**Enhancing Coverage and Management Effectiveness of the Subsystem of Forest Protected Areas in Turkey’s National System of Protected Areas**

**PIMS 1988**

**FINAL DRAFT**

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**ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS**

**BNRMP** Biodiversity and Natural Resources Management Programme

**CEO** Chief Executive Officer

**DHKD** Society for the Protection of Nature

**EIA** Environmental Impact Assessment

**EU** European Union

**FAO** Food and Agriculture Organisation

**FMP** Forest Management Plan

**GDA** General Directorate of Afforestation

**GDEIP** General Directorate of Environmental Impact Assessment and Planning

**GDF** General Directorate of Forests

**GDNCNP** General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks

**GEF** Global Environment Facility

**GoT** Government of Turkey

**IUCN** International Union for Conservation of Nature

**KMNP** Küre Mountains National Park

**LFM** Logical Framework Matrix

**MoU** Memorandum of Understanding

**MoA** Ministry of Agriculture

**MoEF** Ministry of Environment and Forestry

**MTE** Mid-term Evaluation

**NGO** Non-governmental Organization

**ORKOY** General Directorate of Forest-Village Relations

**PA** Protected Areas

**PAN** Pan Parks

**PMU** Project Management Unit

**SGP** GEF Small Grant Programme

**TA** Technical Assistance

**UNDP** United Nations Development Programme

**WWF** World Wildlife Fund for Nature

**WCPA** World Commission on Protected Areas

**WB** World Bank

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Description of the Project**

The *Enhancing Coverage and Management Effectiveness of the Subsystem of Forest Protected Areas in Turkey’s National System of Protected Areas Project* (PIMS 1988) was approved by GEF in March 2008 and signed by UNDP and the GoT in May 2008. The Inception Workshop was organized in August 2008 and the Inception Phase lasted 10 months (from May 2008 to March 2009). During this time the project team was hired and the project offices were established. The project life time is 3 years giving an anticipated closure date of May 2011). The updated total budget is US$ 2,650,000, disaggregated to; GEF contribution US$ 972,000, GoT (in cash) US$ 160,000 (the budget now states US$ 512,000 an additional US$ 352,000) and US$ 1,435,000 (in kind), and WWF-Turkey US$ 83,000 (in kind).

The Project document sets out some of the causative factors which the project will need to engage with in order to achieve a successful outcome as defined by the GEF OP#3 Forest Ecosystems. These are restated here:

*“The main management challenges or barriers confronting the government in extending effective protection regimes at the eight hot spots are:*

1. *Systemic lack of capacity: including:*
   1. *Poor definition of the optimum role of stakeholders in protected area management to optimize management effectiveness;*
   2. *Poor institutional organization and coordination - there is a degree of duplication and ambiguity, and lack of coordinated efforts between the Ministry of Environment and Forest Protection, the Ministry of Agriculture and the General Directorate of Environmental Impact Assessment and Planning (GDEIAP); and*
   3. *Limited and inadequate zoning of protected areas to facilitate multiple environment and development objectives;*
2. *Institutional and individual capacities, including:*
   1. *Weak capacity to develop a detailed strategic and operational plan to ensure cost-effective deployment of financial and human resources;*
   2. *Limited business planning and knowledge management;*
   3. *GDEIAP does not have the capacity to assess ecological impact of allocating certain lands to agriculture preventing them from completing territorial land use plans and;*
   4. *Collection and trade of wild plants is under the authority of Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) by taking permission from MOEF which is responsible for species protection; however, MoA provincial directorates that should supervise collection and trade do not have proper mandate; do not have technical ability to put in place a sustainable harvest regime; do not have capacity to monitor collection and trade;*
   5. *Capacity of locals and PA authority to work together to monitor and check illegal activity is weak; and*
3. *Information/ knowledge gaps, including:*
   1. *Biological information that can provide baseline data for developing appropriate management plans for the park and for forest areas, monitoring subsequent ecological changes, and a detailed sense of the intensity and location of threats facing biodiversity is missing;*
   2. *There is no comprehensive understanding of the extent of harvest of non-wood forest resources, its potential to generate cash income and its potential to inflict harm;*
   3. *No knowledge of alternatives to harvesting wood for sale or self-consumption.*”

The Project’s objectives as stated in the Project document are:

**Objective:** Enhance coverage and management effectiveness of the Forest Protected Areas with a focus on KMNP and establishing a Buffer Zone and replicating the experiences in 9 other Forest Hot Spots in Turkey.

In order to achieve this; the Project aims to achieve the following outcomes:

**Outcome 1:** Cost-effective conservation management approaches for forest protected areas are implemented at KMNP

**Outcome 2:** Sustainable natural resource management is demonstrated in buffer area of KMNP; and

**Outcome 3:** Lessons learned from demonstration work at KMNP are disseminated to the other forest hot spots in Turkey, contributing to the maturation of the national protected areas system.

**Context and purpose of the MTE**

The Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) is an integral component of the UNDP GEF project cycle management. It serves as an agent of change and plays a critical role in supporting accountability. Its main objectives are:

1. To assess overall performance against the project objective and outcomes as set out in the Project Document, Project’s Logical Framework, and other related documents;
2. To assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the project;
3. To analyze critically the implementation and management arrangements of the project;
4. To assess the progress to date towards achievement of the outcomes;
5. To review planned strategies and plans for achieving the overall objective of the project within the timeframe;
6. To assess the sustainability of the project’s interventions;
7. To list and document initial lessons concerning project design, implementation and management;
8. To assess project relevance to national priorities, and;
9. To provide guidance for the future project activities and, if necessary, for the implementation and management arrangements;

The intention being that the MTE, as part of the overall GEF project cycle management and adaptive management approach, will:

* Strengthen the adaptive management and monitoring functions of the project
* Ensure accountability for the achievement of the GEF objective
* Enhance organizational and development learning
* Enable informed decision-making

One of the challenges in reviewing a project such as the Kure Mountains National Park Project and particularly the buffer zone establishment is in understanding the dynamics that are driving not only the process but also the communities and agencies that they are interacting with. The land use process is being driven by ecological, socio-administrative and economic *drivers.* These driving forces are operating in different time scales for example; driving forces that effect change in community perceptions and values operate over a much longer time frame than the time frames expected by project cycles. This inconsistency sets up a tension between “*project*” versus “*process*”. In natural resource management we are further influenced by even greater ecological time scales, which because they are so long we tend to try to fix them in time or cast them aside as unmanageable (Adapted from Murphree 2005).

Bearing this in mind the MTE has tried to measure the achievements of the project by where it is now in the reform process and where it is likely to go in the future. For instance; the level of participation by local villagers may not, when measured against a number of criteria (*e.g.* authority and responsibility or costs and benefits of conservation management), be satisfactory now; but compared with what it was prior to the project beginning, the MTE can reasonably judge that the project should be rated as satisfactory on this issue and is making good progress.

**Main conclusions**

On the whole the Project has been performing very well and the speed and efficiency with which activities have been implemented is acknowledged by the MTE, as is the obvious commitment of all the Team members.

Despite a protracted Inception Phase (lasting for 10 months) the project has made good progress showing a high degree of efficiency in its implementation.

The relationship between the different Project Partners appears to be very effective. One of the notable successes of the Inception Phase has been the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the key institutional partners and a national NGO (WWF Turkey).

Turkey is transforming from a heavily centralized state system with a heavily managed economy with state enterprises toward a more decentralized governance with greater emphasis on local democracy and a free market economy. This process has been ongoing and necessitates considerable changes within the state institutions and their relationship with local civic institutions and communities. It is important to place the project within this context and the broad package of overall reforms that are taking place at the national level. The important point being that Turkey has been, and continues to, undergo a considerable and rapid economic and socio-political change (UNDP, GoT, 2010) within which this project is framed.

An important observation on the Project Document is that, while it identifies the “problem” as being one of an adaptive challenge rather than a technical challenge it is then very weak in setting out a process that will facilitate the stakeholders in responding to a *collective action challenge* and appears to advocate a number of discrete and technical approaches which by themselves are unlikely to bring about the systemic changes that are needed.

The Project is dealing with a complexity of socio-political, economic and ecological issues and is operating over a very large geographic area for which the resources available in the field could be strengthened. The relationship between the different Project Partners appears to be very effective particularly as it relates to the institutional stakeholders and NGOs.

The Project is on track without any significant delay and has achieved a number of important successes that are listed here:

* Establishing multi agencies approach to Project implementation – the project has gone a considerable way to building linkages between the various agencies within the MoEF. Arguably the compartmentalisation of the ecosystem management throughout a large agency such as the MoEF can lead to differing agendas and different management priorities. The project has to a large extent brought these agencies together to address the multiplicity of issues that make up the sustainable management of an ecosystem.
* Participation of a national NGO as a significant partner – the project has succeeded in bringing a significant non-governmental partner into the implementation of the project. This marks an important milestone in Turkey where government agencies have tended to be exclusive rather than inclusive in their approach to resource management and project implementation. This approach is in line with the national-level reforms taking place and it is important to stress that the experience gained during this project, in particular the trust that is built, is an important outcome.
* Broadening the objectives of Forest Management Planning – forest management is changing in Turkey from a very narrow production focus to a wider and more holistic approach that includes the larger ecosystem services and other natural values. The project has been supporting this process of changing management priorities and approaches.
* Project has begun to increase local stakeholder participation – historically forest management in Turkey has been the preserve of the General Directorate of Forests (GDF) and there has been little local community participation in the management planning and implementation. As discussed above, this approach is changing and the project has to some extent been driving this change at the local level. Building strong and equitable linkages with the forest villages is critical to this process as the GDF divests itself of much of its enterprise activities and focuses more on planning and regulation as will be inevitable under the economic reforms towards a free market economy. The importance of this process to natural resource management should not be underestimated because the forest villages offer an alternative tenure model to the normal single owner state or single owner private models that are normally recognised and yet do not always suit the diverse needs of ecosystem conservation management.
* Implementation in accordance with rules and regulations – the Project Management Unit (PMU) appear to be familiar with the UNDP methods of operation and are very efficient in ensuring that administratively the project is well run.
* Activities are progressing well – activities are carried out in a timely and cost effective way.
* There is considerable good will among Project Partners and Participants – there appears to be a genuine enthusiasm for the project and mutual respect between the partners and participants. This last point is very important because *trust* is a significant factor in developing new approaches to natural resource management.
* The General Directorate of Afforestation (GDA) has used tree species of local providence and non-timber value in their afforestation programme.
* The Project has promoted a very high profile that appears to have put (and kept) sustainable forest management on the “political” agenda as well as reaching out to a broader audience.
* Strengthening protected areas concept in climate change mitigation and adaptation in Turkey (organizing a workshop, drafting a national strategy for protected areas and climate change). However, the MTE notes that developing a system for the equitable and sustainable management of forests should remain the priority of the Project and while such a system will undoubtedly contribute considerable to any national climate change mitigation strategy the Project is working to an extremely tight schedule and budget and there is a risk that becoming involved in issues such as climate change might distract from the Project’s core objectives (although this does not appear to be the case it is important to sound a word of caution).

However the MTE has identified number of risks and assumptions that make these successes vulnerable and therefore challenges the **sustainability** of the Project Outcomes given the project has already passed the halfway mark and has only seven months remaining. These concerns are related to:

* The level of local participation in the planning process – it is clear that there is a high degree of consultation taking place but the degree to which non-agency participants can influence the decision-making process that constitutes planning is limited. It is questionable how effective the Local Committees (page 90 Project Document) have been. It is reasonable assume that the biggest challenge to ecosystem management is going to be the buffer zone area and there is no clear hierarchy for planning or formal structure to allow planning decisions to take place at different scales (*e.g. buffer zone, forest management plan, village level*).
* The degree to which this participation will continue to the implementation to these plans – unless the structures for equitable participation are put in place then the non-agency participants will have limited avenues through which they can participate after the project.
* The need for a strategic vision and plan to guide the various planning agencies (State Hydraulic Works, Municipalities, General Directorates of Highways etc.) as well as forest villages within the buffer zone area.
* Natural resource governance within the buffer zone area (cost and benefit of conservation management, authority and responsibility for resource management, pricing and tenure of natural resources, collective decision-making structures, etc.) is still weak and this point is largely related to the three points made above.
* The capacity of local team (Local Branch Managers are very capable but overstretched) needs to be strengthened numerically and according to the needs of the Local Branch Managers in terms of the experience and skills needed on the ground.
* The Project is not sufficiently challenging inequalities and inefficiencies in the enabling the environment (policies, legal framework, etc.).
* The time available for achieving the Objectives (initial Project time frame is unrealistic).
* There is an overreliance on an alternative livelihoods trade off strategy.

**MTE concerns and recommended Project response**

**Recommendation 1**

* + **Level of local participation in the planning process,**
  + **The degree to which this participation will continue to the implementation to these plans,**

*Project engages an external facilitator to drive local community (further beyond muhtars) and civic institutional participation in the planning process.*

**Recommendation 2**

* + **The need for a strategic vision and plan to guide the various planning agencies (State Hydraulic Works, Municipalities, General Directorates of Highways etc.) as well as forest villages within the buffer zone area,**

*Current Forest Management Plans have a limited strategic vision due to the sequencing in the Project Work Plan. A strategic planning structure is necessary to include the multiplicity of interest involved in land use in the buffer Zone. The first task would be to develop the strategic vision of the buffer Zone.*

*This planning structure would also need to regularly monitor and evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of land use planning and management within the buffer Zone to ensure that management is adaptive in light of experience and changing circumstances.*

*The Project should consider the planning structure established for the Yildiz Mountains Biosphere in 2009 and see what lessons might be used to develop a buffer zone planning committee or similar body.*

**Recommendation 3**

* + **Strengthening natural resource governance within the buffer zone area (cost and benefit of conservation management, authority and responsibility for resource management, pricing and tenure of natural resources),**

*The Project should identify a small number of forest villagers and focus its attention on activities to develop pilot (experimental) village level resource management plans within the framework of the Forest Management Plan.*

*To have relevance and ownership at the Forest Village level the plan should include all aspects of the Forest Villagers livelihoods and reflect the degree of collective decision-making and conflict resolution that may exist within the local community.**An important principle should be that the unit for collective management should be as small as practicable and functionally efficient within ecological and socio-political constraints.**From a social dynamics perspective scale is an important consideration; large-scale externally imposed structures tend to be ineffective, increasing the potential for corruption, evasion of responsibility and lethargy in respect of broad participation. Where collective management structures are based on existing collective decision-making structures and are at a scale that ensures regular contact of the members, it becomes possible to enforce conformity to rules through peer pressure and control individual actions through collective sanction.*

*Some principles for developing community-based resource management are given in Annex 7 The purpose of this level of planning is to place the decision-making process (within the larger objectives of the FMP) at a level that empowers Forest Villagers to make decisions about their resource management.*

*Consideration should be given to engaging an external contractor to facilitate this process and could be linked to increasing the participation (Recommendation 1). Designing collaborative management systems involves considerable negotiation between state and community and an external facilitator can afford to take a neutral position on contentious issues in order to “broker” an agreement.*

**Recommendation 4**

* + **The capacity of local team (Local Branch Managers are very capable but overstretched),**

*Additional human resources should be made available at the level of National Park. The required skills and experience should be decided during the revision of the Project Strategy.*

**Recommendation 5**

* + **The Project is not sufficiently challenging inequalities and inefficiencies in the enabling the environment (policies, legal framework etc.)**

*Project could challenge inequalities and inefficiencies in the enabling the environment more (policies, legal framework etc.)*

*(Ex: Article 12 of the MoU signed between the Project Partners),*

*“Article 12 – The parties initiate the necessary actions to suggest changes in the present legislations to provide the implementation of experiences and outcomes which are to be obtained during or in the project.”*

*This could be in the form of a small number of pilot or experimental projects with Forest Villagers, the publication of “position papers” or “briefing papers” identifying weaknesses and inefficiencies between the policy direction and the enabling legislation, an analysis of policy and legislation constraints, etc.*

**Recommendation 6**

* + **The time available for achieving the Objectives (initial Project time frame is unrealistic)**

*On condition that there is consensus following the exercise of revising the Project Strategy the Project requests a budget neutral extension of not less than 12 months (1-2 years depending on the available funds)*

*It is unrealistic to disseminate the Project Methodology to 8 additional hot spots therefore the Project should consider the following:*

1. *Abandoning the idea of disseminating the Project to other hot spots,*
2. *Scaling down the number of hot spots by selecting 2 or 3 and concentrating on those*

*This decision should be made as soon as possible and not in the closing moments of the Project so that plans can be made in the knowledge that they have time to be implemented. Any delay in taking this decision and making the application for an extension will cause the Project to “drift” and will damage the high morale and enthusiasm of the Partners.*

**Recommendation 7**

* + **Overreliance on an alternative livelihoods trade off strategy.**

*The opportunity costs of conservation management are impacting most heavily on forest villagers and contribute significantly to rural de-population. A more balanced mix of sustainable use as well as alternative livelihoods will not only reduce vulnerability of the forest villagers but also provide incentives for the wise management of forest resources.*

*The package of support to local communities (particularly from organisations such as General Directorate of Forest-Village Relations (ORKOY) should be targeted at adding value at the local level to forest resources through processing and marketing where there is a recognised system for sustainable harvesting in place.*

**Lessons learned**

It is very hard to draw any conclusions about the Project at this point in its implementation. Too many of the activities are “works in progress” and it *would* be unfair to draw any conclusions about the success or otherwise of these activities until they have had time to work through. An obvious lesson from this and one which seems to be repeated across many GEF projects is that the timescale for interventions should be greater unless the scope of the projects is drastically scaled down. But this has been stressed repeatedly throughout the MTE and this Report.

Therefore the only lesson that the MTE will draw out from this Project is related to the Project’s design and in particular the buffer zone. It remains to be seen if the use of a buffer zone is a workable solution to supporting the KMNP. Arguably it is an interesting experiment as there is no legal definition of a buffer zone in Turkey[[1]](#footnote-1) and the term is poorly defined, if at all, in conservation literature. Without using a category of protected areas such as the IUCN Category V or VI or a Biosphere Reserve; the concept of a buffer zone to support a national park remains “fuzzy”.

However, it is interesting that the Project (or the MoEF) has sought to define the buffer zone through the Forest Management Plan. The initial assessment of the MTE is that this will not be sufficient because of the competing and conflicting authorities and interests on the land which makes up the buffer zone. Therefore, it will be necessary (in the opinion of the MTE and included as a recommendation) to have a higher coordinated planning structure as well as greater participation at the Forest Village level. Whether this can be done without specific legislation remains to be seen and the Project should be given the benefit of the doubt. After all, it has already brought together the different agencies within the MoEF for a common purpose, given more time it may bring together other agencies for the purpose of collaborative governance in the interest of achieving ecosystem, economic and social sustainability.

**Project ratings**

Project relevance Satisfactory

Country ownership/Driveness Satisfactory

Stakeholder participation Satisfactory

Cost effectiveness Satisfactory

Sustainability Satisfactory

Management arrangements Satisfactory

Identification and management of risks Satisfactory

# 1.0 Introduction

## 1.1 Project background

The first moves towards establishing the Kure Mountains Project appear to arise in the early to mid 1990s when there was considerable NGO activity taking place such as the Turkish Society for the Protection of Nature (DHKD)[[2]](#footnote-2), in collaboration with WWF Mediterranean Programme (WWF-MedPO) and a number of national experts carried out a Gap Analysis aiming to assess the biodiversity values, conservation status and threats of the Mediterranean forest ecosystems and identified the forests of Kure Mountains in Northern Turkey, as the best remaining example of the highly endangered karstic mountain areas of the "Black Sea Humid Forests" ecotype (UNDP-GEF ????).

The result of this was a proposal for a Global Environmental Facility (GEF) Medium-sized Project Development Fund[[3]](#footnote-3) in March 2001 that produced a concept for the eventual Kure Mountains Project. The general feeling was that with 50% of Turkey’s forests degraded and an identified “gap” in Turkey’s protected areas system that left forest ecosystems under-represented there was an urgent need to conserve natural forest.

This eventually led to the Government of Turkey (GoT) in its 1999 *Gift to the Earth* extending the protected areas to include an additional nine forest “hotspots” including the Kure Mountains which was declared a National Park (KMNP) in 2000 following a Turkish Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MoEF) project with support from UNDP and FAO (“*Management of National Parks and Protected Areas, Protection of Biodiversity and Rural Development*”) which conducted the initial surveys and produced general development plan including a zoning plan and basic management guidelines that led to the gazettement of the national park.

Despite this inclusion of forest “hotspots” within the national protected areas system there was still a pressing need to build management capacities, enhance management effectiveness and introduce new approaches to protected areas management. Therefore the Kure Mountains Project was designed to compliment a larger Full-sized Project funded by the World Bank and GEF *"Turkey: Biodiversity and Natural Resources Management Programme (BNRMP)” (*or GEF II) which was being executed by the Turkish Ministry of Forestry. However there were delays in starting the Kure Mountains Project resulting in it starting as the GEF II project was closing.

There is a multiplicity of agencies involved in the Project, a reflection on the institutional complexity of protected areas management and natural resource/biodiversity management in Turkey *per se.* That said, the two principal agencies involved are the General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks (GDNCNP) and the General Directorate of Forests (GDF).

## 1.2 Purpose of the evaluation

The Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) is an integral component of the UNDP GEF project cycle management. It serves as an agent of change and plays a critical role in supporting accountability. Its main objectives are:

1. To assess overall performance against the project objective and outcomes as set out in the Project Document, Project’s Logical Framework, and other related documents;
2. To assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the project;
3. To analyze critically the implementation and management arrangements of the project;
4. To assess the progress to date towards achievement of the outcomes;
5. To review planned strategies and plans for achieving the overall objective of the project within the timeframe;
6. To assess the sustainability of the project’s interventions;
7. To list and document initial lessons concerning project design, implementation and management;
8. To assess project relevance to national priorities, and;
9. To provide guidance for the future project activities and, if necessary, for the implementation and management arrangements;

The intention being that the MTE, as part of the overall GEF project cycle management and adaptive management approach, will:

* Strengthen the adaptive management and monitoring functions of the project
* Ensure accountability for the achievement of the GEF objective
* Enhance organizational and development learning
* Enable informed decision-making

The MTE is guided by the MTE Terms of Reference (ToR) and UNDP-GEF Project Monitoring and Evaluation Policies and Procedures[[4]](#footnote-4). The evaluation process is independent of UNDP, GEF and the MoEF. The opinions and recommendations in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position of the GEF, UNDP, the MoEF or the other project stakeholders, however, once accepted the MTE becomes a recognized component of the project’s documentation.

The MTE will broadly address the issues of project design and strategy, project cycle management and performance (including financial management), progress towards the objectives and how the project has responded *vis a vis* the risks and assumptions that were identified in the original project document or have materialized since as part of an adaptive management approach. These issues have been outlined below in the form of a number of questions that the MTE will attempt to answer and include *inter alia:*

* Were the risks and assumption correctly identified during the critical point of the project cycle (project development, inception phase, etc.)? Have new or different risks been identified during the project.
* Do the indicators set out in the LFM reflect a good measure of performance and effectiveness?
* Has the project had a significant impact upon the conservation management of the protected areas?
* What has been the impact on the project where risks have been realized and assumptions found to be incorrect?
* What has been the impact of the socio-economic interventions?
* Has the project had significant impact upon the enabling environment in terms of influencing policies and events both inside and outside of the immediate project area?
* Given the large number of rural villages (60 within the KMNP Buffer Zone) and the high dependence upon forest resources (70%) of local communities are the alternative livelihood strategies sufficient to absorb the opportunity costs?
* Given that modern protected areas management is as much about governance as it is about science and regulation/enforcement, is the local community of resource users sufficiently involved in the decision-making process of both the project and the future management of the national park and buffer zone or does more need to be done to develop collaborative systems of resource management?
* How is the experience gained from the project being internalized and mainstreamed through policy development?
* How effective are the institutional coordination arrangements established by the project?
* What are the risks of relying too heavily on alternative livelihoods and particularly eco-tourism as a means to offset local community opportunity costs resulting from conservation management?
* What are the implications for replication in the other project “hotspots” given the diversity of issues and the importance of building capacity of stakeholders to effectively manage resources (*i.e.* how valid is a “model” for sustainable conservation management versus a process?).
* What should the UNDP-GEF, Ministry of Environment and forestry and WWF Turkey’s future response be to ensure that the benefits of the project are internalized and made sustainable after the end of the GEF funding?

The key outputs of the MTE is the Final Report with recommendations however, the MTE Team take the view that the process of evaluating the project is also a critical output because it challenges the project and provides an opportunity to internalize any necessary changes to strategy and implementation.

The first phase of the Mid Term Evaluation (MTE) of the Enhancing Coverage and Management Effectiveness of the Subsystem of Forest Protected Areas in Turkey’s National System of Protected Areas Project[[5]](#footnote-5) (*Kure Mountains Project*) that is being implemented by the UNDP Turkey through a National Execution modality, Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MoEF) being the Executing Agency for the project, took place from the 18th October 2010 to the 9th November 2010. The first phase of the MTE involved examining the project documentation, field visits and consulting stakeholders. The *Aide Memoire* (Annex 4) provides the preliminary findings of the evaluation that were presented at the Feedback Workshop on the 8th November 2010. The second phase, consisting of further analysis and the MTE Report production follows on from this.

The MTE provides evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful. It must be clearly understood by project partners and applicable to the remaining period. The MTE was carried out in line with GEF principles on:

* Independence
* Impartiality
* Transparency
* Disclosure
* Ethically
* Partnership
* Competencies and Capacities
* Credibility
* Utility

The MTE has provided disaggregated data where possible, particularly with regard to gender.

The MTE was carried out by a Team of two external evaluators, independent from both the policy-making process and the delivery and management of assistance. The ToR for the evaluators is provided in Annex 1 and a brief resume of the MTE Team’s is given in Annex 5.

The MTE consisted of 3 days desktop study of available project documentation, 10 days in country consisting of field trips, interviews, meetings etc. 5 days for analysis and report writing and 2 days to incorporate corrections, comments and suggestions giving a total 40 person days within the Team.

The following analysis constitutes the MTE’s understanding of the project. It is based upon the history of the project cycle as it is represented in the project documentation, field visits and interviews with the various stakeholders.

Therefore, the MTE has reviewed the project’s performance over its lifetime. It has considered what has been the impact of the project and how has it contributed to the GEF *Objectives*. Therefore the MTE has:

* Assessed the effectiveness of the individual *activities* (monitoring performance);
* Assessed the effectiveness of the various activities in achieving the *Outcome* (monitoring the impact), and;
* Assessed the effectiveness of the various *Outcomes* on achieving the *Objective* (monitoring the change).

The analysis of this has allowed the MTE to comment on the:

* Implementation – did the project do what it planned to do (*i.e.* is the plan still untested because the implementation was poor);
* Effectiveness – did the plan meet the predicted objectives (*i.e.* has the plan been tested and found to have flaws), and;
* Validation of the model’s parameters and relationships (*i.e.* which assumptions, variables and interactions were correct).

Based upon this the MTE can make justified[[6]](#footnote-6) statements about the projects progress towards anticipated results and the *GEF Objective*.

# 2.0 The project and its development context

## 2.1 Project start and its duration

The *Enhancing Coverage and Management Effectiveness of the Subsystem of Forest Protected Areas in Turkey’s National System of Protected Areas Project* (PIMS 1988) was approved by GEF in March 2008 and signed by UNDP and the GoT in May 2008. The Inception Workshop was organized in August 2008 and the Inception Phase lasted 10 months (from May 2008 to March 2009). During this time the project team was hired and the project offices were established. The project life time is 3 years giving an anticipated closure date of May 2011). The updated total budget is US$ 2,650,000, disaggregated to; GEF contribution US$ 972,000, GoT (in cash) US$ 160,000 (the budget now states US$ 512,000 an additional US$ 352,000) and US$ 1,435,000 (in kind), and WWF-Turkey US$ 83,000 (in kind).

## 2.2 Implementation status

On the whole the Project has been performing very well and the speed and efficiency with which activities have been implemented is acknowledged by the MTE, as is the obvious commitment of all the Team members.

Despite a protracted Inception Phase (lasting for 10 months) the project has made good progress showing a high degree of efficiency in its implementation.

The relationship between the different Project Partners appears to be very effective. One of the notable successes of the Inception Phase has been the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the key institutional partners and a national NGO (WWF Turkey).

## 2.3 Project context

Turkey is transforming from a heavily centralized state system with a heavily managed economy with state enterprises toward a more decentralized governance with greater emphasis on local democracy and a free market economy. This process has been ongoing and necessitates considerable changes within the state institutions and their relationship with local civic institutions and communities. It is important to place the project within this context and the broad package of overall reforms that are taking place at the national level. The important point being that Turkey has been, and continues to, undergo a considerable and rapid economic and socio-political change (UNDP, GoT, 2010) within which this project is framed.

One of the challenges in reviewing a project such as the Kure Mountains National Park Project and particularly the buffer zone establishment is in understanding the dynamics that are driving not only the process but also the communities and agencies that they are interacting with. The land use process is being driven by ecological, socio-administrative and economic *drivers.* These driving forces are operating in different time scales for example; driving forces that effect change in community perceptions and values operate over a much longer time frame than the time frames expected by project cycles. This inconsistency sets up a tension between “*project*” versus “*process*”. In natural resource management we are further influenced by even greater ecological time scales, which because they are so long we tend to try to fix them in time or cast them aside as unmanageable (Adapted from Murphree 2005).

Bearing this in mind the MTE has tried to measure the achievements of the project by where it is now in the reform process and where it is likely to go in the future. For instance; the level of participation by local villagers may not, when measured against a number of criteria (*e.g.* authority and responsibility or costs and benefits of conservation management), be satisfactory now; but compared with what it was prior to the project beginning, the MTE can reasonably judge that the project should be rated as satisfactory on this issue and is making good progress.

## 2.4 Problems that the project seeks to address

The Project Document builds a reasonable case for the conservation of forest ecosystems in Turkey identifying issues of biodiversity conservation, ecosystem functions and social benefits of Turkey’s forests as well as establishing that these areas are under considerable pressure with as much as 50% of the forested areas being degraded.

The Project document sets out some of the causative factors which the project will need to engage with in order to achieve a successful outcome as defined by the GEF OP#3 Forest Ecosystems. These are restated here:

*“The main management challenges or barriers confronting the government in extending effective protection regimes at the eight hot spots are:*

1. *Systemic lack of capacity: including:*
   1. *Poor definition of the optimum role of stakeholders in protected area management to optimize management effectiveness;*
   2. *Poor institutional organization and coordination - there is a degree of duplication and ambiguity, and lack of coordinated efforts between the Ministry of Environment and Forest Protection, the Ministry of Agriculture and the General Directorate of Environmental Impact Assessment and Planning (GDEIAP); and*
   3. *Limited and inadequate zoning of protected areas to facilitate multiple environment and development objectives;*
2. *Institutional and individual capacities, including:*
   1. *Weak capacity to develop a detailed strategic and operational plan to ensure cost-effective deployment of financial and human resources;*
   2. *Limited business planning and knowledge management;*
   3. *GDEIAP does not have the capacity to assess ecological impact of allocating certain lands to agriculture preventing them from completing territorial land use plans and;*
   4. *Collection and trade of wild plants is under the authority of Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) by taking permission from MOEF which is responsible for species protection; however, MoA provincial directorates that should supervise collection and trade do not have proper mandate; do not have technical ability to put in place a sustainable harvest regime; do not have capacity to monitor collection and trade;*
   5. *Capacity of locals and PA authority to work together to monitor and check illegal activity is weak; and*
3. *Information/ knowledge gaps, including:*
   1. *Biological information that can provide baseline data for developing appropriate management plans for the park and for forest areas, monitoring subsequent ecological changes, and a detailed sense of the intensity and location of threats facing biodiversity is missing;*
   2. *There is no comprehensive understanding of the extent of harvest of non-wood forest resources, its potential to generate cash income and its potential to inflict harm;*
   3. *No knowledge of alternatives to harvesting wood for sale or self-consumption.*”

An important observation on the Project Document is that, while it identifies the “problem” as being one of an adaptive challenge rather than a technical challenge it is then very weak in setting out a process that will facilitate the stakeholders in responding to a *collective action challenge* and appears to advocate a number of discrete and technical approaches which by themselves are unlikely to bring about the systemic changes that are needed.

## 2.5 Immediate and development objectives of the project

The Project’s objectives as stated in the Project document are:

**Objective:** Enhance coverage and management effectiveness of the Forest Protected Areas with a focus on KMNP and establishing a Buffer Zone and replicating the experiences in 9 other Forest Hot Spots in Turkey.

In order to achieve this; the Project aims to achieve the following outcomes:

**Outcome 1:** Cost-effective conservation management approaches for forest protected areas are implemented at KMNP

**Outcome 2:** Sustainable natural resource management is demonstrated in buffer area of KMNP; and

**Outcome 3:** Lessons learned from demonstration work at KMNP are disseminated to the other forest hot spots in Turkey, contributing to the maturation of the national protected areas system.

## 2.6 Main stakeholders

The Project document lists 23 stakeholders[[7]](#footnote-7) and provides a comprehensive analysis of stakeholders including setting out the means by which they will participate in the project. However, the stakeholder analysis does sufficiently differentiate between those stakeholders in the project and those stakeholders in the resources that are the sum of the natural values of the Kure Mountains National Park and buffer zone. Indeed, although the matrix of stakeholders and their roles and responsibilities in the project does not specifically state that there is any ranking implied “representatives of local communities (Villages)” is nineteenth in the list below “Universities” and “local press and media”. In short; the stakeholder analysis did not sufficiently differentiate between *primary*, *secondary* and *tertiary* stakeholders. The implications of this are discussed in the Findings and Conclusions of this Report.

A further weakness in the stakeholder analysis is that it did not pick up on the issue of migration from Forest Villages to urban centres as an issue that needs to be addressed and could be part a force for change. This dispersed Kure Mountains Forest Villagers working within the urban centres represents a significant interest in the area and is manifest of the difficulties of rural livelihoods in forest villages and the opportunity costs of sustainable ecosystem management. Indeed, their return to the area could cause a significant impact, for good or for bad, on the buffer zone.

## 2.7 Results expected

The Project is framed within the GEF Operational Programme #3 which to a large extent will be the median against which the Projects performance will be judged. GEF OP#3 defines the:

**Programme Outcomes -** a successful outcome is one where globally important biodiversity has been conserved or sustainably used in a specific forest ecosystem;

And the programme **objectives**:

**Conservation** or in-situ protection, will be sought through protection of primary/old growth and ecologically mature secondary forest ecosystems, by establishing and strengthening systems of conservation areas, focusing primarily on tropical and temperate ecosystems in areas at risk; and

**Sustainable use** forest management will be sought by combining production, socio-economic, and biodiversity goals. The Operational Strategy calls for a range of uses from strict protection on reserves through various forms of multiple uses with conservation easements, to full scale use.

## 2.8 Analysis of the situation with regard to outcomes, outputs and partnership strategy

The Project’s strategy is broadly set out as developing the management capacity of KMNP and in particular developing a Management Plan for the KMNP at the same time as the ecosystem resources and functions are being assessed. To support this, a range of new management tools would be introduced and utilised. The focus was specifically aimed at including greater representation of forest ecosystems within Turkey’s protected areas system and developing the conservation management capacity of agencies for forest ecosystems.

Integral to this strategy would be the development of a buffer zone established around the National Park to affect the land use there by placing the emphasis on managing for the ecosystem. Fundamental to this process would be a shift in the focus of the General Directorate of Forestry’s (GDF) management through the Forest Management Plan (FMP) from one geared towards production forestry to a more holistic approach designed to conserve a greater range of ecosystem goods and services.

To support this process a number of livelihood developments would take place, mostly, in the buffer zone and mostly related to ecotourism as a means to offset the opportunity costs and provide alternative livelihoods for forest villagers. Furthermore, both the national park and buffer zone planning were to be carried out with broad stakeholder participation. To support this, the Project would seek *Pan Parks* status for the National Park.

Once demonstrated in the Kure Mountains National Park and Buffer Zone the approach or “model” could be transferred to the other 8 forest hotspots in Turkey thus expanding the effectiveness of forest protected areas management at a national level.

The MTE considers that this was a reasonable approach but there were a number of weaknesses that are outlined here. These are:

* The Project’s strategy did not sufficiently define a buffer zone conceptually and as a result the buffer zone was defined through the somewhat narrow focus of the ecosystem rather than a socio-ecosystem requiring a collective action by all the interested parties. Thus any strategic vision might not be common to all the affected parties.
* The Project Strategy did not place sufficient emphasis on issues of governance (within the system it is seeking to establish)[[8]](#footnote-8). Governance is the means for achieving direction, control, and coordination that determines the effectiveness of management (Eagles 2008). In a strict nature reserve (such as the National Park) governance can be relatively simple as the state is the sole executive (decision-making body), authority and is directly responsible for the implementation of management and enforcement of rules. It should also be noted that under this regime the state also bears all of the direct management costs although local communities are often expected to bear the opportunity costs.

However, this becomes more complicated when there are contested resources and areas and/or included private lands and insufficient financial, material and human resources available to the state to carry out its management role; a description that more accurately fits the situation within the buffer zone.

The arguments for more inclusive approaches to managing the buffer zone are also made stronger when we consider ecosystem resilience. Ecosystem “resilience can be defined as the capacity of a system to undergo disturbance while maintaining both its existing functions and controls and its capacity for future change” (Gunderson 2000).

However, in complex socio-ecological systems, such as the buffer zone, it might also be argued that “resilience is determined not only by a systems ability to buffer or absorb shocks, but also by its capacity for learning and self-organisation to adapt to change” (Gunderson and Holling 2002). Therefore a governance system that allows for a broader participation in planning and management of the buffer zone (and to an extent the National Park where there are shared responsibilities) might arguably be judged more resilient than one which has a narrow scientific focus.

The importance of this is clear when we consider that the buffer zone (and by association the National Park) is not facing a technical challenge but rather an adaptive challenge. That is; no one technology or the introduction of a technology (*e.g.* alternative livelihoods or ecosystem-based management) will reverse any current damaging effects of unsustainable or illegal activity. Neither is the enforcement of prohibitive measures, sometimes being ignored, practicable from a financial, social and in some cases ecological perspective. What is required is a broad behavioural change within the stakeholders towards a common objective (*i.e.* the conservation or sustainable management of biodiversity resources and ecosystem functions within the buffer zone).

* There was an over-reliance upon an alternative livelihoods approach within the buffer zone in order to reduce dependency upon the forest resources. The buffer zone local rural communities’ (Forest Villagers) needs are very closely linked with the sustainability and well-being of the natural resource base. Any premise that the local communities have little interest in natural resource management and must therefore be offered external incentives or alternatives to encourage them to participate or to exclude them in its management are baseless. In fact their very future wellbeing depends upon their participation and the sound conservation management of these resources. The buffer zone communities regard biodiversity and other natural values as an important part of their *livelihood* and its sustainable use is of real concern to them. What is at stake is the nature of their participation. Passive participation will incur significant time costs, and alternative livelihoods could expose them to significant economic risks (*e.g.* unproven markets or market failure) which they may be unwilling to incur.
* There should have been a clearer statement in the Project’s intervention strategy recognising that the Project’s intervention would need to place greater emphasis on *process* and that, given the issues that the Project was addressing, a three year implementation period was unrealistic.

# 3.0 Findings and Conclusions

On the whole the Project has been performing very well and the speed and efficiency with which activities have been implemented is acknowledged by the MTE, as is the obvious commitment of all the Team members. However, as has been discussed earlier, the Project is dealing with a complexity of socio-political, economic and ecological issues and is operating over a very large geographic area for which the resources available in the field could be strengthened. The relationship between the different Project Partners appears to be very effective particularly as it relates to the institutional stakeholders and NGOs.

The Project is on track without any significant delay and has achieved a number of important successes that are listed here:

* Establishing multi agencies approach to Project implementation – the project has gone a considerable way to building linkages between the various agencies within the MoEF. Arguably the compartmentalisation of the ecosystem management throughout a large agency such as the MoEF can lead to differing agendas and different management priorities. The project has to a large extent brought these agencies together to address the multiplicity of issues that make up the sustainable management of an ecosystem.
* Participation of a national NGO as a significant partner – the project has succeeded in bringing a significant non-governmental partner into the implementation of the project. This marks an important milestone in Turkey where government agencies have tended to be exclusive rather than inclusive in their approach to resource management and project implementation. This approach is in line with the national-level reforms taking place and it is important to stress that the experience gained during this project, in particular the trust that is built, is an important outcome.
* Broadening the objectives of Forest Management Planning – forest management is changing in Turkey from a very narrow production focus to a wider and more holistic approach that includes the larger ecosystem services and other natural values. The project has been supporting this process of changing management priorities and approaches.
* Project has begun to increase local stakeholder participation – historically forest management in Turkey has been the preserve of the General Directorate of Forests (GDF) and there has been little local community participation in the management planning and implementation. As discussed above, this approach is changing and the project has to some extent been driving this change at the local level. Building strong and equitable linkages with the forest villages is critical to this process as the GDF divests itself of much of its enterprise activities and focuses more on planning and regulation as will be inevitable under the economic reforms towards a free market economy. The importance of this process to natural resource management should not be underestimated because the forest villages offer an alternative tenure model to the normal single owner state or single owner private models that are normally recognised and yet do not always suit the diverse needs of ecosystem conservation management.
* Implementation in accordance with rules and regulations – the Project Management Unit (PMU) appear to be familiar with the UNDP methods of operation and are very efficient in ensuring that administratively the project is well run.
* Activities are progressing well – activities are carried out in a timely and cost effective way.
* There is considerable good will among Project Partners and Participants – there appears to be a genuine enthusiasm for the project and mutual respect between the partners and participants. This last point is very important because *trust* is a significant factor in developing new approaches to natural resource management.
* The General Directorate of Afforestation (GDA) has used tree species of local providence and non-timber value in their afforestation programme.
* The Project has promoted a very high profile that appears to have put (and kept) sustainable forest management on the “political” agenda as well as reaching out to a broader audience.
* Strengthening protected areas concept in climate change mitigation and adaptation in Turkey (organizing a workshop, drafting a national strategy for protected areas and climate change). However, the MTE notes that developing a system for the equitable and sustainable management of forests should remain the priority of the Project and while such a system will undoubtedly contribute considerable to any national climate change mitigation strategy the Project is working to an extremely tight schedule and budget and there is a risk that becoming involved in issues such as climate change might distract from the Project’s core objectives (although this does not appear to be the case it is important to sound a word of caution).

However the MTE has identified number of risks and assumptions that make these successes vulnerable and therefore challenges the **sustainability** of the Project Outcomes given the project has already passed the halfway mark and has only seven months remaining. These concerns are related to:

* The level of local participation in the planning process – it is clear that there is a high degree of consultation taking place but the degree to which non-agency participants can influence the decision-making process that constitutes planning is limited. It is questionable how effective the Local Committees (page 90 Project Document) have been. It is reasonable assume that the biggest challenge to ecosystem management is going to be the buffer zone area and there is no clear hierarchy for planning or formal structure to allow planning decisions to take place at different scales (*e.g. buffer zone, forest management plan, village level*).
* The degree to which this participation will continue to the implementation to these plans – unless the structures for equitable participation are put in place then the non-agency participants will have limited avenues through which they can participate after the project.
* The need for a strategic vision and plan to guide the various planning agencies (State Hydraulic Works, Municipalities, General Directorates of Highways etc.) as well as forest villages within the buffer zone area.
* Natural resource governance within the buffer zone area (cost and benefit of conservation management, authority and responsibility for resource management, pricing and tenure of natural resources, collective decision-making structures, etc.) is still weak and this point is largely related to the three points made above.
* The capacity of local team (Local Branch Managers are very capable but overstretched) needs to be strengthened numerically and according to the needs of the Local Branch Managers in terms of the experience and skills needed on the ground.
* The Project is not sufficiently challenging inequalities and inefficiencies in the enabling the environment (policies, legal framework, etc.).
* The time available for achieving the Objectives (initial Project time frame is unrealistic).
* There is an overreliance on an alternative livelihoods trade off strategy.

## 3.1 Project formulation

The Project Document makes a very clear case for an intervention in the KMNP as well as the need to influence the land use practices immediately surrounding the national park. This much is clear, as are the outcomes that are expected from the Project in order to achieve this. However, the strategy that it then goes on to describe, the *game plan*, is often confusing. In their conceptualization, global conservation strategies tend to gloss over the magnitude of political changes involved (Redclift, 1984) because as soon as the Project moved from the National Park to the areas surrounding it then it is inevitable that it would be dealing with the raft of formal and informal arrangements that control how people use biological resources, landscape, natural heritage, or whatever term we wish to place upon these resources. As such the project being designed would need to address the issues of governance. Distilled to their very essence these might be categorised as issues relating to tenure and pricing of natural resources, the authority and responsibility for their management and the costs and benefits of existing practices and the likely impact of any changes to the system in where these costs fell and who would feel the benefits.

It is reasonable to question whether a similar project being planned today given the changes that have taken place since this Project was first conceptualised might have placed greater emphasis on the issue of governance or might have looked for an “off-the-shelf” solution such as a Protected Landscape or Biosphere Reserve[[9]](#footnote-9) which have reasonable models for governance that might guide the Forest Management Plans.

What is clear is that although the Project Document does raise issues about rural depopulation in the buffer zone it never downgrades the threat from Forest Villagers or recognises the hardships and pressures that might drive communities that have been resident in an area for many hundreds of years (500 years according some sources) to abandon their links with the land and move to urban areas in search of livelihoods. This is what the MTE is considering when it states that there were conceptual weaknesses in the Project Document.

## 3.2 Project relevance (Satisfactory)

The relevance of the project area to Operational Programme #3 Forest Ecosystems was reasonably made in the Project document and is repeated here:

“*The Küre Mountains fall in one of the Global 200 Ecoregions identified by WWF and the IUCN, namely the Caucasus and North Anatolia temperate forest. They are an extension of the Eastern Black Sea Mountain system to the west. The western section of the Küre Mountains, which lies in the western Black Sea region, has been identified as one of the 122 Important Plant Areas (IPA) in Turkey, by a recent WWF-Turkey study jointly carried out with forty scientists (IPA No.25). The global significance of the Küre Mountains’ biodiversity has been highlighted by its inclusion in WWF’s list of European forest hotspots for conservation. According to a WWF report, the site represents the best remaining example of the sub-eco-region identified as ‘deciduous and coniferous forests of North Anatolia’ as well as being the best remaining example of the highly endangered karstic mountain areas of the “Black Sea Humid Forests” ecotype (WWF 2001). Karstic areas are typically poor in vegetative cover, while the Küre Mountains, with their 1000 m thick Jurassic-Cretaceous era limestones not only demonstrate typical karstic properties, but are also covered with lush forests due to the humid climate.”*

There is also a convincing case for the other 8 forest “hotspots” to which the project intends to include in the outcomes.

Furthermore, the project is addressing forest ecosystem conservation through protection by prohibition in the National Park and by sustainable use in the buffer zone.

The Project objectives are also broadly in line with the UNDP-GoT Country Programme which places considerable emphasis on:

* Democratic governance;
* Poverty reduction and MDG achievement; and
* Environment and sustainable development[[10]](#footnote-10).

While the Project could drive these processes harder the fact that it is increasing stakeholder participation, encouraging collaborative governance and providing a platform for greater civil society participation in resource planning suggest that it is broadly in line with the policies of the GoT and the GoT-UNDP Country Programme.

## 3.3 Implementation approach

As stated earlier in this report the implementation as it relates to the execution of the Work Plan has been remarkable. Furthermore the Project has forged some significant partnership arrangements between the different agencies and between civil society organisations, in particular NGOs. To an extent there has been greater involvement of Forest Villagers, but not to the level that might be expected as has already been discussed.

There are a number of weaknesses in the logical framework matrix (LFM) that make it difficult to monitor and evaluate the implementation. The indicators are generally weak and reflect the deliverables but give no real measure of the process that is taking place.

To an extent this has affected the Project in as much as things are getting done but quite often, and in particular when dealing with local communities, there is more to be learned from what doesn’t work than from what is working. In many ways this is the basis if *adaptive management*. Simply put;

*“Remember the two benefits of failure. First, if you do fail, you learn what doesn't work; and second, the failure gives you the opportunity to try a new approach.”[[11]](#footnote-11)*

This appears to have also affected the way that lessons were carried over from the BNRMP where it might have been more useful to focus on what had *not* worked than what *had*. That said the Project still did not pick up on some of the successes of the BNRMP as well, in particular the protected areas Management Unit (these were disbanded after the end of the GEF II project despite being a considerable success).

This situation can be summed up in the following way. When challenged on a point the project’s response will often be “*we can’t do that because the Law does not allow it*”. Yet GEF projects and this one in particular, are about changing the enabling environment. While it is not within the remit of the Project to change or create laws, it is certainly the case that the Project can develop briefing notes and position papers that can inform higher level policy decisions. There is a tendency within the Project to prepare plans, procedures and strategies in line with the existing legislation framework rather than trying different approaches in recognition that circumstances have changed. Indeed there seems to have been thinking along this line, to experiment within the Project, during the Inception Phase because the MoU between the Partners included *“Article 12 – The parties initiate the necessary actions to suggest changes in the present legislations to provide the implementation of experiences and outcomes which are to be obtained during or in the project[[12]](#footnote-12).”* Clearly someone was thinking strategically about adaptive management.

In many ways this is a result of insufficient time and the inflexibilities of log frame planning. Although the LFM is probably the most effective planning tool it does place constraints on a project and can become inflexible preventing adaptive management from taking place. This is more so when there is a very short time frame for implementation.

## 3.4 Use of technical assistance

The Project has used external technical assistance (TA) for a number of purposes (protected areas management planning, business planning, protected areas financing, *et al.)*. The MTE considers that the choice of international experts was very reasonable and the standard of work was to a very high quality. However, the MTE considers that some of these TA were brought in at too early a stage. Certainly this is the case for the Business Planning Expert. However, good use was made of the TA given the circumstances (the TA was engaged before there was sufficient data collected from the surveys) and the Project has recovered well from this but thought should be given to bringing the TA back to facilitate the development of the Kure Mountains National Park Business Plan.

The MTE does feel that better use could be made of TA in future in as much as they should be more closely integrated into the Project and rather than delivering studies and reports they might be better used to facilitate the solving of complex issues. For instance, the TA for Protected Areas management Planning might have been better used to facilitate the participatory planning process in the buffer zone.

The impact of the international TA will also, to a large part, be determined on how much their inputs are able to influence the State agencies outside the confines of the Project. For instance, on issues of protected areas financing; the *Report on the Sustainable Financing of Protected Areas in the Caucasus Region prepared for WWF Turkey*, (Thomas 2009), provides a number of very clear recommendations for structural adjustments in the ways that the protected areas system is financed in Turkey. It is too early to judge to what degree these recommendations will be integrated into the Ministry’s policies however the PMU together with the Steering Committee should consider how this can best be achieved during the remaining lifetime of the Project.

The Project has engaged TA to carry out the planning process in both the National Park and the buffer zone. The MTE believes that the TA has the competencies necessary to carry out the work and it is too early for the MTE to evaluate this component but it is important that the Project and the GDF and GDNCNP use the TA not just to carry out the surveys and develop the plans but also to facilitate the process and internalise the experience as much as is practicable.

## 3.5 Country ownership/Driveness (Satisfactory)

The Project appears to have a very high profile within the MoEF which in itself is a measure of the degree of country “ownership”. However, further evidence that the process is being driven by the Ministry can be seen by examining the recent Forestry Sector Plans, in particular the 9th Forestry Sector Plan and a FAO assessment of the direction of Forestry Sector Plans in Turkey that states:

“*Recent priorities of the Forestry Sector Master Plan have been:*

* *Conservation of forestlands and resources;*
* *Management of great part of forest areas for wood production purposes;*
* *Rehabilitation and utilization of vast degraded forest lands by establishment and Management of forest plantations; and*
* *Establishment and management of national parks and protected areas.*

*With the assistance of the World Bank, the Ministry of Forestry of Turkey carried out a forestry sector review between 1997 and 2000. The main objectives of the review was to*

1. *Develop strategies to improve the standard of living of 7.2 million low-income forest dwellers who largely depend for their livelihood upon forest resources, and*
2. *Foster rehabilitation of forest resources and their sustainable management which may conform major economic and environmental benefits including conservation of biodiversity.*

*Amongst other recommendations, the review recommended maximizing the potential of forestry to contribute to poverty reduction for forest-dependent communities. It also called for a more integrated approach to rural development. Recent work by the Ministry of Environment & Forestry has been to renew and update Forestry Master Plan (covering1990-2009 period) to better address the priorities and elements of national forest programmes as identified in the international arena (IPF/IFF/UNFF). Recent areas being considered for policy reform include:*

* *The development and implementation of multipurpose (functional) planning;*
* *The management of forest resources by paying increased attention to environmental and socioeconomic values and services of the forests; and*
* *Promoting the involvement and contributions of local people and other stakeholders*.”[[13]](#footnote-13)

## 3.6 Stakeholder participation (Satisfactory)

The Project has made strenuous efforts to increase stakeholder participation both in the National Park and the buffer zone. However, the MTE considers that while local stakeholders are participating to an extent, this very often takes the form of consultation rather than their direct participation in the planning process. At the end of the day one of the main outputs of this Project will be two land use plans – the National Park and the 17 Forest Management Plans for the buffer zone. These plans, in particular the buffer zone plans will largely determine the future of the many Forest Villagers who live in the buffer zone.

The focus of these plans, therefore, needs to be much broader than the ecosystem and include a range of issues such as the cost and benefits of conservation management, the tenure and pricing of the natural resources and the authority and responsibility for natural resource management. While the Project is going some way to including Forest Villagers in the planning process when this comes down to the village area level then there should be a clearer planning hierarchy that allows villagers to decide within a broad framework and agreed objectives how they achieve sustainable ecosystem management at this level. In effect the planning process should be empowering Forest Villagers to make reasonable decisions about resource use at the Forest Village level within an agreed framework of the overall Forest Management Plan (an example of participatory land use planning and some resources is given in Annex 8).

An important facet of the buffer zone is that the forest resources are to a large extent treated as a common pool property by the Forest Villagers but they have little influence over how these resources are managed. In many ways they have little influence over their future. The Project Document never asked the simple question of whether the establishment of the National Park had increased out-migration from the Forest Villagers over the past ten years. This may not be the case but the issue of rural depopulation in the Forest Villages closest to the National Park is a very real issue. The State Planning Organisation 9th Development Plan 2007 – 2013 states that “the Government will withdraw from production of commercial goods and services and strengthen its policy making, regulating and supervisory functions”. In terms of conservation and supporting this process of reform, it is critically important that such common property regimes that might have existed in areas such as the Kure Mountains Forest Villages are formally recognised as effective property regimes (in addition to single state or single private and corporate ownership) for the purpose of ecosystem management.

Perhaps the single largest criticism of the Project is that by focusing on alternative livelihoods[[14]](#footnote-14) it has underestimated the importance of empowering the Forest Villagers by building social capital and engaging thoroughly with them in the village-level planning process. Dismissing outwards migration as “the draw of the big city” risks overlooking the very real concerns that villagers have about the future of their communities and their ability to influence that future. It is important that the economic gains from community-based resource management or alternatives such as eco-tourism are not overplayed. In certain circumstances the income generated by sustainable use of biodiversity can be extraordinary. But in most instances, utilisation of wild products (both consumptive and non-consumptive) offers no more than modest sustainable and secure incomes to local communities. That said; linking the economic benefit with the management of the resources has the effect of substantially empowering local communities, particularly women, and producing significant and lasting social capital. Furthermore, rural communities are quite capable of making the calculations and trading the size of benefit for the security of tenure and opportunity to determine their futures.

Alternative livelihoods imply that the Forest Villagers are disengaged from the process of managing the forest resources – because they have alternatives. Murphree *et al* noted that “*the delivery of the products of professional science and technology to rural communities has consistently been marked by asymmetrical relationships*” and that “*firstly, science and technology are associated with power – the entire power apparatus of government, international and national development agencies, private capital and bureaucracy – which determines in large part what rural communities can or cannot do. The second aspect is a pervasive assumption of the inherent superiority of professional science and technology over the abilities of rural people to understand and manage the resource base on which they depend for their livelihood*” (Murphree, *et al,* 1998)

In many ways, this gets to the heart of what the Project is trying to achieve in the buffer zone (and by the Project’s own admission the future of the National Park is heavily dependent upon what takes place in the buffer zone). While civic authorities and local Forest Villagers have to some extent participated in the Project (clearly there is still considerable enthusiasm and goodwill) the role of the Project is to put in place some sort of planning structure that will incorporate all the views of the stakeholders into a strategic and common vision for the future and will carry on after the life of the Project. Without this there is no mechanism that can collectively make decisions about planning issues (ecosystem or otherwise) that can be broadly applied at the level of the buffer zone and translated into specific activities and actions at the Forest Village level.

Before leaving this subject the MTE makes one last point. The Forest Management Plans have a 20 – 25 year time horizon which would normally be associated with a short timber rotation. However, from a management perspective it is important to recognise that conservation, especially as it relates to the buffer zone (which is essentially a *de facto* protected area), is taking place where three principle drivers collide – the economic, socio-political and the ecological. Therefore, the planning is taking place in multiple fields such as ecology, economics, natural resource management, politics, business and the social sciences. In these fields there are a large and unquantifiable number of known and potential variables, all subject to continual change, all interacting with each other in ways that may be predictable or non-predictable. Applying science to the problems will make no difference to our inability to predict precisely or accurately given the complexity of multivariate, non-linear, cause and effect relationships[[15]](#footnote-15). Therefore, it is imperative to the success of the buffer zone (however success may be defined) that these plans are adaptive in nature. While tree growth may be measured in decades, social, economic and political/administrative drivers of change are much more immediate. Without some sort of inclusive planning structure the Forest Management Plans will be at the mercy of events.

This issue has been raised by the International Expert on Protected Areas Planning in the report “*Outline of a Kure Mountains Conservation, Landscape Management and Sustainable Development Strategy – A Vision for the Kure Mountains National Park and Buffer Zone”[[16]](#footnote-16)* and it is imperative that the Project acts on this report. In addition to this there is the experience from the EU-funded Yildiz Mountains Biosphere Project which was effectively addressing the same issues as the Kure Mountains Project faces in the buffer zone. While the model (*i.e.* a buffer zone and a Biosphere Reserve) may be different, the principles and approaches will have much in common.

## 3.7 Replication approach

The two management plans (Forest Management Plans totalling 17 in the buffer zone and the National Park Management Plan) are currently being developed (with an anticipated delivery date of April 2011) and it was not possible for the MTE to assess the potential of these for replication in and around other protected areas in Turkey. Management planning of wildlife reserves in 8 other forest hotspots involved rapid ecological and social assessments before the management planning process.

It would be reasonably safe to say that as long as the process, principles and experience are transferred to other protected areas then the project is providing valuable experience which can be replicated in other protected areas. That said, the MTE sounds a word of caution. While there are a number of discrete technologies and methodologies that are introduced by the Project that are easily transferable; of equal or more important value is the trust and shared experience that can be gained from participatory planning. While this is difficult to measure, it is not easily transferred or replicated.

As was noted in the Findings and Conclusions introduction; with regards to protected areas sustainable financing, at least one measure of replication is the degree to which the experience and lessons feedback to inform policy and even institutional reform within the key agencies.

## 3.8 Cost-effectiveness (Satisfactory)

The guidance on cost effectiveness in GEF biodiversity projects[[17]](#footnote-17) might make sense in simple accounting terms but leaves much to be desired in respect of evaluating projects that are interacting with complex socio-ecological systems. If measured by the incremental cost criteria then it is simple enough to state that the benefits from this project would not have occurred without the GEF financing. However, at the midterm of the Project it is not possible to judge whether the outcomes will meet or exceed the expected outcomes with any real certainty, and benchmarking biodiversity projects is less than useful.

Therefore the MTE considers the incremental costs approach as the most reasonable measure and believes that this project would not have taken place when it did and taking the approach as far as it has, without GEF funding and has therefore contributed towards speeding a process that arguably has a time limit in terms of loss of natural values such as biodiversity, landscape and ecosystem functions.

## 3.9 Sustainability (Satisfactory)

The MTE has already stated that the timeframe for the implementation of this Project is inadequate and this makes it extremely difficult to judge the likelihood of the Project making a sustainable impact.

To a large extent the Project’s strategy depended upon a number of deliverables and introducing a number of new approaches to protected areas management (*e.g.* Buffer Zone Management, Rapid Assessment and Prioritization of Protected Area Management (RAPPAM), the METT - WB/WWF Tracking Tool for Reporting Progress at Protected Area Sites, High Conservation Value Forests (HCVF), Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR), Reporting Progress Towards Good Forest management at a Landscape Scale, Pan Parks, etc.). While these are all useful tools, the Project document did not clearly differentiate between a *technical* challenge and an *adaptive* challenge. That is; the *answers* lay not in the introduction of new technologies or methodologies but rather in the way that individuals and institutions relate to each other and how they will approach a *collective* challenge – from the narrow perspective of self interest or institutional agenda or through resolving a problem in order to achieve a common vision[[18]](#footnote-18).

Indeed, it can be argued that “*any belief that sustainability can be precisely defined is flawed. It is a contested concept, and so represents neither a fixed set of practices or technologies, nor a model to describe or impose on the world. Defining what we are trying to achieve is part of the problem, as each individual has different values. For us to prescribe a concrete set of technologies, practices or policies would be to exclude future options, undermining the notion of sustainability itself. Sustainable protected area management is, therefore, not so much a specific strategy as it is an approach to understanding complex ecological and social relationships in rural areas*” (Pimbert and Pretty 1997).

However, if we take the approach that in complex socio-ecological systems, such as the buffer zone and the National Park “*resilience is determined not only by a systems ability to buffer or absorb shocks, but also by its capacity for learning and self-organisation to adapt to change*” as described by Gunderson and Holling (2002) we might ask the question; *is the Project putting such a system in place?*

On this basis the MTE believes that the Project is moving in the right direction. Providing the Project is able to bring Forest Villagers and other local stakeholders into the planning process, particularly in the buffer zone, in a meaningful way; then the MTE will argue that the Project’s outcomes are likely to be sustained after the end of the GEF Project. This connection between participation of Forest Villagers and the Municipalities in determining sustainable outcomes of the planning process was summed up by a comment from a participant in the recent EU-funded Yildiz Mountains Biosphere Reserve Project who remarked “*if you don’t have a seat at the table, then it is very likely that you are on the menu!”* Therefore the MTE considers that this aspect of the Project is satisfactory and providing the Project continues to drive this process there is a *moderately likely[[19]](#footnote-19)* chance of sustainable outcomes; that is there are *moderate risks*.

## 3.10 Financial resources

There are two aspects discussed here – the financial resources available to the Project and the financial resources that will be available for the sustainability of the Project outcomes.

The financial resources available to the Project appear to have been, on the whole, sufficient. Projects can always use more money and the job of the evaluator is to determine whether given more money the results would be negative or positive (with this Project they would be positive). In this instance there appear to be sufficient resources but there is an issue with the time available for the Project and if there had been a reasonable timeframe of perhaps 4 – 6 years to complete the work then the Project is under-funded.

An important measure of the continued benefits of this Project will to a large part depend upon degree to which the recommendations of the report by the International TA on Protected Areas Financing are used to inform higher level decision-making within the MoEF. At this point in time it is hard to judge what impact these will have, except to say that the Project has provided good advice in the report which now needs to be acted on in the remaining lifetime of the Project and beyond.

The business planning for the National Park which could have provided a “benchmark” for the MTE is not available and due to the issue of sequencing TA inputs this study was premature and therefore unable to produce a business plan. Business planning for protected areas is not straight forwards, while there are strong arguments for moving protected areas to a more “business-like approach” and the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) has highlighted the need for protected areas system to develop mechanisms for cost recovery, revenue generation and retention as well as sourcing financing from other sources. There remains an inherent tension between the public good and private good aspects of business and conservation. Therefore the MTE feels that it is important for the Project to consider bring the TA back to facilitate the development of the KMNP Business Plan.

It can be argued that there is a greater opportunity for sustainability if the costs and benefits are internalised as much as possible within the system (the system being the KMNP and buffer zone). Therefore the MTE would want to see greater emphasis placed on the buffer zone planning process particularly with regards to the pricing of natural resources. That is, to seek ways to capture a larger amount of the value of forest resources at the Forest Village level by addressing issues of pricing as a means to absorb the opportunity costs of conservation management. For instance; by adjusting the prices paid to villages (or fees and licenses[[20]](#footnote-20)) where Forest villages may have lost substantial areas of Village Forests or similar mechanism that would more equitably share the costs of conservation management.

## 3.11 Institutional framework

The Project should be considered within the larger package of reforms that are taking place in Turkey. As part of this process the Project is developing the institutional linkages between state agencies, civic authorities, NGOs, private enterprise and local communities. It has a mandate to critically challenge the barriers (Article 12 of the MoU) to reforming natural resource and protected areas management. Providing the Project uses this mandate to strengthen the adaptive management within the Project *and* the wider institutional framework there is an opportunity for a medium-sized project to have a large and lasting impact on the way that protected areas are managed in Turkey.

Having said that it is not clear how the Project is influencing other planning issues[[21]](#footnote-21) as they relate to the KMNP and buffer zone. This is particularly so when it comes to large infrastructure projects such as the construction of hydro-electric dams in the buffer zone. Unless there is a strategic vision and plan (that includes all the stakeholders) for the buffer zone this compartmentalisation of planning is likely to continue to produce conflicting developments that will affect the future of the buffer zone and KMNP. There are many ways in which this might be addressed, for instance through the establishment of a protected area (such as a biosphere reserve or protected landscape), but the lack of any formal designation of the buffer zone brings these planning issues into sharp focus and an important aspect of this project is that it seeks to address the challenges even if the end result is the conclusion that an additional protected area status is needed for the buffer zone. Environmental planning challenges such as these are likely to increase in the future and the experience gained from the Project is a worthy outcome in itself.

## 3.12 Environmental

The environmental sustainability of the outcomes is to a very large extent dependent upon the issues discussed in the last two sections. Clearly there are some serious threats to the environmental integrity of the buffer zone and KMNP from infrastructure projects. Indeed these are likely to be the single largest threats. While it is impossible to halt projects that have been started it should be possible to objectively weigh up the costs and benefits of future infrastructure projects given that there is a strategic planning framework in place.

## 3.13 Linkages between project and other interventions within the sector

The Project has forged a number of successful links with other initiatives and interventions in the project area such as the GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) which has funded a number of initiatives, the Kure Ecotourism Association (which has developed the Ecotourism development Centre).

Other linkages have been with the Municipalities of Bartin and Kastamonou that are actively promoting ecotourism as well as associated small-scale industries such as food and crafts.

Through WWF Turkey the Project has been able to utilise technical assistance from the WWF Caucasus Programme demonstrating the benefits of involving NGOs in partnership with Government as well as working with other Regional Agencies. For instance, Zonguldak Agency whose jurisdiction area includes Bartin and Kastamonu Agencies have inserted "protected area management" into their thematic subjects which will be financially support; therefore there is a possibility that other projects might be implemented in the region related with the protected area management.

The recent EU-funded Yildiz Mountains Biosphere Reserve Project which was completed in 2009 could provide valuable experience because the two projects were fundamentally addressing the same issues albeit from different approaches (biosphere versus buffer zone).

## 3.14 Management arrangements (Satisfactory)

Considering that complex arrangement of institutional partners in the Project the management arrangements appear to work very well with one critical weakness which is the presence in the field where the GDNCNP is only really represented by the two Local Branch Managers despite the experience from the GEF II Project which clearly showed the usefulness of having a management *unit* in place in the field.

The good relations fostered by the PMU between all parties are to be commended with an easy working relationship with the various agencies, UNDP, Provincial Directorates, and WWF etc. A project as complex as this one could easily founder without this internal strength and its importance should not be underestimated and is attributable to the individuals involved.

Despite the issue raised above regarding the GDNCNP presence in the field (the lack of management units in Bartin and Kastamonou) the MTE considers the management arrangements to be satisfactory so far but cautions that this area is vulnerable over the remaining period of the Project this could easily affect the final evaluation if these Local branch managers are not provided with more human resources.

# 4.0 Project implementation

## 4.1 Financial management

No audit has been carried out on the Project to date and the MTE is not aware of any financial issues of any concern within the Project.

The GoT has provided an additional US$ 352,000 in cash contribution to the Project above that which was recorded in the Inception Report.

By November 2010 the GEF budget spent is US$ 490,282 or 50.44% budget execution within 83% of the Project time (30 months)[[22]](#footnote-22).

## 4.2 Monitoring and evaluation (Satisfactory)

There is no escaping the fact that the Project’s LFM is weak and offers little as a means to monitor the Project progress and impact. When coupled with the weaknesses in the original Project Document the progress the Project has made is remarkable.

Given the time constraints on the MTE it is not possible to go through the LFM line by line, nor to rewrite the LFM, furthermore, it is not a question of retrofitting a baseline.

Therefore the MTE recommends that the Project should pause in its activities for a short period and rethink the LFM indicators and risks and assumptions without losing the outcomes and outputs.

Apart from this, reporting is very good, in as much as the reports are concise and to the point but the MTE is concerned that some of the “sticking points” in the process (*e.g.* the degree to which non-agency participants are participating by evaluating the impacts) could be better reflected and specific strategies designed and put in place and reported as the Project’s response. This is critical to the adaptive management of the Project and providing feedback into the Policy formulation and enabling environment.

While the Project is closely and diligently monitoring the implementation of activities (the Work Plan is truly impressive) it is not clear how the impact is being monitored. As the systems the Project is seeking to manage are highly dynamic, so too must be the management. It has been noted by military strategists that in the rapidly evolving conditions of warfare “*no plan of operations extends with certainty beyond the first encounter with the enemy's main strength* (*i.e.* no battle plan survives first contact with the enemy)”[[23]](#footnote-23). Certainly this applies to protected areas management and the greatest risk for management is that the plans are being implemented for a situation that may have existed in the past rather than the present or certain assumptions made during the planning phase do not hold true when the plan is rolled out. In many ways this is a product of the timescale of the Project which allows little time for reflection if activities are to be implemented in time and is a common feature of many GEF medium-sized projects.

An area where this is most critical is in outcome 2 (the buffer zone) where there are no real measures of how effective non-agency and Forest Village participation is. Indeed there appears to be a very high dependence upon the relationships between the Local Branch Managers and other Project personal and the local communities and other local players. While this is highly commendable and a credit to the Project and those involved it does not provide a formal platform to measure participation *per se.*

## 4.3 The Project and women

Following the submission of the first draft of the MTE report the MTE were specifically asked to comment on gender issues as they relate to the Project. The MTE does so with caution. It is important not to distract from the Project’s efforts to help women through small projects or to diminish these genuine efforts. However, the MTE also stresses that it is critical that women play an equal role in the decision-making process, that is, they are equally treated in both the planning and management of natural resources so that they can determine their own future. As long as the planning process is carried out by agencies without village-level participation in this process the interests of women will remain vulnerable.

This is important not just from a gender or governance perspective but also from a conservation perspective when one considers that women play an important role in the management of biodiversity and in rural circumstances women often have a high dependency on biodiversity and other natural resources for their livelihood security and its sustainable management is of real and practical concern to them.

The interests of women need to be packaged within the process of empowering local people to determine their futures and the management of the resources that they are generally dependent upon and should consider that:

**Costs and benefits of conservation management:** The greatest opportunity for sustainable management occurs when the primary beneficiaries are those people who are closest to the resource, using the resources and incurring management and/or *opportunity costs*. Simply put – people will manage a resource if the benefits from managing it are greater than the costs incurred. Conservationists, surprisingly, often overlook this simple equation. A frequently encountered situation is one where the benefits of protection (wilderness, tourism and recreation, spiritual values, etc.) are realised by the wider society, but the local people have to bear the costs of protection. Therefore this is a critical component underpinning protected areas planning and enshrined within any planning process in understanding that benefits should reflect the costs of management and be shared with local people where there is a reasonable and equitable case to be made.

**Authority and responsibility:** Authority and responsibility are conceptually linked. That is - authority without responsibility becomes meaningless or obstructive. Conversely, responsibility without authority lacks the necessary instrumental and motivational components for its efficient exercise. In many instances of protected areas the state may be the *de jure* authority for biodiversity, however due to insufficient material and human resources the *de facto* managers may be the local people or communities responsible for day-to-day land management and whose actions will have the most significant impact upon biodiversity. This can cause a disconnection between effective authority and responsibility leaving the natural values such as biodiversity insecure and vulnerable to loss.

This is the basis of Recommendations #1 and #2 of this report.

### Table 1 Examples of the weaknesses in the LFM[[24]](#footnote-24)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Outcome/ Objective | Indicator | Baseline | Target | Source of verification | Risks & Assumptions | MTE issue |
| Objective: To enhance coverage and management effectiveness of the Forest Protected Areas (FPAs) through demonstrating cost effective approaches for effective conservation and sustainable resource management at Küre Mountains National Park and taking initial steps towards the  replication of this model at the remaining eight forest hot spots | Surface of globally significant habitats (grassland, old growth forests) under conservation management |  |  | Meeting Pan Parks requirements |  | PAN Parks is neither democratically elected nor peer reviewed and neither does it provide a measure of sustainability; indeed there is a commercial aspect to PAN Parks that is distinctly uncomfortable when it comes to local community utilisation of natural resources. In short it should never have been included in the LFM except in connection with commercial aspects of ecotourism[[25]](#footnote-25).  Given the time frame of the Project it is unlikely that biodiversity monitoring would indicate any change. Further, it would be impossible to attribute any changes in biodiversity to the Project over this time frame. |
|  |  |  |  |  | There is no mention of the larger and potentially catastrophic infrastructure projects that might take place. One might reasonably expect to see an indicator such as infrastructure planning *and* EIA for large infrastructure projects. Indeed, the some of the most urgent, impacting and extensive threats such as sewage and dam construction are not captured in the LFM.  It is not clear if the buffer zone is included in the objective |
| Outcome 1: Cost effectiveness conservation management approaches for forest protected areas are implemented at KMNP | Use of business methods at KMNP level and existence of a protected areas monitoring system |  | Business planning is an integral part of protected area management supported by a monitoring and evaluation system at the park level |  |  | With the best will in the world this is not possible given the time and resources available to the Project |
| Management costs for KMNP are in line with available funds | Available funds cannot cover management costs of effective protection | Management costs are being covered through revenues and other national funding sources |  | No irresolvable difficulties are encountered in drafting of management plans; conflict resolution mechanisms can successfully resolve serious conflicts | Apart from this being an impossible task, given the timeframe of the Project the assumption listed would be a “killer” assumption. This would not happen in 3 years – management plan – business plan – reconciles difficulties... (the Inception Phase took 10 months). |
| Outcome 2: Sustainable natural resource management is demonstrated in the buffer area of Küre Mountain National Park | Use of sustainable forest management approaches in the buffer area of KMNP is institutionalized by the Department of Forestry[[26]](#footnote-26) as a tool for sustainable natural resource management to be used in all forest PAs |  | Sustainable forest management guidelines developed and implemented at KMNP and institutionalized by the Department of Forestry as a tool for sustainable natural resource management to be used in all forest PAs | Records from the Forest & National Parks Department and courts | Socio-economic and human development priorities of local communities can be addressed in a sustainable manner while conserving the biodiversity of the Project area. | The GDF already had sustainable Forest Management Plans (for timber production) however; the measure of sustainability was being shifted. Without some reasonable (new) definition of sustainability this measure lacks clarity.  The Forest Villagers are key to this outcome yet there is no discernable measure of how they might be involved which might be used to determine impact and effectiveness during the lifetime of the Project. It might have been more useful to measure local community participation, for instance. |
|  | Area of degraded forest land |  | 5% decline in degraded forest areas | Records from the Forest Department |  | It would be extremely difficult to measure a reduction in degraded forest over this timescale, particularly as the emphasis was changing from production to ecosystem management. The ecosystem would respond over much longer timescales and this might also be interpreted as forestry planting which might not be the same as recovered ecosystem, *i.e.* the quality of the ecosystem. |
|  | Local population  percentage generating  income from alternative  livelihoods | 70% of local  population  depends on  resource harvest  from the forest to  generate income | At least 5% of local  population is  generating income  from alternative  livelihoods | Records from the  Forest and National  Parks Departments |  | Arguably this target had been achieved already – that is; 30% of the local population were/are already generating income from alternative livelihoods.  Verification relies on institutional records and there is no measure of the socio-economic impact (*e.g.* household incomes, migration, investment, etc.).  As sustainable use was at the heart of this outcome one might reasonably expect to see some measure of added value and greater capture of the value of forest resources at the local (Forest Village) level.  A critical and unstated assumption is that the value of the alternatives was equal or greater than the opportunity costs of the opportunity that has been surrendered and that the alternative carries equal of less risk. |

## 4.4 Management and coordination

The management and coordination is very good within the Project. For a medium-sized project the challenge is very large and given the complexity of stakeholders potentially unwieldy and the PMU is coping well.

## 4.5 Identification and management of risks (adaptive management) (Satisfactory)

The importance of adaptive management can be summed up in the military adage “*no plan of operations extends with certainty beyond the first encounter with the enemy's main strength”*. Regardless of how much planning is carried out beforehand when dealing with socio-ecosystems it is a given that assumptions about how the system is operating and how it will react will have been made during that planning.

GEF places emphasis on an adaptive management approach because there is an explicit understanding that the strength of these assumptions will not be known until the plan (or project) is implemented. Adaptive management allows us to go forwards without having certainty on the understanding that we will monitor the implementation, impact and effectiveness and if we find that our assumptions are not holding true, the original “hypothesis” can be re-examined to see what is was that we did not understand. In essence it allows a project or management to be experimental in nature and to try different approaches to the same issue and to change the design of an intervention as we learn more about the system and can recognise what was an assumption and what was a reality (an adaptive management framework is given in Annex 6).

While GEF places great emphasis on adaptive management the inherent difficulties of implementing a project in three years generally militate against effective adaptive management, particularly when one takes into account the tremendous effort that goes into developing a project and winning approval. This provides an interesting challenge to any midterm evaluation because the evaluation normally takes place in a project cycle at about the point in time that the assumptions are being realised and before the project can put in place alternative actions.

Therefore the MTE must use a degree of judgement as to whether the Project has sufficient intellectual capital to recognise assumptions that have proved to be false and be able to propose alternative strategies and solutions. To this extent the MTE believes that the Project *has* recognised these assumptions to a large extent and *is* capable of adapting and is therefore rated as satisfactory and this rating (and the MTE) can be challenged by the Final Evaluation, however the question remains as to whether there is sufficient time available to adapt.

Having said that; the MTE is critical of the original Project Document because it has not clearly identified these assumptions (*e.g.* *inter alia* that the local level committees would provide an adequate platform for participation, there is sufficient value in ecotourism to offset Forest Village opportunity costs, that the Mukhtar would be a suitable level for local community participation in planning).

### Table 2 Risk Assessment from the Inception report alongside the MTEs concerns.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Risk | Risk rating | Mitigation strategy | MTE comments |
| The project receives required co-operation from relevant Government, municipalities, NGOs, local villagers, private sector | Low to Medium | A very comprehensive stakeholder analysis was undertaken during the preparation stage, based on which a participation plan was designed. All the key stakeholders have been involved in the project design and will continue to be highly involved in the management planning exercise and all the other activities supported by the project. | Stakeholder participation in planning is a relatively new approach and to a large extent depends upon trust between the different parties. Moving from a very centralised system to a more inclusive and participatory one requires considerable time and building the confidence of all the participants. Yet time was not a factor in the risk assessment.  Participation requires a degree of power to be transferred between the different participants. Agencies are very often reluctant to do this (understandably so as they take their responsibilities seriously) but nonetheless this transfer of power and the likelihood of institutional inertia should have been flagged as a risk  As the comprehensive stakeholder participation plan included “promoting a consistent image of the *Polesie* region” one has to question just how consistent it was with the realities of Bartin and Kastamonu. |
| The strength of other sectors and interest groups causing threats is not more than conservation efforts; or they are open to cooperate. | Low | As threats originating in the buffer zone lie beyond the physical and political control of PA authorities, long-term conservation at the sites will therefore clearly require strong inter-sectoral co-ordination among all institutions that have a mandate in the wider landscape influencing the forest sites. In order to harmonize various planning and land use in the area, the project will collaborate with the relevant local authorities, including, but not limited to the General Directorate of Environmental Impact Assessment and Planning (GDEIAP) with respect to integrating biodiversity concerns into development of the territorial plan of the area. | “Since the General Directorate of EIA and Planning’s tasks have been completed prior to CEO Endorsement”[[27]](#footnote-27) this risk should have been moved to High.  Furthermore, a strategy should have been put in place to ensure that the planning process could influence these larger structural plans in light of experience of managing the socio-ecosystem. |
| Government remains committed to bringing all 9 forest hot spots under an effective conservation regime | Low, now Low to Medium | GOT has already designated one forest protected area and has initiated and funded the preliminary scientific studies for the establishment of the other eight sites. The project is requested and executed by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry and identified and “bringing the forest hot spots” under conservation management/ protected area status has been identified as one of the top conservation priorities by the Government. – Additional remark: The commitment made by the MoEF remains valid. However, the administrative procedure to give an area legal protection status may take longer (pending on the decision of the Council of Ministers), so the announcement in the Official Gazette may occur only after project completion. | It is unwise to include as indicators in the LFM issues that require a decision by Parliament or other high elected authority because they are quite reasonably beyond the control of the Project. |
| Poor coordination between Bartın and Kastamonu responsible bodies (Küre NP is spread over two provinces) | Low | The project establishes local committees and project offices in both provinces to ensure a maximum of coordination. | MTE agrees |
| Project does not succeed in creating local ownership and in providing economic alternatives for people living in the support zones of PAs | Low to Medium | Project interventions in the buffer zone are based on previous initiatives which were supported e.g. by GEFSGP and the EU. | The MTE notes that the buffer zone has become a support zone (presumably this appears is an error; but an important one nonetheless).  The MTE considers this to be High because the buffer zone economic strategy was not just about providing new alternatives but also it was closing or reducing existing economic opportunities through changes in forest management practices. A cursory look at the literature on the impact of alternative livelihood support programmes to buffer zones will show that it is extremely hard to replace the livelihood opportunities. |
| Project unable to compensate for loss in exchange rate US$:YTL for GEF funds / and effects of global financial crisis | Medium | The project attempts to reduce the scope of interventions at all levels, and tries to compensate through co-funding. See remarks above. | MTE agrees |
| Loss of experience through position changes of project staff | Medium | The project will try to mitigate this through MoU among each partner including project staff appointments | MTE agrees and feels that the issue of a Local Management Unit should have been raised here. |
| New law and regulation initiatives take longer to become effective than expected | Medium | The project will focus more on improving current legislation in protected area and sustainable forestry approaches and in a more effective implementation of existing legislation. | There is confusion here as the risk and the response contradict each other. How was the Project going to improve current legislation given the stated risk?  The MTE disagrees with the second part of the response in that much of the legislation has been designed around one approach to forest management and the purpose of the Project was to introduce *new approaches*. How would more effectively implementing existing legislation (which might quite reasonably be restrictive given it was designed for a different approach) help in introducing new approaches?  In fact the response should have been to point to article 12 of the MoU and use adaptive management to experiment with the new approaches and feedback into the policy reform process and changes to the enabling environment. |
| Organizational changes in the ministerial system | Low to Medium | General Directorate of Forestry is the lead managing body in the buffer zone (80.000 ha). Their ownership and implementation power on the ground will support achieving project aims. | MTE agrees |
| Less tourist visits due to disease carrying ticks | Medium to High | Since the area is one of the disease-carrying tick hotspot in Turkey, the project will inform tourism sector related local people and officials on lyme disease possibility in project capacity building activities to take necessary precautions before fieldworks or site visits. | On the surface this might appear to be irrelevant but interestingly it highlights a specific risk that the Project strategy was over-reliant upon ecotourism to absorb the opportunity costs of Forest Villagers and there should have been a strategy to diversify incomes across a number of resource-based enterprises that would spread the risks of market failure, catastrophic events as well as linking livelihood to sustainable resource management (conservation by sustainable use). |

# 5.0 Results

The Project is making progress and will have moved the process of conservation management forwards but MTE feels that, given its human resources, intellectual capital and mandate, it could do more.

The results are reported in more detail in the next section.

## 5.1 Attainment of outputs, outcomes and objectives

### 5.1.1 Outcome 1: Cost-effective conservation management approaches for forest protected areas are designed, piloted and adopted.

**Output 1.1:** The recruitment of staff has been completed. Instead of construction of Park headquarters 2 visitors and information centres and district level offices have been constructed. The equipment for the district level offices has been provided by the Project. Training of the KMNP staff on protected areas management and biodiversity conservation has been conducted. Demarcation of external Park boundaries has been initiated and will be finalized prior to the Project’s completion. A draft visitor management plan has been prepared. Regarding the patrolling issue, 4 entrance gates have been constructed and GDF and GDNCNP work in close collaboration in order to improve the patrolling activities within the KMNP. A draft volunteer program has been developed in a participatory manner and first trial actions have started (*e.g.* verbal history work and photography trips).

**Output 1.2:** Rapid ecological, geological and social analyses of KMNP and the buffer zone are finalized. Data provided from these surveys has been used as baseline information in developing the KMNP Management and buffer zone Forest Management Plans (17 Forest Sub-districts). A draft Monitoring Programme has been developed and submitted for approval to the Management Unit.

**Output 1.3:** Rapid ecological, geological and social analyses of KMNP and the buffer zone are finalized. A draft Zonation Map has been prepared. Participatory Management Planning Process has been initiated. The protected area Management Plan will have components such as a Sustainable Tourism Development Plan, Eco-System Based Multifunctional Forest Management Plan, Business Plan, Visitor Management Plan, Training Plan and Volunteer Program and Interpretation and Communication Plan.

The experience of WB-GEF funded Biodiversity and Natural Resource Management Project (BNRMP) are taken into consideration and best practices were applied during the development phase of the above mentioned Plans. The Territorial Plans (Land Use Plans) are in line with the protected areas Management Plan.

A replication strategy has been prepared (including Zoning Studies) and replication working group was established. This methodology will be used in other 8 hot spots.

**Output 1.4:** A Business Plan has been prepared and an economic and financial analysis of KMNP has been finalized. The Business Plan will be in action in parallel with the protected areas Management Plan.

### 5.1.2 Outcome 2: Sustainable natural resource management approaches demonstrated in buffer areas

**Output 2.1:** There are 17 Forest Sub-Districts in KMNP buffer zone. Eco-System Based Multifunctional Forest Management Plan of 5 Forest Sub-Districts was finalized and is in action. Eco-System Based Multifunctional Forest Management Plan of 10 Forest Sub-Districts is under preparation. 2 Forest Sub-Districts already have Eco-System Based Multifunctional Forest Management Plan. Non-timber forest products inventory and mapping process was finalized.

Experience on public participation and multifunctional definition are important for Turkish Forestry. As a result for the first time in Turkey 4 public participation meetings were organized and 3 new forest functions (landscape conservation, wild life conservation and wild life development) were added to GDFs Forest Functions List to be used all over Turkey.

**Output 2.2:** A Report on Water Quality has been prepared. Draft Communications and Advocacy Plan were prepared. Various communication activities on public awareness were carried out. Within the Project implementation phase various printed materials, booklets, brochures, stickers, two important protected areas related books (CBD Technical Series No. 18: “Toward Effective Protected Areas System: An Action Guide to Implement the Convention on Biological Diversity Programme of Work on Protected Areas” and “Sustainable Financing of Protected Areas: A global review of challenges and options”) were translated and published. Several articles (in magazines and newspapers) both in local (Bartın and Kastamonu) and national level has been published. Such as National Geographic Turkey, Yeşil Atlas Magazine, Hurriyet Newspaper, Radikal Newspaper etc. The Project news is also published in Project Partners web sites and local and national news portals such as; ntvmsnbc.com, etc. The Project was a case study in UNDP/GEF and Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) publication entitled “Protected Areas for 21st Century: Lessons from UNDP/GEF Portfolio”. This publications cover photo is from KMNP. With the above mentioned visibility materials around 150,000 people have been reached. Annex 9 lists the main achievements of the Project in raising the visibility of forest conservation issues.

### 5.1.3 Outcome 3: Lessons learned from demonstration work in the first established forest PAs are disseminated to the other forest hot spots in Turkey, contributing to the maturation of the PA system of Turkey

**Output 3.1:** The Land Use Plan (Terrestrial Plan) of the site was completed before the GEF CEO approval of the Project. Buffer Zone Management and coordination strategy is under preparation this strategy will enhance the inter-sectoral coordination. Local working groups in Bartın and Kastamonu were established and regularly meet for coordination. Pan Park certification process of KMNP was revitalized after the experience sharing meeting in Georgia. A Work Plan for Pan Park Process is in action.

**Output 3.2:** The M&E plan includes: inception report, project implementation reviews, quarterly operational reports, a mid-term and final evaluation. Inception Report, Project Implementation Reviews, Quarterly Operational Reports have been finalized. Project Steering Committee Meetings and regular Project Partner meetings were held.

**Output 3.3:** A replication strategy has been prepared and replication working group was established. This methodology will be used in other 8 hot spots.

**Output 3.4:** Rapid Assessment and Prioritization of Protected Area Management (RAPPAM) tool was applied for Turkey’s National Parks and Nature Parks in 2009. The Rapid Ecological Assessment and Participatory Management planning process in various wildlife reserves located in other forest hotspots are under implementation. Forest sub-districts in Yenice forest hotspot have been planned through an Eco-system Based Multifunctional Forest Management Plan. Report on Sustainable Financing of National Protected areas system in Turkey was published. Management planning guidelines, and rapid assessment guidelines for national parks were published. A national workshop on protected areas and Climate Change was organized in 2010 and a draft National Strategy on protected areas and Climate Change has been prepared.

## 5.2 Project Impact

The Project is having an impact at a number of levels:

Institutionally it is encouraging state agencies to work together and in partnership with civil society organisations and NGOs which is in line with the national policy as well as UNDP, GEF and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

From a conservation management perspective it has introduced new approaches and methodologies and certainly it is contributing to broadening the scope of GDF planning which is in line with the GDF which has been strengthening its planning capacity over recent years and the Project is *adding value* to this and to an extent it has increased local level participation and but it could still have a greater impact on natural resource governance (which is critical to sustainable conservation management).

## 5.3 Prospects of sustainability

It is important, from an adaptive management approach, not just to forge ahead with implementing the project but when it encounters some of the apparently insurmountable challenges (*e.g.* in influencing the development of large nationally important infrastructure projects, or the legal framework prevents the Project implementing a *good idea, etc.)* to consider how best this can be resolved – tension between meeting the measurable targets set out in the monitoring and taking time to resolve fundamental resource management issues is key to the Project meeting the GEF Global Objectives.

The MTE asks *the* question; *would the Project do more, push harder on some of the more challenging issues, if it had more time?*

To use a military analogy; given that the Project has a strong and capable team, it has a good presence in the Project area and the trust of many of the stakeholders at all levels, the Project *will* “win the war” within the 3-year project lifespan (*i.e.* it will implement all the activities) *but* it is the *way* in which it “wins the war” which will determine whether it also “wins the peace”. This is at the heart of the Project’s sustainability and investing in some of these issues related to local community participation and reforming the policy framework are critical to this.

# 6.0 Conclusions and recommendations

Overall the Project Partners can be satisfied that they have a good project which is developing the skills of protected areas managers and engaging with a reform process that will strengthen the management agencies and to a degree it will also strengthen the non-agency players.

On this basis the MTE feels that the ratings of the project are **satisfactory** however, there are a number of areas that have given rise to concern. Despite this the MTE feels that if the recommendations outlined below are implemented then the Project can be confident that it can receive a good Final Evaluation. However, if the Project chooses to ignore the recommendations then there is a high risk that the progress made so far might not be sustainable.

The MTE feels that there is considerable intellectual capital in the PMU and the Team as a whole and as such feels that it is safe to allow the PMU to develop specific responses to meet the recommendations as part of the Project’ adaptive management.

Where practicable, a number of resources are provided as Annexes (Annex 6, 7 and 8) to this Report to assist in the developing the Project’s response to the MTE.

## 6.1 Recommendations

Following the PMU response to the MTE the Project should “pause” and take time to re-visit the Project Strategy to strengthen the Adaptive Management of the Project in consideration of the recommendations given below, including revising the Log-frame Targets and Indicators. This Adaptive Management process should include a broad cross-section of local stakeholders and ideally be facilitated by an external facilitator.

## 6.2 MTE concerns and recommended Project response

**Recommendation 1**

* + **Level of local participation in the planning process,**
  + **The degree to which this participation will continue to the implementation to these plans,**

*Project engages an external facilitator to drive local community (further beyond muhtars) and civic institutional participation in the planning process.*

**Recommendation 2**

* + **The need for a strategic vision and plan to guide the various planning agencies (State Hydraulic Works, Municipalities, General Directorates of Highways etc.) as well as forest villages within the buffer zone area,**

*Current Forest Management Plans have a limited strategic vision due to the sequencing in the Project Work Plan. A strategic planning structure is necessary to include the multiplicity of interest involved in land use in the buffer Zone. The first task would be to develop the strategic vision of the buffer Zone.*

*This planning structure would also need to regularly monitor and evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of land use planning and management within the buffer Zone to ensure that management is adaptive in light of experience and changing circumstances.*

*The Project should consider the planning structure established for the Yildiz Mountains Biosphere in 2009 and see what lessons might be used to develop a buffer zone planning committee or similar body.*

**Recommendation 3**

* + **Strengthening natural resource governance within the buffer zone area (cost and benefit of conservation management, authority and responsibility for resource management, pricing and tenure of natural resources),**

*The Project should identify a small number of forest villagers and focus its attention on activities to develop pilot (experimental) village level resource management plans within the framework of the Forest Management Plan.*

*To have relevance and ownership at the Forest Village level the plan should include all aspects of the Forest Villagers livelihoods and reflect the degree of collective decision-making and conflict resolution that may exist within the local community.**An important principle should be that the unit for collective management should be as small as practicable and functionally efficient within ecological and socio-political constraints.**From a social dynamics perspective scale is an important consideration; large-scale externally imposed structures tend to be ineffective, increasing the potential for corruption, evasion of responsibility and lethargy in respect of broad participation. Where collective management structures are based on existing collective decision-making structures and are at a scale that ensures regular contact of the members, it becomes possible to enforce conformity to rules through peer pressure and control individual actions through collective sanction.*

*Some principles for developing community-based resource management are given in Annex 7. The purpose of this level of planning is to place the decision-making process (within the larger objectives of the FMP) at a level that empowers Forest Villagers to make decisions about their resource management.*

*Consideration should be given to engaging an external contractor to facilitate this process and could be linked to increasing the participation (Recommendation 1). Designing collaborative management systems involves considerable negotiation between state and community and an external facilitator can afford to take a neutral position on contentious issues in order to “broker” an agreement.*

**Recommendation 4**

* + **The capacity of local team (Local Branch Managers are very capable but overstretched),**

*Additional human resources should be made available at the level of National Park. The required skills and experience should be decided during the revision of the Project Strategy.*

**Recommendation 5**

* + **The Project is not sufficiently challenging inequalities and inefficiencies in the enabling the environment (policies, legal framework etc.)**

*Project could challenge inequalities and inefficiencies in the enabling the environment more (policies, legal framework etc.)*

*(Ex: Article 12 of the MoU signed between the Project Partners),*

*“Article 12 – The parties initiate the necessary actions to suggest changes in the present legislations to provide the implementation of experiences and outcomes which are to be obtained during or in the project.”*

*This could be in the form of a small number of pilot or experimental projects with Forest Villagers, the publication of “position papers” or “briefing papers” identifying weaknesses and inefficiencies between the policy direction and the enabling legislation, an analysis of policy and legislation constraints, etc.*

**Recommendation 6**

* + **The time available for achieving the Objectives (initial Project time frame is unrealistic)**

*On condition that there is consensus following the exercise of revising the Project Strategy the Project requests a budget neutral extension of not less than 12 months (1-2 years depending on the available funds)*

*It is unrealistic to disseminate the Project Methodology to 8 additional hot spots therefore the Project should consider the following:*

1. *Abandoning the idea of disseminating the Project to other hot spots,*
2. *Scaling down the number of hot spots by selecting 2 or 3 and concentrating on those*

*This decision should be made as soon as possible and not in the closing moments of the Project so that plans can be made in the knowledge that they have time to be implemented. Any delay in taking this decision and making the application for an extension will cause the Project to “drift” and will damage the high morale and enthusiasm of the Partners.*

**Recommendation 7**

* + **Overreliance on an alternative livelihoods trade off strategy.**

*The opportunity costs of conservation management are impacting most heavily on forest villagers and contribute significantly to rural de-population. A more balanced mix of sustainable use as well as alternative livelihoods will not only reduce vulnerability of the forest villagers but also provide incentives for the wise management of forest resources.*

*The package of support to local communities (particularly from organisations such as General Directorate of Forest-Village Relations (ORKOY) should be targeted at adding value at the local level to forest resources through processing and marketing where there is a recognised system for sustainable harvesting in place.*

# 7.0 Lessons learned

It is interesting that *Lessons Learned* sections are so often described as “*good practices and lessons learned in addressing issues relating to effectiveness, efficiency and relevance*”. One might consider that this leaves future planners open to repeating the errors of those who have gone before because sometimes it is important to focus more on what has not worked and why it did not, than to dwell on the obvious successes. Although from those working within a project this might seem unfair, it may provide valuable lessons for both improving a project and planning projects in the future.

It is very hard to draw any conclusions about the Project at this point in its implementation. Too many of the activities are “works in progress” and it *would* be unfair to draw any conclusions about the success or otherwise of these activities until they have had time to work through. An obvious lesson from this and one which seems to be repeated across many GEF projects is that the timescale for interventions should be greater unless the scope of the projects is drastically scaled down. But this has been stressed repeatedly throughout the MTE and this Report.

Therefore the only lesson that the MTE will draw out from this Project is related to the Project’s design and in particular the buffer zone. It remains to be seen if the use of a buffer zone is a workable solution to supporting the KMNP. Arguably it is an interesting experiment as there is no legal definition of a buffer zone in Turkey[[28]](#footnote-28) and the term is poorly defined, if at all, in conservation literature. Without using a category of protected areas such as the IUCN Category V or VI or a Biosphere Reserve; the concept of a buffer zone to support a national park remains “fuzzy”.

However, it is interesting that the Project (or the MoEF) has sought to define the buffer zone through the Forest Management Plan. The initial assessment of the MTE is that this will not be sufficient because of the competing and conflicting authorities and interests on the land which makes up the buffer zone. Therefore, it will be necessary (in the opinion of the MTE and included as recommendation) to have a higher coordinated planning structure. Whether this can be done without specific legislation remains to be seen and the Project should be given the benefit of the doubt. After all, it has already brought together the different agencies within the MoEF for a common purpose, given more time it may bring together other agencies for the purpose of collaborative governance in the interest of achieving ecosystem, economic and social sustainability.

The current governance of KMNP could be described as single agency state governance. That is; GDNCNP is the executive, authority and the responsible body for the protected area. While this is the most common system of governance for protected areas in many countries and regionally that often fits well with strictly protected areas where there is little human influence; there are also a number of drawbacks to such governance systems when they are applied to areas where there are people living with inalienable rights to reside in the area. These can be characterised in the buffer zone as:

* Few opportunities for local community participation in the decision-making, management and cost-benefit sharing.
* Management focusing to a large extent on the ecological aspects of the buffer zone and on prohibiting numerous activities within the buffer zone.

In many instances this will lead to:

* An impractically narrow focus of management which is insufficient to achieve the stated vision of biodiversity conservation and socio-economic aspects of the local communities and can result in:
  + Conflicts between protected areas/resource managers and local communities.
  + High management costs because the state has to bear all the costs of enforcement and management (or even an inability to realise management objectives).
  + Lack of local support for the protected area/buffer zone.
  + High opportunity costs for the local community because of the reduced livelihood possibilities.

Governance is the means for achieving direction, control, and coordination that determines the effectiveness of management (Eagles 2008). As stated above, in a strict nature reserve governance can be relatively simple as the state is the sole executive (decision-making body), authority and is directly responsible for the implementation of management and enforcement of rules. It should also be noted that under this regime the state also bears all of the direct management costs although local communities are very often expected to bear the opportunity costs.

However, this becomes more complicated when there are contested resources and areas and/or included private lands and insufficient financial, material and human resources available to the state to carry out its management role; a description that more accurately fits the situation found in buffer zone.

While the model of single state agency governance for the buffer zone forest resources may be attractive principally because the executive, authority and responsibility are nested within a single agency, given the circumstances (large included populations, high local livelihood dependency upon the natural resources, historic patterns of land use, other institutional and agency interests and agendas, etc.) of the buffer zone there is compounding evidence that it will be the less effective form of governance for the reasons outlined above.

The arguments for more inclusive approaches to managing the buffer zone are also made stronger when we consider ecosystem resilience. Ecosystem “resilience can be defined as the capacity of a system to undergo disturbance while maintaining both its existing functions and controls and its capacity for future change” (Gunderson 2000).

However, in complex socio-ecological systems, such as the buffer zone, it might also be argued that “resilience is determined not only by a systems ability to buffer or absorb shocks, but also by its capacity for learning and self-organisation to adapt to change” (Gunderson and Holling 2002). Therefore a governance system that allows for a broader participation in planning and management of the buffer zone might arguably be more resilient than one which has a narrow scientific focus.

The importance of this is clear when we consider that the buffer zone is not facing a technical challenge but rather an adaptive challenge. That is; no one technology or the introduction of a technology (*e.g.* alternative livelihoods) will reverse any current damaging effects of unsustainable or illegal activity. Neither is the enforcement of prohibitive measures, currently often being ignored, practicable from a financial, social and in some cases ecological perspective. What is required is a broad behavioural change within the stakeholders towards a common objective (*i.e.* the conservation or sustainable management of biodiversity resources within the buffer zone).

Perhaps the lesson might be that such arguments might be the starting point for developing an intervention strategy and should be articulated more clearly within the Project Document.

1. The PMU noted in response to the First Draft that “the KMNP buffer zone has been accepted by local stakeholders since 2000”. The MTE argues that, at a national level, the buffer zone has not prevented significant infrastructure works from taking place despite apparent local opposition and it remains poorly defined at the local level. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The Turkish Society for the Protection of Nature (DHKD) was founded in 1975. In 1996 it established the Turkish Foundation for the Protection of Nature (DHKV) as an associated organization with primary responsibility for project implementation. DHKV was the proposer of this project. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. UNDP US$24,000 and DHKV/WWF US$10,000 (in-kind) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <http://thegef.org/MonitoringandEvaluation/MEPoliciesProcedures/mepoliciesprocedures.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. PIMS Number: 1988 Herein after referred to as the *Kure Mountains Project* or the *project* [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Justified by evidence or reasonable argument. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Project Document pg. 83 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. The PMU noted in response to the First Draft that “establishing governance system for the buffer zone has been initiated, and it will be finalized within this project.” However, the MTE is concerned that while there has been considerable progress in getting inter-agency collaboration within the MoEF, critically decision-making lies wholly with the those agencies and there should be a greater transfer of “powers” to the village level and other civic agencies to differentiate between government – the *power over the conditions for management* and governance – *the power to make decisions by affected stakeholders at a local level within that broad policy and regulatory framework.* [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. The PMU noted in response to the First Draft that “Protected Landscape and Biosphere Reserves concepts have not been widely accepted in Turkey yet.” The MTE considers that Turkey has developed 2 biosphere reserves recently and the International Expert on Protected Areas advocated a Protected Landscape approach to managing the buffer zone in his first report. Taking an adaptive approach to this issue; greater thought might be given to looking at different approaches other than a buffer zone. However, this should be viewed against the difficulties of trying to apply adaptive approaches within a GEF project framework of 3 years which gives little room to adapt. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Country programme document (CPD) for Turkey (2011-2015), 30th August 2010 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Roger Von Oech [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Ex: Article 12 of the MoU signed between the Project Partners [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Source: *www.fao.org/****forestry****/14331-0-99.pdf* [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. The PMU noted in response to the First Draft that “the Project focuses on pilot implementations for alternative livelihoods. With the support of regional development agencies (which prioritized these issues in their strategic plans) Project will focus more on the sustainable use of resources.” The MTE reiterates the distinction between an alternative livelihoods trade-off strategy and sustainable use as a means to conserving resources and stresses that an often unstated risk of an alternative livelihoods approach is that it can remove value from a resource and result in the abandonment of resources or competition with other more profitable land uses. Invariably management costs fall upon the state as an alternative livelihood approach removes local people from any management role and a duty of care or motivation to manage. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Adapted from a discussion by Dr. Graham Webb [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Appleton, M. R. (undated Project Report) [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. GEF/C.25/11, *Cost Effectiveness Analysis in GEF Projects*  [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. It can be argued that during the Inception Phase this was realised and the project adapted well by producing the MoU for the Project Partners. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. The MTE makes clear that this is the terminology of GEF [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. The PMU noted in response to the First Draft that “ORKÖY has already prioritized these sites for credits.” The MTE notes that these credits will not necessarily be available to everyone in the village, they are generally for investment in new and possible un-tested enterprises, the type of enterprise is largely dictated by the borrowing requirements of ORKÖY and benefits are not linked to wise management but rather offered as compensatory payments, as such they do little to build the sort of linkages between management and benefit. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. The PMU noted in response to the First Draft that the “Project’s experience in forest management planning can be a good sample for other sites of Turkey.” The MTE cautions against transferring a “model” to other sites and especially an untested model. While the experience gained by the Project will undoubtedly benefit other sites it would be important to address the issues of village-level planning and larger civic participation although this could be done as an adaptive process at the other sites it would require more critical analysis of those aspects that are not working as expected (as well as the successful aspects). [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Updated in the Final Draft to US$ 60,9024 (62.65% budget execution) by 31st December 2010. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Helmuth Karl Bernhard Graf von Moltke, German military strategist. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Only the Objective and Outcomes 1 and 2 are analysed here. Outcome 3 is satisfactory. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. The PMU noted in response to the First Draft that “Pan Parks also has criteria for better management of protected areas.” The MTE notes this but in the MTE’s opinion it does not constitute a credible measure of governance given the social and economic implications to Forest Villagers. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Presumably GDF [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Inception Report p 10 [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. The PMU noted in response to the First Draft that “the KMNP buffer zone has been accepted by local stakeholders since 2000”. The MTE argues that, at a national level, the buffer zone has not prevented significant infrastructure works from taking place despite apparent local opposition and it remains poorly defined at the local level. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)