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| <b>1. Project Data:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                              | <b>Date Posted :</b> 06/22/2005 |               |
| <b>PROJ ID:</b> P036062                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                              | <b>Appraisal</b>                | <b>Actual</b> |
| <b>Project Name:</b> Ecodevelopment                                                                                                                                                                                       | <b>Project Costs (US\$M)</b> | 67.0                            | 61.0          |
| <b>Country:</b> India                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <b>Loan/Credit (US\$M)</b>   | 28.0                            | 18.6          |
| <b>Sector(s):</b> Board: RDV - General agriculture fishing and forestry sector (38%), General public administration sector (24%), Sub-national government administration (22%), Forestry (9%), Other social services (7%) | <b>Cofinancing (US\$M)</b>   | 20.0                            | 16.0          |
| <b>L/C Number:</b> C2916                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                              |                                 |               |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <b>Board Approval (FY)</b>   |                                 | 97            |
| <b>Partners involved :</b> GEF                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>Closing Date</b>          | 06/30/2002                      | 06/30/2004    |
| <b>Prepared by :</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <b>Reviewed by :</b>         | <b>Group Manager :</b>          | <b>Group:</b> |
| Keith Robert A. Oblitas                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Roy Gilbert                  | Alain A. Barbu                  | OEDSG         |

**2. Project Objectives and Components**

**a. Objectives**

To conserve biodiversity by implementing the ecodevelopment strategy of the Government of India in and around seven protected areas (PAs). Specific objectives were :

- (I) to improve capacity of PA management to conserve biodiversity and increase opportunities for local participation in PA management activities and decisions;
- (II) to reduce negative impacts of local people on biodiversity, reduce negative impacts of PAs on local people, and increase collaboration of local people in conservation efforts;
- (III) to develop more effective and extensive support for ecodevelopment;
- (IV) to ensure effective management of the project; and
- (V) to prepare future biodiversity projects .

**b. Components**

(i) **Improved PA management** (Planned project Costs US\$ 15.3 million, Actual costs US\$ 15.5 million) Through:

- Improved PA planning processes and building capacity
- Protecting and managing ecosystems and habitats
- Upgrading amenities for PA staff

(ii) **Village ecodevelopment** (Planned costs US\$36.1million, Actual costs US\$32.8 million) to enhance welfare and collaboration of local communities through:

- Microplanning and implementation support
- Implementing reciprocal commitments by local people to: (a) improve conservation; and (b) invest in activities for alternative resource uses and improved livelihoods
- Special programs for joint forest management, voluntary re -location and supplemental investments in areas with special needs

(iii) **Education and awareness and impact monitoring and research** . (Planned costs US\$5.2 million, Actual costs US\$2.8 million) to:

- Environmental education and awareness and management of visitors and ecotourism
- Impact monitoring and research to Improve understanding of PA Issues and solutions

(iv) **Overall project management** (Planned costs US\$5.8 million, Actual costs US\$9.3 million)

(v) **Preparation of future biodiversity projects** . (Planned costs US\$2.6 million, Actual costs US\$0.6 million)

### c. Comments on Project Cost, Financing and Dates

The project was conceived as a first five years time -slice to pilot the approach for a longer program that would be expanded to other PAs. At Mid-Term Review the number of planned community organizations was reduced from 806 to 581 communities, cost allocations were revised and US\$ 8 million of the Credit was cancelled. Development Objectives were not changed. Due to its slow start supervision ratings were sometimes unsatisfactory during the project's second and third years, but implementation improved notably thereafter. The project had two successive one year extensions.

### 3. Achievement of Relevant Objectives:

**I: Improving the capacity of PA managements to conserve biodiversity and increase opportunities for local participation in PA management activities and decisions : Achieved.** In all of the 7 PAs, PA management plans were prepared and put into operation, forums for stakeholder participation were established and made fully operational, regional planning was put in place and the capacity of PA management staff was enhanced through training and study tours. In combination these actions achieved the monitorable indicators for this objective. The ICR also provides substantial discussion and observations of community and PA management activities and outcomes that indicate, in qualitative terms, that the new participatory approach was generally successful.

**II: Reducing negative impacts of local people on biodiversity, reducing negative impacts of PAs on local people, and increasing collaboration of local people in conservation efforts : Partially Achieved.** About 580 community organizations ("Ecodevelopment Committees") were established (compared to the original target of 806 communities and the revised target at mid-term review of 569). Participatory monitoring indicates reduced dependence of communities on the PA and enhancement of their livelihoods. The ICR reports that communities became active in conservation activities such as protection against poachers, and that there are some early indications of habitat restoration and increases in wildlife populations (both carnivores and prey). Notwithstanding these very positive qualitative achievements, the number of community organizations established are nearly 30% lower than the original target of 806 communities. While the achieved number of community organizations is higher than the adjustment in the target made at mid-term review, there was no formal revision of the project objectives. OED uses the original development objectives unless the objectives are formally revised. Hence, what might have been considered a substantially achieved objective is graded as partially achieved.

(Note: The ICR has limited quantitative data for the biodiversity achievements resulting from this objective. To some extent this observation also applies for Objective III. Quantitatively measuring such impacts, especially at this early stage, is clearly difficult. However, more systematic discussion in qualitative terms and specific inclusion of data wherever available - for instance, the results of the participatory monitoring, animal enumerations and specific hectareage of habitat restored - would have better enabled evaluation.)

**III: Developing more effective and extensive support for ecodevelopment : Achieved:** The ICR reports diverse activities in education and public information, resulting in greater public awareness and support for the parks. All seven states passed government orders to institutionalize the ecodevelopment strategy statewide. Baseline measurements for monitoring were completed and impact monitoring integrated into the PA management plans. There was less uptake of the project's research grant funds, partly because research on management activities needed establishment first of the PA management plans, resulting in insufficient time for subsequent research programs to be established. At mid-term review, a small grants program was established to be managed by the PAs, and this was successful with 30 grants provided, resulting also in greater linkages between PAs and local universities. Given the developing success of the small grants program, and the higher achievements than expected in other aspects of this objective (for instance, the passing of the state-wide government orders) the objective can reasonably be considered achieved in overall terms.

**IV: Ensuring effective management of the project : Partially Achieved :** There were initial difficulties with timely flow of funds. Dissemination of lessons and monitoring is reported to have been strong, particularly through the regional workshops. A "Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool" was established and monitoring of all PAs was strong. While the ICR mentions some implementation difficulties, project management overall was effective in promoting the project. (The 60% increase in management costs could have been discussed; the longer project duration explains only part of this.)

**V: Preparing Future Biodiversity Projects . Not Achieved .** At Mid-Term Review, when project progress was still weak, it was decided to drop the component supporting this objective. The project Development Objectives were not formally revised to reflect this.

### 4. Significant Outcomes/Impacts:

- **A new participatory and community based strategy for protected areas conservation was successfully pioneered:** The largely successful project outcome has potential to have major significance for the future of biodiversity conservation in India. Former non-participatory approaches to conservation had limited impact. The new approach has areas where improvement is required, such as in further measures needed for sustainability. There will likely also be other areas for adaptation as experience is gained. However, if successfully adapted to

enable long term sustainability, the new approach would provide Government with a replicable model for scaling up to other PAs, which is now Government's intention. The potential result - more effective and sustainable protection of India's natural resources and biodiversity - would be a significant outcome.

- **Enhancing Community Commitment and Financial Strength** : The project required each community to raise amongst its members an amount equivalent to 25% of investment costs, and to deposit these contributions into a community fund. This helped ensure commitment, and built ownership and financial strength. By the end of the project, the aggregated value of these community funds had reached US\$ 4 million.
- **Improved relations between government staff and local communities** : The project resulted in close interaction and development of mutual trust between the PA staff and the communities, a substantial turnaround from the earlier situation of minimal communication and mutual distrust.

#### 5. Significant Shortcomings (including non-compliance with safeguard policies):

- **Further Actions Needed to Achieve Sustainability** : Several actions need completion to better enable the project's sustainability: (i) The majority of the community organizations still need to prepare action (sustainability) plans for the post-project period; (ii) a number of the villages crucial for conserving the ecological perimeters of the parks have not participated in the project and need to be brought in; and (iii) PA administrations (and central Government and the Bank) still need to experience and learn how to achieve continued community commitment and viability *beyond* the project investment period.
- **Inspection Panel Review** : The Inspection Panel reviewed the project in 1998 because of complaints received concerning threats to the livelihoods of some of the tribal communities in Nagarhole Park. The Inspection Panel findings were subsequently reviewed by the Board. The Board decided that a full investigation was not required but that additional actions should be taken to address the concerns. A stepped up program to address the concerns was subsequently implemented. In reviewing the experience at Nagarhole the ICR highlights the need for more site-wise assessment of needs, greater consultation with communities and transparent information flows.

| 6. Ratings:                | ICR          | OED Review              | Reason for Disagreement /Comments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|----------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Outcome:</b>            | Satisfactory | Moderately Satisfactory | [The ICR's current 4-point scale does not allow for a "moderately sat." rating]. The project's good qualitative achievements are pulled down by the 30% shortfall in the number of community organizations established and the high increase in management costs (refer Section 3, Objectives II and IV)                                                                    |
| <b>Institutional Dev.:</b> | Substantial  | Substantial             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Sustainability:</b>     | Likely       | Non-evaluable           | As indicated in Section 5, there are several actions that need completion before sustainability can be expected. Given that they are either planned or ongoing, the likelihood of sustainability can be expected to increase over the next several years. The present rating is an interim assessment which will be revisited at the time of the proposed PPAR (Section 8). |
| <b>Bank Performance:</b>   | Satisfactory | Satisfactory            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Borrower Perf.:</b>     | Satisfactory | Satisfactory            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Quality of ICR:</b>     |              | Satisfactory            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

NOTE: ICR rating values flagged with '\*' don't comply with OP/BP 13.55, but are listed for completeness.

#### 7. Lessons of Broad Applicability:

- **Learning the features for scaling up** : The primary learning for Government and the Bank stems from the practical experience gained under the project, resulting in a broad array of specific design and implementation lessons, further enriched by the different issues encountered between the seven parks. These form a valuable base for Government's scale-up intentions. The ICR includes a number of such lessons, but more can be anticipated. It would be useful for biodiversity practitioners, in India and elsewhere, if the project's design and implementation lessons, both positive and negative, could be further documented.

- **The need for sustainability planning** : In a community driven environmental management project, there is need to establish the features for participating communities to remain motivated and financially viable . Each PA prepared an action plan to this effect, and a number of communities also prepared plans, but this was not the general case.
- **Community driven projects may need program -type support** : New community organizations and government processes may need longer to fully mature and become sustainable than the period available in a conventional investment project. A program approach or use of follow-on projects may be better. (The Region is now preparing a follow-on project, but this is currently envisaged only for new PAs .)
- **Project extensions should harmonize with time requirements for community investments** : The two successive one year extensions for this project created uncertainty regarding funding beyond the first year . As a result, not all of the communities were able to participate, reducing ecological protection . For a community driven project, if an extension is justified, the extension period is best made as a one -time decision in line with the time required to complete ongoing community investments and /or to start and complete additional investments .

**8. Assessment Recommended?**  Yes  No

**Why?** Further assessing the project's design features and performance would be relevant to other biodiversity conservation programs embarking on participatory approaches .

**9. Comments on Quality of ICR:**

- Satisfactory overall. The ICR is thorough, discusses issues reflectively, and is well structured around assessment by development objectives and components .
- More systematic inclusion of data on achievements and impact would have been helpful . Where not available, a qualitative discussion on achievements could have been included (refer Section 3, Objective II)
- The ICR did not provide a component-wise cost breakdown of actual expenditures by type of expenditure . At least an explanation of why the education and monitoring component was only about half of planned costs and project management was 60% above planned costs would have been desirable .