Conservation and Restoration of the Globally Significant Biodiversity of the Tisza River Floodplain Through Integrated Floodplain Management

Hungary

Ministry of Environment and Water, Government of Hungary
United Nations Development Programme

GEF Biodiversity Focal Area
Strategic Objective BD-2 / Operational Program 2
Medium-sized Project (MSP)

GEF ID: 1527
UNDP Atlas ID: 00046904/ UNDP PMIS: 1980

Terminal Evaluation

November 16, 2009

Josh Brann (Brann.Evaluation@gmail.com), International Expert
Béla Borsos (dioliget@t-online.hu), National Expert
Independent Conservation and Evaluation Consultants

Acronyms

APEH	Hungarian Tax and Financial Audit Office
BNC	Bureau of Nature Conservation (in the Ministry of Environment and Water)
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
COP	Conference of the Parties
E.A.G.G.F.	European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund
EEOP	Environment and Energy Operating Programme
ESA	Environmentally Sensitive Areas
EU	European Union
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
HNVA	High Nature Value Areas
HNPD	Hortobágy National Park Directorate
ICPDR	International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River
IHFM	Integrated, holistic, floodplain management
LPA	Landscape Protection Area (under the Nature Conservation Act)
MEW	Ministry of Environment and Water
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MGBP	Micro Grants for Biodiversity Programme
MgSzH	Agricultural Technical Administration Office
MSO	Middle-Sized Project
NAEP (AEM)	Agri-environmental Measures of the National Rural Development Plan
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NDA	National Development Agency
NDP	National Development Plan
NLF	National Land Fund
NPD	National Park Directorate
NRDP	National Rural Development Programme
PA	Protected Area
PDF-A	Project Development Phase A
PMU	Project Management Unit
PPF	Project Preparation Fund (for EU Operational Programmes)
PMO	Prime Ministers Office
PSC	Project Steering Committee
SSWM	State Secretariat for Water Management
SZÖVET	Szövetség az Élő Tiszáért (Allianz for the Living Tisza)
TFTO	Upper Tisza Floodplain Technical Support Office
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VTT	Improved Tisza River Flood Control Plan (new *"Vásárhelyi Plan"*)
WMB	Water Management Boards (at the sub catchments level)

I. Executive Summary

1. According to GEF evaluation policies, all GEF funded projects must undergo a terminal evaluation. Thus, this evaluation was initiated by UNDP, to follow the close of the Tisza Biodiversity project. This terminal evaluation seeks to assess the actual performance and results of the Tisza Biodiversity project against the planned project activities and outputs, at the national and local levels based on the relevant evaluation criteria. The evaluation assesses project results based on the expected outcomes and objectives, as well as any unanticipated results. The evaluation will identify relevant lessons for other similar future projects in the future in Hungary and elsewhere, and will provide recommendations as necessary and appropriate.

2. The evaluation focuses on the three-year project implementation period, but includes an assessment of project design, and provides recommendations related to the project's post-implementation period. The evaluation provides the required ratings on key elements of project design and implementation. Further, the evaluation will, when possible and relevant, assess the project in the context of the key GEF operational principles, as summarized in Annex 3. The evaluation methodology was based on a participatory mixed-methods approach, which included three primary elements: a) a desk review of relevant project documentation and other documents; b) interviews with key project participants and stakeholders; and c) a field visit to the project site.

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

4. The project "Conservation and Restoration of the Globally Significant Biodiversity of the Tisza River Floodplain Through Integrated Floodplain Management" was implemented over an approximately three-year period, from October 2005 to December 2008. The project was originally planned for a 36-month implementation period, but was approved in early 2007 for a no-cost 3-month extension to December 2008. GEF-financing was $944,000, not including the PDF-A. The total project budget was $2.7 million, including cash and in-kind co-financing.

5. The overall objective was to achieve biodiversity friendly, sustainable development in the Tisza-floodplain. The immediate objective was to "establish biodiversity friendly, holistic floodplain management as the dominant development paradigm in the Upper Tisza floodplain."

6. The objectives were supported by four direct project outcomes:

Outcome 1: A Sustainable Mechanism for Supporting Local Initiatives and Channelling Local Lessons into National Policy and Planning

Outcome 2: Tools to support biodiversity friendly, IHFM in the Upper Tisza Floodplain

Outcome 3: At the site of each of the Initiatives, land, water, habitats and biodiversity are managed in an integrated manner that is supportive of socio-economic development

Outcome 4: Changes in the policy and the implementation of the VTT and NAEP to integrate biodiversity concerns, feeding into related EU policy and decision-making

7. The Tisza Biodiversity project **relevance** is satisfactory with respect to Hungary's development and environment protection objectives, as well as the objectives of the CBD and the strategic priorities of the GEF. At the local level the project supported the environmental priorities of local communities striving to create a sustainable and economically vibrant rural agriculture-based society in the Upper Tisza floodplain region. At the national level the project tied in most notably with the VTT and NAEP government plans and policies in an attempt to leverage new government initiatives on water and floodplain management in an environmentally sensitive manner. The project worked to mainstream biodiversity in these sectoral policies and programs, which was relevant to the GEF's second strategic priority on mainstreaming biodiversity. The overall objective also supports implementation of the CBD.

8. The Tisza Biodiversity project **efficiency** is rated as satisfactory. The project was implemented in a cost-effective manner, using available infrastructure and institutional framework as well as the support of local stakeholders and non-governmental organisations. Project results achieved are acceptable relative to the level of investment from the GEF and co-financing partners (in spite of the financial difficulties encountered). Financial management and reporting were carried out with a high degree of professionalism and responsibility. Procurement was conducted without problem. The project succeeded in leveraging additional funds following project approval, and the administration team of the newly established Tisza platform has developed the capacity to apply for and access new financing available from a number of sources.

9. Based on the progress toward the project objective and the level of achievement for the four project outcomes, **overall project effectiveness** is rated moderately satisfactory. Due to changed assumptions in the project context leading to a modification of the implementation of the VTT and NAEP by the government, the key objective indicators have not yet been fully met, in particular the direct and indirect project-influenced area applying IHFM as the dominant landscape management paradigm. Nonetheless, the project has laid important groundwork and a foundation, particularly at the local level, for improved flood plain management in the Upper Tisza floodplain in the coming years as implementation of the VTT and NAEP moves ahead in 2009 and beyond.

10. The project target was direct coverage of 1600 km^2 (including 240 km^2 for the originally planned six VTT reservoirs), and indirect coverage of 9400 km^2, which is the total area of the floodplain. At the end of the project 1,163 km^2 had been directly influenced (73% of the target), and 2,090 km^2 were indirectly influenced (22% of the target). However, even in the areas have that have been influenced, it can only be said that IHFM has been partially implemented. Along the same lines, there was no change in the percentage of area covered by payments with respect to environmentally sensitive land management measures under the NAEP, due to the aforementioned delay of the NAEP rollout. The area managed in a "notch" system also was not significantly changed due to project inputs (target increase of 2%), although there were some positive steps in areas supported by Micro Grants. Impact level results related to population levels of three indicator species were mixed (one decreasing, one unchanged, one increasing), but this significance of this data is minimal for a host of reasons discussed in Section VI.D on impacts, such as the value of the indicators chosen, issues related to natural and seasonal variation of species populations, and relevant time horizons for biodiversity monitoring.

11. Although the objectives have not yet been achieved, the results can be considered impressive for the size and scope of the Tisza Biodiversity project – for comparison, the $1 million GEF investment was intended to influence the national policies with budgets of hundreds of millions, if not billions, of dollars.

12. The primary focus of **Outcome 1** was the creation and sustainable establishment of the regional network (described in the project document as the "platform") supporting local initiatives supporting sustainable development environmentally friendly land use change. This outcome was effectively achieved and is considered satisfactory. The entity arising from this outcome was the Alliance for the Living Tisza (SZÖVET), which brings together under one initiative the various stakeholders and local initiatives throughout the Upper Tisza Floodplain.

13. The effectiveness of the Tisza biodiversity project in terms of **Outcome 2** is considered satisfactory. The tools supporting the biodiversity friendly integrated holistic floodplain management practices in the Upper Tisza Floodplain were essential for the practical work outlined in Outcome 3 and constituted important background material for the lobbying activities envisaged for Outcome 4.

14. **Outcome 3** of the Tisza Biodiversity project included one of the most successful aspects of the project, as well as one of the least successful. Fortunately the majority of resources under this outcome went into the successful aspect – the Micro Grants program. Although the largest share of GEF-resources under this outcome were budgeted for the Micro Grant program (34.3% of the total GEF financing for the project), under Outcome 3 the project document focused primarily on the site-level action plans that were to be developed. Development of the site-level action plans was as unsuccessful as the Micro Grants program was successful. Based on the relative percentage of resources contributed to each of these activities, overall achievement under this outcome is considered to be satisfactory.

15. Maybe the least favourable of all project outcomes is **Outcome 4**, for which the level of achievement is moderately unsatisfactory based on the GEF/UNDP evaluation criteria. It should be pointed out that the relatively poor results of Outcome 4 were not attributable to any shortcomings of the project team and participants, but rather to the change in assumptions on which the project intervention was predicated. Even though SZÖVET was instrumental in integrating the VTT areas into the NAEP zonal payment scheme, the new NAEP was announced only in 2009 as opposed to the suggested date of 2007, and in line with the New Hungary Rural Development Programme. The results of SZÖVET's and other NGOs' efforts to have a say in the VTT implementation also fell short of expectations.

16. As with all aspects of the Tisza Biodiversity project, there is an important distinction between the local and national levels with respect to **sustainability**. Based on the four parameters of sustainability, overall sustainability of project achievements is considered moderately likely.

17. ***Key Recommendation:*** There is an urgent need to develop a more systematic and credible system for product certification under the Élő Tisza logo. The efforts taken thus far are a positive step, but for broader commercial use there must be clear production criteria and guidelines, with an inspection system including sanction measures. Putting such a system in

place will increase consumer confidence and reduce the risk of brand image degradation, and is critical for a trademark used in a significant commercial context. [*For SZÖVET*]

18. ***Key Recommendation:*** Two more reservoirs (Nagykunság and Hany-Tiszasüly) of the Vásárhelyi Plan are currently under construction. The lessons and experiences from the Tisza Biodiversity project should be applied in the design, construction and operation of the other reservoirs implemented in the improved Vásárhelyi plan. [*For the Government of Hungary*]

19. ***Key Recommendation:*** Ecological evidence shows that population numbers of many species reflect significant short-term natural fluctuations which leaves single indicator species with little value in evaluating the long term effectiveness of a biodiversity conservation measure with a project time scale of two or three years. The same can be found for many species when data is collected at a limited number of single points in time. Either biodiversity monitoring data should be accounted for over a longer period of time (10-15 years), or some complementary data such as habitat assessment or population dynamics model simulation should further inform short-term assessments of biodiversity trends. [*For UNDP and GEF*]

Summary Project Ratings

Project Component or Objective	Rating
Project Formulation	
Relevance	S
Conceptualization/design	S
Stakeholder participation	S
Project Implementation	
Implementation Approach (Efficiency)	S
The use of the logical framework	S
Adaptive management	S
Use/establishment of information technologies	S
Operational relationships between the institutions involved	MS
Financial management	S
Monitoring and Evaluation	MS
Stakeholder Participation	MS
Production and dissemination of information	S
Local resource users and NGOs participation	HS
Establishment of partnerships	S
Involvement and support of governmental institutions	U
Project Results	
Overall Achievement of Objective and Outcomes (Effectiveness)	MS
Objective: Establish biodiversity friendly, holistic floodplain management as the dominant development paradigm in the Upper Tisza floodplain	MU
Expected Outcome 1: A Sustainable Mechanism for Supporting Local Initiatives and Channelling Local Lessons into National Policy and Planning	S
Expected Outcome 2: Tools to support biodiversity friendly, IHFM in the Upper Tisza Floodplain	S
Expected Outcome 3: At the site of each of the Initiatives, land, water, habitats and biodiversity are managed in an integrated manner that is supportive of socio-economic development	S
Expected Outcome 4: Changes in the policy and the implementation of the VTT and NAEP to integrate biodiversity concerns, feeding into related EU policy and decision making	MU
Sustainability	**ML**
Financial sustainability	L/ML
Institutional sustainability	ML
Socio-economic sustainability	ML
Ecological sustainability	ML
Overall Project Achievement and Impact	**MS**

II. Introduction: Evaluation Scope and Methodology

20. According to GEF evaluation policies, all GEF funded projects must undergo a terminal evaluation. Thus, this evaluation was initiated by UNDP, to follow the close of the Tisza Biodiversity project. This terminal evaluation seeks to assess the actual performance and results of the Tisza Biodiversity project against the planned project activities and outputs, at the national and local levels based on the relevant evaluation criteria. The evaluation assesses project results based on the expected outcomes and objectives, as well as any unanticipated results. The evaluation will identify relevant lessons for other similar future projects in the future in Hungary and elsewhere, and will provide recommendations as necessary and appropriate.

21. The evaluation focuses on the three-year project implementation period, but includes an assessment of project design, and provides recommendations related to the project's post-implementation period. The evaluation Terms of Reference (TORs) did not specifically include key evaluation questions, but the following key questions were developed based on the project objectives, to guide the overall scope and framework of the evaluation:

- To what extent has biodiversity friendly, holistic floodplain management been established as the dominant development paradigm in the Upper Tisza floodplain?
- Has a sustainable mechanism been established to support local initiatives, and to channel local lessons into national policy and planning?
- Is the required technical capacity in place to implement biodiversity friendly integrated holistic floodplain management in the Upper Tisza floodplain?
- Is integrated ecosystem management applied at the local initiative sites in a manner supportive of socio-economic development?
- Have biodiversity considerations been mainstreamed in the policy and implementation of the VTT and NAEP, and fed into related EU policy and decision-making?

22. In addition to answering these key questions, the evaluation provides the required ratings on key elements of project design and implementation. Further, the evaluation will, when possible and relevant, assess the project in the context of the key GEF operational principles, as summarized in Annex 3.

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

24. As in any such evaluation, the primary limitation faced by the evaluators was the time available for interviews and field visits, which did not allow for detailed investigation into all aspects of project activities and results. In the case of the Tisza Biodiversity project, this was particularly relevant with respect to the portfolio of 50 Micro Grant projects, which could not be individually evaluated. However, these issues were not considered a significant limitation for this evaluation, and the evaluation is believed to represent a fair and accurate assessment of the project. Another limitation was that some national level stakeholders, notably representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture and the Water Management division of the

Ministry of Environment and Water Management, were not available during the field visit to provide in-person input and feedback on the project. Input was also solicited after the field visit, but some further information was received only from one MEW official working on flood control.

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

III. Project Overview and Development Context

A. Development Context in Hungary

i. Environmental Conditions and Historical Water Management

26. The Hungarian reach of the Tisza river valley is situated in the eastern part of present day Hungary, geographically and ecologically in close connection and very much dependent on the higher stretches of the river now in the territory of Ukraine, Romania and Slovakia, respectively (Figure 1[1]).

Figure 1. Upper Tisza Watershed

[1] Source: Gáspár, Bodnár: A Tiszába érkező vizekről. A Felső Tisza vízmegtartása (On Waters discharged into the river Tisza – Water retention in the Upper Tisza) Conference presentation in Hungarian at the conference: The Future is in our Hands. All drop of water is a value, Budapest 7th May, 2009

27. Historically, the entire watershed was part of the Hungarian Kingdom up to 1920. The river regulation schemes of the 19th century envisaged with a view for the improvement of agriculture and livelihood at the time were designed in an integrated manner taking account of the whole river basin. However, due to financial and other difficulties the river regulation efforts and measures anticipated for the lowland in Hungary in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century were never completely finished. Modern day water management approaches in the Republic of Hungary divide the valley into an Upper, Middle and Lower section. The current biodiversity project supported by GEF-UNDP and supplied with in-kind contributions from the Hungarian government, local initiatives and other institutions deals with the Upper and partly the Middle Hungarian Tisza Valley only.

28. Natural climatic conditions in the lowland Tisza Valley do not allow for high precipitation levels in the vegetation period. In fact, the region was always an arid landscape where rainfall did not exceed loss through evaporation. Yet, the area had a stable water regime due to the regular inundations caused by floods. Flood water replenished depleting soil moisture and groundwater tables while fertilising the land with the sediment it deposited.

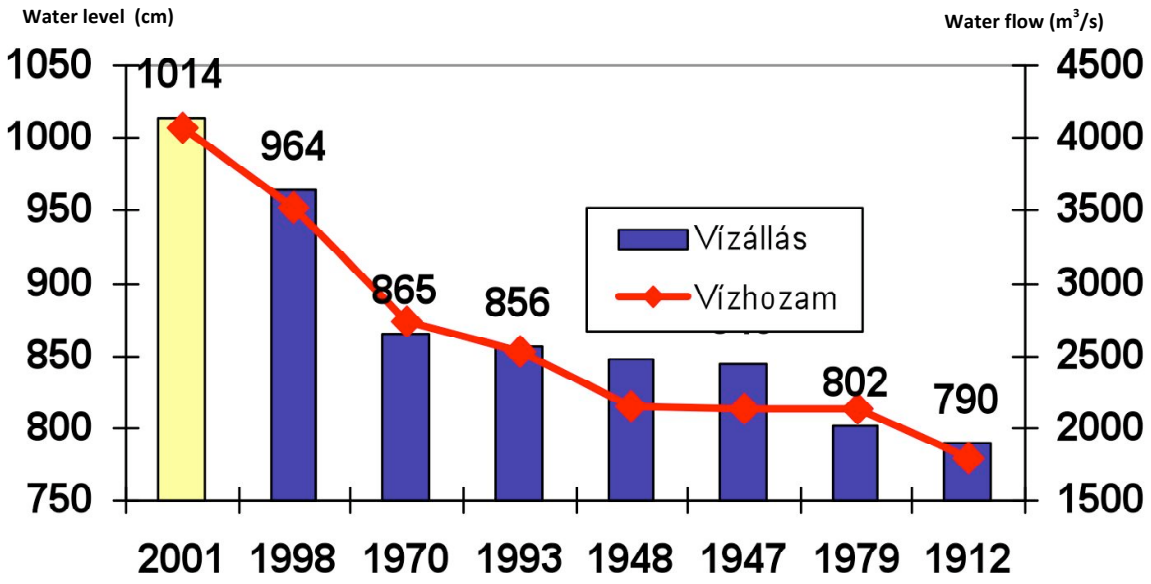
29. The globally significant biodiversity in the Tisza floodplain results from these unique geological and hydrologic conditions and from centuries of distinctive landscape and water management practices of the floodplains, where extreme water flows, agricultural activities and the management of natural resources were kept in harmony. However, over the past one and a half century, much of this biodiversity has been lost due to the large-scale flood control program (river regulation), the onset of intensive agricultural production methods and extensive drainage projects. Since similar changes occurred in the mountain reaches of the Tisza as well, accompanied by heavy logging, deforestation, pavement of surfaces and changing land use patterns, the concept of letting water down in the main riverbed itself became a threat. Water ran more rapidly in the regulated river bed, where due to the shortened meanders and bends which were cut through, it incised its own bed at times of low water level, but it filled up the high water bed between the embankments (active floodplain or floodway) with sediment. Consequently, the overall height of the bottom rose and the dikes had to be elevated every now and then.

Photo 1. Flood in Tokaj, Upper Tisza Floodplain

30. This process obviously had its consequences: higher and more dangerous floods burst the dikes occasionally causing much more damage on the now lower lying "protected" (inactive) floodplain outside the levees than before.

Changing climatic patterns and torrent rain flow in the catchment area of the Carpathian mountains resulted in ever increasing record level floods (see Figure 2[2]) with disastrous consequences (see Photo 1[3]) in some years during a 20 years period between 1988 and 2008. High water in the elevated river bed also has an impact on groundwater, causing waterlogging of the productive land near the river on the inactive floodplain during the winter and spring season, which turns into serious droughts during summer, when due to the climatic changes less and less rain is falling.

Figure 2. Increasing Peak Flood Levels at Tivadar Over the Past 90 Years



ii. Floodplain Oversight and Regulation

31. As administrative boundaries often follow the river itself, the region is organised along the respective jurisdictions of various authorities and administrative units which makes infrastructure development such as municipal water supply, sewage and waste water management schemes cumbersome and fragmented, with less integration then needed. Also, regional, rural spatial and land use development are often not planned with fully accounting of the needs of the local, by now chronically aging population, and of the ecosystem including the natural processes thereof. As a result, the remaining – still rich and in many places internationally recognized – biodiversity is fragmented and endangered because of inconsiderate and inadequate regional and rural development efforts, the recurrent drought and water shortages in Summer, the intrusion of invasive species and, occasionally, chemical spills.

32. Intensive approaches to river management resulted in only one lowland dam along the Tisza, in the middle reach at Kisköre. The dam supports a hydropower scheme and the

[2] Source: Gáspár, Bodnár: A Tiszába érkező vizekről. A Felső Tisza vízmegtartása (On Waters discharged into the Tisza River – Water retention in the Upper Tisza) Conference presentation in Hungarian at the conference: The Future is in our Hands. All drop of water is a value, Budapest 7th May, 2009
[3] Benedek Göncz, Ákos Barabás MEW, 2009

impoundment of the river became the Tisza Lake: a recreational area with strong focus on nature conservation and rural tourism. However, cutting through the natural flow of the river resulted in the disruption of the water regime and the flood patterns as well as groundwater replenishment.

33. The floodplain of the river Tisza in this country encompasses one quarter of the national territory (2,272.5 thousand hectares), nine counties, 51 statistical small regions and 17% of the total population, i.e. 1,754,000 inhabitants.[4] In terms of per capita GDP the region as a whole is at two-thirds of the national average, and even when cities are included it falls short from rural average by 20%. The number of people living in the area dropped in the last decade even more intensively than the national average. In particular, smaller settlements are hit hard by ageing and migration.[5]

iii. Socioeconomic Conditions

34. Main economic activities of the people living in the area include farming, local handicrafts, a few industrial hot spots (for instance Tiszaújváros with a major chemical plant and a thermal power plant) and manual labour for the construction industry in the form of migrating workers. After the collapse of the construction industry in 2008 most of these people now remain home. As in many other places in the country and in Europe, there is a strong ethnic schism between the Roma people and the Hungarian population. Land tenure is a serious issue in Hungary as a whole but particularly in the fertile regions of the Great Hungarian Plain. After the political transition in 1990, land ownership was supposed to be restituted to the original owners. However, after 45 years of Communist rule no conditions for sound private ownership and independent farming existed. Parcels, allotments and lots were fragmented, confused and even after tremendous funds spent on GIS-based land registration, the exact boundaries of fields and ownership structure is still not clear.

35. Land is now owned basically by three different entities: small scale farmers struggling to eke out a living in the hostile economic, business and legislative environment; heavily subsidised large scale farming operations owned by business organisations or former Communist functionaries turned landlords in the privatisation and restitution process; and the state which has no funds to manage national land, therefore even nature conservation authorities lease the protected land under their control to farmers. Thus a critical factor in the poor socio-economic performance of the region is the use of land and the landscape not according to its proper function and the conditions of the region.

iv. The VTT and the NAEP

36. Due to the heavy social and economic as well as ecological problems caused by inadequate flood control along the Hungarian Tisza, the government – in reaction to the

[4] The assessment was made in Chapter 1 and 2 of the paper: *A Tisza-mente integrált területfejlesztési, vidékfejlesztési és környezetgazdálkodási koncepciója.* (Integrated spatial development, rural development and environmental management concept of the region along the Tisza, VÁTI Hungarian Regional Development and Urban Planning Non Profit Company. Planning Directorate. Budapest, May 2004).

[5] The population of Hungary is constantly diminishing since 1981. Source: Central Statistical Office, Hungary http://portal.ksh.hu/pls/ksh/docs/hun/xftp/gyor/jel/jel20601.pdf

devastating floods of 1998, 2000 and 2001 – in 2002 developed the comprehensive development scheme called the Improved Vásárhelyi Plan (or further development of the Vásárhelyi-plan, abbreviated from its Hungarian name as "VTT") as a top policy priority for the region. The overall objective of the scheme was to reduce the extreme flood levels by 1 metre. Model calculations showed that obtaining this goal would require distributing 1.5 billion cubic metres of flood water. The concept aimed at enhancing flood control confidence levels in the Hungarian Tisza valley through coordinated efforts with countries in the upper catchment, by improving the water carrying capacity of the high water river bed (active floodplain) and by constructing a set of reservoirs in the inactive floodplain in low lying areas to absorb sudden flood pulses.

37. Legislative efforts established the legal and financial grounds for the scheme and in 2003 the government adopted Government Decision No 1107/2003 (XI.5.) on the programme aiming at the enhancement of flood control safety in the Tisza Valley and the spatial and rural development of the affected region. The decision called for an integrated rural and spatial development scheme covering the entire floodplain area and later on it was further developed to be an independent piece of legislation in the form of an Act.[6] Annex 7 includes a map of the region with the planned flood control reservoirs.

38. Chapter I Article 2 lists the activities covered by the Act, indicating among others the following:

> *c) the flood reduction and mitigation system consisting of engineering structures and polders dedicated to the controlled discharge and eventual return of floods into the river as necessary (or transferring excess water onto areas in shortage of water) should be established and operated in a manner which will allow for the implementation of the objectives anticipated in the agro-environmental management, climate change control and Tisza Valley development programmes and the maintenance and promotion of natural habitats beside ensuring appropriate flood control functions even in case of flood pulses below the design flood levels. Within the reservoirs and on the landscape management pilot areas systematic annual flooding and inundation should be ensured when water flows allow.*

39. This approach was very similar to the traditional husbandry methods of the region before the Ottoman war where locals used a system called "fok" (a notch, an incision on the river bank) to let excess flood water out onto the fields where it was left, spread out, on a very large surface, thus never threatening human or animal life and preventing damage to property. In addition, the system included a number of benefits such as an abundance of fish in fish ponds in the lower and water replenishment to the orchards and pasture land on the higher elevations, respectively. Studies show that most of the traditional methods could still be revitalised provided the appropriate conditions exist. Modern rehabilitated floodplain husbandry is known as Integrated Holistic Floodplain Management or IHFM (further explained in Box 1, below).

[6] Act No LXVII of 2004 on the public interest and implementation of the programme aiming at the enhancement of flood control safety in the Tisza-valley and the spatial and rural development of the affected region (the Improved Vásárhelyi Plan)

40. The Government decision also set up a framework for the organisational and operational structure of the integrated water and landscape management related to the VTT, and the institutional and financial conditions thereof. In terms of infrastructure, a flood control operation scheme covering the Tisza-valley as a whole was to be implemented, including operation and maintenance of flood control structures within the active floodplain. In the area around the individual reservoirs a landscape management-oriented water infrastructure, allowing for land management based on regular flooding, was to be operated in line with the needs of the farmers concerned and the needs of flood control operations.

41. For these measures to be implemented, land use patterns need to be changed and monitored in a coordinated manner including the provision of an appropriate subsidy system and technical assistance (for farmers, forestry manager, and so on). Also, rural development programmes for the Tisza region are an important priority including job creation and the setting up of an economic structure built on the new type of land use.

Box 1. Integrated Holistic Floodplain Management (IHFM)

A sustainable development concept for the floodplain of large rivers with problems arising from former river regulation. It has two basic approaches:

1. Enhancement of the water receiving and retention capacity of passive floodplains, not only the active floodplain in between the dikes (floodway).

2. Exploration of new ways for husbandry and livelihood within the area in active connection with the river.

Methods include the enlargement of floodways, building of flood pulse reducing reservoirs (polders), changes in land use patterns to accommodate periodically alternating water flows and differentiating among various elevations in the floodplain: the deep floodplain, low floodplain and high floodplain, providing them different functions in a complex utilization structure, such as fishing, meadow management and forestation with soft and hardwood species according to the level of inundation.

Source: Szelídvízország. Kézikönyv a Tisza-menti ártéri gazdálkodás megalapozásához. [Land of Calm Waters. A Handbook on the Basics of Floodplain Management Farming along the River Tisza.] 2009.

42. The government set up an interministerial commission to coordinate the tasks related to this complex development scheme including representatives from the Ministry of Environment and Water Management (MEW), Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) and the Ministry of Municipalities. The total budget of the VTT was originally HUF 250 billion[7] ($1.4 billion USD) over a 10 year period. The plans are to be implemented in two stages. The sites for the first six storage reservoirs have been formally identified. The first three were to be constructed in the first phase (2005-2007). However, due to increasing financial difficulties and an unfavourable economic environment, after lengthy investigations, studies and assessments funds were cut and only 6 of the originally proposed 11 reservoir sites were scheduled for implementation: Cigánd-Tiszakarád; Tiszaroff; Nagykunság; Hany-Tiszasüly; Szamos-Krasznaköz; and Bereg.

[7] US$1 = approximately 220 Hungarian forints at the time of project inception; the current rate is 178.

43. The first reservoir, Cigánd, was built and began operation in October 2008, the second (Tiszaroff) in August 2009. Foundation stones for two more (Nagykunság, Hany-Tiszasüly) were laid in September 2009. The fifth project is in the development phase as of October 2009 (Bereg), while local protests in Szabolcs have impeded the implementation of the sixth (Szamos-Krasznaköz). The VTT was also to be accompanied by infrastructure improvement in the communities concerned such as water management arrangements in the built-up areas, sanitation and sewage treatment systems, interconnecting roads, bicycle paths. Only a few of these projects are now scheduled for implementation, which creates disillusionment among and reduces support from local stakeholders towards the VTT (including IHFM aspects).

44. Under current economic conditions farming is not a profitable occupation, particularly for small scale farmers. Throughout the world agriculture is heavily subsidised, either directly or indirectly. The European Union's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) absorbs the majority of the Community's resources. In order to mitigate the effects of overproduction, the revised CAP introduced the multifunctional agrarian model under Council Regulation (E.C.) No 1257/1999 of May 17, 1999 on support for rural development for the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (E.A.G.G.F.) and amending and repealing certain Regulations. The Hungarian equivalent of this regulation was first implemented before Hungary's accession to the European Union in 2004 as the National Agro-Environmental Programme (NAEP) which aimed at a multifunctional, sustainable, adaptive and competitive agriculture throughout the country[8]. The programme measures had targets such as:

1. Agro-environmental baseline support
2. Integrated crop production
3. Ecological (organic) farming
4. Grassland management
5. Aquatic habitats
6. Agro-environmental zones (environmentally sensitive areas, ESA)

45. The programme was first announced in 2002 for a five years period and more than 5,000 applications were received for the HUF 2.5 billion ($14.0 million USD) appropriated for the purpose. On May 1, 2004 Hungary joined the EU and the NAEP was first incorporated in the National Rural Development Plan (2004-2006) and later integrated into the New Hungary Rural Development Plan, which is financed from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (Regulation No 1698/2005 EC) covering a seven-year period (2007 – 2013). The NAEP was announced for the second time in 2009 summer with a five-year contract period to 2014. The floodplain areas in the Tisza-valley are predominantly characterised by intensive agricultural production - mostly cropland under corn and wheat. Such practices are unsustainable when periodic flooding is anticipated. Changing the method of cultivation and

[8] Ángyán, J. – Fésűs I.– Podmaniczky L.–Tar F. – Vajnáné Madarassy A. (1999): Nemzeti Agrár-Környezetvédelmi Program (a környezetkímélő, a természet védelmét és a táj megőrzését szolgáló mezőgazdasági termelési módszerek támogatására) (National Agro-Environmental Programme of the environmentally sound agricultural production methods dedicated to the goals of nature conservation and landscape preservation, in Hungarian), *Agrár-környezetgazdálkodási tanulmánykötetek*, Vol I, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, 174 pp.

land use patterns requires targeted support from national sources for which the zoning sub-programme of the NAEP is best-suited.

46. Agri-environmental payments are indispensable to initiate landscape management changes that provide for the enrichment of biodiversity in farming systems. Payments for rural development were provided in 2002-2004 (HUF 6 billion ($33.7 million USD)) and in 2004-2006 (HUF 44 billion ($246.8 million USD) with 80% EU co financing). While horizontal measures (e.g. soil protection, organic farming) can be applied everywhere, zonal (special) measures are only applied in Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs). Protection of birds such as corncrake and great bustard is encouraged. In the new EU budget period (2007-2013), the program for High Nature Value Areas began (HNVAs cover 21% of Natura 2000 sites, and have 9% overlap with Hungarian protected areas).

47. The Tisza biodiversity project was conceived, developed and approved in anticipation that:

- The VTT would be an integrated, holistic development approach where water management (flood control), spatial development, rural development, nature conservation and economic development aspects have equal weight, and would have an appropriate institutional framework to manage the implementation of the concept.
- The NAEP would be a main source of income for farmers implementing landscape management and trying to establish the practical experiences necessary for supporting integrated holistic floodplain management as a dominant land use pattern throughout the Tisza Valley.

B. Project Background and Development

48. The Tisza Biodiversity project concept was instigated externally, but ultimately the project built and drew upon locally-driven initiatives. As during implementation, project development included stakeholder involvement at the national and local levels. Evidence indicates that the project development process included sufficient national stakeholder participation. However, perhaps precipitated by the government's fiscal woes as previously discussed, during project implementation "the Ministerial partnership turned out to be not as assumed."[9] While stakeholder ownership at the end of the project varies between local and national level stakeholders (as discussed in Section V.B), the breakdown of assumptions under which the project was predicated cannot be attributed to insufficient stakeholder involvement during the project preparation process. As discussed throughout this report, the primary driving factor was the shift in national macro-economic/fiscal conditions and political priorities of the new government in Hungary at the time of project approval.

49. The Tisza Biodiversity project concept originated from a call for proposals for biodiversity conservation initiatives, catalyzed by a visit to Hungary by a representative from the GEF Secretariat in approximately 1998. Meetings between UNDP and the Ministry of Environment led to a project concept for restoration of oxbows of the Tisza River. As the large floods of 2000-2002 occurred and government policy was being developed to address flooding

[9] Personal communication: Project development stakeholder.

and water management in the future, the project developers soon realized that a landscape-scale approach was required to achieve effective outcomes.

50. Initially there was not a clear operational modality for project implementation; however in the Tisza floodplain a number of small-scale initiatives had formed to support local economic and environmental interests. In collaboration with the local stakeholders, project developers leveraged these initiatives as the base and starting point for the proposed project. The PDF-A was approved July 23, 2003 to further develop the project document, and the project was approved January 11, 2005. The project document states that the three relevant state agencies involved provided letters of support prior to project approval, as did the involved local communities and two national park directorates.[10] The project concept originated five or six years before project approval, and the formal project development process from PDF-A approval to project start-up can be considered long, but was still slightly below average for GEF MSPs. The 2006 GEF Joint Evaluation of the GEF project cycle found that the average time for MSPs from PDF-A approval to project start-up is 30 months.[11] For the Tisza Biodiversity project this period was only 28 months.

IV. Tisza Biodiversity Project Design and Implementation

A. Tisza Biodiversity Project Concept and Design (Relevance)

51. The project "Conservation and Restoration of the Globally Significant Biodiversity of the Tisza River Floodplain Through Integrated Floodplain Management" was implemented over an approximately three-year period, from October 2005 to December 2008. The project was originally planned for a 36-month implementation period, but was approved in early 2007 for a no-cost 3-month extension to December 2008. GEF-financing was $944,000, not including the PDF-A. The total project budget was $2.7 million, including cash and in-kind co-financing.

52. The project is considered to be satisfactory with respect to relevance. The project was relevant to Hungary's local and national development and environment protection objectives, as well as the objectives of the CBD and the strategic priorities of the GEF.

i. Tisza Biodiversity Project Description

53. The Tisza Biodiversity project was designed to encourage and support alternative approaches to floodplain management that integrate flood control, agriculture, biodiversity conservation and social development, and to ensure these approaches are mainstreamed into government policies. It intended to empower local communities in managing their own development process, and in integrating ecological considerations including biodiversity issues into their approach. It also focused on channelling in the needs of local communities, the preservation of biodiversity, and integrated floodplain management into national priorities and policy guidelines. To this end substantial efforts were dedicated to develop and disseminate an

[10] The relevant project document annex includes only the endorsement letters from the GEF Operational Focal Point and the environment division of the MEW.

[11] GEF Evaluation Office. 2007. Joint Evaluation of the GEF Activity Cycle and Modalities. Evaluation Report No. 33. Washington, DC: GEF Evaluation Office.

integrated, pro-biodiversity approach, and to influence agriculture, land use and other rural development activities through technical support to local and regional stakeholders.

54. The overall objective was to achieve biodiversity friendly, sustainable development in the Tisza-floodplain. The immediate objective was to "establish biodiversity friendly, holistic floodplain management as the dominant development paradigm in the Upper Tisza floodplain."

55. The objectives were supported by four direct project outcomes:

Outcome 1: A Sustainable Mechanism for Supporting Local Initiatives and Channelling Local Lessons into National Policy and Planning

Outcome 2: Tools to support biodiversity friendly, IHFM in the Upper Tisza Floodplain

Outcome 3: At the site of each of the Initiatives, land, water, habitats and biodiversity are managed in an integrated manner that is supportive of socio-economic development

Outcome 4: Changes in the policy and the implementation of the VTT and NAEP to integrate biodiversity concerns, feeding into related EU policy and decision-making

56. Project activities included remedial actions in areas under threat and sustainable use and awareness components. A common platform was formed to coordinate local and regional stakeholders, initiatives, farmers, communities, NGOs and academia with the intention of articulating the specific needs of the Tisza-region and proposing a relevant strategy and measures for its holistic management. A permanent technical office and a Micro Grant scheme were also founded. As further discussed in Section V.B.ii on Outcome 1, market places and fair trade facilities (virtually on the Internet and at the respective pilot areas) to market floodplain products and services were created which also increased the level and intensity of collaboration and cooperation among the stakeholders, and increased social and economic wealth.

57. The project focussed on nature conservation; two National Parks (Hortobágy National Park Directorate in Debrecen, and Bükk National Park Directorate in Eger) and several Nature Conservation Areas and Natura 2000 areas (for instance the Kesznyéten Landscape Conservation Area) were involved in the implementation. The local initiatives involved represented ranged throughout the entire region, with each tightly bound to a specific locality, usually small landscape units: Bereg, Bodrogköz, Tokaj, Borsodi Mezőség, Kesznyéten and Nagykörű. Of the pilot sites, only Nagykörű is downstream of the Kisköre dam, the others are situated upstream, exposed to extreme water fluctuations. On the other hand, the dam shuts the Nagykörű area and pilot site off from the replenishing influence of the river, and drought is more severe in this part than, for instance, in the Bereg. A sixth local initiative, Kis-Sárrét in the Körös-valley, a tributary to the Tisza River, was also instrumental in project activities. The local initiative consisted of members of the Nymphea Association (NGO) and members of the Körös-Maros National Park Directorate. A seventh local initiative, the Nymphea Association in Túrkeve was later involved in the project as an informal project area. This area was not strictly part of the project territory, but the project promoters wanted to leverage the extensive experiences of this NGO in the field of nature conservation, biodiversity, habitat restoration and wetland habitats management.

58. Project activities officially started October 1, 2005 and the inception workshop was held on May 2-3, 2006. Although the project was operationally closed in December 2008, the financial accounts will be closed in December 2009 (as approved by UNDP and MEW).

ii. Project Relevance to Needs and Priorities at the Local Level in the Upper Tisza River Floodplain

59. The project was country-driven and in particular region-driven, with local initiatives, municipalities and other stakeholders from the target area joining efforts in project development. The reasons for such a coordinated effort were multiple. The area is exposed to high unemployment rate, an aging population with increasingly more intensive tension from Roma minorities, socially deprived families with extremely low income levels, and intensive and in many areas inappropriate agricultural practices. On the other hand, nature conservation efforts are strong and the water management industry stood in front of a high profile investment in reaction to the recent floods.

60. The proposed activities took advantage and exploited fully the self-organising capacities of local communities, which is not very common in rural settlements in Hungary. They were instrumental in both project design and implementation and felt that the proposed programme was appropriate for them, improving their livelihood and opening new vistas for economic activities, agricultural practices and local businesses such as hospitality industry and food processing.

61. Village councils along the Tisza River struggle with the complex problems of poverty, lack of economic and business opportunities, unemployment and poor infrastructure aggravated by the recurring floods, intermittent drought and waterlogging problems. Some of the local municipalities seek to overcome these handicaps through innovative new models of development where local natural and human resources are accounted for and taken advantage of. For the most part this means the promotion of so-called 'village tourism', a fashionable holiday-making approach based on attractions like peasant houses, horse-riding and various recreational facilities. Other village development approaches driving job creation include providing in-kind contributions to alternative agricultural projects such as agri-environmental measures, organic and traditional extensive farming, local food processing or various handicrafts. The development goals and objectives of the Tisza biodiversity goals matched these efforts perfectly. An excellent example is the village of Nagykörű, where the local council made constant efforts to revitalise the village long before the project started.

iii. Project Relevance to National Environment and Development Policies and Priorities

62. At the time the project was conceived, national environment and development policies had a strong focus on an alternative approach to conventional flood control methods, which proved to be weak in handling the disastrous floods of the previous years. Flood control methods never paid attention to the other major problems of the Great Plains, i.e. droughts and in some areas desertification before. The Executive Agency and main conduit of the UNDP/GEF funding - MEW - planned to implement the VTT, which provided a good opportunity for synergies with the Tisza biodiversity project. The same applies to the NAEP scheme intended

to restructure much of the Hungarian landscape with special emphasis on the environmentally sensitive areas. These circumstances ensured that the project was relevant and consonant with the national level environmental and development policies and priorities. The Parliament adopted the VTT Act with a view to the following objectives:

> *…Enhancement of the flood control security in the Tisza-valley based on partial reactivation of the protected (passive) floodplain, improvement of the retention capacity and living conditions for the population and communities in the socially backward region in line with the Community policies, implementation of sustainable regional development goals based on land use patterns and landscape management practices appropriate to the level of risk anticipated, establishment of flood control and the conditions necessary to manage the floods, as well as the improvement of the Vásárhelyi plan…*[12]

63. Also, the same concept is seen on the programme level:

- ***Target state to be achieved by the development:*** *…The control of floods threatening with disasters has to be complemented by the reactivation of flood plains through regulated water drainage.*
- ***The main objective of the Vásárhelyi Development Plan:*** *The planning of necessary interventions of flood protection development and operations of flood reservoirs has to be made in harmony with the conservation and development of ecological systems. The development of Tisza valley flood protection system serves as protection of people and assets against flood waters, and it is integrated in the ecological development of Tisza, its tributaries and their flood plains. … Besides this, the VRDP has to ensure new opportunities for rural development in the Tisza Plain.* [13]

64. This government level concept appeared in the feasibility studies prepared on the complex spatial development scheme of the Tisza-valley as follows:

1. *The concept and regional development should be based on integrating society and economy into the landscape structures and the cooperation therewith.*
2. *The main objective of development is to reactivate the floodplain, meaning the rehabilitation of the ecological conditions and water regime of the floodplain by setting up a landscape management system built on the specific conditions of the land, including the restoration and maintenance of a uniform, mosaic like landscape structure.*
3. *Landscape and water use schemes in the future should assist the strategic functions and tasks arising from climate change, flood control and prevention of waterlogging, positive water regimes and turning the social degradation into a healthy social development…. Including restoration of natural forests, maintaining their ecological cycles and increasing the size of area they cover up to an extent that allows sound functioning of a living floodplain.*

[12] Act No LXVII of 2004 on the public interest and implementation of the programme aiming at the enhancement of flood control safety in the Tisza-valley and the spatial and rural development of the affected region (the Improved Vásárhelyi Plan)

[13] Environment and Energy Operational Programme, 2007-2013 Government of Hungary, CCI number: 2007HU161PO002

65. Further, the document describes the controlled water discharge practices, flood reservoirs, gravitational water replenishment to ecological and landscape management components, the potential utilisation practices, the process of shifting land use patterns with the help of pilot projects and the changes required in agricultural cultivation and husbandry methods.[14] While in the field of agriculture, the NAEP document asserted that:

> *B.4.1. Environmental land use change scheme*
>
> *The support will be provided …in areas affected by the Vásárhelyi Plan or in flood-areas or places affected by internal waters or in Less Favoured Areas.*
>
> *In these areas utilised by arable farming with unfavourable production characteristics instead of arable farming, grasslands should be promoted in order to preserve and improve the condition of the physical environment (soil and water resources).*[15]

iv. Project Relevance to the Convention on Biological Diversity

66. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), established in 1992, provides the framework and overall objective for biodiversity conservation projects supported by the GEF. The GEF, as the financial mechanism for the convention, receives guidance from the Conference of Parties supporting the implementation of the convention. Specific themes and programs of work are outlined in the articles of the convention, and GEF-supported projects must be relevant to and support implementation of the convention.

67. Through the expected outcomes, and overall objective of establishing biodiversity friendly integrated floodplain management, the project was relevant to supporting the implementation of the CBD. Hungary became a full party to the CBD on February 24th, 1994, thereby signalling its intention to implement the convention, and taking on the legal mandate of doing so.

68. The project was relevant to the CBD thematic programs of agricultural biodiversity, inland waters biodiversity, and forest biodiversity. Cross-cutting issues under the convention addressed by the project including invasive alien species, climate change and biodiversity, education and public awareness, biodiversity for development, protected areas, sustainable use of biodiversity, and tourism and biodiversity. Each of the project's four outcomes supports implementation of multiple convention articles, as shown in Table 1.

[14] *A Tisza-mente integrált területfejlesztési, vidékfejlesztési és környezetgazdálkodási koncepciója.* (Integrated spatial development, rural development and environmental management concept of the region along the Tisza, VÁTI Hungarian Regional Development and Urban Planning Non Profit Company. Planning Directorate. Budapest, May 2004).

[15] Measures for wetland management and maintenance in New Hungary Rural Development Program (European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development), http://www.fvm.hu/main.php?folderID=2170, p 240

Table 1. Tisza Biodiversity Project Relevance to the CBD

Tisza Biodiversity Project Outcomes / CBD Articles	Outcome 1: A Sustainable Mechanism for Supporting Local Initiatives and Channelling Local Lessons into National Policy and Planning	Outcome 2: Tools to support biodiversity friendly, IHFM in the Upper Tisza Floodplain	Outcome 3: At the site of each of the Initiatives, land, water, habitats and biodiversity are managed in an integrated manner that is supportive of socio-economic development	Outcome 4: Changes in the policy and the implementation of the VTT and NAEP to integrate biodiversity concerns, feeding into related EU policy and decision making
Article 1: Objectives	X	X	X	X
Article 5: Cooperation	X			X
Article 6: General measures for Conservation and Sustainable Use			X	X
Article 7: Identification and Monitoring		X	X	
Article 8: In-situ Conservation	X	X	X	X
Article 9: Ex-situ Conservation	X		X	X
Article 10: Sustainable Use of Components of Biological Diversity	X	X	X	X
Article 11: Incentive Measures	X			X
Article 13: Public Education and Awareness	X	X	X	X
Article 14: Impact Assessment and Minimizing Adverse Impacts	X	X		X
Article 17: Exchange of Information	X	X		X
Article 18: Technical and Scientific Cooperation		X	X	

69. In meeting its obligations under the CBD, Hungary produced in 2004 its National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), and on May 28th, 2009 submitted its Fourth National Report to the CBD. The NBSAP includes seven strategic objectives, and multiple lower-level objectives within each economic sector related to natural resource management. The seven overall strategic objectives are:

- Conservation and improvement of the status of protected natural areas
- Conservation and development of biodiversity outside protected natural areas
- Strengthening ex-situ conservation
- Sustainable use of biodiversity and its components, and putting in place the instruments and tools required for sustainable use
- Development of social awareness, required for the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity: education, training and information
- Fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources
- Integration of biodiversity conservation and considerations into sectors, sectoral strategies, regional, micro-regional and local plans and programmes

70. These seven overall strategic objectives are aligned with the objectives of the CBD, and thus the Tisza Biodiversity project is relevant to Hungary's overall strategic biodiversity objectives in the same manner it is relevant to the CBD. Further, the project specifically supported the implementation of sub-objectives of the NBSAP in the agriculture, regional development and tourism, land use, and water management sectors. As stated in the water management portion of the NBSAP,

> *Subsequent to the coordination of the needs of water management and biodiversity conservation, integrated river management planning must be realized on the basis of broad scale consensus, in the frame of open planning procedure. One of its priority areas is the Tisza Valley, where in the course of the Further Development of the Vásárhelyi Plan, flood safety is increased by the partial rehabilitation of the exempted flood plains with attention to the nature conservation aspects, and, as the same time it also serves the sustainable regional development of the area.*[16]

71. As discussed previously, the project was also relevant in addressing the threats to biodiversity as outlined in Hungary's Fourth National Report to the CBD.

v. Project Relevance to GEF Strategies and Priorities

72. The CBD covers many aspects of biodiversity conservation, and there are a wide range of activities that could be relevant to its objectives. However, since the GEF has limited financial resources, it has identified a set of strategic priorities and objectives designed to support the GEF's catalytic role and leverage resources for maximum impact. Thus, in addition to being relevant to the implementation of the CBD, GEF-supported projects should also be relevant to the GEF's strategic priorities and objectives. While strategic priorities are reviewed and proposed for each four-year cycle of the GEF, in practice the overall focus of the GEF's support in the biodiversity focal has remained relatively consistent over the years. The Tisza biodiversity project was approved during third cycle of the GEF (2003-2006) and completed during the fourth cycle (2007 – 2010).

73. The long-term objectives for GEF-4 in the biodiversity focal area, and the strategic programs to support these objectives, are shown in Table 2, below.

74. When approved the Tisza Biodiversity project was classified as supporting the second strategic priority of mainstreaming biodiversity in production landscapes and sectors. For the Tisza Biodiversity project this related primarily to the project's objective of implementing a biodiversity friendly approach to flood plain management and land use in the agricultural and water management sectors in Hungary. However, the project also supported the GEF objectives through the Alliance for a Living Tisza and the Micro Grants program, which helped foster markets for biodiversity goods and services. In addition, the project was relevant to the first strategic priority of catalyzing the sustainability of protected areas through strengthening of terrestrial protected area networks.

[16] Government of Hungary. 2004. Conservation of Biodiversity National Strategy and Action Plan: Objectives, policies and actions," Adopted by the Ministry of Environment and Water.

Table 2. GEF Objectives and Strategic Programs for GEF-4 in the Biodiversity Focal Area[17]

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

B. Project Management and Cost Effectiveness (Efficiency)

75. The Tisza Biodiversity project efficiency is rated as satisfactory. The project was implemented in a cost-effective manner, using available infrastructure and institutional framework as well as the support of local stakeholders and non-governmental organisations. Project results achieved are acceptable relative to the level of investment from the GEF and co-financing partners (in spite of the financial difficulties encountered). Financial management and reporting were carried out with a high degree of professionalism and responsibility. Procurement was conducted without problem. As discussed in Section VI.A.i on financial sustainability, the project succeeded in leveraging additional funds following project approval, and the administration team of the newly established Tisza platform has developed the capacity to apply for and access new financing available from a number of sources, in addition to continuing development of a sound business plan.

Box 2. Steering Committee Composition

- Nature Conservation Agency, MEW
- Water management arm of MEW
- Environmental arm of MEW
- Country Officer, UNDP
- Implementation Agency, the Hortobágy National Park
- Project Manager
- Project Monitoring Officer
- Project Financial Officer
- Programme Management Unit (two members)
- Bükk National Park Directorate
- Office of the Parliamentary Commissioner (Ombudsman)
- Central Organisation for Flood Control and Inland Waterlogging
- MAGOSZ, Hungarian Alliance of Farmers
- Occasional representation of MARD

76. The management structure of the project was set up to reflect the various interests and stakeholders of the project, and, at the same time, to allow effective and efficient operational

[17] GEF. 2007. "Biodiversity Focal Area Strategy and Strategic Programming for GEF-4," Washington, DC. http://www.thegef.org/uploadedFiles/Focal_Areas/Biodiversity/GEF-4%20strategy%20BD%20Oct%202007.pdf.

management throughout the project period.

77. Project activities were implemented in the national execution (NEX) arrangement structure with the Ministry of Environment and Water Management (MEW) as the Executive Agency. The National Nature Conservation Agency assigned a dedicated National Project Director (NPD) to coordinate operations at the national administration level, and one of the Office's regional bodies, the Hortobágy National Park Directorate (HNPD) was appointed as the "on the ground" implementing agency. A Program Management Unit (PMU) consisting of a full time Project Manager and two part time assistants carried out most of the operational activities in the inception phase of the project. Communication between the national level and the direct programme management was facilitated and coordinated by a Project Board, while interests of various stakeholders including the respective departments of the government were represented through a Project Steering Committee (SC) (see Box 2), which provided general support and oversight. The PMU also coordinated the efforts of the local initiatives involved in the implementation of the various activities and maintained contacts with the national experts, national and international non-governmental organisations, academia who and which all contributed towards the achievements of the objectives.

78. The coordinated efforts of the local initiatives (usually NGOs themselves) created the so called "Tisza platform," which has became known as the Alliance for the Living Tisza or ALT (in Hungarian: Szövetség az Élő Tiszáért, SZÖVET), founded in 2007. The shorthand in Hungarian is ingenious as it means 'fabric', a kind of network. From 2007, many of the project activities were taken over by the newly formed institution with the intention of establishing a permanent representation for the project objective (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Organigram of Project Implementation Arrangements

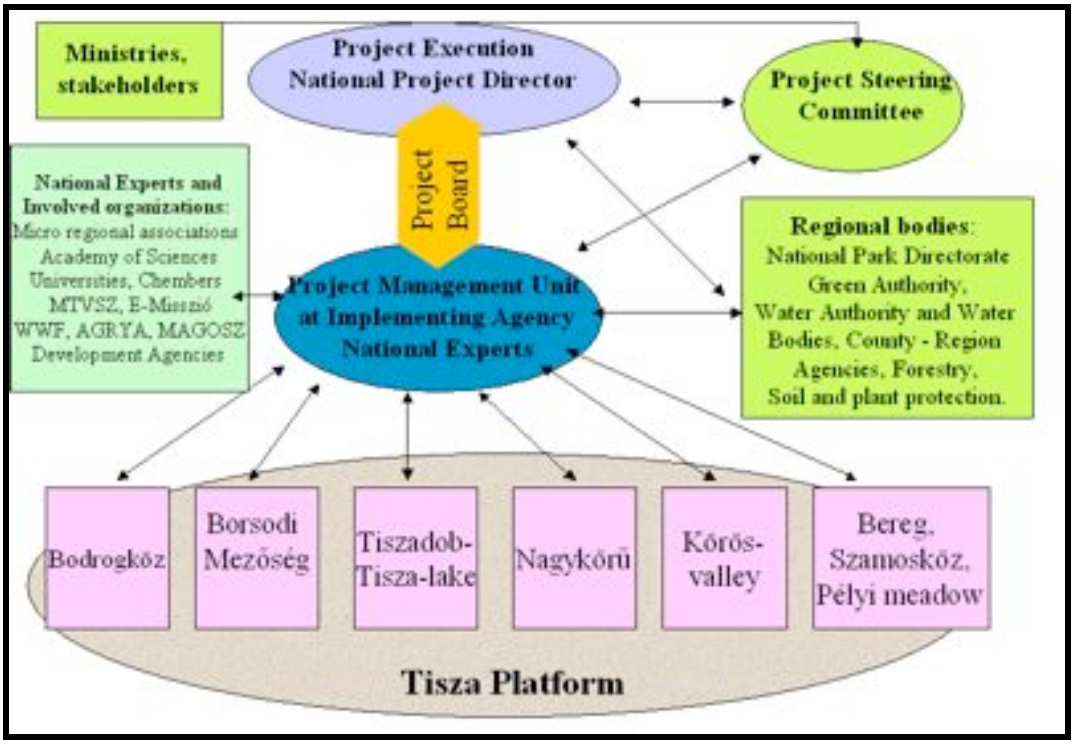


Table 3. Tisza Biodiversity Project Expenditure by Component, as of September 2009 (project financial closing December 2009)

	Planned	Actual	% of Planned	% of Total
Outcome 1: A Financially Sustainable Mechanism for Supporting Local Initiatives and Feeding Local Lessons into National Policy and Planning	$265,000	$261,482	98.7%	28.0%
Outcome 2: Tools to Support Biodiversity Friendly IHFM	$130,000	$119,002	91.5%	12.7%
Outcome 3 (without output 3.5): At Each of the Seven Initiative Sites, Biodiversity, Land, Water and Habitats are Managed in an Integrated, Holistic Manner that is Supportive of Socio-economic Development with the Assistance of the MGBP	$69,232	$54,583	78.8%	7.4%
Sub-Output 3.5: Conservation of Local Biodiversity through Micro Grants for Biodiversity Programme‡	$309,768	$320,618	103.5%	33.2%
Outcome 3 Total	$379,000	$375,201	99.0%	40.6%
Outcome 4: Changes in the Policy and the Implementation of the VTT and NAEP to Integrate Biodiversity Concerns, Feeding into Related EU Policy and Decision-making	$71,000	$61,699	86.9%	6.6%
Project Management	$99,000	$116,828	118.0%	12.5%
Total	$944,000	$934,212	99.0%*	100.0%

‡ Note: In the original project document the financing plan (Table 5 in the project document) contains errors for outcome 3, showing GEF financing for sub-output 3.5 of only $11,000. Shifts in financing of Outcome 3 did occur during the life of the project, and were documented through budget revisions agreed by UNDP and the Executing Agency.

* Since the project financial closing will be at the end of December 2009, all actual financial expenditures have not yet been fully recorded.

Table 4. Tisza Biodiversity Project Planned and Actual Co-financing

Co-financing (Type / Source)	IA own Financing (mill US$)		Multi-lateral Agencies (Non-GEF) (mill US$)		Bi-laterals Donors (mill US$)		Central Government (mill US$)		Local Government (mill US$)		Private Sector (mill US$)		NGOs (mill US$)		Other Sources (mill US$)		Total Co-financing (mill US$)		Percent of Expected Co-financing
	Proposed	Actual	Proposed	Actual	Proposed	Actual	Proposed	Actual	Proposed	Actual	Proposed	Actual	Proposed	Actual	Proposed	Actual	Proposed	Actual	Actual share of proposed
Grant							1.24	1.24					0.01‡‡	0.01			1.25**	1.25	100%
Credits																			
Loans																			
Equity																			
In-kind													0.50***	0.20			0.70	0.20	100%***
Non-grant Instruments																			
Other Types																			
TOTAL							1.24	1.24					0.51	0.21			1.75	1.75	100%

** The project document describes the proposed co-financing as "Cash and In-kind" with no distinction between the two.

*** The project document anticipates receipt of co-financing of $99,580 from five local initiatives; however only two co-financing letters were ultimately received. The first PIR adjusts the expected PIR co-financing amount to $0.20 million USD, of which all was received. In the project document these amounts are also listed under "Local Government" instead of "NGOs". According to GEF co-financing definitions and policies (see GEF document GEF/C.20/6/Rev.1), "proposed" co-financing is co-financing planned at CEO endorsement, in this case the $0.5 million from the NGOs. According to GEF co-financing policy, "the Implementing Agency…will inform the Secretariat whenever there is a potentially substantive co-financing change." This was not done in the present case, likely because the change was not considered substantive.

‡‡ $14,200 was to be contributed from "other" sources (but reported under "NGOs"), which included the Academy of Sciences, the World Wildlife Fund, and other NGOs.

79. Overall final distribution of the project activities across the expected outcome areas is shown in Table 3 above. It must be kept in mind that the figures reported are gross budget expenditures, inclusive of VAT and Implementing Agency fees. Therefore the actual amounts available to the project were somewhat less. Activities related to Outcome 1 (establishment of the Tisza "platform") and sub-output 3.5 (the Micro Grants program, designed to support local farmers, food processors and other stakeholders in their endeavour to shift to IHFM) received a majority of the actual expenditures with 28.0% and 33.2%, respectively. Thus the Micro Grants program was one of the main foci of the evaluation field visit. Project management accounted for 12.5% of GEF funding, which is well within the range of standards and norms for international development/environment projects and organizations. About the same amount, 12.7% went to Outcome 2, developing supporting tools for IHFM. The balance of funding went to Outcomes 3 and 4 at 7.4% and 6.6% respectively.

80. The planned and actual project co-financing is shown in Table 4, above. According to data reported in the final PIR in 2009, all of the expected co-financing was delivered. However, the fact that the actual co-financing reported exactly matches the planned co-financing gives the impression that the actual co-financing was estimated rather than actually tracked (as is common practice among GEF projects), and this was confirmed by the project team. But, these estimates are conservative: the local initiatives likely contributed more to project objectives through in-kind contributions than the figures indicated in project financial reports.

81. The central government co-financing was not received to support the site-level management plans as originally anticipated (as discussed in Section V.B.iv on outcome 3), but reflects the central government support received to the relative costs of IHFM related activities within each of the respective project areas as part of the overall VTT budget, and the expected payments under the NAEP for the affected areas. As per GEF co-financing policies,[18] total government financing of the VTT reservoirs and NAEP should be considered "associated financing" because these programs were budgeted by the government anyway, but the VTT financing (e.g. the Cigánd VTT reservoir alone cost $90 million USD) and actual payments to farmers under NAEP ($45 million USD between 2005-2007 in the project area) can be considered to have contributed to project objectives. UNDP should establish a clear methodology for tracking actual cash and in-kind co-financing delivered throughout the course of a project, as in-kind co-financing would likely be higher than what is reported. This is included at the end of this report as a recommendation of this evaluation.

82. The in-kind NGO financing was expected at CEO endorsement to be $99,500 USD from each of the five local initiatives involved with the project, for a proposed total figure of $0.5 million USD, as listed in the final project document. This is therefore the "proposed" amount of co-financing as per the GEF co-financing policy. Following CEO endorsement, only two commitments were eventually received, and so the proposed co-financing from the local initiatives was changed in the co-financing table to $0.2 million at the time of the first PIR. All of the expected $0.2 million in in-kind co-financing was received by the end of the project.

83. The idea of commissioning a government-led agency in the nature conservation administration (i.e. HNPD) to act as the implementation agency has both its pros and cons.

[18] See the GEF document GEF/C.20/6/Rev.1 "Co-financing Policy for GEF Projects," April 16, 2003.

According to the project's Financial Officer since both UNDP and HNPD have strict accounting rules that do not match, and compatibility had to be found between them. The HNPD reporting requirements are very sophisticated and time consuming as well as rigid which was the main reason why the Q3 report in 2006 was delayed towards UNDP which expects timely reporting before releasing the next quarter's advance payments to any project. Also, the bookkeeping software packages of the two respective entities were different and incompatible. Therefore, operational expenses of the project in Q4 2006 had to be pre-financed by the National Park itself, which however caused no serious problems due to the relatively high cash flow of the Directorate and arrears were finally settled by UNDP in Q1 2007. From this time on the project management prepared for such a delay ahead of the respective reporting periods and therefore no further delays occurred.

84. As part of the regular monitoring and financial management financial audits were carried out each year as per UNDP requirements. On the whole, the audits found no significant problems, and that all financial records and procedures were in order. As described by the 2007 audit, "The accounting and analytical records prepared by the Implementing Agency are adequate and satisfactory for the documentation of money movements, the preparation of quarterly reports, they satisfy the requirements set by the UNDP." Further, "The project expenditures are real and satisfactorily substantiated by documents" and financial management was done in a "trustworthy, exact and realistic manner."

85. The main issue raised by the audits was the lack of an independent project bank account. HNPD maintains an account in Hungarian forints with the state treasury, through which project funds were transferred. In some ways this introduced a certain degree of rigidity into the financial management system and reduced the potential transparency of the use of project funds, but at the same time also allowed the HNP directorate to front the project funding for the continuity of operations when the transfer from UNDP was delayed due to delayed quarterly project reporting.

86. Hungarian tax authorities (APEH: Tax and Financial Audit Office) were very strict on VAT rules and in spite of the international conventions in effect concerning the issue the project was not allowed an exemption. However, since the project management was aware of this fact, calculations in the budgeting period were made with gross figures of all spending in mind.

C. Flexibility and Adaptive Management

87. As the implementing agency UNDP set the stage for successful adaptive management, explaining, for example, during the inception workshop that neither the project document nor the logframe are completely rigid, and that with the exception of project objectives, changes are allowed in all aspects of the project if the appropriate approval steps are respected. Based on the changes in assumptions related to the project's enabling environment with respect to the VTT and NAEP, the project was forced to take multiple adaptive management approaches.

88. Early in the project implementation, in the 2007 PIR, the project overall objective was modified to scale back the project's ambitions with respect to the extent and timeframe for implementing land-use change in the project area. The original project objective, from the project document was: "The project will significantly improve floodplain and landscape management of 1,600 km^2 through activities carried out within pilot sites, while moderately

influencing an estimated area of 9,400 km^2 (about 20% of the Great Hungarian Plain) applying supportive policy environment and institutional capacity at national level."

89. The 2007 PIR succinctly describes the project's change modification of the objective:

> *The large state budget deficit in Hungary caused cutting of governmental programs necessary for reaching project goals (New Vásárhelyi Plan, Agri-environmental Programme). Governmental policies put less emphasis on sustainable flood-control and rural development, which would be essential for BD-friendly farming in the Tisza region. These policies can be influenced at low effectiveness by NGOs this time. Therefore it is rather questionable, whether Overall Objective of the Project can be reached. The area affected by biodiversity friendly floodplain management will probably not reach the targeted order of magnitude before the 2009 launch of new agri-environmental payments.* ***A change in the Project Objective means that the Project*** **will only be able to lay down the foundation of land-use change in 1,600 km^2** ***of the Tisza Region,*** *while moderately influencing an estimated area of 9,400 km^2.* ***It may not be realistically expected, that land-use change will be executed in such a large area before 2009.***[19]
> [Original emphasis]

90. The significant shift in the VTT and NAEP once the project started had multiple practical implications for project implementation as it was originally envisioned. The project team, including the executing and implementing agencies, were flexible in their approach, and thus successfully adapted the project strategy to focus on areas where a tangible influence could be had, such as the support for marketing of local products, as discussed in Section V.B.iv on Outcome 3. At the same time, it would have been helpful for there to have been a clear and documented assessment of the specific changes required to project activities, and corresponding decisions taken at the Steering Committee level, particularly for Outcome 3. For example, as discussed further in Section V.B.iv, there should have been an oversight decision taken that the site-level management plans, which were originally anticipated to be a major project focus, would no longer be carried out since there would be no VTT financing to implement them.

91. At the practical day-to-day level, the project was implemented in a flexible manner based on the real-time situation on the ground, and in relation to the project monitoring tools. The logframe and PIRs were effectively used as adaptive management tools, allowing the project team to identify increasing or decreasing risks to the achievement of project objectives and outcomes. As mentioned, the project was forced to make some changes in planned activities due to the reduction in budget from exchange rate variations.

D. UNDP Project Oversight

92. While the Ministry of Environment and Water Management was the "executing" agency, UNDP was the project "implementing" agency (in GEF jargon). UNDP's responsibilities included project oversight and backstopping, supporting the project from a technical perspective as required, and working with the project team to ensure adequate project reporting and financial management. In this role, the responsibilities included serving on the project Steering Committee. Project reporting and financial aspects were primarily linked to

[19] Tisza Biodiversity project 2007 PIR.

UNDP's Country Support Team in the Bratislava regional centre, while UNDP's country-liaison officer based in Budapest represented UNDP on the Steering Committee and provided additional support as necessary.

93. Interviews with key stakeholders during the evaluation field visit indicated that all parties felt that the working relationship between UNDP and the project team was very positive and effective. This viewpoint is supported by the project documentation and evidence collected during the field visit. UNDP worked with the project team to address the coordination and logistical issues that arose related to project reporting and financial management. As a specific example, UNDP held an informal meeting with the project team in February 2007 to clarify issues related to procurement and reporting. The selection process for an organisation to administer the Micro Grant program was not carried out strictly according to UNDP guidelines, but had produced an effective outcome by the time UNDP raised the issue with the project team. As such, UNDP allowed the project team the flexibility to move forward with the successful implementation of the Micro Grant program rather than adhering to bureaucratic procedures and requiring the project team to redo the entire process, which would have caused significant delays and disillusionment by local-level stakeholders. At the same time, UNDP required the project team to put provisions and safeguards in place to ensure adequate financial oversight of the organization administering the Micro Grants program.

94. In effectively working with the project team to manage budget revisions, allow a short no-cost extension, and revise the project's results-based framework, UNDP supported the project team in being flexible and adapting to the changing circumstances at the national level. With a liaison officer in Budapest UNDP could provide a direct communication channel for the project, and regional staff also made regular field visits to facilitate project oversight. UNDP is considered to have met its obligations for project oversight and backstopping.

95. Given the challenges faced related to changes in funding and direction of the VTT and NAEP national policies on which the project was dependent, the question could be raised if UNDP could have intervened more strongly or provided greater support at the national level to encourage government stakeholders to live up to original expectations related to policy implementation. However, this evaluation concludes that based on Hungary's national political and macro-economic circumstances there was little if anything more that UNDP could have done at the national level to have any practical positive effect to support the project with respect to implementation of the VTT and NAEP policies.

V. Project Performance and Results

A. Key Factors Affecting Project Implementation

96. Project implementation was affected by multiple key factors, a number of which had an adverse impact on the original assumptions.

97. The VTT was reviewed in 2007 with a view to the financial difficulties in which the country found itself, and was amended accordingly.[20] The implementation schedule of the

[20] Act No CXLIX of 2007 amending Act No LXVII of 2004 on the public interest and implementation of the programme aiming at the enhancement of flood control safety in the Tisza-valley and the spatial and rural development of the affected region (the Improved Vásárhelyi Plan) and Act No LVII of 1995 on water management

project was loosened, the time line extended to 25 years and available resources reduced. With the integration of the related activities into the National Development Plan and the National Rural Development Plan, implementation was tied to EU co-funding sources. Using the lack of resources as a pretext, the emphasis was shifted toward conventional flood control measures, and no national level targeted funds were set aside to ensure a transition towards an integrated holistic floodplain management practice in the affected areas.

98. Other legislative changes also clearly reflected a shift in government priorities. A joint decree of several ministries made it impossible for local producers to process their own products locally, setting requirements for household products that can only be met by large scale operations.[21] Act No. CVI of 2007 on national assets had a negative impact on the management practices of national parks. Two kinds of former national assets were merged: treasury assets and business assets. Unfortunately, the business considerations prevailed in the new structure and the freshly formed monolithic asset manager, MNV Zrt., requires national parks to manage state land with a view to the most favourable financial and economical utilisation schemes, as opposed to the former practice of landscape management by leasing land to farmers under strict nature conservation measures. The rules of procedure applied make it practically impossible to tender for rural development landscape rehabilitation funds from the respective EU budgets.

99. The negative aspects of the NAEP also surfaced: there were no suitable wetland measures available in the target programmes, no farm-level planning existed, conflicts emerged between the administrative and the real situation on the ground. There was a lack of flexibility due to dependency on national budgets, and a need for EU conform agricultural plot identification system.

100. Global financial conditions. On top of everything, the global financial crisis beginning in 2008 hit the region hard. Selling prices stagnated, production prices rose and more and more local stakeholders found it difficult to maintain their standard of living. The exchange rate plummeted at the end of the project period by approximately 30% causing much harm to the financial stability and sustainablility of the project particularly in terms of the anticipated sustained activities after project completion. Yet the project managed to avoid cancelling activities related to this issue. The project management focused on saving money on activities with less practical results in the field (e.g. printing costs of the handbook, omitting procurement of equipment with less importance for the project team and local action groups, reducing conference budgets etc.).

101. Another issue is the operation and maintenance costs of the water management structures, which provide the opportunity for the implementation of the IHFM. Due to national budget cuts these are not properly supported.

102. In the case of the Cigánd reservoir for instance, originally an annual cost budget for administration, operation and maintenance of HUF 43.1 million ($0.24 million USD) was scheduled. As opposed to these proposed figures, the current budget for the Section Engineering Unit of the regional water management authority at Sárospatak, the responsible

[21] Joint Decree No 14/2006 (II.16.) FVM-EüM-ICSSZEM of the MARD, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour on the conditions of small producers' food production, processing and marketing

operator of the reservoir, does not contain any amount for 2009. Some of the sluice gates in the water steering shafts in the newly inaugurated structure were never installed for fear of theft. This means, that in case of an imminent flood the parts have to be put in place within 48 hours, transported from a central location outside the reservoir.[22]

103. Stakeholder synergy: In spite of the odds, a remarkable amount was achieved from the original project objective through adaptive management and dedicated project leadership. The project executing agencies - the Nature Conservation Office of MEW and the Hortobágy National Park - also demonstrated a strong commitment to fulfilling the objective. At the local level there were strong achievements based on the cooperative efforts of many very dedicated and capable people who care deeply about the environmental integrity of the region, and who have worked to address this issue for many years. Also, the strength of long standing local initiatives with additional funding focused on the project objectives resulted in remarkable developments in terms of pilot projects. Unfortunately, this strength – extensive local focus and results – cannot easily be migrated to national level policy making.

104. Political changes: Over the project implementation period there was a severe and unwelcome shift in Hungarian governance changing government development priorities, and ruining many of the assumptions made in the 2002 - 2004 period. Shifted priorities are reflected in budget cuts for rural development, sustainable agricultural practices, and alternative water management methods, and the funnelling of resources into large infrastructure projects such as highway construction, and the expansion of large-scale biomass power plants.[23] The results can be seen even on the very small scale: in Nagykörü, where the Tisza biodiversity project and SZÖVET itself has its headqaurters, the list of successful municipal-level tenders from many applications over the last two years reflect the same priorities. Infrastructure projects such as paving an asphalt bicycle path and tourist industry investments have received funding, at the cost of long term sustainability driven attempts such as floodplain husbandry or projects intending to preserve the biological and cultural diversity of the local environment and communities.[24]

105. Governmental policy issues: The Hungarian national government developed a complex relationship with the project throughout the project's lifetime, including the design phase. While the entities responsible for nature conservation were supportive, those in charge of water management were ambivalent, and MARD has been disinterested and sometimes even malignant to the overall approaches of the project. MEW and MARD conducted negotiations to convince agricultural ministry officials to set up a separate NAEP scheme for the areas covered by the VTT so that farmers could apply for funds once the reservoirs are ready. However, these efforts by the VTT management were restricted to the Cigánd and Bereg reservoirs only; for the rest of the proposed sites “no such intention could be detected.” On the other hand, the Bereg reservoir was designed by taking into account the lessons learnt with Cigánd.

[22] Personal communication with operator staff by Béla Borsos.
[23] Comment from ALT Board Member Péter Kajner on the conference ’Our region on the crossroads’, 9 October, 2007.
[24] Personal observation on the bill board in front of the Mayor’s Office at Nagykörü.

106. Another issue is the infrastructure necessary for the implementation of the floodplain management. Weirs, sluices and other structures are needed to discharge water from the floodway onto the inactive floodplain. The water management staff have built these permanent structures but they argue for an additional subsidy to farmers enabling them to carry out on the field water steering with the help of appropriate earthworks, canals, ditches and swales using the EEOP. The NDA is not really supportive of the idea of having a fully reimbursable aid scheme for this purpose. On the other hand, farmers would opt out if they actually have to pay for letting their fields inundated instead of being paid for it.[25]

B. Achievement of Objectives and Anticipated Outcomes (Effectiveness)

i. Objective: Establish biodiversity friendly, holistic floodplain management as the dominant development paradigm in the Upper Tisza floodplain

107. Based on the progress toward the project objective and the level of achievement for the four project outcomes, overall project effectiveness is rated moderately satisfactory. Due to changed assumptions in the project context leading to a modification of the implementation of the VTT and NAEP by the government, the project was not able to reach the full level of achievement originally planned. Achievement of the objective alone – to establish IHFM as the dominant development paradigm in the Upper Tisza floodplain – must be considered moderately unsatisfactory. Further implementation of the VTT and NAEP in the coming years may help support this objective, but at present the IHFM paradigm is not the dominant one on balance among all relevant stakeholders.

108. Only two of the six planned VTT reservoirs were constructed by the government by the end of the project, thus it was not possible for the project to have the level of influence on the water management infrastructure developed that was hoped. In addition, MARD's originally expected 2007 re-opening of the NAEP did not occur until 2009, so the extent to which IHFM could be supported through the land use management measures for environmentally sensitive areas was also limited.

109. Nonetheless, the project has laid important groundwork and a foundation, particularly at the local level, for improved flood plain management in the Upper Tisza floodplain in the coming years as implementation of the VTT and NAEP moves ahead in 2009 and beyond. Although the objectives have not yet been achieved, the results can be considered impressive for the size and scope of the Tisza Biodiversity project – the $1 million GEF investment was intended to influence the national policies with budgets of hundreds of millions, if not billions, of dollars. Establishment of the Cigánd Reservoir alone had a budget of HUF 16.5 billion ($92.5 million USD). Agri-environmental payments in the Tisza region from only 2004 – 2007 totalled more than $45 million USD, and the New Hungary Rural Development Programme for 2007-2013 has a planned expenditure within Hungary of $1.2 billion euros ($1.8 billion USD).

110. The key objective indicators have not yet been fully met, in particular the direct and indirect project-influenced area applying IHFM as the dominant landscape management paradigm. The project target was direct coverage of 1600 km^2 (including 240 km^2 for the

[25] Dr. Benedek Göncz, MEW, personal communication

originally planned six VTT reservoirs), and indirect coverage of 9400 km^2, which is the total area of the floodplain. As highlighted in Annex 9 outlining the actual level of achievement for all logframe indicators, at the end of the project 1,163 km^2 had been directly influenced (73% of the target), and 2,090 km^2 were indirectly influenced (22% of the target). However, even in the areas have that have been influenced, it can only be said that IHFM has been partially implemented. For example, the Cigánd reservoir was constructed in a manner that would allow the application of IHFM, but actual implementation of the IHFM approach when flood conditions prevail is uncertain.

111. Along the same lines, there was no change in the percentage of area covered by payments with respect to environmentally sensitive land management measures under the NAEP, due to the aforementioned delay of the NAEP rollout. The area managed in a "notch" system also was not significantly changed due to project inputs (target increase of 2%), although there were some positive steps in areas supported by Micro Grants, with 200 hectares addressed in Nagykörű and Bodrogköz pilot sites.

112. Impact level results related to population levels of three indicator species were mixed (one decreasing, one unchanged, one increasing) as discussed in Section VI.D on impacts, but this significance of this data is minimal for a host of reasons discussed in Section VI.D, such as the value of the indicators chosen, issues related to natural and seasonal variation of species populations, and relevant time horizons for biodiversity monitoring.

113. Recent GEF evaluations have re-emphasized the importance of building stakeholder ownership of project initiatives and results for the long-term achievement of impacts and, at a larger scale, Global Environmental Benefits. As cited by the Fourth Overall Performance Study,

> *Stakeholder ownership and support is among the most commonly identified impact drivers met by successful projects, as well as unmet by less successful projects. To carry forward project results after completion, stakeholders must have ownership of the process – they must in fact be transformed from "stakeholders" to "results owners." In many cases relevant national institutions must continue to provide political and/or financial support for GEBs to be achieved; examples include passing and implementing policies and plans and mainstreaming biodiversity concerns into policies. The support and ownership of local communities is also critical for many projects.*[26]

114. This passage is particularly relevant in the context of the Upper Tisza floodplain, and again the theme of the local/national dichotomy is evident in this issue for the Tisza Biodiversity project. At the end of the project, there is a strong level of stakeholder ownership among the member organizations of SZÖVET, but also at the national level within the environmental conservation section of MEW. Those stakeholders who were actively engaged in the Tisza Biodiversity project have in fact become "results owners" who care deeply and who continue working intensively for environmental conservation and sustainable development in the region. This commitment was to some extent present in the region prior to the GEF's support, but it has no doubt been enhanced through the project.

[26] GEF Evaluation Office. 2009. "Fourth Overall Performance Study of the GEF: Progress Toward Impact," September 25, 2009, GEF/R.5/18. Washington, D.C.: GEF Evaluation Office.

115. On the other hand, there appears to be relatively low ownership (or perhaps disregard) of the attempt to implement IHFM in the Upper Tisza floodplain among the water management authorities at the national level (within MEW and otherwise), and within MARD. As cited in the quotation above, these national institutions must provide political and financial support for the expected Global Environmental Benefits to be achieved. The level at which this may happen depends on the success of the "results owners" as they continue their efforts in support of IHFM in the Upper Tisza floodplain.

ii. Outcome 1: A Sustainable Mechanism for Supporting Local Initiatives and Channelling Local Lessons into National Policy and Planning

116. The primary focus of this outcome was the creation and sustainable establishment of the regional network (described in the project document as the "platform") supporting local initiatives supporting sustainable development environmentally friendly land use change. This outcome was effectively achieved and is considered satisfactory.

117. The entity arising from this outcome was the Alliance for the Living Tisza (SZÖVET), which brings together under one initiative the various stakeholders and local initiatives throughout the Upper Tisza Floodplain. The SZÖVET office was established in Nagykörű, with office space provided by the city hall. There are currently one full time and two half time SZÖVET staff. Although there were some challenges and delays in the registration process, SZÖVET has been registered as an officially recognized and licensed NGO. Key institutional documents include a formalized set of principles and a constitution outlining governance procedures including the aims and activities of the organization, and procedures for membership. The project document called for the establishment of a Tisza Floodplain Technical Office (TFTO) to provide technical support to farmers and municipalities on IHFM issues – in practice the TFTO has been established "within" SZÖVET by identifying and linking technical experts at the national and regional levels.

"[SZÖVET**] is a very important NGO for us, because they provide us with a lot of inputs for decision-making."**

- Project steering committee member from the environment division of MEW

118. The mandate for SZÖVET was originally envisioned as a general communication and coordination role, but building on the establishment of the regional product trademark ("Élő Tisza"), SZÖVET has found its niche in supporting local market-based initiatives for direct sales of environmentally friendly products. Small-scale producers of local products face market barriers from national agriculture and consumer protection policies that favour large-scale producers. For example, many products, in particular meat products, have to be processed in facilities that meet government hygienic standards; processing in such facilities can be unaffordable for small-scale producers.[27] One important output supported by the project was a proposal to MARD supporting the amendment of agricultural policies to benefit small-scale

[27] This is a problem facing the global agriculture industry at large, not just in Hungary. For example, see: Food & Water Watch. 2009. "Where's the Local Beef? Rebuilding Small-scale Meat Processing Infrastructure," June 2009. Washington, D.C.: Food & Water Watch.

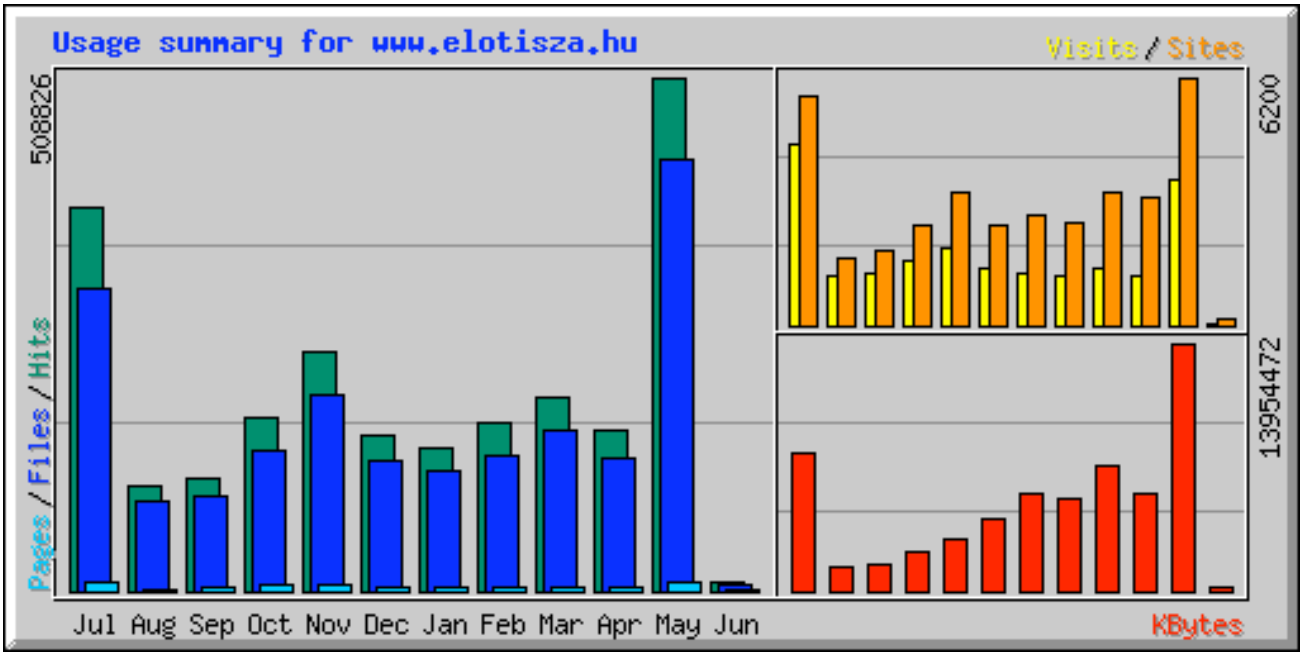
producers. SZÖVET helped craft a letter to the government that was signed by 39 partner organizations.

119. The indicators for this outcome were related to institutional sustainability – the establishment of the office, the number of partners, and its financial sustainability. These have all been met or exceeded. The original target was 50 partners, and SZÖVET currently has a membership of over 120. As with any NGO, it is difficult to say that SZÖVET's operating costs are covered 100% by sustainable sources for the long-term, as was the project's target. Although the project ended in 2008 without a single long-term source of financing, SZÖVET has succeeded in securing near-term financing through grants and funds from subsequent related projects, and continues to be highly active, partially thanks to capacity developed under the project. There remain opportunities for future support from international and national sources. For example, SZÖVET has been awarded funding $85,000 for a sub-project under the regional GEF-supported Tisza-basin project.[28] Support has also been received from Norwegian bilateral aid, and local producers using the Élő Tisza trademark (discussed below) voluntarily contribute 5% of the revenue from products sold with the trademark, although this does not currently amount to significant resources. SZÖVET continues to provide technical support through small-scale consultancies to the regional initiatives and local producers. Another service offered to local producers by SZÖVET is legal counsel, which also raises some funds.

120. SZÖVET started operations with strong information technology support and a web site. The webpage provides information on SZÖVET activities, serves as a resource on IHFM, and was leveraged to support the marketing of local products as discussed below. The statistics of the SZÖVET homepage indicates that it has a steady flow of visitors, averaging a few thousand unique visitors per month, with peaks experienced when there are newsletters issued, media releases, interviews or special events (see Figure 4). For example visitation of the webpage was boosted in May 2008 when a long distance runner, Pál Hídvégi-Üstös (co-sponsored by SZÖVET), ran the length of the Tisza River, followed by intense media coverage. Another peak was seen at the end of June 2008 when the "Save our Sour Cherries" campaign was organised. Occasional anecdotal feedback on the webpage is satisfactory: visitors are content with the availability of materials, the usefulness of information and the regular updates. Minor technical issues with the webpage continue to be corrected over time.

[28] See http://www.icpdr.org/icpdr-pages/tisza_undp_gef.htm (as accessed October 15, 2009). This sub-project is entitled "Integrated land development (ILD) program to improve land use and water management efficiency," with objectives to build capacity for local actors on ILD, implement a pilot ILD program, and disseminate lessons learned.

Figure 4. Statistics for www.elotisza.hu, the SZÖVET webpage, July 2008 through May 2009



121. Statistics from the new website www.elotiszaert.hu launched on 13th August 2009 are not yet available due to difficulties with the respective service provider.

122. One of the key outputs under this outcome was the establishment of the regional trademark for environmentally friendly produced products – the "Élő Tisza" ("Living Tisza") trademark (Figure 5), to support the creation of market opportunities for local producers. The trademark follows in the line of other regional trademarks developed throughout Europe to strengthen local economies and improve marketing of local products. Currently 47 producers are registered to use the Élő Tisza trademark, and many producers have more than one product marketed with the trademark, with about 100 products certified. The trademarked products are all floodplain related - mainly fruit derived products such as juice, jam and marmalade, but also farm-based products such as geese. The method can be used to ad hoc problem solving such as selling grape juice through a special issue of the newsletter. Services, such as tourist accommodations and sight-seeing services, are also be certified and marketed.

Figure 5. Project Developed "Élő Tisza" ("Living Tisza") Regional Trademark

Élő Tisza

123. To be certified to market products with the trademark producers have to complete two data sheets – one about the producer, and one specifically about the product detailing the production process and certifying that organic processes are used, don't use genetically modified organisms or other artificial additives, and other environmentally-friendly criteria. To assist with product marketing, a website leveraging the trademark has been developed – http://www.elotisza.hu.

124. Different types of producers are registered to use the trademark, from individuals producing at a small scale to commercial interests producing for markets beyond the region. SZÖVET's efforts to support marketing of local products has been very much at the commercial level, which bodes well for establishing recognition for regional products at the national level. Through three farmers' markets organized in partnership with other NGOs, and other direct marketing techniques, many regional products are being sold in Budapest. In addition to direct sales, there are four shops in the project region where Élő Tisza products are sold. Web-based ordering of locally produced Élő Tisza products began just at the time of writing this report (October 2009). A key future effort is a potential strategic partnership with a nation-wide distribution and logistics company in Hungary, Kincsem Cooperative, which could create significantly larger market opportunities. This could, for example, facilitate the marketing of floodplain products in a national chain of small markets (the ubiquitous "Co-op" shops).

125. Another marketing innovation is the establishment of a direct marketing email newsletter to link consumers and producers, which reaches over 1500 people weekly. The e-mail mailing list for direct outreach to potential customers was a great success. Circulation is extended by people forwarding to other thematic e-mail lists and web pages, without the organisers' initiative. Various virtual communities of special interest professional organisations such as the Association of Hungarian Agro-Environmental Farmers also share the mailings with their members. An online search of the key words of a recent SZÖVET sponsored campaign (Nagy Kamra Napok: "The Large Pantry Days") found over 101 web pages only in Hungarian, of which about half were not directly related to the two project-developed websites.

126. The email newsletter approach was catalyzed through the "Save our Sour Cherries" campaign organized under the project, which drew an unexpectedly large amount of media attention at the national level. Building on this successful campaign, SZÖVET has facilitated specific marketing opportunities for other products, including a special apple juice campaign in November 2008 (leveraging the sale of 7000 litres of locally produced apple juice) and the direct marketing of 1000 geese (5000 kg of goose meat) in June 2009. Purchasers include private individuals, as well as commercial entities such as restaurants and catering services. SZÖVET is gradually shifting the responsibility for consumer-producer interaction to the producers themselves. Further, in 2008 SZÖVET organized a special holiday catalogue of local products, which further benefited producers.

127. On the whole SZÖVET has made great strides in expanding market opportunities for local products through direct sales channels, the online store for local products, and the sale of local products in small specialty shops and markets at the national and regional level. This market expansion has likely benefited from the recent global wave of increasing awareness about environmentally friendly and locally produced food. Specific total market data for Élő Tisza revenue is not available, but it is safe to say the market size for local, environmentally-friendly Upper Tisza products has increased appreciably since the start of the project.

128. The scale and commercial nature of the marketing efforts related to the Élő Tisza trademark are such that SZÖVET and other stakeholders must urgently move toward a more structured and technically comprehensive approach to product certification under the Élő Tisza trademark. The current voluntary disclosure and certification system has its benefits, but as the Élő Tisza catalogue of products continues to grow, an independent certification body with

protocols for inspections and sanctions is required to protect brand equity and ensure the maintenance of consumer confidence. This is highlighted at the end of this evaluation report as a key recommendation.

129. The Micro Grants program was budgeted under Outcome 3, but SZÖVET was naturally primarily responsible for getting the Micro Grants program up and running. The project team developed the criteria for grant selection, and selected the partnership foundation to administer the grants. The Micro Grant program is further discussed under Outcome 3.

130. Communication, education, and awareness were another key portion of SZÖVET's activities under the project, and the project was particularly successful in garnering media attention. This was partly due to the compelling nature of the issue the project was addressing, but the project team also had previous experience working with and leveraging the media. From 2006 – 2009, nearly 140 media pieces (newspaper articles, radio stories, etc.) discussing the project or issues related to the project were produced. The development of the Élő Tisza trademark, the Save our Sour Cherries Campaign, and the small producers decree drew significant media coverage. SZÖVET was involved in the production of more than 160 publications related to the biodiversity values of the Upper Tisza floodplain. These included regional newsletters, maps, books, pocket guides, posters, DVDs, and articles published in external sources. Also, during the publicity campaign "Run for the Tisza", the long distance runner Pál Hídvégi-Üstös contacted mayors, functionaries and other local stakeholders outside the core areas, assessing their views and feelings about the IHFM approach. The running was co-sponsored by SZÖVET and brought important contacts for the alliance. Unfortunately there is no baseline or other measure of actual level of knowledge and awareness levels within the regional or national population, but there is evidence that the materials produced have been used effectively (i.e. not sitting indefinitely in storage somewhere).

iii. Outcome 2: Tools to support biodiversity friendly, IHFM in the Upper Tisza Floodplain

131. The effectiveness of the Tisza biodiversity project in terms of Outcome 2 is considered satisfactory, and could be rated more highly if adverse exogenous factors impacting project implementation were offset. The tools supporting the biodiversity friendly integrated holistic floodplain management practices in the Upper Tisza Floodplain were essential for the practical work outlined in Outcome 3 and constituted important background material for the lobbying activities envisaged for Outcome 4.

132. The first stage of developing the supporting tools for IHFM was to elaborate and finalise a harmonised concept of the desirable structure and operation of the management practices which can be used in a floodplain in a sustainable manner. For this, lessons learnt from historical sources had to be reconciled with modern day scientific methods, knowledge and modelling to allow for the application of the approach under the radically changed environmental conditions (human development, river regulations, soil and groundwater alterations, etc.) The project partners unified through SZÖVET also had to approve of the concept to work in the same direction. This happened in a timely and effective manner as documented in project reports and SZÖVET minutes.

133. An integrated monitoring system (IMS) was also planned based on previous experiences. A prerequisite for compliance with this indicator was the systematic assessment of historical land cover and land evaluation systems using digital tools. This was done with the help of a seminar book.[29] Further, to assist quality data gathering for monitoring, a questionnaire was developed to help national park rangers and other professionals in their monitoring efforts.

134. The programme also undertook to make a compilation of the data related to key stakeholders in the project area. This was first and most comprehensive survey for the respective pilot areas including all the local products, services, farmers, municipalities, programmes, organised events and the compendium was later used in setting up the web market. The database is currently not consolidated but plans are afoot to do so.

135. As discussed under Outcome 1, another very important tool for promoting IHFM was the setup and maintenance of the web-based marketplace for the floodplain originated products under the newly established trademark Élő Tisza ('Living Tisza'). In the altered project environment and changing macro-economic conditions, government priorities, the building up of an independent marketing organisation moved to the forefront the priority for ensuring the sustainability of project achievement.

136. Trainings and meetings to promote the cause of IHFM were also envisaged and held. The target figure of 30 training workshops was met, with 31 trainings held by 30 June, 2009 as stated in the final PIR. The other indicator target for national conferences was exceeded with 10 national meetings held as opposed to the originally anticipated 6. Detailed specific information received from the project manager showed a slightly different, though still impressive picture, as shown in Table 5:

Table 5. Tisza Biodiversity Project Supported Outreach Events

Event type	Number of Events	Estimated Number of Participants
Conferences, national level meetings	7	920
Meetings, negotiations and discussions on project issues	80	1437
Training workshops, seminars and information dissemination meetings	27	679
Participation of project management in various conferences	21	n.a.

137. As highlighted in Section VI.C.i on project monitoring, this is one area where improved indicators would give a better sense of what the actual results of these trainings and conferences were, beyond exceeding the target numbers.

138. Establishment of guidelines for invasive species management in high natural value floodplains based on an assessment of cause-effect relationships was also an indicator. The direct experiences from this aspect of the project were remarkable. It is well recognized that desert false indigo (*Amorpha fruticosa*) is a harmful invasive species in the project area. Its tall

[29] Mapping historical land cover in the Tisza valley. Seminar volume, Budapest, 2008, 98 pp (in Hungarian)

woody shoots fully can colonise an abandoned field within two years, and constitute dense, shrubby vegetation that is difficult to eliminate. Beside active cutting and burning, the only environmentally sensitive management approach to this vigorous plant is systematic and regular grazing as demonstrated with convincing effect on the Nagykörű pilot project area near and within the Anyita Lake.

139. During the evaluation field visit, other species mentioned in the project documents (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica, Acer negundo, Echinocystis lobata, Parthenocissus spp*.) appeared visually to be a smaller threat than *Amorpha*. On the other hand, the common ragweed *Ambrosia artemisiifolia* is a nationwide invasive pest, which had already appeared on the freshly constructed dikes of the Cigánd reservoir in great numbers. This is not particularly surprising, considering the lack of resources for proper maintenance of this first polder structure in the VTT. At any rate, the indicator target value of 30,000 hectares under control seemed to be a far shot from the actual situation. The achievement level cited in the PIR indicated an even more unrealistic figure of 209,000 hectares being managed for invasive species. According to the Project Manager this is calculated indirectly from the area under the NAEP scheme. The control of invasive species is compulsory for farmers under NAEP, and such control measures are verified by the newly created central body of MARD, the Agricultural Technical Administration Office (or MgSzH in Hungarian). Lack of invasive species control may result in withdrawal of agri-environmental payments. However, anybody with on-the-ground knowledge knows that due to poor enforcement this measure alone cannot be considered a tool of fully effective control. It should be noted though, that other than efforts supported through the Micro Grant fund, the project did not have direct funds for direct control measures; it merely undertook to publish a guideline for invasive species management in the floodplains of the region. This happened in the form of Ministry of Environment and Water Management issuing a two volume publication[30] and SZÖVET publishing a short pocket size guidebook on invasive species and how to handle them. Therefore the indicators applied do not appear to have been highly relevant to actual outcomes supported by the project.

iv. Outcome 3: At the site of each of the Initiatives, land, water, habitats and biodiversity are managed in an integrated manner that is supportive of socio-economic development

140. Outcome 3 of the Tisza Biodiversity project included one of the most successful aspects of the project, as well as one of the least successful. Fortunately the majority of resources under this outcome went into the successful aspect – the Micro Grants program. Although the largest share of GEF-resources under this outcome were budgeted for the Micro Grant program (34.3% of the total GEF financing for the project), under Outcome 3 the project document focused primarily on the site-level action plans that were to be developed. Development of the site-level action plans was as unsuccessful as the Micro Grants program was successful. Based on the relative percentage of resources contributed to each of these activities, overall achievement under this outcome is considered to be satisfactory.

[30] Invasive species I and II. Biological invasions in Hungary, Study papers of the Ministry of Environment and Water Management, 2005 and 2006

141. The Micro Grants program was managed by the Ökotárs Alapítvány, or Partnership Foundation, which was selected by tender as the most capable and qualified entity to fulfil this role. A maximum of HUF 950,000 (approximately $5400 USD) per project was allocated for three categories of activities, with seven sub-categories, as shown in Box 3. Clear project selection criteria were developed, and a review committee assigned points used to rank proposals. Altogether 75 applications were received from the six project areas, representing a demand of HUF 67 million ($0.38 million USD). Through two rounds of funding 50 proposals were funded with 39.3 million HUF ($0.22 million USD). Examples of Micro Grant projects are shown in Photos 2-4 below, and Photo 5 in Section VI.D.

142. The application process was designed to be simple and straightforward enough for the average person to understand and complete, but the project also took the necessary steps to ensure fiduciary responsibility. Co-financing was not required for proposals, but based on the co-financing that was actually put forward, the Micro Grant program leveraged approximately $0.48 cents on the dollar from grantees. One aspect that could be seen as an issue was that in such small towns with relatively low populations, implementing a successful proposal requires identifying individuals with a certain level of capacity to execute. So, for example, based on the clear and transparent proposal selection criteria and points assigned by the independent review panel, in one region, Micro Grant recipients included the mayor, vice-mayor and mayor's brother-in-law. The small number of local farmers and producers aware and capable of using environmentally friendly land use methods also limited the number of possible applicants for Micro Grant funds.

Box 3. Project Types Supported by Micro Grants Program

I. Landscape management small projects
   a. Habitat management and development
   b. Wetland habitat development

II. Development of processing and marketing
   a. Processing of local products
   b. Development of the marketing of local products

III. Planning activity promoting the efficiency of farming
   a. Preparing and planning for farming development
   b. Product development
   c. Preparing and planning to improve product marketing

143. The publication "A chance along the river Tisza" highlights the three best project proposals from each of the six regions. The evaluation field visit also reviewed a number of the Micro Grants, but within the scope of the terminal evaluation of the Tisza Biodiversity project it was not possible to evaluate all 50 individual Micro Grants. The project team indicated that some grants were less successful than others, particularly some animal husbandry projects that did not succeed in establishing financially sustainable operations. In aggregate, in addition to the tangible results that were produced, the Micro Grants program appears to have been very successful in building stakeholder ownership, and raising awareness levels about environmentally friendly extensive agriculture practices.

144. There are a number of similarities between the operations of the Micro Grants fund and the GEF Small Grants Programme. And, like the Small Grants Programme, the Micro Grants fund proved to be an effective way to produce ground-level results. According to individuals

involved in the development of the project document, there was some initial resistance by the GEF Secretariat to the Micro Grants component, and approval of the project document with this component required extra effort. The Micro Grants fund provides further lessons that the modality of on-the-ground, tangible but relatively small interventions can produce valuable outcomes, and should not be considered "outlier" components of a project. Projects incorporating such modalities should not receive any particular extra scrutiny in the GEF approval process, as long as the necessary fiduciary guarantees are assured. When possible, projects should utilize existing national GEF Small Grants Programmes, but independent Micro Grant funds can be efficient and effective as well. One other possible lesson is that the fund may have been even more effective if it had been designed as a revolving fund instead of a straight sinking fund.

"**There is the language of policy makers, and there is the language of farmers, but the language people understand best is when people help them.**"

- Project Manager

145. The project document called for individual site management plans to be created for each of the six pilot areas with local initiatives participating in the project. Resources were not specifically dedicated to this activity, but it was anticipated that the site management plans would be an output of each of the local initiatives, which would then be implemented with financing leveraged in the VTT implementation.

146. As discussed previously, VTT financing and implementation was not as envisioned, so there was little incentive to develop the site management plans as was foreseen in the project document. Documents to meet the local management plan requirement were submitted by the local initiatives to the project team, but in many cases these were slightly relevant outputs from previous initiatives and not actual management plans. Without the VTT financing, few of the local initiatives (e.g. Nagykörü, Bereg, Kesznyéten) have the capacity to implement an area-specific management plan. Therefore it would have been a waste of energy to go through the process of creating site management plans if there was not specific means to implement them anyway, since local municipalities do not have sufficient budget on their own. However, when the VTT implementation situation became clear, an analysis of the relevance of the local management plan activity should have been carried out, and a corresponding management decision taken at the Steering Committee level to modify or abandon this activity. Otherwise it should have been expected that the management plans would still have been completed.

Photo 2. Jam-making

Photo 3. Hungarian Cattle

Photo 4. Fruit Nursery

v. Outcome 4: Changes in the policy and the implementation of the VTT and NAEP to integrate biodiversity concerns, feeding into related EU policy and decision making

147. Maybe the least favourable of all project outcomes is Outcome 4, for which the level of achievement is moderately unsatisfactory based on the GEF/UNDP evaluation criteria.

148. The relatively poor results of Outcome 4 were not attributable to any shortcomings of the project team and participants, but rather to the change in assumptions on which the project intervention was predicated, as described earlier in this evaluation. The project team's strong lobbying activities are confirmed by a large number of texts, papers, articles, press releases, position papers, opinion letters and other materials conceived and sent supporting the Tisza Biodiversity project objectives. The indicators for this outcome were primarily at the output level, relating to the number of lobbying materials produced rather than their effects; the indicators for Outcome 4 were met or surpassed: joint policy papers were sent to Brussels on pollution of the Tisza from mining, the new Rural Development Plan developed by the Hungarian government and the Water Framework Directive. At the domestic level, the project submitted – independently or in conjunction with other NGOs and lobby groups – a total of 18 position papers, policy recommendations and other inputs to various government entities.

149. Even though SZÖVET was instrumental in integrating the VTT areas into the NAEP zonal payment scheme, the new NAEP was announced only in 2009 as opposed to the suggested date of 2007, and in line with the New Hungary Rural Development Programme. One positive outcome that strengthens the NAEP with respect to biodiversity considerations is that a new agri-environmental measure was added according to project proposals for mainstreaming biodiversity, to include wetland creation and management payments. This is a horizontal measure that may therefore be applied in all fluvial areas of Hungary. It may have a direct effect on the six first-phase water reservoirs of the VTT, and may benefit the surrounding areas of the reservoirs as well. However, as with other aspects of these national policies, much depends on the implementation approach taken. Project beneficiaries in several project sites, but most prominently in the Bereg sub-region, complained of the MARD tender announcement failing to take into account the specific concerns of IHFM in the NAEP aid programmes.

150. The results of SZÖVET's and other NGOs' efforts to have a say in the VTT implementation also fell short of expectations. The typical progression is that at the preliminary design level all or most of the alternative concepts proposed by NGOs and academia are taken into account; then at the time the respective development project – for instance a flood reservoir under the VTT, or the call for tenders under the NAEP – gets into the technical design and implementation phase, things start to go wrong: budgets fail, and finally only the most technocratic part of the comprehensive scheme is actually executed. This was the case with the Cigánd reservoir and there is reason to believe that the same approach will be taken for many more similar investments.

151. Another indicator was the strengthening of civil activities in the region and at national level with a view of representation of the region. Of course, the most seminal of these was the establishment of SZÖVET, but further positive developments included the establishment of three additional non-governmental organisations, the most active being the "Bereg Fáklya"

(Bereg Torch) Association with the mission to represent the interests of the local stakeholders in the design and development phase of the Bereg reservoir under the VTT.

152. The project's networking efforts bore fruits in the form of a memorandum involving municipalities in the region that had 80 signatories, as well as another commitment letter "Together for the living Tisza" which was signed by 11 entities from neighbouring countries in addition to the 60 Hungarian signatories. Unfortunately, all of these achievements had little or no effect on the national policies prevailing during the project period. As the risk analysis of the updated 2006 logframe included in the Inception Report stated: whilst the interest of international decision making bodies remained – at least on the level of statements and declarations – by and large unchanged in integrated environmental management issues, national level decisions started to override them from the very beginning of the project implementation period. In late 2006, a much more prominent state budget deficit and foreign indebtedness was revealed by the new government, concealed previously from the public for clearly political reasons (general elections were held in Spring, 2006). In reaction, radical budget cuts were introduced and the potential of NGOs to influence government policy started to dwindle.

VI. Key GEF Performance Parameters

A. Sustainability

153. As with all aspects of the Tisza Biodiversity project, there is an important distinction between the local and national levels with respect to sustainability. On the whole, based on the sustainability parameters discussed below, the sustainability of project achievements is considered moderately likely. While a sustainability rating is provided here, as required, it must be kept in mind that sustainability is a temporal and dynamic state, which is influenced by a broad ranging of shifting factors. In the context of GEF projects there is no clearly defined timeframe for which results should be sustained, although there is the implication that they should be sustained indefinitely. However, as the time horizon from the point of intervention is extended, a number of factors come into play: a.) The level of certainty surrounding sustainability ratings is inherently reduced; b.) Results are absorbed and influenced by other actors; and c.) There is a greater chance for relevant un-anticipated events and circumstances to arise. An assessment of near-term sustainability risks can be provided with a reasonable level of confidence, which is as much as this evaluation report attempts to do.

i. Financial Risks to Sustainability

154. Sustainability related to financial aspects of the project is considered moderately likely.

155. At the local/regional level, SZÖVET has managed to find multiple sources of financing to support ongoing activities, and appears to have the capacity to continue finding for at least the foreseeable future. As discussed at the September 2008 Alliance General Assembly meeting, two grant applications from external sources were successful and have been among the source to sustain SZÖVET over the past year. Based on current and anticipated resources SZÖVET is hoping to expand staff and activities over the next few years. However, the financial existence of any NGO is never highly secure without consistent sustained and dedicated sources of financing. SZÖVET will continue to develop these sources through revenues from the

trademark program, consultancy services to local actors, and project-based grants. SZÖVET has also taken some preliminary steps to identify potential sources of financing to recapitalize the Micro Grant fund, but efforts thus far have not yielded any solid results.

156. At the national level, financial risks to sustainability are strongly linked with the political situation in Hungary. National elections are to be held in early 2010, with a change of government highly likely. Even with a change in government, the implementation of the VTT and NAEP is quite certain to be continued and financed – but the important question is in what manner. What level of emphasis and resources will go into the landscape management and IHFM aspects of these plans? As previously discussed, the VTT is being implemented in the Upper Tisza floodplain, but local stakeholders have had to fight for inclusion of IHFM approaches within the plan – as, for example, in Cigánd, where although the reservoir was designed to include the potential for IHFM, there are inadequate resources for maintenance and operation. It is anticipated that a government run by FIDESZ (the "Hungarian Civic Union" party, currently in opposition) would have a stronger commitment to approaches favouring IHFM, but all factors are sure to be influenced by the evolution of the national economic situation in Hungary. The NAEP will also be implemented from 2009 – 2013, but based on the example of other Eastern European countries that have joined the EU (such as the Czech Republic), there are certain to be challenges in leveraging this policy measure for effective environmental conservation.

ii. Socioeconomic Risks to Sustainability

157. Socioeconomic risks to sustainability can mostly be viewed at the local/regional level, and there are both optimistic and pessimistic views to be had, which lead to a moderately likely sustainability rating. On the one hand, the project has helped catalyze a growing interest in and access to products produced in an environmentally-friendly manner on a small-scale sustainable basis, which can provide an increase in farm income and a diversification of economic activities. As discussed in Section V.B.ii on Outcome 1, there are a number of signs indicating positive growth in this market, and SZÖVET continues to explore valuable partnership approaches. Increasing tourism in the region provides another economic alternative. In addition, the education and awareness building activities supported by the project and other stakeholders will continue to have a positive influence on the ways in which people integrate economic activities with environmental considerations.

158. On the other hand, the progress being made may be too little and not rapid enough to have the necessary wide-influence on socioeconomic factors in the region. The transition of the Hungarian agriculture industry in the EU accession process has resulted in the closure of regionally-based processing facilities for milk, grain, fruit and other agricultural products from the Upper Tisza region. Farmers in the region have been broadly negatively affected by these developments – throughout the evaluation field visit there were numerous stories of how for the most part non-industrial agriculture is a money-losing business, particularly in the milk industry. As previously noted, the EU supported rapid expansion of the biomass industry is also a major concern. In addition, as in other parts of Europe, there is a decline of younger generations taking up the farming business. The region is clearly undergoing a major social and economic transitional period, and throughout this process there will be both positive and

negative developments affecting the extensive agriculture industry, local communities, and the landscape, all of which will have implications for environmental conservation.

iii. Institutional Framework and Governance Risks to Sustainability

159. The institutional and governance aspects of sustainability have been discussed throughout this evaluation report (See in particular Section III.A on development context, and Section V.B.v on Outcome 4), and primarily relate to the implementation of national level policies – the VTT and NAEP - at the regional level. As discussed under financial risks to sustainability, above, there are strong linkages between financial-political aspects that will influence sustainability. The battle for environmentally friendly implementation of these policies will be a protracted one, but there are positive signs for the future. Perhaps the most notable is the example of the Bereg Torch association and the proposed Bereg reservoir. With the support and influence of the project, this local initiative has had some success in proactively influencing the plans for construction of the reservoir in their area. Although the process is ongoing, this positive example combined with the broader regional foundation established with support of the project allow a moderately likely sustainability rating in relation to the institutional framework and governance. At the same time, a sustained lobbying effort will be required at the national and regional levels, and even at the level of the EU.

iv. Environmental Risks to Sustainability

160. There are multiple environmental risks, but at a level that implies a moderately likely rating for sustainability related to this dimension. The most significant risk is that the VTT plan is implemented in a way that does not encompass or include the IHFM approach, i.e. the traditional large-scale technocratic infrastructure intensive approach to flood plain management, which has historically upset the natural hydrologic cycle of the entire region. There are even ongoing discussions about yet another dam on both the Tisza and the Danube, and an inland canal connecting the two rivers to provide water to Homokhátság between them. If such a scheme were to be implemented it would likely have catastrophic effects for the water regime in the region. As pointed out in relation to the other aspects of sustainability, the effort to integrate IHFM in VTT implementation is a long-term prospect, and is strongly related to governance and financial issues.

161. Another important risk is invasive species, on which the project had a small focus. Information on the current and potential severity and scale of the effects of invasive species in the Upper Tisza floodplain was not immediately available (the effects of invasive species are often estimated, for example, as a monetary figure related to negative environmental and economic aspects), but according to a 1998 survey, over 20% of protected grasslands in Hungary were affected by invasive species, with an estimated cost of eradication of more than HUF 1 billion ($5.61 million USD).[31] This figure is surely greater at this point. The most notable invasive species are monitored through the Hungarian Biodiversity Monitoring System.

[31] Government of Hungary. 2003. "Invasive Alien Species in Hungary: National Ecological Network No. 6," Authority for Nature Conservation, Ministry of Environment and Water.

162. Other environmental risks that should be noted, but are also at a relatively low level at present are the threat of GMO contamination, agricultural runoff, downstream pollution received from countries in the upper reaches of the Tisza watershed (i.e. a repeat of the catastrophic Romanian cyanide spill in 2000), and climate change.

B. Catalytic Role: Replication and Scaling-up

163. All GEF projects are expected to be catalytic in nature, to increase the leverage of the GEF's limited resources. This normally takes the form of replication in other contexts of positive lessons and experiences, or a scaling up of the approach piloted. In practice the Tisza Biodiversity project addressed this requirement through multiple avenues. The project document makes a number of claims about replication through dissemination of information, few of which had any relevance during implementation.

164. The most important catalytic effects were at the regional level, in bringing together the various local initiatives that were developing to support sustainable development and environmentally friendly floodplain management in the Upper Tisza floodplain. During the project's lifetime new local initiatives have developed (notably, the Bereg Torch initiative) and the alliance of local initiatives has continued to gain member organizations and expand. The Micro Grant fund also has had an interesting catalytic effect in developing "entrepreneurial spirit" in the region, which does not have a long history in this formerly eastern bloc country. Based on the example of the Micro Grants, other small scale local products entrepreneurs have begun to appear – for example, the field visit included a stop at a household commercial jam-making operation, which had been certified as an Élő Tisza producer, but had not received Micro Grant funding. There may also be some catalytic effect from the dissemination of project lessons and experiences that has occurred within Hungary as well as internationally through the publication of scientific papers and other materials. For a selection of scientific outputs see Annex 5. Members of the project management team also attended and presented project lessons at conferences domestically and internationally.

165. At the national level, whatever positive effects that project's lobbying efforts have had on the VTT and NAEP design and implementation may be scaled-up at the national level, since these are national policies. In particular, the creation of a wetland management measure among the NAEP land management measures is a positive step.

C. Monitoring and Evaluation

i. Project Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation

166. Overall, project monitoring and evaluation for the Tisza Biodiversity project is considered to be moderately satisfactory, primarily due to shortcomings in indicator design in the logframe. The logframe represents an improvement with respect to comprehensiveness and specificity in comparison to the historic average for GEF projects, but overall it lacked in conforming to SMART criteria.

167. Monitoring and evaluation processes and requirements are laid out in the project document and in the inception report produced at project start-up. The M&E procedures described are not extensive, but meet GEF and UNDP minimum standards for oversight and reporting on project implementation progress. Although multiple institutions were involved in

project oversight, the roles and responsibilities for monitoring and reporting were clearly defined and well-understood. The main mechanisms were the Project Steering Committee (planned to meet twice per year), quarterly progress reports, annual project implementation reports, at least one external financial audit, and one independent evaluation. In addition, there was regular ad-hoc communication between the project team, the executing agency and UNDP, and regular field visits were conducted by UNDP. The project inception report also mentions the need for a mid-term evaluation and periodic thematic reports, neither of which were required and were not carried out. Regular project monitoring and reporting were included in the responsibilities of the project team, and thus were not separately budgeted for. Evaluation activities were adequately budgeted. The M&E framework supported project adaptive management, as described in Section IV.C, above.

168. The Steering Committee met six times, an average of twice per year for the three-year project. The quarterly progress reports were submitted to UNDP by the project team, and included financial reports and workplans with requests for disbursement of finances to support activities going forward. There were some delays in project reporting in the early stages of the project (in early 2006) due to the efforts required to harmonize the accounting systems of UNDP and the executing agency, since the finances were managed through Hortobágy National Park. There were also delays in reporting in the third quarter of 2006 resulting in a delay in disbursement for fourth quarter activities, which was briefly covered by the park administration thanks to its adequately liquid financial position. According to the project manager this delay was due to a particularly significant and urgent workload in this quarter related to the start-up of the Micro Grant fund.

169. The annual PIRs were completed in a realistic and comprehensive manner, and fully used to support project adaptive management and implementation. For example, from the 2007 PIR it was recognized that because of the fundamental change in the assumptions surrounding the VTT and NAEP, the project's progress toward achievement of objectives was only moderately satisfactory. The required financial audits were completed in a timely and quality manner. The terminal evaluation was conducted within the required 12 months following project closure.

170. On the whole the project team considered that the reporting procedures were clear, consistent, non-bureaucratic, and as anticipated from the project start, even going so far as to state that "UNDP-GEF reporting system and attitude of the UNDP teams could be models for the Hungarian government and EU institutions." This is a somewhat surprising outlook considering the historic reputation of the GEF and international organizations in general with regard to reporting bureaucracy, and hopefully signals long-awaited broad-based improvements in this area for the GEF (though may also represent further blossoming of bureaucracy in the Hungarian government and EU administration).

171. The original logframe in the project document had a number of shortcomings with respect to indicators, particularly in light of developments within the GEF with respect to focal area results-based approaches and the 2006 GEF M&E policy that was under development at the time of project approval. Thus the logframe was significantly revised during the project inception workshop. As described in the inception report, "Changes in the Logical Framework Matrix: In order to follow the GEF revised approach to the quantitative assessment of the

project indicators, the whole criteria system of performance assessment had to be revised. To this end, under the Project Objective the baseline population of threatened species (mayfly, corncrake and white tailed eagle) land/pond/wetland areas have been recalculated, the number of local enterprises, number of publications have been quantified."

172. The inception report revision of the logframe represents an improvement, but still had shortcomings. Many indicators are directed at the output level, rather than focusing on results at the outcome or impact level. For example, "Number of publications for general stakeholders on the biodiversity values of the Tisza" (baseline: 3; target: 6). Booklets, newsletters etc. don't necessarily contribute to improved understanding, if, for example, they go from the printer's to sit in a storage room somewhere. On a related issue, as with many GEF project logframes, for multiple key indicators the target level is not fully rationalized. On the positive side, baseline values are clearly indicated for each indicator in the logframe.

173. Another significant challenge with the logframe is the attempt to translate and draw in indicators from the GEF tracking tool for Strategic Priority 2 on production landscapes. The Tisza Biodiversity project is within the first generation of GEF projects to apply the management effectiveness tracking tool for the GEF's second overall priority of mainstreaming biodiversity. The tracking tool was completed in a comprehensive manner at work program inclusion, at the project's midpoint, and at the project's end. Any audience of this evaluation report that seeks detailed and specific information related to parameters discussed in the tracking tool should review the tracking tool document, which includes information such as the name and size of specific protected areas included in the project's target region, specific economic sectors addressed, and private sector involvement.

174. The inception report noted "Information included in the Tracking Tool attached to the project document is valuable and it must be used as much as possible in the finalization of the indicators in the Logframe revision." This is a positive effort which should be encouraged in projects in the future, but the example in the Tisza Biodiversity project indicates that significant work is needed to translate and adapt tracking tool indicators into meaningful indicators at the project level. For example, the logframe included the following indicators based on parameters in the tracking tool:

- Minority populations (Gypsies) involved in the management of the protected areas will increase by 2%
- Income of the farmers participating in the project in the Tisza valley pilot sites will increase 2% over baseline
- Municipalities active in the program implementation
- Hectares of invasive species control

175. The first of these indicators was not applicable to the planned project activities, since the project design did not specifically target minority populations or their involvement in the management of protected areas. (However, considering the broad political efforts to develop economic opportunities for the Roma population, which is increasing in the project area, such activities would have been relevant for the project for supporting expansion of alternative/extensive agriculture practices and landscape management.) The latter three indicators were relevant to the project, but were either not specific or not measurable in the

context of the targeted project area, which did not have specifically defined boundaries at the site level. For example there is no definition of what it means for a municipality to be considered "active" in program implementation. There must be continued efforts to find appropriate bi-directional linkages between GEF tracking tools and project-level indicators, and indicators must be adapted in a meaningful way for use by projects on the ground.

ii. Long-term Environmental Monitoring

176. Hungary has a well-developed, but underfunded (of course), national biodiversity monitoring system which was created under Act No. 53/1996 on nature conservation. The Department for Nature Conservation in the State Secretariat for Nature and Environment Protection, under MEW, oversees the system. The national monitoring program was elaborated in 1997, and field surveys under the program began in 1998; a comprehensive review of data sets, and monitoring methodologies was carried out in the 2003 – 2005 time period. The monitoring system consists of eleven "projects" focusing on certain regions, ecosystem types or taxonomic groups, including threats such as invasive species. Links are also created through regional coordination to other environmental monitoring systems in Hungary such as those related to the Water Framework Directive and the Forest Reserve program. The system also leverages volunteer monitoring for specific projects, such as a European ground squirrel survey. Various ecosystems and taxonomic groups have been gradually incorporated into the overall program; for example monitoring of six orthoptera species of European community importance began in Hungary in 2005.[32] In 2008 a centralized GIS-based database – the Nature Conservation Information System – was made operational, and serves as the main national repository of environmental monitoring data.

177. As highlighted in Section V.B.iii on Outcome 2 one of the project activities was the development and implementation of an integrated environmental monitoring system – as described by the project document, "a floodplain wide monitoring network, monitoring the status of biodiversity and the impact of the VTT and NAEP." The project planned to review and assess the various pre-existing monitoring programs and mechanisms, and then catalyze the development of one integrated monitoring system, in particular because the national biodiversity monitoring system does not yet include monitoring of agrobiodiversity. Recognizing the limited capacity of the national monitoring system, the project worked to develop a participatory monitoring tool in the form of a qualitative landscape assessment monitoring survey tool, in collaboration with the Hortobágy National Park. A broader objective was for the national park rangers (who carry out the field monitoring) to be part of the review mechanism in the implementation of the national agri-environmental schemes. Unfortunately, this was not accepted by MARD, combined with the fact that national budget cuts resulted in erratic and incomplete data compilation as rangers were laid off. However, building on the structure of the questionnaire, MEW asked SZÖVET experts to prepare a pocket guide for surveying individual landscape values in the field. The pocket guide is provided to the farmers participating in the ESA programme to assist the Landscape Directive implementation.

[32] Fodor, L., O. Váczi and K. Török (eds.). 2007. "Hungarian Biodiversity Monitoring System," A. Schmidt (trans.). State Secretariat for Nature and Environment Protection, Ministry of Environment and Water.

178. The project was successful in developing this tool, but at present it is not applied, and there are no plans or financing to implement it. On the whole, the implementation of a "floodplain wide" monitoring system was overambitious for a project of this size and timeframe. While supporting the operation of the national monitoring system through increased landscape level data collection was a worthy goal, overseeing the implementation of a floodplain wide monitoring network was beyond the reasonable purview of the project. On the other hand, this activity supported the important idea that one of the ways to instigate development that values nature is through participatory monitoring which raises stakeholder awareness about the condition of the natural environment. Participatory water quality monitoring continues to be supported in Hungary through the implementation of US ("Stream Watch") and UK based approaches.

179. Impact level monitoring results are further discussed below.

D. Project Impacts: Documenting Positive Environmental Changes

180. As discussed previously, the project logframe included a limited number of impact level indicators. The incorporation of impact level indicators is a very positive step for evaluating the contribution of a project toward its ultimate objective of conserving biodiversity. There are multiple issues that limit the feasibility of directly attributing project efforts to measured changes in the environment, but this issue must be assessed nonetheless.

181. The main indicators documented in the logframe were species population levels in the pilot areas for three threatened and endangered species, shown in Table 6 below. The population levels in Hungary for each species is 25% or less of the total global population. According to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, *Crex crex* is considered globally "Near Threatened" with an estimated declining global population of 1.8 – 3.2 million breeding pairs. *Haliaetus albicilla* is considered a species of "Least Concern" with an estimated globally stable population of approximately 6,800 - 13,200 breeding pairs.[33] Although these indicator species are not in themselves highly endangered, they may be sensitive to environmental changes, and therefore can be considered umbrella indicator species for the ecosystem as a whole. Data was reported for these indicators at the end of the project, allowing a preliminary look at impact-level results documented within the project timeframe.

Table 6. Tisza Biodiversity Project Selected Impact Indicator Species

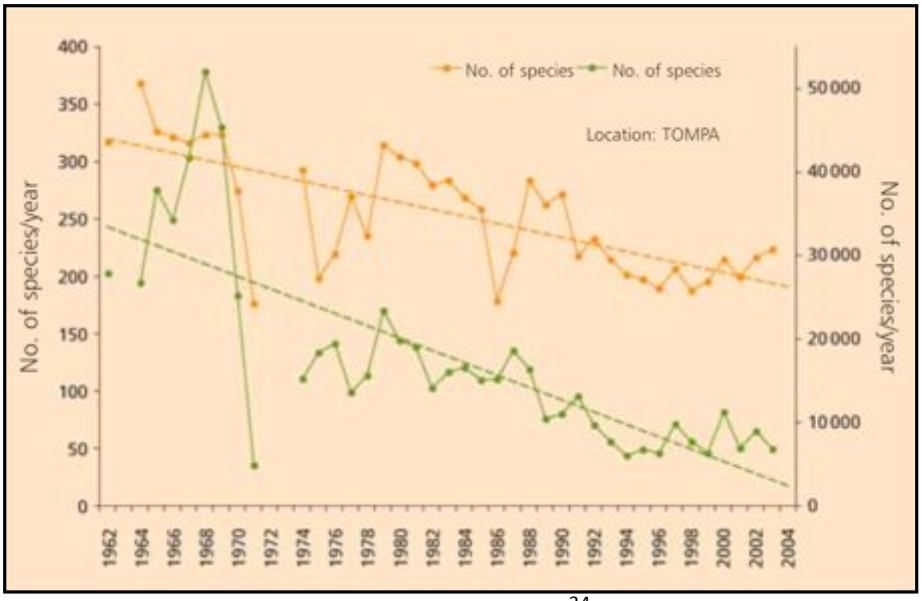
	Baseline	2009 PIR Reported Level
Mayfly (*Paligeria longicauda*)	40,6 ± 48,7 larvae / sample (490 cm2) (2004)	Remained the same – some improvements in the Bodrog River area. (Petrovics Zoltán personal communication, WFD monitoring show good ecological status in the Upper Tisza region.)
Corncrake (*Crex crex*)	252 (2004)	345 (2008) – 167 in the Upper Tisza (till Szolnok) decline/migration to more humid territories due to very arid summer in the region (Sallai, MBMR)
While-tailed Eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*)	6 breeding pairs (2005)	8 breeding pairs (2009) - (Kis-Sárrét: 1; Bodrogzug: 2; Middle-Tisza TK: 5; Szatmár-Bereg TK: 0)

[33] Data from http://www.iucnredlist.org/ as of October 10, 2009.

182. The situation found in the Tisza biodiversity project highlights the ambiguity of examining impact-level results. The project target was to maintain or slightly increase the population levels of the three indicator species. As shown in Table 6, for one species the population remained approximately the same, for one species it declined, and one species increased. Thus there is not a clear indication of positive or negative changes in environmental status in the Upper Tisza Floodplain based on these limited species-level indicators.

183. This result highlights the fact that to assess changes in environmental status in a meaningful way, long-term monitoring data is required to identify trends over time, rather than attempting a single point-in-time snapshot. For example, Figure 6 shows monitoring data for large moths in a single site in Hungary over a 40-year period, in which there are significant annual variations, but trends can be identified over time.[34] Particularly with regard to highly mobile species, populations can vary significantly by season and from year to year. Furthermore, short-term population trends are much more likely to be influenced by short-term variable exogenous factors such as annual climatic conditions, than by the underlying quality and quantity of the ecosystem, which often experiences changes in a more gradual manner. Therefore, one of the key recommendations of this evaluation is that populations of indicator species such as *Crex crex* should be evaluated regularly over an extended period of time, and/or should be accompanied by other related indicators such as habitat quality.

Figure 6. Monitoring of Large Moths over 40 Years in Tompa, Hungary



184. The project can also be considered to have had positive impacts at the micro-scale, but these have not been documented in a systematic manner. For example, under the Micro Grants program, multiple participants improved the environmental "friendliness" of their agricultural practices, and some small-scale wetlands (in the range of a few hectares – see Photo 5) were developed or rehabilitated. In some cases improved grazing practices helped reduce invasive species and slow encroachment by woody shrubs into pastures and grassland

[34] Note: The axis on the right should be labelled "No. of specimens/year" and is represented by the green data points. Government of Hungary. 2007. "Hungarian Biodiversity Monitoring System," State Secretariat for Nature and Environment Protection, Ministry of Environment and Water.

areas. As previously mentioned, the total area affected by the Micro Grants was 1,163 km^2, land land-use change was specifically encouraged in 445 km^2.

185. As highlighted throughout the report, the project can be said to have had some positive influence on VTT and NAEP policies and implementation, which means threats have been lessened to an extent. Correspondingly, there will likely be improved environmental status in comparison to if the project had not existed. The project's potential larger scale impact, at the level considered to be a "Global Environmental Benefit" (the overall objective of the GEF) will only be seen in the coming 5 – 10 year period as the VTT and NAEP are implemented in the Upper Tisza Floodplain.

Photo 5. Wetland Restored with Micro Grant Support at Kisrozvágy

E. Capacity Development

186. The overall project objective was to facilitate sustainable development favourable both for man and nature along the river Tisza, in particular to conserve biological diversity. The Alliance for the Living Tisza was formed in order to support the achievement of these goals through capacity development, which was addressed primarily at the individual, and systemic levels, with less emphasis on the institutional level. The main areas of capacity development were as follows:

- Floodplain management (improvement of livelihood opportunities, increased understanding and implementation of IHFM)
- Connecting local production and consumption (markets, country shop, public catering, organised events, tourist programmes)
- Information dissemination and interest representation (conscious consumer, sound and healthy food and production methods, legal regulations)

187. At the individual level, the project focused on capacity development through education and awareness activities for the communities in the Upper Tisza floodplain, and specifically the local initiatives that make up SZÖVET. As discussed in Section V.B.iii, one of the outputs under Outcome 2 was a series of training session on aspects of IHFM. In addition, through the process of project management and implementation, a solid base of capacity has been established in the region in terms of project management, government relations, media relations, and technical support among the individuals specifically involved throughout the project's lifetime. The project paid specific attention to gender issues by hiring well-qualified women for key positions under the Alliance.

188. At the systemic level, in addition to the general lobbying that has been done at the EU and national levels supporting the implementation of IHFM throughout the floodplain, efforts have also been made to broaden the legislative scope for direct marketing opportunities. SZÖVET submitted an amendment proposal to MARD with the support of 39 NGOs to improve the regulatory conditions for small-scale primary producers in terms of sales, marketing, licensing and control. There is previously existing EU legislation that provides an appropriate framework[35] to take into account the principles of traditional production methods, cultural diversity and direct sales, while allowing flexibility and the maintenance of trust between consumers and producers. The current Hungarian transposition of the EU regulations does not provide sufficient space for Hungarian smallholders and small-scale primary producers to market their products or process them locally.[36] Also, the proposal contains recommendations for tax relief and tax exemption to promote processing of local food, and the creation of a Good Hygiene Practice (GHP) system regarding household food processing in the spirit of industrial standards, but with the flexibility necessary to facilitate small-scale local production.

VII. Main Lessons and Recommendations

A. Lessons from the Experience of Integrated Floodplain Management in the Upper Tisza Floodplain

189. ***Lesson:*** Even projects that start with a high level of country-drivenness, such as the Tisza biodiversity project, can be strongly influenced by short term political changes, shifts of policy priorities and budgetary constraints within the project's lifetime. To mitigate this risk, the GEF and/or UNDP should require strong commitment and agreement from all government stakeholders to sustain their support towards the overall objectives, and uphold the assumptions on which the programme is based. The radical changes to VTT and NAEP following project approval reflect this risk.

190. ***Lesson:*** The Tisza Biodiversity project developed and marketed the Élő Tisza trademark to support environmentally friendly sustainable floodplain-based products. Although this initiative began small and has had relatively little budget compared to some major marketing

[35] Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs and Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 laying down specific hygiene rules for food of animal origin

[36] Joint Decree No 14/2006 (II.16.) FVM-EüM-ICSSZEM of the MARD, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour on the conditions of small producers' food production, processing and marketing (in Hungarian)

campaigns, it has been highly successful in building interest and awareness among consumers, indicating that large results can be produced with little budget but effective use of technology and media relations.

191. ***Lesson:*** The Micro Grants fund provides further lessons that the modality of on-the-ground, tangible but relatively small interventions can produce valuable outcomes, and should not be considered "outlier" components of a project. Projects incorporating such modalities should not receive any particular extra scrutiny in the GEF approval process, as long as the necessary fiduciary guarantees are assured. When possible, projects should utilize existing national GEF Small Grants Programmes, but independent Micro Grant funds can be efficient and effective as well. One other possible lesson is that the fund may have been even more effective if it had been designed as a revolving fund instead of a straight sinking fund.

192. ***Lesson:*** In the project planning and inception stages, the Tisza Biodiversity project drew on what was at the time recently developed GEF tracking tool for strategic priority 2 - mainstreaming biodiversity. Based on approaches in the tracking tool, the project incorporated some indicators that were either not relevant or not measurable in the context of the project. Applying indicators developed from GEF tracking tools should be encouraged (as well as the use of the tracking tools themselves), but great care is required to ensure that indicators incorporated at the project level are relevant and meet SMART criteria in the context of the project on the ground.

193. ***Lesson:*** Through the regularly applied project monitoring tools multiple relevant lessons were identified: 1. The promotion of bottom-up organization of local communities and their network may be an effective tool to support BD-friendly farming activities. 2. Effective BD-protection and enrichment can only be expected, if local communities are provided with the necessary knowledge and financial incentives to carry out economic activities that support these goals. 3. The changes of governmental policies may seriously threaten the goals of a GEF-funded project. Commitment of high-level governmental officials may be a subject to GEF project implementation monitoring too, besides project management activities.

B. Recommendations for Future Actions Supporting Integrated Holistic Floodplain Management in the Upper Tisza Floodplain

194. ***Key Recommendation:*** There is an urgent need to develop a more systematic and credible system for product certification under the Élő Tisza logo. The efforts taken thus far are a positive step, but for broader commercial use there must be clear production criteria and guidelines, with an inspection system including sanction measures. Putting such a system in place will increase consumer confidence and reduce the risk of brand image degradation, and is critical for a trademark used in a significant commercial context. [*For SZÖVET*]

195. ***Key Recommendation:*** Two more reservoirs of the Vásárhelyi Plan are currently under construction.[37] Imre Szabó, Minister for the Environment and László Kóthay, Secretary of State for Water Management laid the foundation stones of both the Nagykunság and the Hany-Tiszasüly reservoirs on 24 September, 2009. A second reservoir at Tiszaroff is already

[37] Newspaper article on the homepage of the Central Directorate for the Environment and Water Management (http://www.vkki.hu/index.php?p=news&cid=17, downloaded on 5 October, 2009)

operational. The lessons and experiences from the Tisza Biodiversity project should be applied in the design, construction and operation of the other reservoirs implemented in the first stage of the improved Vásárhelyi plan. For instance, wise use and reclamation of the barrow pits used to extract earth materials for the levees could promote biodiversity in the region. [*For the Government of Hungary*]

196. ***Key Recommendation:*** Ecological evidence shows that population numbers of many species – including the flagship bird in many Central European biodiversity centred projects, the corncrake (*Crex crex*) – reflect significant short-term natural fluctuations which leaves this single indicator with little value in evaluating the long term effectiveness of a biodiversity preserving measure with a project time scale of two or three years. The same can be found for many species when data is collected at a limited number of single points in time. Either biodiversity monitoring data should be accounted for over a longer period of time (10-15 years), or some complementary data such as habitat assessment or population dynamics model simulation should further inform short-term assessments of biodiversity trends. [*For UNDP and GEF*]

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

C. Project Ratings

Ratings Table for Tisza Biodiversity Project

Project Component or Objective	Rating	Summary
Project Formulation		
Relevance	S	The project concept was relevant to and consistent with the needs of local resource users, local development policies, national development policies, GEF strategies and policies, and the CBD.
Conceptualization/design	S	The approach of leveraging local initiatives was useful, and an effective way to build on local stakeholder ownership. Had the project designers known that the original assumptions would change significantly, the project would have been designed with more emphasis on Outcome 4, lobbying efforts to promote implementation of IHFM.
Stakeholder participation	S	The request for a project proposal came externally from the GEF, but the actual concept taken forward was developed by national stakeholders (MEW) and UNDP, who then drew in additional input from the local initiatives in the Upper Tisza floodplain.
Project Implementation		
Implementation Approach (Efficiency)	S	The NEX modality functioned as planned, and the project management structure was efficient and effective.
The use of the logical framework	S	The logframe was used by the project team and UNDP to support project monitoring for adaptive management, and for project oversight. The logframe was revised at the inception stage to be more targeted and quantitative.
Adaptive management	S	The project team, through the monitoring and reporting tools, regularly monitored risk and made adjustments to project implementation as necessary. Notably, it was recognized early in the project that the original objective was unrealistic due to the changed assumptions at the national level.
Use/establishment of information technologies	HS	The project made excellent use of information technologies in multiple ways. Notably, effective websites were developed for SZÖVET and Élő Tisza trademark. The project also applied many innovative uses of information technology for marketing of local products, awareness raising, media relations, and other activities. The project also leveraged technologies such as GIS to support project outcomes.
Operational relationships between the institutions involved	MS/MU	There was a good working relationship with the environmental conservation division of MEW and with Hortobágy NP in project implementation, but there was a lack of support and participation from the water management department in MEW and MARD.
Financial management	S	Financial management was effective and efficient, with minor issues that arose handled in a transparent and trustworthy manner. The project effectively dealt with a great financial challenge resulting from fluctuating exchange rates.

Project Component or Objective	Rating	Summary
Monitoring and Evaluation	MS	Overall project M&E plans and processes generally met GEF and UNDP minimum standards and guidelines, with the exception of the indicators applied in the logframe. The project's activities to develop an integrated regional monitoring system were not successful.
Stakeholder Participation	MS	There was excellent stakeholder participation from those stakeholders directly involved in nature conservation, from both the local/regional and national levels. However, there was very limited participation, and subsequent ownership, from national level institutions responsible for the policies into which the project was attempting to mainstream biodiversity, i.e. the water management authorities and MARD.
Production and dissemination of information	S	A significant amount of materials and information were produced and disseminated, and the project did an excellent job in leveraging media attention. Unfortunately there was no assessment of the influence of these materials and information.
Local resource users and NGOs participation	HS	The greatest strength of the project was the participation and support for the project objectives at the local level. In particular the Micro Grants fund was well received, and SZÖVET functioned as an effective network of local resources users at the regional level.
Establishment of partnerships	S	The overall project implementation approach leveraged a partnership among the local initiatives through SZÖVET, as well as a partnership at the national level through NEX implementation with MEW and HNPD. The marketing of local products with the Élő Tisza trademark is a good example of public-private partnerships, and SZÖVET continues to explore further strategic partnerships such as with the national logistics company.
Involvement and support of governmental institutions	U	As previously described throughout, the water management section of MEW and MARD lacked ownership of the process. The nature conservation division of MEW was well-involved, as were the respective national park directorates.
Project Results		
Overall Achievement of Objective and Outcomes (Effectiveness)	MS	The overall progress toward the objective and the achievement of outcomes varied, but was generally good. Outcomes 1, 2 and 3 were satisfactorily delivered, while Outcome 4 was less successful.
Objective: Establish biodiversity friendly, holistic floodplain management as the dominant development paradigm in the Upper Tisza floodplain	MU	While IHFM has been embraced by a segment of stakeholders, primarily at the local level and among those involved in nature conservation, it cannot yet be said that IHFM has been established as the dominant development paradigm in the region. Further implementation of the VTT and NAEP in the coming years may expand the reach of the IHFM approach, but significant additional effort is required to make this a reality.
Expected Outcome 1: A Sustainable Mechanism for Supporting Local	S	The mechanism, SZÖVET, has been successfully established and is effectively bringing together local initiatives for

Project Component or Objective	Rating	Summary
Initiatives and Channelling Local Lessons into National Policy and Planning		sustainable development. The majority of were successful, with a particularly high level of success with respect to expanding markets for local products. Due to the prevailing political and economic context, there was a lower level of achievement in integrating local lessons into national policy.
Expected Outcome 2: Tools to support biodiversity friendly, IHFM in the Upper Tisza Floodplain	S	The planned guidebook on IHFM was produced, and other tools such as information on invasive species were developed. The project initiative to establish a floodplain wide monitoring network was not successful, but was far too ambitious for the project.
Expected Outcome 3: At the site of each of the Initiatives, land, water, habitats and biodiversity are managed in an integrated manner that is supportive of socio-economic development	S	Micro Grants programme was among the most successful aspects of the project, and made up the largest percentage of the project budget. The activity to develop site-level action plans was not successful.
Expected Outcome 4: Changes in the policy and the implementation of the VTT and NAEP to integrate biodiversity concerns, feeding into related EU policy and decision making	MU	The project was able to contribute some changes to policies and increased awareness, but on the whole was not able to achieve the expected outcome due to prevailing macro-economic conditions and lack of political will.
Sustainability	ML	Based on the sustainability ratings for the below components of sustainability, the overall sustainability rating is moderately likely.
Financial sustainability	L/ML	SZÖVET has ongoing financial streams, Élő Tisza trademark is sustained, and there are other initiatives working on IHFM in the country and region. Based on the level of stakeholder ownership, the rating would be considered highly likely for local aspects. At the national level, implementation of the VTT and NAEP requires adequate financing to encompass IHFM aspects; to the level of priority for such financing to be allocated remains unclear.
Institutional sustainability	ML	The continued progress toward long-term environmental impacts and sustainable development results depends on adequate institutional political will and capacity. Much depends on the overall political and economic situation at the national level, which is anticipated to change during national elections in early 2010.
Socio-economic sustainability	ML	Results from the Micro Grant scheme appear to be mostly sustained. There is an ongoing need to manage the overall macro-economic conditions of the agriculture industry, and the decline of traditional small-scale farming.
Ecological sustainability	ML	The main environmental threat is the construction and operation of flood control infrastructure in non-environmentally friendly manner as the VTT is implemented, i.e. the enduring paradigm of the large-scale technocratic approach to flood management. Other moderate threats include invasive species, agricultural runoff, upstream pollution, and climate change.
Overall Project Achievement and Impact	**MS**	

From *Guidelines for GEF Agencies in Conducting Terminal Evaluations:*

Rating Explanation for Results

- Highly satisfactory (HS): The project had no shortcomings or exceeded expectations in the achievement of objectives in terms of relevance, effectiveness, or efficiency
- Satisfactory (S): The project had minor shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives in terms of relevance, effectiveness, or efficiency
- Moderately satisfactory (MS): The project had moderate shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives in terms of relevance, effectiveness, or efficiency
- Moderately unsatisfactory (MU): The project had significant shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives in terms of relevance, effectiveness, or efficiency
- Unsatisfactory (U): The project had major shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives in terms of relevance, effectiveness, or efficiency
- Highly unsatisfactory (HU): The project had severe shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives in terms of relevance, effectiveness, or efficiency

Rating Explanation for Sustainability

- Likely (L): There are no or negligible risks that affect this dimension of sustainability
- Moderately likely (ML): There are moderate risks that affect this dimension of sustainability
- Moderately unlikely (MU): There are significant risks that affect this dimension of sustainability
- Unlikely (U): There are severe risks that affect this dimension of sustainability

VIII. List of Annexes

A. Annex 1: Evaluation Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference

for

Final Evaluation of the Project

Conservation and Restoration of the Globally Significant Biodiversity of the Tisza River Floodplain (Tisza-biodiversity project)

PIMS 1980 / Atlas 46904

I. Background information

The Goal of this Project is biodiversity friendly, sustainable development of the Tisza floodplain. The Project Immediate Objective is to establish biodiversity friendly, integrated, holistic floodplain management (IHFM) as dominant development paradigm in the Upper Tisza floodplain. Four Intermediate Outcomes contribute to this. *First*, the Project shall establish a sustainable regional mechanism (the Platform[38]) to support local Initiatives and provide them with a direct communication channel to national decision-makers. *Second*, with support from the Project, the Platform shall develop tools for supporting IHFM. *Third*, each Local Initiative shall develop an Action Plan, and the Project shall contribute to their implementation. *Finally*, the IHFM pro-biodiversity approach shall be mainstreamed into the national programs, such as the Improved Vásárhelyi Plan (VTT)[39] and the National Agri-Environmental Program (NAEP)[40] and policies.

The project shall mainstream biodiversity conservation into floodplain management across the Tisza River Floodplain in Hungary. The project shall significantly improve floodplain and landscape management of 1,600 km^2 through activities carried out within pilot sites, while moderately influencing an estimated area of 9,400 km^2 (about 20% of the Great Hungarian Plain) applying supportive policy environment and institutional capacity at national level. The local stakeholder cooperation shall be improved to establish the Tisza Platform, the aim of which is to improve the common understanding of biodiversity values of the Tisza valley and the complex needs of measures to protect and improve them. To support local initiatives technical and financial support shall be provided for small scale initiatives which fulfil the criteria established by the Tisza Platform.

Expected main results: (1) The Regional Platform and the Upper Tisza Floodplain Technical Support Office (TFTO) providing demand-driven coordination and technical support to local initiatives and implementing region-wide activities. (2) Comprehensive guidelines defining the characteristics of the 'model' approach to IHFM, agreed to by local Initiatives. (3) At each of the seven Local Initiative sites, biodiversity, land, water and habitats are managed in an integrated, holistic manner that is supportive to socio-economic development with the assistance of the Micro Grants for Biodiversity Programme (MGBP). (4) Changes in the policy and the implementation of the VTT and NAEP to integrate biodiversity concerns, feeding into related EU policy and decision-making.

The implementation of the UNDP/GEF Project "Conservation and Restoration of the Globally Significant Biodiversity of the Tisza River Floodplain (Tisza Biodiversity Project)" began in October 2005 right after project document signature in September 2007. Project activities finished in December 2008.

[38] The 'Platform' is the word of the Project Document for the network organization of the local initiatives participating in the Project. Actually, the organization was founded in mid 2006, and its name is Alliance for the Living Tisza (abbreviation in Hungarian: SZÖVET).

[39] VTT: Abbreviation in Hungarian for 'Improved Vásárhelyi Plan' - a governmental program for flood control and rural development.

[40] NAEP: National Agri-Environmental Programme, included in National Rural Development Plan II of Hungary for 2007-2013.

The total project budget is US$ 2,718,300. The allocated resources are: Government: US$ 1,237,200. Other (in-kind): Local initiatives - US$ 497,900; National institutions and NGOs - US$ 14,200. GEF financing - US$ 944,000.

The Executing Agency for the project is the Ministry for Environment and Water. The Implementing Agency is the Hortobágy National Park Directorate (HNPD).

The large state budget deficit in Hungary caused cutting of governmental programs necessary for reaching project goals (New Vásárhelyi Plan, Agri-environmental Programme). Governmental policies put less emphasis on sustainable flood-control and rural development which would be essential for BD-friendly farming in the Tisza region. These policies can be influenced at low effectiveness by NGOs this time. The area affected by biodiversity friendly floodplain management can not reach the targeted order of magnitude before the 2009 launch of new agri-environmental payments.

The Project was only be able to lay down the foundation of land-use change in 1,600 km^2 of the Tisza Region, while moderately influencing an estimated area of 9,400 km^2. It may not be realistically expected, that land-use change will be executed in such a large area before 2009, only smaller parts of the region will change their land-use. These parts can be expected to be found foremost at project Local Initiatives, thanks to the Micro Grant Fund, information dissemination activities and involvement of local actors.

However, civic action, bottom-up organization of local-actors, forming a network that may push decision-makers to ensure the possibilities and the framework for BD-friendly farming seem to be the only tools to reach the original Project Objective, though in a long-term, beyond the end of project execution.

II. Objectives of the Final evaluation

In accordance with UNDP/GEF M&E policies and procedures, all regular and medium-sized projects supported by the GEF should undergo a final evaluation upon completion of implementation.

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

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

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

The purpose of the Evaluation is:

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

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

The evaluation should assess:

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

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

- Project outputs, outcomes and impact
  The evaluation will assess the outputs, outcomes and impact achieved by the project as well as the likely sustainability of project results. This should encompass an assessment of the achievement of the immediate objectives and the contribution to attaining the overall objective of the project. The evaluation should also assess the extent to which the implementation of the project has been inclusive of relevant stakeholders and to which it has been able to create collaboration between different partners. The evaluation will also examine if the project has had significant unexpected effects, whether of beneficial or detrimental character.

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

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

Aspects of the Project to be rated are:

1 Implementation approach;
2 Management of globally significant species
3 Outcome/Achievement of objectives (meaning the extent to which the project's environmental and development objectives were achieved).
4 Stakeholder participation/public involvement
5 Sustainability;
6 Replication approach;
7 Cost-effectiveness;
8 Monitoring and evaluation

Issues of special consideration:

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

- Has the project helped the protection of critically endangered species in the Project Area? (With a special attention to indicator species mentioned in the Tracking Tool and the Logframe Matrix, see Annex 1.)
- Have there been changes in local stakeholder behaviour (i.e. threats, land use management practices, ….) that have contributed to improved conservation? If not, why not?
- Has the project established a management basis for long term sustainability and development of project outcomes?
- Has the project elaborated innovative incentives to motivate land use change to biodiversity friendly land use practices?
- Is there distinct improvement in biodiversity information turnover and use in decision making among the Tisza Region stakeholders?
- Has awareness on biodiversity conservation and subsequent public participation in biodiversity monitoring and management increased as a result of the project?
- Is there adequate territorial planning in place, or in progress, ensuring long-term conservation of biodiversity and cultural values?
- Assess the underlying factors beyond the project's immediate control that influence outcomes and results, especially the recent changes in the governmental policy on the implementation of the agri-environmental scheme. Consider the appropriateness and effectiveness of the project's management strategies for these factors.

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

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

III. Products expected from the evaluation

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

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

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

The Report will be supplemented by Rate Tables, attached in Annex 4 of this TOR.

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

IV. Evaluation team – qualities and requirements

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

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

Team Qualities:

- Recent experience with result-based management evaluation methodologies;
- Experience applying participatory monitoring approaches;
- Experience applying SMART indicators and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios;
- Recent knowledge of the GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy;
- Recent knowledge of UNDP's results-based evaluation policies and procedures
- Competence in Adaptive Management, as applied to conservation or natural resource management projects;
- Recognized expertise in the management and sustainable use of wetlands in temperate ecosystems;
- Familiarity with protected area policies and management structures in Hungary;
- Demonstrable analytical skills;
- Work experience in relevant areas for at least 10 years;
- Experience with multilateral or bilateral supported conservation projects;

- Project evaluation experiences within United Nations system will be considered an asset;
- Excellent English communication skills, (the National Consultant also good Hungarian communication skills)

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

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

The evaluation will be undertaken in-line with GEF principles[41]:
- Independence
- Impartiality
- Transparency
- Disclosure
- Ethical
- Partnership
- Competencies and Capacities
- Credibility
- Utility

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

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

If individual evaluators are selected, UNDP will appoint one Team Leader. The Team Leader will have overall responsibility for the delivery and quality of the evaluation products. Team roles and responsibilities will be reflected in the individual contracts. If a proposal is accepted from a consulting firm, the firm will be held responsible for the delivery and quality of the evaluation products and therefore has responsibility for team management arrangements.

V. Methodology or evaluation approach

An outline of an evaluation approach is provided below; however it should be made clear that the evaluation team is responsible for revising the approach as necessary. Any changes should be in-line with international criteria and professional norms and standards (as adopted by the UN Evaluation Group[42]). They must be also cleared by UNDP before being applied by the evaluation team.

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

The evaluation will take place mainly in the field. The evaluator is expected to follow a participatory and consultative approach ensuring close engagement with the government counterparts, the National Project Manager, Steering Committee, project team, and key stakeholders. The evaluator is expected to conduct a mission to Hungary, to Budapest and the project site in Eastern part of the country, to interview the project team, project partners and key stakeholders, and to held a field visit to demonstration sites.

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

The evaluator is expected to use interviews as a means of collecting data on the relevance, performance and success of the project. S/He is also expected to visit the project sites. Interviews will be held with the following organizations and individuals at minimum:

- Ministry for Environment and Water - Nature Conservation Office,
- Hortobágy National Park Directorate,
- leaders of local action groups,
- Board of Directors of the Alliance for the Living Tisza (SZÖVET);
- Ministry of Agriculture,
- UNDP/GEF RTA from Bratislava Regional Centre,
- National Project Manager,
- Project Steering Committee members,

The methodology to be used by the evaluation team should be presented in the report in detail. It

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

shall include information on:

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

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

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

VI. Implementation Arrangements

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

The activity and timeframe are broken down as follows:

Activity	**Timeframe**	
	international expert	the national consultant
Desk review	2 days	4 days
Briefings for evaluators by PM and UNDP	1 day	1 day
Field visits, interviews, questionnaires, de-briefings	5 days	5 days
Drafting of the evaluation report	3 days	2 days
Validation of preliminary findings with stakeholders through circulation of draft reports for comments, meetings and other types of feedback mechanisms	2 days	4 days
Finalization of the evaluation report (incorporating comments received on first draft)	2 days	1 day

Working Days:
Team Leader (international expert) – 15 working days
Technical experts (national experts) – 17 working days

The proposed date for the in-country mission to Hungary is first half of September 2009.

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

Prior to approval of the final report, a draft version shall be circulated for comments to government counterparts and project management: project manager, National Project Director and UNDP/GEF RTA. UNDP and the stakeholders will submit comments and suggestions within 5 working days after receiving the draft.

Timeframe for submission of first draft of the report: within 10 working days after the mission**.**

The evaluation should be completed by 31 October 2009.

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

VII. Application process

Applicants are requested to apply online on http://jobs.undp.org by **22 June 2009, 17:00 CET**

The application should contain:

1. current and complete C.V. in English with indication of the e-mail and phone contact
2. price offer indicating the total cost of the assignment (including the daily fee, per diem and travel costs, preferably according the template attached in Annex 6)

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

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

UNDP is a non-smoking work environment.

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

.

TOR Annex 1
Project Logical Framework

Project Strategy	Objectively verifiable indicators			Sources of Verification	Risks and Assumptions
	Indicator	Baseline value	Target (EOP) Value		
Project Objective: To establish biodiversity friendly, holistic floodplain management as the dominant development paradigm in the Upper Tisza floodplain	a) The area in hectares of VTT sites in the project area that fully adopt biodiversity friendly IHFM in the finalized (authorized) plan. b) Population of threatened or endangered species maintained at baseline level in the pilot areas: Mayfly-(Paligeria longicauda) corncrake –haris (Crex crex) white tailed eagle (Haliaetus albicilla) c) Percentage of land under ESA payments (based on CORINNE categories: grassland, arable land, others). I: Area in ESA/total area d) Area of ponds/ wetlands (ha-s) managed in "notch" system (fok) e) number of local enterprises processing resources of floodplains (orchards, grasslands, wetlands) f) Number of publications for general stakeholders on the biodiversity values of the Tisza	a) 0 ha. b) mayfly:.40,6 ±48,7 larvae/sample (490 cm²) (2004) corncrake:. 252 (2004) white tailed eagle: 6 breeding pairs (2005) c) Bereg: 0,35; Bodrogköz: 0,42; South Borsod: 0,5; Körös: 0,25 d) 70 ha at Nagykörű (300 ha the total area, 100 ha orchard, grassland and 70 water) e) Bereg: 5, Bodrogköz: 2, South Borsod: ...., Nagykörű: 3, Körös: 1 f) 3 (G. Molnar, WWF, Hungarian Academy of Sciences)	a) 1000 ha. b) it will remain the same or will develop slightly c) will maintain or improve with min 0,1% d) will improve with 2 % e) will improve with 2 % f) 6 (3 will be published minimum from the project)	a) VTT and NRDP Reports b) Project monitoring, other national nature monitoring activities c) CORINE and Project monitoring d) CORINE and Project monitoring e) Project monitoring and pilot action groups data system	Political leaders and decision-makers remain open and flexible. NDP will contain enough funding and conditions for VTT sites. The population size depends on annual weather conditions (e.g. precipitation). NAEP funding flows, and EU continues to be supportive. The Tisza canalization will not take place (shipping IV category) which could destroy mayfly ecosystem. Taxation structure will remain and will be supportive for SME development and activities.
Outcome 1: A Financially Sustainable Mechanism for Supporting Local	a) Coordinated service /expert system/ for farmers, municipalities in the pilot areas.	a) TFTO does not exists, it will be subsidized from the project in the beginning. No. of consultancy provided (0)	Operating costs TFTO are covered 100% by sustainable sources. No of consultancy / year= 200	a) Platform and TFTO annual reports.	Local stakeholders lobby power is very weak., ad-hoc.

Project Strategy	Objectively verifiable indicators			Sources of Verification	Risks and Assumptions
	Indicator	Baseline value	Target (EOP) Value		
Initiatives and Feeding Local Lessons into National Policy and Planning	b) The Tisza platform is created in the frame of the project (with representatives from Municipalities, NGOs, researchers and farmers from the region or working in the region.) c) Micro grant is provided to support small scale initiatives for HFM d) understanding is developed by proper dissemination means (PR materials, publications) on the biodiversity values of the region	b) Platform does not exist. (platform No: 0). Number of member and supporting members (0) c) No. of application (0) d) No. of booklets, newsletters, handbook, maps (0)	b) Platform registered, meets once a year, No of members exceed 50. c) 70 applications /year d) 5 booklet, 8 newsletter, 1 handbook, 1 map	b) state register, Minutes of meetings c) Micro grant council records d) project reports	Realized need for building democracy, base for consultancy is recognized at all level.
Outcome 2: Tools to support biodiversity friendly, IHFM	a) agreement on the model for IHFM b) integrated monitoring system (IMS) is developed based on previous experiences c) pilot area comprehensive compendium on key stakeholders, services, products. d) web-market for IHFM products and services e) trainings, meetings on IHFM f) guideline for invasive species management at high nature value floodplains (based on the assessment of cause effect relationships)	a) harmonized concept, approved by Platform - 0 b) manual on IMS – 0 IMS data gathering – 0 Digital historic land evaluation system -0 c) data collection system at each pilot sites – 0 d) web-market `ELO Tisza` products - 0 No. of visitors - 0 e) No. of trainings, meetings for local regional stakeholders - 0 meetings for national stakeholders – 0 f) guideline – 0 (just management plan exist for certain protected sites)	a) harmonized concept, approved by Platform - 1 b) manual on IMS – 1 IMS data gathering - 1 Digital historic land evaluation system -1 c) data collection system at each pilot sites – 6 d) web market for `ELO – Tisza` products – 1 No of visitors – 200/year e) No of trainings: min. 30 No of national meetings: min 3 f) guideline – 1 general and management plan for each pilot sites	Minutes of the platform Project reports Project own development work Reports of pilot sites Website visitors register Project report Project report	Initiations are willing to cooperate to bring their experiences together. National co-financing will be provided, willingness to learn from the pilot experiences will remain at the Ministry. Demand for eco-product will increase in Europe and in Hungary.
Outcome 3: At each of the seven Initiative sites, biodiversity, land, water and	a) percentage of land dedicated to the integrated floodplain management approach	a) 2% of the upper Tisza Holocene plain	a) 20% min.	a) Project Reports, monitoring reports b) Project Reports & monitoring	Due to other resource the small grant will be not popular.

Project Strategy	Objectively verifiable indicators			Sources of Verification	Risks and Assumptions
	Indicator	Baseline value	Target (EOP) Value		
habitats are managed in an integrated, holistic manner that is supportive of socio-economic development.	b) Population of key farmland bird species – Crex crex as an indicator c) contribution of Micro grant to biodiversity friendly FM based on criteria list (effect on species, increase of area in IFHM, improvement of territorial water supply)	b) No of Crex crex: 252 (2004) c) increase of area in IFHM –0 ha, improvement of territorial water supply – 0 m3	b) maintained c) increase of area in IFHM –0 ha, improvement of territorial water supply – 0 m3	activities c) monitoring activity of the grant program	Further increase of the grant scheme will be difficult due to economic decline in Hungary.
Outcome 4: Changes in the policy and the implementation of the VTT and NAEP to integrate biodiversity concerns, feeding into related EU policy and decision - making.	a) Policy statements, recommendation at EU and national level b) lobby activity at national level – evaluation of proposals, comments and proposals c) Living Tisza Association is established and its role defined at national level inter-ministerial boards	a) No of policy papers at EU level – 0 b) No of policy papers at national level – 0 c) established association -0	a) No of policy papers at EU level – 3 b) No of policy papers at national level – 10 c) established association - 1	Project Reports, monitoring reports	The international decision making bodies are not interested in integrated issues. Too much delegation to national competencies. National legal administration slow the process of registration of the association.

TOR Annex 2a

EVALUATION REPORT: SAMPLE OUTLINE

Minimum GEF requirements[1]

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

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

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

Findings and Conclusions
(In addition to a descriptive assessment, all criteria marked with (*) should be rated[43])

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

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

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

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

- ♣ Execution and implementation modalities
- ♣ Management by the UNDP country office
- ♣ Coordination and operational issues

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

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

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

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

TOR Annex 2b

Explanation on Terminology Provided in the GEF Guidelines to Terminal Evaluations

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

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

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

Some elements of effective country ownership/driveness may include:

- ♣ 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
- ♣ 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
- ♣ Fulfilment of commitments to local stakeholders and stakeholders considered to be adequately involved.

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

- ♣ 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 financing[44].
- ♣ 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.

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

[44] 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.

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.

TOR Annex 3

Co-financing Table

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

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

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

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

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

TOR Annex 4 Rate tables

Table 1: Status of objective / outcome delivery as per measurable indicators

OBJECTIVE	MEASURABLE INDICATORS FROM PROJECT LOGFRAME	END-OF-PROJECT TARGET	STATUS OF DELIVERY*	RATING **
Objective :				
OUTCOMES		**END-OF-PROJECT TARGET**	**STATUS OF DELIVERY**	**RATING**
Outcome 1:				
Outcome 2:				
Outcome 3:	-			
Outcome 4:				
Outcome 5:				

* Status of delivery colouring codes:
Green / completed – indicator shows successful achievement
Yellow – indicator shows expected completion by the end of the project
Red – Indicator show poor achievement - unlikely to be complete by end of Project

** Rating:
Highly Satisfactory = HS
Satisfactory = S
Marginally Satisfactory = MS
Unsatisfactory = U

Table 2: Project ratings

PROJECT COMPONENT OR OBJECTIVE	**RATING SCALE**						**RATING**
	HU	**U**	**MU**	**MS**	**S**	**HS**	
PROJECT FORMULATION							
Conceptualization/Design							
Stakeholder participation							
PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION							
Implementation Approach							
The use of the logical framework							
Adaptive management							
Use/establishment of information technologies							
Operational relationships between the institutions involved							
Technical capacities							
Monitoring and evaluation							
Stakeholder participation							
Production and dissemination of information							
Local resource users and NGOs participation							
Establishment of partnerships							
Involvement and support of governmental institutions							
PROJECT RESULTS							
Attainment of Outcomes/ Achievement of objectives							
Achievement of objective							
Outcome 1							
Outcome 2							
Outcome 3							
Outcome 4							
Outcome 5							
Outcome 6							
Outcome 7							
OVERALL PROJECT ACHIEVEMENT & IMPACT							

TOR Annex 5 List of documents to be reviewed by the Evaluators

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

Document	Description
Project document	Project Document
Project reports	Inception Report Quarterly Progress Reports TPR Reports SC meeting minutes
Annual Project Report to GEF	Project Implementation Reviews - PIRs
Other relevant materials:	Financial Audit Reports Articles in magazines and newspapers Expert studies and research results Short descriptions of the Alliance for the Living Tisza (leaflets) Several articles of the newsletter of the Alliance 'Tiszavölgy' Project Homepage Commitments, expert papers by project participants 'Zöld utak a Tisza mentén' - a map and a tour guide issued by the project 'Tiszavölgy'; 'Ugrai pillanatok'; 'Kevi tájgazdálkodási hírmondó'; 'Nagy-sárréti hírmondó' - newsletters of the Project and the local initiatives Microgrant scheme – rules and guidelines for applicants

TOR Annex 6

Cost breakdown template

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

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

B. Annex 2: GEF Operational Principles

http://www.gefweb.org/public/opstrat/ch1.htm

TEN OPERATIONAL PRINCIPLES FOR DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GEF'S WORK PROGRAM

1. For purposes of the financial mechanisms for the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the GEF will **function under the guidance of, and be accountable to, the Conference of the Parties** (COPs). For purposes of financing activities in the focal area of ozone layer depletion, GEF operational policies will be consistent with those of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer and its amendments.

2. The GEF will provide new, and additional, grant and concessional funding to meet the agreed **incremental costs** of measures to achieve agreed global environmental benefits.

3. The GEF will ensure the **cost-effectiveness** of its activities to maximize global environmental benefits.

4. The GEF will fund projects that are **country-driven** and based on national priorities designed to support sustainable development, as identified within the context of national programs.

5. The GEF will maintain sufficient **flexibility** to respond to changing circumstances, including evolving guidance of the Conference of the Parties and experience gained from monitoring and evaluation activities.

6. GEF projects will provide for **full disclosure** of all non-confidential information.

7. GEF projects will provide for consultation with, and **participation** as appropriate of, the beneficiaries and affected groups of people.

8. GEF projects will conform to the **eligibility** requirements set forth in paragraph 9 of the GEF Instrument.

9. In seeking to maximize global environmental benefits, the GEF will emphasize its **catalytic role** and leverage additional financing from other sources.

10. The GEF will ensure that its programs and projects are **monitored and evaluated** on a regular basis.

C. Annex 3: Tisza Biodiversity Project Evaluation Matrix and Interview Guide

Tisza Biodiversity Project Evaluation Matrix

Evaluative Criteria	Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
Relevance: How does the project relate to the main objectives of the UNCBD and GEF focal areas, and to the environment and development priorities at the local, regional and national levels for biodiversity friendly, holistic floodplain management as the dominant development paradigm in the Upper Tisza floodplain?				
Is the project relevant to UNCBD and other international convention objectives?	• How does the project support the objectives of the UNCBD? • Does the project support other international conventions, such as the Ramsar Convention and the UNFCCC?	• UNCBD priorities and areas of work incorporated in project design • Level of implementation of UNCBD in Hungary, and contribution of the project • Priorities and areas of work of other conventions incorporated in project design • Extent to which the project is actually implemented in line with incremental cost argument	• Project documents • National policies and strategies to implement the UNCBD, other international conventions, or related to environment more generally • UNCBD and other international convention web sites	• Documents analyses • Interviews with project team, UNDP and other partners
Is the project relevant the GEF biodiversity focal area?	• How does the project support the GEF biodiversity focal area and strategic priorities	• Existence of a clear relationship between the project objectives and GEF biodiversity focal area	• Project documents • GEF focal areas strategies and documents	• Documents analyses • GEF website • Interviews with UNDP and project team
Is the project relevant to Hungary's environment and sustainable development objectives?	• How does the project support the environment and sustainable development objectives of Hungary? • Is the project country-driven? • What was the level of stakeholder participation in project design? • What was the level of stakeholder ownership in implementation? • Does the project adequately take into account the national realities of institutional and policy frameworks in its design and implementation?	• Degree to which the project supports national environmental objectives • Degree of coherence between the project and nationals priorities, policies and strategies • Appreciation from national stakeholders with respect to adequacy of project design and implementation to national realities and existing capacities • Level of involvement of government officials and other partners in the project design process • Coherence between needs expressed by national stakeholders and UNDP-GEF criteria	• Project documents • National policies and strategies • Key project partners	• Documents analyses • Interviews with UNDP and project partners
Is the project addressing the needs of target beneficiaries at the local and regional levels?	• How does the project support the needs of relevant stakeholders? • Has the implementation of the project been inclusive of all relevant stakeholders? • Were local beneficiaries and stakeholders adequately involved in project design and implementation?	• Strength of the link between expected results from the project and the needs of relevant stakeholders • Degree of involvement and inclusiveness of stakeholders in project design and implementation	• Project partners and stakeholders • Needs assessment studies • Project documents	• Document analysis • Interviews with relevant stakeholders
Is the project internally coherent	• Are there logical linkages between expected results of the project (logframe) and the project design (in terms of	• Level of coherence between project expected results and project design internal logic	• Program and project documents • Key project stakeholders	• Document analysis • Key interviews

Evaluative Criteria	Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
in its design?	project components, choice of partners, structure, delivery mechanism, scope, budget, use of resources etc)? • Is the length of the project sufficient to achieve project outcomes?	• Level of coherence between project design and project implementation approach		
How is the project relevant with respect to other donor-supported activities?	• Does the GEF funding support activities and objectives not addressed by other donors? • How do GEF-funds help to fill gaps (or give additional stimulus) that are necessary but are not covered by other donors? • Is there coordination and complementarity between donors?	• Degree to which program was coherent and complementary to other donor programming nationally and regionally	• Documents from other donor supported activities • Other donor representatives • Project documents	• Documents analyses • Interviews with project partners and relevant stakeholders
Does the project provide relevant lessons and experiences for other similar projects in the future?	• Has the experience of the project provided relevant lessons for other future projects targeted at similar objectives?	•	• Data collected throughout evaluation	• Data analysis
Efficiency: Was the project implemented efficiently, in-line with international and national norms and standards?				
Was project support provided in an efficient way?	• Was adaptive management used or needed to ensure efficient resource use? • Did the project logical framework and work plans and any changes made to them use as management tools during implementation? • Were the accounting and financial systems in place adequate for project management and producing accurate and timely financial information? • Were progress and other reports produced accurately, timely and responded to reporting requirements including adaptive management changes? • Was project implementation as cost effective as originally proposed (planned vs. actual) • Did the leveraging of funds (co-financing) happen as planned? • Were financial resources utilized efficiently? Could financial resources have been used more efficiently? • Was procurement carried out in a manner making efficient use of project resources? • How was results-based management used during project implementation?	• Availability and quality of financial and progress reports • Timeliness and adequacy of reporting provided • Level of discrepancy between planned and utilized financial expenditures • Planned vs. actual funds leveraged • Cost in view of results achieved compared to costs of similar projects from other organizations • Adequacy of project choices in view of existing context, infrastructure and cost • Quality of results-based management reporting (progress reporting, monitoring and evaluation) • Occurrence of change in project design/ implementation approach (i.e. restructuring) when needed to improve project efficiency • Cost associated with delivery mechanism and management structure compare to alternatives	• Project documents and evaluations • UNDP • Project team	• Document analysis • Key interviews

Evaluative Criteria	Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
How efficient are partnership arrangements for the project?	• To what extent partnerships/linkages between institutions/ organizations were encouraged and supported? • Which partnerships/linkages were facilitated? Which ones can be considered sustainable? • What was the level of efficiency of cooperation and collaboration arrangements? • Which methods were successful or not and why?	• Specific activities conducted to support the development of cooperative arrangements between partners, • Examples of supported partnerships • Evidence that particular partnerships/linkages will be sustained • Types/quality of partnership cooperation methods utilized	• Project documents and evaluations • Project partners and relevant stakeholders	• Document analysis • Interviews
Did the project efficiently utilize local capacity in implementation?	• Was an appropriate balance struck between utilization of international expertise as well as local capacity? • Did the project take into account local capacity in design and implementation of the project? • Was there an effective collaboration between institutions responsible for implementing the project?	• Proportion of expertise utilized from international experts compared to national experts • Number/quality of analyses done to assess local capacity potential and absorptive capacity	• Project documents and evaluations • UNDP • Beneficiaries	• Document analysis • Interviews
What lessons can be drawn regarding efficiency for other similar projects in the future?	• What lessons can be learnt from the project regarding efficiency? • How could the project have more efficiently carried out implementation (in terms of management structures and procedures, partnerships arrangements etc…)? • What changes could have been made (if any) to the project in order to improve its efficiency?		• Data collected throughout evaluation	• Data analysis
Effectiveness: To what extent have/will the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been/be achieved?				
Has the project been effective in achieving the expected outcomes and objectives?	• Has the project been effective in achieving its expected outcomes? o Outcome 1. Creation of a sustainable mechanism for supporting local initiatives and channelling local lessons into national policy and planning o Outcome 2. Development of tools to support biodiversity friendly IHFM in the Upper Tisza Floodplain o Outcome 3. Land, water, habitats and biodiversity managed in an integrated manner that is supportive of socio-economic development at the site of each of the initiatives o Outcome 4. Changes in the policy and implementation of the VTT and NAEP to integrate biodiversity concerns, feeding into related EU policy and decision making	• See indicators in project document results framework and logframe	• Project documents • Project team and relevant stakeholders • Data reported in project annual and quarterly reports	• Documents analysis • Interviews with project team • Interviews with relevant stakeholders
How is risk and risk mitigation being managed?	• How well are risks, assumptions and impact drivers being managed? • What was the quality of risk mitigation strategies developed? Were these sufficient?	• Completeness of risk identification and assumptions during project planning and design • Quality of existing information systems in place to identify emerging risks and other issues	• Project documents • UNDP, project team, and relevant stakeholders	• Document analysis • Interviews

Evaluative Criteria	Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
	• Are there clear strategies for risk mitigation related with long-term sustainability of the project?	• Quality of risk mitigations strategies developed and followed		
What lessons can be drawn regarding effectiveness for other similar projects in the future?	• What lessons have been learned from the project regarding achievement of outcomes? • What changes could have been made (if any) to the design of the project in order to improve the achievement of the project's expected results?		• Data collected throughout evaluation	• Data analysis
Results: What are the current actual, and potential long-term, results of activities supported by the project?				
How is the project effective in achieving its long-term objectives?	• Will the project achieve its overall objective of "biodiversity friendly, sustainable development of the Tisza Floodplain"? • Is the globally significant biodiversity of the target area likely to be conserved? • What barriers remain to achieving long-term objectives, or what necessary steps remain to be taken by stakeholders to achieve sustained impacts and Global Environmental Benefits? • Are there unanticipated results achieved or contributed to by the project?	• Change in capacity: o To pool/mobilize resources o For related policy making and strategic planning o For implementation of related laws and strategies through adequate institutional frameworks and their maintenance • Change in use and implementation of sustainable livelihoods • Change in the number and strength of barriers such as: o Knowledge about biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity resources, and economic incentives in these areas o Cross-institutional coordination and inter-sectoral dialogue o Knowledge of biodiversity conservation and sustainable use practices by end users o Coordination of policy and legal instruments incorporating biodiversity conservation, integrated holistic flood plain management, and agro-environmental strategies o Agro-environmental economic incentives for stakeholders	• Project documents • Key stakeholders • Monitoring data	• Documents analysis • Meetings with UNDP, project team and project partners • Interviews with project beneficiaries and other stakeholders
How is the project effective in achieving the objectives of the UNCBD?	• What are the impacts or likely impacts of the project? o On the local/regional environment o On economic development o On other socio-economic issues	• Provide specific examples of impacts at species, ecosystem or genetic levels, as relevant • Provide data on economic benefits from sustainable use of biodiversity	• Project documents • UNCDB documents • Key Stakeholders • Monitoring data	• Data analysis • Interviews with key stakeholders
Future directions for results	• How can the project build on its successes and learn from its weaknesses in order to enhance the potential for impact of ongoing and future initiatives?		• Data collected throughout evaluation	• Data analysis

Evaluative Criteria	Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
Sustainability: Are the conditions in place for project-related benefits and results to be sustained?				
Are sustainability issues adequately integrated in project design?	• Did the project have a sustainability strategy incorporated into design and implementation?	• Evidence / effectiveness of sustainability strategy • Evidence / effectiveness of steps taken to ensure sustainability	• Project documents and evaluations • UNDP and project personnel and project partners • Beneficiaries	• Document analysis • Interviews
Financial sustainability	• Did the project adequately address financial and economic risks to sustainability? • Do certain aspects of project results require ongoing financial support? • Are any recurrent costs after project completion sustainable? • Are any financial resources expected after project completion adequate?	• Level and source of future financial support to be provided to relevant sectors and activities after project ends • Evidence of commitments from international partners, governments or other stakeholders to financially support relevant sectors of activities after project end • Level of recurrent costs after completion of project and funding sources for those recurrent costs	• Project documents and evaluations • UNDP and project personnel and project partners • Beneficiaries	• Document analysis • Interviews
Institutional and governance sustainability	• Are there identified institutional or governance risks to the sustainability of project results? • Were project results integrated by partner organizations, institutions, and government bodies into their internal systems and procedures? • Is there evidence that project partners will continue their activities beyond project support? • What degree is there of local ownership of initiatives and results? • Were laws, policies and frameworks addressed through the project, in order to address sustainability of key initiatives and reforms? • Are laws, policies and frameworks address through the project implemented and enforced? • What is the level of political commitment to build on the results of the project? • Are there policies or practices in place that create perverse incentives that would negatively affect long-term benefits?	• Degree to which project activities and results have been taken over by local counterparts or institutions/organizations • Efforts to support the development of relevant laws and policies • State of enforcement and law making capacity • Evidences of commitment by government enactment of laws and resource allocation to priorities • Quality of governance at local, regional and national levels	• Project documents and evaluations • UNDP and project personnel and project partners • Beneficiaries	• Document analysis • Interviews
Social-economic sustainability	• Did the project contribute to key building blocks for socio-economic sustainability? • Did the project contribute to local stakeholders' acceptance of integrated holistic flood plain management? • Are there adequate market opportunities and incentives to ensure sustained environmental and economic benefits achieved through the project?	• Example of contributions to sustainable socio-economic changes in support of national development goals and strategies • Examples of contributions to sustainable socio-economic changes in support of the objectives of the UNCBD and other conventions	• Project documents and evaluations • UNDP, project personnel and project partners • Beneficiaries	• Interviews • Documentation review

Evaluative Criteria	Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
Environmental sustainability	• Are there risks to the environmental benefits that were created or that are expected to occur? • Are there long-term environmental threats that have not been addressed by the project? • Have any new environmental threats emerged in the project's lifetime?	• Evidence of potential threats such as infrastructure development • Assessment of unaddressed or emerging threats	• Project documents and evaluations • Threat assessments • Government documents or other external published information • UNDP, project personnel and project partners • Beneficiaries	• Interviews • Documentation review
Individual, institutional and systemic capacity development	• Is the capacity in place at the regional, national and local levels adequate to ensure sustainability of the results achieved to date? • Were the necessary related capacities for lawmaking and enforcement built?	• Elements in place in those different management functions, at the appropriate levels (regional, national and local) in terms of adequate structures, strategies, systems, skills, incentives and interrelationships with other key actors	• Project documents • UNDP, project personnel and project partners • Beneficiaries • Capacity assessments available, if any	• Interviews • Documentation review
Replication	• Were project activities and results replicated nationally and / or scaled up? • Was the project contribution to replication or scaling up actively or passively promoted? • Were project activities and results replicated or scaled-up in other countries?	• Extent /quality of replicated initiatives • Scale of additional investment leveraged	• Other donor programming documents • Beneficiaries • UNDP, project personnel and project partners	• Document analysis • Interviews
Barriers to sustainability of project results	• What are the main challenges that may hinder sustainability of results? • Have any of these been addressed through project management? • What could be the possible measures to further contribute to the sustainability of efforts achieved with the project?	• Challenges in view of building blocks of sustainability as presented above • Recent changes which may present new challenges to sustainability of results	• Project documents and evaluations • Beneficiaries • UNDP, project personnel and project partners	• Document analysis • Interviews
Future directions for sustainability and a catalytic role	• Which areas/arrangements under the project show the strongest potential for lasting long-term results? • What are the key challenges and obstacles to the sustainability of results of the project initiatives that must be directly and quickly addressed? • How can the experience and good project practices influence the strategies for biodiversity conservation through integrated holistic floodplain management? • Are national decision-making institutions prepared to continue improving their strategy for effective biodiversity conservation through integrated holistic flood plain management and agro-environmental schemes?		• Data collected throughout evaluation	• Data analysis

Tisza Biodiversity Project Interview Guide

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

Key
Bold = GEF Evaluation Criteria
Italic = GEF Operational Principles

A. PLANNING / PRE-IMPLEMENTATION

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

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

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

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

B. MANAGEMENT / OVERSIGHT

A. Project management
   i. What were the implementation arrangements?
   ii. Was the management effective?
   iii. Were workplans prepared as required to achieve the anticipated outputs on the required timeframes?
   iv. Did the project develop and leverage the necessary and appropriate partnerships with direct and tangential stakeholders?

v. Were there any particular challenges with the management process?
vi. If there was a steering or oversight body, did it meet as planned and provide the anticipated input and support to project management?
vii. Were risks adequately assessed during implementation?
viii. Did assumptions made during project design hold true?
ix. Were assessed risks adequately dealt with?
x. Was the level of communication and support from the implementing agency adequate and appropriate?

B. Flexibility

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

C. **Efficiency** *(cost-effectiveness)*

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

D. Financial Management

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

E. Co-financing *(catalytic role)*

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

F. Monitoring and Evaluation *(M&E)*

i. Project implementation M&E

a. Was the M&E plan adequate and implemented sufficiently to allow the project to recognize and address challenges?
b. Were any unplanned M&E measures undertaken to meet unforeseen shortcomings?
c. Was there a mid-term evaluation?
d. How were project reporting and monitoring tools used to support adaptive management?

ii. Environmental and socio-economic monitoring
i. Did the project implement a monitoring system, or leverage a system already in place, for environmental monitoring?
ii. What are the environmental or socio-economic monitoring mechanisms?
iii. Have any community-based monitoring mechanisms been used?
iv. Is there a long-term M&E component to track environmental changes?
v. If so, what provisions have been made to ensure this is carried out?

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

C. ACTIVITIES / IMPLEMENTATION

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

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

D. **RESULTS**

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

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

C. Impacts
i. Was there a logical flow of inputs and activities to outputs, from outputs to outcomes, and then to impacts?
ii. Did the project achieve its anticipated/planned impacts?
iii. Why or why not?

iv. If impacts were achieved, were they at a scale sufficient to be considered Global Environmental Benefits?
v. If impacts or Global Environmental Benefits have not yet been achieved, are the conditions (enabling environment) in place so that they are likely to eventually be achieved?

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

E. LESSONS LEARNED
   i. What were the key lessons learned in each project stage?
   ii. In retrospect, would the project participants have done anything differently?

F. **SUSTAINABILITY**

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

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

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

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

E. Annex 4: Key Documents Reviewed

The project produced a number of documents both in Hungarian an in English that were of utmost importance for the purposes of obtaining project targets. In addition to proper project documents much of these papers were also reviewed during the evaluation. Including but not limited to these documents are as follows:

(1) Leaflet on the Tisza Biodiversity Project.

(2) Koncsos, László: A Tisza árvízi szabályozása a Kárpát-medencében [Flood-control of the river Tisza in the Carpathian Basin]. Issued by Magyar Természetvédők Szövetsége / Friends of the Earth Hungary with the help of the Tisza Biodiversity Project, 2007.

(3) Zöld utak a Tisza mentén, Tiszabecs-Tokaj [map + tour-guide of the Upper Tisza].

(4) Zöld utak a Tisza mentén, Tokaj-Szolnok [map + tour guide of the Middle Tisza].

(5-8) Tiszavölgy [4 issues of the newsletter of the Alliance for the Living Tisza].

(8-15) Ugrai pillanatok [7 issues of the local newsletter of the Kis-Sárrét Action Group].

(16) Kevi tájgazdálkodási hírmondó [1 issue of the publication on landscape management newsletter of the Nagy-Sárrét Action Group].

(17) Nagy-Sárréti hírmondó [1 issue of the newsletter of the Nagy-Sárrét Action Group].

(18) Poster on the Alliance for the Living Tisza.

(19) Az ártéri tájgazdálkodással a Tisza biológiai változatosságáért program jelentősége a Kis-Sárrét térségében. [Values of the Tisza Biodiversity Project for the Kis-Sárrét.] Issued by Körös-Maros National Park Directorate with the help of the UNDP-GEF Project.

(20) Madarak a Tisza mentén. Képes zsebhatározó. [Birds along the River Tisza. Illustrated Pocket Guide.]

(21) Özönnövények a Tisza mentén. Képes zsebhatározó. [Invasive species along the River Tisza. Illustrated Pocket Guide.]

(22) Arról, hogy miért lenne módfelett kedvezőbb a Tisza-völgyben ártéri tájgazdálkodást folytatni. Poster [Reasons for Land Use Change to Integrated Holistic Floodplain management along the River Tisza. Poster.]

(23) A tájhasználat változása a Tisza mentén a történelem során. [Historic Land Use Changes along the River Tisza.]

(24-25) Esély a Tisza mentén. A Biodiverzitás Mikroalap. [A Chance along the River Tisza. The Biodiversity Micro Grant Fund. Hungarian and English versions.]

(26) Leaflet on the SCENES Tisza Future Perspectives Planning Process.

(27) Leaflet on the "Living Tisza" trade mark.

(28-32) "Living Tisza" tours – leaflets. [5 types of leaflets].

(33) Virágzó üzlet – Természetkímélő gazdaságfejlesztés a Tisza mentén. [Flourishing Business. Biodiversity-friendly Economic Development along the River Tisza.]

(34) IV. Hagyomány és természet konferencia – DVD. [4th Heritage and Nature Conference – DVD] (35) Kulcs a Tiszához – DVD. A Key to the River Tisza.

(36) Andrásfalvy, Bertalan: A Duna-mente népének ártéri gazdálkodása. [Flood-plain Management of the People Living along the River Danube. – A book co-financed with Ekvilibrium Publishing House.]

(37) A leaflet on the book “Flood-plain Management of the People Living along the River Danube”.

(38) Tájhasználat és fejlesztési elképzelések a Beregben. Beregi fejlesztési stratégia. (Land-use and Development Conceptions in the Bereg Region. Bereg Development Strategy.)

(39) A webshop for “Living Tisza” trade mark products and services (www.elotisza.hu).

(40) Helyi termelés, helyi fogyasztás, helyi termékek, egészségesen! [Local Production, Local Consumption, Local Products, Healthy! Information booklet.]

(41) Kezünkben az életünk és a jövőnk! (We Hold Our Life And Future In Our Hands! Information booklet.)

(42) Kajner, Péter: Kiút a válságból: természetkímélő gazdálkodásra alapozott helyi gazdaságfejlesztés. A publication in: Nemzeti érdek, 2009/1. [A way out of the crisis: local economic development based on a nature-friendly farming. A publication in National Interest, 2009/1.]

(43) Kajner, Péter: Előnyök és távlati lehetőségek az önellátó gazdaságban. [Benefits and long term possibilities of self sustaining farming systems.] A publication in: Az Európai Unió agrárgazdasága / Agra-economy of the European Union, 2009./5-6.

(44) Szabadkai, Andrea: A SZÖVET piacépítő tevékenysége. [Marketing activities of the Alliance for the Living Tisza.] A publication in: Az Európai Unió agrárgazdasága / Agra-economy of the European Union, 2009./5-6.

(45) Gál, Tamás – Kajner, Péter – Szabadkai, Andrea: Az leszel, amit megeszel. [You will get what you eat.] A publication in: Magyar Narancs, 2009./30.

(46) Results of the Tisza Flood Plain Future Perspectives Social Planning in the Framework of the SCENES Project.

(47) Recommendations of the Advisory Board of the SCENES Project, Based on the Results of the Social Planning of the Tisza Future Perspectives.

(48) Kajner, Péter (ed.): Gazda(g)ságunk újrafelfedezése. Fenntartható vidéki gazdaságfejlesztés elméletben és gyakorlatban. [Reinventing our Economy. Sustainable Rural Development in Theory and in Practice.]

(49) Kajner, Péter: Sivatagi tájgazdálkodás. [Landscape Management in a Desert. A publication.] http://elotiszaert.hu/bovebben.php?id=652 2009. 07. 12.

(50) Tisza-menti gazdák a fővárosi piacokon – egy sikeres szövetség. [Farmers from the Tisza at Budapest Markets: a Successful Alliance.] A publication in: Közösségi Önsegítő Rendszerek [Community Self-help Systems], issued by Protect the Future, 2009.

(51) Balogh, Péter: Kárvíz. (Waste (of) Water) http://index.hu/velemeny/jegyzet/karviz0812/ 2008. 12. 06.

(52) Szelídvízország. Kézikönyv a Tisza-menti ártéri gazdálkodás megalapozásához. [Land of Calm Waters. A Handbook on the Basics of Floodplain Management Farming along the River Tisza.] 2009.

(53) Szelídvízország. [Land of Calm Waters.] Floodplain management in theory and practice. Homepage. www.szelidvizorszag.hu

(54-165) At least 111 articles, reports, press releases in national media on the Project in 2008-2009 (radios, TVs, newspapers, internet news portals). List of them available, but not mentioned by title here, due to lack of space.

(166) Flachner, Zsuzsanna: A kiszáradt Vásárhelyi-terv - elszalasztott esélyek a Tisza mentén. [The Dried Out Plan of Vásárhelyi - Missed Chances Along the Tisza.] A publication in the book (V)álságkormányzás [Crisis Governance], 2009.

(167) Alliance for the Living Tisza homepage www.elotiszaert.hu.

Scientific publications: 4 conference presentations (IHDP 2006, 2008; iEMss 2008; Prague, 2009); 4 international articles and 2 book chapters; 1 national book chapter

- Flachner, Zsuzsanna, Péter Kajner: Tisza region adaptation case study. New financial approaches for adaptation: a Micro Grant scheme in the Tisza valley
- Matczak P., Banaszak I., Chorynski A. Zsuzsanna Flachner Tisza River Basin background studies. Property rights and adaptation to climate change 2008
- Werners, Saskia E., Jeroen Warner, Dik Roth, Zsuzsanna Flachner: 2009: SUPPORTERS AND OPPONENTS OF A TRANSITION IN DUTCH AND HUNGARIAN WATER MANAGEMENT, Paper for the European Conference on Sustainability Transitions
- Werners, Saskia E., Zsuzsanna Flachner, Piotr Matczak, Maria Falaleeva and Rik Leemans Exploring earth system governance: a case study of floodplain management along the Tisza River in Hungary 2008
- Werners, Saskia E., J. David Tàbara, Xingang Dai, Zsuzsanna Flachner, 2009: Case Study D: Mainstreaming Adaptation into Regional Land Use Planning in: Adam Project: Adaptation and Mitigation Strategies, Supporting European Climate Policy, Final Report June 2009

F. Annex 5: List of Persons Interviewed

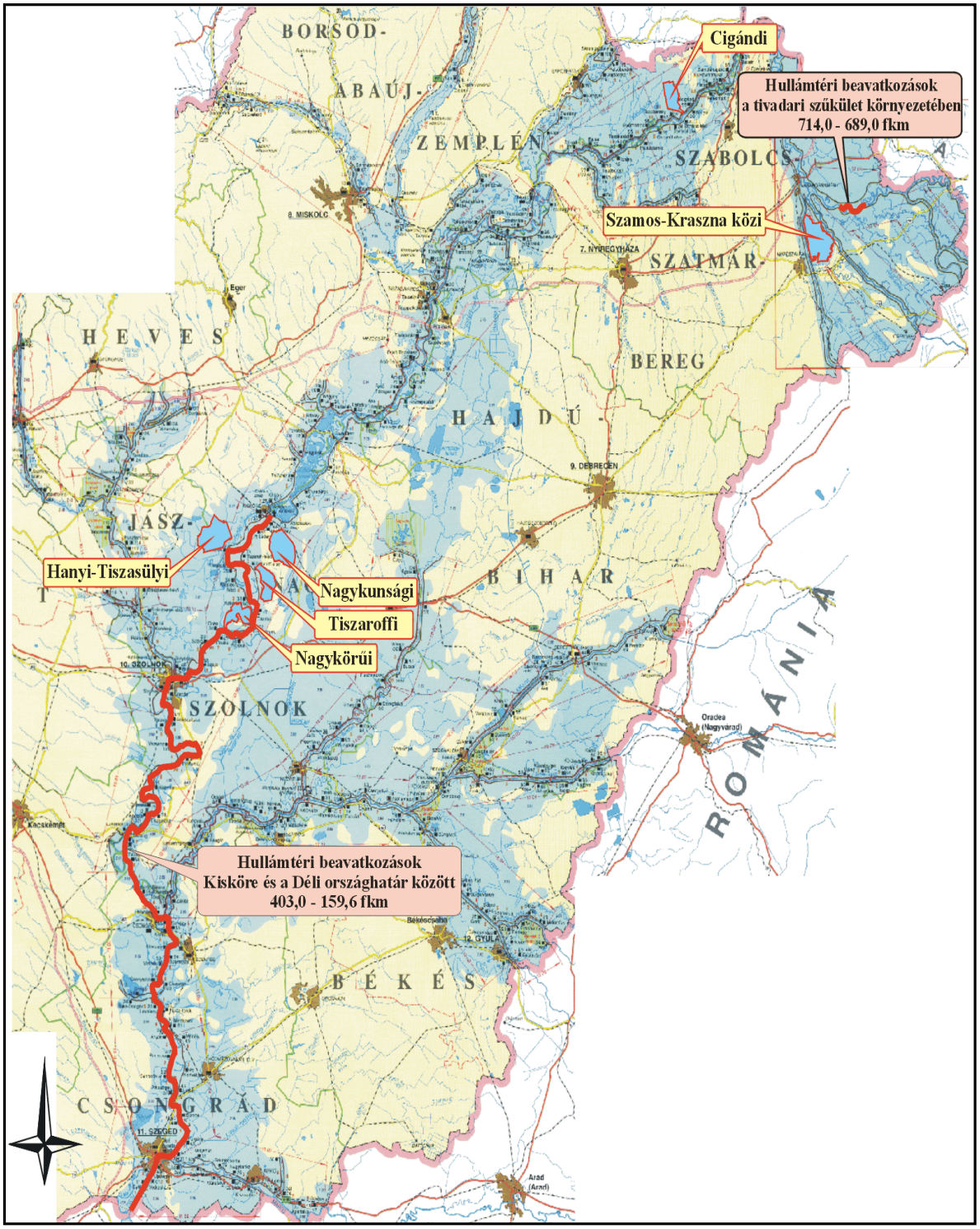
Tisza Biodiversity Project Terminal Evaluation
September 21-24, 2009

Name, *Role/relationship to the project (location)*

- Péter Kajner, *Project Manager, Member of the Project Management Team*
- Gábor Ungvári, *Financial Advisor, Member of the Project Management Team*
- Péter Tóth, *National Project Director, MEW*
- Krisztina Matúz, *Secretary of SZÖVET (Nagykörű)*
- József Barát, *Micro Grant recipient - Flood plain fruit orchards, Member of the Board of SZÖVET, farmer, (Nagykörű)*
- Péter Balogh, *Micro Grant recipient, Livestock farmer*, *Member of the Board of SZÖVET, (Nagykörű)*
- György Varga, Judit Szász, *Micro Grant recipient - Goat farm, Owners of the Nagykörű Guesthouse: Tájház (Nagykörű)*
- Albert Zákány*, Bükk National Park (Kesznyéten)*
- Attila Sárvári, *Micro Grant recipient on behalf of the Borsodi Mezőség Farmers' Alliance, Member of the Board of SZÖVET and Member of the Project Management Team, Member of the Steering Committee (Borsodi Mezőség)*
- Géza Molnár, *Micro Grant recipient, Expert of Integrated Holistic Floodplain Management, Local Consultant in the Bodrogköz (Cigánd, Sárospatak)*
- Tamás Gál, *Member of the Board of SZÖVET (Cigánd, Sárospatak)*
- István Fodor, *Water management expert, Water and Environmental Protection Directorate, North Hungary: ÉKÖVIZIG (Cigánd)*
- [Tamás Petraskó], BODRÉMKA, *Kisrozvágy Wetland habitat rehabilitation (field visit at the Archaeological Park from the Árpád-era) (no persons were available for interview)*
- Szabolcs Füssi-Nagy*, Micro Grant recipient, Sustainable subsistence farmer (Sárospatak)*
- Mihály Bodnár, *Bükk National Park, Ranger of the Kesznyéten Nature Protection Area, Member of the Steering Committee (Sárospatak)*
- István Sándor, *Director of Hortobágy National Park - Implementing Agency, Member of the Steering Committee (Debrecen)*
- Rita Nagy, *Assistant, Member of the Project Team (Debrecen)*
- István Gál, *Micro Grant recipient*, *Farmer, Member of the Board of the Bereg Torch, Rural tourism entrepreneur (Jánd)*
- Annamária Gálné Toldi, *Rural tourism entrepreneur (Jánd)*
- Tomasovszki Kamilla, *Bereg assistant of SZÖVET (Jánd)*
- Sándor Danó, *Micro Grant recipient, Mayor of the village Tivadar (Tivadar)*
- Sándorné Danó, *Micro Grant recipient, Chair of Association for the Tourism in Bereg (Tivadar)*
- Tibor Esze, *Vice-Mayor, Tarpa, Member of the Bereg Torch (Jánd)*
- Attila Filep, *Coordinator of the Bereg Torch (Jánd)*
- Béla Kelemen, *Mayor of Tarpa*, *Member of the Board of the Bereg Torch (Jánd)*
- Zsuzsa Flachner, *Member of the Project Management Team, Monitoring Officer, RISSAC (Budapest)*
- István Tőkés, *Senior Advisor, Member of the Project Management Team, RISSAC (Budapest)*
- Krisztina Kiss, *ex-UNDP's Liaison Officer for Hungary in Budapest, Member of the Steering Committee (throughout the field trip)*

G. Annex 6: Upper Tisza Floodplain Map with Planned Flood Control Reservoirs Under the VTT

(Source: Benedek Göncz, Ákos Barabás MEW, 2009)



H. Annex 7: Evaluation Field Visit Schedule

Date (2009)	Activity
Monday, September 21	Meeting with MEW and Project Managers in Budapest, travel to Nagykörű, field trip. Overnight in Nagykörű.
Tuesday, September 22	Travel to Kesznyéten with project manager, visit Kesznyéten farm, the Cigánd-Tiszakarád reservoir, Árpád era demonstration village, Micro Grant projects, discussions with officials, locals and experts. Overnight in Sárospatak.
Wednesday, September 23	Travel to Debrecen, Hortobágy National Park HQ, interview with officials, travel to Jánd, Bereg region, field trips, visits to Micro Grantees. Overnight in Jánd.
Thursday, September 24	Discussion with local lobby group Bereg Fáklya Association, regional stakeholders in Bereg, return to Budapest. Wrap up meeting with monitoring officer at RISSAC.

I. Annex 8: Tisza Biodiversity Project Logframe Summary with Assessed Level of Achievement

Note: Indicators for targets in *italics* in the "Inception Logframe Revision" section drawn from the inception report are taken from the GEF Strategic Priority 2 Tracking Tool.

PIR Rating Summary		2007	2008*	2009
Rating of Project Toward Meeting Objective	**National Project Manager / Coordinator**	MS	MS	MS
	UNDP Country Office	MS	MS	MS
	UNDP RTA	MS	MS	Not yet available
Rating of Project Implementation	**National Project Manager / Coordinator**	S	S	S
	UNDP Country Office	S	S	S
	UNDP RTA	S	S	Not yet available

* As recorded in the 2009 PIR. The 2008 PIR includes an "S" rating from the project manager on progress toward meeting the objective, and no ratings from UNDP.

Inception report: "Changes in the Logical Framework Matrix: In order to follow the GEF revised approach to the quantitative assessment of the project indicators, the whole criteria system of performance assessment had to be revised. To this end, under the Project Objective the baseline population of threatened species (mayfly, corncrake and white tailed eagle) land/pond/wetland areas have been recalculated, the number of local enterprises, number of publications have been quantified. The Logframe of the project document had three of indicators at the Overall Goal line which were removed leaving a top line with the Overall Goal as a clear definition. At the Outcome 1, Outcome 2, Outcome 3., and Outcome 4 in the initial Logframe the mainly qualitative indicators were assigned to each of their Outputs. In the revised Logframe the new, this time mainly quantitative indicators were determined relating to the respective Outcome itself. The revised Logframe Matrix is attached as Annex F.1."

Narrative Summary	
Overall Goal: Sustainable, biodiversity friendly, development in the Tisza floodplain	**Project Objective: The Project Objective is to establish biodiversity friendly, holistic floodplain management as the dominant development paradigm in the Upper Tisza floodplain**
Indicator	
a) Improving socio-economic conditions b) Increased population of key farmland bird species. c) Increased percentage of land under mosaic management based on CORINNE categories Baseline: to be developed at project outset (related information is provided in Table 1, Para 16 in main text).	a) The number of VTT sites in the project area that fully adopt biodiversity friendly IHFM Baseline: only 1 of the 6 VTT sites has adopted this approach, in theory. This 1 site is not able to operationalise IHFM. b) $ value of NAEP grants going to biodiversity friendly activities. Baseline HUF 243 million ($1.1 million USD)

CORINNE information exists but has not been tabulated to conform to project area. This will be done at project outset.	
Target and Timeline	
a) 36 – 60 months b) 36 – 60 months c) 36 – 60 months Targets to be developed at project outset	a) The project aims to have all six VTT sites operationalise the methodology by the end of the project. The phasing is: 1 site operationally adopts the methodology by end of Year 1; 3 sites formally adopt the methodology by end of Year 2, and; all 6 sites apply IHFM by end of Year 3. b) 36 months 2 billion forint ($11.2 million USD)
Inception Logframe Revision	
[NOTE: "Overall Goal" and "Project Objective" indicators combined in one section in inception logframe] a) Indicator: The area in the project area (including of VTT sites that fully adopt biodiversity friendly IHFM Target: *Directly covered by the project:* 1600 km^2 (pilot sites – including 240 km^2 area of 6 VTT reservoirs) *Indirectly covered bye the project:* 9400 km^2 (entire floodplain) b) Indicator: Population of threatened or endangered species maintained at baseline level in the pilot areas: - mayfly (Paligeria longicauda) - corncrake (Crex crex) - white tailed eagle (Haliaetus albicilla) Target: It will remain the same or will develop slightly c) Indicator: Percentage of land under ESA payments (based on CORINE categories: grassland, arable land, others) Target: Will maintain or improve with min 0.1% *Grassland and arable land management with bird protection (HNVA participation): 20,000 ha; No. of registered farmers for agri-environmental program receiving payments will increase by 5% in the Tisza valley pilot sites; 200 farmers participating in the program (through NAEP)* d) Indicator: Area of ponds / wetlands (ha) managed in "notch" system (*fok* in Hungarian) Target: will improve with 2% *Sustainable fisheries: 3000 ha* e) Indicator: number of local enterprises processing resource of floodplains (orchards, grasslands, wetlands) Target: Will improve with 2% *Gypsies involved I the management of the protected areas will increase by 2%* f) Indicator: Number of publications for general stakeholders on the biodiversity values of the Tisza Target: 6 (3 will be published minimum from the project)	
Inception Baseline Value	
a) 0 km^2 b) mayfly: 40,6 ± 48,7 larvae/sample (490 cm2) (2004) corncrake: 252 (2004) white tailed eagle: 6 breeding pairs (2005) c) Bereg: 0.35; Bodrogköz: 0.42; South Borsod: 0.5; Körös: 0.25 d) 70 ha at Nagykörű (300 ha the total area, 100 ha orchard, grassland and 70 water) e) Bereg: 5; Bodrogköz: 2; South Borsod: 1; Nagykörű: 3; Körös: 1	

f) 3 (G. Molnar, WWF, Hungarian Academy of Sciences)

Level of Achievement Reported in 2009 PIR

a) • Directly covered: 1,163 km^2
• Indirectly covered: 2,090 km^2 (not including directly covered areas)
The coverage numbers are calculated the following way:

Direct coverage numbers: The Micro Grants for Biodiversity Programme of the Project helped the farmers of the six Local Initiatives (pilot sites) to start land use change to floodplain management. The Micro Grant supported projects directly cover 445 km^2, but affect the territory of municipalities of 1,115 km^2 where positive effects can be monitored. The 25 km^2 area of the Cigánd water reservoir and 23 km^2 area of the Tiszaroff reservoir of VTT (which may be pilot areas of floodplain landscape management) are added to the above number of direct coverage.

Indirect coverage numbers: Due to state budget restrictions and a radical shift in governmental policy: (i) only two water reservoirs of VTT (Cigánd, Tiszaroff) were completed by 2009, not 6 as in the initial plans of VTT; (ii) there were no new calls for applications for National Agri-Environmental Programme payments between 2005-2009, according to the policy of the Ministry for Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD).

The 2009 applications of farmers for agri-environmental payments have not been evaluated by the Ministry yet. The new agri-environmental payment system gives preference for VTT areas and contains new wetland programs. New ESA-s are included in the agri-environmental program (Bereg extended, Taktaköz, Kis-Sárrét). These measures may extend areas managed according to IHFM.

The Environment and Energy Operational Programme of the Ministry for Environment and Water may provide financial support for the development of wetland water-supply systems.

Some of the existing agri-environmental measures can help the preparation of farmers for land use change. The indirect coverage numbers stand for 11 regions getting NAEP payments in 2005-2009, along the Tisza and Nagy-Sárrét a new pilot site of the Project. The farmers getting NAEP payments started land use change.

b) • mayfly: remained the same – some improvements in the Bodrog River area. (Petrovics Zoltán personal communication, WFD monitoring show good ecological status in the Upper Tisza region.)
• corncrake: 345 (2008) – 167 in the Upper Tisza (till Szolnok) decline/migration to more humid territories due to very arid summer in the region (Sallai, MBMR)
• white tailed eagle: 8 breeding pairs (2009) - (Kis-Sárrét: 1; Bodrogzug: 2; Middle-Tisza TK: 5; Szatmár-Bereg TK: 0)

c) • No change in percentage since 2004. (There were no new calls for applications for National Agri-Environmental Programme payments between 2005-2009, according to the policy of the Ministry for Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD). Therefore no new farmers could have entered the ESA payment scheme during the implementation of our Project. However, some of the existing agri-environmental measures can help the preparation of farmers for land use change.) The 2009 applications of farmers for agri-environmental payments have not been evaluated by the Ministry yet. The new agri-environmental payment system gives preference for VTT areas and contains new wetland programs.
• New ESA areas were registered: Taktaköz: 27,000 ha-s, Kis-Sárrét: 32,000 ha-s; Szatmár-Bereg, Beregi ártér ESA extended by 50,000 ha-s.

d) • 200 ha Micro Grant supported investments (In Nagykörű and Bodrogköz, incl. 100 ha orchard of Nagykörű as part of landscape rehabilitation).
• Extensive fishponds: 3134 ha
• Reed-management: 1254 ha (Extensive Fishponds and Reed Management stand for agri-environmental payment measures in the 11 regions getting NAEP payments along the Tisza and Nagy-Sárrét a new pilot site of the Project. These areas have not fully changed land use to notch system or Integrated Holistic

Floodplain Management (IHFM), but farmers getting NAEP payments started a biodiversity friendly land use. These areas may be core areas for future extension of IHFM.)

e) New entities supported by Micro Grant Fund:
- Bereg: 8;
- Bodrogköz: 3;
- South Borsod: 6;
- Nagykörű: 7;
- Körös (Kis-Sárrét): 2;

"Living Tisza" trade mark (registered, financed by the Project. Biodiversity friendly products and services of the Tisza)
- Bereg: 30;
- Nagykörű: 16;
- South Borsod: 1;
- Bodrogköz: 1;
- Csongrád: 3;
- National NGO: 2.

f) 167 publications

Terminal Evaluation Assessment

a) The project has been realistic in reporting on the target number of hectares ultimately influenced by the project in the project lifetime. The level of achievement for both the direct and indirect influence falls short of the project targets, and the areas that have been influenced have only partially implemented IHFM. In the case of the direct influence target, this may be a case of over-ambitiousness, for which there was not a clear rationale for the target value. According to project sources the 1600 km^2 figure was derived from the best estimates of the stakeholders involved in project development.

While the project's aim was for the target number of hectares to be covered by the end of the project, it is likely that additional hectares will be covered in the government planning period 2009-2013, during which the revised NAEP will be implemented, and additional progress will be made on implementing the VTT. The project has had a significant influence in the region on the awareness and level of organization of local level stakeholders, who have realized they can affect national level institutions and policies, as demonstrated by the "Bereg Torch" example. Improvement in floodplain management practices is far from certain, but there are positive signs. An evaluation three or four years hence would be required to assess the full outcomes of the project (and, correspondingly, the number of hectares actually influenced).

b) Including impact-level indicators is a positive approach to assess project impact. However, long-term monitoring data is required to identify trends in populations of indicator species. Some indicator species, such as Crex crex, experience natural regional population variations based on annual climatic conditions, and thus may not be appropriate as indicator species using a specific point-in-time data point. Biological monitoring is carried out on a regular basis in some parts of the project area, and is undertaken by the national park staff. The data collected is fed into the national biodiversity monitoring information system which should allow the eventual analysis of long-term trends.

c) Agree that there has been no change in percentage of land covered under NAEP since 2004, as explained in the PIR data. This is another area where there is potential for improved performance in coming years, but which was not achieved by the end of the project implementation period. Because there was no increase in implementation of the NAEP, the other associated indicators could not be achieved, including the percentage or number of farmers participating.

d) The extensive fish ponds and reed management areas highlighted in the 2009 PIR indicate area covered by the NAEP program, in which the same level of participation was observed at the beginning and end of the project. Thus the area covered cannot really be considered an incremental improvement attributable to the project. Further, as mentioned in the PIR, the area cited has not been fully transitioned to a "notch" management system. As mentioned earlier, there is potential future improvement that would result from the project, but at present, for this indicator the target level has not been achieved.

e) The target level of improvement for this indicator does not have a logical rationale. The baseline level for the number of enterprises was 12, thus a 2% improvement would be an addition of 0.24 enterprises. Further, a more appropriate results-based indicator might be the volume or value of local produce processed, or even the number of people involved, rather than the number of enterprises involved. Since the number of enterprises increased by more than 0.24, the target level can be said to have been met. There is no information available on the involvement of minority populations in protected area management, and the project did not specifically address this. Anecdotic information gathered during the field trip indicate that Roma are employed by some of the local businesses during harvesting operations occasionally as seasonal labourers.

f) Agree that the target was surpassed. A more results-based indicator would have related to levels of awareness of knowledge of some stakeholder groups. The impact of those publications is not clear. The figure of 167 include publications other than just those targeted to general stakeholders on the biodiversity values of the Tisza.

Narrative Summary
Outcome 1: A Financially Sustainable Mechanism for Supporting Local Initiatives and Feeding Local Lessons into National Policy and Planning
Indicator
a) Operating costs of Platform and TFTO are covered 100% by sustainable sources. Baseline A comparable mechanism to the TFTO and Platform does not exist b) National Ministries are influenced by the Platform Baseline Platform does not exist. Local people very rarely influence national ministries, and only in a very ad-hoc manner. c) Local Initiatives fully supportive and appreciative of TFTO Baseline TFTO does not exist. Local initiatives all act independently and incoherently.
Target and timeline
a) 36 months Platform meets biannually, TFTO employs at least 3 staff b) 24 months At least 2 changes in national policy based on advocacy from Platform c) 30 months Local Initiatives regularly using TFTO services, and paying for them

Inception Logframe Revision	
a) Indicator: Coordinated service / expert system for farmers, municipalities in the pilot areas. Target: Operating costs of TFTO are covered 100% by sustainable sources. No of consultancy / year = 100 b) Indicator: The Tisza platform is created in the frame of the project (with representatives from Municipalities, NGOs, researches and farmers from the region or working in the region.) Target: Platform registered, meets once a year, No. of members exceed 50. c) Indicator: Micro grant is provided to support small scale initiatives for IHFM Target: 70 applications/ year *Income of the farmers participating in the project in the Tisza valley pilot sites will increase 2% over baseline* d) Indicator: Understanding is developed by proper dissemination means (PR materials, publications) on the biodiversity values of the region Target: 5 booklet, 8 newsletter, 1 handbook, 1 map	
Inception Baseline Value	
a) no Tisza Region TFTO does exist – it will be subsidized from the project in the beginning. No. of consultancy provided (0) b) Platform does not exist (platform No: 0). Number of member and supporting members (0) c) No. of applications (0) d) No. of booklets, newsletters, handbook, maps (0)	
Level of Achievement Reported in 2009 PIR	
a) • Tisza Region TFTO established • Financial sustainability ensured • No. of consultancies since February 2007 = 300 b) • Platform registered, • meetings to date: 25 • No. of members: 120 c) • 84 applications • 216,929 USD awarded for • 50 applicants, • 215,453 USD disbursed.	d) • 8 booklets • 13 issues of 4 newsletters • 3 maps • 3 books • 9 leaflets • 2 pocket guides • 3 posters • 2 DVDs • 2 homepages • 1 webshop • 111 articles • 9 publications
Terminal Evaluation Assessment	
a) The Tisza platform (the Alliance for Living Tisza, including the TFTO) do appear to be sustainably financed beyond the life of the project, though a long-term business financing strategy needs to be put in place. b) Agree that the targets have been met. The platform has been registered, meets more than once per year, and has more than 50 members. c) Quantitative targets related to implementation of the Micro Grants program have been met. There is unfortunately no information regarding the impact on economic welfare of participating individuals, but this is not a highly measureable indicator, as farmers are reluctant to divulge income information. However,	

a post-implementation survey could have been developed and structured in a way to provide feedback on the economic impact of the Micro Grants program while maintaining confidentiality of financial information, for example, "has your Micro Grant project helped increase your income?" d) This is unfortunately a very output oriented indicator rather than a results-based indicator. Agree that the target level has been met.
Narrative Summary
Output 1.1 The Regional Platform
Indicator
a) The Platform's Constitution Baseline There is comparable mechanism to the Platform and no constitution
Target and timeline
a) 3 months. Constitution approved by all stakeholders
Inception Logframe Revision
Inception Baseline Value
Level of Achievement Reported in 2009 PIR
Terminal Evaluation Assessment
Target met
Narrative Summary
Output 1.2 Upper Tisza Floodplain Technical Support Office (TFTO).
Indicator
a) Office is established and has resources. Baseline There is no dedicated Office to provide technical support.
Target and timeline
a) 12 months. Office exists and operates with 2 full-time staff members
Inception Logframe Revision
Inception Baseline Value
Level of Achievement Reported in 2009 PIR
Terminal Evaluation Assessment
Target met
Narrative Summary
Output 1.3 Platform and the TFTO providing demand-driven coordination and technical support to local initiatives and implementing region wide activities (note strong linkages with Outputs 3.1 to 3.4)

Indicator
a) Level of satisfaction of local initiatives with the Platform and TFTO Baseline level of satisfaction cannot be measured as the Platform and TFTO do not exist. Survey will be undertaken at month 6. b) Local initiatives financially contributing to Platform Baseline No support from local initiatives for a coordination mechanism.
Target and timeline
a) 12 – 36. 30% aware of existence, 70% of users are satisfied b) 24 months. Membership fees significant and paid on time
Inception Logframe Revision
Inception Baseline Value
Level of Achievement Reported in 2009 PIR
Terminal Evaluation Assessment
Data not available.
Narrative Summary
Output 1.4 Platform and TFTO sustainable business plans
Indicator
a) Plan implementation is fully funded. Baseline No plans have been prepared.
Target and timeline
a) 24 months. Source of funds for all needs identified in the plans have been found.
Inception Logframe Revision
Inception Baseline Value
Level of Achievement Reported in 2009 PIR
Terminal Evaluation Assessment
Not yet met.
Narrative Summary
Outcome 2: Tools to support biodiversity friendly, IHFM
Indicator
(Indicators are covered, at present, by Outputs 2.1 – 2.3. At project outset, a complete monitoring and evaluation framework will be developed)
Target and timeline

Inception Logframe Revision
a) Indicator: agreement on the model for IHFM Target: harmonized concept, approved by Platform – 1 b) Indicator: Integrated monitoring system (IMS) is developed based on previous experiences Target: manual on IMS – 1; IMS data gathering – 1; Digital historic land evaluation system - 1 c) Indicator: pilot area comprehensive compendium on key stakeholders Target: data collection system at each pilot sites - 6 d) Indicator: web-market for IHFM products and services Target: web market for 'ELO-Tisza' products – 1; No of visitors – 200/year e) Indicator: trainings, meetings on IHFM Target: No. of trainings: min. 30; No of national meetings: min 3 f) Indicator: guidelines for invasive species management at high nature value floodplains (based on the assessment of cause-effect relationships) Target: guideline – 1 general and management plan for each pilot sites *Invasive species control: 3000 ha*
Inception Baseline Value
a) harmonized concept, approved by Platform - 0 b) manual on IMS – 0; IMS data gathering – 0; Digital historic land evaluation system – 0 c) data collection system at each pilot sites – 0 d) web-market 'Élő Tisza' products – 0; No. of visitors – 0 e) No. of trainings, meetings for local regional stakeholders – 0; meeting for national stakeholders – 0 f) guideline – 0 (just management plan exist for certain protected sites)
Level of Achievement Reported in 2009 PIR
a) Harmonized concept, approved by Platform – 1, • Concept as a handbook available: http://www.elotiszaert.hu/bovebben.php?id=552 b) Manual on IMS – 1 IMS data gathering - 1 Digital historic land evaluation system -1 c) Data collection system at 6 pilot sites complete. d) Web market for `Élő Tisza` products – 1; No of visitors – 23,000 / year e) No. of trainings: 31; No. of national meetings: 10 f) 2 guidelines on invasive species issued by the Ministry for Environment and Water in 2005, 2006; Invasive species control: 209 000 ha
Terminal Evaluation Assessment
a) Agree target met. b) The output targets have been met, but an integrated monitoring system has not been implemented. The only environmental monitoring currently undertaken in a portion of the project area is by the national park staff in the context of the national biodiversity monitoring system. The original idea was to collect quality data for monitoring in addition to quantitative assessments, but due to lack of funding the target was only partially met. c) Agree target met. However, the resulting database is not consolidated yet. d) Agree target met.

e) Agree target met. f) Not met. The guidelines reported in the 2009 PIR as issued by the Ministry can hardly be considered to have been an output of the project since the project only began in late 2005. The project did produce some important and useful information on invasive species, but it is not clear that incremental measures for invasive species control have been implemented, i.e. beyond what would have otherwise occurred. The size of land affected by invasive species control measures was assumed to equal the size of land under NAEP payments which is a simplistic and unrealistic view.
Narrative Summary
Output 2.1 Comprehensive guidelines defining the characteristics of the 'model' approach to IHFM, agreed to by local Initiatives.
Indicator
a) Guidelines are fully understood (i.e. terminology, management criteria) and accepted by stakeholders at local and national level Baseline There are no guidelines, model or coherent approach - each Initiative works independently
Target and timeline
a) 12 months. At least 5 Initiatives adopt the common guidelines and so work coherently
Inception Logframe Revision
Inception Baseline Value
Level of Achievement Reported in 2009 PIR
Terminal Evaluation Assessment
See indicator a) under Outcome 2, above.
Narrative Summary
Output 2.2 Integrated floodplain-wide biodiversity monitoring system
Indicator
a) Level of participation in the monitoring system Baseline national agencies and NGOs have independent monitoring systems
Target and timeline
a) 24 months. MEW, NAEP, VTT and NGOs all contributing to a common monitoring system
Inception Logframe Revision
Inception Baseline Value
Level of Achievement Reported in 2009 PIR
Terminal Evaluation Assessment
See indicator b) under Outcome 2, above.
Narrative Summary

Output 2.3 Programme for managing invasive species
Indicator
a) Commitment to implementing the Programme Baseline MEW has dedicated activities, Other agencies have related initiatives, but there is no cooperation
Target and timeline
a) 24 – 36 months. MEW, NAEP, VTT and NGOs all providing co-funding to implement the Invasive Species Programme prepared by this project.
Inception Logframe Revision
Inception Baseline Value
Level of Achievement Reported in 2009 PIR
Terminal Evaluation Assessment
See indicator f) under Outcome 2, above.
Narrative Summary
Outcome 3: At each of the seven Initiative sites, biodiversity, land, water and habitats are managed in an integrated, holistic manner that is supportive of socio-economic development.
Indicator
a) percentage of land dedicated to the integrated floodplain management approach Baseline 0% a) Population of key farmland bird species At seven sites Baseline: figures to be collected at project outset
Target and timeline
a) 36 months, (target to be determined) b) 36 months (target to be determined)
Inception Logframe Revision
a) Indicator: percentage of land dedicated to the integrated floodplain management (FM) approach Target: 20% *Management based on IHFM: 50,000 ha* *Area (farms) applying IHFM grassland management: 45,000 ha* b) Indicator: Population of key farmland bird species – Crex crex as an indicator Target: maintained c) Indicator: contribution of Micro grant to biodiversity friendly FM based on criteria list (effect on species, increase of area in IFHM, improvement of territorial water supply) Target: increase of area in IFHM – 1600 km^2 Micro Grant Fund will only contribute to other activities listed at Outcome 1-4, which drive stakeholders to adopt IHFM. Micro Grant Fund – due to its limited

resource will not reach the 1600 km^2 goal alone.
Inception Baseline Value
a) 2% of the upper Tisza Holocene plain b) No of Crex crex 252 (2004) c) Increase of area in IFHM 0 ha
Level of Achievement Reported in 2009 PIR
a) Management (partly) based on IHFM: 325,300 ha (116,300 + 209,000) Area (farms) applying NAEP grassland management: 38,000 ha b) 167 in the Upper Tisza (till Szolnok) in 2008. 50 in Bodrogzug TK, 107 in Szatmár-Bereg, 10 in Middle-Tisza. Decline due to migration to more humid territories due to very arid summer in the region (Sallai, MBMR). c) Increase of area in IFHM – 1,163 km^2
Terminal Evaluation Assessment
a) Agree with data reported in 2009 PIR. As discussed previously, it can only be considered that IHFM has been partially implemented in the areas covered. b) As discussed under indicator b) for the overall project objective, a single point-in-time measurement for a species such as Crex crex may not be a really useful measurement. There needs to be an analysis of long-term population trends in the area, and a clear understanding of the specific habitat range that needs to be covered in the measurement. c) As discussed previously, agree with data reported.
Narrative Summary
Output 3.1 Assessments
Indicator
a) Agreement on capacity gaps Baseline There has been no capacity assessment, so no agreement on needs.
Target and timeline
a) 6 months. Common agreement on capacity gaps at a minimum of 5 sites
Inception Logframe Revision
Inception Baseline Value
Level of Achievement Reported in 2009 PIR
Terminal Evaluation Assessment
Information not available.
Narrative Summary
Output 3.2 Action Plans

Indicator
a) Endorsement by local governments. Baseline No plans have been prepared
Target and timeline
a) 15 months. At least 5 sites have prepared Plans and they are fully endorsed
Inception Logframe Revision
Inception Baseline Value
Level of Achievement Reported in 2009 PIR
Terminal Evaluation Assessment
Agree that "plans" at the site level have been prepared, but the structure and level of detail the plans varies, as does the level of implementation. They are in certain cases more of a strategic nature than actual action plans. Unclear the extent to which plans are incremental effort based on project support. For example, one plan was originally written in 2003, well before the project start. Plans are supported by local stakeholders, but have not necessarily been endorsed by local government authorities in all cases.
Following Outputs will depend on the contents of the Action Plan
Narrative Summary
Output 3.3 Strengthened Institutional Framework
Indicator
a) E.g., Effective Land and Water Authority established. Baseline There is an existing land authority
Target and timeline
a) 18 months and ongoing. An effective authority responsible for both land and water is operating
Inception Logframe Revision
Inception Baseline Value
Level of Achievement Reported in 2009 PIR
Terminal Evaluation Assessment
Obsolete
Narrative Summary
Output 3.4 Action Plans under implementation, and monitored
Indicator
a) Funding from NAEP at the site. b) VTT projects adapted to Plan Baseline The baseline and monitoring framework will be specified in the Action Plan for each site emanating from Output 3.2

Target and timeline
a) and b) 13-36 The baseline and monitoring framework will be specified in the Action Plan for each site emanating from Output 3.2
Inception Logframe Revision
Inception Baseline Value
Level of Achievement Reported in 2009 PIR
Terminal Evaluation Assessment
Obsolete
Narrative Summary
Output 3.5 Conservation of local biodiversity through Micro Grants for Biodiversity Programme (note: each grant, once disbursed, will be accompanied by a monitoring and evaluation framework)
Indicator
a) MGBP operating and disbursing Baseline No grant mechanism is available at present
Target and timeline
a) 24 – 36. Disbursal reaches 80% of initial targets. Each grant will have its own indicators of success.
Inception Logframe Revision
Inception Baseline Value
Level of Achievement Reported in 2009 PIR
Terminal Evaluation Assessment
Agree target reached.
Narrative Summary
Outcome 4: Changes in the policy and the implementation of the VTT and NAEP to integrate biodiversity concerns, feeding into related EU policy and decision - making.
Indicator
a) Measurable policy statements Baseline existing policy is not sufficiently focussed on globally significant biodiversity
Target and timeline
a) 30 months At least 1 significant policy statements issued, with clear financial implications, related to both VTT and NAEP, and the impact on Tisza biodiversity
Inception Logframe Revision

a) Indicator: Policy statements, recommendation at EU and national level Target: No of policy papers at EU level - 3 b) Indicator: lobby activity at national level – evaluation of proposals, comments and proposals Target: No of policy papers at national level - 10 c) Indicator: Living Tisza Association is established and its role defined at national level inter-ministerial boards Target: established association - 1 d) Indicator: Increased civic activity in the project area Target: *Number of new civic organization in the area: 4* e) Indicator: Increased civic activity in the project area Target: *Municipalities active in the program implementation: 120*
Inception Baseline Value
a) No of policy papers at EU level - 0 b) No of policy papers at national level – 9 c) established association – 0 d) Number of new civic organizations e) Municipalities involved in project implementation
Level of Achievement Reported in 2009 PIR
a) No of policy papers at EU level – 4 b) No of policy papers at national level – 15 c) Established, registered association -1 (Full name: Alliance for the Living Tisza) d) Number of new civic organizations in the area: 3 e) Appr. 80 - Signatories of the Memorandum on the river Tisza, Municipalities of BOKARTISZ + Hungarian signatories of the commitment "Together for the Living Tisza", 2008: 60 + signatories of the commitment "Together for the Living Tisza", 2008 from neighbouring countries: 11 TOTAL: 151
Terminal Evaluation Assessment
a) Agree target level reached. Output level indicator only. Results of lobbying unclear. b) Agree target level reached. Output level indicator only. Results of lobbying unclear. c) Agree target level reached. d) Agree with information reported in 2009 PIR that target level 75% achieved. Output level indicator only. e) Indicator not specific, as it is unclear whether being a memorandum signatory constitutes being “active in program implementation.” Agree with information reported in 2009 PIR that target level 66% achieved, but additional stakeholders involved. Rationale for original target value unclear.
Narrative Summary
Output 4.1 Increased awareness of decision-makers
Indicator
a) No. of high-level references to biodiversity by senior SSWM and MARD officials.

Baseline Biodiversity is rarely mentioned. Actual rate of mentions to be determined at project outset.
Target and timeline
a) 12 – 30. The number of times senior officials mention biodiversity in policy or media statements increases by 100%.
Inception Logframe Revision
Inception Baseline Value
Level of Achievement Reported in 2009 PIR
Terminal Evaluation Assessment
Information not available.
Narrative Summary
Output 4.2 The integrated floodplain management model (Output 2.1) is adopted by the NAEP guidelines
Indicator
a) New NAEP guidelines recognise and prioritise IHFM Baseline IHFM is not mentioned in NAEP guidelines
Target and timeline
a) 24 –36 months. Revised guidelines issued with IHFM given priority.
Inception Logframe Revision
Inception Baseline Value
Level of Achievement Reported in 2009 PIR
Terminal Evaluation Assessment
Project made some contribution to NAEP guidelines, which are to be implemented from 2009 – 2013.
Narrative Summary
Output 4.3 New Implementation Decrees related to VTT with strong biodiversity conservation orientation
Indicator
a) Decree issued. Baseline no decree
Target and timeline
a) 24 months. Decree issued.
Inception Logframe Revision
Inception Baseline Value

Level of Achievement Reported in 2009 PIR
Terminal Evaluation Assessment
Information not available.
Narrative Summary
Output 4.4 Support ongoing WWF Europe-wide efforts to modify EU land and agriculture policy and contribute to UNDP-GEF regional Wetlands Network
Indicator
a) Project findings integrated into WWF 'One Europe/One Nature' Programme and 'CAP Reform' Programme; project findings disseminated widely through network Baseline very informal, non-technical contacts between project proponents and WWF work.
Target and timeline
a) 24-36 months. WWF regional policy papers refer to Tisza river experience and disseminate the findings.
Inception Logframe Revision
Inception Baseline Value
Level of Achievement Reported in 2009 PIR
Terminal Evaluation Assessment
WWF public documents for the Tisza region One Europe More Nature program do not specifically refer to the Alliance for Living Tisza, but discuss the general experience with the VTT and IHFM in the Tisza floodplain.

J. Annex 9: Evaluation Documentation

Photo 6. Evaluation Team with Project Participants

K. Annex 10: Evaluators Curriculum Vitae

See following pages.

Joshua E. Brann

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

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

Professional Experience

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

- Ten years experience working on environmental conservation issues, evaluation, and strategy consulting
- Extensive field work in Asia-Pacific and Eastern Europe regions; additional work in Central Asia and Africa
- Experience leading evaluation teams in project evaluation, and working independently and as a team member
- Expertise in monitoring and evaluation design and execution, including impact evaluation, indicator development, logical frameworks and logic chains, baselines, quantitative analysis, theory-based evaluation, results-based management, knowledge management, design of monitoring tools, and electronic surveys
- Knowledge of and experience with multi-lateral institutions' monitoring and evaluation policies and procedures, including the Global Environment Facility, United Nations, and World Bank
- Experience in all Global Environment Facility focal areas, with particular emphasis in biodiversity, international waters, and multi-focal areas
- Full understanding of key Global Environment Facility principles such as global environmental benefits, incremental costs, catalytic role, stakeholder participation and project sustainability

Keystone Strategy, LLC / North Harvard Group, LLC
Analyst; *South San Francisco, CA, July 2006 – September 2008*

- Business Strategy Consulting

  Conducted market opportunity modeling and strategic analysis for Fortune 100 technology firms

- Litigation Support

  Performed quantitative analyses of technology markets to support clients in intellectual property litigation

  Contributed written qualitative analyses to leverage expertise of Harvard Business School professors serving as expert witnesses

Global Environment Facility
Monitoring & Evaluation Analyst, Evaluation Office*; Washington, DC, May 2004 – May 2006*

- Monitoring and evaluation of the GEF portfolio, covering the main GEF focal areas: conservation of biodiversity, climate change, international waters, land degradation, ozone depletion, and persistent organic pollutants
- Evaluation team member on major GEF programmatic evaluations:

  Pilot Phase of GEF Impact Evaluation (2006): Developed conceptual model for analyzing project-level biodiversity impacts with global-level biodiversity status; Developed evaluation concept paper and terms of reference; Recruited external consultants for evaluation support

  Joint Evaluation of the GEF Activity Cycle and Modalities (2006): Primary responsibility for organization of field visits, external stakeholder survey, and desk review of previous evaluation evidence; Organized and carried out field visit to Macedonia and Turkey; Contributed to evaluation management including budget planning for multiple evaluation components

Evaluation of the GEF Support for Biosafety (2005): Organized and carried out stakeholder consultation field visits in Tajikistan, Croatia, India and China; Contributed to evaluation planning and management; Managed publication of evaluation report

Third Overall Performance Study of the GEF (2005): Organized regional stakeholder consultation workshops in Bangkok, Cairo and Pretoria; Provided support to external firm carrying out evaluation

Biodiversity Program Study 2004: Conducted statistical analysis of GEF biodiversity portfolio; Reviewed and analyzed over one hundred project terminal evaluations and progress implementation reports

- Analysis, input and support for additional GEF Evaluation Office evaluations:

  GEF Annual Performance Report 2004, 2005 and 2006: Carried out Terminal Evaluation Reviews of million dollar GEF biodiversity projects; Provided statistical portfolio analysis

  Review of the GEF Project Cycle: Conducted statistical analysis of GEF project cycle timeframes

  Evaluation of Operational Program 12 – Integrated Ecosystem Management: Provided management support and analysis to external evaluation team

- Portfolio monitoring, strategic priority tracking, and biodiversity indicators

  Contributed to development of biodiversity portfolio strategic priority tracking tools, with emphasis on sustainable use of biodiversity; Updated and maintained indicators and protected areas databases

Global Environment Facility
***Consultant, Biodiversity Team/Monitoring & Evaluation Unit**; Washington, DC, October 2002 – May 2004*

- Produced and contributed to several GEF biodiversity public relations publications:

  Forests Matter: Wrote and produced GEF publication on forest ecosystems component of the GEF biodiversity portfolio

  Making a Visible Difference in Our World – The GEF and Protected Areas: Researched and analyzed the protected areas component of the GEF portfolio; Developed text for publication

  GEF and the Convention on Biological Diversity: A Strong Partnership with Solid Results: Provided research and text for publication distributed at the Conference of Parties of the CBD

- Represented the GEF at major international conservation forums, including:

  World Parks Congress (2003); Seventh Conference of Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity (2004); World Conservation Congress (2004); World Wilderness Congress (2005)

- Supported GEF biodiversity portfolio internal data management systems; Updated and managed GEF biodiversity protected areas database; Researched GEF biodiversity portfolio

World Wildlife Fund – US
***Research Assistant, Asia-Pacific Program;** Washington, DC, September 2000 – June 2001*

- Edited grant proposals for landscape conservation projects requesting funds from US Government agencies, foundations, and international organizations
- Developed reports and educational brochures

Alaska Rainforest Campaign
Consultant*; *Washington, DC, June 2000 – August 2000

- Advocated for increased federal protection for Alaskan forests

National Wildlife Federation
***Conservation Intern;** Washington, DC, January 2000 – June 2000*

- Advocated for enactment of federal conservation funding legislation

Education

M.A., International Relations, Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies
Bologna, Italy & Washington, DC, August 2001 – May 2003

- Concentrations: Energy, Environment, Science & Technology (EEST) and International Economics
- Language Proficiency: French
- Independent Study: Human-Wildlife Conflict and Protected Areas

B.A., Environmental Studies, Dartmouth College
Hanover, NH, September 1995 – June 1999

- Major: Environmental Studies; Minor: French
- Rufus Choate Scholar for Academic Achievement; Citations for Academic Achievement in three courses
- Foreign study: Zimbabwe and South Africa (Environmental Studies); France (French)

Certificate, French Language Studies, University of Nice Sophia-Antipolis
Nice, France, July 2001

Microeconomics and French coursework, United States Department of Agriculture Graduate School
Washington, DC, September 2000 – December 2000

High School Diploma - Salutatorian, Homer High School
Homer, AK, September 1991 – May 1995

Skills and Activities

Professional Associations
International Development Evaluation Association (IDEAS)
American Evaluation Association

Language Skills
French: Speaking (Fair), Writing (Basic), Reading (Good)
Spanish: Speaking (Basic), Reading (Good)

Computer Skills
Microsoft Office applications, Adobe Photoshop, HTML

International Experience
Field Work: Extensive experience in Asia-Pacific region, additional experience in Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and Africa
Travel: Field work and/or tourism in 38 countries, including all major developing regions

Activities and Interests
Professional: Former founding co-chair of International Young Professionals in Conservation initiative
Recreational: Hiking; camping; fishing; running; cross-country skiing; alpine skiing/snowboarding

Publications

Evaluation

2007. "Joint Evaluation of the GEF Activity Cycle and Modalities," Washington, D.C.: GEF Evaluation Office.

2006. "Evaluation of GEF Support for Capacity Building for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety," Washington, D.C.: GEF Evaluation Office.

2004. "Biodiversity Program Study 2004," Washington, D.C.: GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Unit.

Professional

Brann, J. and Matambo, S. T. "Securing the Future of Protected Areas: A commitment to younger generations," in Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (2004). Biodiversity issues for consideration in the planning, establishment and management of protected area sites and networks. Montreal, SCBD, 164 pages and i to iv. (CBD Technical Series no. 15).

Brann, J., Kugler, L., and Matambo, S. T. "Youth and Young Professional Involvement," in Mulongoy, K.J., Chape, S.P. (Eds) 2004. Protected Areas and Biodiversity: An overview of key issues. CBD Secretariat, Montreal, Canada and UNEP-WCMC, Cambridge, UK.

Brann, J. "Trade Policy in Indonesia: Implications for Deforestation," *The Bologna Center Journal of International Affairs,* (Bologna: The Bologna Center of The Johns Hopkins University Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies) Vol. 5, Spring 2002, pp. 77-94.

Public Relations

2004. "Forest Matters: GEF's Contribution to Conserving and Sustaining Forest Ecosystems," Washington, D.C.: GEF Secretariat.

2004. "GEF and the Convention on Biological Diversity: A Strong Partnership with Solid Results," Washington, D.C.: GEF Secretariat.

2003. "Making a Visible Difference in Our World," Washington, D.C.: GEF Secretariat.

Presentations

International Development Evaluation Association (IDEAS); Impact Evaluation Workshop; Presentation title: "National and Global Biodiversity Indicators," April 4, 2008, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

8th World Wilderness Congress; Closing plenary presentation: "Wilderness and Young Professionals," October 6, 2005, Anchorage, Alaska, USA.

CURRICULUM VITAE

1. PERSONAL

Name: Dr. Béla Borsos
Date and place of Birth: Budapest, Hungary, August 18, 1958
Nationality: Hungarian
Marital status: married, 2 children
Residence: 1016 Budapest, Fenyő u. 13. Hungary

2. EDUCATION

1977-1982: University of Veterinary Sciences, Budapest
Degree: DVM, Doctor of Veterinary Medicine
1988: ELTE University of Sciences, Translation and Interpreting Group
Translators' Certificate, Natural Sciences
[1990-1991] Permaculture Institute, Australia, Alternative Studies, Permaculture Designer
2003: ELTE University of Sciences, Translation and Interpreting Group
Translators' Certificate, Economics
2006: ELTE University of Sciences, Translation and Interpreting Group
Interpreters' Certificate
2008: Pécs University of Sciences, School of Geography
PhD in geography

Grants and Scholarships:

1990: Salzburg Seminar, Session 284: International Environmental Negotiation
1991: Schumacher College, Devon, England: The Rebirth of Nature (Scholar in Residence: Rupert Sheldrake)
1992: Schumacher College, Devon, England: Dwellers in the Land (Scholar in Residence: Kirckpatrick Sale)
1992: Norwegian Association of Non Fiction Writers, Norway
1994: Eisenhower Exchange Fellowships, US

Language skills: Hungarian (mother tongue)
English: (TOEFL score 640, 1989)
German: good
French: fair

Current position: 1990 –: independent consultant, translator, interpreter and author.

3. PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE (JOB HISTORY) Number of years: 27

1999 – 2003: Guest lecturer on human ecology at the Institute of Sociology and Institute of Geography, University of Sciences, Pécs
1995-2000: Guest lecturer on human ecology Eötvös Lóránd University of Sciences (ELTE), Budapest
1990- 1995: Assistant Professor, Dept. Animal Husbandry, Univ. Vet. Sci., Budapest
Duties: research on policy options of organic and sustainable practices in Hungarian agriculture with special emphasis on animal husbandry. Lecturing on alternative agricultural systems
1990- 1994: Advisor of the expert team of FIDESZ (Association of Young Democrats, a parliamentary party of Hungary) Duties: environmental policy making, preparation of decisions and political statements of MP`s.
1990 - 1992: Consultant, Regional Environmental Center, Budapest
Duties: grants management and advisory work on NGO communities both domestic and

international.
1987-1990 : free lance photojournalist and translator
1984-1987: research fellow, National Institute for Radiobiology and Radiohygeny
Duties: to conduct immunological research experiments on endotoxin tolerance and non specific resistance.
1982-1984: veterinary surgeon, "Törekvés" farming cooperative, Kecskemét, Hungary

4. REGULAR CLIENTS:

- MOL Plc., Hungary
- Roche Pharmaceuticals, Hungary
- OMD Hungary
- Health Canada
- Advantica Ltd., UK
- Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Hungary
- Ministry of Justice, Hungary
- Ministry of Health, Hungary
- Ministry of Education, Hungary
- Kraftszer Kft., Budapest, Hungary
- Etalongas Ltd., Budapest , Hungary
- Lohman Animal Health Hungary
- British Embassy, Budapest
- Hill & Knowlton, Hungary

5. MEMBERSHIPS, CIVIL ACTIVITIES:

1986- 1995: Member of the Danube Circle, leading environmental NGO of Hungary
1988-1989 : Member of the Steering Committee, Danube Circle
1989-1992 : Member of Board, Galgafarm Association, founded to create an environmentally sound, sustainable development scheme in the Galga region of Hungary
1991-1999: Co-trustee of the Gyűrűfű Project
1990-1996: Member of Executive Committee, International Environmental Negotiation Network, Harward Law School, Cambridge, Mass.
1992-1998: Member of Biokultúra Association, Budapest. Member of the Technical Committee
1994-1997: Member of the Hungarian Selection Committee, Eisenhower Exchange Fellowships
2000-2004: Sasakawa Peace Foundation (Japan): Chairman of the Hungarian Board, Sasakawa Environmental Award

TRAVELS: Official and Study Tours throughout Europe, US and Canada and four longer trips in Asia: Turkey, including Anatolia, Syria, The Soviet Union, Mongolia, China including Uyguria and Tibet, Pakistan, Nepal, India, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS:

Children of Demeter, 8th International IFOAM conference, Budapest 1990
The proper use of animals (?), Proceedings of the International Conference on Alternatives in Animal Husbandry, Witzenhausen, Germany, July 22-25, 1991
Socio-political aspects of the Bôs-Nagymaros dam system, International Water Power & Dam Construction, May 1991
Is The Journey Worth The Effort? FORUM for Applied Research and Public Policy, Univ.Tennessee, Winter, 1992
Natural Ecosystems and Human Subsistence: The Bioregional Concept. Stability and Change in Nature. International Forum for Biophilosophy, Conference Preprints, March 16-18, 1992, Budapest

Animals and the cult of science: The ecosystem approach, in: Science and the Human-Animal relationship, ed. by E.K.Hicks, SISWO, Amsterdam, 1993.

The Role of Animals in Alternative Agriculture Systems, in: Proceedings of the Intl. Seminar for Policy Makers on The Contribution of Organic Agriculture to Sustainable Rural Development in Central and Eastern Europe, Bohdalov, The Czech Republic, June 1994.

Borsos, Balázs - Borsos, Béla: Rural Environmental Planning Gyűrűfű: A Case Study, in: Proceedings of the First Intl. Conference on Ecology and Democracy, The Challenge of the 21st Century, Ceské Budejovice, The Czech Republic, September 1994

Ecological Farming in the Balance in Hungary. Global Pesticide Campaigner, March 1995, Volume 5, No. 1.

Systems theory and ecological settlement design: a pilot project in rural Hungary, Hungarian Studies, in press

In Hungarian:

Alternatív mezőgazdasági rendszerek (Alternative agricultural systems) University studybook, Univ. Vet.Sci, 1993 Budapest

Az élet kereke (The wheel of life) Essays, Liget, 1994

Azok a bizonyos könnyű léptek. Ökológia és rendszerelmélet (Those light steps. Ecology and system theory, University textbook, L'Harmattan, Budapest, 2002

Ázsiától Ázsiáig (From Asia to Asia) Documentary, L'Harmattan, Budapest, 2003

Az ökofalu koncepciója és helye a fenntartható település- és vidékfejlesztésben (The Ecovillage Concept and its Place in Sustainable Settlement and Rural Development) PhD dissertation thesis (Pécs: Pécs University of Sciences, Faculty of Natural Sciences, PhD School of Geography Sciences, Pécsi Tudományegyetem Természettudományi Kar Földtudományok Doktori Iskola) 2007

Budapest, 13th May, 2009.

L. Annex 11: Management Response (if any)