

1. Project Data:		Date Posted : 04/14/2010	
PROJ ID : P067685		Appraisal	Actual
Project Name : Northern Savanna Biodiversity Conservation Project	Project Costs (US\$M):	US\$ 8.51 M	US\$ 7.923 M
Country: Ghana	Loan/Credit (US\$M):	US\$ 7.60 M	US\$ 7.60 M
Sector Board : ENV	Cofinancing (US\$M):		
Sector(s): General agriculture fishing and forestry sector (43%) Central government administration (33%) Other social services (12%) Sub-national government administration (12%)			
Theme(s): Biodiversity (29% - P) Participation and civic engagement (29% - P) Environmental policies and institutions (28% - P) Land administration and management (14% - S)			
L/C Number:			
	Board Approval Date :		03/12/2002
Partners involved : DANIDA, Netherlands	Closing Date :	02/01/2008	02/28/2009
Evaluator :	Panel Reviewer :	Group Manager :	Group :
John Redwood	Robert Mark Lacey	IEGSE ICR Reviews	IEGSE

2. Project Objectives and Components:

a. Objectives:

The Project Development Objective (PDO), as stated in the GEF grant agreement, is "to assist the Recipient in efforts to improve the livelihood, health, and environment of communities in the northern savanna zone of its territory, and more specifically to: (a) strengthen institutional capacity for biodiversity conservation; (b) improve the conservation and management of globally and nationally significant plant and animal species and their habitats; (c) develop a savanna resources management strategy framework; (d) enhance community involvement and adoption of improved biodiversity management plans and conservation measures; and (e) increase community awareness of biodiversity issues and maintenance of gene banks of threatened indigenous crop varieties and medicinal plants ."

The Global Environmental Objective (GEO), as stated in the PAD, is "to identify, monitor and conserve key components of the biodiversity of the northern savanna zone . This would be achieved by: (i) protecting the existing biodiversity in and around reserve areas; (ii) identifying habitats and "hotspots" of endemic species in need of greater protection; (iii) developing a comprehensive strategy and action plans to manage and conserve the savanna

biodiversity; (iv) adopting an integrated ecosystem management approach; (v) protecting sacred groves, other dedicated community reserves and other sources of biodiversity such as threatened medicinal plants through cultivation and conservation; (vi) preserving local knowledge of biodiversity management and use including traditional phytomedicines; and (viii) supporting the cultivation and protection of indigenous and threatened farmer crop varieties."

This review will utilize the PDO (general and specific objectives) as set out in the GEF grant agreement because, while substantively close to that in the PAD, it is clearer, more precise and more measurable .

b. Were the project objectives/key associated outcome targets revised during implementation?

No

c. Components (or Key Conditions in the case of DPLs, as appropriate):

1. Formulating the Policy Framework (appraisal cost: US\$0.44 M; actual cost: US\$0.297 M). This component was intended to support (i) the development of a policy framework and strategies for the conservation and management of biodiversity in the northern savanna zone; (ii) the elaboration of strategies for 10 forest reserves, 2 wildlife reserves, and 2 faunal corridors; (iii) finalization and publication of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, which would contain a section on bio-prospecting and biosafety development; and (iv) development of policies and guidelines on Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) for regulating bio-resource collection and prospecting and for protecting and sharing indigenous knowledge and benefits accruing from conservation and management .

2. Capacity Building and Awareness (appraisal cost: US\$2.52 M; actual costs: US\$1.175 M). This component was expected to (i) strengthen the capacity of six central government agencies (Ministry of Lands and Forestry - MLF; Ministry of Health - MOH; Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, MLGRD; Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology/Environmental Protection Agency - MEST/EPA; Ministry of Food and Agriculture - MOFA; and Savanna Resources Management Center - SRMC) at the national, regional, and district levels, as well as that of private sector organizations, research and academia, rural NGOs and community -based organizations (CBOs), women's and youth groups, environmental and social associations, and local communities for implementing project activities and ensuring sustainability of biodiversity management, utilization, and conservation; (ii) provide financing and technical assistance to TAMD (the Traditional and Alternative Medicines Directorate) and improve collaboration between MLF and MOH; (iii) fund a geographic information system (GIS) database and a biodiversity management information system, including a biodiversity monitoring and evaluation system; and (iv) support local communities and civil society groups in developing education and public awareness programs on natural resources and biodiversity conservation throughout the northern savanna zone .

3. Biodiversity Conservation, Research, and Development (appraisal cost: US\$ 2.94 M; actual cost: US\$5.342 M). This component was expected to support : (i) development and implementation of biodiversity management and conservation systems in 12 Protected Areas (PAs); (ii) improvement of land management and restoration of degraded lands in six pilot areas; (iii) sustainable development of biodiversity in wildlife corridors; (iv) sustaining medicinal plant resources; (v) *in-situ* germplasm development and conservation; and (vi) *ex-situ* germplasm and conservation. Management plans were to be developed and implemented for ten pilot priority areas of protected forests, 2 wildlife reserves and two faunal corridors. Through this component and Wildlife Protected Area Management Committees (WPAMCs) and Forest Management Committees (FMCs) to be formed and strengthened under the project, local communities were to participate in the management of wildlife and forest reserves and national parks and become co-managers of biodiversity resources. The component was also intended to support the protection of sacred groves, preparation and implementation of community resource management action plans, and establishment of community dedicated reserves .

4. Project Management, Monitoring and Evaluation (appraisal cost: US\$1.03 M; actual cost: US\$1.109 M) - this component was to finance a project management unit (PMU) and to strengthen SRMC, which would be responsible for supervising and monitoring project implementation .

d. Comments on Project Cost, Financing, Borrower Contribution, and Dates:

This GEF project was intended to be "partially blended" with the IDA-financed Natural Resource Management Project Phases I and II (NRMP I & II) and to complement geographically the GEF High Forest Biodiversity Conservation Project in the northern savanna region of Ghana . NRMP, the first phase of which was already under implementation and the second phase under preparation at the time the present GEF project was approved, was designed as an APL to be implemented in three stages . However, NRMP's proposed second and third phases were later cancelled because of (i) extensive delays to the first phase, and (ii) the new Country Director's preference for budget support over investment operations .

At the Mid-Term Review (MTR), the geographic scope of the project was reduced . While the original four-component structure was maintained, the sub-components were significantly reorganized . Some were cancelled or reduced in extent, while others were added or expanded . Key performance indicators were modified accordingly . These changes -- which did not alter the PDOs or key associated outcome targets -- were approved at the level of the Regional Vice President. The Grant Agreement was amended to incorporate the revisions .

There was a considerable shift in actual, compared with appraisal, project costs across components, including a substantial increase in the resources consumed by component three and a significant decrease in those spent on component two. The ICR attributes this to "incorrect" component cost estimates and associated budget allocation during project design. The last TTL clarified to IEG that the costs of the capacity building and awareness component had been overestimated; when it was found that planned activities could be carried out for considerably less resources, these were shifted to the biodiversity conservation, research and development component to permit greater results on the ground . A one year extension of the closing date occurred as the result of effectiveness and implementation start-up delays. The GEF grant was fully disbursed, and there was an increase in government counterpart funding. However, parallel contributions from the Danish and Dutch Governments that had been anticipated at appraisal did not materialize . Although the purpose of these potential contributions is not clear either in the PAD or the ICR, the last TTL explained that they were anticipated co -financing for the second stage of the NRMP APL. Together with NRMP II, they were identified as sources of counterpart funding for the present project in order to meet GEF requirements. The present project was intended to cover biodiversity conservation -related activities and costs while NRMP II and III would have addressed other natural resource management activities and costs in production landscapes throughout the entire northern savanna region .

3. Relevance of Objectives & Design:

The relevance of project objectives was **High**. The Bank CAS for Ghana at the time the project was prepared aimed at improving the performance of agriculture to help reduce poverty by increasing food crop productivity and expanding commercial crop opportunities, while also addressing key natural resource management issues, including land and forest degradation and biodiversity loss associated with unsustainable harvesting and inappropriate farming practices. The Bank's main instrument to support Government efforts was the NRMP APL that was initially expected to be implemented in three phases and with which the present project was designed to overlap . Project objectives remain relevant to current national development and Bank assistance strategies .. The National Development Strategy for 2005-09 identifies forest degradation, biomass depletion, inefficient natural resource use and management, and inequitable sharing of benefits from natural resources, as among the issues adversely affecting economic growth, and identifies "restoration of degraded environment and natural resource management " as one of its key focus areas. The current CAS (FY08-11) recognizes that natural resource depletion is reducing the potential for growth and envisages Bank support for sustainable natural resource management .

As the NRMP APL did not extend beyond the first phase, the relevance of the **original** project design, which had assumed its continuation, was **modest**. When it became clear that NRMP II would not materialize, the objectives of the present project "ended up being too ambitious for its resources ... [and] ...project activities became too fragmented and spread-out, both geographically and thematically, and the impact of the project limited " (ICR, paragraph 23). An attempt was made to link this operation with a Community Based Rural Development Project (CRDP), to which a natural resource management (NRM) component was added when NRMP II did not come about . However, this also failed because, as a traditional demand-driven community development project, the majority of CRDP 's resources went for non-NRM interventions such as small-scale physical and social infrastructure . As a result, the geographic focus of the project under review was considerably reduced relative to the original design without any formal change in the PDO. Nevertheless, the greater concentration of project activities in the two wildlife corridors increased its effectiveness.

4. Achievement of Objectives (Efficacy):

Achievement of the PDO -- "to assist the Recipient in efforts to improve the livelihood, health, and environment of communities in the northern savanna zone of its territory " -- was **modest**. Although M&E inadequacies make it difficult to determine outcomes, the project's impact on the health of savanna communities appears to have been limited. The ICR reports a more favorable effect on livelihood and local environment but in a narrower geographic area than originally anticipated . Had the original broader (i.e., northern savanna-wide) scope of the project been maintained throughout, the more dispersed nature of its interventions would have undoubtedly resulted in less significant results than those actually attained in the project corridors . The degree of achievement of specific outputs is described below.

(a) **Strengthen institutional capacity for biodiversity conservation** . **Modest**. While the number of high level staff trained under the project exceeded the target (127 versus 95) and a herbarium was established at the University of Development Studies (UDS), there is little information on other institutional strengthening activities, and the

resources actually allocated for this purpose were significantly lower than anticipated at appraisal . Although the ICR states in an annex that "various trainings and direct logistical and operational support [were] provided to Government agencies" and in the main text that "the project definitely contributed to raise the profile of the governmental institutions involved in the management of the savanna's natural resources," it does not support this with much concrete evidence. In addition, while the Savanna Resource Management Center (SRMC) was strengthened during project implementation by the secondment of staff from other agencies, once the project closed they returned to their agencies of origin, leaving SRMC severely understaffed .

(b) Improve the conservation and management of globally and nationally significant plant and animal species and their habitats . Modest. As anticipated at appraisal, two biological corridors were established under the project (one of which was a trans-boundary corridor with Burkina Faso) and management plans for 5 forest reserves were completed (half of the number targeted during project preparation), Forest Management Committees (FMCs) were established in 28 communities to support reserve management (there are no quantitative targets for this in the PAD), improvements were reported in terms of the management effectiveness of some of the Protected Areas supported under the project using a World Bank/World Wildlife Fund "scorecard," and numerous other biodiversity management and conservation-related measures were implemented . The impact on managerial effectiveness is not known .

(c) Develop a savanna resources management strategy framework . Modest. Actual achievements fell short both of the original appraisal aspirations and of the MTR's "planned cluster of activities." The latter included the elaboration of both the Savanna Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (SBSAP) and a National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP). The last TTL confirmed to IEG that the SBSAP was, indeed, produced and disseminated, but according to the ICR, had not yet been formally approved at project closure . Progress on NBAP was impeded by the considerable distance between the project team's location and the capital, Accra . However, the project did finance a policy document on indigenous knowledge related to plant genetic resources and the publication of guidelines for intellectual property protection for indigenous knowledge related to health and medical plant resources .

(d) Enhance community involvement and adoption of improved biodiversity management plans and conservation measures . Substantial. Project achievements in this area were significant . They included local livelihood improvements, such as establishment of about 500 acres of mango orchards in 40 communities and beehives in 10 communities situated near biological corridors, implementation of low tillage and small ruminants programs in 12 communities, training of 70 farmers in soil and water conservation techniques in 10 communities, and establishment of village tree enterprises in 8 communities, as well as a range of measures in support of medicinal plant and indigenous crops conservation .

(e) Increase community awareness of biodiversity issues and maintenance of gene banks of threatened indigenous crop varieties and medicinal plants . Modest. In addition to developing and implementing education and public awareness strategies in collaboration with local NGOs and CBOs, as noted above, the project undertook a number of activities associated with conserving indigenous crops and medicinal plants . The results in relation to maintenance of gene banks are less clear and there are no outcome measures .

5. Efficiency (not applicable to DPLs):

Efficiency cannot be readily determined on the basis of the information provided in the ICR which limits its discussion to an analysis of the business plans of certain project -supported activities, suggesting that they are highly profitable. In IEG's view, this alone provides an insufficient basis on which to judge the project 's efficiency. The absence of an assessment of cost effectiveness (a standard procedure for GEF projects) is a shortcoming on the part of the ICR.

a. If available, enter the Economic Rate of Return (ERR)/Financial Rate of Return (FRR) at appraisal and the re-estimated value at evaluation :

	Rate Available?	Point Value	Coverage/Scope*
Appraisal	No		
ICR estimate	No		

* Refers to percent of total project cost for which ERR/FRR was calculated.

6. Outcome:

Although relevance of project objectives is high, design relevance and efficacy are both modest, while efficiency cannot be evaluated. Overall project outcome is, therefore, rated as **Moderately Unsatisfactory** . Original project goals were too ambitious given the resources available, especially in the light of the cancelation of the second and third phases of the NRMP APL. Project results, while positive, have fallen short of appraisal and MTR aspirations in a

number of respects. Nonetheless, the reduction in territorial focus at the MTR made the operation more effective than it would otherwise have been.

a. Outcome Rating : Moderately Unsatisfactory

7. Rationale for Risk to Development Outcome Rating:

Additional resources and support will be needed to maintain project achievements over time, both at the local community and national government levels. It is uncertain whether these resources and support will be forthcoming, especially in the absence of future Bank-administered GEF assistance. As noted above, the human resources of the project agency, the SRMC, were significantly depleted following project closing. A possible new Bank-administered GEF project for payment of environmental services and land management in Ghana, currently under consideration, may help to sustain some of the positive outcomes of the present project.

a. Risk to Development Outcome Rating : Significant

8. Assessment of Bank Performance:

Quality at entry : As Section 3 above indicates, there were a number of quality at entry drawbacks, including inappropriate indicators, weak monitoring and evaluation (M&E) arrangements and the absence of baseline information. Implementation arrangements were poorly planned, resulting in weak procurement capacity in the PMU and poor coordination between the latter and the Ministry of Lands and Forests. Most significantly, project activities in the original design were too dispersed both geographically and thematically, and the scope of the operation was not reduced during appraisal even after it became clear that there would be considerable difficulties in meeting the schedule for the NRMP II triggers.

Supervision : During supervision, particularly at the MTR, the Bank did a good job of redesigning the project so as to permit some positive results in the unexpectedly constrained resource and operating environment following the cancelation of NRMP II and III. Project activities were reorganized to give greater emphasis to enhancing community livelihoods within a narrower geographical focus. Project indicators were also reduced in number and revised. Positive linkages were established with a similar project just across the border in Burkina Faso, including several joint supervision missions and a valuable exchange of experiences between the respective Bank and Government teams. In view of the high quality of work undertaken during implementation, which ensured that the project had a more favorable impact than would otherwise have been the case, overall bank performance is rated moderately satisfactory, despite the moderately unsatisfactory quality at entry and moderately unsatisfactory project outcome.

a. Ensuring Quality -at-Entry:Moderately Unsatisfactory

b. Quality of Supervision :Satisfactory

c. Overall Bank Performance :Moderately Satisfactory

9. Assessment of Borrower Performance:

Government : While the Government demonstrated commitment to the project's goals through provision of increased counterpart funding, support in elaborating the SPSAP, and secondment of skilled technical staff to SRMC, the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan were not developed, and the departure of staff from the SRMC at project closure threatens the institution's sustainability. Government performance was, however, negatively affected by the project's over-ambitious original design.

Implementing Agency : Implementing Agency performance improved during the course of the project following initial problems with procurement (see section 13 below) and implementation delays more generally. In addition, the fact that the PMU was located in Tamale (i.e., in the project region itself), while facilitating interaction with local stakeholders, also limited the capacity of the project team to affect government decisions in the national capital, thus reducing its potential influence in relation to broader biodiversity-related policy outcomes. However, the Implementing Agency was able to partner effectively with several civil society organizations when it recognized that it lacked the technical, human, and financial capacity to adequately carry out some project activities. The Government's willingness to second technical staff from several agencies with a mandate in biodiversity conservation to help SRMC perform its project management role was another positive aspect. However, the return of these seconded staff to their agencies of origin after the project closed has now significantly diminished SRMC's capacity, contributing to project sustainability concerns.

a. Government Performance :Moderately Satisfactory

b. Implementing Agency Performance :Moderately Satisfactory

c. Overall Borrower Performance :Moderately Satisfactory

10. M&E Design, Implementation, & Utilization:

The poor design of M& E arrangements was one of the project's principal quality at entry shortcomings . More specifically, the PDO and GEO were defined too broadly and not supported by adequate indicators . These weaknesses were not detected until the MTR, which recognized that the existing M&E was not conducive to measure progress and achievements and that most of the original indicators did not attempt to measure outcomes . Thus, M&E design is rated **Negligible** .

In response to these deficiencies, a new set of indicators was formulated, and baselines and target values established. Following the MTR, progress was regularly assessed against this new set of indicators which reportedly "provided an adequate reference to assess the project outcomes " (even though some of the new indicators continued to be process rather than results -oriented). M&E implementation is rated **Modest**.

Utilization of the M&E system by the client after the end of the project is rated **Modest**.

a. M&E Quality Rating : Modest

11. Other Issues (Safeguards, Fiduciary, Unintended Positive and Negative Impacts):

This Category B project triggered the environmental assessment (EA), pest management, and involuntary resettlement safeguard policies . Even though no physical resettlement was initially contemplated, the relevant safeguard policy was triggered because of the need to take into account the livelihoods of people living in the vicinity of project-supported Protected Areas . During implementation, in 2006, however, the Government proposed the resettlement of the Gbele village (234 people in 24 households) in order to help consolidate the Gbele Resource Reserve, one of the project-supported PAs. According to the ICR, "following extensive stakeholder consultation, the Gbele community as a whole had fully agreed to the proposed resettlement, which Government considers to be voluntary in nature." No Resettlement Action Plan was prepared during the project as this dislocation was not planned as part of the project itself and "only arose as a possible follow-up action late during project implementation and no budget had been allocated to finance it ." On this basis, the ICR concludes that the Bank complied with its Involuntary Resettlement Policy and that "there is no legacy or obligation to a possible resettlement of the Gbele community after the project closure ." Should there be a follow-up Bank assessment, however, the aftermath of this issue should be carefully monitored .

No information is provided in the ICR regarding project compliance with the EA and pest management policies or how these were monitored during supervision . However, the last TTL confirmed to IEG that pest management was not an issue as only organic pesticides were used under the project, nor were there any environmental assessment concerns as no large-scale civil works were implemented and all smaller construction activities were properly screened for potential environmental impacts .

Procurement performance was unsatisfactory until the MTR because of poor planning, the lack of a procurement focal person in the PMU, and cumbersome approval procedures . There was also weak coordination between the PMU, located in Tamale, and the Procurement Unit of the MLF based in Accra, which was responsible for project procurement activities . In addition, "protracted delays" in payment for goods and services were "rampant" due to slow processing of invoices, and delays of up to over six months in works contracts were observed mainly due to payment delays . Performance improved, however, following the MTR . No other significant problems with financial management or audits were reported .

Unexpected positive impacts of the project included the aforementioned collaboration between Ghanaian and Burkinabe communities (and Bank project teams) along the biological corridors strengthened under the project and the "increasing political profile of management of trans -boundary natural resources" as demonstrated by the creation of biological corridors, use of territorial plans, and the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding between Burkina Faso and Ghana for the management of the Nazinga -Mole corridor . Thus, the project had a significant positive trans-boundary impact .

Reason for

12. Ratings:	ICR	IEG Review	Disagreement / Comments
Outcome:	Satisfactory	Moderately Unsatisfactory	The impact on the health of the savanna communities appears to have been limited, while that on savanna resource management, while positive, fell short of aspirations. Project results, while positive, have fallen short of appraisal and MTR aspirations in a number of respects. Insufficient information was provided to evaluate efficiency.
Risk to Development Outcome:	Significant	Significant	
Bank Performance :	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	There were serious quality at entry shortcomings, exacerbated by the absence of NRMP II and III. However, the Bank is to be commended for a proactive approach during implementation.
Borrower Performance :	Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	Both Government and Implementing Agency performance had some shortcomings, stemming in part from the project's over-ambitious original design.
Quality of ICR :		Satisfactory	

NOTES:

- When insufficient information is provided by the Bank for IEG to arrive at a clear rating, IEG will downgrade the relevant ratings as warranted beginning July 1, 2006.
- The "Reason for Disagreement/Comments" column could cross-reference other sections of the ICR Review, as appropriate.

13. Lessons:

Among the principal lessons illustrated by this project are the following :

- When contextual conditions change significantly during project preparation -- as in the failure of NRMP II and III to materialize in the present case -- project objectives and design should be adjusted accordingly .
- Realistic and measurable project indicators and adequate Monitoring and Evaluation arrangements, including pertinent baseline information, should be in place prior to project implementation .
- Biological (or wildlife) corridors are a useful concept for spatial planning and, where relevant - in the present case linking ecologically important areas in the neighboring countries of Ghana and Burkina Faso, thus facilitating the free movement of wildlife between them . This project shows that the Bank can play a catalytic role in promoting trans-boundary collaboration. However, the corridor concept also requires adequate follow-up, in the present case by integrating spatial planning into district plans in both countries, and implementing longer-term corridor management plans which go beyond the scope and time horizon of the present operation.
- Effective working partnerships between Governments and NGOs /CSOs can enhance project capacity to involve and benefit local communities.

14. Assessment Recommended? Yes No

Why? This project represents an interesting and innovative case from a number of perspectives, including its institutional arrangements, its mid-term *de facto* redesign to focus on NRM and biodiversity conservation in two biological corridors with local community participation and its trans-boundary dimension, which was not contemplated in the original design. In short, this project would be a good example of adaptive management, although it should have gone even farther in terms of recasting its original broad (at least in terms of their territorial and national policy scope) objectives and questioning the likely effectiveness of the wide geographic dispersion of project interventions,

as initially designed. The initial links with NRMP II and III and the impact on the present project when the former failed to materialize should also be more specifically evaluated . A follow-up assessment would, moreover, permit a closer examination of sustainability related institutional, financial, and other concerns, including the resettlement issue, and should ideally be combined with an ex-post evaluation of the similar project in Burkina Faso .

15. Comments on Quality of ICR:

The ICR is comprehensive, well-written and generally of good quality . However, it could have provided a more specific explanation regarding the considerable reallocation of project resources across components and of the extent to which initial activities (which are identified in some detail in the PAD) were dropped and reorganized at the MTR. The ICR should also have analyzed cost effectiveness and included a fuller discussion of compliance with safeguards policies . Several of the ratings appear to have been too positive, especially in view of the original design shortcomings.

a. Quality of ICR Rating : Satisfactory