United Nations Environment Programme

Terminal Evaluation of the project GF/1030-04-03 (4788)/GFL-2328-2711-04-4788 'Building Scientific and Technical Capacity for Effective Management and Sustainable Use of Dryland Biodiversity in West African Biosphere Reserves' GEF Id 1216

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July 2010

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ACRONYMS

ABE	Agence Béninoise de l'Environnement
AFD	Agence Francaise du Développement
AfriMAB	Africa Man and Biosphere Programme
AVIGREF	Association Villageoise de Gestion des Réserves de Faune
AWP	Annual Work Plan
BD	Biodiversity
BR	Biosphere Reserve
CHM	Clearing-House Mechanism
EA	Executing Agency
EU	European Union
FFEM	Fond Francais pour l'Environnement Mondial
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIS	Geographical Information System
GPS	Global Positioning System
IA	Implementing Agency
IGA	Income Generating Activity
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources
MAB	Man and Biosphere Programme
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
METT	Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool
MSP	Medium-Sized Project
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NTFP	Non-timber forest products
OP	Operational Programme
PA	Protected Area
PAGEN	Partenariat pour l'Amélioration de la Gestion des Ecosystems Naturels
PDF	Project Development Facility
PIR	Project Implementation Review
PMU	Project Management Unit
RBM	Results Based Management
R&D	Research and Development
ROSELT	Réseau d'Observatoires de Surveillance Ecologique a Long Terme
SP	Strategic Priority
TOR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNCBD	United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USD	United States Dollar
WB	World Bank
WCMC	World Conservation Monitoring Centre
WCPA	World Commission on Protected Area
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This terminal evaluation (TE) fulfils a requirement of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and was conducted in compliance with UNEP Evaluation Office procedures for UNEP-GEF projects. It is based on a review of project documents, on visits and meetings in two countries (Senegal and Ivory Coast) and on interviews with former and current project staff. The report deals with the five main GEF evaluation criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, results/impacts and sustainability.

The UNEP-UNESCO-MAB-GEF Project "*Building Scientific and Technical Capacity for Effective Management and Sustainable Use of Dryland Biodiversity in West African Biosphere Reserves*" had a budget of USD 2,400,000 funded by GEF with co-financing of USD 3,692,000, of which USD 431,000 was co-financed by UNESCO. The project started in early 2004 and ran for four years with UNEP as the implementing agency (IA), and with the UNESCO MAB programme as the executing agency (EA) in collaboration with national executing agencies in the six countries.

The project supported six extant West African Biosphere reserves (BRs), one in each of six countries: Senegal, Burkina Faso, Benin, Niger, Mali and Cote d'Ivoire covering a combined area of nearly 6 million hectares. Its objective was to strengthen the scientific and technical capacity for the effective management of the BRs through biodiversity-related research. The expected result was increased capacity for the conservation in the reserves and their buffer zones.

Three outcomes were envisaged:

1. Improved understanding of the impact of human activities on savannah ecosystems.
2. Enhanced conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.
3. Strengthened managerial and technical capacities of BR managers and their staff, local communities, and government institutions.

The overall rating for the MAB project is **moderately satisfactory**. The project has been a successful blueprint and will have a positive influence on future biodiversity-related projects not only in West Africa but in other regions of the world. Despite its problems e.g. difficulties with fund transfers, the poor performance of one country, and the complexity of the M&E system, the TE concluded that this is one of the best regional projects the evaluator has seen in Africa owing to the extremely strong regional component, the commitment and camaraderie of the managers and staff, the increased sense of trust and cooperation between the stakeholders (the national Focal Points, the reserve managers and staff, the scientific staff), the support from and strong coordination of UNESCO, but above all, from the involvement of the communities around the BRs.

The project design, implementation and achievements were all **moderately satisfactory** but it is more meaningful to treat these three disparate headings separately. The original project design focused too much on strengthening the scientific and technical aspects of the reserves, but not enough on improving management *per se*. It conformed to one design objective by complementing existing investments and projects within the BRs. In addition, the project suffered from the complexity of the M&E system, which all national staff found bewildering and they complained that the GEF-wide monitoring and evaluation procedures were too complex and unwieldy, and that reporting standards were too exacting in terms of time needed

to complete them. Monitoring involved an elaborate system of indicators, which confused the partners although they were simplified in 2005.

The project execution was **satisfactory**, improving towards the end of the project. BR management benefited from the technical training, better quality information on conservation management, biodiversity monitoring, and particularly the development of regional cooperation mechanisms for technical information exchange. The exception was Mali, which can be regarded as a special case. National officers felt they "owned" as well as executed the project in the respective countries: this fostered sustainability (as opposed to projects executed by project staff) and promoted participation from all stakeholders.

Some of the achievements were **highly satisfactory**: communities have been brought into the management equation in that they are seen as being able to contribute to biodiversity conservation whereas in the past they were seen as the major threat to biodiversity. The economic activities and sustainable resource use in each reserve generate (or will generate) domestic benefits at household level and will contribute to poverty reduction and livelihood security. The MTE found that the project focused more on generating information than applying the information for more effective management but this is partly owing to the short duration of the project. While it is true that the activities specified in the project document focused extensively on analyses and publications for testing, demonstrating equipment instead of improving the existing management of the BRs, more time would have allowed the results of the research to have filtered down to BR management and for the consolidation and scaling up of beneficial activities.

The project was **relevant** in meeting the objectives of the UNCBD, UNEP, UNESCO-MAB and AfriMAB network. It was in accord with the development objectives of the beneficiary countries and it provided synergy with other donor programs and projects.

Project effectiveness was **moderately satisfactory**. It achieved outcomes 1 and 2, including the management of risks and risk mitigation measures. The management information improved the understanding of the impact of human activities on the savannah ecosystems. The demonstrations enhanced the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in the six BRs and the capacity development activities strengthened the managerial and technical capacities of the BRs' management teams, which started to include the local communities as positive actors towards better management. The project improved capacity development strategy to guide project activities. However, the TE agreed with the MTE that this was focused on individual capacity rather than institutional capacity especially at national and regional level e.g. improvements in the policy, legal and institutional frameworks in each country were not addressed sufficiently by the project.

The efficient use of the resources by the project was rated as **moderately unsatisfactory** which is an improvement on the assessment of the MTE, which judged the use of project resources as unsatisfactory owing to implementation delays, management issues, problems with fund transfers, and inadequate reporting and coordination/ communication. The situation improved in the final year of implementation but much remains to be accomplished to ensure future impact and long-term sustainability of the project achievements. There were problems with national coordination and overall communication but these improved significantly in the last year of the project. Despite the use of the UNESCO financial system to ensure accountability, this aspect has been an area of frustration with fund transfers not received, changes of bank accounts, banks in West Africa delaying funds release, distances between the BRs and the banks which led to time-consuming journeys to check on funds status etc. The mechanisms of project

delivery were also a source of frustration due mostly to the multiplicity of contracts to deliver the project: there were three contracts per country (except Senegal and Benin) to channel the project funds to the project partners for implementation of the project. After the MTE this situation improved and one country contract was used. This improvement came about largely through the developing trust between the scientific and administrative partners, a trust which was built up over several years.

The potential to achieve the long-term project goal and objective was rated as **moderately satisfactory**. The MTE assessment indicated that there was a risk that the generated management information would not translate into better management frameworks for the BRs. The project closed about one year after the time of this MTE but the TE has concluded, after discussion with BR managers, that the project was able to improve the management decision-making based on project-generated knowledge.

From the global environmental benefit perspective, the project has contributed through three aspects:
- the assessment of the biodiversity resource in the six BRs. Rating: **Highly satisfactory**
- promoting alternative livelihood options. Rating: **Moderately satisfactory.** More time would have been needed to assess the magnitude of the economic benefits to communities and there was insufficient time to scale up to other communities who consequently felt 'left out'.
- developing the capacity of local, national and regional stakeholders. At local level, this was achieved through the inclusion of all stakeholders into BR management, in particular the adjacent communities, by helping them establish income-generating activities in the BR transition zones. At national level, bringing together the research institutions, the managers and the communities was a major success of the project. Rating: **Highly satisfactory.**

The project responded well to the three main common barriers/constraints which are limiting an effective management of these BRs: knowledge / information gaps; weak institutional coordination, cooperation and communication; and, limited capacity of stakeholders. Rating: **Satisfactory.**

The potential for the long-term sustainability of the project achievements is related to the above and is **moderately likely** but it was difficult to assess as it depends on the ability of the individual countries to source follow-up funding. Sustainability was part of the project design but the evaluation indicated that actions taken to ensure the sustainability of the project achievements were, in fact, new activities conducted by the project rather than part of the core components of the project design suggesting that the strategy for sustainability was not well elaborated in the project. The lack of focus on the need to reform the existing policy, legal and institutional frameworks may hamper the long-term sustainability of the project. This risk could affect potential replication of the project. Where new funding has been found (e.g. European Union or World Bank), the outlook for long-term sustainability is good.

A principal lesson learned is that GEF projects should support and concentrate on regional projects that are closely related. This MAB project had the distinct advantage in that it was regional in the sense that all six countries shared the same language, the same ecosystem and more or less the same problems. All the countries could relate to each other, which is a distinct advantage as the project created a coherent group, once trust had been established. In contrast, the consultant has seen countries grouped together as a 'region' where none of the countries had anything in common except, for example, annual rainfall.

A further lesson of the MAB programme is that GEF projects often have insufficient timeframes. Four years is too short a duration to achieve the results envisaged. Although GEF sees itself as a facilitator and therefore avoids phased projects, it should still consider either a longer duration for such projects (8-12 years) or it should ensure that a four-year pilot project should be followed by an eight-year consolidation phase funded by another donor. At present this project is set for consolidation and scaling-up but is unable to do so except in as far as individual countries are able to seek and secure alternative funding. In a regional project, it is not unusual for non-performance in one country to 'drag down' the others. In such a situation, a country could be dropped after the initial period (e.g. four years) so that the project could concentrate on the 'best potential' countries.

The main TE lessons apply to comparable GEF projects either being implemented or in the pipeline rather than this project which is now closed. They are:

1. An aim of the project was to promote the sustainable use of biodiversity in pilot demonstrations. The TE saw and read little about indigenous biodiversity being used in the transition zones beyond honey production. Many of the demonstrations revolved around irrigated market gardening and banana plantations etc. The evaluator would have liked to have seen greater emphasis placed on the use of the indigenous vegetation e.g. non-timber forest products (NTFPs), herbal medicines, indigenous trees being tried or used for biofuels, sustainable timber production, oils, dried fruit, or the collection of grasses, reeds and palm leaves for thatching, cottage industries etc. Data on these was collected but not actually used much for the purpose of exploring new types of commercial ventures that dealt with *indigenous* plants and their products.

2. All project staff interviewed mentioned that the Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and tracking tools procedures were too complex, time-consuming and unwieldy. GEF needs to revisit M&E procedures, which need to be shortened and simplified. Staff complained that the MAB project was in danger of being so over-monitored that the project staff could spend most of the time reporting at the cost of constructive fieldwork.

3. Even though the project has closed, there would be value if one or two of the Focal Points or Reserve Managers gave presentations of project successes and shortcomings to meetings of other related projects especially in Francophone countries. This was done 'in house' i.e. at the regional Technical workshop at UNESCO in June 2008 but it needs to be done externally e.g. in preparation and planning workshops for other related projects so that lessons learned and successes are shared and the likelihood of the same mistakes being made is lessened. This is a better method than relying on passive dissemination of reports, which tend not to be read or consulted.

A separate and more specific recommendation for the GEF Secretariat to consider might be that GEF revisit its one language policy. This project took place in solely francophone countries. The country reports were all in French, but the main reports (PIR and evaluations) were in English. While costly and time-consuming translations can be and were done, the evaluator got the impression that the national teams did not always understand the English reports and to some extent, translations failed to pick up the nuances of the original language. Although it goes against current GEF policy, there is a lot to be said for GEF taking a multilingual approach and allowing the exclusive use of one of the other global languages when projects are run in countries where the *lingua franca* is a language other than English.

2. INTRODUCTION

1. This is the terminal evaluation report of the UNEP-UNESCO-MAB-GEF Project "*Building Scientific and Technical Capacity for Effective management and sustainable use of dryland biodiversity in West Africa Biosphere Reserves*" (GFL-2328-2711-04-4788). This evaluation was performed by an independent consultant, Mark Nicholson, on behalf of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

2. The project was implemented in six West African countries (Burkina Faso, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger and Senegal) which had identified Biosphere Reserves (BR) as effective tools for the *in situ* conservation of savannah ecosystems as reflected in National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAP). The biodiversity value of each national park had been the main reason for the identification and designation of the six BRs involved in this project, each of which is now part of the World Network of BRs (UNESCO-MAB Network). The combined area of the BRs is nearly 6 million ha within the savannah biome, which in West Africa has relatively high biodiversity.

3. This report is five sections: section 2 is an overview of the project; section 3 describes the objectives, scope, methodology, and limitations of the evaluation; section 4 covers the findings of the evaluation, the lessons learned and recommendations sections 5. Annexes are appended.

3. OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT

4. The project met the criteria of the GEF Operational Programme No. 1 on Arid and Semi-Arid Zone Ecosystems in that it aimed to integrate biodiversity conservation and sustainable use in land use planning and BR management. It set up pilot demonstrations that validated alternative economic activities for local communities living in buffer and transition zones around the BRs. It responded to country-driven national priorities by identifying components of biodiversity important for sustainable use, as well as understanding the processes and activities that are likely to have significant adverse impacts on the sustainable use of biodiversity.

5. In order to achieve its objectives, project intervention emphasised improving the understanding of interactions between local communities and savannah ecosystems, identifying and promoting sustainable use of biodiversity, strengthening stakeholder capacity, and integrating all stakeholders into the management of each BR. The project was to make extensive use of the AfriMAB network and, in particular, the sub-regional AfriMAB network for West Africa for technical and scientific information exchange and capacity building. This network (which is part of the worldwide MAB network) was created in 1996 in Dakar and includes all existing BRs in Africa (except North Africa). It was created around four thematic areas/ecosystems: arid, forest, mountain and coastal/marine. In 1999 a 2nd Dakar meeting (for Francophone African countries) reviewed the questions of zoning of existing BRs; harmonizing legislations and making sure they included the BR concept; and promoting research to focus on research for development. The network was changed to include four domains: (1) zoning and institutional aspects; (2) participatory of local populations; (3) Research and Development (R&D); and (4) functioning of the network. Since then, AfriMAB held a meeting in Nairobi for Anglophone African countries and the network held another meeting for all its members in Cape Town, South Africa on 10-13 September 2007 to

finalize the new structure of the AfriMAB network.

6. The AfriMAB network is anchored in each country through national MAB committees with their Presidents and/or Secretaries. The AfriMAB network provided the institutional framework whereby successful programmes and policies in one country could set examples and precedents for other countries to emulate. The project helped catalyze this process by the strength of the regional component within the project. The project pilot sites and the responses to mitigate the threats to biodiversity were a reflection of both the commonality of, and diversity of threats to, the BRs. The lessons learned were shared amongst resource managers and communities throughout the region via the AfriMAB network and the MAB Secretariat.

Table 1: Project objective

Objective	Outcomes
Strengthened scientific and technical capacity for effective management of the BRs	1: Improved understanding of the impact of human activities on savannah ecosystems
	2: Enhanced conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity
	3: Strengthened managerial and technical capacities of BR managers and their staff, local communities, and government agencies institutions

Table 2: Description of BRs within the project

BR	Country	Area (ha)	Biodiversity features
Pendjari	Benin	623,000	Extant large mammals (none endemic)
Mare aux Hippopotames	Burkina Faso	186,000	100 bird species (many migratory) and ~100 fish species
Comoé	Cote d'Ivoire	1,150,000	Varied habitats, large mammals (rare in W Africa, but not endemic)
Boucle du Baoulé	Mali	2,500,000	Crosses bio-geographical zones. Elephants.
"W"	Niger	728,000	80% of Niger's biodiversity represented. Large mammals, including giraffe
Niokolo Koba	Senegal	913,000	Lord Derby's eland, chimpanzees other large mammals

7. Outcome 1 above (Table 1) is not strictly an outcome, rather a change in behaviour of a specified target group. The objective was poorly specified too, needed greater elaboration and suggests the need for improved or more rigorous project design.

8. All the countries participating in the project are located in the west Sudano-Sahelian savannah biome and north Sudano-Guinean biome, which occupies a band across West Africa with relatively high human population densities (50-100 persons/km^2) and a long history of human occupation. West African savannahs are mainly wooded grasslands but not renowned for high plant endemism or the high mammalian biomass found in East and Southern Africa. The climate is semi-arid to arid, with seasonal rainfall, so significant migration of large vertebrates and birds occurs. The Sudano-Guinean savannah biome

contains a total of 105 Important Bird Areas (IBAs) with 200 species restricted to the Sudano-Guinean biome recorded. A number of mammal species are threatened with national or regional extirpation[1], and most of the remaining populations of mammals and savannah habitats are found in these BRs, which occur along a gradient of biophysical and human cultural conditions *viz.* increasing aridity and increasing human pressure on grass savannahs and savannah woodlands, and continuous land cover change from south to north.

9. The BRs were all first established solely as national parks and are here described separately:

10. **Pendjari Biosphere Reserve (Benin)** is located in Atakora province, Northwest Benin, on the international border with Burkina Faso and within the loop formed by the River Pendjari, 45 km north of Natitingou. It is within the Volta depression and the 623,000 ha comprise both the National Park and the Pendjari and Konkombri hunting zones, all of which contains a wide variety of herbaceous and woodland savannah with diverse fauna. Large mammals are easily visible, such as lion, elephant, kob, forest and hybrid buffalo. The density of large mammals is relatively high compared to other areas of West Africa. Predominant land use in the BR transition area includes agriculture, trading of plant species, and pastoralism. The main conservation threats are cross-border poaching, drought, lack of watering points, and bush fires. Conflicts with local communities are linked to the zoning of the BR and access to natural resources within the BR.

11. **Mare aux Hippopotames BR** (186,000 ha.) is in the west of Burkina Faso, 80 km north of the town of Bobo-Dioulasso, in the district of the same name. The reserve is roughly oblong on a north-south axis, and lies between the Black Volta River and the Bossora/Bala highway, with the Wolo River as the southwest limit. The BR has open forests of species with Guinean affinities with gallery forests along the watercourses. Hippopotamus are the main large mammal species. Avifauna comprises more than a hundred bird species (many migratory) recorded, and a similar number of fish species. Predominant land use includes agriculture, livestock husbandry, fishing, hunting and plant collecting. Tourism is not well developed. The main threats to biodiversity and constraints to effective management are: a) lack of alternative incomes for local communities living in the vicinity of the reserve; b) poaching inside the core area; c) illegal fishing and wood cutting; d) lack of trained staff in the biosphere reserve for monitoring; e) reduction of sound community practices such as protection of fruit trees; f) falling soil fertility; and g) the lack of a coordination structure in the BR.

12. **Comoé Biosphere Reserve** in Côte d'Ivoire extends 35km southwest of Bouna, in the northeast prefectures of Bouna and Ferkessedougou, westwards across the Comoé River to the vicinity of Kong. The BR covers an area of 1,150,000 hectares with variety of habitats and plant associations found typically further south, including woodlands savannahs, forests, and riparian grasslands. Large mammals include buffalo, roan antelope (*Hippotragus equinus*), hartebeeste (*Alcelaphus buselaphus*), common waterbuck, and Uganda kob. Land use includes hunting, agriculture (particularly cotton) and pastoralism. The main threats to biodiversity and constraints to effective management are poaching, the lack of infrastructure and inadequate co-ordination to support integrated management of the biosphere reserve, and the lack of alternative economic activities and income sources for the local communities.

13. **Boucle du Baoulé Biosphere Reserve is** in the west part of Mali, on the left bank of the Baoulé River and covers an area of 2,500,000 ha. It crosses the regions of Koulikoro and Kayes. The BR is part of the ROSELT network which traverses the Sudano-Guinean zone to the south and the Sahelian zone to the north, considered the most important

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[1] Localized extinction

wildlife areas in the country. Major habitats and savannah types are wooded and bush savannah, *Butyrospermum paradoxum* savannah, herbaceous steppes and grasslands. Some large fauna such as elephant are present. Predominant land use is agriculture, livestock husbandry, forestry, and crafts. Pressures on the core area of the BR are increasing as local communities exploit resources in the reserve as they have few other viable livelihood options and fertile lands are scarce surrounding the reserve. Scarcity of water points creates competition between wildlife and cattle leading to increased poaching near water. Large fauna is under heavy pressure from hunting as well.

14. **"W" Biosphere Reserve** is in the south-western region of Niger, the "W" region, and lies on an ancient peneplain. Its diversity is primarily a result of the rainfall regime in three different watershed basins. The total area of the "W" BR is 728,000 hectares. It is estimated that some 80% of the country's biodiversity occurs in these woodlands, scrublands and grasslands. The core area is mainly savannah and gallery forest where the last West African or Nigerien giraffe (*Giraffa cameleopardis peralta*) are found. This is a subspecies distinguished by its light colored coat. Other wildlife includes elephant, lion, antelope, Uganda kob, common waterbuck, crocodile, and hippopotamus. In the transition area the main activities are agriculture, grazing and goat keeping. The threats to biodiversity and constraints to effective management are the lack of adequate infrastructure, shortage of staff for monitoring, lack of water points (which encourages the concentration of wildlife around the Mékrou and Niger rivers), increased grazing in forest lands, bush fires and poaching (particularly in the Anana area).

15. **The Niokolo Koba Biosphere Reserve (Senegal)** lies on border between the administrative regions of Senegal-Oriental and La Casamance, on the River Gambia, close to the Guinean border in south-eastern Senegal and covers an area of 913,000 hectares that includes herbaceous savannah (dominated by *Andropogon gayanus*), bamboo, seasonally flooded grassland and dry forest, wetlands, and gallery forests. The BR contains Lord Derby's eland (the largest antelope species), elephant, chimpanzee, lion, and elephant, as well as many bird, reptile and amphibian species.

16. Land use in the transition area consists of agriculture, pastoralism, honey gathering and craft making. Rural communities surround the Park, inhabiting the transition area of the BR and claimed access to resources located within the buffer zone ('*zone tampon*') plus the core area of the BR resulting in conflicts between local communities and reserve staff. Large mammals are threatened by poaching and the reduction of natural habitat threatens some migratory species. The lack of an institutional and co-ordination structure for integrated management of Niokolo Koba Biosphere Reserve remains a major constraint to effective management.

Table 5: Biosphere Reserve nominations			
Country	**BR(s)**	**Project Sites**	**Nomination**
Benin	2	Pendjari BR	1986
Burkina Faso	1	Mare aux Hippopotames BR	1986
Cote d'Ivoire	2	Comoé BR	1983
Mali	1	Boucle du Baoulé BR	1982
Niger	2	"W" BR	1996 (The "W" BR extended to the Benin portion Burkina Faso in 2002)
Senegal	4	Niokolo Koba BR	1981

17. These BRs were selected according to a list of criteria set for an area to qualify and be designated as such. The criteria include appropriate zones in the reserve (a legally constituted core area, a landscape protection (buffer) zone and an outer transition area), provisions for a management policy or plan for the area, a designated authority to implement this policy or plan with programmes for research, monitoring, education and training and a mechanism to manage human use and activities in the buffer zone(s).

18. A Task Force of UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme first developed the concept of BRs in 1974. The BR network was launched in 1976 and had grown to include 529 reserves in 105 countries. The network is a key component in MAB's objective for achieving a sustainable balance between the sometime conflicting goals of conserving biological diversity, promoting economic development and maintaining associated cultural values. BRs are sites where these objectives are tested, refined, demonstrated and implemented. In 1984, an action plan for BRs was formally endorsed by UNESCO and in 1995, UNESCO organized a conference in Seville (Spain) on the BRs to evaluate the experience of the programme and elaborate a draft statutory framework for the world network of BRs. Ten key directions were identified at this conference; which provided the foundation for the "*Seville Strategy*".

19. UNESCO is promoting these BRs as "living laboratories for sustainable development" to explore and demonstrate approaches to conservation and sustainable development on a regional scale and this is included in Article 3. of the UNESCO-MAB statutory framework.

20. Each buffer zone has three functions:

- conservation of biodiversity (ecosystem, species & genes) which contribute to the conservation of landscapes and genetic variation.

- environmental conservation with the fostering of economic and human development which is socio-culturally and ecologically sustainable

- logistical support for demonstration projects, environmental education and training, and an international network of research and monitoring related to local, regional, national and global issues of conservation and sustainable development. The project contributed particularly to this function by supporting research, capacity building and demonstration for biodiversity conservation and sustainable development for the communities living around the BRs.

21. The project sites comprised the research base for conducting studies, acquiring knowledge and transferring/communicating this knowledge using the AfriMAB network.

4. EVALUATION METHOD

22. The ToR (Annex 1) was the basis for the terminal evaluation (TE) which assessed project management and performance, implementation / execution of activities, planned outputs against actual results and whether the project achieved its objective of strengthening scientific and technical capacity for effective management in the biosphere reserves ensuring the long-term conservation and sustainable use of their biodiversity. In addition, the TE reviewed the recommendations of the MTE and their implementation.

23. The TE focused on the following questions:

- Did the project increase understanding of ecological processes across a gradient of biophysical and human cultural conditions that are representative of West African savannahs to support more informed management decisions within each reserve and other protected areas outside the scope of this project?

- Did the project strengthen stakeholder capacity, and integrate all stakeholders

into the management of each BR?

- Did the project establish a functioning regional biodiversity information system and network to support the exchange of data and information (including best practices in sustainable use) and improved cooperation in the management of the West African savannah ecosystem?

24. The findings of the evaluation were based on:

a) A desk review of project documents including project documents, outputs, monitoring reports (such as progress and financial reports to UNEP and GEF annual Project Implementation Review reports), Notes from the Steering Committee and other meetings and other relevant correspondence.

b) Review of specific products including the project website, other project-related material produced by the project staff, partners, GEF and the project team.

c) Face to face and email correspondence with project management, technical support staff and stakeholders including the Project Management in UNESCO-MAB, UNEP/GEF Task Manager and Fund Management Officer and members of the Steering Group.

d) Field visits to project locations in Paris, and two project countries (Senegal, Cote D'Ivoire). The visit to Niger was postponed owing to visa difficulties.

25. The scope of the evaluation was guided by the "*Global Environment Facility Guidelines for Implementing Agencies to conduct Terminal Evaluations, May 2003*[2]" to evaluate the activities supported by GEF through this project.

26. **Project Ratings:** The success of project implementation was rated on a scale from 'highly unsatisfactory' to 'highly satisfactory' in the form of a table[3]. Each category (including the categories given in the TOR) was rated separately with brief justifications based on the findings of the analysis. An overall rating for the project is also given. The following rating system was applied:

27. All of the participating BRs are active in the AfriMAB. The project made use of both this and the sub-regional West African AfriMAB network for technical and scientific information exchange and capacity building. The targeted intervention strategy was designed to complement existing investments and projects within the BRs.

28. The TE assessed and rated the project with respect to the following categories:

A.   Attainment of objectives and planned results:

The TE assessed the extent to which the project's major relevant objectives were effectively and efficiently achieved, or are expected to be, achieved and their relevance. The four principles are:

- *Effectiveness*
- *Relevance*
- *Efficienc*y
- *Gender issues*

B.   Sustainability:

- *Financial resources*
- *Socio-political*

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[2] http://www.gefweb.org/MonitoringandEvaluation/MEPoliciesProcedures/MEPTools/IA_Guidelines_for_TE.pdf

[3] HS= Highly Satisfactory
S = Satisfactory
MS = Moderately Satisfactory
MU = Moderately Unsatisfactory
U   = Unsatisfactory
HU = Highly Unsatisfactory

- *Institutional framework and governance*
- *Environmental*

C. **Achievement of outputs and activities:**
- Delivered outputs
- Assessment of the soundness and effectiveness of the methodologies used for developing the technical documents and related management options in the targeted project area.
- Assessment of the extent the project outputs produced have the weight of scientific authority / credibility, necessary to influence policy and decision-makers, particularly at the local, national and regional level.

D. **Assessment of Monitoring and Evaluation systems during project implementation**
- *M&E design and plan implementation*
- *Budgeting and Funding for M&E activities.*

E. **Replicability / Catalytic role:**

F. **Preparation and readiness**

G. **Country ownership/ drivenness**:

H. **Stakeholder participation / public awareness**

I. **Financial planning**

J. **Implementation approach**

K. **UNEP Supervision and backstopping**

29. Specifically, the TE assessed:
- The relevance of the project design vis-à-vis the practical conditions encountered during project execution.
- the appropriateness of the execution means vis-à-vis the project objectives, the strengths and weaknesses of the project's management structure, operations, and the various partnership arrangements of the project including the management of the by the main executing agency (including the appropriateness of the execution arrangement in UNESCO);
- the quality and relevance of project outputs including their use by member countries;
- the continued relevance of the expected results, outcomes and objectives to the participating countries;
- the significance of any outcomes and impacts to date and the likelihood of achieving future impact with respect to the project's stated objectives;
- project indicators and whether these were used appropriately for project monitoring purposes, particularly review the application of the PIR-2006 indicators;
- possible replication mechanisms, potentially involving more countries;
- the consideration (and justification) for another similar project, with different or additional countries, perhaps more ambitious in scope.

30. The methodology is based on the evaluator's M&E experience with GEF and is compliant with international criteria and professional norms and standards. An evaluation matrix based on the evaluation criteria described above and the scope elements included in the TOR. This matrix served as a general guide for the evaluation (*see Annex 2*). It

provided directions for the collection of relevant data, for structuring the evaluation report and as a basis for interviewing people and reviewing project documents.

31. The TE discusses whether the project met its main objectives as laid down in the project design document and whether the project initiatives are likely to be sustainable. It also makes a number of recommendations for GEF that would be useful in the planning of similar projects.

5. EVALUATION FINDINGS

32. The TE was participatory involving the UNEP/GEF Task Manager, the project's technical staff in UNESCO-MAB, the Focal Point managers and the BR managers and staff and stakeholders. Where countries were not visited, email interviews were conducted in which all countries except Mali participated.

5.1 Attainment of objectives and planned results

33. The TE assessed the extent to which the project's major relevant objectives were (or are expected to be) effectively and efficiently achieved and were relevant. The four principles are effectiveness, relevance, efficiency and gender issues

5.2 Project effectiveness

34. The objective of strengthened scientific and technical capacity for effective management of the BRs was largely achieved in the majority of countries. Therefore, the project can be considered effective (**MS**). Of the outcomes (Improved understanding of the impact of human activities on savannah ecosystems (**HS**); enhanced conservation (**MS**) and sustainable use of biodiversity (**MU**); strengthened managerial and technical capacities of BR managers and their staff, local communities, and government agencies institutions (**S**), the only outcome which was considered less effective was the sustainable use of biodiversity (**MU**): biodiversity has to be used and profit-making or it will diminish. This can involve greater emphasis on local or international tourism or where this is not feasible, greater **sustainable** use of natural products from the BRs (game meat, sustainable indigenous timber production, herbal and nutritional compounds, fibres, thatching and roofing materials etc). Honey production is of course one of these, but greater effectiveness would have been achieved through the use of natural products either in the transition areas, the buffer zones or even in the BRs themselves where this was allowable.

35. All of the participating BRs are active in the AfriMAB. The project made use of both this and the sub-regional West African AfriMAB network for technical and scientific information exchange and capacity building. The targeted intervention strategy was designed to complement existing investments and projects within the BRs.

36. The project was highly effective in five of the six countries (Mali excepted) in establishing better cooperation between BR Managers and the communities living in the buffer and transition zones of the BRs through its studies and tests/demonstrations. The project was <u>very relevant</u> in improving this relationship.

5.3 Project Relevance

37. The project was relevant in that it succeeded in strengthening the scientific and technical capacity for the effective management of the BRs. This is highly relevant when the BRs are under threat from environmental degradation and loss of biodiversity. Improving the understanding of interactions between local communities and savannah ecosystems, identifying and promoting sustainable use of biodiversity in pilot demonstrations,

strengthening stakeholder capacity, and integrating all stakeholders into the management of each BR are each highly relevant.

Table 3: Rating for project relevance

Outcome	Rating	Remarks
Improved understanding of interactions between local communities and savannah ecosystems	HS	"Improved understanding" is really an output. The research carried out in the BRs was highly relevant and a sound scientific grounding for biodiversity conservation
Identifying and promoting sustainable use of biodiversity in pilot demonstrations	MU	Community-owned demonstrations were established around all the reserves; these serve to reduce conflict and promote income-generating activities but the use of existing biodiversity was not as prominent as expected.
Strengthening stakeholder capacity	S	Stakeholder capacity was clearly weak at the outset of the project & was strengthened
Integrating all stakeholders into the management of each BR	MS	"All" is a bit ambitious. Many stakeholders were integrated by using CBOs & NGOs. Clearly this has been less successful in Mali and also in parts of northern Comoe owing to the war.

5.3.1 Relevance to UNCBD objectives

38. The project was relevant within the context of the national implementation of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD) in the six countries, including the principles of an ecosystem approach adopted by the Parties to the UNCBD in May 2000. The six countries ratified the UNCBD between 1993 and 1995. Each country produced three national reports reporting on the national implementation progress of the convention and established their National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAP) which were an important pre-condition for the project rather than a performance target.

Table 4: Status of UNCBD in the six Countries

Country	UNCBD Ratification Date	National Report(s)	NBSAP
Benin	June 30, 1994	3	2002
Burkina Faso	September 2, 1993	3	1999
Cote d'Ivoire	November 29, 1994	3	Undated
Mali	March 29, 1995	3	2001
Niger	July 25, 1995	3	2000
Senegal	October 17, 1994	3	Undated

39. All three outcomes of the project (Improved understanding of the impact of human activities on savannah ecosystems; enhanced conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity; and strengthened managerial and technical capacities of BR managers and

their staff, local communities, and government agencies institutions) were relevant to the objectives of the Convention as defined in its articles[4].

40. The main focus of the project was on the scientific (article 12: Research and Training) and technical capacity for an effective management of the BRs through a better understanding of the interactions between local communities and savannah ecosystems, the identification and promotion of sustainable use of biodiversity in pilot demonstrations, the strengthening of stakeholder capacity, and the integration of all stakeholders into the management of each BR. It also has a regional dimension (article 5: Cooperation) to improve the exchange of data and information through a regional biodiversity information system such as the AfriMAB network.

5.3.2 Relevance to UNESCO-MAB and AfriMAB objectives

41. All of the participating BRs are active in AfriMAB. The project made use of both this and the sub-regional West African AfriMAB network for technical and scientific information exchange and capacity building. The targeted intervention strategy was designed to complement existing investments and projects within the BRs.

42. The six project sites are all part of the UNESCO-MAB network of BRs as indicated in the table 4 below; all of them were created as National Parks. The project was therefore **fully relevant** in supporting the concept of BRs for the six selected sites within the implementation of the Seville strategy for BRs and the statutory framework of UNESCO's programme on Man and the Biosphere (MAB) which is to support the regional biodiversity development, to provide assistance to broad scientific interests, and ensure nature protection.

43. The project was **highly relevant** for the AfriMAB network as it helped the network to establish and strengthen communication with local communities.

5.3.3 UNEP-GEF Objectives in the recipient countries

44. The project was approved by GEF under the Operational Programme (OP)1 (Arid and Semi-Arid Zone Ecosystems) which focus on the conservation and sustainable use of endemic biodiversity in dryland ecosystems. The project was relevant to the GEF objectives in this area including three of its four strategic priorities on Protected Areas that is 1) to conserve biodiversity through the expansion, consolidation, and rationalization of national protected area (NPA) systems; 2) integrating biodiversity conservation into agriculture, forestry, fisheries, tourism and other production systems and sectors to secure national and global environmental benefits; and 4) to improve the analysis, synthesis, and dissemination of best practices, innovative approaches, and new tools. By supporting the BRs, the project tried to integrate biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of natural resources in the management of these reserves and through demonstrations, which were shared through the AfriMAB network.

45. The project was also relevant to the work of the UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC), which has the task of evaluating and highlighting biodiversity and putting authoritative biodiversity knowledge at the centre of decision-making. The WCMC has six strategic objectives: 1) supporting decisions 2) knowledge creation 3) information sharing 4) managing datasets 5) data validation and 6) progress through partnerships.

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[4] Article 5. Cooperation Article; 6. General Measures for Conservation and Sustainable Use; Article 7. Identification and Monitoring; Article 8. In-situ Conservation; Article 10. Sustainable Use of Components of Biological Diversity; Article 11. Incentive Measures; Article 12. Research and Training; Article 13. Public Education and Awareness ;Article 17. Exchange of Information

5.3.4 Relevance to development objectives of recipient countries

46. The project was relevant within the context of the development objectives of the recipient countries as it addressed some of the objectives related to the protection of biodiversity. Each country developed its National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) after the ratification of the UNCBD and every country in the world was expected to have developed their plan by this year (2010). The major features of these National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans are given below:

47. **Benin:** The main strategic points of the NSAP are strengthening of the authorities in the management of biodiversity, the promotion of research and indigenous knowledge as well as better of cooperation at the national, regional, as well as international level and the evaluation of genetic resources.

48. **Burkina Faso:** The global objective of the NBSAP is to ensure that populations manage biodiversity in a sustainable manner by 2025. The action plan emphasizes the need to motivate the population to preserve species and restore habitats, and to manage natural resources in a dynamic and sustainable manner.

49. **Cote d'Ivoire:** The (undated) Action Plan is available on the internet and covers the same issues and objectives as for the other countries.

50. **Mali:** In addition to Mali's general goal and principles, the NBSAP contains numerous objectives, which relate to: improvement of knowledge; conservation of resources; promotion of sustainable development, ecotourism, and fair sharing of benefits; and biotechnology and bio-safety.

51. **Niger:** The strategic objectives focus on: a specific framework for biodiversity related sectors; the multi-sectoral integration of biodiversity programmes; technical models of integrated management; and further research and adequate use of results. The strategy covers 16 priority themes, such as wild fauna, energy, agriculture, territory planning, water management, community participation, traditional knowledge and spiritual values, and environmental emergencies.

52. **Senegal:** The strategy comprises four major objectives, which are (1) the conservation of biodiversity in high density sites, (2) the integration of the conservation of biodiversity in programmes and activities related to production, (3) the fair sharing of roles, responsibilities and benefits with regard to biodiversity management, and (4) the education and awareness-raising of all stakeholders concerning the importance of biodiversity and the need to conserve its components.

53. Research and integration of local populations into the management decision-making process of these reserves were two areas emphasized by the project. They also responded to the strategies presented above. However, despite that this project supported the development of BRs in West Africa, a regional analysis supported by the project[5] indicates that this advance was not matched by progress in adopting/updating the existing national legislation and regulations to recognize the concept of BRs. Furthermore, in most countries, the zoning is an on-going problem which has not yet been addressed. The same is true for the integration of the participation of local populations into the national legislation and regulations.

54. The sustainable exploitation of the biological resources and/or the mining resources has also yet to be addressed. In order to support these countries in these areas and following the regional analysis, the project supported several activities in these areas such as a regional workshop on legislation for protected areas in 2006 in Dakar, which was co-financed with UNESCO and a regional consultant who addressed how the zoning was to be applied in the six different contexts.

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[5] "Evaluation du cadre institutionnel et legislative de gestion des reserves de biosphere de la zone ouest Africaine"

55. **Regional successes:** The strongest point of MAB in all countries was the coherence in participative research and development with the implementation of three supplementary elements, which allowed synergy between community development, technical services and research activities.

56. A further strong point was the cross-border visits to other BRs and ensuring the rotation of the annual regional meetings.

5.4 Project Efficiency

57. The financial arrangements were **unsatisfactory** and inefficient from the outset. Better planning, taking into account the services operated by banks in West Africa, would have allowed financial flows to be much faster. UNEP was credited by GEF; UNEP then credited UNESCO with funds every six months and then UNESCO would send the funds on to the national projects. The delays in receiving the funds meant that activities were often badly delayed. The West African banks would hold onto the funds and the BR managers in some cases had no idea if the funds had arrived (e.g. the manager of Comoé BR had a two-day drive to get to the bank just to find out whether the funds had been credited).

58. The cost-effectiveness of the project on the ground was rated as **satisfactory** because with only limited funds, people could make a lasting changes, for example with demonstration sites for local communities.

59. The fall in the value of the US dollar had a negative impact on the CFA received.

60. PIRs were efficiently produced annually (ending 30 June) providing information on funds allocated and received, and general information on project status, and giving information on project performance and risk.

61. The macro-institutional framework (GEF-UNEP-UNESCO) seemed a bit cumbersome and bureaucratic. The real value addition of working through two UN organizations was not clear to the consultant. Every tier of bureaucracy multiplies the delays.

5.5 Gender issues

62. Gender issues were addressed at the community level to a satisfactory level. Many women groups were established for income-generating activities especially in honey production and smallholder agriculture. In Mali, there was a pastoralism site but this is mainly a male-dominated activity.

5.6 Sustainability

63. The potential for the long-term sustainability of the achievements is rated as moderately likely as weaknesses in the sustainability strategy suggest that there is a risk that they will not be used or applied to the future management of the BRs. The project has contributed substantially to the scientific and management knowledge of BRs but if this knowledge is not used or applied to the management of the BRs, it may be obsolete or lost in the future. Knowledge is not an end in itself but a means to an end, which implies that the project outcomes should have been pitched more at an output level.

64. The project focus was mostly on the generation of management information (through research activities) and on capacity development of stakeholders, particularly local communities and the staff managing the BRs. A large portion of project expenditure was to support research activities done by students who conducted fieldwork to collect data and produce their doctoral theses. Few other activities were planned to review these primary data and assess their implications for the purpose of strengthening the management of the BRs.

65. The ecological sustainability of the project is rated as **highly satisfactory** as there were no environmental risks linked to future project environmental benefits. No project activities posed a threat to the environment or to the sustainability of the project achievements. On the contrary, most of the activities will contribute to improving the ecological sustainability in the six biosphere reserves, if only by reducing pressure on the BRs as communities find they can improve their incomes from the transition areas. Furthermore, the capacity development activities supported by the project should have a positive impact on the local environment over the long-term by ensuring that communities take a hands-on and cooperative role in BR management and partake in sustainable rather than extractive activities in the BRs.

5.6.1 Financial sustainability

66. The future sustainability of the project outcomes depends on the availability of further financial resources, and the likelihood that such required resources will be secured depends on the proactive stance taken by the individual countries. It is likely in Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire and Benin but less likely in the other countries.

67. Four outcomes were defined in the project document: i) Improved understanding of the interactions between local communities and savannah ecosystems; ii) Identifying and promoting sustainable use of biodiversity in pilot demonstrations; iii) Strengthening stakeholder capacity; and iv) Integrating all stakeholders into the management of each BR. None of these outcomes has a definite endpoint at which one can say that the outcome has been achieved. All are subjective indicators and all are processes, the furtherance of which will depend on future financial support and more time. Time alone without financial support will of course be inadequate. The evaluation was not convinced that enough thought or planning had been given to future financial sustainability. Certainly there was the recognition that more funding was required but only limited action had been taken by the time of project closure to secure these funds.

5.6.2 Socio-political

68. The socio-political environment can be a crucial determinant of project success. Cote d'Ivoire underwent political instability during the project cycle and this had an impact on the northern part of the Comoé BR. A further factor in that country is the continuing postponement of elections, which is causing disaffection in the north. Niger is currently undergoing both drought and political instability (the army having taken power in Jan 2010), which will have consequences for the sustainability of any follow-on project in that country. Unstable political environments affected the other countries less but a recent government audit in Mali showed huge sums of money being unaccounted for and complete chaos in Government records, factors that do not bode well for future continuity. Therefore the likelihood that social /political factors will affect the sustainability of the project's outcomes must be recognized.

69. Social /political factors locally included the change of managers at the site level to the detriment of accrued knowledge and loss of the social networking that the project had established, the manager being the key actor in the process. There is some risk that the level of stakeholder ownership will be insufficient to allow for the project outcomes to be sustained but key stakeholders appreciate that it is in their interest that the project benefits continue to flow, as there is sufficient public/ stakeholder awareness in support of the long-term objectives of the project.

5.6.3 Institutional framework and governance

70. The institutional framework in which the project operated was satisfactory in that it brought together the parks authorities with the research institutions in a way that had not occurred in the past.

71. The project however did not directly address the legislation, policy and institutional frameworks of these BRs and the potential to do so in the future is probably low; it is rated as moderately unlikely. The project was more focussed on generating information through research for conservation management than applying this information to a more effective management framework for these BRs in the long term. This weak focus on the enabling environment weakens the sustainability of reforms such as the interaction indicators, the integration of local communities into the management of the BRs, and the results from the demonstrations sites. There is a risk that the body of knowledge produced by the national scientific agencies/universities may not be used by the management of these BRs but this risk is mitigated by the establishment of cooperative agreements and MOUs defining the tasks of each partner and ensuring a flow of information exchange between researchers and the managers (including inventories) as well as agreements with local communities.

5.7 Attainment of outputs and activities

5.7.1 Community development, poverty reduction and livelihoods development

72. Biodiversity conservation near or in areas with expanding populations cannot be achieved without bringing in communities by using the combined tools of **education & sensitization**, and addressing **livelihood development** for **poverty reduction**.

73. The project succeeded well in five of the countries in establishing better cooperation between the local populations living in the buffer and transition zones and the managers of the BRs through its studies and tests/demonstrations. The project was very relevant in improving this relationship. Traditionally, little consideration was given to indigenous knowledge (IK) among the local residents round these BRs but feasibility studies in 2002 indicated that the major problem for managing these reserves were the local populations living in the periphery of these BRs. Formerly, little or no trust existed between the BR managers and the local communities; the latter were considered the enemy of conservation by the former. Both IK and the needs and perspectives of the communities were ignored.

74. Since the start of the project, the studies conducted in these BRs have contributed to a change of thinking. The project has led to the conclusion that the rights and needs of communities must be considered when managing a BR and that they should be included in management decisions. It is now recognized that IK could be beneficial for improving the management of these reserves. A positive relationship between the managers and the villagers has developed in most of the BRs and local populations have become tentative partners in assisting in the management of the reserves. The project has also showed that IK is very valuable for improving the management of these reserves. In Benin students accumulated a large amount of IK on traditional medicine, traditional fishery management, exploitation of NTFP and knowledge on small mammals living in the Pendjari BR.

75. These partnerships increased with the implementation of the pilot demonstrations of alternative economic activities. The villagers started to understand the benefit of, and derived benefits from, using the BRs sustainably. In Benin, formally registered local

associations living near the BR receive 30% of the revenue (about FCFA 20-30 [about US$ 50,000], which is transferred to the local AVIGREF from the trophy hunting permits. They also receive the game-meat as a by-product from this hunting. By having a stake in the existence of the BR, local communities now consider the BR as a resource to improve their livelihoods and cooperate with the BR Administration to conduct surveillance (against a small *per diem* from the 30%) in the reserve.

76. The programme allowed all actors (BR managers, administrators, researchers, MAB committee and the community representatives) at both local and national level to coordinate better and improve the AfriMAB network in West Africa.

77. The main constraints were that the M&E and tracking tools (indicators and reports) were not regarded as successful because it was too complex and there was insufficient time to discuss in depth with the stakeholders.

78. In Burkina Faso, the GEF / MAB project came at the right moment, following the plan for strengthening the scientific capacity in the Sahelian zone (RCS / Sahel) piloted by UNESCO and implemented in Burkina Faso by several partners[6]. The project succeeded in merging existing and new knowledge to reverse the deterioration of natural resources of the Mare aux Hippopotames BR.

79. The training of students was very successful. The different teams produced about twenty research theses. In Burkina, two trainings in technology and tourism were given additionally with the assistance of the National Service of Tourism of Burkina (ONTB) as well as the training in fruit and fish farming. The Burkina team also stressed the success of the computer training and local radio (RBMH) plus MAB committee website (www.mab.burkina.org).

5.7.2 Soundness and effectiveness of the methodologies used for developing the technical documents

80. The M.S. and doctoral theses perused by the consultant appeared to be based on sound methodologies for the effective preparation of the research studies. These were prepared under the supervision of academics at national research institutions and formed the one of main outputs of the project.

81. The TE considered that the scientific output (theses etc) carried sufficient scientific authority/ credibility necessary to influence policy and decision-makers, particularly at the local, national and regional level. The constraint here is whether policy makers take biodiversity issues seriously enough. Progress globally towards biodiversity conservation fall way short of targets. Governments have made some efforts, such as designating national parks, but the responses have been woefully inadequate and the gulf between the threats to biodiversity and government actions is growing ever wider[7].

5.7.3 Monitoring and Evaluation systems during project implementation

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[6] Institute of CNRST, the Institute of National Development (IDR) in the University of Ouagadougou, the Department of Traditional Animal husbandry (DOET) in the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal husbandry (MARA).

[7] World leaders have failed to deliver commitments made in 2002 to reduce the rate of biodiversity loss, and have instead overseen alarming biodiversity declines. These findings are the result of a new 2010 Biodiversity Indicator Partnership paper published in Science, and represent the first assessment of how targets made through the 2002 Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) have not been met. Compiling over 30 indicators measuring different aspects of biodiversity, including changes in species' populations and risk of extinction, habitat extent and community composition, the study found no evidence for a significant reduction in the rate of decline of biodiversity, and that the pressures facing biodiversity continue to increase. The synthesis provides overwhelming evidence that the 2010 target has not been achieved.

82. A comprehensive M&E approach was part of the project design and was included in the project document but there was no separate budget. The approach described in the project document includes an extensive list of indicators for results and for project implementation, some monitoring methodologies, a baseline to be established at the beginning of the project and mid-term and end-of-project evaluations. It also included the monitoring, reporting and evaluation responsibilities. However, it was not clear who would finance the implementation of these indicators.

83. The monitoring approach included a three-pronged strategy:

- Measuring the population dynamics of key species;
- Conducting comparative ecological surveys in the biosphere reserve;
- Surveying the impacts on the livelihoods and participation of local communities, and their level of support for conservation efforts.

82. It also included a complex set of indicators and monitoring procedures to be implemented, including a) Monitoring and evaluation procedures to be established during project implementation, using the BRIM[8] (Biosphere Reserve Integrated Monitoring) approach supervised by the UNESCO-MAB Secretariat; b) Indicators and monitoring structures used by the OSS (Observatoire du Sahara et du Sahel[9]) to be integrated into the Project monitoring and c) Implementation indicators of the *Seville Strategy* (at local, national and international levels for the world network of BRs); d) Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) scoreboard developed by IUCN-WCPA, WB and WWF to be completed at the start of the project, middle and at the end of the project; and e) UNEP-GEF guidelines for project monitoring and evaluation to measure project progress and project impacts using the indicators identified in the log-frame.

84. While the approach was comprehensive it is also too complex, requiring a huge investment in time, expertise and funding. The existing monitoring approaches for protected areas is too confusing: at the February 2005 supervision committee meeting in Niokolo Koba (Senegal), it was decided to review and simplify the list of indicators listed in the log-frame; which was done by all project partners in the following months of 2005. Using the concept of SMART indicators, the analysis of the original list of indicators listed in the original log-frame indicates that these indicators were, in most cases, not specific enough, difficult to measure and unrealistic. Additionally, the issue of attribution existed; given that it is a difficult area to monitor for this particular project. The revised list of indicators was user-friendlier, using SMART indicators (specific, measurable, achievable and attributable, relevant and realistic and time-bound, timely, trackable and targeted. The list is given below:

Objective
1. Implementation indicators of the Seville Strategy
2. WWWF/WB/GEF SP1 Tracking tools
3. Increase in biosphere reserve used as demonstration sites

   Outcome 1
4. Sustainable use activities identified and applied
5. 20% increase in the number of users of the database for scientific and management purposes
6. Human pressure interaction indicators developed

   Outcome 2
7. Increase of 20% in average income of target communities

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[8] An approach for abiotic, biodiversity, socio-economic and integrated monitoring of the UNESCO-MAB world network of biosphere reserves

[9] Three biosphere reserves participating in the Project are also ROSELT or associated sites

8. Adoption of sustainable resource use strategies by 3 villages outside of target demonstration
9. Reduction with 30% average, against baseline, of incursions in the core protected zones in the six biosphere reserves as at end of the project

Outcome 3

10. At least one MOU signed, per country site, between national scientific institutions and BR management
11. At least one agreement signed between local communities and biosphere reserves for each site defining rights and duties of communities and park authorities.
12. Decrease by 15% in resource management conflicts by Year 3 as compared to Year 1 of the project
13. A minimum of 12 Local Mediators operating per biosphere reserve by year 4
14. At least three application of studies of human /biodiversity interactions and GIS in planning and management for each site conducted by 2008
15. At least one successful micro-enterprise functioning in each biosphere reserve at project termination
16. A total of 12 national PhD students graduated in 2008
17. A total of 16 Master degree students graduated in 2008
18. A minimum of 150 persons adequately trained on topics through national and regional training seminar by 2008
19. An annual average increase with 15% over the life of the project in the number of users of the six biosphere reserve websites
20. By year 2008, a 30% increase over year one surveys of the number of people aware of importance of savannah ecosystems and the role of the six biosphere reserves in conserving them.
21. An annual average increase with 10% over the project life in the number of TV programmes, articles in newspapers, local and national radio on the six biosphere reserves compared to year 1 of the project

85. In addition to the identification of performance indicators, the project also supported the development of interaction indicators. One of the conclusions of the regional workshop held in Dakar in 2002 (supported by PDF-B) was to improve the monitoring indicators for BRs to measure better the impacts on the conservation and use of biodiversity. It was recognized that there was a lack of a multi-disciplinary approach within the biodiversity conservation approach, a need for indicators for monitoring both the ecology and the pressure on the natural resources, taking into account local knowledge, and the need to develop a participative programme that included the local stakeholders.

86. In order to respond to these needs for better indicators, the project (co-financed with the government of France) supported the identification of a set of interaction indicators for each biosphere reserve. The process was called "co-construction" of interaction indicators to emphasize the need for a participative approach. These indicators were to take into account the interactions that have an impact (direct and/or indirect) on the evolution of the biodiversity; including the ecological interactions, the human activities interacting with the biodiversity dynamics and the social interactions regarding biodiversity. The objective was to identify a set of indicators that would capture the complexity of biodiversity in the biosphere reserves that included the stakeholder groups in the BRs. These indicators were developed in the six project sites.

87. The reporting function included three levels of reporting:

- *Countries to UNESCO-MAB Secretariat (EA)*: this reporting was done in French and included half-year progress reports, half-year updates on progress indicators contained

in the log-frame (using the Log-frame Tracking Tool) and half-year financial reports;

- *UNESCO-MAB Secretariat (EA) to UNEP-GEF (IA)*: this reporting was mostly a compilation in English of the progress reports received from the six countries (in French). It included half-year progress reports, half-year updates on progress indicators contained in the log-frame (using the Log-frame Tracking Tool), quarterly financial reports and yearly Project Implementation Review (PIR);
- Proceedings of the regional workshops (yearly) and summary reports (yearly) of the supervision committee meetings.

88. Despite the detailed progress-reporting plan in the project document, the reporting approach kept changing over time. After the start of the project, UNEP added the METT log-frame tracking tool and in 2006 added the PIR format[10] without streamlining the existing reporting process. As a consequence, the reporting function required more management time and most managers perceived it as a burden. Additionally, the reports did not focus enough on results. The design of the project was not sufficiently results-based and the same can be said of the progress reporting, the emphasis being mostly on activities conducted during the reporting period. The half-year progress reports did not discuss the project achievements and even less the possible variances between the actual and the planned project achievements. The introduction of the (yearly) standard GEF PIR format was more results-based and provided more information on the achievements of the project versus its expected results (using the indicators from the log-frame), an explanation for significant variances, a review of internal and external risks and assumptions, measures to mitigate substantial risks and the lessons learned.

89. The complexity of the monitoring framework was translated in the progress reports into a body of information, which reported what the project did as opposed to what the project achieved. It is difficult for the reader to get the "big picture" about the project and assess the real progress made by the project toward its objective. The addition of the PIR was a welcome addition but it should not be added to the existing reports without replacing at least one half-year progress report per year.

90. All the Focal points and BR managers interviewed[11] regarded the M&E design and plan implementation as too complex by GEF has developed tracking tools but it is clear that the designers still have to rethink how to make these more user-friendly despite their claims to have made them user friendly already. Budgeting and funding for M&E activities was adequate.

91. UNESCO MAB Secretariat also confirmed that the M&E system was complex. Furthermore, the indicators were changed between the time the project was approved and the second UNEP task manager. The original indicators as per the project document were too ambitious to be fulfilled as well as for the periodicity (for some of them it was not possible to monitor them as regularly as the reporting processes e.g. the costly fauna and aerial monitoring.

92. Focal points and BR managers were not giving clear indications of progress made or were not adequately representing efforts made (income in monetary terms for rural communities, or where impact on the changes on income needed more time than the

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(10) The first PIR was produced for 2006

[11] A typical comment was this from Djafarou Ali Tiomoko, Bendjari BR manager in Benin:

"Principaux problèmes :

- Le système de suivi-évaluation (indicateurs et rapports) n'est pas bien maîtrisé car trop complexe.
- Les différentes évaluations, dont la dernière ne disposent pas suffisamment de temps pour discuter en profondeur avec les acteurs sur le terrain."

duration of the project).

93. The work on the indicators, selected and chosen by the key stakeholders in the sites was perceived as a good counterbalance of these difficulties. UNESCO reported these difficulties several times on the annual progress report sent to UNEP.

5.7.4 Replicability/ catalytic role

94. The project can serve as a model for other sites in the World Network as the experience of most of the countries has led to positive changes in institutional cooperation for the management and conservation of biodiversity. Whether this project has also had a major influence on policy remains to be seen but biodiversity issues are still not a high priority globally for policy makers.

95. Community vernacular radio was highly successful and should be replicated to other projects in the region. Any income-generating activities (IGAs) are positive provided they are ecologically and economically sustainable, although any similar future projects should concentrate more on using indigenous biodiversity (e.g. indigenous timbers, NTFPs etc) in the buffer and transition zones, rather than just horticultural development. In particular, value addition of biodiversity products on site should be encouraged to boost income for communities.

5.7.5 Preparation and Readiness

96. The project benefited from a PDF-B project, which allowed sound preparation prior to the full-sized project. But there was a slow start to the main project in spite of the PDF-B linked to the late allocation in second year of the plan of a conservative who took in hand the governance of both elements II and III. The distance of RBMH from the capital where the project was managed aggravated this situation. The project was not therefore smoothly initiated. The partnership arrangements were not properly identified, neither were the roles and responsibilities fully negotiated prior to project implementation. Counterpart resources (funding, staff, and facilities), enabling legislation, and adequate project management arrangements were also slow in coming.

5.7.6 Country ownership/drivenness

97. Country ownership was highly satisfactory (see section 5.3.4) in most cases except in Mali where drivenness was not good (HU). In the other countries, the project could stand alone even though regional cooperation was one the most positive outcomes of the project.

98. The needs of each country differ even in a sub-region like West Africa: this made arriving at an overall ranking difficult. National needs require different responses and similar projects should take these differences into account and adapt the project and its implementation. The design of the project should have taken into account the strengths and limitations of each country, rather than just assume that 'one-size fits all'.

5.7.7 Stakeholder participation / public awareness

99. Stakeholder participation was high (HS) in most countries. The project started off with a low level of trust between researchers, managers, civil servants and communities but it seems clear that trust was built up over the course of the project.

100. All the countries made efforts in pubic awareness through increased communication with participation of local communities. Community vernacular radio was highly successful.

101. The preparation of the CDs, websites and brochures were useful for public awareness. The project supported the development of websites for each project site to post project results and to be part of the international network on biosphere reserves. Initial planning for these websites started in 2005: they were not initially good and were delayed but they improved with time and have contributed to the long-term sustainability of the project now that information is available to the general public. The UNESCO provided a web platform for the national projects on its own website and this was satisfactory.

5.7.8 Financial planning and financial resources

102. The total cost of the project was US$6.58m. Actual expenditures reported in the last PIR were US$2.3m. However, the financial arrangements for receiving these funds were inadequate and inefficiently relayed to the BR managers. This situation needs to be looked at in depth for the benefit of future projects. Internal financial resources are lacking in most countries to continue the project so sustainability will depend on external funding from agencies like EU and World Bank.

103. The capacity of the project to leverage co-financing is rated as satisfactory. The project document included a total amount of identified MFP/FSP co-funding of USD 3.81m (more than the 3.7m identified at the design stage [Table 5]), of which 34% was in-kind contributions from the six recipient governments and a further 25% to be contributed by the UNESCO-MAB programme and WWF. The balance came from other sources such as the ABE in Benin, FSP in Mali.

Table 5: Identified Co-financing at Design Stage							

	Benin	Burkina Faso	Niger	Mali	Senegal	Cote d'Ivoire	UNESCO	Total
Government	213,000	210,000	222,000	195,000	184,000	245,000	0	**1,269,000**
Other Sources	572,000	557,000	0	274,000	0	100,000	920,000	**2,423,000**
TOTAL	**785,000**	**767,000**	**222,000**	**469,000**	**184,000**	**345,000**	**920,000**	**3,692,000**

104. The targeted intervention strategy of the project was designed to complement existing investments and projects within the six biosphere reserves. Therefore the activities supported by the project were complementary to others supported by other investments provided by the local governments and/or external donors. This was the case, for instance, in Benin and Burkina Faso where each biosphere reserve benefited from the resources of the PAGEN in Burkina Faso (funded by World Bank-GEF) and the PCGPN in Benin funded by a group of donors including the GTZ, the European Union (EU), the Netherlands, the Agence Francaise du Development (AFD), the Fond Francais pour l'environnement mondial (FFEM) and the World Bank-GEF. Budgets are always drawn up in US$. If the value of the US$ falls, the project suffers, in this case at least a 10 percent reduction in the budget, which is bound to have had an adverse impact. GEF might consider a mechanism within its contingency lines whereby extra funds could be made available in the case of significant dollar devaluation.

105. A further finding was the insufficient financing of training and extension activities: the PhD students lacked funds for the finalization of their ongoing jobs, and insufficient funds for community input to surveillance and conservation; likewise, reducing funding for local radio meant it stalled. The level of transparency in financing of GEF / MAB was extremely low.

5.7.9 UNEP Supervision and backstopping

106. UNEP had three Task managers for the project. This resulted in some gaps and some delays during the transition periods but in general the Task managers attended the Steering Committee meetings. Mission reports, progress reports and PIRs were completed and circulated in a timely fashion. It might be advantageous for Task managers to be conversant in French.

107. The purpose of supervision is to work with the Executing Agency in identifying and dealing with problems that arise during implementation of the project itself. Such problems may be related to project management but may also involve technical/ substantive issues in which UNEP has a major contribution to make. The evaluator assessed the effectiveness of supervision and administrative and financial support provided by UNEP/DGEF as follows:

   (i)   The adequacy of project supervision plans, inputs and processes was satisfactory;
   (ii)   The emphasis given to outcome monitoring (results-based project management) was moderately unsatisfactory owing to the failure to understand the complexity and time needed for following the METT process;
   (iii) The realism/ candor of project reporting and rating (i.e. whether PIR ratings are an accurate reflection of the project realities and risks) are moderately unsatisfactory because it is difficult for UNEP to have real handle on what is happening on the ground in different countries in another language;
   (iv)   The quality of documentation of project supervision activities was moderately satisfactory; and
   (v)   Financial, administrative and other fiduciary aspects of project implementation supervision was satisfactory between UNEP and UNESCO.

5.8   Synergies with national and regional donor Programs/Projects

108. The targeted intervention strategy for this project was designed in the project document to complement existing investments and projects within the BRs in the six project sites.

109. As part of the project planning, the focal point of each MAB National Committee established contacts with the leaders of other projects within each BR and initiated a dialogue to avoid duplication and to facilitate communication and exchange with ongoing projects. The concerns and priorities of the project leaders involved in the ongoing projects were taken into account along with the priorities expressed by the regional project's national executing agencies to ensure complementarity between regional and national projects, adding value to national efforts and contributing to long-term sustainable BR management. During the implementation of the project, the national MAB committees were responsible for ensuring good coordination between projects.

6. LESSONS LEARNED

110. **Country specific lessons**: The Regional Technical Workshop held in Paris in June 2008 brought together the MAB National Committees, the BR managers, representatives of the

scientific institutions (together with the doctoral researchers), and community leaders from the six BRs to review and exchange views on the project's achievements since the MTE and outcomes at the end of the project, and to define strategies which would enhance links between BR management, researchers, stakeholders (especially communities) and decision-makers. The Benin team in particular stressed the value of community participation in the management of the BRs, in particular the Villagers' Association for the Management of Wildlife Reserves (AVIGREF), women's participation, and self-promotion strategies.

111. **Capacity building** was increased by exchange visits by the representatives of local communities and BR staff to other BRs ("W", Mare aux Hippopotames, Boucle du Baoulé and Niokolo Koba etc) that allowed visitors to see other techniques on good farming, pastoralist and environmental practices.

- **Lesson**: the incorporation of adjacent communities and their views into the overall management of the BRs is highly important for BR management.
- **Lesson:** exchange visits strengthened cooperation between national institutions and sub-regional partners.
- **Lesson:** The postgraduate research on curative plants and halophytes contributed to conservation and use of biodiversity.
- **Lesson:** Combining biodiversity conservation and IGAs at community level (e.g. small-scale cooperative hunting, soil fertility studies, use of plants for soil conservation in the demonstration sites) contributed to better protection in and around the BRs.
- **Lesson:** Community Multimedia Centres are important for communication and exchange as it strengthens the capacity of the village associations in the management of the BRs and the acquisition of computer equipment provided Internet connection in both the BRs, the Research institutions (Laboratory of Applied Ecology and at the National Committee MAB).

112. **General lessons learned**: MAB was a regional project that really seemed to work because the partners all had a lot in common. This MAB project had the distinct advantage in that it was regional in the sense that all six countries shared the same language, the same ecosystem and more or less the same problems. **Lesson**: Countries that can relate to each other as a coherent group are a distinct advantage, once trust is established. GEF projects should support and concentrate on regional projects that are closely related and consider the wisdom of regional projects that have less in common (especially where problems, language and culture differ between countries). The consultant has seen countries grouped together as a "region" where none of the countries had anything in common except for annual rainfall[12].

113. A regional project has a longer "chain of command" to manage the day-to-day operation of the project. **Lesson:** Such chains of command need to be streamlined to allow empowerment of national project executors. **Lesson**: strong regional coordination requires a fulltime project manager based in the region to coordinate and communicate regularly with project partners in each country and support the execution of the project in each country/project site.

114. **Lesson:** Projects intended to generate global benefits need a strong Results Based Management (RBM) approach (with outputs> outcomes>impact) with a clear long-term development objective.

115. **Lesson**: GEF projects have insufficient time. Four years is too short a duration to achieve the results envisaged. Although GEF sees itself as a facilitator and therefore

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[12] An example was Mali, Botswana and Kenya where Mali felt itself an outsider based on language and Botswana felt itself an outsider based on no tradition of pastoralism.

avoids phased projects, it should still consider either a longer duration for such projects (8-12 years) or it should ensure that a four-year pilot project should be followed by an eight-year consolidation phase funded by another donor. At present this project is set for consolidation and scaling-up but is unable to do so except by individual countries seeking alternative funding. In a regional project, it is not unusual for non-performance in one country to drag down the others. In such a situation, a country could be dropped after the initial period (e.g. four years) so that the project could concentrate on the 'best potential' countries.

116. **Lesson**: Similar projects should adopt a comprehensive capacity development approach, emphasizing not only the training of stakeholders but also the strengthening of the related institutions to improve procedures and mechanisms plus the facilitation of an enabling environment covering policy, laws and institutions).

117. **Lesson**: The main reporting instrument was the PIR (a GEF requirement), which is an annual results-based report to review the past year of implementation. The WB Management Effectiveness Tracking Tools (METT) is described as a user-friendly M&E system but that was not the feedback that the TE received from the users. The project should have established a simplified and streamlined M&E reporting process during the design phase with standard formats and a **user-friendly and affordable** monitoring approach.

118. The implementation of a project without a separate project management unit (PMU) funded from project resources ensures a better/earlier institutionalization of results and the long-term sustainability of results.

119. The use of information technologies (websites and electronic storage of project documents) should have been used earlier in project implementation.

120. Based on the findings of the MTE, a set of recommendations was identified and the TE adds comments on these.

5.1 Recommendations for GEF

121. It is clear that the project closed before it had time to be scaled up and consolidated. While some communities benefited, others did not and they were wondering when it would be 'their turn'. Much useful research was done but again, a Ph.D. thesis takes 3-4 years and the information generated did not have time to feed into the management of the BRs.

122. It is recommended that GEF projects have sufficient time: four years is too short a duration to achieve the results envisaged. Although GEF sees itself as a facilitator and therefore avoids phased projects, it should still consider either a longer duration for such projects (8-12 years) or it should ensure that a four-year pilot project should be followed by an eight-year consolidation phase funded by another donor. This project was set for consolidation and scaling-up but is unable to do so except by individual countries seeking alternative funding.

123. In a regional project, it is not unusual for non-performance in one country to drag down the others. In such a situation, it is recommended that a country could be dropped after the initial period (e.g. four years) so that the project could concentrate on the 'best potential' countries.

124. It is recommended that more attention be paid to indigenous biodiversity and its use. One aim of the project was promoting sustainable use of biodiversity in pilot demonstrations. The evaluator saw and read little about indigenous biodiversity being used in the transition zones beyond honey production. Many of the demonstrations revolved around irrigated market gardening and banana plantations etc. The evaluator would have liked to have seen greater emphasis on the use of the indigenous vegetation

e.g. non-timber forest products (NTFPs), herbal medicines, indigenous trees being used for biofuels, sustainable timber production, oils, dried fruit, the collection of grasses, reeds and palm leaves for thatching, cottage industries etc. Data on these was collected but not actually used much for the purpose of exploring new types of commercial ventures that dealt with *indigenous* plants and their products.

125. The M&E demands were too complex and unwieldy. It is recommended that GEF revisit M&E/METT procedures, which need to be shortened and simplified and designed in collaboration with field managers. These projects are in danger of being so over-monitored that project staff can spend most of the time reporting and very little doing anything constructive.

126. Even though the project has closed, there would be value if one or two of the Focal Points or Reserve Managers gave presentations of project successes and shortcomings to meetings of other related projects especially in Francophone countries. This is a better method that relying on reports, which tend not to be read or consulted.

5.1.1 Minor recommendations on the evaluation itself

127. The TE might have been more effective had it been conducted within a month or two or of project closure when memories were fresh, staff were still in place and enthusiasm still high. To some extent, one had a sense that the project team had 'moved on' to new ideas, assignments and projects and that the BR project was 'history'.

128. UNEP might consider national co-evaluators to work with the main evaluator(s) for the purpose of bringing local knowledge, information and ideas exchange, and creating local capacity.

129. Evaluations would be more useful if a conference call (UNEP/GEF Task manager, UNESCO project coordinator & travel agent) were held *a priori* to discuss and agree on itinerary, distances and logistics. Travel costs were unnecessarily high as the evaluator went to Dakar first without knowing that Kenya Airways flew to Abidjan en route to Dakar, so there was unnecessary backtracking which could have been avoided. Distances were long which meant that a five-day return trip to Comoé was not feasible and the trip to Niokolo Koba was so long that that there was insufficient time in Dakar to meet others involved.

5.1.2 Comments on MTE Recommendations

130. Sentences 73-82 are the (italicized) recommendations of the MTE and the TE gives a short comment on achievements thereafter.

131. *Considering the large amount of information (primary data) generated so far, it is recommended to (i) synthesize this knowledge; (ii) give public access to this body of knowledge; (iii) assess this knowledge against current institutional, policy, legislative and management frameworks to manage the BR; and (iv) identify gaps for a better management of these BRs. The ultimate value of this project resides in its contribution to the sustainable reform of the management effectiveness of these BRs. This assessment should be conducted within the context of adding value on the knowledge generated and applying this knowledge to the management of these BRs. It will increase the potential impact of this project on the management of these BRs as well as the long-term sustainability of the project achievements.*

132. *Conduct capacity assessment of the existing long-term strategies to manage these BRs. On the basis of the new information generated, and taking a holistic capacity development approach looking at the system level (policies and laws), the organisational*

level (institutions) and the individual level (skills and knowledge), assess the current strategies to manage these BRs and identify the capacity gaps; taking into account all previous work such as the study conducted in 2004-2005 "Evaluation Du Cadre Institutionnel et Legislatif de Gestion des Reserves de Biosphere de la Zone Ouest-Africaine".

133. *Publish, disseminate and make accessible the information produced so far. Emphasize/support web site development and strategize this development within the context of the AfriMAB network. Explore the possibility of creating sub-webs under the AfriMAB web site; if necessary. The sooner this information is mounted on the web the better the impact of these results will be.*

134. *Review and streamline the progress reporting process. Review the templates and methods and harmonize the reporting system from countries to UNESCO and UNESCO to UNEP/GEF. Use the PIR as the main progress reporting format and cancel one half-year progress report per year.*

135. *Develop as soon as possible a project exit strategy, which should be endorsed by all project partners (UNESCO, UNEP and Country Partners). This exit strategy – which could be the development of a second phase - will set the critical targets for each of the implementing partners to ensure a smooth ending of this project.*

136. *Assuming that the 2007 transfers will be done soon in September 2007, start the planning process for 2008 as soon as possible.*

137. *Conduct a review of actual total expenditures at closing of December 2007, assess planned expenditures for AWP-2008 and, in function of this assessment, reallocate country amounts which will not be expended in 2008 to other countries/activities for implementing additional activities.*

138. *Monitor closely all <u>new</u> research activities and <u>new</u> demonstrations of alternative economic activities to be implemented in the AWP-2007 and adapt the implementation of these new activities to the timing of the project.*

139. *In its last year, the project should, as much as possible, focus on consolidating the "acquis" as opposed to supporting new activities; to ensure the long-term sustainability of these achievements.*

140. *The co-construction of interactions indicators initiative has the potential to be replicated in other protected areas in the respective countries but also in the region and worldwide. Once completed, this work should be packaged and disseminated - including lessons learned and best practices.*

141. The TE would agree with most of these MTE recommendations. In practice, few were implemented as the MTE was late and the project only ran for 12 months after the MTE when the project staff had gone into closure mode. This points to the need for timely MTEs so **there is at least 24 months** to implement the recommendations of an MTE. The TE found that many of the project staff had difficulties with the MTE because it was written in English. The MTE was also arguably too long: not one of the Focal Points could confirm that the MTE had been read by them in full. Evaluation reports are generally more useful when they are succinct and short.

Annex 1: Ratings Table

Criterion	Evaluator's Summary Comments	Evaluator's Rating
Attainment of objectives and planned results (overall rating) **Sub criteria (below)**	Difficult to give an overall rating. Mali brings down the whole rating. The project started badly but signs improved considerably after MTE.	**MS**
Effectiveness (project objectives)	Again, highly variable, from improved understanding (HS) to sustainable use of biodiversity (MU)	**MS**
Effectiveness (expected outcomes)	Also variable by country and theme. By country there was the leader (Benin) and the laggard (Mali); the project would have been more effective if more attention had been paid to making indigenous biodiversity economically viable. A further outcome was the improvement in participatory BR management.	**HS-MU**
Relevance	The project was definitely relevant	**S**
Improved understanding of interactions between local communities and savannah ecosystems	Project brought increased understanding of the BRs to communities	**HS**
Identifying and promoting sustainable use of biodiversity in pilot demonstrations	Project improved incomes but more could have been done to address use of indigenous biodiversity	**MU**
Strengthening stakeholder capacity	Stakeholder capacity strengthened	**S**
Integrating all stakeholders into the management of each BR	Stakeholders were more involved in management but probably not at executive decision making level	**MS**
Efficiency	Efficiency could have been greatly improved. Some of the efficiencies were beyond the control of the project (fund flows/ banking)	**MU**
Achievement of outputs and activities	Research outputs were good;	**MS**
Cost-effectiveness	Project not very cost-effective.	**MU**
Impact	Impact was high towards end of project	**S-HS**
Sustainability (overall rating) **Sub criteria (below)**		**4**
Financial	Poor: more effort should have made to streamline fund flows	**2**
Socio Political	Outside influence of project. Three countries are probably at quite high political risk.	**2**
Institutional framework and governance	Quite good as BRs managers, researchers and communities have built up considerable trust.	**4**
Ecological	Ecological sustainability increases if sustainable income-generating activities can be maintained	**4**
Stakeholders participation	Very good and improved over the life of the project	**HS**
Country ownership	Excellent in all countries but Mali.	**HS**
Implementation approach	The approach was probably the best one but useful to have a post-project regional meeting to allow BRs managers to have greater say in how such a project could	**HS**

Criterion	Evaluator's Summary Comments	Evaluator's Rating
	be better implemented in future	
Financial planning	GEF should spend a great deal more effort to streamline financial planning and fund flows	**MU**
Replicability	Project should be replicable provided lessons learned are discussed in detail	**S**
M&E (overall rating) **Sub criteria (below)**		**MU**
M&E Plan Design and Implementation (use for adaptive management)	All Focal points and BRs managers complained about the complexity of the M&E system and tracking tools. GEF needs to LISTEN to those who use these tracking tools and redesign to make them easier and faster to use.	**MU**
Budgeting and Funding for M&E activities	Budgeting adequate	**MS**
Sustainability ratings		MS
Stronger institutional capacities	Good linkages between BR managers, research institutions and communities	4
Legal and policy frameworks	Linkage to policy makers poor	2
Socio-economic incentives	Good; community involvement strengthened by economic initiatives	5
Community awareness	Much improved from baseline	5
Community involvement in BR management	Good but other communities need inclusion to avoid disenchantment	4
Public awareness of biodiversity	Moderate	3
Leaders' awareness of biodiversity issues	Poor; not an issue at national level	2
Overall rating		MS

HS = Highly Satisfactory, S = Satisfactory, MS = Moderately Satisfactory, MU = Moderately Unsatisfactory, Unsatisfactory, and HU = Highly Unsatisfactory (see rating system to be applied to the 'sustainability' sub-criteria below).

RATING OF OUTCOMES

Outcomes are the likely or achieved short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention's outputs. Outputs are the products, capital goods and services which result from a development intervention; they may also include changes resulting from the intervention which are relevant to the achievement of outcomes and objectives. The terminal evaluation will make an assessment of the extent to which the project's major relevant objectives[13] were effectively and efficiently achieved or are expected to be achieved and their relevance. The ratings on the outcomes of the project will be assessed using the following criteria:

A. **Relevance**: In retrospect, were the project's outcomes consistent with the focal areas/operational program strategies?

B. **Effectiveness:** Are the project outcomes as described in the TE commensurable with the expected outcomes (as described in the project document) and the problems the project was intended to address (i.e. original or modified project objectives)?

C. **Efficiency:** Was the project cost – effective? How does the cost-time Vs. outcomes compare to other similar projects? Was the project implementation delayed?

RATING OF IMPACT

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[13] The intended physical, financial, institutional, social, environmental, or other development results to which a project or program is expected to contribute.

Impacts are positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. For the GEF, environmental impacts are the main focus. Comments should provide information on the likelihood of achieving the impacts specified in the project document.

RATINGS OF PROJECT M&E

Monitoring is a continuing function that uses systematic collection of data on specified indicators to provide management and the main stakeholders of an ongoing project with indications of the extent of progress and achievement of objectives and progress in the use of allocated funds. Evaluation is the systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed project, its design, implementation and results. Project evaluation may involve the definition of appropriate standards, the examination of performance against those standards, and an assessment of actual and expected results.

The ratings on the quality of the project M&E systems will be assessed using the following criteria:
a. Whether an appropriate M&E system for the project was put in place (including capacity and resources to implement it) and whether this allowed for tracking of progress towards projects objectives. The tools used might have included a base line, clear and practical indicators and data analysis systems, or that studies to assess results were planned and carried out at specific times in the project.
b. Whether the M&E system was used effectively for project management.

RATINGS ON SUSTAINABILITY

A. Sustainability will be understood as the probability of continued long-term outcomes and impacts after the GEF project funding ends. The Terminal evaluation will identify and assess the key conditions or factors that are likely to contribute or undermine the persistence of benefits after the project ends. Some of these factors might be outcomes of the project, i.e. stronger institutional capacities, legal frameworks, socio-economic incentives /or public awareness. Other factors will include contextual circumstances or developments that are not outcomes of the project but that are relevant to the sustainability of outcomes. See section F under 'Project evaluation criteria'.

Rating system for sustainability sub-criteria
Highly Likely = 6, Likely = 5, Moderately Likely = 4, Moderately Unlikely = 3, Unlikely = 2, Highly Unlikely = 1, and not applicable = 0

Annex 2: GEF Minimum requirements for M&E

Project Design of M&E14

All projects must include a concrete and fully budgeted monitoring and evaluation plan by the time of Work Program entry (full-sized projects) or CEO approval (medium-sized projects). This plan must contain at a minimum:

- SMART (see below) indicators for project implementation, or, if no indicators are identified, an alternative plan for monitoring that will deliver reliable and valid information to management
- SMART indicators for results (outcomes and, if applicable, impacts), and, where appropriate, corporate-level indicators
- A project baseline with a description of the problem to address, the indicator data or, if major baseline indicators are not identified, an alternative plan for addressing this within one year of implementation
- An M&E Plan with identification of reviews and evaluations which will be undertaken, such as mid-term reviews or evaluations of activities
- An organizational setup and budgets for monitoring and evaluation.

Minimum Requirement 2: Application of Project M&E

- Project monitoring and supervision will include implementation of the M&E plan, comprising:
- Use of SMART indicators for implementation (or provision of a reasonable explanation if not used)
- Use of SMART indicators for results (or provision of a reasonable explanation if not used)
- Fully established baseline for the project and data compiled to review progress
- Evaluations are undertaken as planned
- Operational organizational setup for M&E and budgets spent as planned.

SMART INDICATORS GEF projects and programs should monitor using relevant performance indicators. The monitoring system should be "SMART":

1. **Specific**: The system captures the essence of the desired result by clearly and directly relating to achieving an objective, and only that objective.
2. **Measurable:** The monitoring system and its indicators are unambiguously specified so that all parties agree on what the system covers and there are practical ways to measure the indicators and results.
3. **Achievable and Attributable:** The system identifies what changes are anticipated as a result of the intervention and whether the result(s) are realistic. Attribution requires that changes in the targeted developmental issue can be linked to the intervention.
4. **Relevant and Realistic:** The system establishes levels of performance that are likely to be achieved in a practical manner, and that reflect the expectations of stakeholders.
5. **Time-bound, Timely, Trackable, and Targeted:** The system allows progress to be tracked in a cost-effective manner at desired frequency for a set period, with clear identification of the particular stakeholder group to be impacted by the project or program.

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[14] http://gefweb.org/MonitoringandEvaluation/MEPoliciesProcedures/MEPTools/meptstandards.html

Annex 3: Project Performance

PROJECT PROPOSAL LOGFRAME			AGREED PROJECT PERFORMANCE					
Narrative Summary (Intervention Logic)	Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Means of Verification	Highly satisfactory	Satisfactory	Moderately satisfactory	Moderately unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Highly unsatisfactory
Outcome One. Improved understanding of the impact of human activities on savannah ecosystems	Population dynamics of key species and condition of key habitats understood by the end of year 3	Research reports		X				
	Sustainable use activities identified for application in the design of resource-use demonstrations in Component Two.	Field surveys on interactions with human communities in demonstration sites			X			
	Human pressure indicators developed and applied by year one. These will include impacts of agriculture, pastoralism, fishing, plant collecting, firewood collecting, and hunting on biodiversity.	Research reports		X				
	Twenty % increase in the number of users of the database for scientific and management purposes (Database usage baseline established at year 3).	Database log recording usage				X		
Outcome Two: Enhanced conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity	Increase in income due to sustainable resource use strategies adopted by test villages at demonstration sites. Baseline established at year one and the target for percentage increase of income will be defined for each project site at end of year one. (Fish farming in the regions of Tiawassage and Porga in Pendjari Biosphere Reserve, collection of medicinal plants in two villages in Mare aux Hippopotames Biosphere Reserve, development of ecovillages in Comoé Biosphere Reserve, commercialization of non wood forest products in Darouma region of Boucle du Baoulé Biosphere Reserve, Craft industry in two villages of the "W" Biosphere Reserve in Niger and in transition zone Niokolo Koba Reserve). Adoption of sustainable resource-use strategies by 3 villages outside of target demonstrations sites in each biosphere reserve by year 3 of the project. Reduction of incursions in the core area of each biosphere reserve (Baseline established at year 1, 10-15% decrease in incursion in the core areas at end of year 4).	Field reports, records and surveys conducted by biosphere reserve staff Socio-economic surveys Field surveys and reports from the rangers of the core areas		X X	X X X			
Outcome Three: Strengthened managerial and technical	Coordination • Number of signed Memorandum of Understanding between national scientific institutions and the biosphere reserve management institution	• Survey and records from the biosphere		X				

PROJECT PROPOSAL LOGFRAME			AGREED PROJECT PERFORMANCE					
Narrative Summary (Intervention Logic)	Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Means of Verification	Highly satisfactory	Satisfactory	Moderately satisfactory	Moderately unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Highly unsatisfactory
capacities of biosphere reserve managers and their staff, local communities, and government agencies institutions	• Establishment of formal links between national universities and research institutions • Increase in the number of agreements signed between representatives of local communities and biosphere reserve staff defining rights and duties of local communities and staff of the biosphere reserve • Creation of a mechanism for conflict resolution in each biosphere reserve (such as a mediation committee) • Established meeting schedule to discuss resource management conflicts • Number of meetings held per year by committee. Steady number based on regular meeting scheduled agreed during year one. • Decrease by 15% in resource management conflicts by Year 3 as compared to Year 1 of the project • Surveys for the establishment of Trust Fund in each Biosphere Reserve and/or other conservation financing strategies	reserve staff and participatory interviews in the villages • Meeting minutes Surveys and strategies produced			X X X	 X X X X		
	Scientific and Technical Capacity • Biodiversity monitoring programme operational by middle of year 2 • Application of studies of human /biodiversity interactions and GIS in biosphere reserve planning and management • Increase in number of publications produced by scientists for applied purposes including interdisciplinary work on biodiversity (baseline established at project initiation) • At least one successful microenterprise functioning in each biosphere reserve at project termination. Success indicators for each will be established at initiation of each microenterprise • Number of users of internet in each biosphere reserve including % of users who reside in local communities • 12 national Phd students graduated at year 4 • 24 master degrees students graduated at year 4 • 2 local mediators operating per biosphere reserve (12) at year 4 • 150 persons directly trained through national and regional training seminars at year 4	• Biodiversity monitoring results • Scientific articles (6), book (1), methodological guidelines and case studies on biodiversity (7) • Regional internet website • Reserve management plans updated with use of new technology • PhD and Masters thesis that produce relevant information for conservation management in the reserves • Official list of mediators for each	X X X X X	X X X	 X	•	•	•

PROJECT PROPOSAL LOGFRAME			AGREED PROJECT PERFORMANCE					
Narrative Summary (Intervention Logic)	**Objectively Verifiable Indicators**	**Means of Verification**	**Highly satisfactory**	**Satisfactory**	**Moderately satisfactory**	**Moderately unsatisfactory**	**Unsatisfactory**	**Highly unsatisfactory**
		biosphere reserve						
	Awareness raising • Fifteen percent increase in number of users of biosphere reserve web page and MAB National Committees web sites at year 2, 3 and 4 • By year 4, 10% of schools located in the transition areas are participating in school competitions related to the biosphere reserve • By year 4, a 30% increase over year one surveys of the number of people aware of importance of savannah ecosystems in the country and the role of biosphere reserves in conserving them • Increase in the number of TV programmes, articles in newspapers, local and national radio on biosphere reserves compared to year 1 of the project • Biosphere reserve role in biodiversity conservation is mentioned in national and regional reports, workshop and international monitoring networks	Reports of biosphere reserve staff Website log and record of user searches Specific field surveys	X		X X	X X		

Annex 4: Evaluation Matrix

The evaluation matrix below serves as a general guide for the evaluation. It provides directions for the evaluation; particularly the collect of relevant data. It is used as a basis for interviewing people and reviewing project documents. It also provides a basis for structuring the evaluation report as a whole.

Evaluated component	Sub-Question	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
Evaluation criteria: Relevance - How does the Project relate to the main objectives of the UNCBD, GEF, UNESCO-MAB, UNEP and to the development challenges faced by the Six Governments of West Africa for the conservation of globally and nationally significant biodiversity?				
Is the Project relevant to UNCBD and GEF objectives?	▪ How does the Project support the objectives of the UNCBD ▪ How does the Project support the related objectives of the GEF? ▪ Does the Project participate in the implementation of the UNCBD in the West African Countries? ▪ Is the GEF incremental cost principle being respected?	▪ Level of coherence between project objectives and those of the UNCBD Convention ▪ Degree of coherence between the project and nationals priorities, policies and strategies in the area of PAs ▪ UNCBD Convention status in the six countries ▪ Extent to which the project is actually implemented in line with incremental cost argument	▪ Project documents ▪ National policies and strategies to implement the UNCBD Convention or related to environment more generally ▪ Key government officials and other partners ▪ UNCBD web site	▪ Documents analyses ▪ Interviews with government officials and other partners
Is the Project relevant to UNESCO-MAB objectives?	▪ How does the Project support the objectives of the UNESCO-MAB network in general? ▪ How does the Project support the objectives of the UNESCO-MAB network in the respective countries?	▪ Level of coherence between project objectives and those of the UNESCO-MAB network ▪ UNESCO-MAB Network status in the six countries	▪ Project documents ▪ National policies and strategies to implement the UNESCO-MAB network in the 6 countries ▪ UNESCO-MAB web site	▪ Documents analyses ▪ Interviews with government officials and other partners; including representatives from the National MAB committee
Is the Project relevant to UNEP objectives?	▪ How does the Project support the objectives of UNEP in the sector of protected areas?	▪ Existence of a clear relationship between the project objectives and sustainable development objectives of UNEP and UNESCO.	▪ Project documents ▪ UNEP and UNESCO strategies and programmes ▪ Key government officials and other partners	▪ Documents analyses ▪ Interviews with government officials and other partners
Is the Project relevant to Countries' development objectives?	▪ How does the Project support the objectives of the development of the six countries in West Africa? ▪ How country-driven is the Project? ▪ Does the Project adequately take into account the national realities, both in terms of institutional frameworks and programming, in its design and its implementation? ▪ To what extent were national partners involved in the design of the Project? ▪ Were the GEF criteria for Project identification adequate in view of actual needs?	▪ Degree to which the project support national environmental objectives ▪ Degree of coherence between the project and nationals priorities, policies and strategies ▪ Appreciation from national stakeholders with respect to adequacy of project design and implementation to national realities and existing capacities? ▪ Level of involvement of Government officials and other partners into the project ▪ Coherence between needs expressed by national stakeholders and UNEP-UNESCO/GEF criteria	▪ Project documents ▪ National policies and strategies (PRSP, NEP, etc.) ▪ Key government officials and other partners ▪ National policies and strategies to protect and manage the environment	▪ Documents analyses ▪ Interviews with government officials and other partners

Evaluated component	Sub-Question	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
Is the Project addressing the needs of target beneficiaries?	▪ How does the Project support the needs of target beneficiaries; including the managers of the reserve, the land owners, the land users and the population leaving in the area? ▪ Is the implementation of the Project been inclusive of all relevant Stakeholders? ▪ Are local beneficiaries and stakeholders adequately involved in Project design and implementation?	▪ Strength of the link between expected results from the Project and the needs of target beneficiaries ▪ Degree of involvement and inclusiveness of beneficiaries and stakeholders in Project design and implementation	▪ Beneficiaries and stakeholders ▪ Needs assessment studies ▪ Project documents	▪ Document analysis ▪ Interviews with beneficiaries and stakeholders
How is the Project relevant in light of other donors?	▪ With regards to these countries, does the Project remain relevant in terms of areas of focus and targeting of key activities? ▪ How do GEF-funds help to fill gaps (or give additional stimulus) that are crucial but are not covered by other donors?	▪ Degree to which the project was coherent and complementary to other donor programming in each of the six countries and in the region	▪ Other Donors' policies and programming documents ▪ Other Donor representatives ▪ Project documents	▪ Documents analyses ▪ Interviews with other Donors
Lessons Learned – Best Practices	▪ What lessons have been learnt and what changes should have been made to the Project in order to strengthen the alignment between the Project and the Partners' priorities and areas of focus? ▪ How could this type of project better target and address the priorities and development challenges of targeted beneficiaries?		▪ Data collected throughout evaluation	▪ Data analysis
Evaluation criteria: Effectiveness – To what extent are the expected outcomes of the Project being achieved?				
How is the Project effective in achieving its expected outcomes?	▪ Is the Project being effective in achieving its expected outcomes: o Improved understanding of the impact of human activities on savannah ecosystems o Enhanced conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity o Strengthened managerial and technical capacities of biosphere reserve managers and their staff, local communities, and government agencies institutions.	▪ Change of status and management resources for the Mare aux Hippopotames Biosphere Reserve ▪ Change in biodiversity conservation through alternatives economic development activities ▪ Change in biodiversity habitats ▪ Change in capacity for information management o Knowledge acquisition and sharing o Effective data gathering, methods and procedures for reporting on biodiversity ▪ Change in capacity for awareness raising o Stakeholder involvement and government awareness o Change in local stakeholder behaviour ▪ Change in capacity in policy making and planning o Policy reform to preserve and improve biodiversity conservation o Legislation/regulation change to improve biodiversity conservation o Development of national and local strategies and plans supporting biodiversity; including ecological landscape plans ▪ Change in capacity in implementation and enforcement o Design and implementation of risk assessments o Implementation of national and local strategies and	▪ Project documents ▪ Key stakeholders ▪ Research findings	▪ Documents analysis ▪ Meetings with main Project Partners including UNEP, UNESCO-MAB, Gov. of the 6 countries and other Partners ▪ Interviews with Project Beneficiaries

Evaluated component	Sub-Question	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
		action plans through adequate institutional frameworks and their maintenance o Monitoring, evaluation and promotion of demonstrations ▪ Change in capacity in mobilizing resources o Leverage of resources o human resources o appropriate practices o the mobilization of advisory services ▪ Existence, quality and use of M&E, feedback and dissemination mechanism to share findings, lessons learned and recommendation on effectiveness of project design		
Were Project activities designed to achieve Project outcomes?	▪ Is there a direct and strong link between expected results of the Project (log frame) and the Project design (in terms of Project components, choice of partners, structure, delivery mechanism, scope, budget, use of resources etc)? ▪ Is actual Project implementation coherent with Project design? ▪ Is the length and design of the Project conducing to achieve Project outcomes?	▪ Level of coherence between Project expected results and Project design internal logic ▪ Level of coherence between Project implementation approach and Project design	▪ Project document ▪ Key Project stakeholders	▪ Document analysis ▪ Key Interviews
How was risk and risk mitigation being managed?	▪ How well are risks and assumptions being managed? ▪ What was the quality of risk mitigation strategies developed? Were these sufficient?	▪ Completeness of risk identification and assumptions during Project planning ▪ Quality of existing information systems in place to identify emerging risks and other issues? ▪ Quality of risk mitigations strategies developed and followed	▪ Project documents and evaluations ▪ UNESCO-MAB and UNEP staff and Project Partners	▪ Document analysis ▪ Interviews
Lessons Learned – Best Practices	▪ What lessons have been learnt by the Project to achieve its outcomes? ▪ What changes should be made (if any) to the design of this type of project in order to improve the achievement of the Project' expected results? ▪ How could the Project have been more effective in achieving its results?		▪ Data collected throughout evaluation	▪ Data analysis

Evaluation criteria: *Efficiency* – *How efficiently is the Project implemented?*

Evaluated component	Sub-Question	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
Was the Project support channelled in an efficient way?	▪ Was adaptive management used or needed to ensure efficient resource use? ▪ Did the Project logical framework and work plans and any changes made to them use as management tools during implementation?	▪ Availability and quality of progress reports ▪ Timeliness and adequacy of reporting provided ▪ Adequacy of Project choices in view of existing context, infrastructure and cost	▪ Project documents and evaluations ▪ UNESCO-MAB, UNEP, Gov. of 6 countries and Project Staffs	▪ Document analysis ▪ Key Interviews

Evaluated component	Sub-Question	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
	▪ Were progress reports produced accurately, timely and respond to reporting requirements including adaptive management changes? ▪ How was RBM used during program and Project implementation? ▪ Was there an institutionalized or informal feedback or dissemination mechanism to ensure that findings, lessons learned and recommendations pertaining to Project design and implementation effectiveness are shared among Project stakeholders, UNESCO, UNEP and GEF Staff and other relevant organizations for ongoing Project adjustment and improvement? ▪ Did the Project mainstream gender considerations into its implementation?	▪ Quality of RBM reporting (progress reporting, monitoring and evaluation) ▪ Occurrence of change in Project design/ implementation approach (ie restructuring) when needed to improve Project efficiency ▪ Existence, quality and use of M&E, feedback and dissemination mechanism to share findings, lessons learned and recommendation on effectiveness of Project design. ▪ Gender disaggregated data in Project documents	▪ Beneficiaries and Project partners	
Were financial resources utilized efficiently?	▪ Were the accounting and financial systems in place adequate for Project management and producing accurate and timely financial information? ▪ Was Project implementation as cost effective as originally proposed (planned vs. actual) ▪ Did the leveraging of funds (co-financing) happen as planned? ▪ Were financial resources utilized efficiently? Could financial resources have been used more efficiently?	▪ Availability and quality of financial reports ▪ Level of discrepancy between planned and utilized financial expenditures ▪ Planned vs. Actual funds leveraged ▪ Cost in view of results achieved compared to costs of similar Projects from other organizations ▪ Cost associated with delivery mechanism and management structure compare to alternatives	▪ Project documents and evaluations ▪ UNESCO-MAB, UNEP, Gov. of 6 countries and Project Staffs ▪ Beneficiaries and Project partners	▪ Document analysis ▪ Key Interviews
How efficient were partnership arrangements for the Project?	▪ To what extent were partnerships/ linkages between institutions/ organizations being encouraged and supported? ▪ Which partnerships/linkages were facilitated? Which one can be considered sustainable? ▪ What is the level of efficiency of cooperation and collaboration arrangements? (between local actors, among the six countries, UNESCO, UNEP, GEF and the Governments of the six West African countries) ▪ Which methods were successful or not and why?	▪ Specific activities conducted to support the development of cooperative arrangements between partners, ▪ Examples of supported partnerships ▪ Evidence that particular partnerships/linkages will be sustained ▪ Types/quality of partnership cooperation methods utilized	▪ Project documents and evaluations ▪ Project Partners ▪ Beneficiaries	▪ Document analysis ▪ Interviews
Did the Project efficiently utilize local capacity in implementation?	▪ Was an appropriate balance struck between utilization of international expertise as well as local capacity? ▪ Did the Project take into account local capacity in design and implementation of the Project?	▪ Proportion of total expertise utilized taken from the countries and region ▪ Number/quality of analyses done to assess local capacity potential and absorptive capacity	▪ Project documents and evaluations ▪ UNESCO-MAB, UNEP and Project partners ▪ Beneficiaries	▪ Document analysis ▪ Interviews
Lessons Learned – Best Practices	▪ What lessons can be learnt from the Project on efficiency? ▪ How could the Project more efficiently address its key priorities (in terms of management structures and procedures, partnerships arrangements etc…)? ▪ What changes should be made (if any) to the Project in order to improve its efficiency?		▪ Data collected throughout evaluation	▪ Data analysis

Evaluated component	Sub-Question	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
Evaluation criteria: _Impacts_ - _What are the potential and realized impacts of activities carried out in the context of the Project?_				

How is the Project effective in achieving its long term goal and objectives?	▪ Is the Project achieving its long term goal that is to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity in six biosphere reserves in West Africa that are predominantly composed of savannah ecosystems?
	▪ Is the Project achieving its objective to systematically strengthen scientific and technical capacity for effective management of the six established biosphere reserves?
	▪ To what extent is the Project focusing on building the capacity of key individuals and institutions at the national and local levels?
		▪ Change in status and management of the reserve
		▪ Change in capacity:
		  o To pool/mobilize resources
		  o For related policy making and strategic planning,
		  o For implementation of related laws and strategies through adequate institutional frameworks and their maintenance,
		▪ Change to the quantity and strength of barriers such as change in
		  o Level of availability of information
		  o Level of trained personnel or technical or managerial expertise
		  o Level of regulatory biases or absence
		  o Initial capital costs or accessibility to credit for sustainable alternatives
		  o Perceived level of risks associated with the sustainable alternatives
			▪ Project documents
			▪ Key Stakeholders
			▪ Research findings; if available
				▪ Documents analysis
				▪ Meetings with UNESCO-MAB, UNEP and Project Partners
				▪ Interviews with Project beneficiaries and other stakeholders

How is the Project effective in achieving the objectives of the UNCBD and UNESCO-MAB?	▪ What are the impacts or likely impacts of the Project?
	  o On the local environment; particularly protecting the biodiversity;
	  o On poverty; and,
	  o On other socio-economic issues
		▪ Provide specific examples of impacts at those three levels, as relevant	▪ Project documents
			▪ UNCBD Convention's documents
			▪ Key Stakeholders
			▪ Research findings
				▪ Data analysis
				▪ Interviews with key stakeholders

Lessons Learned – Best Practices	▪ How could the Project build on its apparent successes and learn from its weaknesses in order to enhance the potential for impact of ongoing and future initiatives?		▪ Data collected throughout evaluation	▪ Data analysis
Evaluation criteria: _Sustainability_ – _Are the initiatives and results of the Project allowing for continued benefits?_				
Are sustainability issues adequately integrated in Project design?	▪ Were sustainability issues integrated into the design and implementation of the Project?	▪ Evidence/Quality of sustainability strategy ▪ Evidence/Quality of steps taken to address sustainability	▪ Project documents and evaluations ▪ UNESCO-MAB, UNEP and Project Partners ▪ Beneficiaries	▪ Document analysis ▪ Interviews
Financial	▪ Did the Project adequately address financial and economic	▪ Level and source of future financial support to be	▪ Project documents and	▪ Document analysis

Evaluated component	Sub-Question	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
Sustainability	sustainability issues? ■ Are the recurrent costs after Project completion sustainable?	provided to relevant sectors and activities in the six countries after Project end? ■ Evidence of commitments from the six governments or other stakeholder to financially support relevant sectors of activities after project end ■ Level of recurrent costs after completion of Project and funding sources for those recurrent costs	evaluations ■ UNESCO-MAB, UNEP and Project Partners ■ Beneficiaries	■ Interviews
Organizations arrangements and continuation of activities	■ Were the results of efforts made during the Project implementation period well assimilated by organizations and their internal systems and procedures? ■ Is there evidence that Project partners will continue their activities beyond Project support? ■ What degree is there of local ownership of initiatives and results? ■ Were appropriate 'champions' being identified and/or supported?	■ Degree to which Project activities and results have been taken over by local counterparts or institutions/ organizations ■ Level of financial support to be provided to relevant sectors and activities by in-country actors after Project end ■ Number/quality of champions identified	■ Project documents and evaluations ■ UNESCO-MAB, UNEP and Project Partners ■ Beneficiaries	■ Document analysis ■ Interviews
Enabling Environment	■ Were laws and policies frameworks being addressed through the Project, in order to address sustainability of key initiatives and reforms? ■ Were the necessary related capacities for lawmaking and enforcement being built? ■ What is the level of political commitment built on the results so far?	■ Efforts to support the development of relevant laws and policies ■ State of enforcement and law making capacity ■ Evidences of commitment by the political class through speeches, enactment of laws and resource allocation to priorities	■ Project documents and evaluations ■ UNESCO-MAB, UNEP and Project Partners ■ Beneficiaries	■ Document analysis ■ Interviews
Institutional and individual capacity building	■ Is the capacity in place at the national and local levels adequate to ensure sustainability of the results achieved to date?	■ Elements in place in those different management functions, at the appropriate levels (national and local) in terms of adequate structures, strategies, systems, skills, incentives and interrelationships with other key actors	■ Project documents and evaluations ■ UNESCO-MAB, UNEP and Project Partners ■ Beneficiaries ■ Capacity assessments available, if any	■ Interviews ■ Documentation review
Social and political sustainability	■ Did the Project contribute to key building blocks for social and political sustainability? ■ Did the Project contribute to citizens' acceptance of the new products or practices?	■ Example of contributions to sustainable political and social change in support of the biosphere reserves	■ Project documents and evaluations ■ UNESCO-MAB, UNEP and Project Partners ■ Beneficiaries	■ Interviews ■ Documentation review
Replication	■ Were/Are Project activities and results being replicated elsewhere and/or scaled up? ■ What was the Project contribution to replication or scaling up of innovative practices or mechanisms that support the UNCBD objectives?	■ Number/quality of replicated initiatives ■ Number/quality of replicated innovative initiatives ■ Volume of additional investment leveraged	■ Other donor programming documents ■ Beneficiaries ■ UNESCO-MAB, UNEP and Project Partners	■ Document analysis ■ Interviews

Evaluated component	Sub-Question	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
Challenges to sustainability of the Project	▪ What are the main challenges that may hinder sustainability of efforts? ▪ Have any of these been addressed through Project management? ▪ What could be the possible measures to further contribute to the sustainability of efforts achieved with the Project?	▪ Challenges in view of building blocks of sustainability as presented above ▪ Recent changes which may present new challenges to the Project	▪ Project documents and evaluations ▪ Beneficiaries ▪ UNESCO-MAB, UNEP and Project Partners	▪ Document analysis ▪ Interviews
Lessons Learned – Best Practices	▪ Which areas/arrangements under the Project show the strongest potential for lasting long-term results? ▪ What are the key challenges and obstacles to the sustainability of results of the Project initiatives that must be directly and quickly addressed?		▪ Data collected throughout evaluation	▪ Data analysis

Annex 5: Project Performance

	From revised LOGFRAME			MTE-2007 Rating[15]	TE Rating
Expected Outcome	**Indicators**	**Baseline Level**	**End-of-Project Target**		
Outcome One: Improved understanding of the impact of human activities on savannah ecosystems	Sustainable use activities identified and applied	▪ Bénin: hunting ▪ Burkina Faso: fishing ▪ Côte d'Ivoire: agroforestry ▪ Mali: pastoralim ▪ Niger: collecting ▪ Senegal: crop culture Sustainable use activities identified after interaction indicators work done (Field reports in the six countries)	▪ Demonstration that these common activities are sustainable and can increase income generation for target villages and outside	MS	MS
	20% increase in the number of users of the database for scientific and management purposes	▪ Database log recording when established (end 2006)	▪ 20% increase from baseline situation	?	Data not ascertained
	Human pressure interaction indicators developed	▪ Co-construction of interaction indicators in the six sites	▪ Interaction indicators used	S	**S**
Outcome Two: Enhanced conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity	Increase of 20% in average income of target communities	▪ Bénin : 80,000 FCFA (154 US$) ▪ Burkina Faso: 30,000FCFA (58 US$) ▪ Côte d'Ivoire : 20,000 FCFA (39 US$) ▪ Mali :25,000 FCFA (48 US$) ▪ Niger: 50,000 FCFA (97 US$) ▪ Senegal: 40,000 FCFA (77 US$) Please note that these annual monetary incomes are based on average data and are not taking into account direct consumption and income variability during seasons Socioeconomic surveys are available from the six sites	▪ 20% increase	MU	20 % unlikely but not ascertained MU

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(15) The following rating system is applied:

HS	= Highly Satisfactory	MU	= Moderately Unsatisfactory
S	= Satisfactory	U	= Unsatisfactory
MS	= Moderately Satisfactory	HU	= Highly Unsatisfactory

	From revised LOGFRAME			MTE-2007 Rating[15]	TE Rating
Expected Outcome	**Indicators**	**Baseline Level**	**End-of-Project Target**		
	Adoption of sustainable resource use strategies by 3 villages outside of target demonstration	▪ Hunting is organized by villages in Pendjari biosphere reserve and is an important source of income. Some villages are not participating to hunting activities and thus excluded from the benefit sharing because they do not respect the rules. ▪ Fishery is organized in Mare aux Hippopotames Biosphere Reserve under an association but control and sanctions are weak : therefore, the resource is overexploited and led to degradation of fish resource and habitats ▪ There are trails for pastoralism in the bocle du Baoule but they are not respected, leading to conflicts with farmers and park managers (Field reports)	▪ 1 village in Burkina Faso outside demonstration site adopt sustainable methods of fishing as tested in the demonstration site ▪ 1 village outside AVIGREF in Pendjari adopt sustainable hunting	S	S
	Reduction with 30% average, against baseline, of incursions in the core protected zones in the six biosphere reserves as at end of the project	Field reports in 2005 (based on reported official fines) ▪ Bénin:10 ▪ Burkina Faso:8 ▪ Côte d'Ivoire (data not consistent, only 40% territory accessible and no possibility for monitoring): ▪ Mali:5 ▪ Niger: 28 ▪ Senegal: 29	▪ 30% reduction	MU	Very hard to ascertain MU
Outcome Three: Strengthened managerial and technical capacities of biosphere reserve managers and their staff, local communities, and government agencies institutions	At least one MOU signed, per country site, between national scientific institutions and BR management	▪ 1 MOU in Senegal	▪ One MOU per country total 6 MOUs	MS	MS
	At least one agreement signed between local communities and biosphere reserves for each site defining rights and duties of communities and park authorities.	▪ 3 Agreements were existing (community protected areas in Senegal, Avigref in Benin, AGEREF in Burkina Faso)	▪ One agreement signed for each site	S	S
	Decrease by 15% in resource management conflicts by Year 3 as compared to Year 1 of the project	▪ Field reports and regional surveys on source of conflicts 45 expressed conflicts collectively for all the reserves	▪ 15 % decrease	S	S
	A minimum of 12 Local Mediators operating per biosphere reserve by year 4	▪ 3 mediators (Benin, Côte d'Ivoire and Niger)	▪ 12 mediators	S	S
	At least three application of studies of human /biodiversity interactions and GIS in planning and management for each site conducted by 2008	▪ No studies had been done	▪ 3	MS	S
	At least one successful micro-enterprise functioning in each biosphere reserve at project termination.	▪ No micro-enterprises existed at baseline level	▪ 1 micro enterprise functioning in each site	MS	MS
	A total of 12 national PhD students graduated at year 2008	▪ No PhD students engaged on these topics	▪ All 12 PhDs completed	HS	S
	A total of 16 Master degree students graduated at year 2008	▪ No masters students engaged on these topics at baseline	▪ 16	HS	S
	A minimum of 150 persons adequately trained on topics through national and regional training seminar by Yr 2008	▪ No persons trained at baseline	▪ 150	HS	HS

From revised LOGFRAME				MTE-2007 Rating[15]	TE Rating
Expected Outcome	Indicators	Baseline Level	End-of-Project Target		
S	An annual average increase with 15% over the life of the project in the number of users of the six biosphere reserve web sites.	▪ Creation of the web sites in each site. Database log recording usage : 100 people using websites	▪ 1500 users of websites	MU	MU
	By year 2008, a 30% increase over year one surveys of the number of people aware of importance of savanna ecosystems and the role of the six biosphere reserves in conserving them	Environmental awareness programmes existing: ▪ Benin: 100 persons ▪ Burkina Faso: 80 ▪ Côte d'Ivoire: 12 ▪ Niger: 1372 scholars ▪ Senegal: 300 persons (schools, Djibelor Center);	▪ 30% increase	S	S
	An annual average increase with 10% over the project life in the number of TV programmes, articles in newspapers, local and national radio on the six biosphere reserves compared to year 1 of the project	▪ Country reports, press reviews: ▪ (2 TV programmes Bénin and Sénégal, 5 TV programmes and 9 radio programmes in Niger), newspapers articles (10)	▪ 10% increase	S	S

Annex 6: Risk Management

Risk Factor	Indicator of Low Risk	Indicator of Medium Risk	Indicator of High Risk	Low	Medium	Substantial	High	N/A	To be determined	NOTES
INTERNAL RISK - Project management										
Management structure	Stable, with roles and responsibilities clearly defined and understood	Individuals understand their own role but are unsure of responsibilities of others	Unclear responsibilities or overlapping functions which lead to management problems	X						Mali not included in this rating.
Governance structure	Steering Committee and/or other project bodies meet periodically and provide effective direction/inputs	Bodies meets periodically but guidance/input provided to project is inadequate	Members lack commitment (seldom meet) and therefore the Committee/body does not fulfil its function		X					Improved after MTE
Internal communications	Good and trust established	Communication process deficient although relationships between team members are good	Lack of adequate communication between team members leading to deterioration of relationships and resentment / factions			X				Due to the nature of the project set-up, good internal communication was key to ensure timely implementation and the success of the project (better networking is part of the expected results). Despite good relationship among project management team members, the lack of regular communications and delays prevented project partners initially to work more together but this improved greatly over time.
Work flow	Project progressing according to work plan	Some changes in project work plan but without major effect on overall implementation	Major delays or changes in work plan or method of implementation			X				Delays impacted the overall implementation of the project. Countries received only one payment for the work plan 2005. Despite improvement after MTE the work plan was not be implemented as planned before the project end. Careful monitoring of the work flow was recommended to assess the progress and the re-allocation of some budgets among implementing partners.

Risk Factor	Indicator of Low Risk	Indicator of Medium Risk	Indicator of High Risk	Low	Medium	Substantial	High	N/A	To be determined	NOTES
Co-financing	Co-financing is secured and payments are received on time	Is secured but payments are slow and bureaucratic	A substantial part of pledged co-financing may not materialize			X				In addition to the difficulty of securing the planned co-financing, this was compounded by the fact that the implementation of the work plan was delayed and this affected some co-financing
Budget	Activities are progressing within planned budget	Minor budget reallocation needed	Reallocation between budget lines exceeding 30% of original budget		X					
Financial management	Funds are correctly managed and transparently accounted for	Financial reporting slow or deficient	Serious financial reporting problems or indication of mismanagement of funds			X				Funds were properly managed using UNESCO financial procedures, accountability and system. However, the multiplicities of implementing partners (3 in most countries) led to multiple contracts and the method to report project expenditures render the financial reports was difficult to assess. It was difficult to assess exactly was really spent and what was not be spent within the timeframe of the project; preventing a re-allocation of funds among implementing partners if necessary.
Reporting	Substantive reports are presented in a timely manner and are complete and accurate with a good analysis of project progress and implementation issues	Reports are complete and accurate but often delayed or lack critical analysis of progress and implementation issues	Serious concerns about quality and timeliness of project reporting		X					Reports were good quality but often delayed
Stakeholder involvement	Stakeholder analysis done and positive feedback from critical stakeholders and partners	Consultation and participation process seems strong but misses some groups or relevant partners	Symptoms of conflict with critical stakeholders or evidence of apathy and lack of interest from partners or other stakeholders	X						Good involvement with communities
External communications	Evidence that stakeholders,	Communications efforts are taking place but not yet evidence that	Project existence is not known beyond		X					Communications improved throughout life of project

Risk Factor	Indicator of Low Risk	Indicator of Medium Risk	Indicator of High Risk	Low	Medium	Substantial	High	N/A	To be determined	NOTES
	practitioners and/or the general public understand project and are regularly updated on progress	message is successfully transmitted	implementation partners or misunderstandings concerning objectives and activities evident							
Short term/long term balance	Project is meeting short term needs and results within a long term perspective, particularly sustainability and replicability	Project is interested in the short term with little understanding of or interest in the long term	Longer term issues are deliberately ignored or neglected		X					Long term interest depends on government commitment to biodiversity issues and this is LOW globally.
Science and technological issues	Project based on sound science and well established technologies	Project testing approaches, methods or technologies but based on sound analysis of options and risks	Many scientific and /or technological uncertainties		X					The project tested/ demonstrated new approaches and methods based on sound analysis of options and risks. However despite a medium risk, it is manageable.
Political influences	Project decisions and choices are not particularly politically driven	Signs that some project decisions are politically motivated	Project is subject to a variety of political influences that may jeopardize project objectives		X					Varied by country
EXTERNAL RISK – Project Context										
Political stability	Political context is stable and safe	Political context is unstable but predictable and not a threat to project implementation	Very disruptive and volatile		X					High risk in 3 countries
Environmental conditions	Project area is not affected by severe weather events or major environmental stress factors	Project area is subject to more or less predictable disasters or changes	Project area has very harsh environmental conditions		X					Sahel is always subject to variable rainfall and drought
Social, cultural and economic factors	There are no evident social, cultural and/or economic issues that may affect project performance and results	Social or economic issues or changes pose challenges to project implementation but mitigation strategies have been developed	Project is highly sensitive to economic fluctuations, to social issues or cultural barriers		X					
Capacity issues	Sound technical and managerial capacity of institutions and other project partners	Weaknesses exist but have been identified and actions is taken to build the necessary capacity	Capacity is very low at all levels and partners require constant support and technical assistance		X					Managerial capacity improved throughout course of project except in Mali

Annex 7: List of Interviews (personal & email)

Name	Position / Contact	Organization
UNESCO-HQ Paris		
Ms. Meriem Bouamrane	Programme coordinator	Division of ecological and earth sciences, UNESCO
UNEP (GEF), Nairobi		
Ms. Esther Mwangi	Programme Officer	Division of GEF Coordination (DGEF), UNEP
Paul Vrontamitis	Finance Officer	UNEP
BENIN		
Mr. Djafarou Ali Tiomoko	Directeur	Pendjari National Park
Mr. Bonaventure Guedegbe	Point Focal MAB	
Colonel Seidou Mama Gao	Directeur General	CENAGREF
BURKINA FASO		
Dr. Jean Noel Poda	Point Focal MAB	
Dr. Mamounata Belem	IERA/MAB Committee	
Ouedraogo Amadé	Conservator	B.R. Mare aux Hippopotames
Dibloni, Ollo Théophile	Représentant des Doctorants	
NIGER		
Mr. Sahailou Samaila	Director	Parc du "W"
COTE D'IVOIRE)		
Col. KOFFI, Kouame Pierre	Manager	R.B. Comoe
Lt. ZIMIEN, Tode Leonard	Chief	SAAF
Dr. ANGU, K.T. Pascal	Researcher	CNMAB
Mr. Soumahoko, Megabou	President	Nature et Developpment (ONG)
Ms. KONE BAKAYOKO, Alimata	Focal Point, Abidjan	GEF
Dr. M. Tahoux Touao	Ecologiste	GRE/ MAB Point Focal
Dr. Etian Mian Kouadio	Biologiste en Faune Sauvage	Projet agrosylvopastoral
OTHER		
Dr Stuart Butchart	Biodiversity specialist	UNEP WCMC

Annex 8: Mission itinerary

Date / Time	Event	Place
Sunday Jan 03 2010		**NBO-DKR**
0900-1600	NBO-DKR	
Monday Jan 4		**Dakar**
0830-1100	Briefing Meeting	
1100-1900	Drive Tambaco Unda	
Tuesday Jan 5		**Niokolo Koba**
0800-1830	Visit to BR, zones de transition et tampon	
Wed Jan 6		**Tambaco Unda**
0500-1630	Drive Dakar	
1630	Debrief Focal Point	
Thurs Jan 7		**Abidjan**
0340-0630	Flight DKR-ABJ	Abidjan Airport
	Briefing with Col. P. Koffi	
Fri Jan 8		**Abidjan**
0900	Meeting with Comoe team	
1400	Meeting with Dr. M. Tahous Touao	
	Meeting with Dr. E. Mian Kouadio	
Sat Jan 9		**Abidjan**
1000-1600	Flight to Niamey changed to DKR	Arrive Senegal
Sun Jan 10		**Dakar**
0830	Meeting Focal Point	
1000-1700	Documentation review	
Mon Jan 11		**Dakar**
0900	Meeting Focal Point	
1045-1730	Review of BR documents	
Tues Jan 12		**Dakar**
	Review of all Senegal documents	
	Report writing	
Wed Jan 13		**Dakar-Paris**
0800	Report writing	

Date / Time	Event	Place
2325	Delayed 3 h; depart 0245	
Thurs Jan 14		**UNESCO**
1000-1700	Arrive Paris; Meeting coordinator	
Fri Jan 15		**UNESCO**
	Meeting coordinator; document review	
Sat Jan 16		**PARIS**
	Review of documents	
Sun Jan 17	Leave Paris	**CDG-NBO**

Annex 9: List of Documents Reviewed

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Ichaou, A. et al. 2007 Etat des lieux sur les activites de peche et les resources halieutiques du fleuve dans la reserve de biosphere du W du Niger

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ISFRA (Mali) 2008. Projet Regional sur le renforcement des capacites scientifiques et techniques pour une gestion effective et une utilisation durable de la biodiversite dans les reserves de biosphere des zone arides et semi-arides d'Afrique de l'Ouest

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Kane, Amy Dia 2007 Evolution des comportements vis a vis de resources menaces: Communaute rurale de Dialacoto.

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Cote d'Ivoire. ONG Nature et development. Parc National

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