

TERMS OF REFERENCE
Project Mid-Term Evaluation

1. Project Summary

- Project Title: PIMS 2091 - Coastal and Marine biodiversity conservation and sustainable use in the Con Dao islands region
- Project ID: 00049728
- Implementing Partner: Ba Ria – Vung Tau provincial peoples’ Committee (PPC)
- Responsible Agency: Con Dao National Park (CDNP)
- Project Sites: Con Dao islands region, Con Dao District, BR-VT Province
- Country: Vietnam
- Budget:

UNDP/ GEF	US\$ 970,450
Government inputs (in kind)	\$ 254,850
Third Party parallel funding (in kind)	\$ 598,000
- Duration of the assignment: 14 days, (expected starting date: Late May 2008)
- Duty station: Ba Ria-Vung Tau province, Con Dao District, with travel to Ha Noi

2. General introduction to the UNDP/ GEF Mid-Term Review (MTR) process

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) policy at the project level in UNDP/ GEF has four objectives:

- i). to monitor and evaluate results and impacts;
- ii). to provide a basis for decision making on necessary amendments and improvements;
- iii). to promote accountability for resource use; and
- iv). to document, provide feedback on, and disseminate lessons learnt.

A mix of tools is used to ensure effective project M&E. These might be applied continuously throughout the lifetime of the project- e.g. periodic monitoring of indicators-, or as specific time- bound exercises such as mid-term reviews, audit reports and independent evaluations.

Mid-term evaluations are intended to identify potential project design problems, assess progress towards the achievement of objectives, identify and document lessons learnt (including lessons that might improve design and implementation of other UNDP/GEF projects), identify risks and counter- measure and to make recommendations regarding specific actions that might be taken to improve the project. It is expected to serve as a means of validating or filling the gaps in the initial assessment of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency obtained from monitoring. The mid-term evaluation provides the opportunity to assess early signs of project success or failure and prompt necessary adjustments.

3. Project summary

This medium-sized GEF project ‘COASTAL AND MARINE BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE PROJECT CON DAO ISLANDS’ focuses on the Con Dao National Park (CDNP), an area of global significance for biodiversity conservation in both its marine and terrestrial environments. Both the Vietnam ‘Biodiversity Action Plan’ and the World Bank’s publication on ‘A Global Representative System of Marine Protected Areas’ list the area as a priority for biodiversity conservation.

The biodiversity of CDNP is currently in relatively good condition compared to most of Vietnam’s terrestrial and marine ecosystems, although a number of threats have been identified that impact on the land- and seascape. These include issues of an incomplete legislative environment for the protection of marine biodiversity, lack of engagement of local communities in management and subsequent over-exploitation of resources in critical areas of the NP, and economic development plans that are centrally-derived and pay insufficient attention to social and environmental impacts (i.e. are not in line with principles of sustainable development). Large-scale tourism development potentially falls into this category.

The project aims to address these issues through strengthening local capacity for marine and coastal biodiversity conservation, improving the integration of conservation and environmental management into development planning, establishing a sustainable financing mechanism for biodiversity conservation, and linking local efforts to national strategies and policy development, thus contributing to the conservation of globally significant coastal and marine biodiversity.

Project global environmental objective¹: To catalyse conservation and sustainable management of the globally significant coastal and marine biodiversity and ecological processes of the Con Dao Islands Region

Project immediate objective: Protection, management and sustainable financing of globally significant coastal and marine biodiversity in the Con Dao islands region, with increased participation of local communities

- **Outcome 100:** Strengthened protection and participatory conservation and management of biodiversity in CDNP.
- **Outcome 200:** Strengthened sustainable environmental management in Con Dao district
- **Outcome 300:** Development of Sustainable Financing for Con Dao Islands Region Biodiversity

The project is executed by Con Dao National Park, on behalf of the Ba Ria – Vung Tau Province, with technical support from UNDP and in partnership with the World Wide Fund for Nature – Indochina Programme.

4. Project Status

Project started implementation since May 2006 and have achieved a number of important results. These include:

- Baseline socio-economic and biodiversity surveys have been undertaken to provide the basis for national park planning.
- A participatory process was used to redefine the zoning of the MPA, with off-take zones and regulations introduced in line with emerging MPA legislation.
- A consultative process was undertaken to agree a Con Dao Marine Resources Conservation Convention with local fishing communities.
- The Con Dao Marine Resources Conservation Convention, zoning of the MPA and on-going re-zoning of the terrestrial section of the NP (A Government-led exercise) form the basis for an operational management plan, developed by CDNP staff in consultation with local stakeholders.
- A M&E system for the CDNP is under development as a component of the Management Plan.
- A Strategic Environmental Assessment was undertaken as a basis for reconciling differing development agendas for Con Dao with the Government’s principles of sustainable development (environmental, social and economic). This SEA will be issued by the provincial Peoples Committee as guidelines for further socio-economic planning.
- A strategic tourism orientation is under development following on from the above, also as an input into integrated planning for Con Dao district. An ecotourism masterplan will follow in order to define tourism options for the national park.
- A number of training courses have been conducted for CDNP staff and local stakeholders, resulting in improved management capacity and increased public awareness of environmental protection and natural resources. Local communities such as local fishermen realize their ownership and have participated in project planning, implementation and monitoring.
- Consultations have been undertaken as initial stages of a complex process of identifying feasible alternative income generating opportunities for local resource-dependent households (especially fishing households).
- Equipment was supplied to the CDNP, including monitoring equipment (diving gear), a 4WD vehicle and a boat in order to enhance patrolling and monitoring in both terrestrial and marine sections of the park.

5. Objectives of the Mid-Term Evaluation

As per the general introduction, the overall objective of the MTE is to review progress towards the project’s objectives and outcomes, identify strengths and weaknesses in implementation, identify risks and counter-measures, assess the likelihood of the project achieving its objectives and delivering its intended outputs, and provide recommendations on modifications to increase the likelihood of success (if necessary).

In the particular case of Con Dao Project, some operational problems at the start caused some delays in implementation. Further, an uncoordinated planning process involved various players from central to provincial level with widely divergence agendas, may hinder the contribution of the project to the national outcomes.

¹ Global Environmental Objective is often used by GEF and is named “Development Objective” by UNDP and it is the same as “Project Goal”.

Key issues

- Assess progress towards attaining the project's national and global environmental objectives;
- Assess progress towards achievement of project outcomes (particularly outcome 200, and noting that most activities contributing to outcome 300 are scheduled for the second half of the project cycle);
- Describe the project's adaptive management strategy – how have project activities changed in response to new conditions, and have the changes been appropriate (with particular attention to project responsiveness to the emerging development planning agendas);
- Review the clarity of roles and responsibilities of the various agencies and institutions (including effectiveness of the Government contribution to the project) and the level of coordination between relevant actors, especially involvement of relevant staff/departments of the IAG in project implementation;
- Review any partnership arrangements with other donors and comment on their strengths and weaknesses (i.e. partnership with WWF as a subcontractor, engagement with the SEMLA project also working on Con Dao with overlapping objectives);
- Assess the level of community involvement in the project and recommend on whether public involvement has been appropriate to the goals of the project;
- Describe and assess efforts of UNDP in support of the implementing agency and national institutions;
- Review and evaluate the extent to which project impacts have reached the intended beneficiaries, both within and outside project sites;
- Assess the likelihood of continuation of project outcomes and benefits after completion of GEF funding;
- Identify risks and counter-measures, describe key factors that will require attention in order to improve prospects for sustainability of project outcomes;
- Assess whether the project has an appropriate strategy for knowledge transfer, and describe the results of this strategy to date;
- Assess whether the Logical Framework Approach and performance indicators have been used as project management tools;
- Review the implementation of the project's monitoring and evaluation plans;
- Describe the main lessons that have emerged in terms of:
 - strengthening country ownership;
 - strengthening stakeholder participation;
 - application of adaptive management strategies;
 - efforts to secure sustainability;
 - knowledge transfer; and
 - role of M&E in project implementation.

In describing all lessons learnt, an explicit distinction needs to be made between those lessons applicable only to this project, and lessons that may be of value more broadly, including to other similar projects in the UNDP/GEF pipeline and portfolio.

6. Methodology for the evaluation

The evaluation will be conducted in a participatory fashion working on the basis that the primary purpose of the evaluation is to assess project implementation and impact likelihood and for this to happen all stakeholders must fully understand and identify with the evaluation report, even if they might disagree with some of the contents.

The evaluation will start with a review of Project documentation including key reports and correspondence. It will include visits to the national project office, interviews (by phone if necessary) with key individuals within the project, the government, and independent observers of the project and its activities, as well as implementing and executing agency personnel. Field visits to project sites will also be conducted to view activities first hand and to meet with site contractors, local leaders, and local government officials.

Project design and relevance

- Assess the relevance of the Project to its Development and Immediate Objectives and to the biodiversity conservation needs of Viet Nam, especially in term of maximising and sustaining the impact of the intervention.

- Assess the design of the Project and the coherence of its strategies and activities, as well as the inter-linkages between components.
- Evaluate the relevance of the overall approach in relation to the Project's objectives. Assess if the Project Development and Immediate Objectives, the specific results and the activities carried out by the Project are in line with the needs and aspirations of the beneficiaries.

Progress of implementation, efficiency and effectiveness

- Analyse the achievements of the Project against its stated targets, its strengths and weaknesses, as well as key challenges that have emerged in the course of implementation.
- Assess the adequacy and appropriateness of the Project implementation modalities that have been put into place.
- Assess the role of the funding and executing agencies, implementing bodies (Con Dao National Park, BR-VT PPC, WWF, Sub-Contractors, Steering Committee, local CBOs, Local authorities), and their effectiveness in carrying out their respective tasks
- Analyse the adequacy of the monitoring approach/methodology and the results of monitoring activities that have been conducted.
- Assess the effectiveness of Project's approaches and strategies in relation to the stated Immediate Objectives.
- Assess the effectiveness of the Project in co-ordinating its work, and in exchanging information, with other initiatives in Viet Nam and with co-operation projects supported by other donors

Impacts

- Assess the Project's long-term impact on institution building, especially CBOs and local communities.
- Analyse the overall effects of the Project per component, be they positive or negative, in a broader context: against the Project's Objectives but also in a general development sense.

Sustainability

- Assess if the policies, strategies adopted by the Project are sustainable in the long term
- Assess how the local institutional capacity and structures have been prepared for the post project situation.
- Comment on cross-cutting issues: appropriate technology, gender issues, cooperation between different Government institutions, biodiversity conservation and sustainable development
- Analyse the current trends in policy and legislative development in sectors related to the Project and describe the current and expected legal and other bottlenecks that may stall the assimilation of key project results.

7. Products expected from the evaluation

Framework for Evaluation Report (no more than 30 pages, excluding Executive Summary and Annexes) structured as follows:

1. Executive Summary
 - Brief description of the project
 - Context and purpose of the evaluation
 - Main conclusion, recommendation, and lessons learnt
2. Introduction
 - Purpose of the evaluation
 - Key issues addressed
 - Methodology of the evaluation
 - Structure of the evaluation
3. The project and its development context
 - Project start and its duration
 - Problems that the project fixed to address
 - The immediate and development objectives of the project
 - Main stakeholders
 - Results expected
4. Finding and conclusion
 - Project formulation

- Implementation approach
- Country ownership / drivenness
- Stakeholder participation
- Replication approach
- Cost effectiveness
- UDDP comparative advantage
- Linkages between project and other interventions within the sector
- Indicators
- Management arrangement
- Project Implementation
 - Financial planning
 - Monitoring and evaluation
 - Execution and implantation modalities
 - Management by the UNDP Country office
 - Coordination and Operational Issues
 - Risks and counter-measures
- Project results
 - Attainment of objectives
 - Sustainability
 - Contribution to upgrading skills of the national staff
- 5. Recommendations
 - Corrective actions for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project
 - Proposal for following up directions underlining main objectives
- 6. Lessons learnt
 - Best and worst practices in addressing issues relating to relevance, performance and success
- 7. Annexes
 - TOR
 - Itinerary
 - List of persons interviewed
 - Summary of field visits
 - List of document reviewed
 - Questionnaires used and summary of result

8. Evaluation team

The team will consist of one international consultant as the team leader and one national consultant. The International will be engaged in for 14 days and the national consultant is engaged for 17 days. The team leader will be responsible for organizing and achieving the evaluation and delivering a final report. In addition, one national project staff will accompany the mission to gather basic data, set up meetings, identify key individuals, assist in planning and logistics, and generally ensure that the evaluation is carried out smoothly.

9. Implementation arrangements:

- The project office is responsible for obtaining a visa for the international consultant, booking hotels, arranging domestic travel, meeting consultants at the airport, arranging meetings with concerned parties in Con Dao District and BR-VT provinces, and other logistic support. Passport details of the international member of the mission must be provided at least two weeks prior to the arrival date;
- It is suggested that the mission is carried out in late May 2008.

10. Evaluation team requirements

International consultant (team leader)

- Academic and/ or professional background in natural/marine and coastal resources/ protected area management or related fields.
- Familiar with integrated conservation development projects in developing countries, particularly in Asia, either through managing or evaluating donor-funded projects.

- Substantive knowledge of participatory monitoring & evaluation processes is essential and experience with ethnic minorities and country experience in Vietnam is an advantage;
- Experience in the evaluation of technical assistance projects, if possible with UNDP or other UN development agencies and major donors. A demonstrated understanding of GEF principles and expected impacts in terms of global benefits is essential;
- Excellent English writing and communication skills. Demonstrated ability to assess complex situations in order to succinctly and clearly screen critical issues and draw forward-looking conclusions.
- Experience leading small multi-disciplinary, multi-national teams to deliver quality products in high stress, short deadline situations.

National consultant (marine and coastal biodiversity conservation)

- Academic background in natural/marine and coastal resource management or related fields
- Knowledge monitoring and evaluation and working experiences in evaluating conservation and development projects;
- Demonstrate understanding of both conservation and development decision-making processes, at national and provincial level is essential.
- Knowledge of participatory and community participation;
- Proficient English writing and communication skills. Ability to act as translator for international counterpart and to translate written documents from/ to Vietnamese is essential.
- Experience with the United Nations or other development agencies is an advantage.

11. Tentative Agenda

- Day 1-2-3: stay in Vung Tau:
 - Create a work-plan; Discuss and agree on approaches/ methodologies; Review documents (as in Annex 6); Briefing meetings with the project office and WWF, (consultation with UNDP through telephone conference).
 - Meet with Vung Tau authorities and concerned departments (notable DPI, Dept Tourism and DoNRE – the latter being the implementing agency of the SEMLA project)..
- Day 4: Travel to Con Dao. Introductory meeting with the Con Dao NP Management Board.
- Day 5: Meet with various stakeholders in Con Dao, including the District PC, CCG and representatives of the fishing communities
- Day 6: Field visits to the islands and the park
- Day 7-8-9: Prepare report and discussions with PMU.
- Day 10: Present report to a stakeholder meeting to obtain comments; revise the report
- Day 11: Travel to HCMC and Vung Tau. Present the reports to concerned agencies/departments to obtain comments
- Day 12: Revise report
- Day 13: Finalize report and debriefing and travel back.
- Day 14: One additional day home-based for any additional, revision and finalization of the report.

12. List of documents to be provided to the project mid-term evaluation mission

- Project Document
- Inception report
- Quarterly and annual reports, including PIR/APR and Minutes of National Steering Committee Meetings.
- Project M&E framework (supplementary to the PIR)
- Key consultants' reports: baseline socio-economic survey, SEA, strategic tourism orientation report, AIG report.
- Audit reports
- Maps of the project sites

Annex 1
Explanation on Terminology Provided in the GEF Guidelines to Terminal Evaluations

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

Some elements of an effective implementation approach may include:

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

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

Some elements of effective country ownership/drivenness may include:

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

For projects whose main focus and actors are in the private-sector rather than public-sector (e.g., IFC projects), elements of effective country ownership/drivenness that demonstrate the interest and commitment of the local private sector to the project may include:

- The number of companies that participated in the project by: receiving technical assistance, applying for financing, attending dissemination events, adopting environmental standards promoted by the project, etc.
- Amount contributed by participating companies to achieve the environmental benefits promoted by the project, including: equity invested, guarantees provided, co-funding of project activities, in-kind contributions, etc.
- Project's collaboration with industry associations

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

Examples of effective public involvement include:

Information dissemination

- Implementation of appropriate outreach/public awareness campaigns

Consultation and stakeholder participation

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

Stakeholder participation

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

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

- Development and implementation of a sustainability strategy.
- Establishment of the financial and economic instruments and mechanisms to ensure the ongoing flow of benefits once the GEF assistance ends (from the public and private sectors, income generating activities, and market transformations to promote the project's objectives).
- Development of suitable organizational arrangements by public and/or private sector.
- Development of policy and regulatory frameworks that further the project objectives.
- Incorporation of environmental and ecological factors affecting future flow of benefits.
- Development of appropriate institutional capacity (systems, structures, staff, expertise, etc.) .
- Identification and involvement of champions (i.e. individuals in government and civil society who can promote sustainability of project outcomes).
- Achieving social sustainability, for example, by mainstreaming project activities into the economy or community production activities.
- Achieving stakeholders consensus regarding courses of action on project activities.

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

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

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

Effective financial plans include:

- Identification of potential sources of co-financing as well as leveraged and associated financing².
- Strong financial controls, including reporting, and planning that allow the project management to make informed decisions regarding the budget at any time, allows for a proper and timely flow of funds, and for the payment of satisfactory project deliverables
- Due diligence due diligence in the management of funds and financial audits.

Co financing includes: Grants, Loans/Concessional (compared to market rate), Credits, Equity investments, In-kind support, Other contributions mobilized for the project from other multilateral agencies, bilateral development cooperation agencies, NGOs, the private sector and beneficiaries. Please refer to Council documents on co-financing for definitions, such as GEF/C.20/6.

² Please refer to Council documents on co-financing for definitions, such as GEF/C.20/6. The following page presents a table to be used for reporting co-financing.

Leveraged resources are additional resources—beyond those committed to the project itself at the time of approval—that are mobilized later as a direct result of the project. Leveraged resources can be financial or in-kind and they may be from other donors, NGO's, foundations, governments, communities or the private sector. Please briefly describe the resources the project has leveraged since inception and indicate how these resources are contributing to the project's ultimate objective.

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

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

Monitoring & Evaluation. Monitoring is the periodic oversight of a process, or the implementation of an activity, which seeks to establish the extent to which inputs, work schedules, other required actions and outputs are proceeding according to plan, so that timely action can be taken to correct the deficiencies detected. Evaluation is a process by which program inputs, activities and results are analyzed and judged explicitly against benchmarks or baseline conditions using performance indicators. This will allow project managers and planners to make decisions based on the evidence of information on the project implementation stage, performance indicators, level of funding still available, etc, building on the project's logical framework.

Monitoring and Evaluation includes activities to measure the project's achievements such as identification of performance indicators, measurement procedures, and determination of baseline conditions. Projects are required to implement plans for monitoring and evaluation with adequate funding and appropriate staff and include activities such as description of data sources and methods for data collection, collection of baseline data, and stakeholder participation. Given the long-term nature of many GEF projects, projects are also encouraged to include long-term monitoring plans that are sustainable after project completion.