



# **Ensuring Financial Sustainability of the Protected Area System of Serbia**

PIMS 4281

## **Terminal Evaluation Volume I**

Republic of Serbia

GEF SO-1, SP-1 Catalyzing Sustainability of Protected Area Systems/Sustainable  
Financing of PA Systems

**Republic of Serbia**

**Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection**

**United National Development Program (UNDP)**

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The evaluation is intended to give a summary of what has been achieved in the project to date as well as glean some of the lessons that can be learned from it in what was a relatively short period. In the report, I have tried to offer constructive criticism where I think it is warranted and I hope that those involved in the project take it as such.

Finally, it is a privilege to be shown around with such evident pride and to see wonderful places. I saw the results of the dedication and enthusiasm that people had put into the work of conserving important places in the world. I would like to offer them my thanks and wish them every success in their continuing endeavours.

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## Acronyms, Abbreviations and Glossary

APR	Annual Project Review
CEO	Chief Executive Officer (referring to GEF)
ECA	Europe & Central Asia (referring to the regional designation of the project)
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EOP	End of Project (usually in the context of targets for indicators)
EU	European Union
FSC	Financial Score Card
FSC	Forest Stewardship Council
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIS	Geographical Information System(s)
ha	Hectares
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
KNP	Kopaonik National Park
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
METT	Monitoring Effectiveness Tracking Tool (for protected areas)
MSP	Medium Sized Project (referring to the size of the GEF grant)
MTR/MTE	Midterm Review/Midterm Evaluation
NAPS	National Association for Protected Areas of Serbia
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NIM	Nationally Implemented/Nationally Executed (referring to a project implementation modality)
NP	National Park
PA	Protected Area
PAFP	Protected Areas Financing Plan
PB	Project Board
PES	Payment for Ecosystem Services
PIF	Project Identification Form
PIR	Project Implementation Review
PIU	Project Implementation Unit
PM	Project Manager

PPG	Project Preparation Grant
PRF	Project Results Framework
ProDoc	Project Document (referring to the UNDP operational project document)
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
TE	Terminal Evaluation
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNDAF	United National Development Action framework
UNDP	United National Development Program
UNDP-CO	UNDP Country Office
UNDP-DRR	UNDP Deputy Resident Representative
UNDP-GEF RTC	UNDP-GEF Regional Technical Centre (based in Istanbul)
UNDP-RR	UNDP Resident Representative
USD	United States dollars
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

## Executive Summary

### Project Information Table

<b>Project Title</b>	Ensuring Financial Sustainability of the Protected Area System of Serbia		
UNDP Project ID	4281	PIF Approval Date	April 22, 2009
GEF Project ID	3946	CEO Endorsement Date	January 21, 2010
ATLAS Business Unit Award No.	00059435	ProDoc Signature Date	March 23, 2010
Country	Serbia	Date PM hired	August 1, 2010
Region:	ECA	Inception W/shop date	June 17, 2010
GEF Focal Area/Strategic Objective	Biodiversity	MTR completion date	February 23, 2013 June 17, 2013 (TTs cleared)
Trust Fund	GEF Trust Fund	If revised, proposed op. closing date:	May 31, 2015
Executing Agency/Implementing partner	UNDP		
Other executing partners	Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection		
<b>Project Financing*</b>	at CEO endorsement (USD)		At MTR (USD)
[1] GEF Financing	\$0.95		\$0.17
[2] UNDP Contribution	\$1.835		\$1.20
[3] Government	\$2.07		\$0.30
[4] Other partners	\$0.675		\$0.00
[5] Total cofinancing	\$4.58		\$1.50
PROJECT TOTAL COSTS	\$5.53		\$1.67

\*Figures in millions of US dollars.

### Project Description

The biodiversity within Serbia is under significant pressures, with the following threats being listed as being the most important: i) loss of natural habitat due to expanding agriculture and drainage of swamps and marshes, illegal construction, unregulated tourism, expanding transportation networks and micro-hydroelectric infrastructure; ii) excessive unregulated use and/or illegal poaching and hunting of

animal species, particularly large mammals and birds; iii) over-harvesting of timber and non-timber forest products from forests and meadows, including edible fungi and snails as well as overgrazing, particularly in mountain areas, and iv) the impacts of global climate change – which is already having impacts on tree mortality.

The described long-term vision for the project was described as being a scenario for the PA System in Serbia in which the “PA financing gap is restricted to minimum, allowing maximum coverage of the optimal costs of PAs”. This could be ensured through “a steady stream of funding from diverse sources and effectively increasing the overall resource envelope”. However, three main barriers exist to achieving financial sustainability of the PA system. These are: i) regulatory and policy gaps, ii) low diversity of funding sources, and iii) inadequate cost-effectiveness of site management.

It should be noted that the institutional situation of the PAs within Serbia is not typical. Protected areas are proposed by the Institute of Nature Conservation; if acceptable, the protected areas are established at national (or republican), regional (or provincial) or municipal levels. The management of the protected areas is then handed to one or other organization. Most often, this is a public forestry enterprise but protected areas within the country are also managed by NGOs and the church. Irrespective of the strengths and weaknesses of such a situation (and there are pros and cons), it does mean that the majority of the areas are *not* managed with conservation of biodiversity, ecosystems and ecological processes as their primary objective. Partly because of the atypical institutional setup for the protected areas in Serbia, the protected areas receive little funding from the government. Further to this, the environment sector is marginalised.

The objective of the project was “*to improve the financial sustainability of Serbia’s protected area system*”. This objective was to be achieved through the implementation of three components: Component 1. *Enabling legal and policy environment for improved PA financial sustainability*; Component 2. *Increasing revenue-streams for the PA system*; and Component 3. *Institutional and individual capacity of PA institutions to raise PA management cost-effectiveness*.

The start of the project coincided with an initiative to reinforce the biodiversity conservation framework on Serbia, and to seek to develop better ecological representation and a sustainably funded PA system.

The project was designed to be implemented under NEX/NIM arrangements with UNDP as the Implementation Agency for GEF. In practice, the project was implemented by a small, efficient team, employed by the UNDP-CO, sitting in the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection (or whichever ministerial version preceded it during the project’s life).

The project implementation was overseen by the Project Board that changed four times over the course of the project’s lifetime (see Annex V).

## **Project Results**

One of the persistent threads throughout the report is the institutional change that occurred during the project’s lifetime. The project had to adapt to these changes and

it did primarily by shifting the focus from the central level to focusing on the demonstration or pilot sites. In contrast, the institutional situation in the Vojvodina province was more stable and consistent, and, as a result, the project could continue to work with partners within this province even when it was more challenging with national level partners.

The project suffered two significant setbacks. First the key partner organisation for the project – the Environment Fund – was closed down in 2012. Second, due to two electoral processes (in May 2012 and March 2014) and government restructuring (in August 2013), there was significant institutional upheaval. Aside from Environment being shifted from ministry to ministry, over the course of the project's lifetime, the project saw five different ministers. The Project Board changed four times (see Annex V). And in addition to Environment being shifted from ministry to ministry, the changes included a total change in personnel. Thus, the changes were not simply a switch in the ministers but the changes reverberated through all the different levels of the civil service – including, uniquely, technical staff and protected area managers. Other institutes also suffered a relatively high level of insecurity – most notably the Institute of Nature Protection. Over the course of the project, the Institute for Nature Protection, at the state level, suffered a mandate dilution (e.g., it lost the mandate to review and approve the management plans for protected areas)

Furthermore, the global financial crisis stemming from 2007-08 also proved to be a barrier to project processes.

Despite these ongoing challenges and barriers, the project and its partners did take steps. These include (but are not limited to):

- An assessment of the value of the ecosystem services for one protected area was carried out. The ecosystem services provided by that one protected area was valued at two billion dinar (~ €19.6 million) per annum. The results of the analysis were also presented twice – once locally and once to a broader meeting of stakeholders in Belgrade.
- In response to the hiatus at a central level, the project shifted its focus to the demonstration sites – thus, in the protected areas themselves. At this level, the project carried out several initiatives.
- *Trainings*. The project held numerous meetings and training sessions covering the following topics: i) funding sources such as the EU, ii) the production and marketing of organic agriculture, iii) developing PA manager capacity to develop 'projects' and, therefore, allow them to raise funds and diversify their funding base, iv) project management cycle for PA managers, v) business planning for PA managers – using a 'train-the-trainers' approach, and vi) guiding visitor in protected areas. Other training included GIS, monitoring biodiversity (e.g., bird species) and building databases for the data and learning the value of ecosystem service valuation (as described above). Eleven people were taken on a study tour in October 2014 to Austria and Slovenia. It was notable that the state institutions valued the trainings to the extent that they co-financed people to attend.
- *Implementation of business and project cycle planning*. The protected areas developed 'business plans' (or project proposals of up to USD 25,000) with the premise was that they should in some way contribute to financial sustainability and

diversification. The majority of these focused on acquiring inputs – thus, including materials such as kayaks, binoculars, hiking poles and bicycles but they also included chalets/mountain huts (in Kopaonik National Park), nature walk, and hiking and biking trails (in Kopaonik, Djerdap and Tara National Parks, Lepterija-Sokograd) – but, in addition, they covered other aspects (e.g., development of a smartphone application for the trail in Djerdap NP, an exhibition for disabled persons in the Djerdap NP visitor center, guidance on sustainable collection of NTFP in Kopaonik NP, economic valuation of an aspect of the ecosystem services in Kopaonik NP, training on eco-tourism for staff and local stakeholders in Fruska Gora NP, training of NP rangers and local inhabitants in guiding and nature interpretation, business plans for ecotourism development in Tara NP, Djerdap NP and Nature park Golija, and database on cultural and natural objects in three PAs managed by PE Srbijasume as a base for collecting PAs user fees).

The projects that focused on inputs recouped the capital costs after only one year. In addition, the trails that were developed in Tara National Park were done so with acute sensitivity and awareness to disabled people. Finally, the implementation of these projects demonstrated the growth in capacity and the ability to diversify away from forestry-based finance for protected areas.

- The project worked to establish and strengthen the capacity of the National Association of Protected Areas. The National Association of PAs gave grants to 12 protected areas using funds from three successful grant applications secured by the National Association.

While the project made gains in these areas, there remained barriers to other revenue streams being incorporated, including: i) bed night fees at the accommodation facilities within protected areas, ii) ‘conservation’ fees for visitors to protected areas, iii) fees built into ski passes (e.g., in Kopaonik National Park) and iv) Payment for Ecosystem Service (PES).

In conclusion, then, despite the challenges it faced, the project demonstrated that there are options beyond the preponderance of and dependence on forestry. Further, in each of the areas in which the project worked, there are people now doing something different from what they were doing before: as such there is a shift from the “business as usual”.

Other barriers, of course, still remain. These include: i) there remains an imperative to commercialise all activities, ii) the threats to biodiversity still remain – although there is the hope that by achieving financial sustainability, efforts will be made to address the threat, their root causes and the barriers to effective management of the protected areas, iii) governance issues such as corruption and complex bureaucracy, iv) high rates of change among personnel leading to loss of institutional memory and lack of ownership, and v) the conditions imposed by the IMF on the country has resulted in a diminution of capacity.

### TE Ratings & Achievement Summary Table

Item	Rating	Comment
Overall project results	<b>S</b>	Despite the challenging period over which the project was implemented, it has made gains particularly at the level of the protected areas themselves. At a central level, gains were less significant but the institutional instability made this particularly challenging.
<b>IA &amp; EA Execution</b>		
Overall quality of implementation and execution	<b>S</b>	In the face of significant implementation challenges, the project managed to make headway, particularly in the field.
Implementation Agency Execution (UNDP)	<b>HS</b>	The UNDP-CO did an outstanding job in implementing the project in what were challenging circumstances.
Executing Agency Execution (GOS/Ministry)	<b>MU</b>	The government proved more of an obstacle to project implementation. There was little government ownership of the project. The Minister overseeing the project changed five times; the PB changed four times.  In contrast, the protected area managers proved to be committed and good partners to the project.
<b>M&amp;E</b>		
M&E design at project start-up	<b>S</b>	The design of the M&E for the project was standard for all UNDP-GEF biodiversity projects.
Overall quality of M&E	<b>S</b>	The M&E led to adaptive management of the project – with particular reference to the re-focusing of the project to the pilot/demonstration sites when the institutional changes were occurring at the central level as a result of electoral processes.
M&E plan implementation	<b>S</b>	The M&E plan was implemented satisfactorily with no shortcomings.
<b>Outcomes</b>		
Overall quality of project outcomes	<b>S</b>	The majority of the indicators in the PRF were achieved. In addition, while environmental (and biodiversity) impacts were minimal, at the level of the protected areas themselves, the project built capacities and resulted in the increase in revenues and budgets for the PAs. Overall, the project demonstrated that the <i>are</i> options for diversifying revenues for protected areas away from the previous forms of revenue such as timber from forestry work.
Relevance (R or NR)	<b>R</b>	The project remained relevant to the GEF priorities, the UNDP framework within Serbia and to the legal framework within Serbia. The project was less relevant to the country framework - partly as a result of the fact that it fell outside of the development priorities for the country and partly because the environment sector is

Item	Rating	Comment
		marginalised.
Effectiveness	S	The project, with a relatively small (MSP) grant from the GEF, was efficiently and effectively implemented by a small but outstanding team. The way in which gender was incorporated into project implementation was also notable.
Efficiency	HS	
<b>Sustainability</b>		
Overall likelihood of sustainability	L	Institutional sustainability is the aspect that is most concerning and the political processes over the lifetime of the project did not inspire confidence. The environment sector remains marginalised. However, hope can be derived from the process of accession to the EU because of the obligations (including environmental and institutional commitments) that accompany the move.
Financial sustainability	L	
Socio-economic sustainability	L	
Institutional/governance sustainability	ML	
Environmental sustainability	L	
<b>Impact (S, M, N)</b>		
Environmental Status Improvement	N	It is only in the long-term that environmental impacts will be seen from the processes that have been put into place and the changes that have been made by the project. In addition, the biodiversity indicator in the PRF was inappropriate and, moreover, two of four of the species that were included in the indicator were not being monitored.
Environmental Stress Reduction	N	
Progress towards stress/status change	M	

### Summary of conclusions

In conclusion, there were profound institutional issues that the environment sector faced over the course of the project that pivoted about the marginalisation of the environment sector in Serbia. The challenges that the project faced included the closure of the Environment Fund and the shifting institutional situation, with changes in the ministry in which the environment sector is housed. The project was “overseen” by five different ministers and the PB composition changed four times over the project’s lifetime.

The marginalisation of the environment sector is partly due to the development priorities that the government has for the country. These do not include the environment sector; indeed, there is an overwhelming emphasis on developing the economy of the country. As such, there is a great deal of irony that even when a project comes along seeking financial sustainability and the application of business practices – ultimately to move towards financial independence from state coffers, the politicians still manage to undermine the project and its success.

Despite this, there is some room for optimism here – primarily because of the obligations that will come with accession to the EU.

Moreover, the project has demonstrated that there are options to move away from the dependency on forestry that is the case for many of the protected areas in the country. The options included a diversity of potential revenue streams.

A further conclusion is that while there are some tensions between the forestry (especially with the overt commercial aspects of it) and biodiversity conservation, currently the protected areas cannot do without the revenues generated by the forestry work. Further work may be done to mainstream biodiversity thinking into the forestry sector such that the foresters are more willing to cross-subsidise more focused biodiversity work and even tourism development. In addition, the role that the forestry currently plays in securing the livelihoods of local communities should be recognised – although, as tourism develops further, it will also play an increasingly important role in local livelihoods.

Finally, it is likely that the concept of ‘business planning’ for the protected areas as implemented by the project strayed a little from the original perception of the project designers. Indeed, in the majority of sustainable financing projects, business plans consider the financing of the entire protected area. In this case, the project focused primarily on the business plan surrounding tourism – thereby excluding, for example, the forestry aspects. Following on from the above paragraph, it may have been good to trial one business plan for an *entire* protected area including all aspects of its operation. In this way, the foresters may begin to understand and appreciate the value of other aspects of the protected area.

### Summary of Recommendation & Lessons Learned

*Actions to take when the key partner organisation is shut down.* The project’s key partner – the Environment Fund was closed down in 2012. The project opted to continue and shift its focus onto the pilot (or demonstration sites) in the field<sup>1</sup>. In similar circumstances, projects should carry out a detailed feasibility and risk analysis to determine whether or not the project should be closed in response to the loss of key strategic partners.

*In kind co-finance.* The project did receive in kind support from the Government of Serbia – although the support was not well monitored or monetised. The UNDP-CO, together with the UNDP-GEF RTC in Istanbul, should work to ensure that projects systematically collect these data.

*FSC certification.* The timber being produced from protected areas should be eligible for certification by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). This would i) add value to the timber being produced and ii) promote better environmental (and socio-economic) standards.

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<sup>1</sup> **Comment on first draft of TE report:** “Soon after the Environment fund was closed, new Ministers responsible for Env’t that came after Gov’t changed in 2012 started announcing that a new Env’t fund will be established, especially because that was one of the strong recommendations of EU. In fact, establishment of a new so-called Green fund has been initiated end of 2015, however at the end it was decided that it would be a budgetary line rather than a separate institution (that existed until 2012).” **TE Response:** This partly explains the continuation of the project – in the hope that the government would fulfil their promises to re-establish the Environment Fund. In the event, at the end of 2015, they have not re-established it in its original form.

*Conservation agriculture.* Adopt and implement “conservation agriculture”. This goes beyond the concept of organic agriculture to one that should have a net positive effect on the environment.

*Association for Protected Areas.* Continue to support the Association for Protected Areas, at both the national and regional levels.

*Seek mechanisms to expand the revenue streams, including PES.* Project partners should continue to explore other forms of revenue that could further enhance the likelihood of financial sustainability for the protected areas. Where barriers exist, strategies and action plans should be developed and implemented with the aim of overcoming those barriers.

*Gender.* The approaches taken by the project towards gender as well as to disabled people was of the highest standard and should be used as a benchmark for other projects – especially those in countries where gender issues remain profoundly problematic.

*Debt for Nature swaps.* The UNDP-CO, through the Environment Portfolio Manager/Project Manager, has initiated a discussion regarding Debt for Nature swaps. As and when possible, this discussion should continue and will, hopefully, come to a fruitful conclusion.

Finally, in the broadest terms, there is still far to go. The institutional issues within the environment sector need to be finally and satisfactorily resolved – so too the systemic institutional issues that remain as barriers to effective management of the protected area system (which would have otherwise have been included in the project had it had been a full-sized project). The forestry sector needs to be restructured – including outsourcing forestry. In addition:

*Mitigation hierarchies for Zones II and III in protected areas.* The avoidance practices in forestry work could be extended further and made more systematic using the concept of mitigation hierarchies that are designed precisely to protect biodiversity.

*Changing attitudes about the protected areas.* In the long-term, it would be good to see a shift in the attitudes such that protected areas – and especially national parks – are seen as public institutions or as a public good and not simply commercial. This would engender the attitude that the protected areas would be something that the government would be willing to subsidize if need be.

*Mainstreaming biodiversity in land use and spatial planning.* There are some good examples from the region of how this has been successfully done – through UNDP-GEF projects, as well as in Serbia itself (e.g., in Vojvodina Province ecological network are used to integrate biodiversity into spatial planning). The good examples should be taken and replicated in Serbia.

There are a number of lessons to be learned from the project:

*Adaptive management in the face of adversity.* The project demonstrated that even when things appear to go wrong, with adaptive management and re-focusing, positive results can be attained.

*Political processes such as elections can cause significant turbulence.* The designers of a project should be aware whether or not an electoral process will take place during a project's life and they should also be aware of the potential for upheaval as a result of political processes such that i) the project design takes these things into account (including project length), and ii) the risk analysis should reflect the actual situation and risk log should be updated as the project proceeds.

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose of the evaluation

1. The Terminal Evaluation (TE) of the UNDP-GEF project “Financial Sustainability of the Protected Area System of Serbia” was carried out according to the UNDP-GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy. Thus, it was carried out with the aim of providing a systematic and comprehensive review and evaluation of the performance of the project by assessing its design, processes of implementation, achievement relative to its objectives. Under this overarching aim, its objectives were i) to promote accountability and transparency for the achievement of GEF objectives through the assessment of results, effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, sustainability and impact of the partners involved in the project, and ii) to promote learning, feedback and knowledge sharing on the results and lessons learned from the project and its partners as a basis for decision-making on policies, strategies, programme management and projects, and to improve knowledge and performance.

2. As such, this TE was initiated by the UNDP-CO as the project’s National Implementing Partner to determine its success in relation to its stated objectives, and to understand the lessons learned through the implementation of the project.

3. The TE was conducted by one international consultant (with the support and assistance of two national consultants). The TE consultant was independent of the policy-making process, and the delivery and management of the assistance to the project. The consultant was not involved in the implementation and/or supervision of the project.

4. The TE was carried out over a period starting from 15 September 2015 and with a mission to Serbia from 18 – 24 October 2015. Carrying out the TE at this point in the project’s implementation timeline was in line with UNDP/GEF policy for Evaluations.

## 1.2 Scope & Methodology

5. The approach for the TE was determined by the Terms of Reference (TOR, see Annex I) and by the UNDP-GEF Guidance for conducting Terminal Evaluations<sup>2</sup>.

6. Thus, it was carried out with the aim of providing a systematic, evidence-based and comprehensive review of the performance of the project by assessing its strategy and design, processes of implementation and achievements relative to its objectives. As such, the TE determined the

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<sup>2</sup> UNDP-GEF (2012) *Project-level Monitoring: Guidance for conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed projects*.

progress of the project in relation to its stated objectives (through the assessment of results, effectiveness, relevance, sustainability, impact and efficiency - requiring a review of the fund allocations, budgets and projections, and the financial coordination mechanisms), to promote learning, feedback and knowledge sharing on the results and lessons (both positive and negative) that can be learned from the implementation of the project. The TE examined whether the implementation arrangements – including the relationships and interactions among the project’s partners, UNDP, and other partners – are effective and efficient.

7. The TE included a thorough review of the project documents and other outputs, documents, monitoring reports, the Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE), Project Implementation Reviews (PIR), relevant correspondence and other project related material produced by the project staff or their partners (see Annex VI). The evaluation assessed whether a number of recommendations that had been made following the MTE, and monitoring and support visits from people from the Biodiversity staff of UNDP’s Regional Technical Centre were implemented and to ascertain the explanations if they were not.

8. The TE also included a mission to Serbia between 18 – 24 October 2015 (see Annex II for the itinerary of the mission). The evaluation process during the mission followed a participatory approach and included a series of structured and unstructured interviews (see Annex VII), both individually and in small groups (see Annex III for the list of people met and interviewed over the course of the mission in Serbia). Site visits to the Kopaonik National Park, the Uvac Reserve and Tara National Park were also scheduled i) to validate the reports and indicators, ii) to examine, in particular, any infrastructure development and equipment procured, iii) to consult with protected area staff, local authorities or government representatives and local communities, and iv) to assess data that was held only locally. Particular attention was paid to listening to the stakeholders’ views and the confidentiality of all interviews was stressed. Whenever possible, the information was crosschecked among the various sources.

9. The evaluation was carried out according to the UNDP/GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy. Therefore, activities and results were evaluated for their: i) **Relevance** – thus, the extent to which the results and activities were consistent with local and national development priorities, national and international conservation priorities, and GEF’s focal area and operational programme strategies, ii) **Effectiveness** – thus, how the project’s results were related to the original or modified intended outcomes or objectives, and iii) **Efficiency** – thus, whether the activities are being carried out in a cost effect way and whether the results were achieved by the least cost option. The results, outcomes, and actual and potential **impacts** of the project were examined to determine whether they were positive or negative, foreseen or

unintended. Finally, the **sustainability** of the interventions and results were examined to determine the likelihood of whether benefits will continue to be accrued after the completion of the project. The sustainability was examined from various perspectives: financial, social, environmental and institutional.

10. In addition, the evaluator took pains to examine the achievements of the project within the realistic political and socio-economic framework of Serbia.

11. The logical framework (with approved amendments in the Inception and following the MTE) with Outcomes, Outputs and indicators towards which the project was working formed the basis of the TE.

12. According to the GEF policy for TEs, the relevant areas of the project were evaluated according to performance criteria.

13. The preliminary findings of the TE were presented at a debriefing meeting at the end of the mission on 23 October 2015 to the DRR and project team at the UNDP-CO offices.

14. Finally, the TE was carried out with a number of audiences in mind, including: i) the various (and changing) entities of the Government of Serbia with whom the project was connected, ii) the UNDP-CO and UNDP-GEF RTC in Istanbul, and iv) the GEF.

### 1.3 Structure of the evaluation report

15. The report follows the structure of Project Evaluations recommended in the UNDP Evaluation Guidance for GEF-Financed Projects as given in Annex 5 of the TOR. As such, it first deals with the purpose of the review and the methodology used for the review (Section 2), a description of the project and the development context in Serbia (Section 3), it then deals with the Findings (Section 4) of the evaluation within four sections (Project Strategy, Progress Towards Results, Project Implementation and Adaptive Management, and Sustainability). The report then draws together the Conclusions and Recommendations from the project (Section 5).

## 2 Project description and development context

### 2.1 Project start and duration

16. The UNDP Project Document (Prodoc) was signed on 23 March 2010 (see Table 1) with implementation starting with the first disbursement on 17 June 2010. The project was planned to be implemented over four years (48 months).

**Table 1.** The project milestones.

Milestone	Date
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PIF Approval	22 April 2009
PPG Approval	22 April 2009
CEO Endorsement	21 January 2010
UNDP Prodoc signed	23 March 2010
Implementation commences	17 June 2010
Project Manager starts	August 2010
Planned Project closure	January 2014

## 2.2 Problems that the project sought to address

17. As indicated in both the project document and the MTR, the biodiversity within Serbia is under significant pressures, with the following threats being listed as being the most important: i) loss of natural habitat due to expanding agriculture and drainage of swamps and marshes, illegal construction, unregulated tourism, expanding transportation networks and micro-hydroelectric infrastructure; ii) excessive unregulated use and/or illegal poaching and hunting of animal species, particularly large mammals and birds; iii) over-harvesting of timber and non-timber forest products from forests and meadows, including edible fungi and snails as well as overgrazing, particularly in mountain areas, and iv) the impacts of global climate change – which is already having impacts on tree mortality.

18. The described long-term vision was described in the project document as being a scenario for the PA System in Serbia in which the “PA financing gap is restricted to minimum, allowing maximum coverage of the optimal costs of PAs”. This could be ensured through “a steady stream of funding from diverse sources and effectively increasing the overall resource envelope”. However, three main barriers exist to achieving financial sustainability of the PA system. These are: i) regulatory and policy gaps, ii) low diversity of funding sources, and iii) inadequate cost-effectiveness of site management.

19. The threats and barriers, as described in the project document, do not present the whole picture. The institutional situation of the PAs within Serbia is not typical. Protected areas are proposed by the Institute of Nature Conservation; if acceptable, the protected areas are established at national (or republican), regional (or provincial) or municipal levels. The management of the protected areas is then handed to one or other organization. Most often, this is a public forestry enterprise but protected areas within the country are also managed by NGOs and one by the church. Irrespective of the strengths and weaknesses of such a situation (and there are pros and cons), it does

mean that the majority of the areas are *not* managed with conservation of biodiversity, ecosystems and ecological processes as their primary objective.

20. When the project was being originally conceived in 2009, some thought was given to a full-sized project with the objective to tackle this institutional aspect – as well as that of financial sustainability. It is possible that a larger, full-sized project would have had more influence on the political processes within the country: the government would certainly have taken more notice. With the benefit of hindsight, it does, however, beg the question of how such a project would have fared in the face of the political and institutional upheavals that confronted this project (as will be discussed ad nauseam in this report). Either way, that untypical institutional situation – with little focus on biodiversity, ecosystems and ecological processes – persists.

21. Because of the atypical institutional setup for the protected areas in Serbia, the protected areas receive little funding from the government. For example, the Kopaonik National Park (KNP) receives approximately 10% of its budget (of 120 million dinars, 2015) from the government. The majority of protected area budgets come from accrued revenue. Again, for example, KNP accrues over 125 million dinars in revenue per year<sup>3</sup>. However, this has led to a situation which is largely dependent on forestry activities – which does not prioritise conservation measures – hence the need to diversify the revenue streams.

22. Further to this, the environment sector is marginalised: there is little interest in the sector from the Ministry of Finance; it is “at the bottom of the list” for privatisation; the development priorities are fiscal stabilisation, investment and employment with little mention of the environment.

23. Other issues and barriers also exist. The Environment Fund was, ostensibly, closed in the government’s efforts to reduce the number of public institutions and public spending but also because of allegations of corruption.

24. One further barrier exists: the country exists under IMF conditions which state that no recruitment should occur within the civil service or state enterprises. And yet, within protected areas, this has led to declines in the number of employees and loss of qualified people – in a sector with low capacities.

### **2.3 Immediate and development objectives of the project**

25. The objective of the project was:

To improve the financial sustainability of Serbia’s protected area system.

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<sup>3</sup> Thus, the accrued revenue exceeds the budget and the state receives 60-70% of this “profit” with the KNP retaining up to 40%.

26. This objective was to be achieved through the implementation of three components:

1. *Component 1. Enabling legal and policy environment for improved PA financial sustainability.* This component was to provide the legal and policy groundwork for long-term gains in the sustainability of the PA system as well as produce a Protected Areas Financing Plan (PAFP).
2. *Component 2. Increasing revenue-streams for the PA system.* This component was to be focused on expanding potential revenue streams from activities compatible with the conservation goals of the protected areas network to provide clear pilot projects that show financial sustainability is feasible without commercial logging activities.
3. *Component 3. Institutional and individual capacity of PA institutions to raise PA management cost-effectiveness.* This component was to build on the various pilots and policy work to increase institutional capacity for cost-effective management and financial sustainability. One key activity for this component was the development of business plans for pilot sites.

27. Together these activities and outcomes were thought to greatly increase the financial sustainability and cost-effectiveness of Serbia's protected areas

#### **2.4 Baseline indicators established**

28. The indicators and their baseline values were established during the project preparation phase. They are discussed when the project's results framework is presented (see Table 5 in Section 3.3.1).

#### **2.5 Main stakeholders**

29. The Project Document and MTR exhaustively identified the project's stakeholders<sup>4</sup>. The tables presented in both these documents not only identify the stakeholders but they describe their mandates and their roles within the project.

#### **2.6 Expected results**

30. The principal results that were expected from the project included: i) an improvement of the policy and legislation surrounding the finance of protected areas, ii) a diversification of the revenue streams for protected areas, and iii) improved capacity within protected areas as a result of improved planning, provision of training and improved accountability.

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<sup>4</sup> See the Stakeholder Analysis presented in Section 1.4 of the Project Document and Section IV(A)(ii) of the MTR report.

## 3 Findings

### 3.1 Project Design

31. The project document and MTR provide comprehensive accounts of the rationale of the project. Some understanding of the protected area system within Serbia is, however, useful as it differs in its governance than many other protected area systems. Two examples of the differences are:

1. Management of protected areas is delegated to a number of different organisations and there is no protected area management authority (as can be found in many other nation states).
2. The government provides very little in the way of funding for protected areas; indeed, with the majority of protected areas being managed under the auspices of some form of state enterprise, the protected areas are expected to be net contributors for the economy.
3. The preparation of justification and documentation for the establishment of protected areas is carried out by the Institutes for Nature Conservation at the state and provincial level (for the Vojvodina Province).

32. As the project was being designed and as implementation was starting, Serbia started to reinforce its biodiversity conservation framework and was seeking to develop better ecological representation and a sustainably funded PA system.

33. This provided the basis for the project design. Crucially, however, a decision was taken during the design phase to restrict the project to the financial sustainability of the protected area system of Serbia – rather than addressing the broader systemic barriers to effective management of the protected area system, including, perhaps most pertinently, the institutional aspects<sup>5</sup>. This was not only slightly odd because of the institutional issues facing the protected area system in the country but also because, at least in principle, the protected areas are *already* accruing significant revenues (albeit principally from forestry). However, as rightly observed by the MTR, as a result of these revenues the protected area network of Serbia may be better financed than many other protected area networks around the globe. However, the rationale for the project was primarily to increase revenues from non-forestry sources – including tourism and non-timber forestry products (NTFPs). The project design was focused at the national level but the design included site-based demonstration activities.

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<sup>5</sup> There was a choice whether to implement one full-sized project – that would deal with both the institutional issues as well as financial sustainability or to implement two medium-sized project – one of which would address financial sustainability. This resulted to be the case but see Section 4.1 for further discussion.

### **3.1.1 Analysis of LFA/Results Framework (Project logic /strategy; Indicators)**

34. Overall, the Project Results Framework (PRF) is a sensible and logical sequence that should measure the successes (or otherwise) of the project. Detailed analysis of the project's results framework is included in Table 5.

### **3.1.2 Assumptions and risks**

35. The project document identified four risks to the project achieving its objectives. Of these, two were considered as moderate risks, while the other two were considered as low risk. In summary, the risks were:

1. Weak institutional capacities
2. Escalating threats to biodiversity undermining conservation planning
3. The governance context of Serbia might make it difficult implement some revenue generation mechanisms
4. Climate change

36. The Inception Report did not make any additions or adjustments to the risk table.

### **3.1.3 Lessons from other projects incorporated into project design**

37. While the project was being designed and implemented at a time when there were many other sustainable financing projects in the region, the unique nature of the protected area system in Serbia means that lessons from these other projects were of limited value.

### **3.1.4 Planned stakeholder participation**

38. The project document specifies the responsibilities that the identified stakeholders have in the project's implementation. In addition, the project document also specifies the principles for participation of stakeholders – something that is rarely found in other projects. Further to this, the project documents identifies a number of other mechanisms to ensure adequate stakeholder participation.

### **3.1.5 Replication approach**

39. In principle, the replication approach was satisfactory based on “direct replication of selected project elements and practices and methods, as well as the scaling up of experiences”. This was to be based on the development of a knowledge management system to ensure information flow to targeted stakeholder groups thereby facilitating replication.

40. Various other aspects could also assure replication – such as the establishment of the National Association of National Parks and Protected Areas of Serbia (NAPS) – depending on the sustainability of such an institution.

### 3.1.6 UNDP Comparative Advantage

41. In principle, UNDP has a significant comparative advantage:

1. As a global organization, it can apply lessons learned from all over the world to a particular problem
2. It is, in principle, a trusted partner that is easier to work with than other multi-national organizations; part of this is that it operates through grant assistance rather than other, often more complex mechanisms and it is not pursuing any political or commercial interests.
3. As a global organization, it has a bigger picture and, consequently, can influence all aspects of a problem
4. It retains neutrality and independence. This is particularly important when dealing with sensitive governance issues
5. It always has a presence in the countries in which the projects are implemented. This brings local knowledge and experience to the projects.
6. UNDP not only has a global role but also a regional one. In the sphere of biodiversity conservation, this is important because of the lessons that can be shared and learned among countries with a similar history.
7. UNDP is also leading the NBSAP process allowing it to be perfectly placed for biodiversity projects within the country.

42. As a result, at least in principle, UNDP can implement innovative projects just as they have tried to do in this.

43. A further point should be mentioned. The capacity of the UNDP staff is exceptionally high: these people are outstanding, not only within the context of Serbia but also globally.

### 3.1.7 Linkages between project and other interventions

44. The project had few linkages with other projects and interventions within Serbia – primarily because of the uniqueness of the situation within Serbia and the uniqueness of the project. However, through the project team, there were linkages as they were involved in the implementation of other projects. More specifically, the UNDP-CO environment team had meeting every fortnight – thereby ensuring linkages with all pertinent project.

### 3.1.8 Management arrangements

45. The project was designed to be implemented under NEX/NIM arrangements with UNDP as the Implementation Agency for GEF. What this meant, in practice, was that the project was implemented by a small, efficient

team, employed by the UNDP-CO, sitting in the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection (or whichever ministerial version preceded it during the project's life).

46. The project implementation was overseen by the Project Board, which, as discussed in Section 3.3.1 (and see Annex V), changed four times over the course of the project's lifetime.

47. The Project Implementation Unit (PIU) was established and was housed within the Ministry with the mandate for the environment (which, at the time of the TE mission, was the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection but this has changed through the project's life; see Sections 3.3.1 for more details). The actual office used by the project team changed numerous times over the course of the project's lifetime – moved around the same building in parallel to the institutional changes. At some points, the project was alone in an office; at other points, it shared office space.

48. The PIU was responsible for the development for all Terms of Reference and contracts; these were scrutinised by the UNDP-DRR; all contracts were then signed by the UNDP-RR (although, on occasion, this was deputised, as necessary).

49. At the point of the TE, the PIU was staffed by two employees of the UNDP (see Table 2); these were not staff specifically hired for this project alone (as with many projects) but were longer-term staffers with other responsibilities within the UNDP-CO portfolio.

**Table 2. The members of the Project Implementation Unit, including position and period within the position.**

Name	Position	Employment dates
Milena Kozomara	Project Manager*	From August 2010
Vera Cvejic Pullen	Project Coordinator	From Nov 2010 until May 2012
Katarina Vuksic	Project Coordinator	From April 2013

\* Also Environment Portfolio Manager for UNDP-CO

50. As a result, the UNDP-CO Environment Portfolio Manager was also the de facto Project Manager; in contrast, the Project Coordinator, in essence, provided support to the Project Manager – for example, dealing with administration, organising logistics and workshops, and other programme related work.

51. The UNDP-CO did provide some training for the staff, once appointed, and the cohesion among the UNDP staff assisted with providing support, as necessary. However, apparently, the support and training could have been “better structured”.

52. Within the Environment Portfolio, meetings were held every fortnight; at a higher level, the UNDP-CO held staff meetings every month with an annual retreat and team building exercise. Thus, while the UNDP-CO could not be described as a “family” (cf. other UNDP-COs elsewhere), there was a good, professional cohesion among staff members.

### 3.2 Project Implementation and Adaptive Management

Item	Rating	Comment
<b>IA &amp; EA Execution</b>		
Overall quality of implementation and execution	<b>S</b>	In the face of significant implementation challenges, the project managed to make headway, particularly in the field.
Implementation Agency Execution (UNDP)	<b>HS</b>	The UNDP-CO did an outstanding job in implementing the project in what were challenging circumstances.
Executing Agency Execution (GOS/Various Ministry iterations)	<b>MU</b>	The government proved more of an obstacle to project implementation. There was little government ownership of the project. The Minister overseeing the project changed five times; the PB changed four times.  In contrast, the protected area managers proved to be committed and good partners to the project.

#### 3.2.1 Adaptive management

53. One of the persistent threads throughout the remainder of this report is the institutional change that occurred during the project’s lifetime. The project had to respond to these changes and it did primarily by shifting the focus from the central level to focusing on the demonstration or pilot sites. In contrast, the institutional situation in the Vojvodina province was more stable and consistent, and, as a result, the project could continue to work with partners within this province even when it was more challenging with national level partners.

54. In addition to the institutional impediments to project implementation, there were other challenges including, for example, in the 2014 floods, implementation of some of the field activities was delayed.

#### 3.2.2 Partnership arrangements

55. The project enjoyed good relationships with the partners at the field level. All of the people involved at the level of pilot areas enjoyed good communications with project; they had the freedom to plan, propose and implement projects as per their own perception of priorities.

#### 3.2.3 Feedback from M&E activities used in adaptive management

56. The monitoring of the project by the PIU staff (as described above in Section 3.1.8) and through the MTR provided the principal mechanisms for adaptive management. However, at the field level, the partners were given

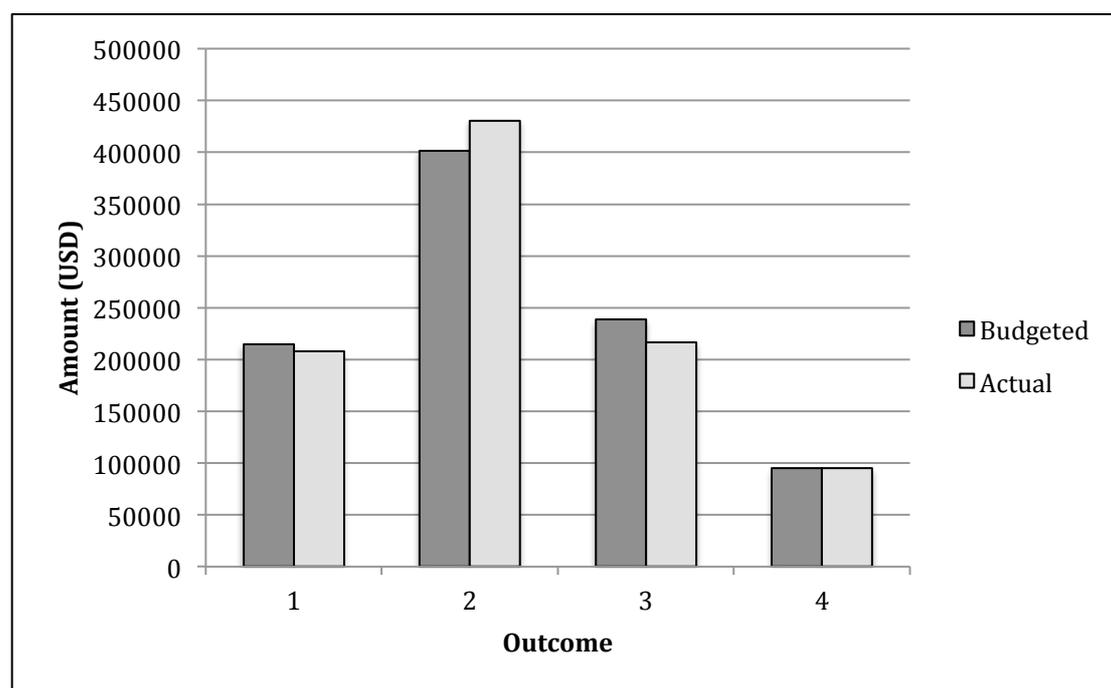
sufficient autonomy that they could adapt their implementation as they saw fit.

### 3.2.4 Project Finance

57. As with all UNDP-GEF projects, the project produced annual workplans and budgets. However, because the PB changed frequently through the project's lifetime and, on occasion, the project did not have a PB, the workplans and budgets were scrutinised by the UNDP-DRR and signed off by the UNDP-RR. The workplans and budgets were, eventually, signed off by the PB if and when it was functioning.

58. As indicated above, the project was designed as a GEF Medium-Sized Project (MSP) with a budget of USD 0.95 million<sup>6</sup> from the GEF Trust Fund. The originally proposed co-finance was USD 2.97 million – thus, the total project budget was USD 3.92 million.

59. Of the GEF budget, overall the expenditure almost precisely matched the budgeted amount (see Table 3). When this was disaggregated by Outcome, it can be seen that Outcome 2 was slightly overspent overall while Outcomes 1 and 3 were underspent (see Table 3). These were all within an acceptable range.



**Figure 1 The total budgeted amounts and actual expenditure by outcome (noting that Outcome 4 represents the project management budget).**

<sup>6</sup> This does not include the USD 50,000 for the PPG.

**Table 3. The project expenditure by Outcome and by year.**

	YR1 (2010)			YR2 (2011)			YR3 (2012)		
<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Budgeted</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>% spent</b>	<b>Budgeted</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>% spent</b>	<b>Budgeted</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>% spent</b>
<b>1</b>	5,500.00	3,156.85	57.40%	50,000.00	34,017.91	68.04%	28,022.00	22,230.81	79.33%
<b>2</b>	-	-		33,260.00	3,405.05	10.24%	54,000.00	32,864.07	60.86%
<b>3</b>	-	-		82,560.00	21,279.67	25.77%	66,300.00	86,865.14	131.02%
<b>Proj. Mgt</b>	19,220.00	2,613.16	13.60%	36,340.00	55,945.05	153.95%	26,720.00	30,795.73	115.25%
<b>Total</b>	24,720.00	5,770.01	23.34%	202,160.00	114,647.68	56.71%	175,042.00	172,755.75	98.69%

	YR4 (2013)			YR5 (2014)			YR6 (2015)		
<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Budgeted</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>% spent</b>	<b>Budgeted</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>% spent</b>	<b>Budgeted</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>% spent</b>
<b>1</b>	37,000.00	35,778.59	96.70%	39,000.00	62,859.46	161.18%	54,280.00	49,622.00	91.42%
<b>2</b>	129,300.00	130,893.35	101.23%	148,000.00	136,993.66	92.56%	100,000.00	126,471.00	126.47%
<b>3</b>	29,700.00	25,594.15	86.18%	113,000.00	53,922.75	47.72%	50,000.00	28,603.00	57.21%
<b>Proj. Mgt</b>	4,000.00	386.33	9.66%	-	3,658.95		2,459.00	2,000.00	81.33%
<b>Total</b>	200,000.00	192,652.42	96.33%	300,000.00	257,434.82	85.81%	206,739.00	206,696.00	99.98%

60. In terms of co-finance, estimated expenditure exceeding the amounts pledged at the beginning of the project (see Table 4). However, the project did not keep accurate records of actual expenditure and the figures presented are and remain estimates.

**Table 4. The planned value and actual expenditure of co-finance (all figures in USD)**

Co-financier	Amount pledged	Actual (at TE)*	% of expected amount
UNDP	1,835,000	1,500,000	82%
Government of Serbia	2,070,000	3,800,000	184%
Provincial government	-	960,000	-
Other partners	675,000	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,580,000</b>	<b>6,260,000</b>	<b>137%</b>

\* These represent estimates

61. Unlike other project, detailed monetisation of in-kind contributions by the government was not carried out by the project. However, the government's contribution to the project, including (but not limited to):

- a. The project was housed within the Ministry that housed the environment sector and the government covered the costs of the office space, electricity, phone and utilities.
- b. The time of government officials spent on project business, including attending meetings, seminars and workshops
- c. The capacity building and training sessions laid on by the project were so successful that the government co-financed attendance by additional personnel

62. This was true of the other state enterprises such as the forestry enterprises that have the mandate to manage protected areas and the Vojvodina provincial government.

63. In addition, further cost efficiency included: i) sharing office space with other programmes and projects, ii) cost sharing personnel over a number of programmes and projects – including the project staff (as indicated in Section 3.1.8), iii) neither recruiting a Chief Technical Advisor not using large numbers of international consultants (the project used one international consultant – a protected areas financing expert), and iv) having no significant overheads (for example, not having a project vehicle).

### 3.2.5 Project-level Monitoring & Evaluation Systems

64. The project's M&E framework is similar to the majority of all UNDP-GEF projects with USD 73,000 allocated for project monitoring. This was more than adequate a budget for this size of a project.

65. Similarly, the reporting structures were similar to all UNDP-GEF projects and this was carried out satisfactorily.

66. In terms of completing the GEF Tracking Tools, the Financial Score Cards (FSC) were completed three times during the project's lifetime – in 2009, 2012 and 2015. The Monitoring Effectiveness Tracking Tool was carried out three times – to establish baseline value in 2009, to determine midterm levels in 2012, and then again in 2015.

Item	Rating	Comment
M&E		
M&E design at project start-up	S	The design of the M&E for the project was standard for all UNDP-GEF biodiversity projects.
Overall quality of M&E	S	The M&E led to adaptive management of the project – with particular reference to the re-focusing of the project to the pilot/demonstration sites when the institutional changes were occurring at the central level as a result of electoral processes.
M&E plan implementation	S	The M&E plan was implemented satisfactorily with no shortcomings.

### 3.2.6 UNDP and Implementing Partner implementation, execution, coordination and operational issues

67. The principal issue to report is the profound institutional changes that happened over the project's lifetime and which proved to be an impediment to project implementation and, in some aspects, to project success. This will all be described in detail in the next section (see Section 3.3.1).

68. As described above (in Section 3.2.1), the project responded to these in a practical and pragmatic way – by shifting the focus to the field sites in which there was (slightly) more constancy.

69. In addition, the team was exceptionally efficient in all aspects of project implementation.

## 3.3 Project Results

### 3.3.1 Overall results

70. As has already been mentioned, the project suffered two significant setbacks. First the key partner organisation for the project – the Environment Fund – was closed down in 2012. Second, due to two electoral processes and government restructuring, there was significant institutional upheaval.

71. The Environment Fund<sup>7</sup> was the key partner for the project. The Environment Fund was a “government mandated foundation” that accrued revenues from environmental taxes and it had the objective to “provide long-term financing to environmental projects including protected areas and biodiversity”. In summary, it was the perfect partner for the project! Indeed, in the Project Document, the Environment Fund was identified to provide co-financing and technical support to the project.

72. The Environment Fund was closed down by law – ostensibly because of corruption issues (and some criminal charges have been laid). Following its closure, there was some discussion from the donor community within Serbia – lead by the EU and a letter, led by SIDA, written to the Government of Serbia expressing their concern.

73. Following the closure of the Environment Fund, such financial mechanisms for the protected areas ceased to exist and protected areas became “just another budget line” within the government budget. The taxes and fees that are still collected by the protected areas (and other entities) are simply placed into the Treasury.

74. The majority of interviewees over the course of the TE estimated that re-establishment of the Environment Fund was difficult and highly unlikely.

75. The institutional upheavals began in May 2012 when Serbia held Presidential elections. This left a hiatus during which the ministries were reshuffled and the mandate for the Environment shifted from the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning and was split between the Ministry of Energy, Development and Environmental Protection and the Ministry of Natural Resources, Mining and Spatial Planning. In particular, the mandate for nature protection was split between the above two ministries, with unclear division and mainly overlapping responsibilities. [It is interesting to note that at the same juncture, Vojvodina also held elections although these did not lead to similar issues in the region’s relationship with the project.]

76. Between September – November 2013, a government restructuring/reconstruction process led to discussions over mandate, tensions among different sector and some mandate shifts.

77. In March 2014, Serbia held Parliamentary elections following, once again, there was a ministerial change and Environment was unified and shifted from the Ministry of Energy, Development and Environmental Protection and the Ministry of Natural Resources, Mining and Spatial Planning to the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection.

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<sup>7</sup> Also known as the Fund for Environmental Protection.

78. These shifts in ministerial setting are symptomatic of the degree to which the environment sector (as a whole and not just biodiversity) is marginalised within Serbia and the degree to which environmental issues are not a priority.

79. Aside from Environment being shifted and split from ministry to ministry, over the course of the project's lifetime, the project saw five different ministers. The Project Board changes four times (see Annex V). And in addition to Environment being shifted from ministry to ministry, the changes included a total change in personnel. Thus, the changes were not simply a switch in the ministers but the changes reverberated through all the different levels of the civil service – including, uniquely, technical staff and protected area managers.

80. In addition to these ministerial level shifts, other institutes also suffered a relatively high level of insecurity – most notably the Institute of Nature Protection. As stated in the Project Document, the Institute for Nature Protection “performs research for nature protection, monitoring of the status of the natural resources, prepares reports on nature conservation, and assists with the implementation of protection regimes”. This includes identifying areas for inclusion into protected areas. Over the course of the project, the Institute for Nature Protection, at the state level, suffered a mandate dilution (e.g., it lost the mandate to review and approve protected area management plans) and, according to a number of interviewees, may be entirely eliminated (as part of the processes to reduce costs). The Institute has been further marginalized as it has been excluded from some meetings – even on protected areas<sup>8</sup>. This stands in stark contrast to the regional version within Vojvodina which retains all its previous mandate.

81. Further to these fundamental issues facing the project, the global financial crisis stemming from 2007-08 also proved to be a barrier to project processes and, again, many interviewees considered that things may have been very different period. Of course, it is impossible to say that with any certainty. It is equally interesting that the Project Document does not identify the global financial crisis as a risk to the success of the project.

82. Finally, in terms of challenges and remaining barriers, the perception among state-owned enterprises is that precisely because they are state-owned, one state-enterprise (e.g., the ski facilities in Kopaonik National Park) does not feel the need to pay another (e.g., the Kopaonik National Park) for rent or other services. In short, many revenue streams are not fulfilled because invoices are simply not paid.

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<sup>8</sup> **Comment of draft report:** “*INP was included in relevant meetings*”. **TE response:** The statement was not that the INP was excluded from meetings within project processes but rather that the government has excluded them from some forums. The text has been edited to add clarity.

83. Despite these ongoing challenges and barriers, the project and its partners did take steps. These include (but are not limited to):

1. The Vojvodina Institute for Nature Protection carried out an assessment of the value of the ecosystem services for one protected area. The protected area for which the analysis was carried out was selected with some care: it was an area of 600ha and selected because it had a large number of ecosystem services and would, therefore, elegantly demonstrate the value of such analyses. There were also good data available for the selected protected area.

The result was that the ecosystem services provided by that one protected area was valued at two billion dinar (~ €19,600,000) per annum. The results of the analysis were also presented twice – one locally within Vojvodina on 08 October 2015 (to protected area managers, Friends of the Institute, etc) and then to a broader meeting of stakeholders at on 13 October 2015 (during the annual meeting of protected areas managers of Serbia, organized by the Ministry).

The fact that these analyses follow on from the floods that occurred in Serbia between 13 and 18 May 2014 and which was estimated to have cause € 1.55 billion in Serbia is significant as it has the potential to leverage some support for protected areas as these can be, with justification, linked to reducing the risk of such disasters.

2. In response to the hiatus at a central level, the project shifted its focus to the demonstration sites – thus, in the protected areas themselves. At this level, the project carried out several initiatives.

*Trainings.* Training people at the level of the protected areas became a key objective of the project and, as a result, the project held numerous meetings and training sessions (see Annex IV) covering the following topics: i) funding sources such as the EU, ii) the production and marketing of organic agriculture, iii) developing PA manager capacity to develop ‘projects’ and, therefore, allow them to raise funds and diversify their funding base, iv) project management cycle for PA managers, v) business planning for PA managers – using a ‘train-the-trainers’ approach, and vi) guiding visitor in protected areas. Other training included GIS, monitoring biodiversity (e.g., bird species) and building databases for the data and learning the value of ecosystem service valuation (as described above). Eleven people were taken on a study tour in October 2014 to Austria and Slovenia – again, this was useful in the eyes of the participants because they “could see and relate to” the results in these areas. It was notable that the state

institutions valued the trainings to the extent that they co-financed people to attend.

In addition to these training sessions, the project also provided training for journalists within Serbia to increase their knowledge and awareness of protected areas and their values.

In the view of the protected area managers, the training was useful for a number of reasons, including: i) the training was practical and applicable to the protected area, ii) the trainings exposed the protected area managers to new technologies, and iii) the training catalysed the development of proposals which, in turn, resulted in the procurement of equipment<sup>9</sup>.

One of the impacts of the training was an increase in the budgets and funds received from the government.

*Implementation of business and project cycle planning.* In response to the training, as described above, the protected areas were encouraged to develop project proposals of up to USD 25,000 and submit them to the project to be funded. The premise was that these proposals should in some way contribute to financial sustainability and diversification. In response a number of projects were developed by the protected areas. The majority of these focused on acquiring inputs – thus, including materials such as kayaks, binoculars, hiking poles and bicycles but they also included chalets/mountain huts (in Kopaonik National Park), nature walk, and hiking and biking trails (in Kopaonik, Djerdap and Tara National Parks, Lepterija-Sokograd) – but, in addition, they covered other aspects (e.g., development of a smartphone application for the trail in Djerdap NP, an exhibition for disabled persons in the Djerdap NP visitor center, guidance on sustainable collection of NTFP in Kopaonik NP, economic valuation of an aspect of the ecosystem services in Kopaonik NP, training on eco-tourism for staff and local stakeholders in Fruska Gora NP, training of NP rangers and local inhabitants in guiding and nature interpretation, business plans for ecotourism development in Tara NP, Djerdap NP and Nature park Golija, and database on cultural and natural objects in three PAs managed by PE Srbijasume as a base for collecting PAs user fees).

Within the trainings on business planning (as mentioned above), participants from the protected areas were coached to develop

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<sup>9</sup> This was in contrast, in the words of one protected area manager, “to workshops – with lunch! –the contents of which are forgotten as quickly as one walks out of the door”.

feasible business plans related to their PAs. A total of eight business plans were thereafter developed, each generating new ideas for income generation. For example, in Tara National Park, plans were developed for bear watching tours (and this idea has subsequently received donor support for implementation).

Furthermore, three protected areas also developed fully-fledged business plans using these grants.

A few additional comments should be made here. First, the projects that focused on inputs recouped the capital costs after only one year. Second, the trails that were developed in Tara National Park were done so with acute sensitivity and awareness to disabled people. Third, the implementation of these projects demonstrated the growth in capacity and the ability to diversify away from forestry-based finance for protected areas.

3. The project worked to establish and strengthen the capacity of the National Association of Protected Areas. The National Association of PAs gave grants to 12 protected areas using funds from three successful grant applications secured by the National Association.

84. While the project made gains in these areas, there remained barriers to other revenue streams being incorporated. In the future, the protected areas – supported by whichever institution has, at that moment, the mandate to oversee their management, should work to develop these other forms of revenue. The potential sources of revenue include (but are not limited to): i) bed night fees at the accommodation facilities within protected areas, ii) ‘conservation’ fees for visitors to protected areas, and iii) fees built into ski passes (e.g., in Kopaonik National Park).

85. In addition, Payment for Ecosystem Service (PES) are, of course, implied as a source of revenue from the study that was undertaken by the Institute for Nature Protection in Vojvodina. There are some immediate and obvious opportunities for PES – for example, numerous micro-hydroelectric schemes have either already been developed, are under development or are planned.

86. As it currently stands, all of these further streams of revenue are problematic as they have barriers that stand in the way of being incorporated by protected areas. For example, apparently “people take water for granted” and “by law” people cannot be made to pay for water. In addition, there are cultural sensitivities to asking people to pay for such services. In short, then, such barriers will have to be overcome before these revenue streams can contribute to the financial sustainability of protected areas.

87. In terms of management of the protected areas (as opposed to the financial sustainability that was the objective of the project), one comment may be

made. The protected areas are, in general zoned into three categories: zone one (which is strictly protected), zone two (in which some level of activity is permitted – including forestry) and zone three (in which commercial activities including farming and construction are permitted)<sup>10</sup>. The protected areas may consider adopting *mitigation hierarchy* principles and practices<sup>11</sup> (beyond the avoidance practices that are, in fact, already being undertaken within some of the protected areas). This is stated in the acknowledgement that protected areas that are coupled with forestry enterprises already harvest 30% less than other forestries.

88. In conclusion, then, despite the challenges it faced, the project demonstrated that there are options beyond the preponderance of and dependence on forestry. Further, in each of the areas in which the project worked, there are people now doing something different from what they were doing before: as such there is a shift from the “business as usual”.

89. Barriers, of course, still remain. These include:

1. There remains an imperative to commercialise all activities – thus, there is little or no space for values or things that have no (perceived) commercial value. Even the payment of ecosystem services is too removed from commercialisation to have any impact, to date.
2. The project focused on financial sustainability – thus, it was not directly addressing the threats to biodiversity – although there is the hope that by achieving financial sustainability, efforts will be made to address the threat, their root causes and the barriers to effective management of the protected areas.
3. There were other barriers that were not addressed by the project including, for example, corruption and bureaucracy – although these were beyond the scope of the project
4. The institutional changes that occurred over the course of the project (and which were beyond the mandate or capability of the project to arrest) have led to other issues including: loss of institutional memory and lack of ownership. In part, the institutional changes were also a symptom of the lack of systematic thinking and organisation.
5. Finally, some of these issues are compounded by the conditions imposed by the IMF on the country at present. Thus, new

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<sup>10</sup> For example, in Tara National Park, <15% is categorised in Zone I, 40% is categorised in Zone II and the remainder of the areas is categorised into Zone III.

<sup>11</sup> For example, see [http://bbop.forest-trends.org/pages/mitigation\\_hierarchy](http://bbop.forest-trends.org/pages/mitigation_hierarchy)

recruitment into the civil service is currently prohibited – including the replacement of retiring staff or the loss of staff through the restructuring that took place over the project’s life. In short, this has resulted in a diminution of capacity.

6. Finally, other perverse incentives exist: apparently private forests are all categories as zone three areas (as described above) otherwise the state needs to compensate the owner for potential lost revenues. This is, of course, a perverse incentive as the integrity of areas rich in biodiversity or with important ecosystem services may end up being eroded as a result.

Item	Rating	Comment
<b>Outcomes</b>		
Overall quality of project outcomes	<b>S</b>	The majority of the indicators in the PRF were achieved. In addition, while environmental (and biodiversity) impacts were minimal, at the level of the protected areas themselves, the project built capacities and resulted in the increase in revenues and budgets for the PAs. Overall, the project demonstrated that there <i>are</i> options for diversifying revenues for protected areas away from the previous forms of revenue such as timber from forestry work.

**Table 5. The Project Results Framework showing the EOP status and the TE comments and ratings.**

Project Strategy	Indicator	Baseline	Target (EOP)	End-of-project status (level at 30 June 2015)	Means of verification	TE Rating & Comments
Objective: To improve the financial sustainability of Serbia's protected areas system	Overall score of the Financial Scorecard	0.276	0.45	0.459	Financial scorecards	There are no issues with this indicator.  <b>According to the FSC, this indicator has been satisfactorily achieved.</b>
	Population trends of Picea omorika, Pinus heldreichii H.Christ, Griffon Vulture and Great Bustard at key PAs	Decreasing	Stable	Griffon vulture level at 30 June 2015 is stable and increasing  Great bustard population in Serbia is limited to one area that has been protected and the population level is considered stable at 30 June 2015.  No monitoring data on Picea omorika and Pinus heldreich.  The project does not finance data collection or monitoring of these species and other sources of data are not available.	State of Environment Report of Serbia, published by Serbian Environmental Protection Agency <sup>12</sup>	The GEF insists on having biodiversity impact indicators. However, as with many similar projects, the selected biodiversity indicators are slow-breeding, large species and short of a catastrophic decline (which would have been beyond the scope of the project), their populations would be unaffected by project processes. In summary, while these are arguably the most important species and the indicator species for the selected pilot sites, they are inappropriate for the project. Moreover, the project did not fund the collection of data on

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.sepa.gov.rs/download/Izvestaj2013.pdf>

Project Strategy	Indicator	Baseline	Target (EOP)	End-of-project status (level at 30 June 2015)	Means of verification	TE Rating & Comments
						these species and there is no systematic monitoring of two of the four indicator species!
	<p><b>Original indicator:</b> Coverage of Serbian Protected Areas with ensured financial sustainability [This indicator has been dropped as per MTR recommendation.]</p> <p><b>New indicators</b></p> <p>1: Annual financing gap for basic management as measured by FSC reduced</p> <p>2: Annual financing gap for optimal management as measured by FSC reduced</p>	<p>0 ha [dropped]</p> <p>0 [for new indicators]</p>	<p>550,000 ha [dropped]</p> <p>10% [for Indicator 1 as per MTR]</p> <p>20% [for indicator 2 as per MTR]</p>	<p>1. Annual financing gap for basic management as measured by FSC reduced Level as of 30 June 2015 -1.96 % (gap increase as per final FSC)</p> <p>2. Annual financing gap for optimal management as measured by FSC reduced Level as of 30 June 2015 is 5.94% (gap decrease as per final FSC)</p>	Financial Score Card	The indicator was amended in response to the MTR. The issue with the indicator is that many of the protected areas are <i>already</i> financially sustainable because of the commercial activities that take place within them (e.g., skiing, forestry). However, it is apparent that the project did lead to a diversification of the revenue streams for the protected areas with which it worked.
Component	Number of PA	0	7 [Original]	2, same as in the previous	Government	The target was amended in

Project Strategy	Indicator	Baseline	Target (EOP)	End-of-project status (level at 30 June 2015)	Means of verification	TE Rating & Comments
1. Enabling legal and policy environment for improved PA financial sustainability	finance by-laws and regulations completed		target value] 2 [New target value as per MTR recommendation]	reporting period	publications	response to a recommendation from the MTR: the original target was simply too ambitious.  <b>Two regulations were adopted by the government and, in addition, six PAs adopted by-laws allowing fees to be charged. In other words, the indicator was satisfactorily achieved.</b>
	PAFP integrated into PA policy and regulations	No	Yes (in 2012)	Protected Areas Financing Guide for Serbia was finalized in 2015. This comprehensive funding plan that serves as guidance for the government, PA management authorities and other stakeholders for securing sustainable financing of PAs in Serbia was developed based on existing data on PA financing as well as extensive research on potential sources of funding. This document is embedded and referenced in the following national level documents: National Biodiversity Strategy, National Strategy for Sustainable Use of Goods and Resources as well as in (Draft)	PAFP, National Biodiversity Strategy, National Strategy for Sustainable Use of Goods and Resources	<b>Despite the institutional upheaval over the course of the project, the PAFP was satisfactorily completed.</b>

Project Strategy	Indicator	Baseline	Target (EOP)	End-of-project status (level at 30 June 2015)	Means of verification	TE Rating & Comments
				Action Plan for Implementing the Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA) of the CBD.		
	Cost-effectiveness reporting incorporated into annual State of the Environment Report	No	Yes (in 2012)	A set of PA financial indicators that would be relevant for the specific PA system of Serbia is being finalized. It is envisaged as part of the proposal for the set of indicators for measuring management effectiveness of protected areas in Serbia that can be used by SEPA for preparation of their annual State of Environment Report.	Project technical report	<b>While a set of indicators was developed, the institutional flux over the course of the project prevented them being adopted by the Serbian Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA). The UNDP-CO should do whatever it can to follow this up following closure of the project.</b>
Component 2. Increasing revenue-streams for the PA system	Increased revenues at PAs from nature based tourism and NTFPs	0 PAs	4 PAs	According to the 2014 FSC, there is further increase in PAs revenue generation from tourism activities. The share of revenues generated from tourism activities in the total finances available to the PA system rose from 16.3% at the baseline, over 30.1% in 2012 to 31.4% in 2014. For NTFP the situation remains unchanged. It has to be emphasized that the year 2014 was exceptional for both tourism and NTFP activities - due to severe flooding in May 2014 that greatly affected majority	Financial scorecards, Annual PA reports, financial reporting	The indicator simply specifies that <i>some</i> increase in the revenue should be recorded in <i>x</i> PAs rather than <i>y</i> % increased in targeted PAs.  <b>The target of an increase in tourism generated revenue in four PAs was satisfactorily achieved (indeed, it was achieved in 10 PAs).</b>

Project Strategy	Indicator	Baseline	Target (EOP)	End-of-project status (level at 30 June 2015)	Means of verification	TE Rating & Comments
				of PAs: there were less visitors, hence, there is a slower increase in revenue generation than would be under normal consequences. 10 protected areas have already reported that there is further increase or are expecting increase in next period thanks to finalized project pilot activities in PAs supporting nature-based tourism and use of NTFP. It is expected that sport and recreation equipment - including 100 audio guides, 70 binoculars, 120 hiking poles, 35 mountain bikes and 20 kayaks - that are distributed to protected areas will increase visitation and contribute to further income generation from tourism.		
	Number of grants acquired by PAs	5 per year	10 per year	55 protected areas received grants from the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection with total value of app.1,900,000 USD, while additional 28 protected areas received grants from Provincial Secretariat for Urban Planning, Construction and Environmental Protection with total value of app 200,000	Annual PA reports, Ministry reports, Provincial Secretariat reports	The indicator neither specifies where the grants should come from nor does it suggest how large (or small) the grants could be.  <b>The reported EOP results are from 2014/15 only and not a cumulative result. Every year PAs raised &gt;10 grants from a</b>

Project Strategy	Indicator	Baseline	Target (EOP)	End-of-project status (level at 30 June 2015)	Means of verification	TE Rating & Comments
				USD in 2014.		number of different donors (EU IPA cross-border, GIZ, WWF, Ministry/ies, Provincial secretariat). The figures demonstrate a large increase in the grants raised by the protected areas.
	Amount of funding provided to PAs from the Environment Fund [Indicator dropped as per MTR recommendation since the Fund ceased to exist in 2012]	\$320,000 US	\$1 million US	The project no longer reports against this indicator	Annual reports of Environment Fund	Given that the Environmental Protection Fund ceased to exist in September 2012, this indicator was deleted (as per the recommendation in the MTR).
Component 3. Institutional and individual capacity of PA institutions to raise PA management cost-	<p><b>Original indicator:</b></p> <p># of PAs in Serbia with business plans and cost-effectiveness strategies</p> <p><b>New indicators:</b></p> <p>1. Number of PAs in Serbia whose</p>	<p>1 [Baseline for original indicator]</p> <p>0 [New baseline for Indicators 1 and 2 as per MTR recommendation]</p>	<p>21 [Original target value]</p> <p>21 [Target value for indicator 1]</p> <p>2 [Target value for indicator 2]</p>	Indicator 1: PA managers of 28 protected areas received training on business planning for protected areas (they were trained to become business planning trainers) Indicator 2: A total of 11 business plans were developed.	Business Plans, Training reports	<p>The original indicator was amended in response to the MTR recommendation.</p> <p><b>The indicator has been satisfactorily achieved. However, see Conclusions (Section 4.1) for a discussion on this point.</b></p>

Project Strategy	Indicator	Baseline	Target (EOP)	End-of-project status (level at 30 June 2015)	Means of verification	TE Rating & Comments
effectiveness	<p>staff has been receiving knowledge and training on the PA business planning process</p> <p>2. Number of PAs in Serbia, which, by the time of the project completion developed new PA business plans</p>					
	# of PA, INP, Environment Fund, and MESP staff trained in effective financial management of PAs	0	30	20 staff from PAs and MAEP	Training reports	<b>A total of 20 staff were trained by EOP – thus, the target was not achieved. However, this was likely to be due to the institutional upheavals that occurred over the course of the project’s life.</b>
	# of INP staff trained for supporting PAs through the Help Desk [This indicator has been dropped as per MTR	0	10	The project no longer reports against this indicator. Comment: This indicator has been dropped as per MTR recommendation		<b>These indicators were deleted in response to the recommendation in the MTR.</b>

Project Strategy	Indicator	Baseline	Target (EOP)	End-of-project status (level at 30 June 2015)	Means of verification	TE Rating & Comments
	recommendation]					
	Existence of a country wide PA results based financial reporting system with reports sent to MESP and INP. Traceable expenses, costs, needs and gaps by program and PA [This indicator has been dropped as per MTR recommendations ]	No	Yes (in 2012)	The project no longer reports against this indicator. Comment: This indicator has been dropped as per MTR recommendation		
	METTs for 21 PAs	See cells below	See cells below	Clearance of terminal METT is pending Terminal Evaluation. Please see bellow METT scores:	METTs	While in principle more effective management of protected areas <i>could</i> result from better and more sustainable financing of protected areas, the linkage is not always direct or inextricable. Thus, observed increases may have not been linked to the project or to efforts to increase funding
	Karadjordjevo	0.18	0.38	0.73		
	Pcinja	0.26	0.46	0.73		
	Ludas	0.34	0.54	0.62		
	NP Fruska Gora	0.43	0.6	0.88		
	Veliko ratno ostrvo	0.54	0.65	0.87		

Project Strategy	Indicator	Baseline	Target (EOP)	End-of-project status (level at 30 June 2015)	Means of verification	TE Rating & Comments
	NP Sara	0.58	0.65	No data received by the project.		streams.
	Slano Kopovo	0.64	0.75	<b>0.72</b>		<p>Despite the above comment, the METT scores for all 21 protected areas <i>increased</i> over the course of the project and only 11 (out of the total of 21) not achieving the stipulated EOP target<sup>13</sup>. However, as stated above, these increases were not necessarily linked to the project or efforts to diversify funding in PAs. Notably, two of the key pilot sites with which the project worked (Tara and Kopaonik NPs) did <i>not</i> achieve their EOP targets despite the gains made in these two areas.</p>
	Ovcarsko-kablarska klisura	0.64	0.75	<b>0.69</b>		
	NP Djerdap	0.65	0.75	0.78		
	Golija	0.65	0.75	<b>0.71</b>		
	Mokra Gora	0.66	0.75	0.78		
	Sicevacka klisura	0.67	0.75	0.79		
	NP Kopaonik	0.67	0.75	<b>0.72</b>		
	Carska bara	0.68	0.80	0.80		
	Deliblatska pescara	0.68	0.80	<b>0.74</b>		
	NP Tara	0.69	0.85	<b>0.80</b>		
	Klisura reke Tresnjice	0.69	0.85	<b>0.69</b>		
	Resavska pecina	0.7	0.90	<b>0.85</b>		
	Gornje Podunavlje	0.71	0.90	<b>0.72</b>		
	Jegricka	0.75	0.90	<b>0.80</b>		

<sup>13</sup> **Comment on draft report:** "Please note that METT scores for some of the participating protected areas were higher at mid-term (2012 METT). There are several reasons for the difference: Government austerity measures (ban for new employment, inability to engage temporary employees for execution seasonal activities), pending of appointment of new NP directors after elections. In some cases METT questionnaire was filled in by different persons, as PAs staff changed." **TE response:** The comment is noted.

<b>Project Strategy</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Target (EOP)</b>	<b>End-of-project status (level at 30 June 2015)</b>	<b>Means of verification</b>	<b>TE Rating &amp; Comments</b>
	Zasavica	0.84	0.95	0.88		

### 3.3.2 Relevance

90. The project remained relevant and the TE concurs with the assessment carried out at the MTR<sup>14</sup>. The project remained relevant at all of the different levels: the local and national level, the regional level, to the UNDAF and to the GEF priorities.

91. Following the floods of 2014, the relevance of good environmental management and well managed protected areas – especially of watershed areas – became even more relevant. This was demonstrated, in part, through the analysis that was carried out on the value of ecosystem services that was carried out by the Institute for Nature Protection of Vojvodina.

Item	Rating	Comment
<b>Outcomes</b>		
Relevance (R or NR)	<b>R</b>	The project remained relevant to the GEF priorities, the UNDP framework within Serbia and to the legal framework within Serbia. The project was less relevant to the country framework - partly as a result of the fact that it fell outside of the development priorities for the country and partly because the environment sector is marginalised.

### 3.3.3 Effectiveness & Efficiency

92. The effectiveness of the project was undermined by the various political upheavals through which the country went during the life of the project. And yet, despite this major drawback, if one examines the project's results framework (see Table 5), the majority of indicators were achieved if not surpassed. This can be attributed in some large part to the efficiency of the team and the relationship that they had with their partners. The degree to which the project achieved *impact* will be discussed in the relevant section below (see Section 3.3.7).

93. One comment that should be made in this section is the effectiveness of the integration of gender and marginalised people in the project. Indeed, the project can and should be held up as best practice as far as this is concerned. Gender incorporation included: i) ensuring representation through all project processes, ii) the use of gender sensitive language, and iii) ensuring that gender stereotypes were not being perpetuated. On occasion, the project team "had to intervene" to ensure that the integration of gender was maintained and considered throughout the project's implementation. The project also enjoyed a good relationship with the UN Women office in

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<sup>14</sup> See Section B of the MTR report on pp. 12-14.

Belgrade; this also contributed to ensuring that the direction taken was appropriate.

Item	Rating	Comment
<b>Outcomes</b>		
Effectiveness	<b>S</b>	The project, with a relatively small (MSP) grant from the GEF, was efficiently and effectively implemented by a small but outstanding team. The way in which gender was incorporated into project implementation was also notable.
Efficiency	<b>HS</b>	

### 3.3.4 Country Ownership

94. The level of ownership of the project – primarily perpetuated by the institutional changes that occurred over the course of the project – was low. This was exacerbated by the fact that the project had multiple PBs over its lifetime (and which did, “eventually”, approve the major project documents – e.g., the MTR and Inception reports, as necessary). Indeed, at the central level, the project could simply be said to have been owned by the Project Manager!

95. However, this was a symptom not only of the institutional changes but also of a deeper issue: the decision makers, in the words on one interviewee, are simply “not interested”.

96. This was in stark contrast to the ownership displayed among the stakeholders with whom the project worked in the different field sites. Here, a high degree of ownership was displayed. Indeed, in the development of small projects (using ‘business plans’), ownership was transferred completely to the stakeholders. The result was highly satisfactory with people taking pride in what they had achieved over the course of the project.

97. Given the current state of the Ministry within which the Environment is housed, beyond the current project, the UNDP-CO (and the Environment Portfolio Manager in particular) is leading the development process for future GEF pipeline projects.

98. In addition (and partly as an extension of the current project), the UNDP-CO has led on a series of discussions surrounding Debt for Nature swaps<sup>15</sup>.

99. However, the final note here is that this all may change; indeed, it may have to change as Serbia moves towards accession to the European Union.

<sup>15</sup> Indeed, the TE attended one of these meetings with government representatives and donors and it was remarkable that the Environment sector within the government has sent a relatively low level staffer in comparison to the other government organizations that were represented at the meeting.

### 3.3.5 Mainstreaming

100. One of the objectives of the project was to develop capacity within the protected area system to ensure sustainability: arguably, this was mainstreaming sustainable financing within the protected area system (although this is not the conventional understanding of “mainstreaming”).

101. The project did, however, catalyse and leverage funding from other donors into the protected areas. For example, both WWF and SIDA have engaged with funding for “bear watching” in Tara National Park. Similar projects have also been catalysed elsewhere: again, for example, vulture watching is now occurring in Uvac Special Nature Reserve.

102. There are a number of other things that should be mentioned here. First, the media coverage that the project (or project partners) enjoyed has raised interest and the potential for replication. Second, as mentioned above, the project (through the Environment Portfolio Manager of the UNDP-CO) has catalysed the discussion surrounding Debt for Nature Swaps. Third, a PIF is being developed for a “Green Parliament” with a focus on capacity development.

Finally, the establishment of the National Association for Protected Areas has prompted calls for a *Regional* Association across ex-Yugoslavia, in partnership with WWF. The thinking is that such an Association would be for lobbying, fund raising, training trainers – not unlike the current project, and communication. This should be encouraged as and when the opportunity arises.

### 3.3.6 Sustainability

103. Before embarking on a more detailed analysis of sustainability, it is obvious that there was a strong emphasis on sustainability in the project’s design, development and implementation.

104. The project document identified four risks; these were not amended in either the Inception or MTR reports. Two of the risks has proved well identified: i) some of the revenue generation mechanisms might prove difficult to replicate in Serbia’s governance context and ii) the weak capacity for efficient PA management; both of these were accurately rated as being moderate risks (in contrast to the other two risks which were rated as “low”<sup>16</sup>). The former risk (inappropriate funding mechanisms for Serbian context) is discussed above (see para 83 *et seq.*). The second risk, does not fully address the issues that the project has faced. In addition, the institutional upheavals seen over the course of the project were not identified as a risk at all.

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<sup>16</sup> It could be argued that the floods that afflicted Serbia in 2014 were a consequence of climate change; the floods certainly had an impact on project implementation.

105. Overall sustainability hereon, as mentioned above, is anchored in the accession to the EU; included in this is the Natura 2000 network and there are incentives and pressures to conform with this. Furthermore, there are cross-border programmes and the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA), which demand stronger institutional frameworks at the central and local levels, and preparing the country for the rights and obligations – including environmental – that come with EU membership. Within these frameworks, there are powerful incentives to conform – all of which will contribute to the sustainability of the protected area system within the country.

#### **3.3.6.1 Financial Risks to Sustainability**

106. Again, obviously, the project's objective was financial sustainability and little more needs to be stated within this sub-section – except, perhaps, to reiterate that the project has demonstrated that there a diversity of sustainable financing options that is available both to the system as a whole but most particularly to the individual protected areas. This is most clearly demonstrated on a small scale by the fact that the capital costs of purchasing equipment was paid off within one year following procurement.

#### **3.3.6.2 Socio-economic Risks to Sustainability**

107. The project was mostly neutral with respect to socio-economics. However, there are some aspects that should be noted.

108. First, effectively managed protected areas in Serbia are definitely *not* neutral to local socio-economics. Indeed, taking Tara National Park as an example, the park has over 300 employees with over 5,000 people dependent on various aspects of park management and productivity. In summary, a well-managed park will lead directly to the sustainability of the livelihoods of those people.

#### **3.3.6.3 Institutional Framework and Governance Risks to Sustainability**

109. The institutional upheaval that occurred over the project's lifetime does not spell well for institutional sustainability. It is apparent that electoral processes, and restructuring and reconstruction of government institutions can significantly hamper the progress of projects such as these. With the changes in personnel that occur, institutional memory and all capacity that has been built are lost.

110. The fact that the environment sector is as marginalised as it is does not help. A good example of this and the effect on institutional sustainability is the erosion of the mandate of the Institute for Nature Protection and the elimination of the Environment Fund.

111. The project worked to contribute to institutional sustainability in a number of ways:

1. The project worked to build capacity in a number of ways (see Section 3.3.1 for a description).
2. When building capacity and training people, the project opted train trainers as well such that the knowledge would be perpetuated beyond the life of the project.
3. The small grants that were given to the protected areas were as a result of processes whereby the PA managers and their staff “learned by doing”.

112. Overall, despite the institutional challenges, the protected area capacities will remain; the UNDP-CO will retain their environment portfolio with the outstanding staff; the project did demonstrate that options for diversification of revenue streams for protected areas.

113. However, as previously mentioned in the report, there is one overriding cause for optimism for institutional sustainability: the process of accession to the EU – with the obligations that are part of this process (which continue, of course, once the country has successfully acceded).

114. In addition, while the Environment may continue to be passed from one ministerial configuration to another, there always will be a Environment with personnel with the mandate to carry out environmental work in all its forms.

115. There are two other areas of concern. First, the small grants to the protected areas focused on the provision of *inputs* (based on the proposals that were developed by the protected area personnel themselves). While it has already been stated in the report that the capital costs of much of the recreational equipment was recouped within the first year, it is essential that the protected areas set aside funds for replacing the equipment. Similarly, the protected areas should include depreciation into their budgets – thereby allowing for maintenance and replacement, as appropriate. Second, future work – possibly carried out by the Institute of Nature Protection – should focus on a tourism value chain analysis to identify bottlenecks and challenges<sup>17</sup>, and, thereafter, develop strategies and actions plans to overcome them.

116. Finally, to reiterate a recommendation made above, continuing to invest in Associations for Protected Areas, both at a national and regional level, would also be useful for institutional sustainability.

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<sup>17</sup> For example, see

[http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTEXPCOMNET/Resources/Mozambique\\_value\\_chain\\_2006\\_vol1.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTEXPCOMNET/Resources/Mozambique_value_chain_2006_vol1.pdf) or <http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/98.pdf>

### 3.3.6.4 Environmental Risks to Sustainability

117. It is also obvious that the one of the principles that underpins the project is to work towards environmental sustainability as well as having biodiversity impacts. While environmental sustainability is linked with the other aspects of sustainability described above, it is only when there are inadvertent impacts that risks to environmental sustainability become likely. Within the frame of the current project, there are two areas of concern. First, at present across the majority of the protected area estate, tourism is underdeveloped, in Kopaonik National Park, the skiing facilities – as well as all associated infrastructure – is growing apace. In order to avoid the inadvertent and negative impacts of commercially driven development.

118. Along similar lines, the vulture colony in the Uvac Special Nature Reserve is dependent on being fed. This is linked with financial sustainability, but such dependencies lead to risks of negative environmental impacts.

Item	Rating	Comment
<b>Sustainability</b>		
Overall likelihood of sustainability	L	Institutional sustainability is the aspect that is most concerning and the political processes over the lifetime of the project did not inspire confidence. The environment sector remains marginalised. However, hope can be derived from the process of accession to the EU because of the obligations (including environmental and institutional commitments) that accompany the move.
Financial sustainability	L	
Socio-economic sustainability	L	
Institutional/governance sustainability	ML	
Environmental sustainability	L	

### 3.3.7 Impact

119. This project was designed and implemented under the aegis of the GEF strategic objective one – biodiversity. Since the GEF Biodiversity Study Program was published in 2004<sup>18</sup>, there has been an emphasis on biodiversity impacts. As a result, indicators to demonstrate biodiversity impacts are included in projects' results framework. However, as in this project, the indicators are often not well thought out and, as a consequence, inappropriate (see Table 5). It is not easy: selecting indicators that are meaningful for the interventions that the projects are carrying out is challenging particularly if the project is working in an indirect way to improve the management effectiveness of protected areas (as in every sustainable financing project).

<sup>18</sup> See

[http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/soilbiodiversity/Downloadable\\_files/364030PAPER0GE1iversity0PS01PUBLIC1.pdf](http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/soilbiodiversity/Downloadable_files/364030PAPER0GE1iversity0PS01PUBLIC1.pdf)

And choosing the aspects of biodiversity that are simply the most important to the area(s) – as was done in this project – without considering whether the project will actually influence the populations or ecosystems is meaningless. In addition, two of the four selected biodiversity indicators are not being monitored (and the project did not specifically pay for them to be monitored); obviously, without monitoring we cannot know whether results are being achieved.

120. As it is and as a result, we cannot know whether the project has had biodiversity impacts. It is reasonably unlikely that it has in its lifetime but it is reasonably likely that if the initiatives that it started continue, then it will, in the longer term, have positive biodiversity impacts.

121. The project did, however, have other impacts. As examples:

1. There was an increase in tourism in Kopaonik National Park leading to an increase in tourism-related revenue.
2. The installation in Tara National Park of trails that were sensitive to the needs of physically and visually handicapped people brought significant media attention that, in turn, will contribute to changing attitudes.
3. The budgets of the protected areas increased as a result of the gain in capacity – as a result of project activities.

122. Most significantly, in the estimation of the project team, at least one person in each protected is now doing something different. Thus, the business as usual scenario has been irrevocably altered. In this alone, there is impact and the potential for a lasting legacy.

Item	Rating	Comment
<b>Impact (S, M, N)</b>		
Environmental Status Improvement	<b>N</b>	It is only in the long-term that environmental impacts will be seen from the processes that have been put into place and the changes that have been made by the project. In addition, the biodiversity indicator in the PRF was inappropriate and, moreover, two of four of the species that were included in the indicator were not being monitored.
Environmental Stress Reduction	<b>N</b>	
Progress towards stress/status change	<b>M</b>	

## 4 Conclusions and Recommendations

### 4.1 Conclusions

123. There are a number of key conclusions that can be drawn from the project.

124. There were profound institutional issues that the environment sector faced over the course of the project that pivoted about the marginalisation of the environment sector in Serbia. The challenges that the project faced included the closure of the Environment Fund – the principal partner for the project! The second challenge faced by the project was the shifting institutional situation, with changes in the ministry in which the environment sector is housed. The project was “overseen” by five different ministers and the PB composition changed four times over the project’s lifetime (see Annex V).

125. The marginalisation of the environment sector is partly due to the development priorities that the government has for the country. These do not include the environment sector; indeed, there is an overwhelming emphasis on developing the economy of the country. As such, there is a great deal of irony that even when a project comes along seeking financial sustainability and the application of business practices – ultimately to move towards financial independence from state coffers, the politicians still manage to undermine the project and its success.

126. Despite this, there is some room for optimism here – primarily because of the obligations that will come with accession to the EU.

127. Moreover, the project has demonstrated that there are options to move away from the dependency on forestry that is the case for many of the protected areas in the country. The options included a diversity of potential revenue streams. And yet, as discussed above (see paras 86 *et seq.*), there are even more options for which barriers continue to exist.

128. Given the institutional upheavals that were seen through the project’s lifetime, in hindsight, it is probably a good thing that a full-sized GEF project was not designed and implemented as it would probably have suffered a worse fate than the project as it is. The counterpoint to this is that a full-sized project would have more resources and, probably, more leverage than the current project had.

129. A further conclusion is that while there are some tensions between the forestry (especially with the overt commercial aspects of it) and biodiversity conservation that may underpin the protected areas, currently the protected areas cannot do without the revenues generated by the forestry work. Indeed, further work may be done to mainstream biodiversity thinking into the forestry sector such that the foresters are more willing to cross-subsidise more focused biodiversity work and even tourism development. In addition, the role that the forestry currently plays in securing the livelihoods of local communities should be recognised – although, as tourism develops further, it will also play an increasingly important role in local livelihoods.

130. Finally, it is likely that the concept of ‘business planning’ for the protected areas as implemented by the project strayed a little from the original perception of the project designers. Indeed, in the majority of sustainable financing projects, business plans consider the financing of the entire protected area. In this case, the project focused primarily on the business plan surrounding tourism – thereby excluding, for example, the forestry aspects. Following on from the above paragraph, it may have been good to trial one business plan for an *entire* protected area including all aspects of its operation. In this way, the foresters may begin to understand and appreciate the value of other aspects of the protected area.

Item	Rating	Comment
Overall project results	S	Despite the challenging period over which the project was implemented, it has made gains particularly at the level of the protected areas themselves. At a central level, gains were less significant but the institutional instability made this particularly challenging.

## 4.2 Recommendations

### 4.2.1 Corrective actions for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project

131. *Actions to take when THE KEY partner organisation is shut down.* As has been discussed through this report, the Environment Fund – the project’s key partner – was closed down in 2012 – thus, two years after the project started. The project opted to continue and shift its focus onto the pilot (or demonstration sites) in the field. Some reflection is necessary to determine whether this was the correct course of action<sup>19</sup>. Given that the majority of the gains that the project made were in the protected areas, it can be concluded that this probably was the correct course of action. However, in similar circumstances, projects should carry out a detailed feasibility and risk analysis to determine whether or not the project should be closed in response to the loss of key strategic partners. The analysis may also lead to the development of a number of *triggers* which if hit within a designated timeframe, the project will continue; however, if the triggers are not hit within that timeframe, the project may be closed. These mechanisms simply assist with the decision making process whether or not to close a project.

<sup>19</sup> **Comment on draft report:** “Soon after the Environment fund was closed, new Ministers responsible for Env’t that came after Gov’t changed in 2012 started announcing that a new Env’t fund will be established, especially because that was one of the strong recommendations of EU. In fact, establishment of a new so-called Green fund has been initiated end of 2015, however at the end it was decided that it would be a budgetary line rather than a separate institution (that existed until 2012).”

**TE response:** Noted as an explanation of why the project did not close once the Environment Fund was closed: there was a promise from the government that it would be re-opened.

132. *In kind co-finance.* The project did receive in kind support from the Government of Serbia – although the support was not well monitored or monetised. Other UNDP-GEF project elsewhere<sup>20</sup> have successfully made significant efforts to monitor and monetise co-finance – including in kind co-finance. The UNDP-CO, together with the UNDP-GEF RTC in Istanbul, should work to ensure that projects systematically collect these data.

#### 4.2.2 Actions to follow up or reinforce initial benefits from the project

133. There are a number of things that could be done to continue to develop the sustainable financing of the protected areas within Serbia. These include:

134. *FSC certification.* Because the forestry work within the protected areas is already being done with care, the timber being produced should be (perhaps with some minor tweaks), eligible for certification by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC<sup>21</sup>). This would have to impacts: i) it would add value to the timber being produced and ii) it would assist to persuade the foresters that making efforts to promote better environmental (and socio-economic) standards is worthwhile.

135. *Conservation agriculture.* The project already provided training regarding organic agriculture. This could be taken even further through the adoption and implementation of “conservation agriculture”<sup>22</sup>. This goes beyond the concept of organic agriculture to one that should have a net positive effect on the environment.

136. *Association for Protected Areas.* As mentioned through the report, any support to the Association for Protected Areas, at both the national and regional levels, would be well invested funding.

137. *Seek mechanisms to expand the revenue streams, including PES.* The project explored various revenue streams that could contribute to the financial sustainability of protected areas. However, as discussed (in paras 83 *et seq.*), there are other funding mechanisms that were either not explored or barriers exist to them being adopted and implemented. The best example of this is PES – particularly because people could appreciate the costs that the 2014 floods brought to the country. The project partners should continue to explore other forms of revenue that could further enhance the likelihood of financial sustainability for the protected areas. Where barriers exist, strategies and action plans should be developed and implement with the aim of overcoming those barriers.

138. *Gender.* The approaches taken by the project towards gender as well as to disabled people was of the highest standard and should be used as a

<sup>20</sup> See, for example, [https://www.thegef.org/gef/project\\_detail?projID=3950](https://www.thegef.org/gef/project_detail?projID=3950)

<sup>21</sup> Not to be confused with the acronym for the Financial Score Card!

<sup>22</sup> See, for example, <http://www.fao.org/ag/ca/> and <http://mulch.mannlib.cornell.edu>

benchmark for other projects – especially those in countries where gender issues remain profoundly problematic.

139. *Debt for Nature swaps.* The UNDP-CO, through the Environment Portfolio Manager/Project Manager, has initiated a discussion regarding Debt for Nature swaps. As and when possible, this discussion should continue and will, hopefully, come to a fruitful conclusion.

#### **4.2.3 Proposals for future directions underlining main objectives**

140. In the broadest terms, there is still far to go. The institutional issues within the environment sector need to be finally and satisfactorily resolved – so too the systemic institutional issues that remain as barriers to effective management of the protected area system (which would have otherwise have been included in the project had it had been a full-sized project). The forestry sector needs to be restructured – including outsourcing forestry. In addition to these aspects, this section will list the additional work that should be undertaken and which builds on and extends the foundations laid by the current project. They are not noted in any particular order.

141. *Mitigation hierarchies for Zones II and III in protected areas.* Acknowledging that there already is some level of avoidance in practice in the forestry areas of protected areas, these could be extended further and made more systematic using the concept of mitigation hierarchies that are designed precisely to protect biodiversity.

142. *Changing attitudes about the protected areas.* The attitude, particularly from the government, surrounding protected areas (and the majority of other things as well), is that they should be commercially successful such that they are financially contributing to the treasury and to the economy. [Of course, this does not recognise the non-monetary value of the protected areas – as was so elegantly demonstrated by the analysis of ecosystem services that was carried out under the project.] In the long-term, it would be good to see a shift in the attitudes such that protected areas – and especially national parks – are seen as public institutions or as a public good and not simply commercial. This would engender the attitude that the protected areas would be something that the government would be willing to subsidize if need be.

143. Further to this, the replication of the PES study to other areas will contribute to changing attitudes<sup>23</sup>.

144. *Mainstreaming biodiversity in land use and spatial planning.* There are some good examples from the region of how this has been successfully done –

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<sup>23</sup> However, more recently, there has been some discussion about the degree to which valuation of ecosystem services is having on changing the attitudes and, more importantly, the behavior of politicians, policy makers and economists.

through UNDP-GEF projects. The good examples should be taken and replicated in Serbia.

#### **4.2.4 Best and worst practices in addressing issues related to relevance, performance and success**

145. There are a number of lessons to be learned from the project:

146. *Adaptive management in the face of adversity.* The project demonstrated that even when things appear to go wrong, with adaptive management and re-focusing, positive results can be attained. In the circumstances of the project, this entailed a shift of focus from the central level to working almost exclusively with partners at the level of the protected areas themselves. Indeed, this approach as also successfully worked in other projects.

147. *Political processes such as elections can cause significant turbulence.* The electoral processes that took place over the course of the project caused a major barrier to the implementation of the project. They can also significantly undermine the sector by changing personnel; they can lead to existing programmes being cancelled; they can lead to strategies being undermined – even if those strategies have been previously adopted. There is a loss of institutional memory when people are moved about.

148. This has a number of implications for project such as this particularly during a project's planning phase. The designers of a project should be aware whether or not an electoral process will take place during a project's life; they should also be aware of the potential for upheaval as a result of political processes (or at least consultations should be held during the PPG phase with people who should be able to make judgements of the risk of institutional upheavals) such that i) the project design takes these things into account (including project length), and ii) the risk analysis should reflect the actual situation and risk log should be updated as the project proceeds. In summary, then, these projects are implemented in sometime challenging political circumstances and their design and implementation needs to reflect these political realities.

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# **Ensuring Financial Sustainability of the Protected Area System of Serbia**

PIMS 4281

## **Terminal Evaluation Volume II (Annexes)**

Republic of Serbia

GEF SO-1, SP-1 Catalyzing Sustainability of Protected Area Systems/Sustainable  
Financing of PA Systems

**Republic of Serbia**

**Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection**

**United National Development Program (UNDP)**

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# Annex 1 Terms of Reference

## INTRODUCTION

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In accordance with UNDP and GEF M&E policies and procedures, all full and medium-sized UNDP support GEF financed projects are required to undergo a terminal evaluation upon completion of implementation. These terms of reference (TOR) sets out the expectations for a Terminal Evaluation (TE) of the Ensuring Financial Sustainability of the Protected Area System of Serbia (PIMS 4281).

## OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

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The project objective is to improve the financial sustainability of Serbia's protected area system. The project has three components – along with their associated outcomes, outputs and activities - which will contribute towards achieving the project objective. These are: Component 1 Enabling legal and policy environment for improved financial sustainability; Component 2 Securing revenue streams for the protected area system; and Component 3 Development of institutional and individual capacity of protected area institutions to raise PA management cost-effectiveness. The first component aims at providing the legal and policy groundwork for long-term gains in the sustainability of the PA system as well as producing a Protected Areas Financing Plan (PAFP) that will integrate the results of the entire project in a key guidance document. The second component is focused on expanding potential revenue streams from activities compatible with the conservation goals of the protected areas network to provide clear pilot projects that show financial sustainability is feasible without commercial logging activities. The third component builds on the various pilots and policy work to increase institutional capacity for cost-effective management and financial sustainability.

The TE will be conducted according to the guidance, rules and procedures established by UNDP and GEF as reflected in the UNDP Evaluation Guidance for GEF Financed Projects.

The objectives of the evaluation are to assess the achievement of project results, and to draw lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project, and aid in the overall enhancement of UNDP programming.

## EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHOD

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An overall approach and method<sup>1</sup> for conducting project terminal evaluations of UNDP supported GEF financed projects has developed over time. The evaluator is expected to frame the evaluation effort using the criteria of **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact**, as defined and explained in the [UNDP Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed Projects](#). A set of questions covering each of these criteria has been drafted and were included with the TOR. The evaluator is expected to amend, complete and submit this matrix as part of an evaluation inception report, and shall include it as an annex to the final report.

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<sup>1</sup> For additional information on methods, see the [Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results](#), Chapter 7, pg. 163

The evaluation must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful. The evaluator is expected to follow a participatory and consultative approach ensuring close engagement with government counterparts, in particular the GEF operational focal point, UNDP Country Office, project team, UNDP GEF Technical Adviser based in the region and key stakeholders. The evaluator is expected to conduct a field mission to Belgrade, Serbia including the following project sites: Novi Sad, National park Tara and National park Kopaonik. Interviews will be held with the following organizations and individuals at a minimum:

- UNDP CO Serbia;
- Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection;
- Provincial Secretariat for Urban Planning, Construction and Environmental Protection;
- Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia;
- Institute for Nature Conservation of Vojvodina Province;
- Protected area managers: National Park Tara, National Park Kopaonik, Public Enterprise Srbijasume, Public Enterprise Vojvodinasume.

The evaluator will review all relevant sources of information, such as the project document, project reports – including Annual APR/PIR, project budget revisions, midterm review, progress reports, GEF focal area tracking tools (protected areas financial score cards (FSC), initial, mid-term and terminal management effectiveness tracking tools (METT)), project files, national strategic and legal documents, and any other materials that the evaluator considers useful for this evidence-based assessment. A list of documents that the project team will provide to the evaluator for review was included in the Terms of Reference.

### EVALUATION CRITERIA & RATINGS

An assessment of project performance will be carried out, based against expectations set out in the Project Logical Framework/Results Framework, which provides performance and impact indicators for project implementation along with their corresponding means of verification. The evaluation will at a minimum cover the criteria of: **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact**. Ratings must be provided on the following performance criteria. The completed table must be included in the evaluation executive summary. The obligatory rating scales were included in the TOR.

<b>Evaluation Ratings:</b>			
<b>1. Monitoring and Evaluation</b>	<i>rating</i>	<b>2. IA&amp; EA Execution</b>	<i>rating</i>
M&E design at entry		Quality of UNDP Implementation	
M&E Plan Implementation		Quality of Execution - Executing Agency	
Overall quality of M&E		Overall quality of Implementation / Execution	
<b>3. Assessment of Outcomes</b>	<i>rating</i>	<b>4. Sustainability</b>	<i>rating</i>
Relevance		Financial resources:	
Effectiveness		Socio-political:	
Efficiency		Institutional framework and governance:	
Overall Project Outcome Rating		Environmental :	
		Overall likelihood of sustainability:	

## PROJECT FINANCE / COFINANCE

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The Evaluation will assess the key financial aspects of the project, including the extent of co-financing planned and realized. Project cost and funding data will be required, including annual expenditures. Variances between planned and actual expenditures will need to be assessed and explained. Results from recent financial audits, as available, should be taken into consideration. The evaluator(s) will receive assistance from the Country Office (CO) and Project Team to obtain financial data in order to complete the co-financing table below, which will be included in the terminal evaluation report.

## MAINSTREAMING

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UNDP supported GEF financed projects are key components in UNDP country programming, as well as regional and global programmes. The evaluation will assess the extent to which the project was successfully mainstreamed with other UNDP priorities, including poverty alleviation, improved governance, the prevention and recovery from natural disasters, and gender.

## IMPACT

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The evaluators will assess the extent to which the project is achieving impacts or progressing towards the achievement of impacts. Key findings that should be brought out in the evaluations include whether the project has demonstrated: a) verifiable improvements in ecological status, b) verifiable reductions in stress on ecological systems, and/or c) demonstrated progress towards these impact achievements.<sup>2</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS & LESSONS

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The evaluation report must include a chapter providing a set of **conclusions, recommendations** and **lessons**.

## IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

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The principal responsibility for managing this evaluation resides with the UNDP CO in Serbia. The UNDP CO will contract the evaluators and ensure the timely provision of per diems and travel arrangements within the country for the evaluation team. The Project Team will be responsible for liaising with the Evaluators team to set up stakeholder interviews, arrange field visits, coordinate with the Government etc.

## EVALUATION DELIVERABLES

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The evaluation team is expected to deliver the following:

Deliverable	Content	Timing	Responsibilities
<b>Inception Report</b>	Evaluator provides clarifications on timing and method	No later than 2 weeks before the evaluation mission.	Evaluator submits to UNDP CO
<b>Presentation</b>	Initial Findings	End of evaluation mission	To project management, UNDP CO

<sup>2</sup> A useful tool for gauging progress to impact is the Review of Outcomes to Impacts (ROtI) method developed by the GEF Evaluation Office: [ROtI Handbook 2009](#)

<b>Draft Final Report</b>	Full report, (per annexed template) with annexes	Within 3 weeks of the evaluation mission	Sent to CO, reviewed by RTA, PCU, GEF OFFs
<b>Final Report*</b>	Revised report	Within 1 week of receiving UNDP comments on draft	Sent to CO for uploading to UNDP ERC.

\*When submitting the final evaluation report, the evaluator is required also to provide an 'audit trail', detailing how all received comments have (and have not) been addressed in the final evaluation report.

## **TEAM COMPOSITION**

The evaluation team will be composed of one international evaluator. The consultants shall have prior experience in evaluating similar projects. Experience with GEF financed projects is an advantage. The evaluators selected should not have participated in the project preparation and/or implementation and should not have conflict of interest with project related activities.

The evaluator must present the following qualifications:

- Minimum 10 years of relevant professional experience
- Knowledge of UNDP and GEF
- Previous experience with results-based monitoring and evaluation methodologies;
- Technical knowledge in the targeted focal area(s)
- Fluency in English – both spoken and written.

## **EVALUATOR ETHICS**

Evaluation consultants will be held to the highest ethical standards and are required to sign a Code of Conduct (Annex E) upon acceptance of the assignment. UNDP evaluations are conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the [UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluations'](#)

## Annex 2 MTR Mission Itinerary

Date	Item
18 October	Arrival of International Consultant in Belgrade
19 October	<p><b>8:00 Meetings at UNDP project office, Omladinskih brigada 1, Belgrade</b></p> <p><i>9:00-13:00 Travel to NP Kopaonik</i></p> <p><b>14:00 Meetings with representatives of NP Kopaonik and visit field sites</b></p> <p><i>18:00-21:00 Travel to Nova Varoš</i></p> <p><i>Overnight stay in Nova Varoš</i></p>
20 October	<p><b>9:00 Meeting with representatives of SNR Uvac, Trg Petra Bojovića 3, Nova Varoš</b></p> <p><i>11:00-13:00 Travel to NP Tara</i></p> <p><b>14:00 Meeting with representatives of NP Tara and visit to field sites</b></p> <p><i>Overnight stay in Bajina Bašta</i></p>
21 October	<p><i>8:00-12:00 Travel to Belgrade</i></p> <p><i>Afternoon</i></p> <p><b>12:00 Meeting with members of Project Team</b></p> <p><b>14:00 Attend Debt-for-Nature-Swap Analysis Presentation, Palace of Serbia, Bulevar Mihajla Pupina 2, New Belgrade</b></p> <p><b>16:00 Meeting with Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection, UNDP, Internacionalnih brigada 69, Belgrade</b></p> <p><b>17:00 Meeting with members of Project Team</b></p> <p><i>Overnight stay in Belgrade</i></p>
22 October	<p><i>7:30-9:00 Travel to Novi Sad</i></p> <p><b>9:00 Meeting with representatives of Provincial Secretariat for Environment, Bulevar Mihajla Pupina 16, Novi Sad</b></p> <p><b>11:30 Meeting with representatives of INCVP, Radnicka 20a, Novi Sad</b></p> <p><b>15:00 Vojvodinasume, Novi Sad</b></p>

Date	Item
	<p><i>Return to Belgrade in the afternoon</i></p> <p><i>Overnight stay in Belgrade</i></p>
23 October	<p><b>9:00 PE Srbijasume</b>, Bulevar Mihajla Pupina 113, New Belgrade</p> <p><b>11.20 Meeting with Project Team</b></p> <p><b>14:30 Debriefing meeting at UNDP CO</b>, Internacionalnih brigada 69, Belgrade</p> <p><i>Overnight stay in Belgrade</i></p>
24 October	Departure of International Consultant

### Annex 3 List of persons interviewed

Name	Position	Organisation
Predrag Sumarac	Head of Ranger Service	Kopaonik NP
Branko Bjelic	Director	Special Nature Reserve "Uvac"
Marijana Josipovic	Head of Protection Programmes and Projects Service	Tara NP
Ranko Milanovic	Head of Tourism and Education Service	Tara NP
Ivica Radovic -	Special Advisor to the Minister	Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection
Jelena Ducic	CBD Focal Point	Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection
Ivana Vasic	Senior officer for Protected Areas and Environment	Public Enterprise "Vojvodina Šume (Vojvodina Forests)"
Slobodan Puzovic	Provincial Secretary	Provincial Secretariat for Urban Planning, Construction and Environmental Protection of Vojvodina Province, Novi Sad
Nikola Ugrcic	Assistant Provincial Secretary	Provincial Secretariat for Urban Planning, Construction and Environmental Protection of Vojvodina Province, Novi Sad
Tamara Stojanovic	Associate	Provincial Secretariat for Urban Planning, Construction and Environmental Protection of Vojvodina Province, Novi Sad
Brigita Maric	Associate	Provincial Secretariat for Urban Planning, Construction and Environmental Protection of Vojvodina Province, Novi Sad
Lorand Vig	Associate	Provincial Secretariat for Urban Planning, Construction and Environmental Protection of Vojvodina Province, Novi Sad
Nikola Stojnic	Deputy Director for Nature Conservation	Institute for Nature Conservation of Vojvodina Province

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Natasa Pil	Independent Associate	Institute for Nature Conservation of Vojvodina Province
Gordana Jancic	Executive Director	Sector for Forestry and Environmental Protection, Public Enterprise "Srbija Šume (Serbian Forests)"
Dejan Miletic	Department for Forest Protection and Protected Natural Resources	Sector for Forestry and Environmental Protection, Public Enterprise "Srbija Šume (Serbian Forests)"
Milena Kozmora	Project Manager Environment Portfolio Manager	UNDP-CO
Katarina Vuksic	Project Coordinator	UNDP-CO
Steliana Nedera	Deputy Resident Representative	UNDP-CO

## Annex 4 List of trainings and events carried out by the project

Date	Type	Purpose	Location	No. of people	Participants	Summary
4 Feb 2011	Workshop/ Training	“EU Funds in Environmental Protection“	Novi Sad	20	UNDP, MEMSP, Serbian European Integrations Office (SEIO)  Managers from eight different PAs	The goal of the workshop was to inform and train protected areas managers about EU funds available for nature protection and analyze support needed for project development. The workshop provided short representation of all available EU funds with special emphasis given to the relevant EU cross-border cooperation funds for environmental protection: programs Hungary – Serbia, Romania – Serbia and Croatia – Serbia.
17-18 March 2011	Workshop/ Training	“EU Funds in Environmental Protection“	Nature Park Mokra Gora	20	UNDP, MEMSP, SEIO  Managers form 10 different PAS, 3 participant from National Parks of Montenegro	The workshop provided short representation of all available EU funds with special emphasis given to the EU cross-border cooperation funds for environmental protection: programs Serbia – Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia - Montenegro. The second day of the workshop, participants had a chance to work on development of concrete proposals (two) and to practice project cycle management, project budgeting, etc.
14 April 2011	Workshop/ Training	“EU Funds in Environmental Protection“	Belgrade	29	UNDP, MEMSP, SEIO  Managers from nine PAs	The workshop briefly presented all available EU funds with special emphasis given to the EU cross-border cooperation funds for environmental protection (CBC IPA Serbia - Romania, Serbia - Bulgaria, CBC South Eastern Europe)

Date	Type	Purpose	Location	No. of people	Participants	Summary
24-26 May 2012	Training	Training for journalists on biodiversity and PAs	National Park "Tara"	17	10 journalists, UNDP, MEMSP, IUCN, WWF, Stado doo, University of Novi Sad	This workshop UNDP organized for journalist in order to improve their knowledge about biodiversity and PAs, as well as to increase awareness of their importance.
27-28 Sept 2012	Training	Project Management Cycle 1st training	Novi Sad	30	UNDP (2), PA Managers members of NAPS (27), NAPS manager (1)	<p>The goal of this Training was to support capacities of PA managers to develop project and fundraise and therefore diversify funding of their PAs; all participants will be coached and mentored to develop full project proposals</p> <p>Lecturers provide explanations of first steps in project proposal creation. Team groups were organized for working on project proposal</p> <p>Project Mentoring has been arranged between trainers and PA Managers</p>
21-23 Oct 2012	Training	Project Management Cycle 2nd training	Prolom Banja (Prolom Spa)	30	UNDP (2), PA Managers members of NAPS (27)	<p>Introducing PA Managers with Project Management Cycle was main topic of this session.</p> <p>Lecturers provide clarification of terms: Gantt Chart, Project Budget, SMART project aims, Risk analysis... Working groups were organized for project proposals development. Also, lecturers defined aims for the next Training.</p> <p>Participants visited Nature Monument Djavolja Varos</p>
25-27 Nov 2012	Training	Project Management Cycle 3rd	National Park Djerdap	34	UNDP (3), PA Managers members of NAPS (30), NAPS	<p>Main topic of last session in Project Management Cycle was Project Implementation and Fundraising</p> <p>Trainers presented crucial objectives for successful</p>

Date	Type	Purpose	Location	No. of people	Participants	Summary
		training			manager (1)	fundraising and also for development non-profit structures. PA Managers presented their prepared Project Proposals and they chose three the best Proposal
17 May 2013	Event	Press conference to announce Biodiversity week and celebration of International Biodiversity Day	Botanical garden Jevremovac	20	UNDP (3), Ministry of Energy, Development and Environmental Protection (1), Faculty of Biology (1), Media (11)	BD week 2013 event
18-19 May 2013	Event	Photography course for young people from Center for youth integration	Landscape of Extraordinary Characteristics Avala	15	UNDP (2), PE Srbijasume (3), Center for Youth Integration beneficiaries (10), Photographer, Cameraman	BD week 2013 event
22 May 2013	Event	International Biodiversity Day Official ceremony - Opening of Visitor center "Vrelo"; Visiting farms with	Nature Park Stara Planina	130	UNDP (3), Ministry of Natural Resources, Mining and Spatial Planning (2), Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management (1), PE Srbijasume, Media	BD week 2013 event

Date	Type	Purpose	Location	No. of people	Participants	Summary
		domestic animal breeds			(12), INCS, INCVP, PE Vojvodinasume, PA managers, Local Government, NGOs	
23 May 2013	Event	Press conference to announce European Day of Parks, organized by TOS	Belgrade, TOS	30	TOS, UNDP, WWF, NP Fruska Gora, ND Djerdap, NP Tara, NP Kopaonik, PA managers, NGOs, Media	Announcement of events organized by TOS, NPs, UNDP and WWF to mark European Day of Parks (24 May 2013). UNDP presented its work on PAs and biodiversity
24 May 2013	Event	European Day of Parks, Visiting Natural Monument Lazar's canyon and Lazar's cave	Natural Monument Lazar's Cave (Zlot)	60	UNDP (3), Ministry of Energy, Development and Environmental Protection, PE Srbijasume, Media (9)	BD week 2013 event
25 May 2013	Event	Hike to Ostrovica peak	Natural Monument Ostrovica - Rudnik	20	UNDP (2), PE Srbijasume, Media	BD week 2013 event
3-4 July 2014	Training	Training on Business Planning -1st session	Belgrade	11	11 representatives of PA managers: Marijana Josipovic Predrag Sumarac Gordana Jancic Ivana Vasic	Training objective was to improve PAs managers' capacities in business planning and optimizing financial situation for management of protected areas. With train-the-trainers approach, the project provided a catalytic approach to capacity development on PA financing issues in Serbia.

Date	Type	Purpose	Location	No. of people	Participants	Summary
					Marton Ferenc Željko Turudić Igor Petrović Tijana Radulovic Uros Pantovic Branko Bijelic Ranko Milanovic	Coaching to training participants was provided in-between training sessions to develop the selected business ideas. A total of 8 business plans was developed in the training. First session focused on business plan development, with following topics: Introduction in Business Planning, Business Environment in Serbia, The Selection of Business Idea, Situational Analysis of Organization; Investor development opportunities; Introduction of new product/service; Marketing Plan, Production plan; Organization and staffing plan; Management plan; Financial Analysis, The process of decision making based on facts from financial analysis; Risk Analysis. Golden Rules for making an effective business plan.
14-15 Aug 2014	Training	Training on Business Planning - 2nd session	SNR Uvac	11	11 representatives of PA managers: Marijana Josipovic Predrag Sumarac Gordana Jancic Ivana Vasic Marton Ferenc Željko Turudić Igor Petrović Tijana Radulovic Uros Pantovic Branko Bijelic	Second session goals: to finalize with participants their business plans; to help them to provide the presentation of their business plan; participants to present their business plan in front of the group and trainers in order to practice public speaking.

Date	Type	Purpose	Location	No. of people	Participants	Summary
					Ranko Milanovic	
26 Sept 2014	Event	Presentation of the hiking trail in LEC Lepteriya-Sokograd	LEC Lepteriya-Sokograd	25	UNDP, MAEP, PE Srbijasume, INCVP, Municipality of Soko Banja, Mountain club "Ostra cuka", local community	On 26 September 2014, on the occasion of Clean Mountains Day, protected area manager PE Srbijasume organized a presentation of the hiking trail Streliste – Siroka Poda - Padina in the protected area Lepteriya-Sokograd. The presentation was attended by representatives of UNDP Serbia, Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection, Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia, Municipality of Soko Banja and Mountain club "Ostra cuka" from Soko Banja, and it included a hike along the 950 meters long trail up to the viewpoint Golemi kamen
1 Oct 2014	Event	Presentation of special trail for people with disabilities in NP Tara	NP Tara	45	UNDP, MAEP, NP Tara, TOS, National organization of people with disabilities, municipal authorities, representatives of Belgrade based school for the visually impaired persons, media representatives	On 1 October 2014 PE NP Tara organized presentation of the special trail for people with disabilities. The agenda : 1300 Opening ceremony - Aleksandar Lucic, President of Board of Directors, NP Tara  -Milica Tomic, Deputy Director, NP Tara -Steliana Nedera, DRR. UNDP - Gordana Plamenac, Director, National Tourism Organization 1330-1345 "Tara for all" project presentation 1345-1415 Trail walking
16 Oct 2014	Event	140 years of protected area	Novi Sad	70	UNDP, MAEP, Vojvodina Government, PE	10:00 - 10:10 Opening ceremony - Welcome speech of PE „Vojvodinašume“ Director 10:10 - 10:30 Welcome speeches of the guests

Date	Type	Purpose	Location	No. of people	Participants	Summary
		Obedska Bara			Vojvodinasume, INCVP, Provincial Secretariat, Faculty of Forestry, representatives of universities, research institutes, PAs, NGOs	- Istvan Pastor, Vojvodina Government - Slobodan Erdeljan, Ministry of agriculture and environment protection - Irena Vojackova Sollorano, UNDP RR - Thobias Salathe, Ramsar Convention 10:30-12:30 Presentations 12:45-13:55 Presentations 13:55 - 14:15 Awarding ceremony and closing of the event
19-24 Oct 2014	Study visit	Study visit to PAs of Slovenia and Austria	3 PAs in Slovenia and 4 PAs in Austria	14	Rangers from 11 PAs, UNDP, Interpreter: Ranko Milanović Milan Radojčić Aleksandar Stojanović Nenad Ratković Nebojša Vidojković Radmila Šakić Peurača Snjezana Marinković Goran Nikolić Marko Obućina Mihajlo Stanković Momčilo Tomić Milena Kozomara Katarina Vukšić Barbara Müller Sanja Katarić	The objective of the visit was to support protected area managers' capacities in development of nature-based tourism contributing thus to improved financial sustainability of the protected areas system in Serbia. The study visit included meetings with representatives of 7 protected area administrations – thereof three in Slovenia (Regional Park Kozjanski, Landscape Park Logarska Dolina and National Park Triglav) and four in Austria (Natura 2000 Site Lendspitz-Maiernigg, Biosphere Park Nockberge, National Park Hohe Tauern Carinthia and Nature Park Dobratsch). The protected areas were chosen because of their pioneering roles with respect to development history, visitor management programs and infrastructure, ranger education standards, tourism cooperation and sights, diversity of management structures and land ownership taking into account aspects of logistical feasibility.
30-31	Training	Training on	NP Palic	11	11 representatives of	Third session goals: finalization of trainings prepared by

Date	Type	Purpose	Location	No. of people	Participants	Summary
Oct 2014		Business Planning - 3rd session	lake		PA managers: Marijana Josipovic Predrag Sumarac Gordana Jancic Ivana Vasic Marton Ferenc Željko Turudić Igor Petrović Tijana Radulovic Uros Pantovic Branko Bijelic Ranko Milanovic	participant. Every participant prepared a presentation, material for training, discussion topics and workshops, which were presented during training. After the presentation trainers delivered overall and individual feedback to participants regarding their business planes, prepared training and presentations. 9 training programs were developed in total by the participants.
19-20 Nov 2014	Training	Training of Protected Areas guides	Belgrade	18	18 rangers from different PAs in Serbia: Ranko Milanović, Milan Radojčić, Aleksandar Stojanović, Nenad Ratković, Nebojša Vidojković, Radmila Šakić Peurača, Snježana Marinković, Goran Nikolić, Marko Obućina, Mihajlo Stanković, Momčilo Tomić, Maksa Badrljica, Marko	The training on visitor guiding and nature interpretation for PAs guides was organized in order to support PA managers capacities in development of nature based tourism, contributing thus to improved financial sustainability of the protected areas system in Serbia. Due to this objective, in training plan was included a part connected to ecotourism with the aim to explain basics of this specific tourism form, as well as to explain how to develop special tours as well as how to deliver them to tourists

Date	Type	Purpose	Location	No. of people	Participants	Summary
					Nikolic, Milivoj Putić, Ivana Vasić, Sebastian Pahert, Goran Stojaković, Vasil Dinov	
22 May 2015	Event	Conference on Biodiversity and Protected Areas of Serbia	Belgrade	60	UNDP, MAEP, PAs managers, INCS, INCVP, SEPA, NGOs, TOS, media, etc.	Project organized a conference on the occasion of the 2015 International Biodiversity Day. Main project results were presented at the conference. Over 50 stakeholders, including representatives from national institutions, protected areas and NGO sector discussed the key results of the project. A total of 21 press releases have been recorded and the conference was attended by 10 media representatives.
27-28 May 2015	Training	Training in organic agriculture for protected areas	Belgrade	22	22 representatives of PAs	Training was organized in order to support PA managers capacities in diversifying their sources of funding. Training included: main principles and basics of organic agriculture, legal aspects (national and EU law), certification process, planning and organizing organic agriculture, plant nutrition and protection, opportunities and challenges as well as tips and tricks for successful organic production. It covered both plant and animal production and included comprehensive information on funding opportunities from national sources and foreign assistance (EU funds and bilateral donors), necessary documentation, as well as practical examples and case studies that would be applicable in the context of PAs.

Date	Type	Purpose	Location	No. of people	Participants	Summary
2-5 June 2015	Conference	Green week conference	Brussels	12	Jasmina Murić, MAEP Biljana Filipović, MAEP Ivona Boričić, MAEP Danko Jović, INCS Mario Lukinović, INCS Oliver Fojkar, INCVP Biljana Panjković, INCVP Slobodan Puzović, PSUPCEP Lorand Vigh, PSUPCEP Milena Kozomara, UNDP Katarina Vukšić, UNDP Elina Järvelä, UNDP	The 2015 edition of Green Week, the biggest annual conference on European environment policy, was held from 3 to 5 June. The theme of 2015 was nature and biodiversity, with the tagline “Nature – our health, our wealth”. The conference had over 3,000 delegates in attendance, and included over 30 different workshops focusing on nature protection from a number of angles, including nature and health, green infrastructure, nature and land use, nature in cities, agriculture, natural capital. Representatives of Serbian institutions dealing with nature conservation participated in the conference (MAEP, INCV, INCVP, PSUPCEP)

## **Annex 5 List of members of Project Board; Project Board meetings**

### **17 June 2010 – 06 May 2012**

Ivan Radović, State Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning (which transmuted into Ministry of Environment, Mining and Spatial Planning)

William Infante, UN Resident Coordinator & UNDP Resident Representative

Maxim Vergeichik, UNDP-GEF Regional Technical Advisor

Jelena Ducic, CBD Focal Point, Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning (which transmuted into Ministry of Environment, Mining and Spatial Planning)

### **04 April 2013 – 02 September 2013**

Vladan Zdravkovic, State Secretary, Ministry of Energy, Development and Environmental Protection

Srdjan Belij, State Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Mining and Spatial Planning

Juerg Staudemann, UNPD Deputy Resident Representative

Jelena Ducic, CBD Focal Point, Ministry of Energy, Development and Environmental Protection

### **06 November 2013 – 16 March 2014**

Mirjana Knezevic, Special Advisor to the Minister, Ministry of Energy, Development and Environmental Protection

Srdjan Belij, State Secretary, Ministry of Natural Resources, Mining and Spatial Planning

Juerg Staudemann, UNPD Deputy Resident Representative

Jelena Ducic, CBD Focal Point, Ministry of Energy, Development and Environmental Protection

### **05 December 2014 – end of project**

Aleksandra Doslic, Head of Department for Protected Areas and Ecological Networks, Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection

Steliana Nedera, UNPD Deputy Resident Representative

Ivan Radović, Special Advisor to the Minister, Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection

Date	Location	Participants	Summary
17 June 2010	Belgrade, The Palace of Serbia	UNDP Ministry of Environment, Mining and Spatial Planning (MEMSP) Provincial Institute for Nature Conservation Institute for Nature Conservation	Conclusions from the meeting: -Motion to launch the project activities tabled, seconded and passed. -Parks Sport Games event (Parkovijada) will be used to engage national parks representatives and present them the Project.
25 May 2011	Belgrade	UN RR/RC, UNDP DRR , UNDP Regional Technical Adviser; UNDP portfolio manager, MEMSP	Info on Project implementation progress PB approval of Support to the Association of National Parks and Protected Areas (NAPS)- Proposal to finance strengthening capacities of the NAPS was received and Project Management Board is asked to review it and approve.
23 January 2013	Belgrade, SIV 3	Vladan Zdravkovic, MEDEP Juerg Staudemann, UNPD Milena Kozomara, UNDP Maja Matejic, UNDP	Reintroduction of PAs project to new PB members Submission of the NBSAP project document to MEDEP Nomination of a MEDEP representative for project board Discussion on future activities
19 February 2013	Belgrade, SIV3	Srdjan Belij, MNRMSPP Slobodan Cvetkovic, MNRMSPP Juerg Staudemann UNPD Milena Kozomara, UNDP Maja Matejic, UNDP Katarina Vuksic, UNDP	Re-introduction of UNDP biodiversity portfolio and projects overview Nomination of a MNRMSPP representative for project board Change of project office Potential joint activities/projects related to hydrological objects

Date	Location	Participants	Summary
31 May 2013	Belgrade, SIV 3	Vladan Zdravkovic, MEDEP Jelena Ducic, MEDEP, Juerg Staudemann, UNDP Milena Kozmora, UNDP Katarina Vuksic, UNDP Lazar Divjak, UNDP	Introduction of new PB members Presentation of three project components - status and progress Presentation of mid-term project review results and recommendations Proposal for changes in the activities - piloting 2-3 business plans (sectoral) instead of 21 BPs envisaged in Prodoc Overview of implemented and planned activities Changes in the government structure, situation with financing of PAs Informing PB on upcoming grants activities with PAs
21 October 2013	Belgrade, Nemanjina 11	Jovana Jaric MEDEP Danijela Bozanic, MEDEP, Juerg Staudemann, UNDP Olivera Puric UNDP Milena Kozomara UNDP Maja Matejic UNDP Emma Hakala UNDP	1. Climate change projects 2. Biodiversity - Appointment of a new a Project Board Member for the two Biodiversity projects (NBSAP and PA finance)- either Ms. Jaric or Ms. Knezevic could act in this position. - Multi-ministerial WG to be formed to facilitate the coordination and line of communication between two new ministries (MEDEP and MNRMSp) as there is currently no one responsible for approving reports and other documents for biodiversity projects. - Newly appointed State Secretary for Environment is the person in charge. - idea of utilizing private financing in protected areas, following the model used in a UNDP project on Sustainable Tourism in Vlasina Lake, which was partly financed by Coca Cola. 3. Energy - Energy Management Information System 4. GEF issues - GEF STAR allocation for a land management project (UNEP). - GEF-6 programming - Mr. Staudemann suggested holding regular meetings between UNDP and the Special Advisor
28 November 2013	Belgrade, UNDP	Jelena Ducic, MEDEP, NPD Srdjan Belij, MNRMSp	Presentation of the project progress and activities, risks and project challenges/issues; achieved results and the planned activities and expected results.

Date	Location	Participants	Summary
		Dušan Ognjanović, MNRMS Juerg Staudemann, UNPD Olivera Purić, UNDP Milena Kozomara, UNDP Katarina Vuksic, UNDP Aleksandar Jovanović, UNDP	Grant project proposals of the PA managers PE Srbijašume and PE Vojvodinašume were presented and approved by the PB. Discussion: -Change of PB member from MEDEP following Gov't restructuring - WG for NBSAP update: establishment of the WG group has been approved by MEDEP; the request for the appointment WG members will be sent out by MEDEP to Ministries/Institutions relevant for NBSAP update process. Detailed work plan will be prepared for NBSAP revision and shared with the stakeholders. -Geodiversity strategy of Serbia is being prepared. There is a notion that in general geodiversity as a topic has not been covered enough, so MNRMS will be paying more attention to this topic while preparing geodiversity strategy using experiences/best practices from NBSAP preparation.
19 December 2014	Belgrade, UNDP	Ivica Radović, MAEP Jelena Dučić, MAEP Steliana Nedera, UNDP Milena Kozomara, UNDP Katarina Vukšić, UNDP Elina Jarvela, UNDP	Reintroducing project to new PB members, Presentation of the project scope and activities, risks and project challenges/issues; achieved results and the planned activities and expected results. Grants for ten PAs were presented in detail Ideas to explore Debt-for-nature-Swaps for financing nature conservation were shared. Discussion -Change of PB member from MAEP following national elections - Proposal of the NPD to have a working meeting between partners in the second half of January 2015 - Proposal to have the Final PAs conference on 22 May 2015 (Int'l BD Day)

## **Annex 6 List of documents reviewed**

1. PIF
2. PPG Application Document
3. UNDP Project Document
4. Midterm Review
5. Project Inception Report
6. All Project Implementation Reports (PIR's)
7. List of meetings and trainings held by the project with stakeholders
8. Minutes of PB meetings
9. Budgets and annual workplans, 2013, 2014 and 2015
10. Project lessons learned logs
11. Project Risk logs
12. Quarterly progress reports and work plans of the various implementation task teams
13. Finalized GEF focal area Tracking Tools at CEO endorsement, midterm and at EOP
14. UNDP country programme document

## Annex 7 Example questionnaire used for data collection

1. What is the achievement, so far, of which you are most proud?
2. If you could go back in time, what would you change or do differently?
3. If you could go back in time, which activities would you definitely do again?
4. If the project had an extra USD 2 million and an extra two years, what else would you consider doing?
5. What are you doing to ensure take up/replication of the concept and processes in other landscapes?
6. What are the effects of inflation or changes in the exchange rates to the budgeting and/or expenditure?
7. Please give examples of how you are ensuring cost effectiveness?
8. Please provide all information on cofinance to date, including both cash and in-kind expenditure and a summary of the items on which the co-finance has been spent.
9. What is your role/relationship with the project?
10. What are you doing to ensure sustainability of the project's processes and impacts?
11. This (xxx) success seems very good: what did you do to achieve it?
12. Who are the partners (i.e., people actively working to the same goals) on the project?
13. Who would you say *owns* the project?
14. Who are the stakeholders in the project (i.e., people that are involved in the project, either actively or passively or will be affected by the project in some way)?
15. Who prepares the TOR for all contracting?
16. Who signs the contracts?
17. Imagine this scenario: if the Minister phones you up and says that he needs to make a brief report on the project to the President and he needs 5 bullets on the following subjects:
  - Key successes
  - what would you advise the next door country to do if they were to implement a similar project
  - what works and why
  - what does not work and why
  - key challenges
18. Is the project having any useful (but unplanned) spin-offs?
19. Is the project having any detrimental or negative (but unplanned or unintended) impacts?
20. This is a UNDP project – what advantages or disadvantages does this bring?  
What if it was a World Bank project instead – what difference would that bring?
21. If you were to re-write the Project Document, what would you change?
22. Who are the project's champions?
23. Standard issues:
  - Project Manager Forum

- Procurement rules and efficiencies
  - UNDP training/support
  - Financial audits
  - Cofinance information
  - Communication strategy?
  - Monitoring awareness/knowledge
  - Backing up data and digital information
  - Team functionality
  - Staff turn over
  - If training is provided, how is training is now being used in job?
  - How including gender and/or indigenous peoples issues?
  - Need to provide all information, including equipment, inputs, infrastructure, tracking tool data.
  - If there was a delay, what was the reason?
24. How is the project aligned to the national development plan, region-level development plans and the UNDAF?
  25. Is the project trying to increase awareness? If so, among which target groups? How is the project monitoring changes in awareness and attitude? How has any changes in attitude and awareness affected project implementation, and how is it being used in the daily, professional lives of the target groups?
  26. Infrastructure has been developed over the course of this project. Was it in alignment with the strategic plan developed at the landscape level? If not, how was the decision made for any given infrastructural input?
  27. New institutions have been created over the course of the project (specifically the landscape management committees). How will these be sustainable? In five years' time, how do you imagine the committees functioning?
  28. Why did the Financial and Administrative Assistant resign?
  29. At a landscape level, what monitoring activities are being undertaken to determine the impact of the project?
  30. How does the project interface with the land reform processes in the country?
  31. The Project Advisory Committee (PAC) appears to be largely unsuccessful: we aim to propose that no further effort be expended to make it active. However, in the long-term, particularly once the GEF project has ended, will there be a role for i) an umbrella coordination body (to continue the work of the PCU – and if so, should it be independent or remain within govt?) and/or ii) a centralised technical body to assist landscapes with technical issues?
  32. It appears as if some key stakeholders are not part of the landscape management committees – e.g., Regional Governments, Roads, Water, etc. Would it be useful to try to include some of these organizations, at least on an ad hoc basis?
  33. How is the project – and landscape management committees in particular - interfacing with regional governments?
  34. To what extent is the project strategy relevant to country priorities, country ownership, and the best route towards expected results?
  35. To what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved thus far?
  36. Has the project been implemented efficiently, cost-effectively, and been able to

adapt to any changing conditions thus far?

37. To what extent are project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, reporting, and project communications supporting the project's implementation?
38. To what extent are there financial, institutional, socio-economic, and/or environmental risks to sustaining long-term project results?
- 39.

**Six questions to overcome fear of failure:**

1. What would you attempt to do if you knew you could not fail?
2. What if I fail — how will I recover?
3. What if I do nothing?
4. What if I succeed?
5. What's truly worth doing, whether you fail or succeed?
6. In this failure, what went right?

## Annex 8 UNEG Code of Conduct Form

### Evaluators/Consultants:

1. Must present information that is complete and fair in its assessment of strengths and weaknesses so that decisions or actions taken are well founded.
2. Must disclose the full set of evaluation findings along with information on their limitations and have this accessible to all affected by the evaluation with expressed legal rights to receive results.
3. Should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual informants. They should provide maximum notice, minimize demands on time, and respect people's right not to engage. Evaluators must respect people's right to provide information in confidence, and must ensure that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source. Evaluators are not expected to evaluate individuals, and must balance an evaluation of management functions with this general principle.
4. Sometimes uncover evidence of wrongdoing while conducting evaluations. Such cases must be reported discreetly to the appropriate investigative body. Evaluators should consult with other relevant oversight entities when there is any doubt about if and how issues should be reported.
5. Should be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty in their relations with all stakeholders. In line with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, evaluators must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender equality. They should avoid offending the dignity and self-respect of those persons with whom they come in contact in the course of the evaluation. Knowing that evaluation might negatively affect the interests of some stakeholders, evaluators should conduct the evaluation and communicate its purpose and results in a way that clearly respects the stakeholders' dignity and self-worth.
6. Are responsible for their performance and their product(s). They are responsible for the clear, accurate and fair written and/or oral presentation of study limitations, findings and recommendations.
7. Should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent in using the resources of the evaluation.

### MTR Consultant Agreement Form

Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System:

Name of Consultant: Stuart Williams

**I confirm that I have received and understood and will abide by the United Nations Code of Conduct for Evaluation.**

Signed at Kampala, Uganda (Place) on 18 February 2016 (Date)



Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## Annex 9 MTR Final Report Clearance Form

**Midterm Review Report Reviewed and Cleared By:**

UNDP Country Office Serbia

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**UNDP-GEF Regional Technical Advisor**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_