Assignment: TF056176

GEF MSP-ALBANIA: BUTRINT NATIONAL PARK: BIODIVERSITY & GLOBAL HERITAGE CONSERVATION PROJECT

GEFIA - GEF-IBRD AS IMPLEMENTING AGENCY

Task Team Leader: 00000187561 - Drite Dade
Approving Manager: 00000018780 - Benoit Paul Blarel

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This GRM report includes the following sections: Overview, Outcome, Components/Outputs, Execution, Program(GEFIA), Completion, Processing, Attached Documents, Disbursements, Internal Comments.
OVERVIEW

Overall Assessments and Ratings

Grant Objectives:
The purpose of the Grant is to assist in the financing of the Integrated Coastal Zone Management and Clean-Up Project (the Project), which has as main objective to protect Albania's coastal and marine natural resources and to promote sustainable tourism development, through building the right incentives at the local level for sustainable land management, and through strengthening the broader regulatory and enforcement framework for coastal zone management in Albania.

Overall progress from 01/14/2008 to 06/30/2011 with regard to Achieving Grant Objectives:
Rating: Moderately Satisfactory (Previously Rated Moderately Satisfactory on 06/30/2010)
Comment:
The global environmental objective of the Butrint National Park Biodiversity and Global Heritage Conservation Project is to support long-term protection of ecosystems by linking biodiversity conservation and sustainable ecosystem management with world heritage conservation in the Butrint wetland complex as an integral part of the implementation of the Albania Integrated Coastal Zone Management and Clean-up Program (ICZMCP). The rating of achieving of this objective is moderately satisfactory because several grant activities could not be completed by the grant closing date.

Overall progress from 01/14/2008 to 06/30/2011 with regard to Implementation of Grant Financed Activities:
Rating: Moderately Unsatisfactory (Previously Rated Moderately Satisfactory on 06/30/2010)
Comment:
The implementation of grant activities has been slow, due to the initial delays of Project start-up and low capacities of Park management to manage the project. In addition, IDA credit suspension for more than a year slowed down the implementation of the GEF grant and other Project components. To date only the Park management plan has been prepared and designs for archeological, cultural and tourist signage and interpretations, and tourist information centers and parking lots were prepared but could not implemented by the grant closing date. Despite the revising of project activities in December 2009, which included the dropping up of the small grant facility and financing key infrastructure investments (namely tourist information centers, bird watching towers, wetland restoration) identified in the Park Management Plan, the project unit and BNP administration did not manage to finalize theses investments by the grant closing date.

Grant follow-up and structure

Description and context of Grant:

Expected follow up (if any): Follow up Bank project/loan/credit/grant

Comment on follow up:

End Date of Last Site Visit: 09/15/2010

Restructuring of Grant:
In December 2009, the activities related with the setting up of the small grant facility were dropped and decision was taken to finance key park infrastructure instead - identified in the Park Management Plan, namely tourist information centers, bird watching towers, wetland restoration etc. This was related to the failure of the Park administration and ICZMCP/PCU to hire consultants to manage the small grant facility (because of low expression of interest from experts - the selection process failed twice) and the insufficient time to finalize all grant activities within the current closing date of September 30, 2010.

Activity Risk
Rating: Substantial Risk
Comment:
The main threats to Butrinti National Park (BNP) come from:
(i) uncontrolled developments and expansion of Ksamilli village which is located in the recreational zone of the BNP;
(ii) increased ecological pressure from agricultural activities, stone extraction/quarries and lack of environmental infrastructure;
(iii) lack of coordination of public investments financed by different government agencies which do not take into account the special status of a world heritage site and national park.

All these issues were identified during project preparation and the implementation support team has closely overseen the whole preparation process of the Park management plan. Given the need to mitigate the risks to the Park's integrity and potential reputational risk for the Bank, the BNP Management Plan was supported by a Social and Legal Assessment (SLA), an additional activity to complement the Social Survey carried out during project preparation. The SLA defined (i) social impacts of the proposed investments in the BNP; (ii) potential impacts of current zoning; (iii) social benefits of the implementation of the BNP management plan; (iv) the analyses of the current legal frame for the establishment and functioning of BNP and (v) stakeholders' new roles, responsibilities and incentives to promote sustainable natural resource management. Although the grant was closed on September 30, 2010 the Bank team has closely followed developments that are likely to affect the integrity of the national park through official letters and dialogue with the MOEFWA.

Critical Issues and Pending Actions for Management Attention

Summary of key issue and pending actions for management attention are listed below.

Critical Issues:
The key actions include: (i) finalization of the Social and Legal Assessment by September 15, 2010; (ii) Finalization of procurement of all packages by August 15, 2010. Although the final draft management plan was prepared on time, agreement was reached with the Government not to officially approve it until the social and legal assessment is complete. This assessment will be an integral part of the Plan. Given the fast approaching closing date and the risk that investments in park infrastructure may not be finalized, the Government is intending to request an extension of six months to the current grant closing date. The approval of such a request will be conditional on the satisfactory completion of the management plan and preparation of an action plan for the extended period.

OUTCOME

Comments on outcome achieved from 01/14/2008 to 06/30/2011

The GEF financed project is part of the Integrated Coastal Zone management and Clean-up Project and it uses the same Results Matrix for this Project. The specific outcome indicators for this grant are: Improved protection and sustainable use of biodiversity in 13,500 hectares of protected areas and wetlands and Increased support for protected areas regime and biodiversity conservation demonstrated by increased participation of local communities in implementation of protected areas management plan and conservation activities.

Grant Outcome Indicators

No Outcome indicators are defined or used for this grant.

COMPONENTS/OUTPUTS

Output and Implementation by Component
A. PROTECTED AREAS MANAGEMENT STRENGTHENING ACTIVITIES

Implementation (Previously Rated Moderately Satisfactory on 06/30/2010)
Rating:
Status: Under Implementation
Planned Output: Preparation of the Management Plan for Butrint National Park
Actual Output: Draft final plan prepared by the local consultants hired by the Gov't. The plan will be endorsed after the legal and social assessment is complete.

B. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

Implementation (Previously Rated Moderately Satisfactory on 06/30/2010)
Rating:
Status: Under Implementation
Planned Output: Technical assistance provided to BNP; and provision of park infrastructure investment. Establishment of the small grant facility was dropped
Actual Output: Local consultants for forestry, agriculture and legal issues have been hired.

C. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

Implementation (Previously Rated Moderately Satisfactory on 06/30/2010)
Rating:
Status: Under Implementation
Planned Output: Hiring of Grant manager was dropped; incremental operating costs
Actual Output: The selection process for the grant manager has failed twice, due to the unavailability of qualified and experienced consultants to be stationed in Saranda

Comment on planned and actual Output

Comment on component implementation progress

EXECUTION

Bank project related to the grant

Project ID / Name: P085089 - BUTRINT GLBL BIODIV & HRTG (GEF MSP)
Project Status: Lending
Global Focal Area: Biodiversity
Product Line: GM - GEF Medium Sized Program

Implementing agency and contact details

Agency: Butrint National Park Administration - Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth, Sport
Contact: Dr. Ylli Cerova
Address: Parku Pombetar i Butrintit, Sarande
Phone: 0682077521
Email: butrint@albaniaonline.net
Website: www.butrint.org
Implementation performance ratings from 01/14/2008 to 06/30/2011 with regard to:

Project Management: (Previously Rated Moderately Satisfactory on 06/30/2010)
  Brief Comment: None

Financial Management: (Previously Rated Moderately Satisfactory on 06/30/2010)
  Brief Comment: None

Counterpart Funding: (Previously Rated Moderately Satisfactory on 06/30/2010)
  Brief Comment: None

Procurement: (Previously Rated Moderately Satisfactory on 06/30/2010)
  Brief Comment: None

Monitoring and Evaluation: (Previously Rated Moderately Satisfactory on 06/30/2010)
  Brief Comment: None

Additional Comments on Implementation Performance:
  The pace of GEF grant implementation has been slow. The overall Project on Integrated Coastal Zone Management and Cleanup Project has been under suspension for more than a year. The capacities of the BNP administration in project management are low and hiring of full time qualified consultants in Saranda city has been very difficult. In December 2009 the ICZMCP was restructured and GEF funded activities related with the setting up of the small grant facility were dropped and decision was taken to finance key infrastructure investments identified in the Park Management Plan, namely tourist information centers, bird watching towers, wetland restoration etc. Todate only the Park management plan has been prepared and few consultancies (on Park archeological, cultural and tourist signage and interpretations, and designs) are either under preparation or contracted. Considering that the Project Closing Date is only a few months away, it is important that the Park administration and PCU follow very closely to be able to complete utilization of the remaining funds.

PROGRAM

Program Specific Ratings

1. Please rate public involvement -
2. Please rate government commitment -
3. Please rate safeguard performance -
4. Please rate arrangements for sustainability -

Program Specific Questions
1. Please comment on additional resources leveraged

**COMPLETION**

**Overall Assessments and Lessons Learned**

*Main lessons learned:*

- **Overall outcome (and its Sustainability):** Rated
  - Comment:

- **Bank Performance:** Rated
  - Comment:

**Additional Assessment**

- **Development / strengthening of institutions:** Rated
  - Comment:

- **Mobilization of other resources:** Rated
  - Comment:

- **Knowledge exchange:** Rated
  - Comment:

- **Client's policy / program implementation:** Rated
  - Comment:

- **Efficiency:** Rated
  - Comment:

- **Replicability:** Rated
  - Comment:

- **Main recommendations to stakeholders:**

- **Main recommendations to Bank Management:**
Manager's comments on this GRM report:
None

GRM report history - Requested on 06/22/2011, due on 09/30/2011

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DOCUMENTS
None

DISBURSEMENTS

Disbursements Summary in USD

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INTERNAL COMMENTS
None