financing, in GEF projects, and this evaluation recommends that a consistent system urgently be developed (see recommendations at the end of this report).

76. Some additional funds have been leveraged during the course of the project or to support activities after the end of the project, as discussed in Section VI.A.i on financial sustainability. In particular, the MoE has contributed additional funds to support environmental monitoring through 2013, and in Beskydy PLA Norwegian bilateral funds have been received to support ongoing activities; the exact value of this support was not available at the time of the evaluation.

[11] For definitions of GEF co-financing, see document GEF/C.20/6/Rev.1.

[12] While the subsidies disbursed were more than originally anticipated in real terms, the increase in co-financing compared to the original proposal when calculated in US dollars is also partially due to the decline in the dollar exchange rate during the project implementation period. At approval the dollar:koruna exchange rate was 1:24.79; at the end of the project the rate was 1:19.23 (source: http://finance.yahoo.com/currency-converter#from=USD;to=CZK;amt=1), a 22.4% decrease. Thus, based on the exchange rate change, the co-financing expected at project end would have been $9.93 million. Therefore the project produced an additional $6.39 million in additional co-financing (82.9% more than expected) based on the exchange rate at approval.

## Table 6 Carpathian Grasslands Project Expenditure by Component *(all amounts in USD)*

| | GEF Amount Planned | % of GEF Amount Planned | Total Planned | % of Total Planned | GEF Amount Actual | % of GEF Amount Actual | Total Actual ‡ | % of Actual Total ‡ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Outcome 1: Institutional capacity is in place to assess, plan and implement priority conservation management of mountain grasslands taking full advantage of newly available funding mechanisms under the EU Common Agricultural Policy and Natura 2000** | 135,000 | 13.9% | 194,000 | 1.9% | 115,024 | 11.8% | n/a | n/a |
| **Outcome 2: Farmers' capacity and incentives for and participation in conservation-oriented management of mountain grasslands is improved** | 423,300 | 43.4% | 9,679,655 | 93.5% | 432,811 | 44.4% | n/a | n/a |
| **Outcome 3: Monitoring and evaluation programme for mountain grassland biodiversity conservation management in place** | 140,000 | 14.4% | 200,000 | 1.9% | 108,068 | 11.1% | n/a | n/a |
| **Outcome 4: National policy for agro-environment schemes incorporates project experience** | 112,000 | 11.5% | 112,000 | 1.1% | 152,073 | 15.6% | n/a | n/a |
| **Project Coordination, Management and Monitoring & Evaluation** | 164,000 | 16.8% | 164,000 | 1.6% | 166,123 | 17.1% | n/a | n/a |
| **Total** | 974,300 | | 10,349,655 | | 974,099 | | 20,804,099 | |

Source: Project Document for planned amounts; 2005 – 2009 UNDP Combined Delivery Reports for actual GEF amounts.

‡The breakdown of co-financing was not specifically tracked by component because it was disbursed directly by project partners rather than channelled through the project, and therefore the project team was not required to report co-financing by component.

## Table 7 Carpathian Grasslands Project Planned and Actual Co-financing *(all amounts in millions USD)*

| Co-financing (Type/Source) | IA own Financing | | Multi-lateral Agencies (Non-GEF) | | Bi-lateral Donors | | Central Government | | Local Government* | | Private Sector | | NGOs | | Other Sources** | | Total Co-financing | | Percent of Expected Co-financing |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Proposed | Actual | Proposed | Actual | Proposed | Actual | Proposed | Actual | Proposed | Actual | Proposed | Actual | Proposed | Actual | Proposed | Actual | Proposed | Actual | Actual share of proposed |
| Grant | | | | | | | $7.73 | $18.19 | $1.53 | $1.53 | | | | | $0.09 | $0.05 | $9.35 | $19.77 | 211% |
| Credits | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Loans | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Equity | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| In-kind | | | | | | | | | | | | | $0.02 | $0.06 | | | $0.02 | $0.06 | 300% |
| Non-grant Instruments | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Other Types | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **TOTAL** | | | | | | | $7.73 | $18.19 | $1.53 | $1.53 | | | $0.02 | $0.06 | $0.09 | $0.05 | $9.38 *** | $19.83 | 211% |

* "Local government" in this case refers to the administrative units of the PLAs.

** "Other sources" is VÚZE

*** Doesn't sum due to rounding. Total co-financing was $9.38.

## C. Flexibility and Adaptive Management

77. Flexibility is one of the GEF's ten operational principles, and all projects must be implemented in a flexible manner to maximize efficiency and effectiveness, and to ensure a results-based, rather than output-based approach. Thus, during project implementation adaptive management must be employed to adjust to changing circumstances. The Carpathian Grasslands project was implemented in a flexible manner, which appropriate adaptive approaches by both the project management team and UNDP as the implementing agency.

78. There was no change to the project strategy or objectives during implementation, but there was some revision and clarification following project approval. As noted in the 2007 Project Implementation Report (PIR), "The wording of the project objective and outcomes has been reformulated, indicators and targets have been defined in the logframe to better specify the objectively verifiable impact and targets values, and to measure the progress and the success of the project."

79. At the same time, while not explicit, there was some shift during the course of the project in which elements received the greatest emphasis. When the project first started, the original strategy was to increase and expand farmers' participation in agri-environmental subsidy programs supported by the EU during the Czech Republic's EU accession process. The original Czech subsidy program initiated in 2004, the HRDP, was transitioned to the EU program, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), in the 2006-2007 timeframe, and the project sought to both avoid a reduction in participation in the subsidies program, and to support farmers in taking advantage of the new program. Once this transition took place, the project focused on having a positive influence on the development and implementation of the agri-environmental measures, with the goal of instituting measures tailored specifically to individual farms and land blocks, also known as "farm plans." As discussed in Section VI.C.i on monitoring and evaluation, the project logframe and indicators did not provide adequate measures of success for this latter focus.

80. As discussed above, one aspect that necessitated adaptive management was the reduction of the budget in real terms due to exchange rate fluctuations, and there are a number of examples of how the project team addressed this. Also, as seen in Table 7 above, some project partners, notably the NGOs, tripled their level of co-financing to help account for the shortfall. Changes related to budget reduction include:

- The completion of a majority of project activities in the 3$^{rd}$ quarter of 2008 instead of the 4$^{th}$ quarter. Starting in July 2008 the project manager moved into a role as an external advisor to the Deputy Minister of Agriculture on good agricultural practice and cross-compliance;
- Organizing a domestic conference on agri-environmental measures and grassland management instead of an international conference;
- Reducing the scope of activities related to education and awareness for farmers;
- Reducing the frequency of biological monitoring;
- Money was also saved by having one large public tender for office software and hardware for the local nature protection offices, instead of just purchasing the items at retail.

81. One of the first adaptive management actions was the elimination of the "Project Board" mechanism during the inception workshop, which was a superfluous body considering the existence and role of the Steering Committee. As noted in the project inception report, "It was recommended to ask the MŽP [MoE] Executive Authority to establish the Project Steering Committee, and not to establish the Project Board. The Steering Committee can fulfill the council's duties provided that it meets more than twice annually." Although the Steering Committee did not always meet twice annually, it still adequately covered the role of the Project Board, also thanks to the fact that the project was well managed and did not face any specific challenges that had to be addressed by the Steering Committee.

### D. UNDP Project Oversight

82. Because there is no UNDP Czech Republic country office, the project was implemented and supported by the UNDP Country Support Team office in Bratislava. UNDP's responsibilities included project oversight and backstopping, supporting the project from a technical perspective as required, and working with the project team to ensure adequate project reporting and financial management. In this role, the responsibilities included serving on the project Steering Committee and conducting annual supervision field missions. The executing agency, MoE, considered that coordination with UNDP was at an "excellent level." The project manager also indicated that there was an open, collaborative, and effective working relationship with UNDP regarding all aspects from financial matters to project monitoring. The one area for improvement was the short amount of lead time given before certain monitoring deliverables were requested, such as annual PIRs. On the whole the Carpathian Grasslands project required relatively little support and backstopping because it was executed by the project manager, project team and partners in a professional and well-managed way, and did not face specific unforeseen challenges.

## V. Carpathian Grasslands Project Performance and Results

### A. Key Factors Affecting Project Implementation

83. The achievement of project outcomes has been positively and negatively influenced by several political, economic and social factors. Given that the project sought to influence the legislation process and improve the integration of biodiversity protection, which is still not fully recognized as an important issue by relevant ministries, the project was sensitive to the ever-evolving political environment. Second, the project was also built on the idea of strong cooperation on both national and local levels among partners with different interests and socio-economic and technical foundations. Therefore, gaining trust and finding compromises among the broad variety of partners involved was a complex process sensitive to different factors, such as focusing on themes relevant to all parties, choosing the appropriate "ways of communication", and timing activities in relation to ongoing political and social events. Third, the project suffered from the unfavorable economic environment influenced by the worldwide economic crisis, including devaluation of US dollar.

84. Strong partnership among important stakeholders effectively contributed to the excellent achievement of the project outputs and efficient implementation of activities, as is highlighted several times in this report. At the local level, the project team tried to involve all

of the important stakeholders, notably farmers working in protected areas, site managers and researchers and as well active associations and non-profit organizations. Since the project was integrated into local institutional and social structures and addressed species protection in view of the needs of stakeholders concerned by nature protection, cooperation at the local level was effective and significantly facilitated project implementation.

85. The improvement of the communication at the ministry level, however, required much greater effort and relatively intense negotiations, which finally led to some enhancement of the cooperation between the relevant departments of the MoE and the MoA. Although the project team achieved significant progress in information flows among local stakeholders and national institutions, many local-level project partners still perceive a lack of communication and low interest in biodiversity protection from both ministries when it comes to concrete actions, such as modifications in the agricultural legislation.

86. Once the strong project partnership was established, the project team focused on implementation of the project activities, including the lobbying process. The policy component of the project was the most difficult one, as changes in agri-environmental measures and other relevant policy instruments depend on external factors. Agri-environmental measures are prepared in the framework of the CAP, which is designed at European level. Even though the implementation of the agri-environmental measures is under the jurisdiction of member states, the changes in national measures should be in harmony with European political priorities and agendas. Consequently, modification of agri-environmental measures is, in part, influenced by European procedures and time schedules that determine programming periods and main budget allocation. In general, the project was realized during the preparation work for the programming period 2007-2013; however, the MoA has argued that some amendments initiated during the project could not be integrated as they were submitted too late, i.e. once the final version of the RDP was already finalized and approved.

87. Further, the current implementation of agri-environmental measures in the Czech Republic suffers under inappropriate paradigms, and incoherent interpretations and definitions of biodiversity protection on grasslands by the relevant ministries. Measures are designed by the MoA and associated research institutes (such as VÚZE), and subsequently commented on by the MoE, among others. The final formulation should represent consensus between two ministries; however, priorities are mostly defined by agricultural governance and the associated resources, which are under the jurisdiction of the MoA. Agricultural policy in the Czech Republic considers biodiversity in the context of a “rougher” scale, whereby agricultural practices are elaborated at a national level without consideration of territorial particularities.

88. Agricultural sector bureaucrats argue such an approach is necessary to facilitate the administration and oversight of agri-environmental measures because finer scale approaches require more intensive oversight which is cost ineffective (and for which there is insufficient resources). However, this approach is strongly criticized by PLA managers who see biodiversity protection on a more localized scale, and which is adapted to site conditions. The lack of a smaller-scale approach seems to be an important reason for some of the remaining gaps in agri-environmental measures that may be harmful to (or at least not beneficial to) the conservation of mountain grassland biodiversity. In spite of the partial improvement of the general understanding of grassland biodiversity and more targeted protection achieved during

the project, agri-environmental measures are still strongly affected by the concept of the agricultural policy that prefers the large-scale land unit. As a result, the measures define practices on land blocks that are too big for targeted management.

89. A final important factor that considerably influenced project implementation relates to economic issues. As the exchange rate of US dollar progressively decreased by approximately 50% during the project period the budget was correspondingly reduced, and certain actions could not be completed, as discussed in Section IV.C on adaptive management.

## B. Achievement of Objective and Anticipated Outcomes

### i. Objective: Strengthen the Conservation Management of Globally Significant Biodiversity in Species-rich Mountain Grassland Habitats (Grasslands and Pastures) in Two Protected Landscape Areas in the Carpathian Mountains of the Czech Republic

90. Overall the project objective has been achieved, and the rating on this aspect is **satisfactory**. The indicators for achievement of the project's objectives were primarily at the impact level, focusing on both species and ecosystems. The achievement of the targets for these indicators is further discussed in Section VI.D on project impacts. With one exception (maintenance of the population of *Crex crex*) the species-level targets were achieved, but as discussed in the section on impacts, given the project's scope and timeframe it is difficult to attribute either positive or negative environmental changes to the project's influence at this point in time. Ecosystem level targets were also achieved – the number of hectares incorporated in core protected landscape areas (zone 1) was targeted at 603 hectares, and this was exceeded with a total of 1,553 hectares achieved. The target for the area of degraded grassland converted to species rich grassland was also achieved, with a total of 588 hectares compared to the target of 575 hectares. The project's self-reported level of achievement for all logframe indicators is summarized in Annex 6, which also provides this evaluation's assessment of the project's actual level of achievement.

91. Although the project would have benefited from improved indicators that better reflected achievements under the project objective, the project did strengthen conservation management in the Czech Republic's Carpathian Grassland ecosystems, and specifically within the two target PLAs. As mentioned at various other points in this report, there was excellent stakeholder participation at the regional and local levels, and the project was extremely valuable in opening communication channels and building partnerships and networks amongst different stakeholder groups, such as conservationists and farmers. In addition, the project's contribution to improved capacity and level of knowledge for environmental and biodiversity monitoring the PLAs was much needed; such work is critical to understanding human-ecosystem interactions, as well as gaining a true understanding of the status of biodiversity in globally significant ecosystems. Finally, while the full extent of success of the project's efforts to influence national level policy on agri-environmental measures remains to be seen, stakeholders have leveraged insights gained from the project to make a positive contribution to the planning process, as recognized by both the MoE and MoA.

92. GEF project designs, especially biodiversity conservation projects, are often criticized for being over-ambitious (see any selection of GEF Evaluation Office reports since at least 2004). It

would therefore go against the grain of previous evidence to suggest that a project was not ambitious enough. It is uncommon, however, for a project to set a significant number of indicator targets that are equal to the baseline, i.e. simply maintaining the status quo, as was the case for the Carpathian Grasslands project. The fact that the project far exceeded many of these targets could be an indication that these targets should have been set at a higher level at the start of a project. In reality, it is difficult if not impossible, even for those with extensive knowledge of a particular situation, to say in the project design phase what the "appropriate" level of ambitiousness is for any given project; such clarity only comes with hindsight. A pragmatic approach is to "under promise" and "over deliver" rather than the other way around. On the other hand, the most *useful* approach to developing indicator targets is to have a documented clear analysis and transparent rationale for the value of the targets selected at the beginning of a project, as suggested elsewhere in this report. Too often targets are set based simply on what stakeholders "think" or "feel" is achievable with the time and resources available.

#### ii. Outcome 1: Institutional Capacity is in Place to Assess, Plan and Implement Priority Conservation Management of Mountain Grasslands Taking Full Advantage of Newly Available Funding Mechanisms Under the EU Common Agricultural Policy and Natura 2000

93. Outcome 1 was successfully achieved, and completion is rated **satisfactory**. There were two main indicators: the METT score, and the development and institution of a cross-compliance system. The baseline METT score for both PLAs was 43, and the target was set at a score of 48, an approximately 12% increase, based on an estimate by the project team regarding areas where improvement was possible. The rationale for this target level is not clear in terms of what an improvement to 48 would represent for increased management effectiveness for the PLAs. Based on the experience of other GEF projects, a 12% increase over three years from a moderate baseline should be easily achievable with GEF project investment. The target level was significantly exceeded in both PLAs, with an end-of-project score of 62 in Beskydy PLA, and 57 in Bílé Karpaty PLA. This increase, significantly more than the original target, represents positive progress in both protected areas with respect to institutional capacity for conservation management.

94. The cross-compliance outcome indicator was originally supposed to have been completed as part of the project – it was completed by the end of the project in December 2008, but following the end of project activities in July 2008, when the project manager was no longer employed by the project and was working as an external advisor to the MoA. Cross-compliance is a requirement for farmers to comply with EU Statutory Management Requirements on public health, animal and plant health, animal welfare, and the environment, as well as a requirement to maintain agricultural lands in good agricultural and environmental condition. The Czech Republic was required to develop such a system as part of EU accession, and the project contributed to aspects related to meeting the requirements of Natura 2000 measures, and support for environmentally friendly ways of farming.

95. The first activity under Outcome 1 was the establishment of a Memorandum of Understanding with the MoA regarding advisory services and input to policy processes around

agri-environmental measures. Project partners provided consultancy and outreach services by advising and assisting farmers in applications for agri-environmental measures during the transition to the EAFRD in September 2007. The project assisted approximately 50 farmers in preparing and submitting their applications for the new agri-environmental program. Project partners further provided consultancy services to farmers on feasibility research and support for the marketing of agricultural products, and, for example, exploring the issues around wool washing for production and the processing of meat products at a small scale. The non-profit corporation established as a result of the project, Moravské Karpaty, o.p.s., is further supporting these activities; the organization's website is http://www.moravskekarpaty.cz.

96. Although the majority of biological monitoring was undertaken under Outcome 3, Outcome 1 also included documenting and mapping of some of the mountain grassland habitat areas and associated species, and surveys of these areas were published for each of the PLAs for use by the PLA administrations and the MoA. One notable development in this area was the discovery of 90 additional habitat sites of the critically endangered Great Blue butterfly (*Maculinea arion*). This activity also included an assessment of geographic information systems (GIS) capacity at the PLAs, and the updating of environmental information in relevant GIS database layers.

#### iii. Outcome 2: Farmers' Capacity and Incentives for and Participation in Conservation-oriented Management of Mountain Grasslands is Improved

97. Achievement of Outcome 2 is considered **satisfactory**. The project sought, under Outcome 2, opportunities for the improvement of farmer participation in local initiatives and in policy incentives aimed at extensive grazing, which is particularly relevant to nature conservation in both PLA sites as small and medium farmers are crucial to the development of grasslands. The target levels of indicators for Outcome 2 were achieved, as shown in detail in Annex 6. These achievements included specifically maintaining the number of farmers and other land users taking advantage of subsidies for agri-environmental measures, increasing the number of certified organic farms, supporting further development of regional trademarks and logos, and improving methods of analysis on farmers' incomes in relation to sustainable grassland management. Concretely, the project carried out several studies, publications, trainings and collective events to promote sheep and goat grazing systems and their benefits to biodiversity, rural development and the local economy (wool products, hand crafts, etc.).

98. The project contributed to better understanding of biodiversity protection by farmers who work on lands encompassed in the protected areas. The Grassland Management Advice Units (GMAUs) established in each PLA office played an important role by improving communication between farmers and nature conservationists, and improving the understanding of biodiversity protection by all stakeholders. The representatives of the GMAUs regularly communicate with farmers (including visits on farms) to explain characteristics of extensive farming, to provide the information on funding available for small-scale farmers, or provide any other professional assistance that might be required. These GMAUs are anticipated to continue and keep the exchange between nature conservationists and farmers.

99. The project succeeded in introducing new events in the region, such as festivals and workshops focused on sheep farming that increased public awareness of extensive and

traditional farming, and enhanced cooperation among stakeholders. The events, like the "Valaske klobouky" festival, which celebrates traditional farming skills, are well established and will continue in the future. The project succeeded in involving important and strategic partners like the Association of Sheep and Goat Farmers that operates on local and national levels. This association played important role in gaining the trust of farmers for extensive grazing through dissemination of information and studies, and organizing a regular thematic exhibition that promoted the extensive grazing.

100. The third important element under Outcome 2 include number of feasibility studies and guidelines that provided farmers with broad information on technical standards of farming, the funds available for small and medium sized farms, guidelines on processing of agricultural products (wool processing, etc.) and other professional assistance concerning agriculture in mountain areas. Guidelines and studies have been accompanied by training or workshops (i.e. milk and wool processing) to demonstrate traditional forms of agricultural practices. In these activities, the association "Moravské Karpaty", which was founded under the project, played an important role. It aims to provide free advisory services to farmers and to enhance extensive sheep grazing through special workshops on sheep product processing. Although well organized and promoted, however, workshops were not found to be highly effective in attracting and encouraging young farmers that could start sheep farming. More than farmers, hobbyists and groups especially interested in traditional skills and lifestyles attended the workshops.

101. The project also tried to integrate existing initiatives like regional branding and trademarks, which were established and coordinated by the Partnership Foundation in the region before the project. The project introduced new logos, like "Sheep from Moravian Carpathians", or "Produced in Beskydy" to promote sheep and goat products. In a long-term perspective, this may be a good marketing strategy to improve sales of agricultural products from the PLAs. The products are certified as "traditional" once they pass criteria evaluating the regional origin. Having a label highlighting these products supports traditional forms of farming and rural development, and thus indirectly enhances extensive agriculture and directly promotes specific agricultural products such as artisanal cheeses. However, the element of extensive farming (favorable for grassland biodiversity) does not seem to be strongly integrated; specific criteria defining extensive farming or high nature value grassland areas might be a better way for the integration of biodiversity concerns.

102. The advisory service activities and various events, mentioned above, tried to promote and explain better the policy measures under the RDP, and specifically the agri-environmental measures, to motivate farmers to participate in these programs. The project focused on maintaining the same number of farmers benefiting from agri-environmental measures and other environmental payments from 2005 to 2009, during the EU accession process. The concern was that an inappropriate design of agri-environmental contracts at the point of transition would discourage a number of farmers, and they would not continue to participate in the program. Looking at examples from other European mountain regions (Austria, Slovakia) which have demonstrated better acceptance of agri-environmental measures over time, the project could have been more ambitious on this point by trying to increase the number farmers participating in agri-environmental measures instead of only maintaining the status quo.

103. The project also supported studies of socio-economic aspects of mountain farming in the two project areas. Generally speaking the Czech Republic keeps good statistical data on land use, financial aspects, the use of agricultural inputs, farm structure, as well as the subsidization of agricultural holdings and individual farmers. As the national database includes only statistical information, which is likely to prove a limiting factor in relation to its potential use for analysis on extensive farming on grasslands, a research team from VÚZE collected data using a more detailed questionnaire. Interestingly the study showed that farmers inside the protected areas are more profitable than those outside. However, data from only 19 farmers were analyzed which may be too few to be a representative sample. Unfortunately this activity was not coordinated with a second study focused on agri-environmental measures and economic aspects of farms (covering 51 farmers) that was conducted in the region (farm visits) by other project partners from the PLA Beskydy.

#### iv. Outcome 3: Monitoring and Evaluation Programme for Mountain Grassland Biodiversity Conservation Management in Place

104. Outcome 3 was completed at a **satisfactory** level, and focused on the enhancement of PLA administration environmental databases, and research on the character and effects of extensive grazing to gain a greater understanding of the different practices, the interaction between biodiversity and grazing farming systems, and the way in which these systems could be more adapted to special species protection. Thus Outcome 3 included two main activities: a) comprehensive survey of grassland plant species, invertebrates and birds, and b) monitoring of impact of farming practices on biodiversity. The only indicator identified for Outcome 3 was the number of hectares for which the degradation of vegetation species diversity has been stopped or improved, with a target of expanding this area by 150 hectares in each of the PLAs; the target was achieved for both project areas.

105. During the project period, the local databases have been considerably enhanced and new data on the occurrence of habitats and species have been delivered, and subsequently transferred to the national inventory grassland system. Surveys on species diversity collected from 26 sites in the PLAs (15 in Bílé Karpaty and 11 sites in Beskydy), confirm and identify new sites with occurrence of globally significant species such as *Maculinea arion*, and specified the distribution of high nature value grasslands in both project sites.

106. A second primary achievement of the project under this outcome was the determination of optimal extensive grazing intensity and patterns for different types of grassland ecosystems. Complex research was conducted on coherence between extensive farming practices and the biodiversity value of grassland, with focus on particular species protection. Research on impacts of various agricultural practices from six monitoring plots (3 sites in each PLAs) provided important data for extensive grassland management and contributed to the improvement of the overall site management.

107. The monitoring and evaluation program have been well adapted to the needs and priorities of both protected areas, and experiments and mapping have been conducted in a scientifically rigorous manner. Moreover, the methodology for studying different types of grassland habitats in relation to farming practices could be used for similar analysis in other mountains regions. The research and mapping activities have been realized with the time and

resources available, however, not all planned actions been completed due shortness of financial resources (see Section IV.B.ii on financial management). Nevertheless, the outputs significantly improved knowledge on extensive management that enhances the biodiversity of grasslands, and which could be replicated in other mountain region (see Section VI.B on replication). The monitoring provided valuable insights for arguments for future changes in designation of agricultural practices defined in the measures for agri-environmental schemes.

108. It should be noted that the three years of monitoring and studying changes of the vegetal composition in response to agricultural practices provided only preliminary results. In order to obtain reliable and more comprehensive data on relationships between species diversity and farming, long term monitoring must be conducted, as highlighted in Section VI.D on impacts. Therefore, it is important that the monitoring of grassland habitats will continue as the MoE has allocated additional funding for monitoring over the next three years.

109. The studies, mapping and research conducted in both sites are focus on data related primarily to grassland species, habitats and site management, as well as to statistical data on farm structure, livestock and land use. However, these two primary sources of information are not yet integrated for the more advanced analysis that would show the complexity of biodiversity conservation in socio-economically and ecologically sensitive areas. Further analysis could be done on grassland complexity and how grasslands respond to grazing practices, enhancing the landscape and providing socio-economic benefits.

#### v. Outcome 4: National Policy for Agri-environmental Schemes Incorporates Project Experience

110. While the full results of the project's efforts under Outcome 4 cannot yet be determined because the current policy planning process for agri-environmental measures in the Czech Republic is ongoing, based on the results seen thus far, results under Outcome 4 are considered **moderately satisfactory**. Outcome 4 attempted to improve the national agri-environmental schemes, which are a key step in addressing biodiversity conservation in both PLAs. Indicators for Outcome 4 included a) the number amendments proposed or enacted in national legislation concerning environmentally focused subsidies, based on the experience gained through the project; and b) the number of examples of replications or disseminated project outputs in other regions of the Czech Republic and other European countries where the White Carpathian mountains are located. As further detailed in Annex 6, the target level was achieved under both indicators.

111. The most important outcome of the project is that, based on monitoring results, the MoA has recognized an urgent need for the better integration of biodiversity conservation into agricultural policy. An evaluation was carried out of alternatives to or reformulation of existing agri-environmental measures for the purpose of better targeting extensive grazing practices. The project identified concrete problems in implementation of agri-environmental measures in mountains areas, and thus underlined the urgency for a better understanding of habitat and species conservation. Coupled with long-term negotiations, the project team sent a strong message to the MoA, which has been received. The main criticism concerns: a) low support of traditional forms of pastoralism; b) compensation payments too low to act as effective incentive measures; c) inadequate size of land units (too big of plots); d) the destruction of

important landscape features that are not presently accounted for (such as hedgerows or tree islands); e) low consideration of region-specific environmental conditions; f) misleading interpretation of certain agricultural practices (i.e. grazing after mowing is considered as application of fertilizers on meadows); g) gaps in administrative procedures; and h) low adaptation to small farmers. For example, the project confirmed that 48% of the semi-natural grasslands in PLA Beskydy are without any agricultural subsidy support as the policy measures are not sufficiently adapted to the family farms, which are typically managing 1-5 hectares.

112. Second, the project has contributed to several significant changes in LFA payments,[13] and modifications in management schemes designated under agri-environmental measures.[14] In particular, the project provided arguments for redefining certain measures on mowing and grazing practices, and thus contributed to better overall targeting of agri-environmental measures for management of high nature value areas. However, a majority of proposed modifications have not yet been accepted and integrated, and they therefore remain the focus for future negotiations. Importantly, using experiences from the two pilot sites, the project team has been successful in encouraging the MoA to reconsider the concept of agri-environmental measures in the perspective of more site-specific management (i.e. "farm plans"). Currently, experts are studying the technical, administrative and financial aspects of the introduction of so-called "farm plans" that would define the agricultural practices under agri-environmental measures at the farm level, which integrate local environmental priorities, and individual needs of farmers. The "farm plans" appear to be the most effective and appropriate way for the specific species protection and efficient manner to find a compromise between agricultural production and nature conservations priorities.

113. Insufficient cooperation and information exchange between governmental institutions, notably between the MoA and MoE, and between ministries and local PLA offices, are also limiting factors in the quality and efficiency of agri-environmental measures. A third excellent outcome is that the project brought together, for the first time, the representatives of all interested parties: governmental institutions from agricultural and environmental sector, research institutes, nature conservation local offices, as well as farmers and local stakeholders (municipalities), to discuss options for better integration of biodiversity into rural development and agricultural policy. A Memorandum of Understanding defining the roles and sharing the competencies related to agri-environmental schemes has been signed and endorsed between the MoA and MoE. The regular meetings and information exchanges during the project improved the communication among all parties. However, local stakeholders, such as farmers and representatives of PLAs, do not yet feel fully included in the decision making process.

114. It should be acknowledged that "farm plans", although revolutionary in their approach, are still only an "idea" that needs to be analyzed in detail, and has not yet been accepted by the relevant ministries. There thus still exists a need for analysis of options regarding improving cooperation and refocusing of this policy instrument as defined at both the local and national levels for the purpose of more effectively addressing extensive grazing as a factor in the maintenance of valuable semi-natural habitats.

---

([13]) Amendments in Regulation No.75/2007 on providing LFA payments

([14]) Amendments in Regulation No 79/2007 on conditions from implementation of agri-environmental measures

# VI. Key GEF Performance Parameters

## A. Sustainability

115. Based on the analysis of the four aspects of sustainability considered below, the sustainability of results for the Carpathian Grasslands project is considered **moderately likely**. It should be noted that sustainability is a dynamic state, and can shift significantly over time.

### i. Financial Risks to Sustainability

116. There are limited financial risks to sustainability, but the financial sustainability of the organization formed as a result of project efforts, and the long-term financial sustainability of the regional branding and trademark associations are not yet certain. Therefore financial sustainability is considered moderately likely. The project structure was such that the project activities were integrated into the work of other stakeholder groups and organization in the region. The partner NGOs and the protected area administrations were already in existence, and there were not a large number of additional staff hired to undertake project-related activities. Therefore there is not a large cohort of project staff or infrastructure that requires ongoing financial inputs, and the benefits that the project generated are primarily of the nature that they will be sustained without further financial support, i.e. awareness raised, capacity developed, and networks built. The stakeholders and partner organizations could, however, continue to increase and expand benefits with additional external resources (i.e. more activities supporting farmer education and awareness, and additional capacity development regarding implementation of subsidy programs). The Beskydy PLA administration has been able to secure some additional support from regional development funds and from Norwegian bilateral sources, but the specific amount was not available at the time of this evaluation.

117. In the Beskydy region, the non-profit organization that was formed during the project, "Moravské Karpaty," has worked with VÚZE in trying to leverage European cross-border cooperation funding, but was unsuccessful because the organization is still young and without a track record of delivery. It seems that "Moravské Karpaty" will continue to face the challenges that all non-profit organizations face in terms of continuously finding financial resources to support ongoing activities. Representatives of the association mentioned that they have not ensured long term funding. The coordinator confirmed that they will continue in fund raising and will do their best to find solution that would ensure the effective functioning of organization in the future. There are funding opportunities through EU programs and EU Strategic Operational Program funds for the Czech Republic, but there is much competition and many priorities these funds are expected to cover.

118. There was an important investment in technical infrastructure for the PLA administrations to support environmental monitoring, and this is a specific area where additional financial support has been allocated by the MoE to continue the monitoring efforts through 2013, as mentioned in Section V.B.iv on Outcome 3. At the macro-scale, the MoE indicated that the level of financial support allocated by the national government and received from the EU for agri-environmental measures is at an acceptable level, but what is really needed is to ensure that those measures have appropriately structured environmental incentives.

119. Another aspect of the project where a long-term financial strategy is required is the support system for the regional trademarks. Following the project there is some financial uncertainty for this initiative – products sold under the trademark make-up a relatively small amount of total revenue since they are primarily produced by hobbyists rather than full-scale commercial enterprises. Therefore producers that have been certified are not in a position to fully financially support the ongoing development and marketing of the trademark. The present fee system charges certified producers an amount based on the number of employees in the firm and the majority of the producers are single-individual or family enterprises. There is also currently no support from regional governments to find financial support for the regional trademarks; all fundraising to support the programs is done by the Partnership Foundation.

### ii. Socio-economic Risks to Sustainability

120. There are a number of socio-economic risks to sustainability, but these generally apply broadly to the region addressed by the project and do not specifically threaten the immediate results of the project. They are, nonetheless, critical long-term considerations, and therefore socio-economic sustainability is considered moderately likely. The project has significantly strengthened the marketing and technical performance of extensive grazing practices through better targeting of agricultural funding and various marketing strategies, but there are different socio-economic aspects that influence farmers' livelihoods. The most important risks are the decreasing number of small-scale farmers (those often on the edge of economic viability), and inappropriate urban planning in protected areas. Moreover, both of the protected areas in the Carpathian Grasslands project are in remote, relatively underdeveloped regions that suffer from a lack of infrastructure, economic resources and employment. Notably, Beskydy PLA is in a region with one of the highest unemployment rates in the Czech Republic.

121. Small scale farmers, who are crucial to biodiversity maintenance in mountain protected areas, are closing their farms mainly due to demanding and often incoherent requirements for grassland management, agricultural subsidies poorly targeted to territorial conditions, and a lack of market for sheep products. There is considerable influence of large industry companies that still dominate the agricultural market (relics of collectivized agriculture from the 2$^{nd}$ half of the 20$^{th}$ century in Eastern Europe), and they have important impacts on agricultural production, and thus on farming practices. This concerns both the national and international market. Prices for sheep products have been low for a long time, and currently do not cover the expenses for production and wool processing in small-scale farming. As the market in the Czech Republic is strongly influenced by cheap wool processing from the Ukraine and a relatively strong market in Slovakia, it is extremely difficult for Czech small farmers to find their market niche and make wool competitive with other producers. Coupled with challenges in the application of regulations related to hygienic standards, the lack of willingness of farmers to work together through producer groups, and decreasing meat prices, the current outlook for small-scale sheep farmers is negative. Actions are being taken at local, regional, national and international levels to improve efficiencies and influence market incentives (such as through more effective approaches to hygienic standards for small-scale producers in the EU), but whether positive results will be seen in time remains to be seen.

122. The second risk concerns conventional land management in favor of forestry determined by the State Forest Administration (SFA). The land use classification does not recognize the production functions of grasslands and defines grassland habitats among unproductive land that needs to be afforested, once abandoned. Inappropriately defined criteria for the habitats with partial succession or solitaire trees caused inaccurate or confusing information in the Forestry Land Management information system on grassland cover. Moreover, these areas are forbidden for grazing. The SFA also proposes subsidies for re-forestation of grasslands that encourage farmers to abandon their grasslands, notably in upper parts of the protected areas, which are less productive or far from the farm. The gaps in national land cover databases and inadequate management requirements defined by SFA for abandon grasslands are considered one of the most important threats in the continuing decrease of grassland area. For now, there is no legislative foundation to slow or stop this tendency. An elegant solution in finding compromise between grazed areas and forestry has been found in some counties in Estonia, known for "wooded meadows"; national legislation supports traditional forms of grazing in wooded areas if any farmer is willing to graze these pastures, regardless of the density of trees or minimum size of the grazed area.[15]

123. A third important risk is urban planning that underestimates or in extreme case, ignores the biodiversity value of grasslands. This risk has been highlighted several times by the managers of Beskydy PLA who state that urban planning does not include in agricultural functions the nature values of grasslands in this region, so municipalities have a tendency to propose such land for potential building zones. This potentially threatens the biodiversity value in Beskydy PLA, as harmful economic development in favor of new building areas causes the important decrease of the grassland areas.

124. Broader risks relate to the influence of European policies. The economic studies during the project confirmed that small-scale farmers depend strongly on agricultural subsidies, even more that farms outside of protected areas.[16] Therefore, the future orientation of payments under the CAP is crucial to whether the grassland biodiversity will be maintained and enhanced. Apart from agri-environmental schemes, there are LFA payments (Pillar II) that are also in the core of farmers´ revenues. LFAs are defined in the Czech Republic as the rural areas that are particularly fragile in environmental aspects (slope, humidity) that influenced productive functions of soil. As large tracks of grasslands of high nature value are located in particular in remote and underdeveloped areas, the LFA should also consider economic and social aspects, which is not the case in the Czech Republic. The European Commission has not considered the criterion for socio-economic hardship in relation to LFA payments, for two reasons. First, much of the area in the new members states qualifies under such a criterion, which could have serious consequences for the EU budget. Second, monitoring of this criterion has been poor.

[15] Sammul, et al. 2008. "Wooded meadows of Estonia: conservation efforts for a traditional habitat," *Agricultural and Food Science,* Vol. 17 (2008), pp. 413-429.

[16] Pickova, A., and Jindrich Spicka. 2008. "Farming under environmental restrictions in the Beskydy and the White Carpathians," Report of the Institute of Agricultural Economics and Information (VÚZE). Prague 2008.

### iii. Institutional Framework and Governance Risks to Sustainability

125. Risks to institutional and governance sustainability are generally low, but, as mentioned previously, there are not yet clear directions about future biodiversity conservation measures in agri-environmental policies in the Czech Republic; sustainability in this respect is considered moderately likely. The institutional framework for nature protection in the area is well set, with multiple institutions that have clearly defined roles – the MoA, MoE, PLA administrations, and other stakeholder organizations, such as the Sheep farmers' association. Each of these organizations is well established and adequately funded on an annual basis. The governmental Agency for Nature Conservation coordinating activities at the PLA offices is regularly funded from national resources that provide annual budget for salary as well as for various activities related to the grassland management (i.e. agreements with farmers); each of the PLA administrations has in the range of 20 staff. The most significant issue is the level of communication and coordination amongst these bodies. As previously mentioned, the project had a positive influence in this area by building networks and expanding communication channels, but there is still much room for improvement. One of the greatest outstanding barriers to effective agri-environmental policy development and implementation is the highly bureaucratic system that farmers must understand and find ways to participate in. According to some sources, there can be contradictory information received from various government bodies or even officials within the same institution regarding agri-environmental measures, which makes participation by farmers challenging.

126. The main governance risk is the form and implementation of future agri-environmental measures (for the 2014 – 2020 period), which are currently being planned. The planning process is incorporating input from the project experience, but it will not be known for another year at least what the actual new agri-environmental measures will look like, and whether they will adequately and effectively reflect true environmental considerations and priorities. As has been mentioned, the most effective measures would be those with the greatest flexibility and specificity for each individual land parcel. However, it must be recognized that the MoA must balance the specificity and flexibility of any system with the necessary costs to administer such a system; the more scope there is for any farmer to implement unique and specific measures the greater the administrative burden in monitoring and enforcing the program.

127. Another potential governance risk in the area is the incoherent landowner information system, which reflects a lack of clarity in the historical land tenure. Even if the landowner information system does not crucially influence management of the area, unclear landowner rights and multiple owners of one parcel may complicate grassland management. Also, this is one of the reasons why there is only a five-year period defined in agri-environmental measures contracts with farmers for grassland management. Restitution claims are ongoing, and although this process is mostly completed, the clarification of all landowners and reorganization of land use throughout both PLAs may still take a long time due to missing information.

### iv. Environmental Risks to Sustainability

128. There are no identified acute risks to environmental sustainability in the Bílé Karpaty and Beskydy PLA regions. The main environmental risks are long-term, and will require ongoing efforts by concerned citizens, local organizations, and the PLA administrations to eventually

successfully address. Environmental sustainability is therefore considered moderately likely. The primary environmental threats continue to be those present before the project, identified in Table 1: suburban development, inadequate landscape management and subsidies for environmental conservation, and long-term demographic and socio-economic trends that continue to drive a decline in traditional agricultural methods. Partially driving the challenges with the application of agri-environmental measures is that many farms are larger, such as up to 4,000 hectares, so even when farmers apply agri-environmental measures the measures are applied to a large area at the same time, instead of the landscape receiving a heterogeneous treatment. A single land-management technique applied across a large area at an approximately single point in time has negative long-term consequences for biodiversity because it tends to homogenize the landscape. A paradigm explicitly aligning farmers with nature conservation has not yet been established, and farmers are reluctant to risk the majority of their income (received from government subsidies) by undertaking non-government sanctioned land management practices that may have positive environmental effects.

## B. Catalytic Role: Replication and Scaling-up

129. There are multiple achievements identified in this report that could be replicated in other similar situations, but there are at least two specifically that should be highlighted. First, the idea of farm plans proposes a new approach for the region in agricultural policy for an efficient management model to restore and conserve specific grassland biodiversity in mountain areas. The second important approach that should be scaled up to other protected areas, also in neighboring countries like Slovakia, are the GMAUs established by PLA offices for farmers (see Section V.B.iii on Outcome 2).

130. Although project results have been presented on international conferences, published in local journals and newspapers, and discussed with other nature conservation stakeholders in the Czech Republic, a more active approach to replicate results could have been designed into the project, particularly linking the Czech Republic and Slovakia in areas that could truly benefit from the lessons and approach of the Carpathian Grasslands project for which the two project areas are on the international border. According to project participants, it had been envisioned that more replication activities would be undertaken, but these had to be scaled back because of the reduction in budget related to the decreasing exchange rate. For example, the conference organized by the project on grassland conservation was held only at the national level instead of being an international conference. The project did undertake a study tour to Slovakia with more than twenty farmers. Another interesting activity that was replicated internally was the practice of the PLA administration having an annual meeting with local mayors, which was replicated in Beskydy PLA from Bílé Karpaty.

131. The broadest catalytic effect of the project has been that the conclusions regarding the need for more location specific management measures, based on the environmental monitoring data from the project areas, have been recognized at the national level in the MoA, MoE, and VÚZE – all three institutions where national-level agri-environmental policy is being developed. The lessons from the Carpathian Grasslands project are relevant throughout the Czech Republic.

132. Future replication will require resources, but the project partners should take the initiative to actively build partnerships and work with organizations in other regions to replicate their valuable experiences on national and international levels. The main achievements that should be replicated are:

- Best management practices for grazing and mowing of grasslands in mountains areas: The results from permanent monitoring provide a good basis for recommendations for appropriate grassland management in relation to specific species protection. The main findings have been well summarized and presented in several publications, for both site managers and farmers.
- Farm plans as a new policy tool and approach for specific grassland management: The project presented farm planning as a necessary tool to ensure effective species conservation on grasslands. This approach could be applied at a national level using examples from pilot areas in Beskydy and Bílé Karpaty PLAs. Unfortunately there remain significant barriers in the form of institutional bureaucracies – some agri-environmental measures even require farmers to measure the amount of nitrogen deposited by their livestock per square meter of soil. Some project stakeholders indicated that even government officials can't always agree between themselves on the interpretation of regulations. Even at present, the older generation of farmers that doesn't have a high level of information technology capacity is disadvantaged in understanding and participating in the current agri-environmental measures.
- Adaptation of marketing techniques for support of agricultural products associated with grasslands. Regional branding of agricultural products based on trademarks and labels proving the origin of the products, such as wool and leather from PLA Beskydy, has the potential to improve marketing of these products and attract more customers. The content and the development of this idea, including the criteria for processing, have been well demonstrated in the two pilot sites, and one of the branding efforts supported by the project has turned into a national-level association. However, regional branding is not significantly established in surrounding countries like Slovakia.
- Justification for a list of additional habitat sites hosting globally important species that has been identified during the project and increases the natural value of the site. Systematic monitoring and mapping of grasslands has brought new data on species occurrence. Well-selected mapping methods adapted to local conditions, as well as appropriate monitoring methodology, should provide positive examples to other protected areas. Findings have also highlighted the importance of regular data collection, particularly in the case of continuing biodiversity decline in mountains areas of Central and Eastern Europe.
- The project has been well structured and the basic idea can be used to develop other projects under environmental programs funded by the Government of the Czech Republic or EU. The project has shown the importance of a holistic approach to biodiversity protection and the involvement of all relevant stakeholders. The project took a comprehensive approach covering nature protection, agricultural production, public awareness, local marketing and rural development, considering the Carpathian region of

the Czech Republic as a whole for the first time. This approach could provide a positive example to other protected areas in developing of new projects.

## C. Monitoring and Evaluation

### i. Project Monitoring, Reporting, and Evaluation

133. Project monitoring and reporting was implemented in a satisfactory manner, but there were some moderately unsatisfactory aspects of the design of the monitoring and evaluation plan, including the logframe, and thus overall monitoring and evaluation is considered to be **moderately satisfactory**.

134. Project monitoring and evaluation was conducted according to standard GEF and UNDP procedures. The project's monitoring and evaluation plan (Annex 9 of the approved MSP brief[17]), however, was severely lacking. It is a confused mix of project outcome monitoring and environmental monitoring more akin to a logframe with output indicators, with no information about project-level monitoring and evaluation, which is normally included in a project's monitoring and evaluation plan. The project document also includes a confusing "Results Framework" (as Annex 8 of the project document), which has results indicators and information on the use of outcome monitoring. A review of project implementation documentation seems to show that this results framework was never seen or heard from again (which was probably for the better). Fortunately, the project inception report clarified some monitoring and evaluation procedures in descriptions of the roles of project partners, noting, for example, that UNDP was responsible for monitoring and evaluation of the project, especially focusing on the monitoring of project results. In addition, the format of UNDP's quarterly progress report includes a section on monitoring and evaluation, which highlighted the required aspects of project monitoring. The main elements of project monitoring were:

- Quarterly progress and financial reports submitted by the project team through the MoE, to UNDP;
- Annual workplan submissions;
- Annual PIRs;
- Annual financial audits, as required;
- Two UNDP supervision missions (5/30/2007 and 5/30/2008);
- A mid-term evaluation was not conducted, as it was not required since the project was an MSP, rather than a full-sized GEF project;
- The terminal evaluation, which was conducted within a year of project completion, as required.

[17] Note: There are typically two documents for UNDP's GEF projects, the approved project brief, and the UNDP ProDoc, which has additional information. The "approved MSP brief" posted on the GEF's website for the Carpathian Grasslands project is 70 pages, compared to 137 pages for UNDP's internal extended version, which is the version on which the project team bases its efforts. In the extended version, the final few pages describe financial management and oversight procedures, and basic project monitoring procedures are also described. It is more common and generally preferable if all such information is included in the approved project brief that is on file with the GEF Secretariat.

135. Project evaluation was included in the project document budget line for project management, and was broken out as a specific line item, for $12,000. The GEF does not recommend a specific percentage of the project budget that should be allocated for evaluation, but this small amount can be considered to be somewhat under-budgeted for a GEF MSP, which can have evaluation budgets of $20,000 or more. The total actual project evaluation costs are not known, but with travel, per diems, and professional fees for two consultants, it is expected that the costs were higher than what was budgeted in the project, and that the UNDP regional office has covered the additional costs.

136. The approved project MSP brief did not include a logframe, which is unusual for GEF projects, even though logframes are often revised following approval. The Carpathian Grasslands project logframe was developed during the inception period of September – December 2005, and included in the inception workshop report, which noted that the logframe would be further revised and submitted to the Steering Committee for approval by June 2006. The inception report logframe did not include multiple baseline and target values for indicators, and the logframe was revised three more times, the last in April 2007. The logframe appears to have been refined and updated over time, rather than significantly revised.

137. The logframe indicators meet some aspects of SMART[18] criteria, but have a number of shortcomings. The inclusion of impact level indicators under the overall project objective is a very welcome approach, even if there are some challenges with species level indicators, as discussed in Section VI.D, below, on impact. Overall, the indicators, as identified in the logframe, are often not highly relevant to the activities and anticipated outcome of the respective project component, of limited scope.

138. Outcome 3, which focused in increasing monitoring capacity and improving biological databases, had only one indicator, which focused on decreasing the number of hectares of degraded vegetation. For Outcome 4 ("National policy for agri-environmental measures that include experience from the project"), there were only two indicators, the second of which was an indicator on replication. The remaining indicator under this outcome did not adequately or appropriately represent a measure of success for the project under this Outcome, which, ultimately, was a major focus of the project's efforts in scaling-up to achieve Global Environmental Benefits. The indicator focused on the number of proposed or adopted national agri-environmental legislation amendments based on the experience of the project. The project's success under this outcome was related to the degree to which agri-environmental measures planned for the future are modified based on the project's experience, such as incorporating farm or land-block specific "farm plan" measures, which will not truly be known for a few more years until the planning process is completed.

139. Indicator targets for all aspects of the project were also quite modest, as they focused on maintaining the status quo rather than significantly improving the situation. Also, indicators and associated targets are sometimes at the output level rather than outcome-oriented / results-based, e.g. an increase in regional origin marketing logos from zero to two.

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

140. Although improving the effectiveness of the management of the Beskydy and Bílé Karpaty PLAs was not one of the specific outcomes of the project, it was an important tangential benefit, also considering the project supported the first strategic priority of the GEF biodiversity focal area of catalyzing the sustainability of protected area systems. As such, the respective score for each PLA derived from the METT was one of the indictors in the logframe as a measure of success for Outcome 1. The baseline score for both PLAs was 43, and the target level for both was 48. The target was achieved and the actual final METT score for Beskydy PLA was 62, and for Bílé Karpaty it was 57.

#### ii. Long-term Environmental Monitoring

141. Through the project's support the technical capacity for environmental monitoring in the region was greatly enhanced, as discussed in Section V.B.iv above on Outcome 3. The PLA administrations (supported by the MoE) play an important role in and are primarily responsible for environmental monitoring in Beskydy and Bílé Karpaty PLAs; they are strongly supported by local NGOs as well – ZO ČSOP Salamandr, the Beskydy local branch of the Czech Union for Nature Conservation, and ZO ČSOP BK, the White Carpathians branch of the same organization. As highlighted in Section VI.A.i on financial sustainability, one of the positive developments is that additional MoE resources have been allocated for environmental monitoring through 2013, using the same monitoring plots. The PLA administrations maintain biological monitoring databases with well developed GIS based systems, and have a high level of technical capacity to perform the work. The Czech Republic has a national monitoring program for Natura 2000 sites, budgeted at 20 million CZK/year ($1.2 million USD). Additional information on environmental monitoring is discussed in Section VI.D below on impacts. Regarding socio-economic monitoring, experience gained during the course of the project and through other research conducted in the region has shown that farmers are typically reluctant to provide information on their economic status and respective situation.

## D. Project Impacts and Global Environmental Benefits

142. The GEF's overarching objective is producing Global Environmental Benefits, and thus for GEF projects "impact" level results are those where there is a demonstrated and documented positive change in the status of environmental resources. Impact level results alone do not equate to Global Environmental Benefits; these are not clearly defined for the GEF's biodiversity focal area, but relate to questions of scale for impact level results. Of the project's species-level impact indicators (see Table 8), all were surpassed with the exception of one, according to the data available. The one environmental indicator that was not positive was the population status of the Corncrake (*Crex crex*), which decreased from 300 calling males to 246 calling males in the aggregate project area. It is possible that the baseline figures are not as accurate as later figures considering the increased capacity and level of effort in environmental monitoring enabled by the project, but there is a sense among the region's technical specialists that the species has declined, and there is not a lone explanation for this decline. It most likely is the result of a combination of factors, including ongoing housing development, and negative environmental factors in the summer of 2008. It is also possible that some landowners have not followed the agri-environmental measures appropriately, and there is increasing tourism in the region.

**Table 8 Carpathian Grasslands Project Species Level Impact Indicators**

| | Baseline | Target Level | 2009 PIR Reported Level |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Gentianella lutescens* | 7 sites (only several specimens at each site; need of extensive grazing) | 7 sites | Bílé Karpaty PLA: 4 sites confirmed in 2008<br>Beskydy PLA: 5 sites in total confirmed in 2008<br>9 sites in TOTAL; the target level achieved |
| *Serratula lycopifolia* | 4 sites (hundreds of specimens at each site; need of meadow cutting) | 4 sites | Bílé Karpaty PLA: 4 sites confirmed in 2008<br>Beskydy PLA: no incidence in the Beskydy Mountains<br>4 sites in TOTAL; the target level achieved |
| Corncrake (*Crex crex*) | 300 couples (need of meadow cutting) | 300 couples | Bílé Karpaty PLA: 2008 - 174 calling males<br>Beskydy PLA: Horní Vsacko bird area – 66 calling males; 72 calling males in total in Beskydy<br>246 calling males in TOTAL; the targeted level has not been achieved and considerable decrease has been registered. The population is endangered by expanding housing development and unsuitable mowing period at the end of June. 86% of the monitored sites with incidence were mowed in 2008. |
| Large Blue (butterfly) (*Maculinea arion*) | 2 sites in Bílé Karpaty<br>2 sites in Beskydy Mountains<br>(need of extensive grazing) | 3 sites<br><br>4 sites | Bílé Karpaty PLA: 2008 4 sites<br>Beskydy PLA: 2008<br>All the 97 sites from last year confirmed.<br>97 sites in TOTAL; target level achieved; however in Bílé Karpaty the species stagnates. |

143. There are outstanding questions about trying to use such specific indicators in short-term periods, such as a three-year project implementation period. It is useful to report environmental monitoring data collected during the project, but it is hard to expect that any changes seen can be considered results of the project. To assess changes in environmental status in a meaningful way, long-term monitoring data is required to identify trends over time, rather than a single annual data point. Particularly with regard to highly mobile species, populations can vary significantly by season and from year to year. Within short periods of time population trends may reflect short-term variable exogenous factors such as annual climatic conditions, rather than reflecting the underlying quality and quantity of the ecosystem, which often experiences changes in a more gradual manner. The Bilé Karpaty PLA scientific staff noted that even five years is too short of a time to identify meaningful changes in species populations. These issues are further complicated by the fact that some agri-environmental measures may benefit some species while harming others. Therefore, one of the recommendations of this evaluation (highlighted at the end of this report) is that populations of indicator species such as *Crex crex* should be evaluated regularly over an extended period of time, and/or should be accompanied by other related indicators such as habitat quality. As previously discussed, such monitoring is being carried out in Beskydy and Bílé Karpaty PLAs, and should provide insights in the future.

144. The project logframe includes an additional impact level indicator: "Area in hectares of degraded land (parcels) and species-poor grassland in hectares converted to grassland rich in species." The baseline / target levels for this indicator were 175 hectares / 275 hectares in Bílé

Karpaty, and 250 hectares / 300 hectares in Beskydy. The target level was achieved in both areas, with 570 hectares in total, a figure based on estimates from regional technical experts.

145. The question of whether the Carpathian Grasslands project will eventually result in Global Environmental Benefits remains open, and is dependent on the form and implementation of agricultural subsidies in the Czech Republic over the next ten years or so. As has been discussed, the agri-environmental measures are being revised nationally for the upcoming 2014 – 2020 EU programming period, and this process is continuing to incorporate experiences and input from the Carpathian Grasslands project. The policies in question are national, so if they are in some extent influenced by the Carpathian Grasslands project this could be said to constitute a Global Environmental Benefit as the results will be extended throughout the country. As has been discussed, the most effective approach from the point of view of biodiversity conservation would be that which allows the greatest flexibility at the smallest scale, but obviously the finer the scale of administration, the higher the transaction and administrative costs involved. In addition, it should be pointed out that there is still a huge gap in terms of knowledge about what the most effective grassland management practices are to support biodiversity, and major gaps in knowledge about the functioning of semi-natural grassland ecosystems. As also highlighted in Section VI.B on catalytic effects, there are a number of project results that are being or may further be replicated nationally within the Czech Republic or in neighboring countries.

## E. Stakeholder Participation in Implementation

146. The protection of globally important species requires a complex approach and integration of biodiversity conservation in all sector policies, such as rural development, agriculture, economy, etc. The Carpathian Grasslands project achieved this integration through cooperation with the relevant and strategic stakeholders, such as governmental representatives, PLA managers, farmers, municipalities, researchers, and NGOs. Thereby there was excellent communication and positive information flows, which helped avoid competition among stakeholders, and clarified agricultural, economic and social aspects of biodiversity protection. As a specific example, an important element of the project implementation was roundtable meetings bringing together different types of stakeholders to discuss some of the specific problems faced in implementation of the agri-environmental measures. Further discussions were held after these sessions to identify the most promising approaches, which were then communicated MoE and MoA by the project team. Through this process the project team identified gaps in agricultural policy and needs for more targeted grassland management.

147. In particular, the strong cooperation helped identify compromises for the future design of agri-environmental schemes, in dissemination of information and public relations activities, and the improvement of agricultural practices on grasslands. As has already been mentioned, the working groups and cooperation networks are integrated into social and institutional structures and are expected to continue in the future. However, not all aspects of cooperation were considered to be excellent by some partners, as there are differences in intensity and efficiency of efforts. It should be noted that local partners do not feel fully involved in decision-making processes at the national level on those measures that will directly influence management practices in protected areas. The main reason for skepticism is that significant changes in legislation urged by PLA managers have not yet been implemented, and there is a

perceived lack of initiative taken by ministry representatives for improvement of biodiversity conservation. In spite of these unsatisfactory feelings, the project has been appreciated for breaking down many communication barriers between the MoA and MoE, and for improving the top-down approach.

148. The strong partnership among stakeholders at the local level is one of the most important outputs of the project, and has been mentioned in many parts of this report. At the local level, stakeholder involvement has taken place at different levels and within structures, and included representatives with a variety of professional backgrounds (farmers, PLA managers, municipality and district offices, NGOs, etc.).

149. One of the most effective elements for involving stakeholders were the GMAUs established in PLA administration offices that considerably improved the communication between farmers and PLA managers. The GMAUs were active in approaching farmers (51 visits of farms) and providing information on issues interesting to farmers, like agricultural subsidies, marketing of added value products, establishment of producer groups, improvement of grazing practices. This allowed facilitated the building of trust with farmers, and meant a big step towards better cooperation. Also, as documented during the evaluation mission, there was strong cooperation with national farmer umbrella organization "Sheep and Goat Association," which provided good assistance during the project in organizing many events and disseminated information, and thus positively influenced farmers' perception of extensive sheep grazing.

150. The second positive example that demonstrates an effective cooperation on local level is associated to the implementation of new marketing approaches such as regional branding. The project team used the existing structures and experiences of the NGO Partnership Foundation for development of new trademarks promoting extensive sheep grazing and for transfer of the know-how from Bílé Karpaty to Beskydy. The relatively long history of branding activities in the region, coupled with assistance of and well-established implementing organization, should contribute to long-term promotion of sheep products and to economic sustainability of small farmers.

# VII. Main Lessons Learned and Recommendations

## A. Lessons from the Targeted Application of New EU Funding Mechanisms for the Conservation of Biodiversity in Carpathian Mountain Grasslands Project

151. ***Key Lesson:*** While the Carpathian Grasslands project significantly increased the breadth and depth of environmental monitoring data available to scientists and thereby to decision-makers, further biological and ecological research is needed to improve understanding of the complexity of natural systems, and to determine what management measures are actually needed to maximize biodiversity conservation and environmental benefits. It is anticipated that it will take significant time and effort before humans learn how to manage nature for maximum benefit to humans and nature. Moreover, the overall prospects for success of a centralized approach to nature planning should be critically analyzed (see recommendations).

152. ***Key Lesson:*** The Carpathian Grasslands project implementation structure proved to be an effective and efficient means of mobilizing technical capacity already in place amongst

stakeholders and building partnerships, while contributing to the sustainability of project results. The specific structure employed was a central coordinating organization, which sub-contracted other stakeholders and partner organizations to carry out project activities.

153. ***Key Lesson:*** The most effective means of communicating with stakeholders is through one on one meetings and contacts. This is particularly true in the case of farmers, who often don't have time to take out of their workweek to attend workshops and meetings. In the case of the Carpathian Grasslands project, the advisory units created to provide one-on-one advice to farmers through on-the-ground farm visits proved more useful than organized seminars or workshops for communicating critical information and raising awareness.

154. ***Lesson:*** Inter-ministerial communication, as well as communication from the local to the national level and vice versa, is critical to achieve consensus and improve understanding of on-the-ground problems, as well as challenges in crafting policy to suit a variety of circumstances. In the Carpathian grasslands project stakeholders felt the most was accomplished when there were strong flows of information on scientific and socio-economic issues between the local and national levels. This point further speaks to the value of broad-based partnerships in tackling complex problems that affect a wide range of stakeholders.

155. ***Lesson:*** As has been seen in other parts of Europe, regional branding and trademarks can be valuable marketing tools to increase visibility of a region's sustainably created natural products, which in turn supports biodiversity conservation. In the experience of the Carpathian Grasslands project, regional trademarks have proven to be more useful in supporting the maintenance of cultural heritage and fostering regional pride rather than greatly expanding the market for regional products, which are mostly produced by hobbyists and individual producers rather than large-scale commercial ventures.

156. ***Lesson:*** Socio-economic monitoring can be difficult because of stakeholder concerns about the disclosure of personal financial information. Surveys of farmers conducted under the Carpathian Grasslands project were not fully successful in collecting and analyzing socio-economic data because of farmers' reluctance to provide detailed information on the financial operations of their farms.

## B. Recommendations for Future Actions Supporting Conservation of Biodiversity in Carpathian Mountain Grasslands

157. ***Key Recommendation:*** As much flexibility as possible should be built into agro-environmental scheme structures, and these need to be better adapted for biodiversity conservation in grasslands. Five-year contracts are restrictive in many ways, and a small number of landscape management titles broadly applied to the diversity of the Czech agricultural landscape is inhibiting; local environmental conditions and needs must be taken into account. A limitation on the "horizontalness" of measures does imply some increased administrative burden, but efficient management structures can limit this administrative increment. Alternative approaches to "centralized" nature management should be strongly considered and analyzed. For example, to truly achieve environmental benefits from landscape management measures, incentives should be provided for farmers to produce long-term environmental benefits, rather than incentives for a particular land management activity that may or may not be appropriate based on the environmental conditions at the time. The

implementation of this new type of paradigm would require considerable time and effort to develop and structure, but such a results-based approach to landscape management would likely prove much more efficient and effective in the long-term. Such an approach would be predicated on the fact that farmers and resource users best know their land and its characteristics at a given point in time, and, with adequate environmental monitoring data, would be enabled to take appropriate action to produce maximum environmental (and socio-economic) benefits. [*For MoA, VÚZE and MoE*]

158. ***Key Recommendation:*** Ecological evidence shows that population numbers of many species reflect significant short-term natural fluctuations, which leaves short-term data on species level indicators with limited value in evaluating the long term effectiveness of conservation initiatives with time scales of two or three years. Either biodiversity monitoring data should be accounted for over a longer period of time (10-15 years), or some complementary data such as habitat assessment or population dynamics model simulation should further inform short-term assessments of biodiversity trends. *[For UNDP and GEF]*

159. ***Key Recommendation:*** While progress is always possible, there are time and bureaucratic limitations to the rate and magnitude of change that stakeholders can generate at centralized levels. To help support and create change on the ground "ahead of the curve," stakeholders should place a priority on education and awareness-raising of resource users and local policy makers. Appropriately structuring financial incentives related to centralized resource disbursement does depend on national policy measures, but much good can result when local level stakeholders at least understand the relationships between land management and environmental impacts. [*For FOA, regional NGOs, and PLA administrations*]

160. ***Recommendation:*** The MoA and other stakeholders, such as the PLA administrations, should examine ways to ensure that small but important landscape features such as wetland areas, springs, tree islands and hedgerows can be incorporated in the agro-environmental measures. Such landscape features may not constitute a large area, but are critical features in the landscape for biodiversity as well as the overall health of the ecosystem. [*For MoA, MoE and PLA administrations*]

161. ***Recommendation:*** Additional research should be conducted in an integrated manner on the complex interrelationships between various types of agricultural land management practices at differing scales and the effects on all aspects of biodiversity. It has been shown that some types of management practices beneficial for one species may be harmful to others, so a much better understanding of ecosystem dynamics is required to identify the optimal approach to agricultural practices for environmental benefits. [*For MoE, MoA, PLA administrations and regional NGOs*]

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

## C. Project Ratings

| Project Component or Objective | Rating | Qualitative Summary |
|---|---|---|
| **Project Formulation** | | |
| **Relevance** | S | The project was relevant to the Czech Republic's environmental and sustainable development priorities, supported the implementation of the CBD and the Carpathian Convention, and was in-line with GEF strategies and priorities. |
| Conceptualization/design | S | The components of the project were logically linked and supported the overall objective. |
| Stakeholder participation | S | The concept originated from an external request for proposals, but was successfully developed through a persistent and patient effort by national-level stakeholders. Relevant organizations such as the PLA administrations were involved in the project design phase. |
| **Project Implementation** | | |
| **Implementation Approach (Efficiency)** | HS | The project management structure was highly efficient and cost-effective. The central coordinating node of FOA supported by the project manager successfully leveraged partner capacity through effective coordination and communication. |
| The use of the logical framework | S | The logframe served as a regular monitoring tool and was referenced by the project team, as well as UNDP, in ongoing oversight to guide results-based management. |
| Adaptive management | HS | There were no changes to the overall project objective, but multiple adaptive management approaches were applied in response to changing institutional and economic conditions. Most notable is the successful completion of the project despite a shortened implementation period. |
| Use/establishment of information technologies | HS | The procurement and use of technology-based approaches to biological monitoring was a critical component of the project and significantly increased the technological capacity of the PLA administrations. |
| Operational relationships between the institutions involved | S | A successful partnership was built between diverse institutions and organizations, particularly the operational relationships between the organizations involved in project implementation. However, there remains room for improvement in coordination and communication between institutions at the national level. |
| Financial management | S | The project was forced into further efficiency gains as the US dollar exchange rate grew less favourable. The management of project finances was well organized and clear, as testified by the financial audits. |
| **Monitoring and Evaluation** | MS | Project monitoring and evaluation was implemented in a satisfactory manner, but there were some moderately unsatisfactory aspects of the design of the monitoring and evaluation plan, including the logframe. |
| **Stakeholder Participation** | HS | Stakeholder participation at the regional and local level was very inclusive and effective, as highlighted by the specific factors below. |
| Production and dissemination of information | S | A website and other dissemination approaches such as participation in local trade events and fairs supported education and awareness building. Public awareness surveys establishing a baseline and end-of-project increment would have been useful. |
| Local resource users and NGOs participation | HS | The project's implementation approach of sub-contracting local trade associations and NGOs was especially effective in leveraging capacity and networks that were already in-place in the region. A key element of project activities was outreach to local resource users (farmers). |
| Establishment of partnerships | S | The project was implemented as a partnership between the MoE, FOA, and the sub-contracted organizations and institutions, including the establishment of partnerships between farmers' associations, NGOs, the PLA administrations, and regional branding initiatives. |
| Involvement and support of governmental institutions | S | Communication and interaction with national-level institutions, particularly the MoA, MoE, and the agricultural research institute was a primary focus of the project approach. |
| **Project Results** | | |
| **Overall Achievement of Objective and Outcomes** | S | The project successfully met the expected outcome targets. Achievement of the overall objective and further results of the project remain to be seen in the |

| Project Component or Objective | Rating | Qualitative Summary |
|---|---|---|
| **(Effectiveness)** | | coming years, and depend on the form of national agri-environmental policies currently being formulated. |
| Objective: Strengthen the conservation management of globally significant biodiversity in species-rich mountain grassland habitats (grasslands and pastures) in two Protected Landscape Areas (PLA) in the Carpathian Mountains of the Czech Republic | S | Although the project would have benefited from improved indicators that better reflected achievements under the project objective, the project did strengthen conservation management in the Czech Republic's Carpathian Grassland ecosystems, and specifically within the two target PLAs. In addition, the project's contribution to improved capacity and level of knowledge for environmental and biodiversity monitoring the PLAs was much needed; such work is critical to understanding human-ecosystem interactions. |
| Expected Outcome 1: Institutional capacity is in place to assess, plan and implement priority conservation management of mountain grasslands taking full advantage of newly available funding mechanisms under the EU Common Agricultural Policy and Natura 2000 | S | A Memorandum of Understanding was established with the MoA for project stakeholders to provide input and support for the implementation of agri-environmental measures; the project exceeded the target METT score in both PLAs, and the project supported implementation of a cross-compliance mechanism. |
| Expected Outcome 2: Farmers' capacity and incentives for and participation in conservation-oriented management of mountain grasslands is improved | S | The target levels of indicators for Outcome 2 were achieved, including maintaining the number of farmers and other land users taking advantage of subsidies for agri-environmental measures, increasing the number of certified organic farms, supporting further development of regional trademarks and logos, and improving methods of analysis on farmers' incomes in relation to sustainable grassland management. |
| Expected Outcome 3: Monitoring and evaluation programme for mountain grassland biodiversity conservation management in place | S | The indicators and targets for this outcome were not well developed, but the level of achievement did surpass the target. Beyond this the project made good progress in enhancing local biodiversity monitoring data, and carrying out other ecological research and field studies. |
| Expected Outcome 4: National policy for agro-environmental schemes incorporates project experience | MS | The full results under Outcome 4 cannot yet be determined because the current policy planning process for agri-environmental measures is ongoing. Indicators for this outcome included a) the number amendments proposed or enacted in national legislation concerning environmentally focused subsidies, based on the experience gained through the project; and b) the number of examples of replications or disseminated project outputs in other regions of the Czech Republic and other European countries where the White Carpathian mountains are located. Both targets were met. |
| **Sustainability** | ML | The overall ML rating for sustainability is based on the fact that the overall rating must not be higher than the lowest of any of the four factors listed below. |
| Financial sustainability | ML | There are limited financial risks to sustainability, but the financial sustainability of the local NGO formed as a result of project efforts, and the long-term financial sustainability of the regional branding and trademark associations are not yet certain. The project implementation approach of sub-contracting partners means that the individual and institutional capacity developed under the project will remain in place. |
| Socio-economic sustainability | ML | The project has significantly strengthened the marketing and technical performance of extensive grazing practices through better targeting of agricultural funding and various marketing strategies, but there remain many socio-economic aspects that influence farmers' livelihoods. The most important risks are the decreasing number of small-scale farmers (those often on the edge of economic viability), and inappropriate urban planning in protected landscapes. |
| Institutional and governance sustainability | ML | The institutional framework for nature protection in the area is well set, with multiple institutions that have clearly defined roles – the MoA, MoE, PLA |

| Project Component or Objective | Rating | Qualitative Summary |
|---|---|---|
| | | administrations, and other stakeholder organizations, such as the Sheep farmers' association. Risks to institutional and governance sustainability are generally low, but, as mentioned previously, there are not yet clear directions about future biodiversity conservation measures in agri-environmental policies in the Czech Republic. Government and institutional bureaucracy remains a major hurdle to effective environmental and agricultural management. |
| Ecological sustainability | ML | The main environmental risks are long-term, and will require ongoing efforts by concerned citizens, local organizations, and the PLA administrations to eventually overcome successfully. The primary environmental threats continue to be those present before the project. There are no identified acute risks to environmental sustainability in the Bílé Karpaty and Beskydy PLA regions. |
| **Overall Project Achievement and Impact** | **S** | |

## VIII. List of Annexes

Annex 1: Evaluation Terms of Reference

Annex 2: GEF Operational Principles

Annex 3: Evaluation Matrix and Interview Guide

Annex 4: List of People Interviewed

Annex 5: Evaluation Mission Agenda

Annex 6: Logframe Summary with Assessed Level of Achievement and PIR Ratings Summary

Annex 7: Evaluation Documentation

Annex 8: Evaluator Curriculum Vitae

## IX. Annex 1: Evaluation Terms of Reference

# Terms of Reference

# for

# Final Evaluation of the Project

# Conservation of biological diversity of Carpathian Mountain grasslands in the Czech Republic through targeted application of new EU funding mechanisms

# PIMS 2255 / Atlas 46799

I. Background information

The objective of this project was to strengthen suitable management and farming on sites of floriferous mountain grasslands (meadows and pastures) with globally significant biodiversity in two protected areas (hereinafter the CHKO) in the Carpathian Mountains in the Czech Republic – i.e. the Beskydy mountains and the White Carpathian mountains.

The project dealt with this objective based on demonstration, especially by proposing the targeted subsidy from the newly available opportunities for EC funding for integrated development of rural areas (especially the supportive payments from CAP and from grants of the LIFE Nature programme), and by wide-range availability of the lessons learned and the best methods for replicating it in the entire system of the Czech CHKOs and in the Carpathian region as a whole.

The project selected the priority sites for conservation of mountain grassland biodiversity in two CHKOs, and specified suitable measures for the management and farming required for them. Where appropriate, the project supported farming (grazing, mowing or their combinations) based on the owners or users of the land – mountain grassland biotopes, using the newly available mechanisms of EC subsidies (especially the supportive payments from CAP and from grants of the LIFE Nature programme).

From this point of view, the project was designed in order to test and verify the assumption that the existing and the future mechanisms of EC subsidies, if they are focused correctly, shall sufficiently compensate the increased additional costs arising to the land owners or users during management of worse accessible grassland sites with high biodiversity. This should better motivate the land owners and users to participate in plans made by protected area administrations for management and farming on mountain grasslands.

The GEF funding focused on creating the initial capacity for determination of the most precious regions of mountain grasslands, gaining and sharing the expertise in organizing the EC funding for projects focused on grassland management, monitoring of outputs of this management and dissemination of knowledge among persons participating in mountain grassland management.

The project provided practical results enabling thus fine adjustment of the EC subsidy mechanisms at the national level and strengthening possibility of their use for mountain grassland conservation.

From the point of view of the design and implementation of the project, the key partners of the project were:
Ministry of the Environment as Executing Agency
Ministry of Agriculture

Agency for Nature Conservation and Land Protection in the Czech Republic
Beskydy Protected Area Administration
White Carpathians Protected Area Administration
Research Institute of Agricultural Economics
Association of Sheep and Goat Farming in the Czech Republic
Local Branch of the Czech Union for Nature Conservation in the White Carpathians
Local Branch of the Czech Union for Nature Conservation Salamandr
Partnership Foundation
UNDP/GEF Regional centre for Europe and CIS (Bratislava)
GEF Secretariat who does not participate in the project implementation; nevertheless the Final Evaluation Report which is to be prepared within this Terms of Reference will be submitted to it.

The project implementation body was FOA – the Foundation for Organic Agriculture.

The project objective as defined in the Project Document:
Strengthening of preservation of the globally significant species management at sites of mountain meadows (meadows and pastures) rich in species in two protected areas in the Carpathians.

Outputs are associated with this objective are presented in Project Logical Framework in Annex 1.

The project was planned for three years and implemented from 1 October 2005 to 31 December 2008.

## II. Objectives of the Final evaluatioN

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.

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

This evaluation is to be undertaken taking into consideration the GEF Monitoring and Evaluation policy (http://thegef.org/MonitoringandEvaluation/MEPoliciesProcedures/mepoliciesprocedures.html) and the UNDP/GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy (http://www.undp.org/gef/05/monitoring/policies.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.

The purpose of the Evaluation is:
To assess overall performance against the Project objectives as set out in Project Document and other related documents
To assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the Project
To critically analyze the implementation and management arrangements of the Project
To assess the sustainability of the Project's interventions.
To list and document initial lessons concerning Project design, implementation and management
To assess Project relevance to national priorities.

Project performance 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 should assess:
Project concept and design
The evaluators will assess the project concept and design. He/she should review the problem addressed by the project and the project strategy, encompassing an assessment of the appropriateness of the objectives, planned outputs, activities and inputs as compared to cost-effective alternatives. The executing modality and managerial arrangements should also be judged. The evaluator will assess the achievement of indicators and review the work plan, planned duration and budget of the project.

Implementation
The evaluation will assess the implementation of the project in terms of quality and timeliness of inputs and efficiency and effectiveness of activities carried out. Also, the effectiveness of management as well as the quality and timeliness of monitoring and backstopping by all parties to the project should be evaluated. In particular, the evaluation is to assess the Project team's use of adaptive management in project implementation.

Project outputs, outcomes and impact
The evaluation will assess the outputs, outcomes and impact achieved by the project as well as the likely sustainability of project results. This should encompass an assessment

of the achievement of the immediate objectives and the contribution to attaining the overall objective of the project. The evaluation should also assess the extent to which the implementation of the project has been inclusive of relevant stakeholders and to which it has been able to create collaboration between different partners. The evaluation will also examine if the project has had significant unexpected effects, whether of beneficial or detrimental character.

The evaluation will assess the aspects as listed in evaluation report outline attached in Annex 2.

In addition to a descriptive assessment, the evaluation will also provide ratings of Project achievements according to GEF Project Review Criteria, using the following divisions: Highly Satisfactory, Satisfactory, Marginally Satisfactory, Unsatisfactory.

Aspects of the Project to be rated are:
Implementation approach;
Management of globally significant species
Outcome/Achievement of objectives (meaning the extent to which the project's environmental and development objectives were achieved).
Stakeholder participation/public involvement
Sustainability;
Replication approach;
Cost-effectiveness;
Monitoring and evaluation

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 critically endangered species been properly and adequately protected within the Beskydy and the White Carpathians Protected Area Administrations?
Have there been changes in behavior of nature conservation bodies and farmers that have contributed to improved conservation? If not, why not?
Is there distinct improvement in biodiversity information turnover and use in decision making among the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture bodies?
Has awareness of farmers and the public on biodiversity conservation and subsequent public participation in biodiversity monitoring and management increased as a result of the project?

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.

## III. Products expected from the evaluation

The key product expected from this final evaluation is a comprehensive analytical report in English that should, at least, include the contents as indicated in Annex 2 of this TOR.

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 mid-term evaluation report shall not exceed 30 pages in total (not including annexes).

## IV. Evaluation team – qualities and requirements

A team of independent experts will conduct the evaluation. The evaluators selected should not have participated in the project preparation and/or implementation and should not have conflict of interest with project related activities.

The evaluation team will be composed of one International Consultant or Team Leader and one National Consultant. The consultants shall have prior experience in evaluating similar projects. Former cooperation with GEF is an advantage.

Team Qualities:
Recent experience with result-based management evaluation methodologies;
Experience applying participatory monitoring approaches;
Experience applying SMART indicators and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios;
Recent knowledge of the GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy;
Recent knowledge of UNDP's results-based evaluation policies and procedures
Competence in Adaptive Management, as applied to conservation or natural resource management projects;

Recognized expertise in the management and sustainable use of wetlands in temperate ecosystems;
Familiarity with protected area policies and management structures in the Czech Republic;
Demonstrable analytical skills;
Work experience in relevant areas for at least 10 years;
Experience with multilateral or bilateral supported conservation projects;
Project evaluation experiences within United Nations system will be considered an asset;
Excellent English communication skills, (the National Consultant also good Czech communication skills)

Specifically, the international expert (team leader) will perform the following tasks:
Lead and manage the evaluation mission;
Design the detailed evaluation scope and methodology (including the methods for data collection and analysis);
Decide the division of labor within the evaluation team;
Conduct an analysis of the outcome, outputs and partnership strategy (as per the scope of the evaluation described above);
Draft related parts of the evaluation report; and
Finalize the whole evaluation report.

The National Consultant will provide input in reviewing all project documentation, especially if available only in Czech, and will provide the International Consultant with a compilation of information prior to the evaluation mission. Specifically, the national expert will perform tasks with a focus on:
Review documents;
Prepare a list of the outputs achieved under project;
Organize the mission programme and provide translation/interpretation when necessary;
Participate in the design of the evaluation methodology;
Conduct an analysis of the outcome, outputs and partnership strategy (as per the scope of the evaluation described above);
Draft related parts of the evaluation report;
Assist Team leader in finalizing document through incorporating suggestions received on draft related to his/her assigned sections.

The evaluation will be undertaken in-line with GEF principles19:
Independence
Impartiality
Transparency
Disclosure

[19] See p.16 of the GEF's Monitoring and Evaluation Policy

Ethical
Partnership
Competencies and Capacities
Credibility
Utility

Individual consultants are invited to submit applications together with their CV for these positions. Joint proposals from two independent evaluators are welcome. Or alternatively, proposals will be accepted from recognized consulting firms to field a complete team with the required expertise within the evaluation budget.

If individual evaluators are selected, UNDP will appoint one Team Leader. The Team Leader will have overall responsibility for the delivery and quality of the evaluation products. Team roles and responsibilities will be reflected in the individual contracts.

## V. Methodology or evaluation approach

An outline of an evaluation approach is provided below, however it should be made clear that the evaluation team is responsible for revising the approach as necessary. Any changes should be in-line with international criteria and professional norms and standards (as adopted by the UN Evaluation Group20). 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 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 conduct a mission to Czech Republic, to Prague and the two pilot sites in Beskydy and White Carpathians to interview the project team, project partners and key stakeholders, and to held a field visit to demonstration sites

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, 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;

[20] See http://www.uneval.org/

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. Interviews will be held with the following organizations and individuals at minimum:
FOA – Foundation for Organic Agriculture,
National Project Director,
Beskydy Protected Area Administration,
White Carpathians Protected Area Administration,
Ministry of Agriculture,
UNDP/GEF RTA from Bratislava Regional Centre,
National Project Manager,
Project Steering Committee members.
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.

VI. Implementation Arrangements

The principal responsibility for managing this evaluation lies with lies with UNDP Regional Center for Europe and CIS in Bratislava (UNDP BRC). UNDP BRC will contract the evaluators and ensure the timely provision of per diems and travel arrangements within the country for the evaluation team. FOA – the Foundation for Organic Agriculture and UNDP will be responsible for liaising with the Evaluators team to set up stakeholder interviews, arrange field visits, coordinate with the Government etc.

The activity and timeframe are broken down as follows:

| Activity | Timeframe | |
|---|---|---|
| | international expert | the national consultant |
| Desk review | Approximately 2 days | Approximately 4 days |
| Briefings for evaluators by FOA and UNDP | Approximately 1 day | Approximately 1 day |
| Field visits, interviews, questionnaires, de-briefings | Approximately 5 days | Approximately 5 days |
| Drafting of the evaluation report | Approximately 3 days | Approximately 2 days |
| Validation of preliminary findings with | Approximately 2 days | Approximately 4 days |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| stakeholders through circulation of draft reports for comments, meetings and other types of feedback mechanisms | | |
| Finalization of the evaluation report (incorporating comments received on first draft) | Approximately 2 days | Approximately 1 day |

Estimated Working Days:
Team Leader (international expert) – 15 working days
Technical experts (national experts) – 17 working days
The proposed date for the in-country mission to the Czech Republic is first half of September 2009.
The draft and final report 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, a draft version shall be circulated for comments to government counterparts and project management: project manager, National Project Director and UNDP/GEF RTA. UNDP and the stakeholders will submit comments and suggestions within 5 working days after receiving the draft.
Timeframe for submission of first draft of the report: within 10 working days after the mission.
The evaluation should be completed by 31 October 2009.
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.

VII. Application process

Applicants are requested to apply online on http://jobs.undp.org by 22 June 2009.
Individual consultants are invited to submit applications together with their CV for these positions. Joint proposals from two independent evaluators are welcome. Or alternatively, proposals will be accepted from recognized consulting firms to field a complete team with the required expertise within the evaluation budget.
If individual evaluators are selected, UNDP will appoint one Team Leader. The Team Leader will have overall responsibility for the delivery and quality of the evaluation products. Team roles and responsibilities will be reflected in the individual contracts.
The application should contain current and complete C.V. in English with indication of the e-mail and phone contact.
Shortlisted candidates will be requested to submit price offer indicating the total cost 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.

.

Annex 1

Project Logical Framework [DELETED FOR SPACE CONSIDERATIONS AND REPETITION]

Annex 2a

## EVALUATION REPORT: SAMPLE OUTLINE

Minimum GEF requirements[1]

**Executive summary**

- ♣ Brief description of project
- ♣ Context and purpose of the evaluation
- ♣ Main conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned

**Introduction**

- ♣ Purpose of the evaluation
- ♣ Key issues addressed
- ♣ Methodology of the evaluation
- ♣ Structure of the evaluation

**The project(s) and its development context**

- ♣ Project start and its duration
- ♣ Problems that the project seek to address
- ♣ Immediate and development objectives of the project
- ♣ Main stakeholders
- ♣ Results expected

**Findings and Conclusions**

*(In addition to a descriptive assessment, all criteria marked with (*) should be rated[21])*

- **Project formulation**
  - Implementation approach (*)(i)
  - Analysis of LFA (Project logic /strategy; Indicators)
  - Lessons from other relevant projects (e.g., same focal area) incorporated into project implementation
  - Country ownership/Driveness
  - Stakeholder participation (*)
  - Replication approach
  - Cost-effectiveness
  - UNDP comparative advantage
  - Linkages between project and other interventions within the sector
  - Management arrangements

- **Implementation**

[1] Please refer to GEF guidelines for explanation of Terminology

[21] The ratings will be: Highly Satisfactory, Satisfactory, Marginally Satisfactory, Unsatisfactory

Implementation approach (*)(ii)
The logical framework used during implementation as a management and M&E tool
Effective partnerships arrangements established for implementation of the project with relevant stakeholders involved in the country/region
Feedback from M&E activities used for adaptive management

- Financial Planning
- Monitoring and evaluation (*)
- Execution and implementation modalities
- Management by the UNDP country office
- Coordination and operational issues

- **Results**
  - Attainment of objectives (*)
  - Sustainability (*)
  - Contribution to upgrading skills of the national staff

**Recommendations**

- Corrective actions for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project
- Actions to follow up or reinforce initial benefits from the project
- Proposals for future directions underlining main objectives

**Lessons learned**

- Best and worst practices in addressing issues relating to relevance, performance and success

**Annexes**

- TOR
- Itinerary
- List of persons interviewed
- Summary of field visits
- List of documents reviewed
- Questionnaire used and summary of results

## Annex 2b Explanation on Terminology Provided in the GEF Guidelines to Terminal Evaluations

**Implementation Approach** includes an analysis of the project's logical framework, adaptation to changing conditions (adaptive management), partnerships in implementation arrangements, changes in project design, and overall project management.

Some elements of an effective implementation approach may include:

- The logical framework used during implementation as a management and M&E tool
- Effective partnerships arrangements established for implementation of the project with relevant stakeholders involved in the country/region
- Lessons from other relevant projects (e.g., same focal area) incorporated into project implementation
- Feedback from M&E activities used for adaptive management.

**Country Ownership/Driveness** is the relevance of the project to national development and environmental agendas, recipient country commitment, and regional and international agreements where applicable. Project Concept has its origin within the national sectoral and development plans

Some elements of effective country ownership/driveness may include:

1. Project Concept has its origin within the national sectoral and development plans
2. Outcomes (or potential outcomes) from the project have been incorporated into the national sectoral and development plans
3. Relevant country representatives (e.g., governmental official, civil society, etc.) are actively involved in project identification, planning and/or implementation
4. The recipient government has maintained financial commitment to the project
5. The government has approved policies and/or modified regulatory frameworks in line with the project's objectives
6. Project's collaboration with industry associations

**Stakeholder Participation/Public Involvement** consists of three related and often overlapping processes: information dissemination, consultation, and "stakeholder" participation. Stakeholders are the individuals, groups, institutions, or other bodies that have an interest or stake in the outcome of the GEF-financed project. The term also applies to those potentially adversely affected by a project.

Examples of effective public involvement include:

1. Information dissemination
2. Implementation of appropriate outreach/public awareness campaigns

Consultation and stakeholder participation

3. Consulting and making use of the skills, experiences and knowledge of NGOs, community and local groups, the private and public sectors, and academic institutions in the design, implementation, and evaluation of project activities

Stakeholder participation

4. Project institutional networks well placed within the overall national or community organizational structures, for example, by building on the local decision making structures, incorporating local knowledge, and devolving project management responsibilities to the local organizations or communities as the project approaches closure
5. Building partnerships among different project stakeholders
6. Fulfilment of commitments to local stakeholders and stakeholders considered to be adequately involved.

**Sustainability** measures the extent to which benefits continue, within or outside the project domain, from a particular project or program after GEF assistance/external assistance has come to an end. Relevant factors to improve the sustainability of project outcomes include:

1. Development and implementation of a sustainability strategy**.**
2. Establishment of the financial and economic instruments and mechanisms to ensure the ongoing flow of benefits once the GEF assistance ends (from the public

and private sectors, income generating activities, and market transformations to promote the project's objectives).

**3.** Development of suitable organizational arrangements by public and/or private sector**.**

4. Development of policy and regulatory frameworks that further the project objectives**.**
5. Incorporation of environmental and ecological factors affecting future flow of benefits.
6. Development of appropriate institutional capacity (systems, structures, staff, expertise, etc.) **.**
7. Identification and involvement of champions (i.e. individuals in government and civil society who can promote sustainability of project outcomes)**.**
8. Achieving social sustainability, for example, by mainstreaming project activities into the economy or community production activities**.**
9. Achieving stakeholders consensus regarding courses of action on project activities.

**Replication approach**, in the context of GEF projects, is defined as lessons and experiences coming out of the project that are replicated or scaled up in the design and implementation of other projects. Replication can have two aspects, replication proper (lessons and experiences are replicated in different geographic area) or scaling up (lessons and experiences are replicated within the same geographic area but funded by other sources). Examples of replication approaches include:

1. Knowledge transfer (i.e., dissemination of lessons through project result documents, training workshops, information exchange, a national and regional forum, etc).
2. Expansion of demonstration projects.
3. Capacity building and training of individuals, and institutions to expand the project's achievements in the country or other regions.
4. Use of project-trained individuals, institutions or companies to replicate the project's outcomes in other regions.

**Financial Planning** includes actual project cost by activity, financial management (including disbursement issues), and co-financing. If a financial audit has been conducted the major findings should be presented in the TE.

Effective financial plans include:

1. Identification of potential sources of co-financing as well as leveraged and associated financing[22].
2. Strong financial controls, including reporting, and planning that allow the project management to make informed decisions regarding the budget at any time, allows for a proper and timely flow of funds, and for the payment of satisfactory project deliverables

[22] Please refer to Council documents on co-financing for definitions, such as GEF/C.20/6. The following page presents a table to be used for reporting co-financing.

3. Due diligence due diligence in the management of funds and financial audits.

*Co financing includes:* Grants, Loans/Concessional (compared to market rate), Credits, Equity investments, In-kind support, other contributions mobilized for the project from other multilateral agencies, bilateral development cooperation agencies, NGOs, the private sector and beneficiaries. Please refer to Council documents on co-financing for definitions, such as GEF/C.20/6.
*Leveraged resources* are additional resources—beyond those committed to the project itself at the time of approval—that are mobilized later as a direct result of the project. Leveraged resources can be financial or in-kind and they may be from other donors, NGO's, foundations, governments, communities or the private sector. Please briefly describe the resources the project has leveraged since inception and indicate how these resources are contributing to the project's ultimate objective.

**Cost-effectiveness** assesses the achievement of the environmental and developmental objectives as well as the project's outputs in relation to the inputs, costs, and implementing time. It also examines the project's compliance with the application of the incremental cost concept. Cost-effective factors include:

1. Compliance with the incremental cost criteria (e.g. GEF funds are used to finance a component of a project that would not have taken place without GEF funding.) and securing co-funding and associated funding.
2. The project completed the planned activities and met or exceeded the expected outcomes in terms of achievement of Global Environmental and Development Objectives according to schedule, and as cost-effective as initially planned.
3. The project used either a benchmark approach or a comparison approach (did not exceed the costs levels of similar projects in similar contexts)

**Monitoring & Evaluation**. Monitoring is the periodic oversight of a process, or the implementation of an activity, which seeks to establish the extent to which inputs, work schedules, other required actions and outputs are proceeding according to plan, so that timely action can be taken to correct the deficiencies detected. Evaluation is a process by which program inputs, activities and results are analyzed and judged explicitly against benchmarks or baseline conditions using performance indicators. This will allow project managers and planners to make decisions based on the evidence of information on the project implementation stage, performance indicators, level of funding still available, etc, building on the project's logical framework.
Monitoring and Evaluation includes activities to measure the project's achievements such as identification of performance indicators, measurement procedures, and determination of baseline conditions. Projects are required to implement plans for monitoring and evaluation with adequate funding and appropriate staff and include activities such as description of data sources and methods for data collection, collection of baseline data, and stakeholder participation. Given the long-term nature of many GEF projects, projects are also encouraged to include long-term monitoring plans that are sustainable after project completion.

Annex 3 Co-financing Table

| Co financing (Type/ Source) | IA own Financing (mill US$) | | Government (mill US$) | | Other Sources* (mill US$) | | Total Financing (mill US$) | | Total Disbursement (mill US$) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Proposed** | **Actual** | **Proposed** | **Actual** | **Proposed** | **Actual** | **Proposed** | **Actual** | **Proposed** | **Actual** |
| Grant | | | | | | | | | | |
| Credits | | | | | | | | | | |
| Loans | | | | | | | | | | |
| Equity | | | | | | | | | | |
| In-kind | | | | | | | | | | |
| Non-grant Instruments * | | | | | | | | | | |
| Other Types | | | | | | | | | | |
| **TOTAL** | | | | | | | | | | |

1. Other Sources refer to contributions mobilized for the project from other multilateral agencies, bilateral development cooperation agencies, NGOs, the private sector etc.

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

3. Describe "Non-grant Instruments" (such as guarantees, contingent grants, etc): *Source/amount/in-kind or cash/purpose*.

*4.* Explain "Other Sources of Co-financing": *Source/amount/in-kind or cash*

Annex 4 Rate tables [DELETED IN TE REPORT FOR SPACE CONSIDERATIONS]

Annex 5 List of documents to be reviewed by the Evaluators

The following documents can be used as a basis for evaluation of the project:

| Document | Description |
|---|---|
| Project document | Project Document |
| Project reports | Inception Report<br>Results of surveys in protected areas in 2006-2008<br>Quarterly Progress Reports<br>TPR Reports<br>SC meeting minutes |
| Annual Project Report to GEF | Project Implementation Reviews - PIRs |
| Other relevant materials: | Financial Audit Reports<br>Memorandum of Understanding with Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Agriculture<br>Partnership Cooperation Agreements<br>Promotional materials and literature<br>Articles in magazines and newspapers<br>Expert studies<br>Collections of articles<br>Maps<br>Various databases<br>Research results |

Annex 6 Cost breakdown template

| | Units* | Rate | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Home office** | | | |
| Desk review | | | |
| Briefings by UNDP and PM | | | |
| Drafting of the evaluation report | | | |
| Validation of preliminary findings with stakeholders through circulation of draft reports for comments, meetings and other types of feedback mechanisms | | | |
| Finalization of the evaluation report (incorporating comments received on first draft) | | | |
| **Mission** | | | |
| Field visits, interviews, questionnaires, de-briefings | | | |
| International travel to and from Prague | | | |
| Local travel (to be arranged and covered by the project) | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| DSA (overnights) | | | |
| **TOTAL** | | | |

* Estimates are indicated in the TOR, the applicant is requested to review and revise, if applicable.

# X. 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.

# XI. Annex 3: Evaluation Matrix and Interview Guide

## Carpathian Grasslands Project Evaluation Matrix

| Evaluative Criteria | Questions | Indicators | Sources | Methodology |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Relevance**: How does the project relate to the main objectives of the UNCBD and GEF focal areas, and to the environment and development priorities at the local, regional and national levels for biodiversity conservation in Carpathian mountain grassland ecosystems? | | | | |
| Is the project relevant to UNCBD and other international convention objectives? | • How does the project support the objectives of the UNCBD?<br>• Does the project support other international conventions, such as the Carpathian Convention, and the UNFCCC? | • UNCBD priorities and areas of work incorporated in project design<br>• Level of implementation of UNCBD in Czech Republic, and contribution of the project<br>• Priorities and areas of work of other conventions incorporated in project design<br>• Extent to which the project is actually implemented in line with incremental cost argument | • Project documents<br>• National policies and strategies to implement the UNCBD, other international conventions, or related to environment more generally<br>• UNCBD and other international convention web sites | • Documents analyses<br>• Interviews with project team, UNDP and other partners |
| Is the project relevant the GEF biodiversity focal area? | • How does the project support the GEF biodiversity focal area and strategic priorities | • Existence of a clear relationship between the project objectives and GEF biodiversity focal area | • Project documents<br>• GEF focal areas strategies and documents | • Documents analyses<br>• GEF website<br>• Interviews with UNDP and project team |
| Is the project relevant to the Czech Republic's environment and sustainable development objectives? | • How does the project support the environment and sustainable development objectives of the Czech Republic?<br>• Is the project country-driven?<br>• What was the level of stakeholder participation in project design?<br>• What was the level of stakeholder ownership in implementation?<br>• Does the project adequately take into account the national realities, both in terms of institutional and policy framework in its design and its implementation? | • Degree to which the project supports national environmental objectives<br>• Degree of coherence between the project and nationals priorities, policies and strategies<br>• Appreciation from national stakeholders with respect to adequacy of project design and implementation to national realities and existing capacities<br>• Level of involvement of government officials and other partners in the project design process<br>• Coherence between needs expressed by national stakeholders and UNDP-GEF criteria | • Project documents<br>• National policies and strategies<br>• Key project partners | • Documents analyses<br>• Interviews with UNDP and project partners |
| Is the project addressing the needs of target beneficiaries at the local and regional levels? | • How does the project support the needs of relevant stakeholders?<br>• Has the implementation of the project been inclusive of all relevant stakeholders?<br>• Were local beneficiaries and stakeholders adequately involved in project design and implementation? | • Strength of the link between expected results from the project and the needs of relevant stakeholders<br>• Degree of involvement and inclusiveness of stakeholders in project design and implementation | • Project partners and stakeholders<br>• Needs assessment studies<br>• Project documents | • Document analysis<br>• Interviews with relevant stakeholders |
| Is the project internally coherent in its design? | • Are there logical linkages between expected results of the project (log frame) and the project design (in terms of project components, choice of partners, structure, delivery mechanism, scope, budget, use of resources etc)?<br>• Is the length of the project sufficient to achieve project outcomes? | • Level of coherence between project expected results and project design internal logic<br>• Level of coherence between project design and project implementation approach | • Program and project documents<br>• Key project stakeholders | • Document analysis<br>• Key interviews |

| Evaluative Criteria | Questions | Indicators | Sources | Methodology |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| How is the project relevant with respect to other donor-supported activities? | • Does the GEF funding support activities and objectives not addressed by other donors?<br>• How do GEF-funds help to fill gaps (or give additional stimulus) that are necessary but are not covered by other donors?<br>• Is there coordination and complementarity between donors? | • Degree to which program was coherent and complementary to other donor programming nationally and regionally | • Documents from other donor supported activities<br>• Other donor representatives<br>• Project documents | • Documents analyses<br>• Interviews with project partners and relevant stakeholders |
| Does the project provide relevant lessons and experiences for other similar projects in the future? | • Has the experience of the project provided relevant lessons for other future projects targeted at similar objectives? | | • Data collected throughout evaluation | • Data analysis |
| **Effectiveness:** To what extent have/will the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been/be achieved? | | | | |
| Has the project been effective in achieving the expected outcomes and objectives? | • Has the project been effective in achieving its expected outcomes?<br>1. Institutional capacity in place to assess, plan and implement priority conservation management of mountain grasslands taking advantage of newly available EU funding mechanisms<br>2. Farmers' capacity and incentives for and participation in conservation-oriented management of mountain grasslands is improved<br>3. Monitoring and evaluation programme for mountain grassland biodiversity conservation management in place<br>4. National policy for agro-environmental schemes incorporates project experience | • See indicators in project document results framework and logframe | • Project documents<br>• Project team and relevant stakeholders<br>• Data reported in project annual and quarterly reports | • Documents analysis<br>• Interviews with project team<br>• Interviews with relevant stakeholders |
| How is risk and risk mitigation being managed? | • How well are risks, assumptions and impact drivers being managed?<br>• What was the quality of risk mitigation strategies developed? Were these sufficient?<br>• Are there clear strategies for risk mitigation related with long-term sustainability of the project? | • Completeness of risk identification and assumptions during project planning and design<br>• Quality of existing information systems in place to identify emerging risks and other issues<br>• Quality of risk mitigations strategies developed and followed | • Project documents<br>• UNDP, project team, and relevant stakeholders | • Document analysis<br>• Interviews |
| What lessons can be drawn regarding effectiveness for other similar projects in the future? | • What lessons have been learned from the project regarding achievement of outcomes?<br>• What changes could have been made (if any) to the design of the project in order to improve the achievement of the project's expected results? | | • Data collected throughout evaluation | • Data analysis |
| **Efficiency**: Was the project implemented efficiently, in-line with international and national norms and standards? | | | | |
| Was project support provided in an efficient way? | • Was adaptive management used or needed to ensure efficient resource use?<br>• Did the project logical framework and work plans and any changes made to them use as management tools during implementation?<br>• Were the accounting and financial systems in place adequate for project management and producing accurate and timely financial | • Availability and quality of financial and progress reports<br>• Timeliness and adequacy of reporting provided<br>• Level of discrepancy between planned and utilized financial expenditures<br>• Planned vs. actual funds leveraged | • Project documents and evaluations<br>• UNDP<br>• Project team | • Document analysis<br>• Key interviews |

| Evaluative Criteria | Questions | Indicators | Sources | Methodology |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | information?<br>• Were progress reports produced accurately, timely and responded to reporting requirements including adaptive management changes?<br>• Was project implementation as cost effective as originally proposed (planned vs. actual)<br>• Did the leveraging of funds (co-financing) happen as planned?<br>• Were financial resources utilized efficiently? Could financial resources have been used more efficiently?<br>• Was procurement carried out in a manner making efficient use of project resources?<br>• How was results-based management used during project implementation? | • Cost in view of results achieved compared to costs of similar projects from other organizations<br>• Adequacy of project choices in view of existing context, infrastructure and cost<br>• Quality of results-based management reporting (progress reporting, monitoring and evaluation)<br>• Occurrence of change in project design/ implementation approach (i.e. restructuring) when needed to improve project efficiency<br>• Cost associated with delivery mechanism and management structure compare to alternatives | | |
| How efficient are partnership arrangements for the project? | • To what extent partnerships/linkages between institutions/ organizations were encouraged and supported?<br>• Which partnerships/linkages were facilitated? Which ones can be considered sustainable?<br>• What was the level of efficiency of cooperation and collaboration arrangements?<br>• Which methods were successful or not and why? | • Specific activities conducted to support the development of cooperative arrangements between partners,<br>• Examples of supported partnerships<br>• Evidence that particular partnerships/linkages will be sustained<br>• Types/quality of partnership cooperation methods utilized | • Project documents and evaluations<br>• Project partners and relevant stakeholders | • Document analysis<br>• Interviews |
| Did the project efficiently utilize local capacity in implementation? | • Was an appropriate balance struck between utilization of international expertise as well as local capacity?<br>• Did the project take into account local capacity in design and implementation of the project?<br>• Was there an effective collaboration between institutions responsible for implementing the project? | • Proportion of expertise utilized from international experts compared to national experts<br>• Number/quality of analyses done to assess local capacity potential and absorptive capacity | • Project documents and evaluations<br>• UNDP<br>• Beneficiaries | • Document analysis<br>• Interviews |
| What lessons can be drawn regarding efficiency for other similar projects in the future? | • What lessons can be learnt from the project regarding efficiency?<br>• How could the project have more efficiently carried out implementation (in terms of management structures and procedures, partnerships arrangements etc…)?<br>• What changes could have been made (if any) to the project in order to improve its efficiency? | • | • Data collected throughout evaluation | • Data analysis |
| **Results**: What are the current actual, and potential long-term, results of activities supported by the project? | | | | |
| How is the project effective in achieving its long-term objectives? | • Will the project achieve its overall objective to "Strengthen the conservation management of globally significant biodiversity in species-rich mountain grassland habitats (grasslands and pastures) in two Protected Landscape Areas (PLA) in the Carpathian Mountains of the Czech Republic"<br>• Is the globally significant biodiversity of the target area likely to be conserved?<br>• What barriers remain to achieving long-term objectives, or what necessary steps remain to be taken by stakeholders to achieve sustained impacts and Global Environmental Benefits? | • Change in capacity:<br>o To pool/mobilize resources<br>o For related policy making and strategic planning<br>o For implementation of related laws and strategies through adequate institutional frameworks and their maintenance<br>• Change in use and implementation of sustainable livelihoods<br>• Change in the number and strength of barriers such as:<br>o Knowledge about biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity resources, and | • Project documents<br>• Key stakeholders<br>• Monitoring data | • Documents analysis<br>• Meetings with UNDP, project team and project partners<br>• Interviews with project beneficiaries and other stakeholders |

| Evaluative Criteria | Questions | Indicators | Sources | Methodology |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | • Are there unanticipated results achieved or contributed to by the project? | economic incentives in these areas<br>o Cross-institutional coordination and inter-sectoral dialogue<br>o Knowledge of biodiversity conservation and sustainable use practices by end users<br>o Coordination of policy and legal instruments incorporating biodiversity conservation and agro-environmental strategies<br>o Agro-environmental economic incentives for stakeholders | | |
| How is the project effective in achieving the objectives of the UNCBD? | • What are the impacts or likely impacts of the project?<br>o On the local environment;<br>o On economic well-being;<br>o On other socio-economic issues. | • Provide specific examples of impacts at species, ecosystem or genetic levels, as relevant | • Project documents<br>• UNCDB documents<br>• Key Stakeholders<br>• Monitoring data | • Data analysis<br>• Interviews with key stakeholders |
| Future directions for results | • How can the project build on its successes and learn from its weaknesses in order to enhance the potential for impact of ongoing and future initiatives? | | • Data collected throughout evaluation | • Data analysis |
| **Sustainability**: Are the conditions in place for project-related benefits and results to be sustained? | | | | |
| Are sustainability issues adequately integrated in project design? | • Were sustainability issues integrated into the design and implementation of the project? | • Evidence / quality of sustainability strategy<br>• Evidence / quality of steps taken to ensure sustainability | • Project documents and evaluations<br>• UNDP and project personnel and project partners<br>• Beneficiaries | • Document analysis<br>• Interviews |
| Financial sustainability | • Did the project adequately address financial and economic sustainability issues?<br>• Are the recurrent costs after project completion sustainable? | • Level and source of future financial support to be provided to relevant sectors and activities after project ends<br>• Evidence of commitments from international partners, governments or other stakeholders to financially support relevant sectors of activities after project end<br>• Level of recurrent costs after completion of project and funding sources for those recurrent costs | • Project documents and evaluations<br>• UNDP and project personnel and project partners<br>• Beneficiaries | • Document analysis<br>• Interviews |
| Institutional and governance sustainability | • Were the results of efforts made during the project implementation period well assimilated by organizations and their internal systems and procedures?<br>• Is there evidence that project partners will continue their activities beyond project support?<br>• What degree is there of local ownership of initiatives and results?<br>• Were laws, policies and frameworks addressed through the project, in order to address sustainability of key initiatives and reforms?<br>• What is the level of political commitment to build on the results of the project? | • Degree to which project activities and results have been taken over by local counterparts or institutions/organizations<br>• Level of financial support to be provided to relevant sectors and activities by in-country actors after project end<br>• Efforts to support the development of relevant laws and policies<br>• State of enforcement and law making capacity<br>• Evidences of commitment by government enactment | • Project documents and evaluations<br>• UNDP and project personnel and project partners<br>• Beneficiaries | • Document analysis<br>• Interviews |

| Evaluative Criteria | Questions | Indicators | Sources | Methodology |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | • Are there policies or practices in place that create perverse incentives that would negatively affect long-term benefits? | of laws and resource allocation to priorities | | |
| Social-economic sustainability | • Did the project contribute to key building blocks for socio-economic sustainability?<br>• Did the project contribute to local stakeholders' acceptance of effective agro-environmental schemes?<br>• Are there adequate market incentives to ensure sustained environmental and economic benefits achieved through the project? | • Example of contributions to sustainable socio-economic changes in support of national development goals and strategies<br>• Examples of contributions to sustainable socio-economic changes in support of the objectives of the UNCBD and other conventions | • Project documents and evaluations<br>• UNDP, project personnel and project partners<br>• Beneficiaries | • Interviews<br>• Documentation review |
| Environmental sustainability | • Are there risks to the environmental benefits that were created or that are expected to occur?<br>• Are there long-term environmental threats that have not been addressed by the project?<br>• Have any new environmental threats emerged in the project's lifetime? | • Evidence of potential threats such as infrastructure development<br>• Assessment of unaddressed or emerging threats | • Project documents and evaluations<br>• Threat assessments<br>• Government documents or other external published information<br>• UNDP, project personnel and project partners<br>• Beneficiaries | • Interviews<br>• Documentation review |
| Individual, institutional and systemic capacity development | • Is the capacity in place at the regional, national and local levels adequate to ensure sustainability of the results achieved to date?<br>• Were the necessary related capacities for lawmaking and enforcement built? | • Elements in place in those different management functions, at the appropriate levels (regional, national and local) in terms of adequate structures, strategies, systems, skills, incentives and interrelationships with other key actors | • Project documents<br>• UNDP, project personnel and project partners<br>• Beneficiaries<br>• Capacity assessments available, if any | • Interviews<br>• Documentation review |
| Replication | • Were project activities and results replicated nationally and / or scaled up?<br>• What was the project contribution to replication or scaling up actively or passively promoted?<br>• Were project activities and results replicated or scaled-up in other countries? | • Number/quality of replicated initiatives<br>• Number/quality of replicated innovative initiatives<br>• Scale of additional investment leveraged | • Other donor programming documents<br>• Beneficiaries<br>• UNDP, project personnel and project partners | • Document analysis<br>• Interviews |
| Challenges to sustainability of the project | • What are the main challenges that may hinder sustainability of efforts?<br>• Have any of these been addressed through project management?<br>• What could be the possible measures to further contribute to the sustainability of efforts achieved with the project? | • Challenges in view of building blocks of sustainability as presented above<br>• Recent changes which may present new challenges to the project<br>• Education strategy and partnership with school, education institutions etc. | • Project documents and evaluations<br>• Beneficiaries<br>• UNDP, project personnel and project partners | • Document analysis<br>• Interviews |
| Future directions for sustainability and catalytic role | • Which areas/arrangements under the project show the strongest potential for lasting long-term results?<br>• What are the key challenges and obstacles to the sustainability of results of the project initiatives that must be directly and quickly addressed?<br>• How can the experience and good project practices influence the strategies for biodiversity conservation of mountain grasslands | | • Data collected throughout evaluation | • Data analysis |

| Evaluative Criteria | Questions | Indicators | Sources | Methodology |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | through agro-environmental schemes?<br>• Are national decision-making institutions prepared to continue improving their strategy for effective biodiversity conservation through agro-environmental schemes? | | | |

# Carpathian Grasslands Project Terminal Evaluation Interview Guide

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

Key
**Bold** = GEF Evaluation Criteria
*Italic* = GEF Operational Principles

---

I. PLANNING / PRE-IMPLEMENTATION

A. **Relevance**
   i. Did the project's objectives fit within the priorities of the local government and local communities?
   ii. Did the project's objectives fit within national priorities?

*B. Incremental cost*
   i. Did the project create environmental benefits that would not have otherwise taken place?
   ii. Does the project area represent an example of a globally significant environmental resource?

*C. Country-drivenness / Participation*
   i. How did the project concept originate?
   ii. How did the project stakeholders contribute to the project development?
   iii. Do local and national government stakeholders support the objectives of the project?
   iv. Do the local communities support the objectives of the project?
   v. Are the project objectives in conflict with any national level policies?

D. Monitoring and Evaluation Plan / Design *(M&E)*
   i. Were monitoring and reporting roles clearly defined?
   ii. Was there either an environmental or socio-economic baseline of data collected before the project began?

II. MANAGEMENT / OVERSIGHT

A. Project management
   i. What were the implementation arrangements?
   ii. Was the management effective?
   iii. Were workplans prepared as required to achieve the anticipated outputs on the required timeframes?
   iv. Did the project develop and leverage the necessary and appropriate partnerships with direct and tangential stakeholders?
   v. Were there any particular challenges with the management process?
   vi. If there was a steering or oversight body, did it meet as planned and provide the anticipated input and support to project management?
   vii. Were risks adequately assessed during implementation?
   viii. Did assumptions made during project design hold true?
   ix. Were assessed risks adequately dealt with?
   x. Was the level of communication and support from the implementing agency adequate and appropriate?

*B. Flexibility*
   i. Did the project have to undertake any adaptive management measures based on feedback received from the M&E process?
   ii. Were there other ways in which the project demonstrated flexibility?
   iii. Were there any challenges faced in this area?

C. **Efficiency** *(cost-effectiveness)*
   i. Was the project cost-effective?
   ii. Were expenditures in line with international standards and norms?
   iii. Was the project implementation delayed?
   iv. If so, did that affect cost-effectiveness?
   v. What was the contribution of cash and in-kind co-financing to project implementation?
   vi. To what extent did the project leverage additional resources?

D. Financial Management
   i. Was the project financing (from the GEF and other partners) at the level foreseen in the project document?
   ii. Where there any problems with disbursements between implementing and executing agencies?
   iii. Were financial audits conducted with the regularity and rigor required by the implementing agency?
   iv. Was financial reporting regularly completed at the required standards and level of detail?
   v. Did the project face any particular financial challenges such as unforeseen tax liabilities, management costs, or currency devaluation?

E. Co-financing *(catalytic role)*
   i. Was the in-kind co-financing received at the level anticipated in the project document?
   ii. Was the cash co-financing received at the level anticipated in the project document?
   iii. Did the project receive any additional unanticipated cash support after approval?
   iv. Did the project receive any additional unanticipated in-kind support after approval?

F. Monitoring and Evaluation *(M&E)*
   i. Project implementation M&E
      a. Was the M&E plan adequate and implemented sufficiently to allow the project to recognize and address challenges?
      b. Were any unplanned M&E measures undertaken to meet unforeseen shortcomings?
      c. Was there a mid-term evaluation?
      d. How were project reporting and monitoring tools used to support adaptive management?
   ii. Environmental and socio-economic monitoring
      a. Did the project implement a monitoring system, or leverage a system already in place, for environmental monitoring?
      b. What are the environmental or socio-economic monitoring mechanisms?
      c. Have any community-based monitoring mechanisms been used?
      d. Is there a long-term M&E component to track environmental changes?
      e. If so, what provisions have been made to ensure this is carried out?

*E. Full disclosure*
   i. Did the project meet this requirement?
   ii. Did the project face any challenges in this area?

III. ACTIVITIES / IMPLEMENTATION

A. **Effectiveness**
   i. How have the stated project objectives been met?
   ii. To what extent have the project objectives been met?
   iii. What were the key factors that contributed to project success or underachievement?
   iv. Can positive key factors be replicated in other situations, and could negative key factors have been anticipated?

B. Stakeholder involvement and public awareness *(participation)*
   i. What were the achievements in this area?
   ii. What were the challenges in this area?
   iii. How did stakeholder involvement and public awareness contribute to the achievement of project objectives?

**IV. RESULTS**

A. Outputs
   i. Did the project achieve the planned outputs?
   ii. Did the outputs contribute to the project outcomes and objectives?

B. Outcomes
   i. Were the anticipated outcomes achieved?
   ii. Were the outcomes relevant to the planned project impacts?

C. Impacts
   i. Was there a logical flow of inputs and activities to outputs, from outputs to outcomes, and then to impacts?
   ii. Did the project achieve its anticipated/planned impacts?
   iii. Why or why not?
   iv. If impacts were achieved, were they at a scale sufficient to be considered Global Environmental Benefits?
   v. If impacts or Global Environmental Benefits have not yet been achieved, are the conditions (enabling environment) in place so that they are likely to eventually be achieved?

D. Replication strategy, and documented replication or scaling-up *(catalytic role)*
   i. Did the project have a replication plan?
   ii. Was the replication plan "passive" or "active"?
   iii. Is there evidence that replication or scaling-up occurred within the country?
   iv. Did replication or scaling-up occur in other countries?

V. LESSONS LEARNED

A. What were the key lessons learned in each project stage?
B. In retrospect, would the project participants have done anything differently?

**VI. SUSTAINABILITY**

A. Financial
   i. To what extent are the outcomes of the project dependent on continued financial support?
   ii. What is the likelihood that any required financial resources will be available to sustain the project outcomes/benefits once the GEF assistance ends?
   iii. Was the project successful in identifying and leveraging co-financing?

iv. What are the key financial risks to sustainability?

B. Socio-Political
   i. To what extent are the outcomes of the project dependent on socio-political factors?
   ii. What is the likelihood that the level of stakeholder ownership will allow for the project outcomes/benefits to be sustained?
   iii. Is there sufficient public/stakeholder awareness in support of the long-term objectives of the project?
   iv. What are the key socio-political risks to sustainability?

C. Institutions and Governance
   i. To what extent are the outcomes of the project dependent on issues relating to institutional frameworks and governance?
   ii. What is the likelihood that institutional and technical achievements, legal frameworks, policies and governance structures and processes will allow for the project outcomes/benefits to be sustained?
   iii. Are the required systems for accountability and transparency and the required technical know-how in place?
   iv. What are the key institutional and governance risks to sustainability?

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

**Attachment A: GEF Evaluation Criteria and Key Definitions**

**Evaluation Criteria:**

Relevance: The extent to which the activity is suited to local and national development priorities and organizational policies, including changes over time.
Effectiveness: The extent to which an objective has been achieved or how likely it is to be achieved.
Efficiency: The extent to which results have been delivered with the least costly resources possible. Also called cost-effectiveness or efficacy.
Results: The positive and negative, and foreseen and unforeseen, changes to and effects produced by a development intervention. In GEF terms, results include direct project outputs, short- to medium term outcomes, and longer-term impact including global environmental benefits, replication effects and other, local effects.
Sustainability: The likely ability of an intervention to continue to deliver benefits for an extended period of time after completion. Projects need to be environmentally as well as financially and socially sustainable.

**Key Definitions:**

Output: Tangible product (including services) of an intervention that is directly attributable to the initiative. Outputs relate to the completion (rather than the conduct) of activities and are the type of results over which managers have most influence. An example of an output for a GEF biodiversity project is a training session held in environmental monitoring, or an environmental education video.
Outcome: Actual or intended changes in capacity, behavior, awareness, knowledge or other condition that an intervention(s) seeks to address. Using the same example, an outcome could be the implementation of a community-based monitoring program, or an increase in awareness about a particular environmental issue.
Impact: Actual or intended changes in environmental status as measured by broadly accepted indicators, such as keystone species' population trends, species density, ecosystem extent or quality (or rate of expansion / contraction), etc.

## XII. Annex 4: List of People Interviewed

| Name | Organization / Position |
|---|---|
| Klara Tothova | UNDP |
| Maxim Vergeichik | UNDP |
| Jan Dvorsky | FOA (Currently advisor to Ministry of Environment) |
| Tomas Zidek | FOA (Currently Ministry of Finance) |
| Miroslava Moravkova | FOA |
| Jaroslav Humpal | Institute of Agricultural Economics and Information |
| Alice Pickova | Institute of Agricultural Economics and Information |
| Jindrich Spicka | Institute of Agricultural Economics and Information |
| Jaroslav Prazan | Institute of Agricultural Economics and Information |
| Miluse Abrahamova | Institute of Agricultural Economics and Information |
| Michal Pastvinsky | Ministry of Environment |
| Petr Parizek | Ministry of Environment |
| Jan Jima | Ministry of Environment |
| Ivan Landa | Ministry of Agriculture |
| Anna Vejvodova | Ministry of Agriculture |
| Radim Machu | Partnership Foundation |
| Tomáš Růžička | Partnership Foundation |
| Radka Sachrová | Partnership Foundation |
| Vít Mareš | The Association of Sheep and Goat Breeders SCHOK CR |
| František Jaskula | Beskydy PLA |
| Zdeněk Miklas | FOA (currently farmer) |
| Světla Studenská | Consultant |
| Milan Škrott | Beskydy PLA |
| Petr Wolf | Beskydy PLA |
| Jiří Němec | Bílé Karpaty PLA |
| Zbyněk Piro | FOA (Currently Bílé Karpaty PLA) |
| Marie Petru | Bílé Karpaty PLA |
| Ivana Jongepierová | Bílé Karpaty PLA |

## XIII. Annex 5: Evaluation Mission Agenda

**Date:** September 14th to September 18th, 2009
**Team Leader / International Consultant:** Josh Brann
**National Consultant:** Miroslava Cierna-Plassmann

The mission agenda was well organized and the program structured in an effective way. Other than one meeting that did not take place (with František Pojer, director of the Agency for Nature Conservation and Landscape Protection of the Czech Republic), all fixed arrangements have been accomplished within the planned time schedule. All important stakeholders from the project team and its partners, including managers, experts, farmers, NGO partners and local coordinators, have been interviewed in a manner that provided enough space for in-depth discussion and in an open and friendly atmosphere. Interviewed persons openly expressed their opinions and experiences about aspects of the projects, and pointed out all significant findings, including both benefits and weak points.

| Date and Time | Subject | Location |
|---|---|---|
| **Sunday, September 13th** | | |
| | Evaluators arrival in Prague, accommodation in a hotel | Prague |
| **Monday, September 14th** | | |
| 11:00 | Tomáš Zídek, former FOA project manager: Introduction to project implementation.<br>Jan Dvorský, former FOA project manager: Project implementation and important outputs<br>Miroslava Morávková: Project financial management | UZEI, Praha – Vinohrady, Mánesova 75<br>Conference room<br>Organization by M. Míčová |
| 13:00 | Lunch | Organization by M. Míčová |
| 14:00 | Jaroslav Humpál, UZEI: Experiences of sheep and goat farmers with Agro - Environmental Scheme (AES)<br>Alice Picková, Jindrich Spicka, UZEI: Company management in productive handicapped conditions CHKO Beskydy and Bílé Karpaty<br>Miluše Abrahamová, UZEI: Support of CHKO agriculture product distribution<br>(ÚZEI – Institute of Agricultural Economics and Information) | UZEI, Praha – Vinohrady, Mánesova 75 |
| **Tuesday, September 15th** | | |
| 9:00 | Ministry of Environment<br>Meeting with Michal Pastvinský, National Project Director<br>Ing. Petr Pařízek, Division of Nature Conservation and Landscape Protection<br>Ing. Jan Jima, Division of Nature Conservation and | Ministry of Environment, Vršovická 1442/65, Praha 10 |

| Date and Time | Subject | Location |
|---|---|---|
| | Landscape Protection | |
| 12:00 | Lunch | Praha 1 |
| 13:00 | Ministry of Agriculture: Meeting with Ivan Landa, Director of Environmental Support for the Rural Development Program and Anna Vejvodova, responsible for design of agri-environmental schemes | Ministry of Agriculture, Těšnov 17, Praha 1 |
| 16:00 | Move to Brno by car | Provided by Jan Dvorský |
| 19:00 | Accommodation in a hotel | Close to Brno – book a hotel by M. Míčová |
| **Wednesday, September 16th** | | |
| 9:00 | Jaroslav Pražan, UZEI: Farm Plans and Biodiversity - How to Continue in AES? | Partnership Foundation, Údolní 33, Brno |
| 10.30 | Meeting with representatives of Partnership Foundation Tomáš Růžička: Branding and regional product trademarks, Radka Sachrová : Regional mark People in Beskydy, Radim Machu: Traditions of Bílé Karpaty | Partnership Foundation, Údolní 33, Brno |
| 12:00 | Lunch | Zlobice Koliba, SCHOK in ČR. Provided by Vít Mareš. |
| 13:30 | The Association of Sheep and Goat Breeders SCHOK CR (SCHOK v ČR) – meeting with the president Vít Mareš - presentation of project output: Enhancement of grassland management through positive motivation of farmers. | Zlobice by Malhostovice, area of SCHOK, Malhostovice |
| 15:00 | Field trip in the area of Zlobice | |
| 16:00 | Move to Rožnov pod Radhoštěm by car | Provided by Jan Dvorský |
| 19:00 | Accommodation in a hotel | *Rožnov - book a hotel by M. Míčová* |
| **Thursday, September 17th** | | |
| 9:00 | Beskydy PLA – meeting with management team<br>František Jaskula, director: Project benefits for the PLA Beskydy<br>Zdeněk Miklas, local project team leader for PLA Beskydy: presentation of project activities and outputs in Beskydy PLA, and gaps in agri-environmental measures<br>Světla Studenská, consultant – Study of socio-economic and agricultural factors of farms protect sites<br>Milan Škrott, Petr Wolf – capacity building and GIS application<br>Individual responsible for results of research and monitoring in PLA Beskydy | Beskydy PLA, Nádražní 36, Rožnov pod Radhoštěm |
| 11:30 | Meeting with members of Czech Union for Nature | |

| Date and Time | Subject | Location |
|---|---|---|
| | Conservation (ČSOP) – Salamandr - discussion of research and locality monitoring | |
| 12:30 | Lunch | Provided by Z. Miklas |
| 14:00 | Visit of chosen localities and farmers involved to project – Zdeněk Miklas | |
| 18:00 | Move to Veselí nad Moravou by car | Provided by Jan Dvorský |
| 19:00 | Accommodation in a hotel | Veselí nad Moravou - book a hotel by M. Míčová |
| **Friday, September 18th** | | |
| 9:00 | Bílé Karpaty PLA – meeting with management team<br>Jiří Němec, director of the PLA Bílé Karpaty: Capacity building and main project output<br>Zbyněk Piro, local project leader in Bílé Karpaty: Presentation of project activities in Bílé Karpaty PLA<br>Ivana Jongepierová - Results of research and biodiversity monitoring in Bílé Karpaty PLA<br>Marie Petru: Public awareness activities | Vzdělávací a informační středisko Bílé Karpaty, o.p.s., Bartolomějské 47, Veselí nad Moravou |
| 10:30 | End of mission | |
| 11:00 | Depart by car to Břeclav, provide by Jan Dvorský | Train departure at 12:55 p.m. from Břeclav to Bratislava by train EC Slovan, arrival to Bratislava at 1:47 p.m. |
| 15.00 | De-briefing with UNDP Regional Office<br>Ms. Klara Tothova<br>Mr. Maxim Vergeichik | UNDP Regional Office Bratislava, Slovakia |

# XIV. Annex 6: Logframe Summary with Assessed Level of Achievement and PIR Ratings Summary

| PIR Rating Summary | | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rating of Project Toward Meeting Objective | National Project Manager / Coordinator | S | S | n/s |
| | UNDP Country Office | S | S | n/s |
| | UNDP RTA | S | n/s | n/s |
| Rating of Project Implementation | National Project Manager / Coordinator | S | S | n/s |
| | UNDP Country Office | HS | HS | n/s |
| | UNDP RTA | HS | n/s | n/s |

| Project Strategy | Indicator | Baseline | Target | Level of Achievement Reported in 2009 PIR | Terminal Evaluation Assessment |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

| Project Strategy | Indicator | Baseline | Target | Level of Achievement Reported in 2009 PIR | Terminal Evaluation Assessment |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Long-term objective: To ensure that the globally significant sites of mountain meadows rich in species in the Czech Republic are preserved.<br><br>Objective of the program: Support to maintain management of globally significant species at their habitats on mountain meadows rich in species (meadows and pastures) in two CHKOs (Protected Landscape Area) in the Carpathians. | Populations of globally significant species remain at basic level<br><br>Gentianella lutescens<br><br>Serratula lycopifolia<br><br>Crex crex<br><br>Maculinea arion | 7 sites (only several specimens at each site; need of extensive grazing)<br><br>4 sites (hundreds of specimens at each site; need of meadow mowing)<br><br>300 couples (need of meadow mowing)<br><br>2 sites in White Carpathians<br><br>2 sites in Beskydy (need of extensive grazing) | 7 sites<br><br>4 sites<br><br>300 couples<br><br>3 sites<br><br>4 sites | Wh.C.PA: 4 sites confirmed in 2008<br>BM PA: 5 sites in total confirmed in 2008<br>9 sites in TOTAL; the target level achieved<br><br>Wh.C.PA: 4 sites confirmed in 2008<br>BM PA: no incidence in the Beskydy Mountains<br>4 sites in TOTAL; the target level achieved<br><br>Wh.C.PA: 2008 - 174 calling males<br>BM PA: Horní Vsacko bird area – 66 calling males; 72 calling males in total in the Beskydy Mountains<br>246 calling males in TOTAL; the targeted level has not been achieved and considerable decrease has been registered. The population is endangered by expanding housing development and unsuitable mowing period at the end of June. 86% of the monitored sites with incidence were mowed in 2008.<br><br>Wh.C.PA: 2008 4 sites<br>BM PA: 2008<br>All the 97 sites from last year confirmed.<br>97 sites in TOTAL;<br>target level achieved;<br>however in the White Carpathians the species stagnates. | Concur with level reported in PIR for all targets under objective. Environmental monitoring was a strong point of the project, and the data reported represents the most accurate knowledge at the time reported. As noted in the evaluation report however, any changes in environmental status within such a short timeframe are difficult to attribute to project interventions. |

| Project Strategy | Indicator | Baseline | Target | Level of Achievement Reported in 2009 PIR | Terminal Evaluation Assessment |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number of hectares in system of protection of species diversity on mountain grasslands (zones I in CHKO). | 603 ha | 603 ha | Wh.C.PA 2008: 553 ha.<br>BM PA 2008: 500 ha<br>1,553 ha in TOTAL, target level achieved. | Concur with level reported in PIR. |
| | Area in hectares of degraded land (parcels) and species-deficient grasslands converted to grasslands rich in species. | 175 ha in CHKO White Carpathians (out of total estimated area of 750 ha) *<br><br>250 ha in CHKO Beskydy (out of total estimated area of 2400 ha) *<br><br>* it involves exp. estimation of meadow area originally rich in species which is farmed neither by grazing nor by mowing, and are gradually contaminated by self-seeding woods | 275 ha in CHKO White Carpathians<br><br>300 ha in CHKO Beskydy | Wh.C.PA: 288 ha<br><br>BM PA: 300 ha<br><br>570 ha in TOTAL<br><br>Target level achieved. | Concur with level reported in PIR, though as mentioned in the logframe the baseline figures rely on estimates. |
| Output 1: Established institutional capacity for evaluation, planning and implementation of | METT (Monitoring of Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool) - achieved score. | Beskydy 43<br>White Carpathians 43 | Beskydy 48<br>White Carpathians 48 | BM PA: 62 points<br><br>Wh.C.PA: 57 points, target level achieved | Concur with level reported in PIR. |

| Project Strategy | Indicator | Baseline | Target | Level of Achievement Reported in 2009 PIR | Terminal Evaluation Assessment |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| priority conservation management of mountain meadows, with full use of new subsidies from EC, CAP and Natura 2000 funds. | CROSS-COMPLIANCE (C-C system)<br><br>Effective use of new EC policy tools. Part of C-C system is focused at inspection of meeting the requirements of NATURA 2000 measures. Environmentally friendly ways of farming will also be included in farmer inspection system. | C-C system has not been created | C-C system is completely defined; management and inspection system is functional. | C-C system completely defined; GAEC management and inspection; SMR 1 – 8 and Minimum requirements for AE scheme is functional as of 31 December 2008. | The cross-compliance system was developed, but this mostly took place after the project work ended, and was an activity of many institutions at the national level. |
| Output 2:<br>Ability and willingness of farmers to participate in measures focused on mountain meadows have improved. | Number of persons applying for subsidies within the grassland protection measure within Landscape Management Program<br>- other<br>- farmers<br><br>Number of persons applying for subsidies within the grassland protection measure within HRDP and EAFRD<br>- other<br>- farmers | <br><br><br><br>195<br>45<br><br><br>W. Carpat. 195 entities (HRDP) | <br><br><br><br>195<br>45<br><br><br>X<br>X<br>(EAFRD) | 136 Wh.C.PA, out of which:<br>88 others<br>48 farmers<br>191 BM PA, out of which:<br>139 others<br>52 farmers<br>327 in TOTAL, out of which:<br>227 others<br>100 farmers<br><br>Wh.C.PA:<br>215 farmers<br>0 others<br>BM PA:<br>815 farmers,<br>0 others<br>Target level was achieved. | Concur with level reported in PIR. |
| | Number of certified organic farms | 34 in White Carpathians<br><br>7 in Beskydy | +3<br><br>+ 10 | Wh.C.PA: 68 farms<br><br>BM PA: 66 farms<br>Target level was achieved. | Concur with level reported in PIR. |

| Project Strategy | Indicator | Baseline | Target | Level of Achievement Reported in 2009 PIR | Terminal Evaluation Assessment |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Regional origin logos – marketing support of sheep and goat products improves their sales | 0 | 2 | 3 logos,<br>Tradice Bílých Karpat ® (Tradition of White Carpathians)<br>Vyrobeno v Beskydech ® (Produced in the Beskydy Mountains)<br>Ovečka z Moravských Karpat ® (Sheep from Moravian Carpathians)<br>Target level was achieved. | Concur with level reported in PIR. There was however activity on these initiatives prior to and in addition to project support; in other words it should not be implied that the development of the logos was an initiative of the project. Further, this particular activity would have significantly benefited from more outcome level indicators. |
| | Income/profit of farmers for sustainable ways of farming on grasslands | USD/ha of permanent grassland not included in sustainable farming methods.<br><br>USD/ha included in sustainable farming methods. | | Research Institute of Agricultural Economics drew up a study whose results were presented and handed over to the project partners at the Conference held on 17 and 18 April 2008.<br>The following materials were used for evaluation of the agricultural businesses data:<br>Analysis of variance<br>Logical regression<br>Evaluation of financial soundness. | Some preliminary limited research has been carried out, but anecdotal evidence suggests that much greater study is needed. At the same time, it was found difficult to conduct financial research when relying on farmers' willingness to provide data. |
| Output 3: Monitoring and evaluation of the program for management and protection of species diversity of mountain grasslands | Hectares on which the degradation of vegetation species diversity has been stopped or improved | 250 ha in White Carpathians<br><br>400 ha in Beskydy<br><br>* expert estimations by SCHKO before the project commencement | 150 ha in White Carpathians<br><br>150 ha in Beskydy<br><br>New areas where degradation has stopped | WH.C.PA: 405 ha<br>Target level was achieved in Wh.C..<br><br>BM PA: 476 ha<br>Target level in BM was achieved. | Concur with level reported in PIR, but it should again be noted that baseline levels are based on estimates. |

| Project Strategy | Indicator | Baseline | Target | Level of Achievement Reported in 2009 PIR | Terminal Evaluation Assessment |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Output 4: National policy for AEO (agro-environmental measures) which include experience from the project. | Number of amendments of national legislation concerning the subsidies for sustainable farming on permanent grasslands, from national or EC sources, which were proposed or adopted on the basis of experience gained in the course of the project implementation. | 0 | 3 | 5<br>Gov. Reg. No. 113/2008 Coll. amending Gov. Reg. No. 75/2007 Coll. on conditions for provision of payments for farm land naturally disadvantaged in mountain regions, in regions with other disadvantages and in Natura 2000 regions.<br>(Note: the Reg. comes into effect on 15 April 2008)<br>Gov. Reg. No. 114/2008 Coll., which amends Gov. Reg. No. 79/2007 Coll. on conditions for application of agri-environmental measures<br>(Note: the Reg. comes into effect on 15 April 2008)<br>Gov. Reg. No. 99/2008 Coll. which amends Gov. Reg. No. 242/2004 Coll. on conditions for implementation of measures for development of non-productive functions of agriculture consisting in protection of environmental components (on implementation of agri-environmental measures) as amended.<br>(Note: the Reg. comes into effect on 31 March 2008) | Concur with results reported in PIR, however a much more in-depth legal and scientific qualitative review and analysis would be need to fully substantiate the degree to which project experience specifically contributed to the passage of the amendments reported. As such, this indicator does not meet the "measurable" or "attributable" aspects of the SMART criteria. |

| Project Strategy | Indicator | Baseline | Target | Level of Achievement Reported in 2009 PIR | Terminal Evaluation Assessment |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number of examples and repetitions or enlargements of project outputs in other regions of the Czech Republic and European countries on whose areas the White Carpathians are located. | 0 | 5 | 8<br>Krkonoše - originální produkt ® (Giant Mountains – Original Product)<br>Šumava - originální produkt ® (Bohemian Forest - Original Product)<br>Moravský kras – regionální produkt ® (Moravian Karst - Regional Product)<br>Orlické hory – originální produkt ® (Orlické Mountains – Original Product)<br>Moravské Kravařsko – regionální produkt ® (Moravské Kravařsko - Regional Product)<br>Polabí – regionální produkt ® (Labe Region – Regional Product)<br>Vysočina – regionální produkt ® (Czech-Moravian Uplands – Regional Product)<br>Gorolsko Swoboda –regionální produkt ® (Gorolsko Swoboda – Regional Product) | Concur with level reported in the PIR. At the same time, while this is technically correct, it is a stretch to state that each additional individual regional brand constitutes a "replication" and as discussed in the evaluation report there are other areas in which the project could have reported replication effects. This indicator also represents another example of lack of clarity for the rationale of the target value. |

## XV. Annex 7: Evaluation Documentation

From left: Project farmer outreach officer, evaluation team member, project manager, evaluation team member


## XVI. Annex 8: Evaluator Curriculum Vitae

Please see PDF version of this evaluation report.

## XVII. Annex 9: Management Response (if any)