Report Number : ICRR0021104

1. Project Data

Project ID	Project Name
P108879	Nyika Transfrontier Conserv.
Country	**Practice Area(Lead)**
Africa	Environment & Natural Resources

L/C/TF Number(s)	Closing Date (Original)	Total Project Cost (USD)
TF-99857,TF-99858	30-Jun-2016	11,092,000.00
Bank Approval Date	**Closing Date (Actual)**	
21-Apr-2011	30-Jun-2017	

	IBRD/IDA (USD)	Grants (USD)
Original Commitment	4,820,000.00	4,820,000.00
Revised Commitment	4,820,000.00	4,820,000.00
Actual	4,820,000.00	4,820,000.00

Prepared by	Reviewed by	ICR Review Coordinator	Group
Ridley Nelson	Christopher David Nelson	Christopher David Nelson	IEGSD (Unit 4)

2. Project Objectives and Components

a. Objectives

The combined Project Development Objective and Global Environmental Objective of the project was: "to establish more effective transfrontier management of biodiversity in the Nyika Transfrontier Conservation Area (NTFCA)".
The NTFCA straddles the border of Zambia and Malawi
The two (Zambia and Malawi) trust fund grant agreement documents' objectives had the same language.

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

No

c. Will a split evaluation be undertaken?

No

d. Components

Component 1. **Institutional and Planning Framework** (Planned US$1.89 million; Actual US$1.34 million).

This was to establish and operationalize the governance and planning for the Nyika Transfrontier Conservation Area through support for planning instruments and the establishment of, and capacity building of, the implementation agencies. The component included project management, training, capacity building for institutions, integrated district planning, reviewing and updating draft management and tourism plans, a diagnostic review of national legal barriers, staffing, and operation of two project management units.

Component 2. **Sustainable Financing** (Planned US$0.27 million; Actual US$2 70 million).

This was to develop mechanisms for financial sustainability for the management of the transfrontier park area. This included business plans, fundraising, an investment strategy, the advertising of concessions for hunting logging and tourism, and the development of promotional material.

Component 3. **Protected Areas Management** (Planned US$8.93 million; Actual US$3.21 million).

This was to improve the effectiveness of management of each of the three blocks within the Transfrontier Conservation Area: the Nyika block, the Vwaza block and the Chama block. Activities included: capacity building; infrastructure development and maintenance of airstrips, water crossings, contracts, fences, and firebreaks; habitat management, resource protection, patrol operations, research, monitoring, livelihoods alternatives for poachers, and the establishment of two tourism camps.

e. Comments on Project Cost, Financing, Borrower Contribution, and Dates

Project Cost
The planned Total Project Cost was US$11.095 million. This included US$4.200 million from Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs funding. The actual disbursed was US$10.077 million including US$3.598 million of the Norwegian funding.
Financing
Project financing included two World Bank Trust Funds T- 99857 (US$2.28 million planned and actual) and T- 99858 (US$2.54 million planned and actual) giving a totaled planned and actual funding of US$4.820 million. In addition there was Norwegian funding of US$4.200 million planned and US$3.598 million actual and, from a Foundation, Community Markets for Conservation (COMACO), US$230,000 planned and US$250,000 actual.

Borrower
The borrower was expected to contribute US$1.845 million and by closing had contributed US$1.409 million.
Dates
The project was approved on April 21, 2011, and was effective following a ten month delay on February 29, 2012. The MTR review was carried out on November 17, 2014. The original project closing date was June 30, 2016, however the project was extended by one year to close on June 30, 2017.

3. Relevance of Objectives

Rationale

The project was covered by the Zambia Country Partnership Strategy (FY13 - FY16) under the objective: “Improved access to resources for strengthening household resilience and health in targeted areas”, though it only really applied to the communities in the Chama block. In the case of Malawi, the project supported somewhat loosely the first of the three themes in the Malawi Country Ownership Strategy (FY13 - FY16) which was: “Promoting sustainable, diversified and inclusive growth.” Its' strategic alignment to this theme is marginal at best given the limited explanation of how the park support would fit into the countries development portfolio.
The ICR (p.14, 15) argues that, with respect to biodiversity, it was important to protect this area through strengthening transboundary collaboration and management. The ICR argues that the level of national priority was demonstrated by the fact that the two country Presidents signed the Malawi Zambia TFCA Treaty in 2015, two years before the project closed. The ICR also argues that the objectives continue to be in line with country priorities since both country strategies focus on broad-based wealth and job creation. It asserts that the project was consistent with the Bank’s objectives in forestry and biodiversity.
IEG’s assessment is that, while the project was very loosely consistent with the country strategies, both applicable at the outset and today, it is very difficult to discern within the strategic documents alone a substantial priority for this type of project even though, in both cases, the project is listed in the proposed lending program. Neither country’s strategies have a focus on the management of biodiversity which is the core element in the stated project objectives. While it is true that, in both countries, the strategic objectives focus on broad-based wealth and job creation, this is not stated as a key project objective even though in parallel to, and prior to, the project there was some livelihoods support in the area by other ongoing programs. Within the project, some modest support for livelihoods was provided, particularly in redirecting the employment of poachers to more benign activities. The loose connection between strategy and project is evident in the case of Zambia, for example, where the CPS in paragraph 128 mentions the project without drawing any particular connection to the strategic strands of the strategy.
However, while it is clear from both the country strategy documents that the management of biodiversity was not a significant feature even if, perhaps, it should have been, the fact that the two Presidents signed the TFCA Treaty in 2015 indicates that, at least part way through the project, and certainly by project closing, the project was very much a part of the two national strategies. The Relevance of Objectives is therefore rated, on balance, Substantial.

Rating
Substantial

4. Achievement of Objectives (Efficacy)

Objective 1
Objective
The objective of "more effective transfrontier management of biodiversity in the project area" suggests a theory of change with three main elements: improving the institutional and planning framework; more sustainable financing; and, improved management in the three conservation areas. Since it is too early to expect much impact on measurable biodiversity changes, the majority of the reported evidence is, in evaluation terms, at an output and intermediate outcome level rather than an outcome level. Changes over the project period in wildlife numbers were available but attribution over such a short timeframe is difficult.

Rationale
Overall, taking the three main elements of the objective, Efficacy is rated, on balance, Substantial. But this is not without concerns about financial sustainability.
A. Improving the Institutional and Planning Framework.

1. While not solely attributable to the project, the signing of the Trans Frontier Conservation Area (TFCA) treaty by the two Presidents in 2015 was an important achievement. The treaty covered cooperation aspects such as the sharing of intelligence information, joint law enforcement and patrols, and harmonization of policies for all the officers working in the protected area that covered both countries. However, it is not clear from the ICR how far this agreement has been implemented on the ground. The project team reported that joint law enforcement and coordination was taking place but armed anti-poaching staff crossing the other country's national border was infeasible.
2. All four of the intended planning instruments were prepared and eventually approved by the government in the final project year: the Integrated Management and Development Framework, the Business Plan, the Tourism Plan, and the Marketing Plan. This fully met one of the key indicators, although a little late.

Overall, the institutional coordination and planning improved significantly.
B. More Sustainable Financing

1. One of the indicators for this element of the objectives is the score on the UNDP Protected Area Network Financial Scorecard. This index covers 25 rating elements, some directly related to financing and others indirectly. The target set at appraisal was to raise the score from 111 to 117 out of the 196 possible. This was a relatively modest goal. The ICR (p.15) reports in the text that the score “remained stable”. The final score was 111 against an adjusted baseline of 110. However, the ICR (p. 15) argues that despite this modest achievement, the project put in place “the critical ingredients for improved performance”. While it is correct that setting the strategy and the associated implementation planning was achieved, the reality is

that financing from either direct earnings from tourism, or from government, or from donors or foundation sources did not increase significantly so much of the achievement was in planning rather than in actual financing or commitments. A significant weakness in financial sustainability was that the proposed Nyika Implementation Agency ((NIA) was never established, partly due to lack of funds. This had been expected to become the main vehicle for mobilizing both private and donor fundings. However, as IEG discussed with the project team, it is questionable whether this new institution was ever realistic given the financial constraints.

2. The additional funding target had originally been set at US$1 million. This was later considered unrealistic and reduced to US$0.55 million. The actual amount achieved was US$0.34 million, well short of the target. The reasons given for the shortfall in the ICR included: (i) that the timber contract was not renewed; and, (ii) that tourism did not grow much, partly due to bad roads. The ICR argues (p.32) that these were outside the project's control. However, it is difficult to fully accept this as exogenous with respect to the roads problem since the project at the time of design could have predicted this constraint and lowered targets or addressed core elements of road rehabilitation.

Overall, there was limited achievement of more sustainable financing. This is discussed again under Risk to Development Outcome.

C. Improved Management of the Three Conservation Areas. (Substantially achieved)

1. At an evaluation output level, there were two significant implementation changes in the institutional arrangements for the project. First, in Zambia, the Forest Department had to withdraw because of legal issues about the model of management. It is not clear why this legal impediment was not understood at the time of appraisal since it was related to long-established law and regulation. This resulted in some change in project area and location. Second, in Zambia, there was a change of status of the parks management agency, the Zambia Wildlife Authority (ZAWA) changed from a semiautonomous agency to a government department, the Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW). This occurred in 2015 and resulted in a number of implementation teething problems particularly in procurement, where, after the change, a procurement review had to be referred to ministerial committees.

2. At an evaluation output level, there was a significant amount of training undertaken. Targets in the PAD were confusing, having been labeled cumulative when they were clearly intended as annual absolute targets. However, the targets were greatly exceeded. Of the two main indicators: (i) training days attended by management teams reached 2,253 against a target of 215, over 10 times the target; (ii) training days attended by field staff and partners reached 5,968 against a target of 2,850, approximately double the target set originally. However, there is limited evidence presented on the quality and impact of this training.

3. One intermediate outcome indicator was the change in illegal occupation of park and reserve land. The data in the Results Framework indicate that, for Nyika National Park, only 38 additional hectares were encroached, for Vwaza Block 528 hectares were encroached, and, for Chama Block, zero additional hectares were encroached. These findings drawn from satellite imagery suggest that the problem of agricultural encroachment has been largely halted. The ICR claims that this is, in large part, attributable to project activities. This may be true but encroachment has been variable by location.

4 . The UNDP Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) indicator, while partly a financial sustainability rating, covers a number of elements of improved park management. As noted above, this rating remained more or less flat in terms of progress. The ICR reporting on this is not entirely consistent. It notes (p.30) that it was partially achieved and that the METT targets were slightly over-achieved for Nyika and Chama and slightly under-achieved for Vwaza. But then it says also (p. 30) that overall the effectiveness of management in the three areas improved significantly. Looking at the data provided, the changes do not look like significant improvements. However, the project team argues that there has been better *quality* of patrolling with better control of illegal activities, and improved relationships with local communities especially at Vwaza with the provision of the elephant fence for crop protection. In the case of Vwaza the evidence does suggest significant progress with improving community relationships.

5 . The area reported as brought under enhanced biodiversity protection was 57,500 hectares, meeting exactly the original targeted area. However, it is difficult to interpret the impact of this area-based measure given the modest changes in the METT ratings and limited evidence of how protection on the ground changed.

6 . Changes in wildlife numbers can sometimes offer evidence of improved management. However, due to wildlife movements in environments such as Nyika with corridors in and out, changes in numbers are difficult to interpret. In this case, converting actual numbers and baselines reported into percentage changes: (i) roan antelope numbers in Chama were about 73% of the baseline; (ii) kudu in Chama about 33%; (iii) elephants in Vwaza about 66%; (iv) buffalo in Vwaza about 43%; (v) eland in Nyika Block about 83%; (vi) zebra in Nyika Block about 180%. Thus, for the majority of counted species, the numbers declined over the project period. However, there were quality questions about the baseline figures and animal counts, in any case, have a low reliability unless carried out very thoroughly which is usually too costly. The ICR reports that, “anecdotally, wildlife experts in the two countries considered that animal numbers in all three areas were stable during the lifetime of the project.” Surveying neutral specialists who frequently travel the whole of a contiguous area may be a more reliable qualitative estimate than block quantitative surveys that cannot account for out- or in-migration or for drought fluctuations. At this early stage, there is limited value in wildlife head counts as a viable measure of success.

7 . One activity related to the management of this contiguous park and reserve area that was not initially covered under the project was the livelihoods aspect. It is difficult to know how to treat this. The reason this element of support was omitted from the funding at the time of appraisal was that livelihoods were being covered by parallel investments. However, even at appraisal it should have been clear that these parallel investments were not likely to continue through the life of this project, particularly given the delayed preparation and later the lagged effectiveness. This, in fact, became an issue at the midterm review where it was recognized that more attention was needed to livelihoods for communities close to the protected areas. At this late stage approximately US$0.5 million was reallocated to livelihoods activities. In Malawi, 5,944 households benefited and in Zambia 1,234. Some beneficiaries of project funding were ex-poachers who were persuaded to take up other activities of benefit for biodiversity. There seems to have been some design weakness here in not focusing more on livelihoods at the time of appraisal.

8 . Since the main aim of the project was to get coordination between the two governments over the management of this contiguous protected area, one part of the improved management objective that could

have been better measured is the government coordination activity. While the ICR notes qualitatively that the two governments shared intelligence information on poachers, carried out joint enforcement activities and joint patrols across the borders, and harmonized policies for officers working in the contiguous parks, there is limited quantification of these joint activities in comparison to what happened prior to the project or to some alternative counterfactual. It is not entirely clear what would have happened without the project. For example, there is no data presented that shows the number of patrols and apprehensions prior to the project on both sides of the border, nor is there data on any changes in cooperation, for example, the role and achievements of communities in reporting or apprehending poachers.

Overall, there was mixed achievement on improving management on the ground. There were significant gains in policy and planning, coordination, and possibly skills, across and between the two countries. This was built on a clear statement of cooperation intent. There were some modest gains in management performance ratings. A platform was built but sustainability remains uncertain.

Rating
Substantial

Rationale
Overall, the institutional coordination and planning improved significantly, there was limited achievement of more sustainable financing, and there was mixed achievement on improving management on the ground. There were significant gains in policy and planning, coordination, and possibly skills, across and between the two countries. This was built on a clear statement of cooperation intent. There were some modest gains in management performance ratings. A platform was built but sustainability remains uncertain.
Taken together, IEG finds that the combination of achievements results in a Substantial Efficacy rating.

Overall Efficacy Rating
Substantial

5. Efficiency

An economic rate of return analysis was not carried out in the Project Appraisal Document nor in the Implementation Completion Report. While it would have been challenging, a willingness to pay analysis both ex post and ex-ante may have been a possible option for the tourism activities. Added to this would have been the forest concession earnings although ex post, in the absence of the timber concession, this would have required some form of standing timber and/or biodiversity valuation.
The ICR (p. 17) notes that comparator areas in Eastern or southern Africa were not found with similar management threats although the use of lessons from similar areas at project design is reported in the PAD. It seems to IEG that some attempt at selective comparator analysis might have been possible.
Taking a partial budget breakeven approach to the issue of economic returns, the ICR notes that the area

covered under the transfrontier project was 1.93 million hectares which, against an expenditure of about US$9 million, including all the grant funding as well as the Norwegian funds, would be approximately US$1 per hectare annually. The cost effectiveness assumption is that this amount seems modest against the qualitative scale of the benefits. This seems not unreasonable. It may also be worth noting that typical potentially competitive livestock ranching benefits would generally be at or a little more than US$1 per hectare in a similarly productive zone. But using ranching as a comparator would be valid only under limited circumstances although it does convey an opportunity cost in terms of resource use options.
Administrative efficiency is argued, in the ICR (p. 17), to be substantial. The argument here is that costs of salaried government employees were already covered because governments used their own existing human resources. Consultants were only hired for some of the specialist tasks. It is also argued that, for similar reasons, not financing two specialized project management units, or even one, would have involved higher costs. This argument is not entirely convincing because the use of existing employees is still a use of national resources. These employees had an opportunity cost which would have had to have been added into a project economic analysis following this logic. However, the evidence on the patrolling cooperation suggests that were some efficiencies in extending the capacities of existing human resources and almost certainly in advancing their skills.
It is also argued correctly that the training costs were modest, averaging US$49 per day.
However, given the limited evidence on efficiency, and given the concerns about the failure to achieve incremental financing beyond establishing some basic means and proposals, IEG agrees with the ICR rating of Modest.

Efficiency Rating
Modest

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

	Rate Available?	Point value (%)	*Coverage/Scope (%)
Appraisal		0	0 ☐Not Applicable
ICR Estimate		0	0 ☐Not Applicable

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

6. Outcome

Relevance of Objectives is rated Substantial, although with some concerns that the project was rather loosely connected to the initial country strategic documents, at least until the two Presidents signed the Malawi-Zambia TFCA Treaty in 2015. Achievement of Objectives is rated, on balance, Substantial with evidence of more effective transfrontier biodiversity management in the Nyika area and skills building. There were weaknesses in

financial sustainability but this was balanced by quite strong institutional coordination building and skills building and community relationship improvement in border areas. Efficiency is rated Modest due partly to limited outcome and comparator evidence although the costs per hectare appear to be modest for the management of such a large and biodiversity-significant area.
Thus, the project is rated Moderately Satisfactory. The project exhibited moderate shortcomings, mainly in financial sustainability and with uncertainty about efficiency.

a. Outcome Rating

Moderately Satisfactory

7. Risk to Development Outcome

Risk is rated High.
On the negative side, there remain considerable risks in terms of financial sustainability given that limited progress was made on self-financing through tourism earnings during the project period and given the limited tourism income actually achieved due to poor tourism growth over the period. These are extensive areas of significant biodiversity but poorly serviced with infrastructure. Most of the financial returns to sustaining the biodiversity must be expected to come in future years as infrastructure improves.
On the more positive side, to support collaboration, four strategic planning instruments were endorsed by both countries through the Joint Ministerial Committee. However, this is only a foundation, a platform, for future action. It will need to be sustained with institutional and real financial support.
Importantly, Germany's KfW is supporting a follow-on project during the next 10 years totaling about Euros23 million. The ICR reports that the same teams will be working with this project which should provide important continuity. This may be a chance to consolidate towards considerably greater sustainability beyond the project's lifetime provided that sustainability is treated seriously as a key element for this next phase.
The ICR also notes that the signing of the Malawi Zambia TFCA Treaty indicates strong political buy-in for management of the area. However, again, this commitment is an intent and will need to be backed up by actual government financing and institutional support from both parties.
The achievement of training numbers was well beyond the target and the ICR believes that it has increased the standard of management on both sides of the boundary. However, the ICR also correctly notes that such training has a limited life given the movement of staff unless it can be sustained through continuing to build skills and capacities of incoming staff.

8. Assessment of Bank Performance

a. Quality-at-Entry

Quality at entry
This was clearly a challenging project to design because it involved co-financing from Norway, parallel grants and coordination between two neighboring countries on an issue that required good understanding of both biodiversity and institutional relationships. Having acknowledged this, quality at entry was mixed.

The ICR argues that the design accommodated GEF eligibility criteria but was also consistent with national development strategies. IEG somewhat questions the consistency with national strategies since, as noted earlier, for both Zambia and Malawi there is very little mention of biodiversity in the Country Partnership Strategies. It could be argued that the project has connections to broad statements about sustainability, livelihoods and employment, but in neither case does the management of biodiversity come through clearly in the strategic documents as a significant priority. It was only later that the cooperation treaty was signed.
The Results Framework was mixed. There were some obvious errors that required later correction and it did not offer much in terms of ways to measure changes over the pre-project situation in inter-country management and coordination.
Fiduciary aspects, procurement, and implementation arrangements were generally sound.
There are also some questions about whether a more serious attempt at an efficiency analysis could have been made at appraisal.

Quality-at-Entry Rating

Moderately Satisfactory

b. Quality of supervision

The Bank handled both the Trust Fund grant funds supervision and the supervision for the Norwegian project funding, the latter with costs reimbursed to the Bank.
Missions were regular at two per year and appropriately staffed with the necessary skills. The Bank team responded appropriately to a number of changes including the withdrawal of the Zambia Forest Department, and, later, the addition of support for sustainable livelihoods which had been insufficiently addressed at appraisal.
Two appropriate restructurings were undertaken which involved a number of changes including changes in disbursement and institutional arrangements, and an extension of the closing date.
The ICR notes (p.26) that there were some shortcomings in the filling of positions from the Bank's side in the area of environment and social safeguards but that this was fully satisfactory by the final two years. There were weaknesses in M&E mostly due to design but partly due to implementation which tighter supervision might have improved.
The ICR argues (p. 24) that the project did not need dedicated safeguard specialists. This is questionable given the later resettlement safeguard issue. However, the supervision team was proactive in picking up the later incursion into the Nyika National Park in Malawi involving a dozen households. It appears that these households had been earlier evicted. Appropriately, the Bank followed up on this issue after project closure and solutions were found consistent with Bank safeguard policies including compensation for crop losses. A follow-on project is continuing this support.

Quality of Supervision Rating

Moderately Satisfactory

Overall Bank Performance Rating

Moderately Satisfactory

9. M&E Design, Implementation, & Utilization

a. M&E Design

As noted earlier, there were issues with the Results Framework, including some basic errors such as inconsistent units of measurement.

The design was generally sound in proposing one Monitoring and Evaluation Officer based at the project offices in each country, at Chipata and Mzuzu. They were to be supported by managers and extension workers in the three contiguous park blocks. They were expected to handle monitoring, safeguards compliance, and the harmonization of information from a range of sources. They were expected to produce a consolidated report and to train agency staff in the needs for M&E from the various agencies involved. They were also expected to recruit M&E skills where needed to further develop the M&E systems.

b. M&E Implementation

Despite the design intentions, there was only ever one M&E officer, in Zambia at Mfuwe, and without specific training in M&E. It took two years to revise the M&E manual to make it functional and appropriately suited to the project.

The ICR notes that M&E was frequently ranked moderately unsatisfactory in ISRs, but action was limited. During implementation there was some adjustment of indicators, partly because some were considered too difficult to attribute given the modest amount of project funding provided for the activity. Difficulty was encountered in defining some of the proposed evaluation parameters and adjustments that had to be made. Carrying out wildlife inventories in each block was found to be difficult and costly. It is not clear why this was not better appreciated at the time of appraisal because there is wide experience in Africa of wildlife population counting and it has almost always been found to be methodologically difficult, partly due to animal movement. It has also been found to be costly due to difficulties of observation from the air and the need for ground truthing validation.

In the end, reasonably reliable monitoring data did not become available until the final two years, too late to have much impact.

c. M&E Utilization

For the reasons noted above, M&E data was only useful in making adjustments in the final two years of the project. The ICR notes that some of the data eventually made available did enable park management to focus patrols better and to target illegal activities. They also report that the UNDP METT data analysis was of value to park managers in both countries for making adjustments. It is therefore disappointing the response to M&E was delayed.

M&E Quality Rating

Modest

10. Other Issues

a. Safeguards

The project was a Category B project, triggering: Environmental Assessment (OP/BP 4.01); Natural Habitats (OP/BP 4.04); Forests (OP/BP 4.36); and Involuntary Resettlement (OB/BP 4.12).
To meet these safeguard requirements, an Environmental and Social Management Framework, a Process Framework, and an Involuntary Resettlement Framework were prepared. As noted earlier, these required adjustment as experience was gained and weaknesses were noticed, especially in the Process Framework.
The ICR reports that the project was in compliance with the Environmental Safeguards Policy. The ICR does not state explicitly whether the project was in compliance with the policies on Natural Habitats, Forests, and Involuntary Resettlement, making the compliance statement confusing.
On Involuntary Resettlement, it is known that there was an issue at the end of the project with an illegal park invasion by a dozen families, apparently from an earlier date. Compensation was paid and further support has been provided. This would appear to meet the Involuntary Resettlement Safeguards policy although it is not clear from the ICR exactly what the history was of these households in terms of earlier relocation arrangements or compensation.
The ICR is open about the weakness of the Process Framework which focused narrowly on compensation for reformed poachers. When it was revised there was greater attention given to resettlement issues related to economic exclusion from protected areas.

b. Fiduciary Compliance

Financial Management
In the case of Malawi, at appraisal, there had been concerns about capacity since Malawi had not yet fully adopted the International Accounting and Auditing Standards. However, there were plans in Malawi to strengthen capacity and to recruit more skilled staff.
In the case of Zambia, there were concerns about weakness in the financial management information system and the poor control environment with weak enforcement of financial regulations, weak internal audit functions, and lack of remedial action. However, this was reportedly mitigated by other project support from the Bank and by other donors supporting government capacity building through the program of Public Expenditure Management and Financial Accountability Reform.
In implementation for both countries, there were weaknesses and only moderately satisfactory ratings earlier on. But there were improvements towards the end of the project, particularly for Zambia.
The ICR notes that the final ISR reported that the project was current on all reporting requirements including annual audited financial statements and interim reports. It also noted that a review of project transactions done in May 2016 showed that there was an improvement in the adequacy of documentation supporting payments.
Procurement
Procurement was generally sound. Following a somewhat weak start with a moderately satisfactory rating in the first year, procurement was rated satisfactory starting from the second project year. The ICR (p.25) reports that post-procurement reviews were carried out regularly and that no major compliance issues were found. All contracts were completed by the end of the project.

c. Unintended impacts (Positive or Negative)

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d. Other

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11. Ratings

Ratings	ICR	IEG	Reason for Disagreements/Comment
Outcome	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	---
Bank Performance	Moderately Satisfactory	Moderately Satisfactory	---
Quality of M&E	Modest	Modest	---
Quality of ICR		Substantial	---

12. Lessons

The ICR has five main lessons. They are useful but arguably not new for projects of this type. They are given here with some adjustment of language and some expansion of substance.

1 **. In a transfrontier conservation initiative, high-level commitment within the participating governments is crucial because of the need for collaboration not just on the technical and management issues but also on the political issues.** In this case, it was particularly important to get the relationship formalized in a treaty signed at the highest level. It was also useful that there were already shared historical and cultural values between the two countries and that there was already a good working relationship between responsible departments at the technical level.

2 **. Conservation efforts cannot be dissociated from strong investments in communities surrounding national parks and reserves but this requires a thorough understanding of any parallel programs aimed at livelihoods and careful planning to accommodate the phasing and sources of this support and to forecast the residual need for project investments.** In this case, the project did not handle the design and the phasing for this issue as well as it might have. Initially the livelihoods activities were to be supported by other interventions. However, these turned out to be insufficient for the full project period and adjustments had to be made.

3 **. Robust design and timely implementation of M&E is particularly important for a transboundary conservation initiative calling for coordination between two countries.** In this case, there were weaknesses in design that led to weaknesses in implementation partly due to staffing and skills issues. There

was also weakness in an insufficient ex ante analysis at appraisal of the challenges and costs of counting wildlife and interpreting findings. There could have been more attention at appraisal to the exploration of other efficacy and efficiency indicators such as: at intermediate outcome levels - numbers and type of interactions between agencies or units at field level; trends in poaching encounters and apprehensions; changes in community reporting of local illegal activities; changes in community earnings from tourism and wildlife; community, wildlife guide, wildlife professional, and lodge/tour operator opinion surveys; and, at higher outcome levels, possibly contingent valuation analyses.

13. Assessment Recommended?

Yes

Please explain

A useful learning case if a package of transboundary management wildlife coordination projects could be assembled to look specifically at the management coordination issues.

14. Comments on Quality of ICR

This new format shorter ICR is generally sound. The theory of change chart is useful as are the Results Framework charts. The lessons are carefully constructed. There could have been more evidence, even qualitative evidence, on how the management and coordination of the joint park activities had changed from before the project, for example how the results and quality of patrolling had improved and how community cooperation had changed. The efficiency analysis was somewhat thin but there was a lack of efficiency data. As the ICR makes clear in several places, the new system prevented them from entering some of the data correctly, requiring the team to find unsatisfactory ways around it. Hopefully these system bugs will be ironed out quickly.

a. Quality of ICR Rating

Substantial