

United Nations Environment Programme



Evaluation of the UNEP-TNC-NatureServe Project “Catalyzing Conservation Action in Latin America: Identifying priority sites and best management alternatives in five globally significant ecoregions”

GF/1010-00-14

Terminal Evaluation Report

by

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List of Acronyms and abbreviations

CDC	–	Conservation Data Center
CHM	–	Clearing House Mechanism
CVC	–	Cauca Valley Corporation
DGEF	–	Division of GEF Coordination
EOU	–	Evaluation and Oversight Unit
GEF	–	Global Environmental Facility
GIS	–	Geographic Information System
GPS	–	Global Positioning System
IABIN	–	Inter American Biodiversity Information Network
IADB	–	Inter-American Development Bank
IUCN	–	International Union for Conservation of Nature
MSP	–	Medium Size Project
NASA	–	National America Space Agency
NBSAP	–	National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans
NGO	–	Non-Governmental Organization
SNAP	–	National System of Protected Areas
TNC	–	The Nature Conservancy
UNEP	–	United Nations Environment Programme
WWF	–	World Wildlife Fund

Executive Summary

1. The terminal evaluation of the project “Catalyzing Conservation Action in Latin America: Identifying Priority Sites and Best Management Alternatives in Five Globally Significant Ecoregions” was carried out during January and March 2005. The objective of the terminal evaluation was to establish project impact and review and evaluate the implementation of planned project activities, outputs and outcomes against actual results. The evaluation encompassed personal interviews with project staff and an evaluation questionnaire sent to key stakeholders, technical and administrative staff and other personnel involved in the project. The evaluation methodology applied by the evaluator also included a comprehensive desk review of project documents, outputs, progress reports, mission reports, websites, expenditure reports, minutes of meetings and annual reports.
2. The “Catalyzing Conservation Action in Latin America” project was executed by The Nature Conservancy’s (TNC) Regional Technical Unit in Quito, Ecuador in collaboration with six Latin American Conservation Data Centers (CDCs) located in Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, Paraguay and Peru. The project was implemented by UNEP and funded with US \$ 750,000 from the GEF trust fund with US \$ 698,489 in co-funding from the TNC and CDCs. The project commenced in September 2000 and ended in September 2003.
3. The objectives of the project were to scientifically analyze and identify priority sites with globally significant biodiversity in five eco-regions; develop and recommend a set of conservation management alternatives and protection strategies for the identified sites; and catalyze the adoption of strategies to protect and conserve the globally significant biodiversity of these sites. The five eco-regions were the Choco/Darien tropical forest, the Eastern Andes Cordillera Real mountain forest, the Peruvian and the Bolivian Yungas and the Chaco Savannas.
4. The project was well designed and the multi-country and multi-organizational nature of the project proved to be a success. The project used an innovative methodology to establish critical sites for conservation based on the eco-regional concept, which is now widely used by conservation institutions such as TNC and WWF in the region. The project was the first attempt of establishing a multi-country conservation plan to influence decision-making processes at country level. In spite of the overall quality of project design there were some flaws that affected project performance and outcome. Dissemination was not considered an important part of the project in the design and as a result was not prioritized in the budget so that at the end of the project there were insufficient funds to disseminate all the results and outputs. Whilst the participatory approach used by the project worked well among the organizations there was little involvement of formal governments representatives in policy discussions.
5. The project activities were implemented in two ‘phases’. The first phase focused on identification of priority areas based on an analysis of three components: (1) A biological-ecological study of more than 4,750 species of flora and fauna and their distribution; (2) An analysis of the conservation state, forest fragmentation and natural vegetation and (3) A study of the National System of Protected Areas (SNAP) of the six countries. The integration of these three large components provided the necessary elements to identify priority sites for conservation. During the second phase of the project, the selected sites were further analyzed using more than 6,500 maps developed covering vegetation, species, habitat, threats and centres of origin. The sites selected included the enclave of xerophytic vegetation of Dagua in the Biogeographic Choco; the Shuar zone of Tsurakú of the Eastern Slopes of the Andes; the high Huallaga spurs in the Peruvian Yungas; the Irupana zone in the Bolivian Yungas and the Chaco Dunes in the Dry Chaco.
6. Best alternatives for conservation and site management proposals were then prepared with local community participation for each site incorporating the environmental and socio-economic conditions. The initiatives designed for the sites ranged from protection and recovery of local fauna and flora, strengthening local capacity for species conservation and management to land use zoning. Specific proposals were developed for alternative agricultural production in Colombia, ecotourism in Ecuador, protection corridors in Peru, protection of spring water sources in Bolivia and recuperation of degraded land in Paraguay.
7. The project was very participatory, involving more than 100 institutions in the whole region at governmental and local levels. More than 70 technicians from the participating institutions in Latin

America were trained in conservation, geographic information systems (GIS), remote sensing analysis, Global Positioning Systems etc. Technicians from other institutions such as the Bolivian Geographic Army Institute were also trained in ARC/INFO, ERDAS, IMAGINE 8.3.1, ARC/VIEW and ARC EXPLORER software.

8. The project helped CDCs establish a functioning network sharing information among members and reinforcing existing biodiversity networks. Many of the CDCs had withered and disappeared before this project and others were too weak to achieve the purpose for which they had originally been designed by TNC. Through this project, however, the CDCs received the most advanced technological tools available at that time and training in their use.

9. The Ministry of Environment in Paraguay participated actively in the project and its involvement led to the creation of a National Park at the site of Dry Chaco. The Regional Government of San Martin in Peru used the maps and management plan produced by the project to establish a regional reserve at the site of Alto Huallaga. Participation of Governments was nevertheless limited. Representatives from the Ministries of Environment, National Parks and Reserves, Institutes of Natural Resource Management and other institutions assigned one or two officers to monitor the project's progress but their role did not go further than reviewing reports and project made little impact on government decision-making processes.

10. In terms of overall project management, the evaluator considers that the performance of the executing and implementing agencies has been very effective. Some administrative and financial management issues occurred, which were to some extent resolved during implementation. UNEP/GEF took longer than expected to transfer the first allotment and this delayed some of the activities. The regional and local participants did not get the opportunity to discuss and design their plan of activities at the beginning of the project and as a result each CDC followed their own administrative modus operandi. This had a negative effect on the overall administrative performance. Similarly, during project design, the multi-country nature of the project was not fully taken into account and insufficient funds were allocated to travel for the project coordinator and the technical coordinator. Thus, the administrative staff had to re-estimate project management costs and find additional sources of funding.

11. Raising awareness and creating an enabling environment for conservation action was achieved successfully at local and community levels in some areas of Bolivia and Ecuador, at regional level in Peru and Colombia and at national level in Paraguay. CDC's partners have continued working along the lines of the project and implementing management alternatives at the sites. TNC is currently using the information gathered in this project for its eco-regional conservation plans and WWF is implementing a project, which incorporates the information gathered through this project in Colombia. At local level the situation differs and for the most part national institutions have not yet adopted or used project-generated information.

12. The project successfully catalyzed additional funds for conservation action. In 2004 the IADB provided financial support to a follow-up project to analyze the viability and sustainability of best projects and programs to be implemented in the selected areas. WWF is currently implementing a project in the Dagua Valley in collaboration with the Colombian CDC. NatureServe, which provided technical support during project implementation, is working together with the Colombian Cauca Valley Corporation (CVC) on a conservation project using the information generated by the UNEP/GEF project. NatureServe is also working together with the Peruvian CDC to raise resources for a research project in the Alto Huallaga and the Ecuadorian CDC and Jatun Sacha are jointly implementing ecotourism programs in the Tsurakú area with funds from external sources.

13. The evaluator shares the opinion expressed by the project staff in the evaluation questionnaire that the project can successfully be replicated in other regions outside of Latin America. The project tools can extend conservation action beyond country borders and bring conservation benefits closer to local communities. The findings from the evaluation questionnaire showed that those involved in the project, TNC and CDCs believe the project could help establish unified rule and policies for biodiversity conservation, establish joint national parks and reserves across borders, and establish protected districts in key economic development areas. In fact, this has already happened in Paraguay when the Government declared the Chaco Dunes a national park despite the presence of gas reserves underground.

14. An important lesson learned from this project is how the training process helped create an environment of trust among participants and it is now possible to share information which was, not too long ago, classified (e.g. maps and geo-referencing information covering country border areas). The training workshops were not only theoretical but gave participants the opportunity to apply what was learned in the field. The eco-regional analytical approach proved to be very practical and has since been adopted by TNC and WWF for the development of conservation plans. In terms of project design the main lessons learned from this project were the need to incorporate a more targeted policy component at national level directed at Governments and provide adequate funds for dissemination of project outputs.

15. It is recommended that a coordination mechanism be established, which could help ensure that the success of the UNEP/GEF project will not be lost. The mechanism would serve as a communication channel from the project design stage to project execution for all key stakeholders and Governments. The evaluator further recommends that resource mobilization and capacity building for local NGOs located in other areas should be increased. Securing external funding and technical support will be critical for the development and management of these sites. Also, it is recommended that the information and database should be strengthened and investment in dissemination processes should be emphasized. The project has been successful in many ways but it seems that the enormous amount of information produced has been underutilized. The CDCs could then play an important role in developing national biodiversity data centers and information banks.

16. The evaluation concludes that the project achieved very good results. It met the expected outputs and results and is therefore rated “very good” (2).

Table 1. Rating of project implementation aspects.

Criteria	Rating (rounded)	Comments
Achievement of objectives and planned results	2	The level of achievement was very good. In some areas, the project achieved outcomes beyond those expected.
Attainment of outputs and activities	1	Attainment of planned results and expected outputs was excellent
Cost effectiveness	1	The amount of quality information and data produced in this project was enormous, even though limited funding was available. Excellent
Impact	3	Impact was good. It created awareness for conservation at local regional level and national level. Local institutions were strengthened and an enormous biodiversity database has been developed to aid conservation policies.
Sustainability	2	The project was effective at creating and raising awareness of these sites, it enhanced CDCs’ capabilities, and CDCs achieved an enhanced level of financial sustainability.
Stakeholder participation	2	Stakeholder participation was generally very good, although government agencies did not fully embrace it.
Implementation approach	1	Implementation was ‘excellent’. The project used a participatory approach and encouraged open discussion.
Financial planning	2	Financial planning was very good. There were no major complications during the implementation of the project.
Replicability	2	Replicability was very good. This project helped set up guides and methodologies to develop ecoregional plans and conduct gap analysis in other regions. Examples of replication (e.g. WWF projects) have been documented
Monitoring and evaluation	2	Monitoring and evaluation was very good. The

		project was regularly monitored through UNEP/GEF Biannual Progress Reports.
Overall rating	2	

Project details

Project Title:	Catalyzing Conservation Action in Latin America: Identifying priority sites and best management alternatives in five globally significant eco-regions		
Project Number:	UNEP project no. GF/1010-00-14		
Duration:	36 months	Commencing:	September 2000
		Completion:	September 2003
Location:	Regional		
Implementing Agency:	United Nations Environment Program P.O.Box 30552, Gigiri, Nairobi, Kenya		
Project cost:	\$1.448 million		
GEF	\$750,000		
Co-financing	\$698,489		

I. Introduction

A. Background

17. The Catalyzing Conservation Action in Latin America project was designed to conserve and promote sustainable use biodiversity by protecting the highest priority sites on Latin American Priority Level One eco-regions.

18. The project was characterized by the participation of different organizations at local, national and international levels. The United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) was the implementing agency and the executive agencies were the Asociación Nacional para la Conservación de la Naturaleza – ANCON (Panama), Corporación Regional del Valle del Cauca (Colombia), Alianza Jatun Sacha/CDC (Ecuador), Universidad Nacional Agraria La Molina (Peru), Asociación Boliviana para la Conservación TROPICO (Bolivia), Ministry of Environment SEAM/CDC (Paraguay). The Project was managed by The Nature Conservancy Regional Technical Unit of Ecuador (TNC) where the general coordination, technical coordination and administrative coordination was located (Figure 1). The project received technical and scientific support from NatureServe, US Geological Survey (USGS), NASA, UNEP-GRID (Sioux Falls, SD), and University of Maryland - UMIACS/Global Land Cover Facility Program.

19. The steering committee was formed by the Task Manager MSP Biodiversity UNEP/Division of GEF Coordination (DGEF); the Project Director and general coordinator, and the Technical Director and technical coordinator of the project, currently Senior Science expert TNC/Northern Tropical Andes Conservation Program.

20. The oversight committee was formed by a Senior Biodiversity Advisor at NatureServe, currently working as a private environmental consultant; a Senior Conservation Advisor for Latin America at NatureServe, the Director of TNC Regional Unit Quito, currently External Affairs Director at TNC/South America Conservation Region, and the Regional Coordinator UNEP Division of Early Warning and Assessment.

21. Some changes occurred during the implementation of the project. The Project Coordinator resigned after the second year and the Senior Conservation Advisor at NatureServe became Project Director during the last year of the project.

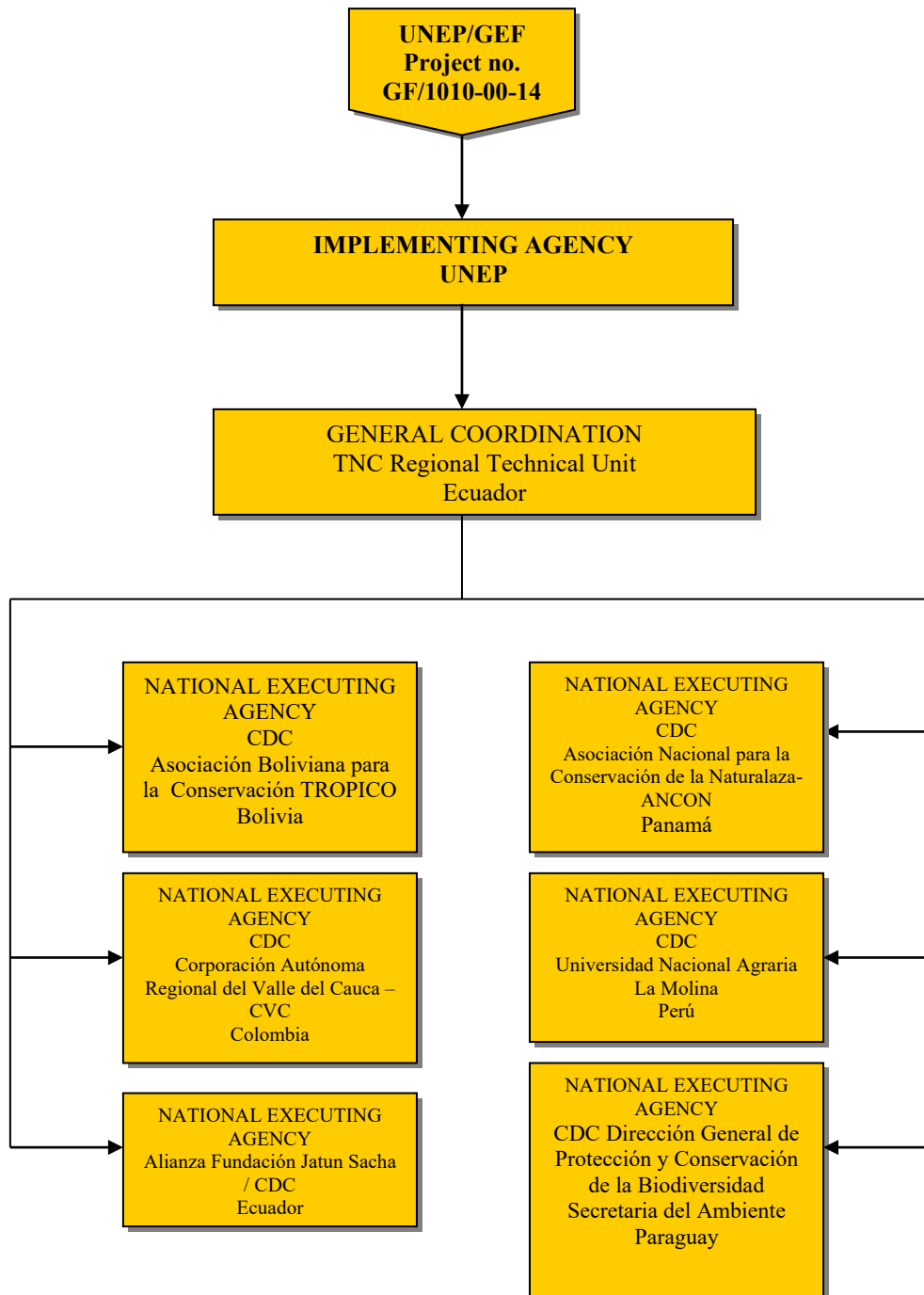


Figure 1. Organigram of UNEP/GEF Project No. GF/1010-00-14

22. The overall objective of the UNEP/GEF project was to catalyze science-based decision-making and conservation action on landscape management alternatives in the important eco-regions, particularly in the development and implementation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAP) and the primary outcome of this project was to identify, with a scientific basis, high priority sites for conservation in five eco-regions of world importance in Latin America. The specific objectives of the project were to scientifically analyze and identify priority sites with globally significant biodiversity in the five eco-regions; develop and recommend a set of conservation management alternatives and protection strategies for the identified sites; and catalyze the adoption of strategies to protect and conserve the globally significant biodiversity of the identified sites in the five eco-regions.

23. Project activities were initiated with a stakeholder workshop. The first workshop took place in Tandayapa in March 7 – 11, 2001, six months after the project was signed and four months after project's start date. Among the participants of this workshop were directors of the executive agencies CDCs of Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, Paraguay and Perú, as well as staff members of the project's main executing agency –The Nature Conservancy Regional Technical Unit in Quito. The primary objective of this workshop was to discuss and approve the methodology on how to carry out the project and agree on the proposed datelines and activities for the first year of its implementation.

24. Once the methodology was agreed upon, the purpose of the first phase of the project was to choose the project. The sites were chosen from among Level One priority areas for conservation in the Chocó/Darien tropical forest (Colombia, Ecuador, Panama); Eastern Andes Cordillera Real montane forest (Ecuador, Colombia, Peru); Peruvian Yungas (Peru); Bolivian Yungas (Bolivia); and Chaco Savannas (Paraguay and Bolivia).

25. During the first phase (identification of priority areas), the analysis involved three large components: (1) A biological-ecological study, based on the analysis of more than 4,473 species of flora and fauna (all mammals, birds, amphibians, and all species of two botanical families per ecoregion), each with a distribution map. The objective of the biological-ecological analysis was to identify core centers of high biodiversity and endemism, of threatened species, etc. (2) An analysis of the conservation state (as well as threats), forest fragmentation and natural vegetation, based on the analysis of satellite images from 1999 to 2002, and (3) A study of the National System of Protected Areas (SNAP) of the six countries, including the location of areas and management systems. The objective of the SNAP study was to identify the zones that did not have a conservation status; those that had legal protection, and those that, regardless of their status within the System, did not have good protection and needed to be reinforced.

26. The integration of these three large components provided the necessary elements to identify priority conservation sites. Generally, they are sites with high diversity, endemism, with a certain amount of threat and, normally, did not form part of National Protected Areas (except the areas which, regardless of their protection status, did not satisfy conservation requirements, in terms of natural areas ecological representation and species protection).

27. During the second phase of the project, the selected sites were analyzed in greater depth and the best alternatives for conservation and site management were identified. Socio-economic aspects of conservation were discussed in workshops to ensure that decision-making together with the local communities, etc. was integrated with conservation opportunities more emphatically than in the preceding phase. The focus in the second phase was on: area delimitation, preparation of base maps, vegetation maps, main objective identification (species, habitat) for conservation (including maps), definition of threats and their origins (even with maps), zoning maps for area management, and identification of the best alternatives for site conservation.

28. The project was funded from the GEF trust fund in the amount of \$750,000.00 with contributions from Conservation Data Centers (CDCs) and the TNC. Planned co-financing was \$ 680,000 against actual co-financing \$ 698,488.83. The total budget was \$1,430,000.00. The duration of the project was 36 months, which ended in September 2003.

B. Evaluation objectives and scope

29. The project "Catalyzing Conservation Action in Latin America: Identifying priority sites and best management alternatives in five globally significant ecoregions" GF/1010-00-14 produced several monitoring and progress reports, which mainly focused on activities and completion deadlines. In addition, this project passed through an extensive mid-term evaluation by the UNEP Oversight and Evaluation Unit (EOU), TNC, and NatureServe.

30. This in-depth terminal evaluation was commissioned by the Evaluation and Oversight Unit (EOU) and carried out by an independent and external evaluator under the guidance of the Chief of Evaluation and Oversight Unit and in close cooperation with the Task Manager, MSP-Biodiversity, Division of GEF Coordination (DGEF/UNEP).

31. The most important objective of the evaluation was to establish project impact and review and evaluate the implementation of planned project activities, outputs and outcomes against actual results. This has been accomplished by reviewing projects outputs and outcomes, implementation of project activities, and measuring indicators of performance. As far as possible, project impacts and outcomes have been determined, lessons of from project implementation have been identified and documented, and recommendations made.

C. Methodology

32. The evaluation was carried out during the period from January 28 to March 28 2005 using a participatory approach. Key staff members, the task manager and other relevant staff were informed and regularly consulted throughout.

33. The findings of the evaluation are based on the following:

- (a) Desk review of project document, outputs, monitoring reports such as quarterly progress reports, mission reports, websites, expenditure reports, minutes of meetings, technical annual reports and other correspondence.
- (b) Personal interviews were conducted of 15 key individuals and stakeholders associated with the project. These included, among others, the Task Manager, steering committee members, site project managers, directors of CDCs, administrative manager, and other key participants of the project.
- (c) Phone interviews and electronic correspondence were conducted during the process, and a detailed electronic questionnaire (attached to the present report in annex 2) was designed and forwarded to key stakeholders, members of the steering committee and local partners in Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, Paraguay and Peru.
- (d) The evaluation indicators are based on the UNEP Terms of Reference. These indicators clearly cover all activities undertaken within the framework of the project. TOR indicators helped to establish project's impact, implementation of planned activities, outputs and outcomes, and actual results. TOR indicators were useful in achieving the objective of the evaluation

34. The time constraint of the present evaluation demanded some trade-offs among the various evaluation activities – interviews, reading documents, analysis of data, report writing. Of particular importance, however, was the use of a comprehensive survey which made it possible to reach most of the key stakeholders, technical and administrative staff and other personnel involved in the project. The questionnaire strengthened the depth and validity of the results. A good rate of response was achieved.

35. The evaluation questionnaire (Annex 2) was designed in a structured manner to comply with the Final Evaluation of the UNEP GEF project' terms of reference and accordingly consisted of ten sections that covered all activities undertaken within the framework of the project. The first section contained questions relating to achievement of objectives and planed results. The second section focused mainly presentation and dissemination of project's outputs and planned activities. The third and fourths sections focused on the project team's performance and project implementation. The fifth section dealt with issues of administrative and financial management. Other sections examined the project's sustainability, the country's adoption and ownership of project's findings, replicability, monitoring and evaluation and the role of UNEP in the project.

36. The questionnaire was sent to all technical and administrative members of the executing agencies, TNC Regional Technical Unit of Ecuador, UNEP/GEF task management unit, UNEP EOU, and technical staff of countries, ministries and environmental agencies. Twenty nine technical and administrative members of the project received the questionnaire and 13 of them completed and returned the questionnaire via e-mail.

37. The recipients were asked to answer only those questions that were familiar. The responses to the questionnaire provided a rating from one to five as described in Table 2. These values were added together and a statistical average was derived. An overall rating was awarded from the average of all

achievement categories included in the questionnaire. Each value was estimated, and then transformed to the UNEP rating system.

38. In addition to the evaluation questionnaire, fourteen interviews were conducted in person and by telephone (Annex III). These interviews included questions that took account of the implementation aspects included in the survey questionnaire such as; achievement of objectives and planned results, attainment of outputs and activities, cost effectiveness, impact, sustainability, stakeholder participation, implementation approach, financial planning, replicability, and monitoring and evaluation. Based on the responses from the interviewees, the consultant gave awarded ratings similar to survey ratings. Project documents and reports were also reviewed as part of the evaluation and rated in similar manner to the survey and interviews.

Table 2. Evaluation rating system

UNEP rating system	Survey values	
1=Excellent	5 = excellent	(90-100 per cent achievement)
2=Very good	4 = very good	(75-89 per cent)
3=Good	3 = good	(60-74 per cent)
4=Satisfactory	2 = satisfactory	(50-59 per cent)
5=Unsatisfactory	1 = unsatisfactory	(less than 49 per cent)

39. The evaluation findings and final ratings for implementation aspects have been based on the following weights –survey (50 per cent), interview (25 per cent), written documents (25 percent). The three main sources of information were generally consistent and the final results are considered to be very reliable and without any bias from the consultant and technical / administrative staff of the project team.

D. Limitations of the evaluation

40. Although the evaluation of this project benefited from various sources of information including an electronic survey, the consultant noted the following limitations.

- (a) Some key personnel, for example, the NatureServe project manager, some members of the steering committee, and other key stakeholders were not available for interviews.
- (b) Some technical staff of local partners and the original Project Director left the project one year prior to its conclusion and were not available for an interview or did not return the electronic questionnaire. The result was that the technical viewpoint was limited to those who were still part of the local organizations and the second and last director of the project. He was, however, a valuable source of information as he was also one of the members who initially designed the project and passed through all the development phases of the project.
- (c) No field visits to conservation areas were conducted for this evaluation and the questionnaire was forwarded mainly to project staff. The evaluation exercise did not, therefore, directly involve targeted stakeholder groups such as local government representatives, NGOs or community groups. Instead the evaluation was conducted as a desk review with the evaluator traveling to the TNC regional office in Quito and two CDCs to interview project staff.

II. Evaluation of the project

A. Goal

41. The primary goal of this project was to conserve and promote sustainable use of biodiversity by protecting the highest priority sites at the appropriate level with five of ‘Level One’ priority ecoregions of Latin America. The four main outcomes from the project activities were expected to:

- Enhance conservation initiatives by providing the decision-makers with the best conservation management alternatives in selected priority one sites of the participating countries in Latin America.
- Adopt and implement conservation management alternatives.
- Enhance the development and implementation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs).
- Strengthen local CDCs as biodiversity information centers providing decision-makers science-based information for conservation action at national level through capacity building.

42. The outcomes were consistent with the projects objective, which was to catalyze science-based decision-making and conservation action on landscape management alternatives in important ecoregions, particularly in the development and implementation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs). According to the two indicators in the project document, which supported the objective, the aim was to:

- Identify geographic conservation needs in 5 ecoregions
- Help governments and stake-holders to implement conservation action

B. Implementation of project activities

Identification of priority unprotected sites

43. The identification of priority unprotected sites with high global biodiversity was achieved using an in-depth scientific and standardized analysis of the global biodiversity considering issues such as: biodiversity index at each site, endangered and flag species residing in the site, accessibility, importance for human consumption, and scientific importance. The project gathered information from biological databases, thematic maps, satellite images and ecological, biological and socioeconomic data.

44. The project successfully achieved this objective through the use of a cartographic modeling, standardization process and analysis and prioritization of critical areas. The standardization process presented some difficulties mainly because of information constraints and differences in technology; as a result, the technical staff had to adapt the project's methodology to the special local conditions prevailing while maintaining key definitions and scale. The prioritization was based on scientific data, methodology and consultation with experts, interest groups, and other stakeholders. The identification and selection of priority areas were based on three large components:

- (1) A biological-ecological study, based on the analysis of more than 6,473 species of flora and fauna (all mammals, birds, amphibians, and all species of two botanical families in each ecoregion), each with a distribution map. The objective of the biological-ecological analysis was to identify; centers of high biodiversity and endemism, threatened species, etc.
- (2) Analyses of the conservation state (as well as threats), forest fragmentation and natural vegetation were conducted based on satellite images from 1999 to 2002, and
- (3) A study of the National System of Protected Areas (SNAP) of the six countries, including the location of areas and management systems. The objective of the SNAP study was to identify zones without any conservation status; those that have legal protection, and those that regardless of their status within the System do not have good protection and need to be reinforced.

45. During the process of site selection, more than 6,500 thematic maps were produced, indicating vegetation types, centers of high diversity and endemism, current and potential threats, forest fragmentation, infrastructure and location of protected areas, among other important issues.

46. The sites selected included the enclave of xerophytic vegetation of Dagua in the biogeographic Choco; the Shuar zone of Tsurakú on the Eastern Slopes of the Andes; the high Huallaga spurs in the Peruvian Yungas; the Irupana zone in the Bolivian Yungas and the Chaco Dunes in the Dry Chaco. Management alternatives have been proposed for each site and prepared with local community participation.

47. The main outputs of Phase One and others products, such as some thematic maps (soils, geomorphology, climate, etc.) that were developed for specific eco-regions were:

- Databases with distribution maps for all species of birds, amphibians, mammals and several families of plants. A total of 6,473 species each one with a distribution range polygon. 2,400 from the Chocó; 1,300 from the Eastern Cordillera Oriental Mountain Forest; 743 from the Peruvian Yungas; 1,430 from the Bolivian Yungas and 600 from the Dry Chaco.
- Base maps of all five eco-regions, which include: contour lines, rivers (main, secondary, tertiary), roads (first to third order), cities, villages and main infrastructure features. Base maps (scale: 1:500 000) follow the international standards of the History and Geography Pan American Institute.
- Vegetation maps of eco-regions based on an international (Pan American) classification initiative to unify the classification of ecological systems in the Americas.
- Biodiversity maps of eco-regions resulting from the combination of the biodiversity maps for animal classes such as birds, amphibians, mammals and several plant families.
- Endemism maps of eco-regions resulting from the combination of the endemism maps of each animal class and several Plant families.
- Conservation Status maps of eco-regions resulting from the combination of the conservation status maps of each animal class and several Plant families.
- Important Conservation Site maps of eco-regions resulting from the combination of important conservation sites for each animal class and several plant families.
- Eco-regional maps of the fragmentation of natural vegetation.
- Eco-regional Ecosystem Diversity maps.
- Eco-regional Priority Areas maps (Gap Analysis).

48. The project used the most advanced cartographic and modeling technology to combine an enormous quantity of biological, ecological, and environmental information. Using Geographic Information Systems (GIS), remote sensing analysis, Global Positioning Systems (GPS), and modeling, facilitated the development of species distribution models, and data sets needed to understand species distributions. The project helped to improve available land-cover information by producing annual eco-regional classified data sets, supplemented by data sets focusing on areas most critical to conserving biodiversity. In addition, this methodology facilitated the development of analytical tools and environmental indicators to provide better measurement of environmental conditions, such as degradation and change in vegetation and determining relationships between surface biophysical parameters and local species composition and biodiversity. The methodology used was cheap, fast and near-real time detection of new threats to habitats.

Identification of plans for conservation management alternatives

49. The identification of management alternatives was part of the second phase of the project and included an analysis of the environmental and socio-economic conditions of the selected sites. The information gathered in workshops held with key stakeholders and decision-makers at the community level made it possible to identify threats and their origins for the preparation of project maps including

zoning maps for area management. Only after this analysis was it possible to formulate alternative management proposals for decision-makers both at national and local levels.

50. Management alternatives were divided into general strategies and specific initiatives for each critical site of conservation. The general strategies were similar for all sites and designed to reduce main threats, motivate community and local participation, and protect objects of conservation, defined in this project as species of animals and plants that were endangered and representative for each critical site selected, (determined during the first and second phase of the project).

51. Specific initiatives were designed for each site based on its particular ecological and biological conditions. These initiatives included protection and recovery of local fauna and flora, especially of endangered species; community participation through education and awareness-raising, as well as strengthening the local capacity for species conservation and management; land use zoning and alternative resources utilization, and several specific proposals of alternative agriculture production in Colombia, ecotourism in Ecuador, protection corridors in Peru, protection of spring water sources in Bolivia, and recuperation of degraded lands in Paraguay.

Strengthening of local capacity and improving information exchange

52. The project activities focusing on capacity building were intended to assist and strengthen local CDCs in order to reinforce biodiversity networks. Originally, the TNC designed and promoted the creation of these Conservation Data Centers with the main objective of being information centers of biodiversity for policy-makers. For many reasons, several of the CDCs disappeared before the project started and many others were weak and were not achieving the purpose for which they were created.

53. As a result of the implementation of this project, the executing institutions –CDCs– have become strengthened from both a technical and an institutional point of view. During the implementation process of the project, and in order to accomplish planned outcomes and outputs of the project, a technical evaluation of each CDC took place. This allowed the coordination team to determine strengths and weakness of each institution. Accordingly, each CDC received the most advanced technological tools, at that time, in order to carry out the project. In addition to technological limitations such software and hardware, the project supported improvement in human capital of CDCs, as well as that of other institutions.

54. The project was highly participatory. It involved more than 100 institutions in the whole region (governmental, private and local). During project development and implementation, more than 70 Latin American technicians from the participating institutions were trained in conservation, geographic information systems (GIS), remote sensing analysis, GPS, etc. In addition, some technicians from other institutions, including governmental and local institutions were trained. For example, during the training workshop in Bolivia, members of the Bolivian Army from the Instituto Geográfico Militar of Bolivia (Bolivia Geographic Army Institute) were trained in using ARC/INFO, ERDAS, IMAGINE 8.3.1, ARC/VIEW, and ARC EXPLORER software. The Instituto Geográfico Militar of Bolivia provided its labs and computers during the training. A similar process took place in Paraguay, Peru, and Ecuador.

55. The project helped CDCs establish a real network providing and exchanging information among each other and reinforcing existing biodiversity networks. This kind of networking in particular was not weak before the implementation of this project. In fact, there was mistrust among CDCs and other local organizations, thus hindering any institutionalization of information networks.

56. The project was to disseminate the information through new or existing initiatives. Even though a clear strategy was developed at the beginning, the project limited dissemination to CD-based materials in Spanish and English, reports in Spanish and English, and the creation of a web site – through NatureServe, www.natureserve.org/latinamerica/prioritysites/indexen.

57. This information strategy sought to influence National Biodiversity Conservation Strategies and Action Plans in order to achieve sound conservation policies. Accordingly, the strategy targeted policy-makers from Ministries of Environment, National Parks and Reserves, Institutes of Natural Resource Management, other environmental institutions to use the methodology and strategic plans developed in this project.

58. The participation of the Government of Paraguay through the Ministry of Environment was significant and consequently a National Park was created in the critical site selected for Paraguay (Dry Chaco). Also, the information produced during project's implementation process was used in other projects and the Regional Government of San Martin in Peru used the findings of the project to establish a regional reserve in the critical site selected (Alto Huallaga). Nevertheless, most of the contacts with governmental institutions were largely geared towards the provision of information. Ministries of Environment, National Parks and Reserves, Institutes of Natural Resource Management, other institutions, assigned one or two officers to monitor the project's progress and their role did not go further than reviewing reports. The participation of these key stakeholders, however, is extremely important in the process of designing policies to improve current conservation practices. The information gathered and generated by the project was very significant and should be used by government agencies. Unfortunately, a policy management component that could deal with these types of issues and could generate more interest from government officers was not prioritized during the design process of the project. As a result, the information network did not completely respond to the objectives and expected outcomes of the project.

Table 3. Planned activities, outputs, and achievements

Objectives and activities	Indicators	Actual achievements
(1) Identification of priority unprotected sites		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Compile critical data on biodiversity and threats to biodiversity from biological databases, map study and satellite images. - Hold workshops to standardize methodology among the CDCs. - Determine cartography analysis, geo-referencing, image classification, selection matrixes, databases and cartographic modeling. Produce preliminary assessments and verify secondary information or further investigation as needed. - Prioritize critical areas based on scientific data, methodology, consultation and conservation imperatives. - produce evaluations of the global biodiversity benefits of the priority sites based on biological and ecological scientific analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data gathered for : Thematic maps, Satellite images, Ecological, Biological, Socioeconomic Data - Standardized process, digitalization, and map standards set. - Cartographic model selected, geo-referencing, image classification, matrix selection process completed. - Areas prioritized within eco-regions. This developed in coordination with stakeholders - Prioritized areas evaluated based on matrices. - One or two sites per eco-region identified and site landscape management approach developed. 	<p>The five sites were selected including the enclave of xerophytic vegetation of Dagua in Colombian Choco; the Shuar zone of Tsurakú in the Eastern Slopes of the Andes of Ecuador; the high Huallaga spurs in the Peruvian Yungas; the Irupana zone in the Bolivian Yungas and the Chaco Dunes in the Dry Chaco.</p>
(2) Identification of plans for conservation management alternatives		
Use the site prioritization to determine effective biodiversity protection and conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A Landscape Ecology Analysis complete with cooperation of national and local 	Management alternatives were divided in general strategies and specific initiatives for each

management alternatives that support and correspond to existing national planning efforts	<p>stakeholders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Landscape management alternatives Identified. 	<p>critical site of conservation. The general strategies included: reducing main threats promoting community and local participation and conservation.</p> <p>Specific initiatives included: protection and recovery of local fauna and flora, especially with endangered species community participation through education and awareness-raising, as well as strengthening of conservation and management at community level land use and use of alternative resources for the production of agricultural products in Colombia ecotourism in Ecuador protection corridors in Peru protection of spring water sources in Bolivia, recuperation of degraded lands in Paraguay</p>
(3) Increased capacity of the CDCs to catalyze conservation actions at national level achieved		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organize workshops for key national and local government policymakers, NGOs, multilateral institutions and other stakeholders and present different prioritized management alternatives to achieve implementation of conservation actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CDCs strengthened at a national level to support biodiversity conservation management alternatives recommended by the project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CDCs have been strengthened from both the technical and institutional viewpoint - More than 70 Latin American technicians from the participating institutions were trained in conservation, GIS, remote sensing analysis, GPS, etc., as well as, some technicians from other institutions including governmental and local institutions.
(4) Enhanced regional co-operation, networking information exchange on the use of spatial technologies, protocols, common methodologies		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Disseminate scientific data 	Enhanced capacity of the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CDCs established a network

<p>and biodiversity protection and conservation management alternatives via the CDC network to key stakeholders through consultation and publications.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Distribute via electronic format also for other key decision-makers, communities, NGOs, and international organizations 	<p>Network of Conservation Data Centers acquired through an exchange of information for conservation purposes</p> <p>Cooperation with international metadata networks established. These included entities such as The ClearingHouse Mechanism (CHM), the InterAmerican Biodiversity Information Network (IABIN), and others.</p>	<p>providing and exchanging information among each other and helped strengthening existing biodiversity networks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dissemination of CD materials in Spanish and English, reports in Spanish and English, and the creation of a web site – through NatureServe - Dissemination for local and national governmental institutions was merely informative.
<p>(5) Building stakeholder support for science-based decision making and promoting application of project outputs</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organize workshops for key national and local government policymakers, NGOs, multilateral institutions and other stakeholders and present different prioritized management alternatives to achieve implementation of conservation actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Informed stakeholders capable of making decisions with gathered information - Policy makers will increase the use of information provided by each Conservation Data Center to achieve sound policy making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Several institutions at international and local levels have used project’s methodology and information in several projects - Dissemination of project information to stakeholders was merely informative, and as a result limited support has been achieved from mainstream governmental institutions, as well as little use of project’s findings in policy-making.

C. Evaluation findings

59. This section provides a more detailed evaluation of the project according to its specific performance indicators. The evaluation findings are based on the findings of the evaluation questionnaire, interviews and written documents.

1. Achievement of planned results and expected outputs

60. The project achieved very good results. The expected outputs and planned results were met. The project used an innovative and flexible methodology and was able to establish five critical sites for conservation. The concept of eco-regions as a tool for conservation practices was not completely developed by the time of project’s implementation. To that extent the methodology used by the project helped to improve the application of the eco-regional concept, which is now widely used by conservation institutions such as TNC and WWF. In addition, the UNEP/GEF project was the first attempt of a multi-country conservation plan to influence decision-making processes at country level.

61. These sites have, among other conditions, some of the highest levels of biodiversity; high numbers of endemic species and several species in danger of or threatened with extinction. The sites are also threatened by human activity and none of these sites are part of local, regional or national protected areas. In some areas, the project went beyond outcomes expected or planned. In others, disappointments were experienced.

(a) Conservation and Sustainable use of biodiversity by protecting high priority conservation sites

62. The primary goal of the project was to preserve the highest priority sites for sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity. In order to achieve this goal, the project used an innovative methodology to determine the location of these critical sites in the five selected eco-regions. The project achieved an 'excellent rating' (1). The project found five critical sites that matched its requirements and conditions. Among the requirements was the condition that the area has high biodiversity and high endemism.

(b) Catalyzing science-based decision making

63. The Project was multi-country and multi-organizational in its approach. Given the complexity of implementing such a project, the results achieved were remarkable in terms of producing biological, ecological and cartographical information for the identification of priority sites and the formulation of conservation management alternatives in a corridor of 5 'priority one' eco-regions and 6 countries from Panama to Paraguay. The executing agencies and other stake-holders of all the participating countries were trained in cutting-edge techniques of GIS/Remote Sensing, biological and ecological database management, plus the best techniques for eco-regional planning and site conservation planning.

64. The main goal of the project was to use the information produced to influence decision-makers, by providing them with tools to implement sound environmental decisions. In this sense, the project achieved a 'good' performance (3) rating. However, only few changes in sectoral policies, laws and regulations and their application, and changes in institutional arrangements, responsibilities and effectiveness, to improve biodiversity conservation and sustainable use have been achieved. The lack of change in sectoral policies, laws and regulations catalyzed by the project can be attributed to poor dissemination of project results. This will be analyzed later in this report. Moreover, each CDC had the responsibility of publicizing results and outputs, but this is still an on-going process. For example, the CDC of Paraguay has recently reprinted project findings and the CDC of Peru is planning to reprint the Peru publication.

(c) Identification of priority unprotected sites

65. This particular output of the project is closely related to the project's primary goal and discussed in Section (a). The project, using its innovative and flexible methodology, reached its target and identified five critical sites of conservation in the critical and globally important five ecoregions. In this respect, the project was rated with the highest score of 'excellent' (1).

66. Among the sites selected was the enclave of xerophytic vegetation of Dagua in Colombian Choco. This selection responds to the unique nature of the Dagua Valley, a dry valley surrounded by humid tropic, in which are found many endemic species, such as cactus (*Frailea colombiana*, *Melocactus loboguerreroi*, *Opuntia bella*) and *Anthurium buenaventurae* (Aracea), *Tillandsia mima* (Bromeliaceae), and various subspecies of other plants and even animals, as is the case of an endemic race of white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus daguae*).

67. Another site selected was the Shuar zone of Tsurakú in the Eastern Slopes of the Andes of Ecuador. This zone is characterized by very high concentrations of mahogany (*Swietenia macrophylla*) in Ecuador, which is overexploited as well as several species of animals such as: 6 species of cracids among them Salvin's curassow (*Crax salvini*) of nocturnal habits. Another species of overexploited bird, because of hunting, is the large toucan (*Ramphastos tucanus*). Hunted mammals include: the peccary pigs (*Tayassu* spp.), mazama deer (*Mazama americana*), tapirs (*Tapirus terrestris*), and a number of species of monkeys.

68. The Alto Huallaga spurs in the Peruvian Yungas was also selected and it is a unique zone and extremely important for conservation. It has one of the world's highest concentrations of endemic South American monkeys; three species in total, which is a record in primate endemism.

69. The fourth site selected was the Irupana zone in the Bolivian Yungas. The Irupana is a true mosaic of vegetation formations from xeric formations (dry vegetation) to the most humid.

70. The last site selected was the Chaco Dunes in the Dry Chaco. The Dry Chaco is an interesting and rich variety of ecological systems of dry vegetation, from tropical savannahs to dense spiny underbrush, and even open vegetation on dunes and it supports unique vegetation varieties, such as the Rosa del Chaco (*Cordia bordasii*, *Schinopsis cornuta*) and the Palo Papel (*Cochlospermum tetraporum*), as well as some animal species, such as Peccary Taguá (Peccary) (*Catagonus wagneri*), and even an endemic species of Tinamou (*Eudromia formosa*).

(d) Identifying plans for conservation management alternatives

71. The project was able to define management alternatives with the input of key stakeholders from each priority site. These alternative management plans included both general strategies and specific initiatives. The project performed well in this regard and achieved a 'very good' rating (2). The general strategies were designed to reduce main threats, motivate community and local participation. Specific initiatives included protection and recovery of local fauna and flora, community participation through education and awareness-raising; land use zoning and alternative resource utilization, and proposals for alternative agriculture production, ecotourism, protection of corridors, spring water sources, and rehabilitation of degraded lands.

72. The implementation of management alternatives varies from site to site and is still ongoing. For example, the current CVC Executive Director has included the management alternatives developed for Dagua as part of his regional strategic plan.

(e) Increasing capacity of CDCs to catalyze conservation actions

73. The executing institutions –CDCs– were strengthened from both a technical and an institutional point of view. The project contacted more than 100 institutions in the whole region (governmental, private and local). During project development and implementation, more than 70 Latin American technicians from the participating institutions were trained in conservation, geographic information systems (GIS), remote sensing analysis, GPS, etc. In addition, some technicians from other institutions were trained, including governmental and local institutions. More than a hundred organizations of all kinds (governmental, private, national, local, and international) were consulted during project implementation. Broad stakeholder consultation enriched the process and provided the required information to develop locally acceptable and effective conservation management alternatives.

74. The activities focusing on capacity building and support to CDCs performed extremely well and are rated 'excellent' (1). As mentioned in Section B, several of the CDCs had disappeared before this project started and many others were weak and had not accomplished the objectives for which they were created. Soon after the UNEP/GEF project had finished, the same group of NGOs and CDCs were able to secure additional funding from the Inter American Development Bank (IADB), which helped to add important socio-economic information that was not included in the GEF project, to further improve their database and assist the design of better and more specific alternative conservation management plans.

75. The additional funding also enabled the CDCs to continue working at their sites and attract other local, regional, national, and international institutions to participate in conservation initiatives at the same critical sites. For example, in Colombia, the WWF has used UNEP/GEF information and methodologies to implement its own eco-regional conservation project in the Chocó region. NatureServe has also developed a new project in association with CVC in the Cauca Valley. In Peru, a re-evaluation of the National Park System is currently in progress and it is possible that the Peruvian environmental agency would consider the Alto Huallaga as a

national critical site for conservation. NatureServe is also working in Perú using UNEP/GEF information.

(f) Enhance regional cooperation and networking information exchange

76. This particular output of the project is closely related to the previous section (e) increasing capacity of CDCs. Again, the project performed exceptionally well and was rated 'excellent' (1). Since the implementation of the UNEP/GEF project, CDCs reinstated communication networks for the mutual provision and exchange of information. As a result, biodiversity networks have been reinforced and improved.

(g) Building stakeholder support for science-based decision making

77. This part of the project was rated 'good' (3). The main reason for awarding this rating was the limited allocation of effort and resources to dissemination of the project's outputs through mechanisms such as CD materials, printed reports, information brochures, manual guides, websites and institutional networks. As mentioned earlier, project dissemination was faced with various setbacks. For instance, dissemination was not considered an important part of the project in the design and development of the project, and as a result it was not prioritized in the budget. Consequently, once the project ended, there was insufficient funding to disseminate all the results and outputs.

78. With limited financial support from other TNC and NatureServe activities, the project was able to disseminate final reports and site reports on a web site. In addition to web dissemination, presentations were made to major international institutions and funding partners. Presentations were made at the World Bank, IADB, GEF office in Washington DC, and TNC headquarters. As a result of these presentations, the IADB expressed interest in the project and funded a follow-up project with the same executing institutions. The IADB requested that more socio-economic information on the critical sites be included, and asked for management alternatives based on environmental services. On the other hand, there was less effort put into dissemination and communication to local institutions, stakeholders and governmental organizations.

2. Presentation of expected outputs and planned results

79. The project performed satisfactorily in terms of presentation of planned results and expected outputs. General presentations, workshops, participation in international conferences were part of project dissemination and communication goals. The limited amount of funding committed in the project's budget to dissemination seriously constrained the project's management ability to reach out to a larger audiences within the conservation community. The project, for example, could have benefited from the opportunity to present and disseminate results at the IUCN conference held in Kuala Lumpur in 2004, as well as in annual meetings of scientific associations such as Conservation Biology, and The Wildlife Society.

(a) Organization and conduct of presentation meetings

80. The project performed well and was rated 'good' (3) in organizing the presentation meetings and round tables. As mentioned in the introduction of this section, during the design and development of the UNEP/GEF project insufficient funding was allocated to the organization of meetings and this limited opportunities to introduce the project to main stakeholders, and to present project progress and results. It is possible, that with adequate funding, this activity could have performed very well because of the high level of technical staff expertise available in their fields. This relatively low performance was consistent at local, national, regional and international levels.

(b) Organization and conduction of endorsement and training workshops

81. The project pursued its capacity building objective through organized training workshops for selected institutions. The project did not make sufficient efforts to get

endorsement and/or project ownership from local, national or international institutions such as community organizations, local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), regional and national environmental agencies or institutions. The excellent performance of the training workshops in the countries that participated in this project, however, has raised the performance to a 'very good' rating (2).

82. One of the reasons for a lack of endorsement from other institutions was the fact that only two general conferences or presentation workshops were planned by the project's management; one at the beginning of the project, and the second at the end to present results. Therefore, the international community did not get a real opportunity to endorse and support the project. It is the judgment of the evaluator that perhaps the lack of endorsement and exposure at international levels resulted from the ongoing reorganization at both TNC and NatureServe at the time that this project was designed. This restructuring process played a fundamental role in the lack of ownership and endorsement from other institutions. Instead, the TNC Regional Technical Unit of Quito and local CDCs had to carry the burden of the project by themselves.

(c) Communication and dissemination

83. The project partially achieved its goal of communicating and disseminating its findings. Communication and dissemination were rated as 'good' (3). As mentioned earlier, most of the contacts with governmental institutions were merely informative. Ministries of Environment, National Parks and Reserves, Institutes of Natural Resource Management, other institutions, assigned one or two officers to monitor project's progress and their role did not go further than reviewing reports. As a result, the information network did not completely respond to the objectives and expected outcomes of the project. The project distributed six-monthly, annual and final reports in Spanish and English to the UNEP/DGEF, TNC and NatureServe. Copies of findings on CDs in Spanish and English, and published project material can be found in a dedicated web page on NatureServe's web site: www.natureserve.org/latinamerica/prioritySites/indexen.

84. The web site contains a detailed summary of the UNEP/GEF project's final report. It describes how NatureServe's partners in Panama (ANCON), Colombia (Corporación Valle del Cauca), Ecuador (Alianza Jatun Sacha/CDC-Ecuador), Peru (Universidad Agraria La Molina), Bolivia (TROPICO) and Paraguay (Secretaría del Ambiente, CDC-Paraguay) with The Nature Conservancy Regional Technical Unit of Ecuador conducted a rigorous scientific study to identify critical sites for conservation in Latin America. The focus of this research, as described in Section II, was on the five high-priority ecoregions and included the Biogeographic Choco, the eastern slopes of the Andes in Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia, the Peruvian Yungas, the Bolivian Yungas, and the Dry Chaco.

85. NatureServe's webpage on conservation sites is available in English and Spanish and also contains a link to download the final report, as well a link with a description of project's methodology. The webpage has links to each of the priority conservation sites with a description of sites studied and a brief summary of the site's results. The facility allows downloading of the final report of each eco-region as a PDF file as well as maps as a zip document and a Power Point presentation on results and products.

3. Institutional and administrative framework execution

86. Overall, the institutional and administrative execution and internal participation of partners in project were rated 'very good' (2). Most of the technical staff of partners participated in training workshops, and participated in the steering and monitoring committees, as well as in the coordination of the project by promoting discussion, providing information and technical and administrative support.

(a) Regional seminars and training workshops

87. All those who responded to the evaluation questionnaire as well as those interviewed agree that there was a very high level of coordination and was rated as 'excellent' (1). The TNC Regional Technical Unit of Quito periodically organized workshops and seminars for their

partners in order to maintain a good communication network. Originally, one workshop for each ecoregion was planned, but due to the demand, three workshops were conducted in Paraguay, two in Perú, two in Colombia and Panama, and one additional workshop in Quito.

(b) Steering and Oversight committees

88. Interviewees and respondents to the evaluation questionnaire found that the steering and oversight committees worked well and this was rated ‘very good’ **(2)**. The committees periodically made visits to evaluate and assist project partners. These frequent visits were very welcome by the CDC’s technical staff because they gave them the opportunity to discuss particular problems related to the implementation of the project. As a result of the close relationship with the steering and oversight committees, CDCs partners were able to accomplish more.

(c) General, regional and national coordination

89. During the project design process and implementation, the project made use of a participatory approach and open discussion was encouraged and helped facilitate information sharing and timely technical support.

- The project promoted an open dialogue and discussion to achieve its main objectives. This was apparent from the evaluation interviews and from the evaluation questionnaires. The performance was rated ‘excellent’ **(1)**. This dialogue gave the opportunity for technical staff to reach consensus on the methodology and steps needed to achieve the project’s goals and objectives. During these meetings, general coordination and technical staff partners realized that the project methodology needed some level of flexibility to adapt to local conditions and differences among partners in terms of knowledge, technology and information.

- The project Coordination Unit provided and disseminated all information needed to all members of the executing team. Its performance was rated as ‘very good’ **(2)** based on evaluation interviews and responses to the questionnaire.

- Similarly, the coordination provided all the technical and administrative support to allow partners carry out the project and was rated ‘very good’ **(2)**. The main coordinating task was to attend to partners’ needs and requests, and the coordination unit tried to fulfill all these requirements in a prompt matter. Technical and administrative staff responded promptly and adequately to their partner’s requests. Most of technical problems of partners related to computer software and hardware. In Paraguay, for example, computers broke down at least four times and needed a complete reinstallation of software. Similar situations occurred in Colombia, Ecuador and Perú. However, most of these types of problems emerged during the first year of project implementation, a time when most of the training activities took place.

4. Project implementation approach

90. Aspects pertaining to the implementation approach of the project, such as the feasibility of the plan of activities (POAs), the plan’s flexibility, the ability of the technical team to adjust to local conditions and restructure POAs, are rated “excellent” **(1)**. The project used, from the outset, a participatory approach and encouraged open discussion. This was necessary to accommodate the multinational and multi-organizational nature of the project, which required a degree of flexibility in order to adapt to the particular conditions of each ecoregion. None of the partners were at the same level in terms of information availability, knowledge and technology, so it was difficult to achieve a standard product. However, the participatory approach of the project and the continuous dialogue it facilitated yielded excellent participation and performance of partners.

5. Administrative and financial management

91. There were no major complications during the implementation of the project. The administrative and financial management had some problems that were addressed during implementation. For instance,

from the administrative point of view, regional and local participants did not get the opportunity to discuss and design their administrative / operational plans. As a result, each CDC had its own administrative modus operandi. This had an effect on the overall administrative performance. Similarly, during project design the multi-country nature of the project was not taken into account. For example, both the general coordinator and technical coordinator needed to travel more than initially anticipated. As a result, administrative staff were compelled to re-estimate the project's management costs and needed to secure additional sources of funding.

(a) Resource mobilization, financial and budget planning

92. Findings from interviews and the electronic questionnaire indicate that the resource mobilization and budget planning performed very well and was rated as 'very good' (2). The planned contribution of the TNC and CDCs was \$ 550,000; their actual contribution amounted to \$ 698,489. TNC and CDCs provided in-kind support of \$ 224,350 and \$ 474,139 respectively. This more than covered an anticipated contribution from the Andean Financial Corporation (CAF), which never materialized. It had, at an early stage, been expected that CAF would provide \$ 130,000 in financial support but CAF later decided to cut funding for environmental projects, including the UNEP/GEF project. All technical and financial reports from CDCs and TNC, including audits have been completed and approved at this point in time.

93. Some difficulties emerged during project implementation such as transfer of funds, but this particular problem only arose at the beginning of the project with funds transferred from UNEP/GEF. This problem rarely occurred during project implementation mainly because the TNC Regional Technical Unit was able to transfer funds from other activities. It would have been beneficial if the administrative staff had been given the opportunity to meet and organize their role in the project at the beginning.

(b) Activities performance within project's budget

94. Respondents found that the activities performance was within the project's budget and was rated "very good" (2). The major complaint was that the budget was insufficient to achieve all the objectives and activities planned. Partners did not only provide in-kind matching funds, but also had to invest money, which was not part of the initial agreement between TNC and CDCs.

(c) Financial resources allocated properly

95. All financial resources were allocated properly in order to achieve major project's goal and objectives. The general view emanating from the evaluation and interviews on this issue was that they achieved a great deal with the funds allocated. Accordingly, the performance was rated 'very good' (2).

(d) Cost-effectiveness

96. The amount of information and data produced by this project was enormous. More than 6,473 species of flora and fauna (all birds, mammals and amphibians) were analyzed, each one with a distribution range map. Over 6,500 thematic maps (1:500,000) were produced, among others: Base/Vegetation maps, Centers of Biodiversity, Centers of Endemism, Forest Fragmentation and Priority Areas. As a result, based on the evaluation interviews and responses to the evaluation questionnaire, participants believe that the project did an excellent work in terms of achieving cost-effectiveness and was rated 'excellent' (1).

6. Sustainability of the project

97. The focus of the project was to create an awareness of the selected sites as a means to achieve its overall objectives, namely to catalyze conservation action by providing the best management alternatives. Enhanced awareness of the need for conservation of these sites was achieved successfully at local and

community levels in some areas like Bolivia and Ecuador, at regional level in Perú and Colombia, and national level in Paraguay. There was also a successful attempt to support and enhance CDCs capabilities to continue improving data collection and management. Accordingly, the data base has been enlarged since the conclusion of the project and CDCs network is working as it should, by sharing and providing information. Furthermore, all executing agencies were able to apply and receive funding from other international environmental institutions to continue with their conservation activities; as a result CDCs have been able to continue adding data to project's database and using such information in other projects.

(a) Financially

98. The Project was highly regarded by other international organizations. In 2004 the IADB provided financial support to a follow-up project to analyze the viability and sustainability of the best projects and programs to be implemented in the selected areas. The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) is currently working on the Dagua Valley with the Colombian CDC. NatureServe is working with CVC of Colombia in another conservation project using the information generated in UNEP/GEF project. NatureServe is also working with CDC-Universidad Nacional Agraria La Molina of Perú in order to get additional funding for a research project in the Alto Huallaga. The CDC of Ecuador with Jatun Sacha is working on the implementation of ecotourism programs in the Tsurakú area with funds from external sources. Respondents found that the project did a good job in terms of obtaining additional funds for these priority conservation areas and financial sustainability was rated as 'very good' (2).

(b) Substantively

99. CDCs partners have continued working along the lines of the project and implementing management alternatives proposed in this project at each of the critical sites. The TNC is currently using the information gathered in this project for its eco-regional conservation plans; similarly, the WWF has a project which is using the information obtained in Colombia as input. The information obtained during the implementation of this project has been used by other institutions. At national and local levels it is a different situation mainly because national institutions have not yet adopted or used project information. Local communities, however, are working on their own conservation plans and finding ways to implement conservation management alternatives. Interviewees and responses to the evaluation questionnaire found that the project was very successful in obtaining additional funds and was rated 'very good' (2).

7. Country ownership of activities, policies and adoption process

100. Country ownership was not as good as expected. As previously stated, this was in part due to the lack of endorsement and sense of ownership among national and international institutions such as local NGOs, regional and national agencies and institutions.

- Respondents of the evaluation questionnaire and interviews found that ownership among those institutions and agencies represented in the steering committees was very good and the project was rated accordingly (2). Monitoring and steering and coordination committees were aware of progress and products of the project. Unfortunately, government participation was limited to the receipt of information and did not go further than that level.

- The project did not perform very well in terms of influencing national policies and was rated 'satisfactory' (4). The exception was Paraguay where the Government declared the Chaco Dunes a national park, despite of the gas reserves that have been found there. The Government of the Department of San Martin in Peru has declared the Alto Huallaga of Peruvian Yungas as a Regional Reserve, mainly because of spring water reserves. In general, the national governments did not embrace this project as one that could provide reliable and sound information to feed into the countries' environmental policies. This is however, an on-going process. From personal and phone interviews, the evaluator found that Peru is currently reviewing its National Park and Reserve System and Peruvian authorities are evaluating the UNEP/GEF project results. Consequently, it is possible that the Peruvian Government may adopt the project findings to promote conservation of natural areas that are not part of their current system. Similarly, the new Executive Director of

CVC has included Dagua Valley as part of his action plan based on the project's findings and, as a result, new policies and plans will be developed to conserve this unique place.

- Locally, CDCs have played an important role in influencing specific projects in their areas. Several local and international NGOs, have continued working on these critical sites and used the information obtained in this project. Based on the evaluation interviews and questionnaire, respondents agreed that the project did very well in terms of influencing specific projects in these areas and was rated 'very good' (2).

8. Replication in other regions

101. In terms of transferring knowledge and building capacity, the project team and related professionals trained more than 60 persons in several topics, especially in GIS, remote sensing, GPS and conservation ecology (eco-regional planning, site conservation planning and gap analysis). Trained people of the executing agencies in each country (6) and their partners (including local stake-holders and some government representatives) could help to replicate the methodology and findings of this project. Most of the training was developed through personnel training sessions, workshops and other informal means. This process created human capital and standardized the methodology among CDCs and other institutions. Standardization will facilitate ease of replication of the methodology for selection of critical non-protected areas.

102. Since eco-regions do not recognize country borders, what happens in one area is not restricted to one country but can affect an entire eco-region. Subsequently, measures to conserve critical sites of eco-regions go beyond the national level. Therefore, steps towards instituting sound conservation practices also go beyond country borders. Projects like this can help to understand and perceive conservation in a wider sense and establish rules and regulations that fit. In this sense, normalizing a methodology, helping to build institutions' capacity and improving human capital create a good foundation for future projects and conservation policies.

103. The Director of the project and technical staff expect that the achievements and outputs from the present project will lead to similar projects and programs throughout the region, and include other high priority eco-regions in Latin America. This project has already helped in formulating guidelines and establishing methodologies to develop eco-regional plans and conduct gap analysis in other regions.

104. The project may help to establish unified rules and policies for biodiversity conservation. Responses from the questionnaire indicate that technical and administrative personnel of the project's implementation partners believe that this may happen, thus it was rated 'excellent' (1). However, this particular goal has not been accomplished.

105. Secondly, the project may help future establishment of joint national parks and reserves across borders. The questionnaire survey determined that technical and administrative personnel of project implementation partners believe that this may indeed happen, accordingly it was rated 'excellent' (1).

106. Finally, the project may help lead to the establishment of protected districts in key economic development areas. From the responses to the questionnaire it was clear that technical and administrative personnel of project implementation partners believed this may happen; it is therefore rated 'excellent' (1). In fact, there is evidence to support the survey findings when the Government of Paraguay declared the Chaco Dunes as National Park despite the presence of gas reserves under ground. Although, this does not mean that the gas will not be exploited in the future, it creates a precedent for other countries to follow.

107. It is the opinion of the technical and administrative staff of the UNEP/GEF project as well as of the evaluator that this project can be replicated in other regions outside Latin America because it sets conservation initiatives in a wider context that goes beyond country borders and brings conservation benefits closer to the local communities and their environment. Replication was rated 'excellent' (1).

9. Project Monitoring and Evaluation

108. Monitoring of project activities was found to be sound and the respondents to the evaluation interviews and questionnaire supported this view. Monitoring was rated 'very good' (2). The oversight committee was basically self-monitoring because the project applied a participatory approach. UNEP, through UNEP/GEF Biannual Progress Report, required a six-monthly report on the implementation of the project, with which the coordination team had to comply. Suggestions and changes identified in the reports were adopted. Some concern was, however, expressed about the delay of feedback and follow-up on the reporting.

10. Role of UNEP in supporting and facilitating the project

109. Most of the respondents to the evaluation questionnaire and interviews found that the role of UNEP was 'very good' rated (2), and that UNEP's involvement was essential for the support of the project. The UNEP, as a multilateral and well known authority, played an important role in strengthening the local CDCs.

110. A GEF project requires the agreement and support of the government recipient of the funds. Depending on government regulations and rules, the negotiation process can take a couple years or more. During the negotiations, which took place in 1999 with five different governments, UNEP participation helped to speed up the process. It is the opinion of all technical and administrative staff of the UNEP/GEF project, who had experience dealing with their own governments, that government officials recognized the importance of the project because a global environmental authority such as UNEP was the implementing agency and this sped up the process and the agreement was signed in a relatively short period of time.

111. Likewise, CDCs role as center of information on conservation to governments was strengthened. For example, the role of the CDC within the Secretaria de Ambiente (Secretary of Environment) of Paraguay was relatively unnoticed before the project. Having UNEP as implementing agency working together with local CDC office has strengthened the CDC's position inside of the agency. Now, the director of CDC has the rank of Assistant Secretary.

112. Unfortunately, there were some logistical problems at the beginning of the project which were highlighted by project staff. At the beginning of this project, UNEP took longer than expected to transfer the first allotment, this delayed some planned activities. This occurred only at the beginning of the project and later was not an issue at all according to project staff. Final audits have taken place and the CDCs and TNC have completed all the administrative and financial requirements pertaining to this project.

113. It is evaluator's opinion that UNEP as implementing agency cannot and should not limit its participation to being a monitoring partner and review bi-annual reports. It could be more participative and conduct at least bi-annual field visits. This would be appreciated by its partners and it would encourage them to produce and achieve even more.

D. Key lessons learned

114. The project applied a participatory approach including government authorities, local governments, scientists, local stake-holders and both national and international NGOs and other organizations. More than 40 organizations were consulted in Bolivia alone and over a 100 in the 6 participating countries.

115. Staff from the Geographic Army Institutes from Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay and Perú participated actively and interacted not only with trainees but also with experts in the national workshops on Geographic information (one of the instructors was a geographic engineer from Instituto Geográfico Militar of Ecuador) as well as with maps, aerial photography and geographic information. This training process helped create an environment of trust among participants and now it is possible to share information that not too long ago was classified (e.g. maps and geo-referencing information of countries' borders). In fact, during the second phase of the project implementation, the TNC was able to start a new

project in the Pacific coastal area of Ecuador and Peru and the institutions' participants of this project did not have any problem sharing critical country border information.

116. An important by-product of the project was the fact that the executing agencies and other stakeholders of each country have been trained in cutting-edge techniques of GIS/Remote Sensing, biological and ecological database management, plus the best techniques of eco-regional planning and site conservation planning. Training was organized with well designed and intensive workshops. The best Latin American experts in the field, hired as advisors or part of the project's technical coordination, acted as workshop instructors. These workshops were not only theoretical but participants had an opportunity to apply what was learned in the field. Most of the participants have been able to apply the new techniques and information acquired in their institutions in other projects or get jobs with other institutions. For example, as the director of CDC in Peru explained in a personal interview, former CDC members of this project were able to find a job with Pronaturaleza, a leading conservation NGO in Peru, and have kept contact and shared information with CDC.

117. The eco-regional approach proved to be a very practical. The Project established that developing a GEF project implemented in multiple countries with multiple organizations is feasible. In fact, institutions like TNC and WWF are now using the project's eco-regions for their conservations plans. Furthermore, the eco-regions approach where country borders do not play much role ecologically and understanding that species of plants and animals are not restricted to one country helped to break institutional mistrust.

118. Dissemination is a very important part of a project and the entire technical and administrative staff of the UNEP/GEF project recognized this in the end. A project such as the UNEP/GEF project needs to reach a wide audience and generate ownership of findings and recommendations in order to create more impact on environmental conservation. Most of the project's shortcomings came from its inability to reach a wide audience. Limited government participation and ownership, at least in part, are the result of limited dissemination funds. This was a lesson learned during the implementation of the project.

119. In order to attain even higher conservation goals. Governments need to be more involved in projects like this, especially the Ministry of the Environment. Community participation should continue and be encouraged. At least three countries associated with this project have demonstrated how important it is to conserve critical and threatened areas. Unfortunately this participatory approach was limited to information sharing for most of the organizations. Only those closely related to the project, actually participated in this particular approach.

E. Conclusions and recommendations

1. Conclusions

120. The project was implemented successfully in several countries through multiple organizations. During the implementation process, the project used an innovative methodology to establish critical sites for conservation in five globally significant eco-regions.

121. The enormous amount of information produced will be a useful international public good to inform policy makers and guide implementation of sound conservation practices. During the implementation of the project, 6,473 species of flora and fauna (all birds, mammals and amphibians) were analyzed, each one with a distribution range map. Over 6,500 thematic maps (1:500,000) were produced, among others: Base/Vegetation maps, Centers of Biodiversity, Centers of Endemism, Forest Fragmentation and Priority Areas. The enormous amount of information is generally undervalued and has only partially been used by other institutions.

122. The project succeeded in improving and strengthening the capacity of CDCs as centers for biodiversity conservation that could be used by policy-makers in establishing conservation and management alternatives on critical areas. In terms of transferring knowledge, the Project team and related professionals trained more than 60 professionals in several topics, e.g. GIS, remote sensing, GPS and conservation biology (eco-regional planning, site conservation planning and gap analysis). The professionals were staff of the executing agencies in each country (6) and their partners (including local

stakeholders and some government representatives). Most of the training was conducted through personnel training sessions and workshops.

123. The project demonstrated that through training and the provision of appropriate tools, local CDCs can continue implementing conservation activities to protect key sites and improve their roles as centers of information for environmental conservation. However, to ensure that CDCs continue to collect data and information will require long-term commitment and extensive financial resources in order to develop and implement well-planned national conservation strategies in these countries.

124. This evaluation found that limited financial resources were not impediments to achieve the planned results of the project. Lack of financial resources, however, did limit the extent to which some of the results were disseminated and thus the impact of the project.

125. Although most of the problems related to international project development were experienced during the negotiation phase (before the Project implementation), these problems, at different levels, affected the outcome of the project. For instance, some interviewees expressed concern that the reorganization of the two major participants of the project –TNC and NatureServe, affected the management and ownership of the project. As a result, the TNC central headquarters did not consider the project as ‘its own’.

126. Most of the international technical issues were addressed successfully. This includes cartographical issues and protocols, database standardization and hardware/software and methodology standardization. The methodology standardization had to be adapted to local conditions and five methodologies were designed based on cartographical protocols.

127. This project was successful in many aspects such as production of biological, ecological and cartography information for the identification of priority sites and the formulation of conservation management alternatives in a corridor of 5 priority one eco-regions and 6 countries from Panama to Paraguay. As an example of the amount of data produced in this project, 6,473 species of flora and fauna (all birds, mammals and amphibians) have been analyzed, each one with a distribution range map. Over 6,500 thematic maps (1:500,000) have been produced, among others: Base/Vegetation maps, Centers of Biodiversity, Centers of Endemism, Forest Fragmentation and Priority Areas. However, the enormous amount of information produced has been underutilized.

2. Recommendations

128. The main constraint is always financial, but a coordination mechanism would ensure that the successes generated by the GEF project will not be lost. The mechanism would serve as a communication channel from the project design stage to project execution for all key stakeholders and Governments. One way to achieve this would be to have a policy-making component in the project, and have sufficient funds dedicated to this particular area. It might be necessary to have additional workshops with government officials to achieve full participation and provide more information from the beginning. The mechanism would require agreement on the significance of the dissemination of results during the design process. Communication is of key importance in such projects because the expected outcomes are to create impact and influence on environmental policy-making and, in particular, support the development of national biodiversity plans. Projects should seek to reach a wider audience in order to create more impact on environmental conservation.

129. Capacity building is a key tool to achieve success and this project achieved outcomes beyond what was expected and, with further resource mobilization can ensure long-term commitments to conservation of natural threatened areas. There is a need to increase resource mobilization and capacity building for other local NGOs located in other geographic areas and communities for implementing management alternatives and biodiversity conservation. International organizations need to provide further funding and technical support for the development and sustainable use and management of the sites selected. At the same time, institutions like UNEP, TNC Regional Technical Unit of Ecuador, and CDCs should be more determined and ambitious in pursuing full-size funding. The results of this project prove that greater conservation benefits could be achieved with additional funding.

130. The comprehensive information and database should be further enhanced, and greater emphasis placed on the dissemination process in order to reach as many local, national and global stakeholders as possible. CDCs have already taken steps toward strengthening their database as they are currently participating in other projects and increasing the scope of information captured. In addition to the efforts of CDCs, national governments should be encouraged to adopt regulations and laws allowing CDCs to access information from other NGOs and institutions working with biodiversity projects. The idea is to develop national biodiversity data centers and biodiversity information banks based on what CDCs already have. UNEP is already developing a knowledge management system where information from its own projects and those of other organizations can be accessed. This initiative should be replicated at national and local levels.

Annex 1

TERMS OF REFERENCE For the Final Evaluation of the UNEP GEF project

CATALYZING CONSERVATION ACTION IN LATIN AMERICA: Identifying priority sites and best management alternatives in five globally significant ecoregions “

GF/1010-00-14

Background and legislative mandate

The goal of the project is to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity by protecting the highest priority sites at the appropriate level within five (5) Level One priority Latin American ecoregions:

Choco/Darien tropical forest (Colombia, Ecuador, Panama);
Eastern Andes Cordillera Real montane forest (Ecuador, Colombia, Peru);
Peruvian Yungas (Peru);
Bolivian Yungas (Bolivia); and
Chaco Savannas (Paraguay and Bolivia).

The overall objective of the project is to catalyze science-based decision-making and conservation action on landscape management alternatives in the important eco-regions, particularly in the development and implementation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAP). The specific objectives of the project were to scientifically analyze and identify priority sites with globally significant biodiversity in the five eco-regions; develop and recommend a set of conservation management alternatives and protection strategies for the identified sites to the project stakeholders; and catalyze the adoption of strategies to protect and conserve the globally significant biodiversity of the identified sites in the five eco-regions.

Activities focused on gathering information, providing training, standardizing data assessment processes and analysis and dissemination of data and were expected to lead to the following outcomes:

- 1) Identification of priority unprotected sites with the highest global biodiversity importance for future conservation action.
- 2) Identify plans for conservation management alternatives developed and presented to key stakeholders (Governments, community representatives, national and international NGOs)
- 3) -Increased capacity of the CDCs to catalyze conservation actions at national level achieved.
- Enhanced regional co-operation, networking information exchange on the use of spatial technologies, protocols, common methodologies
- Building stakeholder support for science-based decision making and promoting application of project outputs

The project was executed by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) Regional Technical Unit in Quito Ecuador in collaboration with six Latin American Conservation Data Centers (CDCs) for a three year period commencing 1st September 2000 and completing 30th September 2003. The total budget of the medium size project was US\$ 1,430,000 including a project preparation block A grant (PDF-A) US\$ 25,000 and co-financing from CDC (in kind), TNC (in kind) and Cooperacion Andina Fomento (CAF) (cash).

The project supports the GEF operational programmes 1 and 3 on semi-arid and arid ecosystems and forest ecosystems. The project supports UNEP's sub-programme 1 on Environmental Assessment and Early Warning and builds on UNEP's activities in assessing the state of the environment and analyzing global environmental trends including the UNEP/CIAT project on Environmental and Sustainability Indicators in Latin American and the Caribbean.

Objective and scope of the Evaluation

To overall objective of the evaluation is to establish project impact, and review and evaluate the implementation of planned project activities, outputs and outcomes against actual results. The evaluation

will also assess efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the overall implementation approach of the project, efficient and effective management of project funds, participation of all stakeholders, lessons learnt and good practices and management of risks, sustainability of project impacts and issues of replicating good practices.

The scope of the in-depth evaluation will cover all activities undertaken within the framework of the project. The performance indicators provided in the LogFrame/project matrix (see table in Annex) should be used together with the evaluation parameters of appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency, impact and sustainability. Guidelines on performance indicators are provided in the UNEP project manual pp. 13/89-13/99 and also available on http://www.unep.org/Project_Manual/

Specifically the evaluator shall take the following actions in order to achieve the objective of the evaluation. The evaluator shall:

1. Establish to what extent the project's objectives were met and planned outcomes (results) obtained.
2. Evaluate project performance in relation to the indicators, assumptions and risks specified in the logical framework matrix and the Project Document. Determine the usefulness of the indicators specified.
3. Assess the scope, quality and significance of the project outputs produced in relation to expected results.
4. Analyze the extent of cooperation engendered and synergy were created by the project between its activities and with on-going activities for the preparation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs).
5. Identify and, to the extent possible, quantify any additional outputs and outcomes beyond those specified in the Project Document.
6. Evaluate the timetable of activities and the allocation of financial resources to project activities and determine their consistency with the Project Document. Where activities and/or outputs have been delayed the cause of the delay and remedial actions taken should be identified.
7. Identify any programmatic and financial variance and/or adjustments made during the project and their appropriateness in terms of the overall objectives of the project.
8. Evaluate project coordination, management and administration provided by the executing agency TNC and UNEP/GEF. The evaluation should include specific references to:
 - a) Organizational/institutional arrangements for collaboration between TNC, CDCs and sites including in-country partners and policymakers;
 - b) The effectiveness of project management in terms of assignment and execution of project activities, and flexibility of management in terms of responsiveness to the need for changes in financial allocations, timing of activities, or mode of operation;
 - c) The effectiveness of the monitoring mechanisms currently employed by the executing agency TNC in monitoring on a day to day basis, progress in project execution;
 - d) Administrative, operational and/or technical problems and constraints that influenced the effective implementation of the project, and
 - e) Financial management of the project, including the balance between expenditures on administrative and overhead charges in relation to those on the achievement of substantive outputs.
9. Assess the extent to which the scientific products such as geographic information and biological databases, conservation management alternatives, and protection strategies have scientific credibility.
10. Assess the extent to which the local NGOs, CDC partners, government ministries, policymakers and decision-makers (of which some are identified in the project document) were involved in the activities of the project.

11. Assess the extent to which the project has been able to provide direct access to information and to reduce cost of activities required by collaborating entities.
12. Determine the sustainability and replicability of the project taking into consideration the extent which the activities have developed CDC's role, catalyzed conservation plan implementation and supported ongoing activities for the preparation of NBSAPs.
13. Identify tools and methods used and their effectiveness for dissemination of scientific data and biodiversity protection and conservation management alternatives via the CDC network and other in the scientific, conservation and political communities.
14. Identify any risks that the project faced during implementation and how well the risks were managed through adaptive management.
15. Identify problems encountered and lessons learned during project implementation.
16. Provide recommendations to UNEP and its executing partner regarding future actions to follow up on this project.

3. Methodology

The evaluation will be conducted by using a participatory approach where by the task manager and other relevant staff are kept informed and regularly consulted throughout the evaluation. The following approaches will be used for collecting and analyzing data:

- a) Desk review of project document, outputs, monitoring reports (such as quarterly progress reports, mission reports and the GEF annual Project Implementation Review reports, minutes of meetings and relevant correspondence;
- b) Review of specific products including datasets, management and action plans, publications and other material and reports;
- c) Interviews with the Task Manager UNEP/GEF, the Regional Coordinator UNEP Environmental Information Program – North America and the Project Manager and other project staff at TNC Regional Technical Unit in Quito Ecuador;
- d) Phone interviews and/or electronic questionnaires forwarded to the focal points of the DCDs located in Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, Paraguay and Peru.
- e) Consultations with relevant UNEP and UNEP/GEF staff;
- f) Consultations and/or interviews with relevant stakeholders involved, including government representatives; relevant ministries and departments, local NGOs and other agencies.

The success of project implementation will rated a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being the highest (most successful) rating and 5 being the lowest and covering the following aspects:

Achievement of objectives and planned results
 Attainment of outputs and activities
 Cost-effectiveness
 Impact
 Sustainability
 Stakeholders participation
 Country ownership
 Implementation approach
 Financial planning
 Replicability
 Monitoring and evaluation

Each of the items should be rated separately with comments and then an overall rating given. The following rating system is to be applied:

1=Excellent	(90 % -100 % achievement)
2=Very Good	(75 % - 89 %)

3=Good	(60 % - 74 %)
4=Satisfactory	(50 % - 59 %)
5=Unsatisfactory	(49 % and below)

The ratings will be converted in a separate annex to the GEF rating system of: Highly Satisfactory (80%-100%), Satisfactory (65%-79%), Marginally Satisfactory (50%-64%), Unsatisfactory (49% and below), and N/A.

4. Evaluation Report Format and Procedures

The evaluation report shall be a detailed report, written in English, of no more than 20 pages exclusive of the executive summary, the lessons learned, and the findings and recommendations and include:

- i) Executive summary (no more than 3 pages)
- ii) Introduction and background
- iii) Scope, objective and methodology of evaluation
- iv) Findings and conclusions
- v) Lessons learned
- vi) Recommendations
- vii) All annexes should be typed.

The final report shall be written in English and submitted in electronic form in the MS Word Format by 28th March 2005, and should be addressed as follows:

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 UNEP, P.O. Box 30552
 Nairobi, Kenya
 Tel.: (254-20) 623387
 Fax: (254-20) 623158
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With copies to

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Mr. Alain Lambert
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The evaluation report will be printed in hard copy and published on the Evaluation and Oversight Unit's web-site www.unep.org/eou

5. Timing and resources

A consultant will be hired to conduct this evaluation under the guidance of the Chief of Evaluation and Oversight unit (EOU) and in close cooperation with the Task Manager, MSP-Biodiversity in the Division of GEF Coordination (DGEF) and in collaboration with the Programme Officer for Medium Sized Projects (MSP) in DGEF.

In accordance with UNEP/GEF policy, all GEF projects are evaluated by an independent evaluator contracted by the EOU, and not associated with the implementation of the project. The evaluator should have the following qualifications: (i) Basic expertise on the subject matter, (ii) Experience with projects in developing countries, in particular Latin America and (iii) Project evaluation.

The contract will begin on 31st January 2005 and end 28th March 2005 (4 weeks spread over 8 weeks). The consultant will travel to Quito, Ecuador and interview relevant staff of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and after discussion with the task manager agree on visits to one or two of the Conservation Data Centres (CDCs) either in Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, Paraguay or Peru and interview stakeholders. The consultant will submit a first draft to EOU on 28th February 2005. Comments on the final draft report will be sent to the consultant after a maximum of 2 weeks. After incorporating the comments, the consultant will submit the final report by 28th March 2005.

6. Schedule of Payment

The evaluators will receive an initial payment of 40 % of the total amount to be made upon assessment of satisfactory progress by submitting the draft report. Final payment of 60% will be made upon satisfactory completion of work. The fee is payable under the individual SSAs of each evaluator. The travel will be prepared separately and will be inclusive of all expenses such as travel, accommodation and incidental expenses.

In case, the evaluators cannot provide the products in accordance with the TORs, the timeframe agreed, or his products are substandard, the payment to the evaluators could be withheld, until such a time the products are modified to meet UNEP's standard. In case, the evaluators fail to submit a satisfactory final product to UNEP, the product prepared by the evaluators may not constitute the evaluation report.

12th January 2005

Project Logical Framework

PROJECT OBJECTIVES	
<p>Project rationale and objectives:</p> <p>Goal: Conserving and sustainably using biodiversity by protecting the highest priority sites at the appropriate level within five (5) <u>Level One</u> priority Latin American ecoregions: Choco/Darien tropical forest (Colombia, Ecuador, Panama); Eastern Andes Cordillera Real montane forest (Ecuador, Colombia, Peru); Peruvian Yungas (Peru); Bolivian Yungas (Bolivia); and Chaco Savannas (Paraguay and Bolivia).</p> <p>Objective: Catalyzing science-based decision-making and conservation action on landscape management alternatives in the important ecoregions, particularly in the development and implementation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAP).</p>	<p>Indicators</p> <p>(a) Priority sites identified with defined conservation management alternatives within each ecoregion.</p> <p>(b) Adoption and implementation of conservation management alternatives by stakeholders.</p>
<p>Expected project outcomes:</p> <p>3) Identification of priority unprotected sites with the highest global biodiversity importance for future conservation action.</p>	<p>Indicators:</p> <p>GIS maps scaled to 1:500,000 for the five ecoregions and 1:50,000-1:100,000 for the key sites with an in-depth scientific and standardized analysis of the global biodiversity benefits. These benefits revolve around biodiversity index of a site, endangered and flag species found within, accessibility, importance to communities for human use, and importance for scientific needs.</p> <p>Selection priority matrices and databases of geographic and biodiversity data established.</p> <p>Filled matrices with information on biodiversity values and biological values.</p> <p>Identified sites through input and collaboration from stakeholders.</p> <p>Electronic and hard copy presentation of the results in a clear and easy to view and understand format (utilizing Geoexplorer – software)</p>
<p>4) Identify plans for conservation management alternatives developed and presented to key stakeholders (Governments, community representatives, national and international NGOs)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Best management alternatives selected and prioritized ▶ Agreement with stakeholders indicating the adequacy of management alternative of site(s) identified through a landscape ecology approach.

<p>5)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Increased capacity of the CDCs to catalyze conservation actions at national level achieved. ▶ Enhanced regional co-operation, networking information exchange on the use of spatial technologies, protocols, common methodologies ▶ Building stakeholder support for science-based decision making and promoting application of project outputs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ CDCs strengthened at a national level to support biodiversity conservation management alternatives recommended by the project ▶ Cooperation with international metadata networks established. These included entities such as The Clearing House Mechanism (CHM), the InterAmerican Biodiversity Information Network (IABIN), and others. ▶ Recommendations from this project accepted by decision and policy makers.
<p>Planned Activities to Achieve Outcomes (including the cost in US \$ of each activity)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Compile critical data on biodiversity and threats to biodiversity from biological databases, map study and satellite images. ▶ Hold workshops to standardize methodology among the CDCs. ▶ Determine cartography analysis, geo-referencing, image classification, selection matrixes, databases and cartographic modeling. Produce preliminary assessments and verify secondary information or further investigation as needed. ▶ Prioritize critical areas based on scientific data, methodology, consultation and conservation imperatives. ▶ Produce evaluations of the global biodiversity benefits of the priority sites based on biological and ecological scientific analysis. <p>US\$ 851,000 (GEF: US\$420,548)</p>	<p>Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Data gathered for : Thematic maps Satellite images Ecological, Biological, Socio economic Data ▶ Standardized process, digitalization, and map standards set. ▶ Cartographic model selected, geo-referencing, image classification, matrix selection process completed ▶ Areas prioritized within ecoregions. This developed in coordination with stakeholders ▶ Prioritized areas evaluated based on matrices. ▶ One or two sites per ecoregion identified and a landscape management approach developed for each.
<p>2) Use the site prioritization to determine effective biodiversity protection and conservation management alternatives that support and correspond to existing national planning efforts.</p> <p>US\$ 257,000 (GEF: US\$198,366)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ A Landscape Ecology Analysis complete with cooperation of national and local stakeholders. ▶ Landscape management alternatives Identified.

<p>3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Disseminate scientific data and biodiversity protection and conservation management alternatives via the CDC network to key stakeholders through consultation and publications. Distribute via electronic format also for other key decision-makers, communities, NGOs, and international organizations. ▶ Organize workshops for key national and local government policymakers, NGOs, multilateral institutions and other stakeholders and present different prioritized management alternatives to achieve implementation of conservation actions. ▶ Develop exchanges between the CDCs and others in the scientific, conservation and political communities and reinforce biodiversity networks. ▶ Develop CDC role to catalyze in conservation plan implementation for continued management. <p>US\$ 322,000 (GEF: US\$ 106,083)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Communication vehicles such as CDs, literature, and others produced and functioning. ▶ Informed stakeholders capable of making decisions with gathered information. ▶ Enhanced capacity of the Network of Conservation Data Centers acquired through an exchange of information for conservation purposes. ▶ Policy makers will increase the use of information provided by each Conservation Data Center to achieve sound policy making.
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Annex II

EVALUATION SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

UNEP-TNC Project "Catalyzing Conservation Action in Latin America: Identifying Priority Sites and Best Management Alternatives in Five Globally Significant Ecoregions" GEF 1010-00-14

As you may know, an in-depth evaluation of the UNEP-TNC project is being carried out by an independent evaluator (Dr. Fabián Rodríguez E.). This survey is an important element of the evaluation and your responses will contribute greatly to the success of the UNEP initiative.

Please read the following questions carefully and provide a response using a scale of 1 to 5. The rating system is as follows:

1 = Excellent / Outstanding	(90-100 per cent achievement)
2 = Very well / Very good	(75-89 per cent)
3 = Well / Good	(60-74 per cent)
4 = Adequately / Satisfactory	(50-59 per cent)
5 = Inadequately / Unsatisfactory	(less than 49 per cent)

Answer only the questions that cover areas with which you are familiar. If you have inadequate information, you may skip that specific question. Explanatory comments will be useful, especially suggestions to improve activities in the future.

Individual responses will be kept strictly confidential and held by the evaluator. Only aggregate or average results will appear in the evaluation report, and no result will be attributed to any single individual.

Please return the completed survey before February 25th 2005, to the evaluator via e-mail (fabian196@hotmail.com). Even a partial response is better than no response at all. Thank you very much for your collaboration.

Respondent's information:

Name:..... Title:.....

Address:.....

.....

Phone: Fax: E-mail:.....

Role in UNEP-TNC project (e.g. coordinator, researcher, National Committee, other):

.....

Profession / Discipline:

1. How well has the UNEP-TNC-NatureServe achieved planned results and expected outputs based on project's goals and objectives –if it is possible accomplishments in the comment:

1.1 Sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity by preserving highest priority sites within five Level One priority in Latin America (rank 1-5)

Comments:

.....

1.2 Driving science-based decision-making and conservation action on landscape management alternatives in the important ecoregions, specially in the development and implementation of National Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAP). (rank 1-5)

Comments:

.....

1.3 Identification of priority unprotected sites with the highest global biodiversity importance for future conservation action. (rank 1-5)

Comments:

.....

1.4 Identify plans for conservation management alternatives developed and presented to key stakeholders (Governments, community representatives, national and international NGOs) (rank 1-5)

Comments:

.....

1.5 Increasing capacity of the CDCs to catalyze conservation actions at national level (rank 1-5)

Comments:

.....

1.6 Enhance regional co-operation, networking information exchange on the use of spatial technologies (GIS) protocols, common methodologies. (rank 1-5)

Comments:

.....

1.7 Building stakeholder support for science-based decision making and promoting application of project. (rank 1-5)

Comments:

.....

2. How well did the UNEP-TNC-NatureServe's team deliver and present expected outputs and planned activities in the Project document:

2.1 Organization and conduction of Presentation Meetings or Round-tables:

2.1.1 Local(rank 1-5)

2.1.2 Regional(rank 1-5)

2.1.3 National(rank 1-5)

2.1.4 International(rank 1-5)

Comments:

.....

- 2.2 Organization y conduction of endorsement and training workshops:
 - 2.2.1 Local(rank 1-5)
 - 2.2.2 Regional(rank 1-5)
 - 2.2.3 National(rank 1-5)
 - 2.2.4 International(rank 1-5)

Comments:

2.3 Communication y dissemination(rank 1-5)

- Throughout:
- Newsletters, publications, appropriate journals
 - National / international conferences
 - Partial, annual and final reports dissemination
 - National and regional follow up reports
 - Strategic communication
 - Websites (reports and results)
 - TNC network
 - NatureServe Network
 - UNEP network
 - Presentation on international meetings and donor’s reports

Comments:

3. How well did the institutional and administrative framework perform their work:

3.1 Regional seminars and training workshops (rank 1-5)

Comments

3.2 Steering and monitor committees (rank 1-5)

.....

3.3 General, regional and national coordination:
 - promoting partners’ dialogue y discussion (rank 1-5)

- providing and dissemination information (rank 1-5)

- providing technical and administrative support (rank 1-5)

Comments:

4. How successful was project’s implementation approach (rank 1-5)

(e.g. activities' design, preparation of action plans, flexibility, ability to adjust and re-phase, follow-up actions, etc)

Comments:

5. Administrative and financial management (to be answered only by administrative and financial members of the team)

5.1 How well and fast was the resource mobilization, financial and budget planning. (rank 1-5)

Comment:

.....
...

5.2 were the activities carried out satisfactorily within the planned budget (rank 1-5)

Comment:

5.3 Were the financial resources devoted properly in order to achieve major project's goal and objectives

- 1.1 (too little / about right / too much)
- 1.2 (too little / about right / too much)
- 1.3 (too little / about right / too much)
- 1.4 (too little / about right / too much)
- 1.5 (too little / about right / too much)
- 1.6 (too little / about right / too much)
- 1.7 (too little / about right / too much)

Comment:

5.4 Were financial resources used in a cost effective (e.g. activities carried out at the lowest possible cost)
(rank 1-5)

Comments:

6. How sustainable were activities of UNEP-TNC-NatureServe's project:

6.1 Financially (e.g. UNEP-TNC-NatureServe's needs vs. resources available)

Comments:

6.2 Substantively (e.g. demand for UNEP-TNC-NatureServe services, enthusiasm of key stakeholders, etc)

- internationally (rank 1-5)

- regionally (rank 1-5)

- nationally (rank 1-5)

Comments:

7. How well did country ownership of activities, policies, and processes adopt:

- Among monitoring and steering and coordination committees (rank 1-5)

- in influencing national policies (rank 1-5)

- in influencing specific projects (rank 1-5)

Comments:

8. Could a multinational, multi-stakeholder such as UNEP-TNC-NatureServe Project be replicated and applied on other regions, using it as a model of establishing priority conservation sites as well as facilitate dialogue and discussion on areas with strong conflicting (ej. Economic development vs. conservation)

- Establishing single multinational policies, rules and laws for biodiversity (rank 1-5)

- Establishing bi-national conservation areas (rank 1-5)

- Establishing protection areas on key economic development areas (rank 1-5)

Comments:

9. How well the activities of UNEP-TNC-NatureServe project were monitored and evaluated ex-post (e.g. End-of-meeting questionnaires follow-up evaluations, feedback, etc.)

..... (rank 1-5)

Comments:

10. How helpful was the role of UNEP in supporting, facilitating and monitoring UNEP-TNC-NatureServe project's activities (rank 1-5)

Comments:

Annex III

List of Evaluation Interviewees

<i>Nombre</i>	<i>Institución</i>
Dr. Sheila Aggarwal-Khan	The Division of Global Environment Facility Co-ordination (DGEF) UNEP
Ing. Pablo Almeida	Director GIS, Alianza Jatun Sacha-CDC, Ecuador
Silvia Benitez, M.Sc.	Conservation Project Director, TNC Northern Tropical Andes Conservation Program
Tarsicio Granizo	Senior Advisor for Protected Areas System, TNC South America Conservation Region
Marcelo Guevara	Science, TNC Northern Tropical Andes Conservation Program
Dr. Marcia Peñafiel	Director CDC.
Fernando Regal	GIS Senior Advisor, Universidad Nacional La Molina, CDC Perú
Elizabeth Ribadeniera	Grants Specialist, TNC Northern Tropical Andes Conservation Program
Nélida Rivarola	Assistant Secretary, CDC Director, Secretaria de Ambiente, Paraguay
Ing. María Isabel Salazar	Director, Environmental and Biodiversity Policy, Corporación Regional del Valle del Cauca, Colombia
Dr, Xavier Silva	UNEP/GEF Project Director, Environmental Consultant
Dr. Ashbindu Singh	Regional Coordinator, UNEP Division of Early Warning and Assessment -North America
Dr. Roberto Troya	External Affair Director, TNC South America Conservation Unit
Ing. Pedro G. Vásquez	Director, CDC – Universidad Nacional La Molina, Perú
Eduardo Velasco Abad	CDC Director, Corporación Regional del Valle del Cauca, Colombia

Annex IV. Co-financing and Leveraged Resources

Co financing (Type/Source)	IA own Financing (US\$)		Government (US\$)		Other* (US\$)		Total (US\$)		Total Disbursement (US\$)	
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual
- Grants										
- Loans/Concessional (compared to market rate)										
- Credits										
- Equity investments										
- In-kind support					\$ 550,000 ¹	\$ 698,489	\$ 550,000	\$ 698,489		
- Other (*)					\$ 130,000 ²		\$ 130,000			
Totals					\$ 680.000	\$ 698.489	\$ 680.000	\$ 698.489		

* Other is referred to contributions mobilized for the project from other multilateral agencies, bilateral development cooperation agencies, NGOs, the private sector and beneficiaries.

¹ Total In-kind support from TNC \$ 288,000.00 / \$ 224,350.09 (planned/actual) and from CDCs \$ 262,000.00 / \$ 474,138.74 (planned/actual).

² Originally financial support from the Andean Financial Corporation (CAF) was expected but CAF later changed priorities and decided not to support the project.

Annex V. Terms of Reference

TERMS OF REFERENCE For the Final Evaluation of the UNEP GEF project

CATALYZING CONSERVATION ACTION IN LATIN AMERICA: Identifying priority sites and best management alternatives in five globally significant ecoregions “

GF/1010-00-14

Background and legislative mandate

The goal of the project is to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity by protecting the highest priority sites at the appropriate level within five (5) Level One priority Latin American ecoregions:

- ▶ Choco/Darien tropical forest (Colombia, Ecuador, Panama);
- ▶ Eastern Andes Cordillera Real montane forest (Ecuador, Colombia, Peru);
- ▶ Peruvian Yungas (Peru);
- ▶ Bolivian Yungas (Bolivia); and
- ▶ Chaco Savannas (Paraguay and Bolivia).

The overall objective of the project is to catalyze science-based decision-making and conservation action on landscape management alternatives in the important ecoregions, particularly in the development and implementation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAP). The specific objectives of the project were to scientifically analyze and identify priority sites with globally significant biodiversity in the five ecoregions; develop and recommend a set of conservation management alternatives and protection strategies for the identified sites to the project stakeholders; and catalyze the adoption of strategies to protect and conserve the globally significant biodiversity of the identified sites in the five ecoregions.

Activities focused on gathering information, providing training, standardizing data assessment processes and analysis and dissemination of data and were expected to lead to the following outcomes:

- 6) Identification of priority unprotected sites with the highest global biodiversity importance for future conservation action.
- 7) Identify plans for conservation management alternatives developed and presented to key stakeholders (Governments, community representatives, national and international NGOs)
- 3) -Increased capacity of the CDCs to catalyze conservation actions at national level achieved.
 - Enhanced regional co-operation, networking information exchange on the use of spatial technologies, protocols, common methodologies
 - Building stakeholder support for science-based decision making and promoting application of project outputs

The project was executed by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) Regional Technical Unit in Quito Ecuador in collaboration with six Latin American Conservation Data Centers (CDCs) for a three year

period commencing 1st September 2000 and completing 30th September 2003. The total budget of the medium size project was US\$ 1,430,000 including a project preparation block A grant (PDF-A) US\$ 25,000 and co-financing from CDC (in kind), TNC (in kind) and Cooperacion Andina Fomento (CAF) (cash).

The project supports the GEF operational programmes 1 and 3 on semi-arid and arid ecosystems and forest ecosystems. The project supports UNEP's sub-programme 1 on Environmental Assessment and Early Warning and builds on UNEP's activities in assessing the state of the environment and analyzing global environmental trends including the UNEP/CIAT project on Environmental and Sustainability Indicators in Latin American and the Caribbean.

Objective and scope of the Evaluation

To overall objective of the evaluation is to establish project impact, and review and evaluate the implementation of planned project activities, outputs and outcomes against actual results. The evaluation will also assess efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the overall implementation approach of the project, efficient and effective management of project funds, participation of all stakeholders, lessons learnt and good practices and management of risks, sustainability of project impacts and issues of replicating good practices.

The scope of the in-depth evaluation will cover all activities undertaken within the framework of the project. The performance indicators provided in the LogFrame/project matrix (see table in Annex) should be used together with the evaluation parameters of appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency, impact and sustainability. Guidelines on performance indicators are provided in the UNEP project manual pp. 13/89-13/99 and also available on http://www.unep.org/Project_Manual/

Specifically the evaluator shall take the following actions in order to achieve the objective of the evaluation. The evaluator shall:

17. Establish to what extent the project's objectives were met and planned outcomes (results) obtained.
18. Evaluate project performance in relation to the indicators, assumptions and risks specified in the logical framework matrix and the Project Document. Determine the usefulness of the indicators specified.
19. Assess the scope, quality and significance of the project outputs produced in relation to expected results.
20. Analyze the extent of cooperation engendered and synergy were created by the project between its activities and with on-going activities for the preparation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs).
21. Identify and, to the extent possible, quantify any additional outputs and outcomes beyond those specified in the Project Document.
22. Evaluate the timetable of activities and the allocation of financial resources to project activities and determine their consistency with the Project Document. Where activities

and/or outputs have been delayed the cause of the delay and remedial actions taken should be identified.

23. Identify any programmatic and financial variance and/or adjustments made during the project and their appropriateness in terms of the overall objectives of the project.
24. Evaluate project coordination, management and administration provided by the executing agency TNC and UNEP/GEF. The evaluation should include specific references to:
 - f) Organizational/institutional arrangements for collaboration between TNC, CDCs and sites including in-country partners and policymakers;
 - g) The effectiveness of project management in terms of assignment and execution of project activities, and flexibility of management in terms of responsiveness to the need for changes in financial allocations, timing of activities, or mode of operation;
 - h) The effectiveness of the monitoring mechanisms currently employed by the executing agency TNC in monitoring on a day to day basis, progress in project execution;
 - i) Administrative, operational and/or technical problems and constraints that influenced the effective implementation of the project, and
 - j) Financial management of the project, including the balance between expenditures on administrative and overhead charges in relation to those on the achievement of substantive outputs.
25. Assess the extent to which the scientific products such as geographic information and biological databases, conservation management alternatives, and protection strategies have scientific credibility.
26. Assess the extent to which the local NGOs, CDC partners, government ministries, policymakers and decision-makers (of which some are identified in the project document) were involved in the activities of the project.
27. Assess the extent to which the project has been able to provide direct access to information and to reduce cost of activities required by collaborating entities.
28. Determine the sustainability and replicability of the project taking into consideration the extent which the activities have developed CDC's role, catalyzed conservation plan implementation and supported ongoing activities for the preparation of NBSAPs.
29. Identify tools and methods used and their effectiveness for dissemination of scientific data and biodiversity protection and conservation management alternatives via the CDC network and other in the scientific, conservation and political communities.
30. Identify any risks that the project faced during implementation and how well the risks were managed through adaptive management.
31. Identify problems encountered and lessons learned during project implementation.
32. Provide recommendations to UNEP and its executing partner regarding future actions to follow up on this project.

3. Methodology

The evaluation will be conducted by using a participatory approach where by the task manager and other relevant staff are kept informed and regularly consulted throughout the evaluation. The following approaches will be used for collecting and analyzing data:

- g) Desk review of project document, outputs, monitoring reports (such as quarterly progress reports, mission reports and the GEF annual Project Implementation Review reports, minutes of meetings and relevant correspondence;

- h) Review of specific products including datasets, management and action plans, publications and other material and reports;
- i) Interviews with the Task Manager UNEP/GEF, the Regional Coordinator UNEP Environmental Information Program – North America and the Project Manager and other project staff at TNC Regional Technical Unit in Quito Ecuador;
- j) Phone interviews and/or electronic questionnaires forwarded to the focal points of the DCDs located in Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, Paraguay and Peru.
- k) Consultations with relevant UNEP and UNEP/GEF staff;
- l) Consultations and/or interviews with relevant stakeholders involved, including government representatives; relevant ministries and departments, local NGOs and other agencies.

The success of project implementation will be rated on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being the highest (most successful) rating and 5 being the lowest and covering the following aspects:

- Achievement of objectives and planned results
- Attainment of outputs and activities
- Cost-effectiveness
- Impact
- Sustainability
- Stakeholders participation
- Country ownership
- Implementation approach
- Financial planning
- Replicability
- Monitoring and evaluation

Each of the items should be rated separately with comments and then an overall rating given. The following rating system is to be applied:

1=Excellent	(90 % -100 % achievement)
2=Very Good	(75 % - 89 %)
3=Good	(60 % - 74 %)
4=Satisfactory	(50 % - 59 %)
5=Unsatisfactory	(49 % and below)

The ratings will be converted in a separate annex to the GEF rating system of: Highly Satisfactory (80%-100%), Satisfactory (65%-79%), Marginally Satisfactory (50%-64%), Unsatisfactory (49% and below), and N/A.

4. Evaluation Report Format and Procedures

The evaluation report shall be a detailed report, written in English, of no more than 20 pages exclusive of the executive summary, the lessons learned, and the findings and recommendations and include:

- i) Executive summary (no more than 3 pages)
- ii) Introduction and background
- iii) Scope, objective and methodology of evaluation
- iv) Findings and conclusions
- v) Lessons learned
- vi) Recommendations
- vii) All annexes should be typed.

The final report shall be written in English and submitted in electronic form in the MS Word Format by 28th March 2005, and should be addressed as follows:

Mr. Segbedzi Norgbey
UNEP, P.O. Box 30552
Nairobi, Kenya
Tel.: (254-20) 623387
Fax: (254-20) 623158
Email: segbedzi.norgbey@unep.org

With copies to

Mr. Ahmed Djoghlaif, Director
UNEP/Division of GEF Coordination
P.O. Box 30552
Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: + 254-20-624166
Fax: + 254-20-624041/4042
Email: ahmed.djoghlaif@unep.org

Mr. Alain Lambert
Task manager MSP Biodiversity
UNEP/Division of GEF Coordination
P.O. Box 30552
Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: + 254-20-624085
Fax: + 254-20-624042
Email: alain.lambert@unep.org

The evaluation report will be printed in hard copy and published on the Evaluation and Oversight Unit's web-site www.unep.org/eou

5. Timing and resources

A consultant will be hired to conduct this evaluation under the guidance of the Chief of Evaluation and Oversight unit (EOU) and in close cooperation with the Task Manager, MSP-Biodiversity in the

Division of GEF Coordination (DGEF) and in collaboration with the Programme Officer for Medium Sized Projects (MSP) in DGEF.

In accordance with UNEP/GEF policy, all GEF projects are evaluated by an independent evaluator contracted by the EOU, and not associated with the implementation of the project. The evaluator should have the following qualifications: (i) Basic expertise on the subject matter, (ii) Experience with projects in developing countries, in particular Latin America and (iii) Project evaluation.

The contract will begin on 31st January 2005 and end 28th March 2005 (4 weeks spread over 8 weeks). The consultant will travel to Quito, Ecuador and interview relevant staff of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and after discussion with the task manager agree on visits to one or two of the Conservation Data Centres (CDCs) either in Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, Paraguay or Peru and interview stakeholders. The consultant will submit a first draft to EOU on 28th February 2005. Comments on the final draft report will be sent to the consultant after a maximum of 2 weeks. After incorporating the comments, the consultant will submit the final report by 28th March 2005.

6. Schedule of Payment

The evaluators will receive an initial payment of 40 % of the total amount to be made upon assessment of satisfactory progress by submitting the draft report. Final payment of 60% will be made upon satisfactory completion of work. The fee is payable under the individual SSAs of each evaluator. The travel will be prepared separately and will be inclusive of all expenses such as travel, accommodation and incidental expenses.

In case, the evaluators cannot provide the products in accordance with the TORs, the timeframe agreed, or his products are substandard, the payment to the evaluators could be withheld, until such a time the products are modified to meet UNEP's standard. In case, the evaluators fail to submit a satisfactory final product to UNEP, the product prepared by the evaluators may not constitute the evaluation report.

12th January 2005

ANNEX

Project Logical Framework

PROJECT OBJECTIVES	
<p>Project rationale and objectives:</p> <p>Goal: Conserving and sustainably using biodiversity by protecting the highest priority sites at the appropriate level within five (5) <u>Level One</u> priority Latin American ecoregions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Choco/Darien tropical forest (Colombia, Ecuador, Panama); ▶ Eastern Andes Cordillera Real montane forest (Ecuador, Colombia, Peru); ▶ Peruvian Yungas (Peru); ▶ Bolivian Yungas (Bolivia); and ▶ Chaco Savannas (Paraguay and Bolivia). <p>Objective: Catalyzing science-based decision-making and conservation action on landscape management alternatives in the important ecoregions, particularly in the development and implementation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAP).</p>	<p>Indicators</p> <p>(c) Priority sites identified with defined conservation management alternatives within each ecoregion.</p> <p>(d) Adoption and implementation of conservation management alternatives by stakeholders.</p>
<p>Expected project outcomes:</p> <p>8) Identification of priority unprotected sites with the highest global biodiversity importance for future conservation action.</p>	<p>Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ GIS maps scaled to 1:500,000 for the five ecoregions and 1:50,000-1:100,000 for the key sites with an in-depth scientific and standardized analysis of the global biodiversity benefits. These benefits revolve around biodiversity index of a site, endangered and flag species found within, accessibility, importance to communities for human use, and importance for scientific needs. ▶ Selection priority matrices and databases of geographic and biodiversity data established. ▶ Filled matrices with information on biodiversity values and biological values. ▶ Identified sites through input and collaboration from stakeholders.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Electronic and hard copy presentation of the results in a clear and easy to view and understand format (utilizing Geoexplorer – software)
9) Identify plans for conservation management alternatives developed and presented to key stakeholders (Governments, community representatives, national and international NGOs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Best management alternatives selected and prioritized ▶ Agreement with stakeholders indicating the adequacy of management alternative of site(s) identified through a landscape ecology approach.
10) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Increased capacity of the CDCs to catalyze conservation actions at national level achieved. ▶ Enhanced regional co-operation, networking information exchange on the use of spatial technologies, protocols, common methodologies ▶ Building stakeholder support for science-based decision making and promoting application of project outputs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ CDCs strengthened at a national level to support biodiversity conservation management alternatives recommended by the project ▶ Cooperation with international metadata networks established. These included entities such as The ClearingHouse Mechanism (CHM), the InterAmerican Biodiversity Information Network (IABIN), and others. ▶ Recommendations from this project accepted by decision and policy makers.
Planned Activities to Achieve Outcomes (including the cost in US \$ of each activity)	Indicators:
1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Compile critical data on biodiversity and threats to biodiversity from biological databases, map study and satellite images. ▶ Hold workshops to standardize methodology among the CDCs. ▶ Determine cartography analysis, georeferencing, image classification, selection matrixes, databases and cartographic modeling. Produce preliminary assessments and verify secondary information or further investigation as needed. ▶ Prioritize critical areas based on scientific data, methodology, consultation and conservation imperatives. ▶ Produce evaluations of the global biodiversity benefits of the priority sites based on biological and ecological scientific analysis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Data gathered for : Thematic maps Satellite images Ecological, Biological, Socio economic Data ▶ Standardized process, digitalization, and map standards set. ▶ Cartographic model selected, georeferencing, image classification, matrix selection process completed ▶ Areas prioritized within ecoregions. This developed in coordination with stakeholders ▶ Prioritized areas evaluated based on matrices. ▶ One or two sites per ecoregion identified and a landscape

<p>US\$ 851,000 (GEF: US\$420,548)</p>	<p>management approach developed for each.</p>
<p>2) Use the site prioritization to determine effective biodiversity protection and conservation management alternatives that support and correspond to existing national planning efforts.</p> <p>US\$ 257,000 (GEF: US\$198,366)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ A Landscape Ecology Analysis complete with cooperation of national and local stakeholders. ▶ Landscape management alternatives Identified.
<p>3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Disseminate scientific data and biodiversity protection and conservation management alternatives via the CDC network to key stakeholders through consultation and publications. Distribute via electronic format also for other key decision-makers, communities, NGOs, and international organizations. ▶ Organize workshops for key national and local government policymakers, NGOs, multilateral institutions and other stakeholders and present different prioritized management alternatives to achieve implementation of conservation actions. ▶ Develop exchanges between the CDCs and others in the scientific, conservation and political communities and reinforce biodiversity networks. ▶ Develop CDC role to catalyze in conservation plan implementation for continued management. <p>US\$ 322,000 (GEF: US\$ 106,083)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Communication vehicles such as CDs, literature, and others produced and functioning. ▶ Informed stakeholders capable of making decisions with gathered information. ▶ Enhanced capacity of the Network of Conservation Data Centers acquired through an exchange of information for conservation purposes. ▶ Policy makers will increase the use of information provided by each Conservation Data Center to achieve sound policy making.