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Terminal Evaluation of project GF/6010-04-02 (4771)
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"Building Capacity for Participation in the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH)" - Phase I

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The BCH project was designed with the objective of strengthening the capacities of eligible countries to access and use the Biosafety Clearing-House, to meet their obligations to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. The project was part of a broader capacity development effort and was intended to complement other UNEP-GEF biosafety initiatives; in particular building on the achievements of the Development of National Biosafety Frameworks (NBF) project. The BCH project was approved in 2004 for US$ 14.9 million and has extended training, IT support and technical advisory services to 112 countries. This was done with the aim of achieving the project outcomes of (i) strengthened capacities of BCH users in ministries and other institutions; (ii) improved physical infrastructure for national BCH components; and (iii) sustained in-country capacity to use and access the BCH, as stated in the project outcomes.

The BCH project stands out as a well-planned initiative that incorporated good design practices. Project formulation and inception phases included needs assessment surveys, consultations with external experts and peer reviews. This, combined with the lessons learned from the earlier NBF project, contributed to effective and often innovative implementation arrangements that have enabled the project team to respond to delivery and coordination challenges. Several practices have pilot value and could be replicated by UNEP in other global projects as well. Administrative and financial procedures were streamlined to the needs and scale of the project. On-line management information systems were used and knowledge sharing encouraged. A core group of region-based advisors was created to provide biosafety and IT training to participating countries, training national trainers and provide technical advice. A comprehensive training package was designed using advanced learning software and expert advice that includes interactive modules, case studies on diverse biosafety topics and "hands on" exercises for managing BCH data. The training materials are excellent and are the project's most important - and sustainable – contribution to the implementation of the Cartagena Protocol and BCH requirements.

Despite initial delays and some technical problems, overall project performance was very satisfactory and reflected the efforts and adaptive management capacity of the project team. Significant advances were made in strengthening national capacities to use the BCH and, in particular, ensuring physical infrastructure and connectivity. However, little progress was made in sustaining country capacities - largely due to limited enabling conditions and other variables that were outside the project's control. Most respondents felt the project's greatest contribution at the country level was raising basic awareness of the Cartagena Protocol and BCH; and reviving biosafety discussions and momentum.

The lack of enabling conditions at the country level is a recurrent theme in the report, because of the influence this has had on project impact. In many countries, the absence of operational biosafety frameworks weakened the potential impact and the sustainability of capacity improvements in particular. The knowledge generated by the project has not fed into an operating system and there are few opportunities or incentives to apply new capacities. The momentum generated tends to lapse after project support finishes; institutional memory gradually declines as well. Fortunately the training materials are sustainable and will have future

demand as more countries consolidate their frameworks and start applying or expanding biosafety practices.

In most developing countries, the implementation of the Cartagena Protocol and BCH component is project-driven and will remain so for the foreseeable future. Capacity development for biosafety on a global scale cannot be continued without external support. Future project assistance should focus on helping countries consolidate national frameworks - addressing gaps in legislation, policy, institutional mandates and coordination in addition to technical capacity needs. The process initiated by the NBF project still needs to advance in many countries before capacity improvements such as those generated by the BCH project can be applied, internalized and retained.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT

When the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety entered into force in September 2003, Article 20 of the Protocol established the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH) as a repository of up-to-date information on living modified organisms and their transboundary movement. The Biosafety Clearing-House was created to:

- *Facilitate the exchange of scientific, technical, environmental and legal information on, and experience with, living modified organisms*
- *Assist Parties to implement the Protocol, taking into account the special needs of developing country Parties, in particular the least developed and small island developing States among them, and countries with economies in transition as well as countries that are centers of origin and centers of genetic diversity*

Countries that have ratified the Protocol are required to participate in the BCH, entering and managing their own data. However, an initial needs assessment survey indicated many lacked the essential capacity, expertise and equipment to do so. In response to this need, the project for "Building Capacity for Effective Participation in the Biosafety Clearing-House of the Cartagena Protocol" (referred to as the BCH project in this report) was created to help countries fulfill their obligations to the Cartagena Protocol with respect to the BCH.

The BCH project was approved in 2004 with UNEP as executing agency. The initial three-year duration was subsequently extended to five years (until March 2009) to accommodate the gradual increase in participating countries from 50 to 112 – reaching over 80% of total eligible countries. The US$ 14.9 million budget was funded with a US$ 13,520,700 grant from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and an in-kind contribution of US$ 1.4 million from other donors including USA, Canada, Germany and UNEP. Co-financing was provided by participant countries, often exceeding the project grant.

The project was designed to achieve the following objectives:

- To strengthen capacity in eligible Parties through support for capacity building including training activities for key stakeholders.
- To create an enabling environment for Parties to meet the obligations for implementation of the Protocol by providing participating countries with appropriate computer hardware and software, as well as software for the storage and exchange of data with the BCH.
- To support further capacity building activities through the development and dissemination of an interactive computer-based training packaging.

During the course of implementation, the project developed an extensive package of training materials, trained a core group of regional advisors, conducted workshops at global, regional, and country levels, and has drawn on a wide body of experience. At the time of the evaluation, the project had completed activities and closed MOUs in 95 countries while 17 remain active (mostly in Africa).

1.2. EVALUATION PURPOSE, SCOPE AND METHODS

The aim of the terminal evaluation is to establish if the project achieved its objective of building national capacities to access and use the BCH effectively**.** The evaluation assesses project performance and the implementation of planned activities and outputs against actual results. It focuses on three core questions:

- Did the project strengthen capacities of potential users of BCH in relevant ministries and other institutions to fulfill requirements of CPB with reference to BCH?
- Did the project improve the physical infrastructure of national BCH components?
- Did the project build sustainable capacity to use and access the BCH in country and regionally?

The evaluation was conducted by an external consultant hired by UNEP's Evaluation and Oversight Unit (EOU). Its methodology combined (i) interviews with ex-team members including the project manager, three regional coordinators and UNEP support staff; (ii) desk reviews of project documentation - monitoring reports, training materials, financial data, the BCH page and relevant correspondence; and (iii) visits to a country sample selected by the EOU in consultation with the project manager. These were Mongolia, Ethiopia, Albania, Guatemala, Belize and Uruguay, located in the different regions where implementation took place.

During the visits meetings were held with national coordinators and focal points responsible for coordinating implementation, Task Forces members, and trainees from government ministries, NGOs, academia and the private sector. The interviews captured stakeholder perceptions on the project performance and the progress made towards planned outputs and outcomes, as well as their sustainability beyond the project term. Belize was not visited due to scheduling difficulties; however the national coordinator and country-based regional coordinator for the Caribbean region were interviewed by phone and written comments were received.

In order to broaden the evaluation sample, brief questionnaires were e-mailed to a random sample of 26 national coordinators and 15 regional advisors. Combined with the country visits, this would have raised the country sample by covering over one-quarter of participating countries and a higher proportion of regional advisors. Unfortunately, the extremely low level of response (especially from national coordinators) undermined the value of this exercise. To a large extent, the report's analysis and findings look at trends emerging from the "triangulation" of country stakeholder perceptions, interviews with project team members, and review of the materials and documentation generated by the project. The report's structure follows the guidelines described in the terms of reference for the evaluation.

2. PROJECT PEFORMANCE AND IMPACT

2.1 PROJECT PREPARATION AND READINESS

In concept and design the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH) project is part of a broader process that aims to develop national capacities for implementing the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. The Cartagena Protocol was adopted by the Parties to the Convention on Biodiversity

(CBD) in 2000 to "contribute to ensuring an adequate level of protection in the field of the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology that may have adverse effects on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, taking also into account risks to human health, and specifically focusing on transboundary movements."[1]

The Biosafety Clearing-House is composed of a central portal and network of external components. It was created by the Protocol's Article on Information Sharing to facilitate exchange of information on living modified organisms (LMOs); and help Parties implement the Protocol taking into account the needs of developing countries. The Protocol's Intergovernmental Committee (ICCP) recommended a Biosafety Clearing-House pilot phase at its first meeting. A project was designed to provide training, information technology (IT) and hardware to eligible countries, enabling them to access and use the Biosafety Clearing-House central portal based at the CBD Secretariat. The project has relevance to global biosafety priorities adopted by the CBD and reflected in the Cartagena Protocol that was ratified by 79 countries. It falls under the activities contained in the 2000 GEF Initial Strategy as well as Operational Priorities 1-4 and OP 13.

As part of a wider context, the BCH project was intended to "…complement other UNEP-GEF projects on biosafety, which are carried out in line with the GEF Initial Strategy on Biosafety [approved in 2000]…More specifically, the project will build upon the achievements of the UNEP/GEF Development of National Biosafety Frameworks, currently being implemented with the participation of 117 countries." [2] The BCH project expected to "synergize with the larger effort of capacity building in support of the implementation of the Protocol. For example, the BCH will assist in making legislative and regulatory frameworks more accessible to the world." [3] The BCH project was a follow-up support phase to a UNEP-GEF project for developing national biosafety frameworks (NBFs), in which most countries participated.

This is important for the evaluation. Project performance at the country level was often influenced by the momentum and enabling conditions generated by the NBF project. The BCH was not intended as a "stand alone" project and aimed to extend the progress made under the NBF project. Participation in the NBF project was required to join the BCH project. In many countries, the same people sat on both project committees. Project impact should perhaps be viewed from a broader perspective of UNEP-GEF support - in which the BCH project has played a contributing role - instead of seeking effects directly attributable to BCH activities. In many cases, discussions and advances in national biosafety issues are influenced by both projects.

The BCH project was approved in two tranches for 50 countries in 2004 and then for 89 additional countries in 2005 for a total of US$ 14.9 million which included a US$ 1.4 million in-kind contribution from other donors including USA, Canada, Germany and UNEP. Country eligibility required approval of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the national focal organization and project describing training activities, connectivity preferences, equipment needs and mutual obligations. The overall project objective was to assist eligible countries in

[1] Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (2000)
[2] Biosafety Clearing-House Project Brief, p. 3
[3] Idem.

strengthening national capacities to access and use the BCH, in order to implement their obligations under the Cartagena Protocol. This was supported by three specific objectives:

- To strengthen capacity in eligible Parties through support for capacity building including training activities for key stakeholders.
- To create an enabling environment for Parties to meet the obligations for implementation of the Protocol by providing participating countries with appropriate computer hardware and software, as well as software for the storage and exchange of data with the BCH.
- To support further capacity building activities through the development and dissemination of an interactive computer-based training packaging.

Project design was structured around the achievement of three outcomes and their outputs:

Outcome 1: Strengthened capacities of potential users of BCH in relevant ministries and other institutions in order to fulfill requirements of Cartagena Protocol with reference to BCH

- Beneficiary countries in a better position to make timely and informed decisions on LMO transboundary movements and report those decisions as required by the Protocol.
- Relevant stakeholders including the officially designated BCH focal points with increased skills and competence to run BCH national components.
- Key country decision-makers understand how to use and access the BCH and deploy it in decision-making.
- National data on decisions entered on the BCH are made available on the national database and accessible via Internet.

Outcome 2: Support provided for the improvement of the physical infrastructure of national BCH components

- Beneficiary countries able to effectively access, use and register information through the BCH in order to fulfill their obligations under the Protocol and meet national needs.
- Participating countries have the necessary physical requirements needed (computers, software etc) for the national BCH to be operational
- A core group of relevant responsible agencies and appropriate persons trained to maintain national databases.

Outcome 3: Sustained capacity to use and access the BCH established in-country

- Increased and more effective exchange of relevant information and decision-making regarding LMOs in place among participating countries
- An increased exchange of experience and knowledge between personnel involved in Biosafety in different countries
- Informal network of peer-to-peer support set up among countries to assist each other in BCH related matters with list server set up by responsible agency.
- Support provided by project team to assist in training and replacement of BCH users

- Sustainability of the project and continued participation in BCH increased by full documentation being available to countries to allow continued training and by continued availability of regional experts to assist countries.

The project's design and implementation approach benefited from external expertise, peer reviews and the experiences of the earlier NBF project. With the changes introduced during the inception phase, the BCH project gained viability. It is a well-thought initiative and reflects good design practices. Examples include the following:

- The Cartagena Protocol's Intergovernmental Committee (ICCP) set guidelines for the project: (i) Build experience and provide feedback for a functional and accessible BCH, identifying alternatives to the electronic system; (ii) identify and address national capacity building needs with respect to the BCH; (iii) link the central portal to national, regional and international databases/nodes; and (iv) develop common formats for information. In 2003, UNEP-GEF distributed a questionnaire in cooperation with the CBD Secretariat to understand the level of access and use of the BCH in each country.

- A panel of six national coordinators from the NBF project reviewed the project document and made suggestions based on their experience. This influenced the decision to focus training resources on national workshops, among others. Training organizations were consulted during the design of the training modules. Peer reviews of training materials by the Global Industry Coalition (GIC), Third World Network and others have contributed to the recognized quality of the training package. These organizations were also on the BCH Consultative Group that met annually to review performance and provide guidance.

"We had the chance to learn from the National Biosafety Framework project and do things differently."

- A member of the BCH project team

- Instead of relying solely on the Geneva-based project team to deliver support to 112 countries, and resources were invested in developing a core group of region-based advisors who trained trainers and gave country training workshops, provided technical support in their region and helped monitoring. The screening process for the initial recruitment drive was very demanding, with 27 candidates selected from over 400 applicants to attend a two-week training workshop. During the project period, four regional workshops were held for regional advisors. The investment has paid off: The regional advisor network has raised the project's presence in the regions and countries; improved project compatibility with national contexts, and may have encouraged national ownership as well. Although the network is gradually disbanding following the project's termination, capacity remains in the regions that could be used in the future.

- The decision to not fund national project coordinator posts was intended to encourage country ownership and sustain internal momentum beyond the project term. National focal points were financed by government contributions and were usually designated from GEF focal institutions such as the Ministry of Environment.

- Administrative and implementation arrangements were adapted – sometimes innovatively - to help the project meet the challenges of global implementation. Country agreements were documented in Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) instead of full project documents, facilitating approval and reporting. The MOU included a brief assessment of national biosafety capacities and needs that in principle[4] encouraged a "reality check" and effective use of funds. Its format and content were based on a common template for all countries that could be adjusted to national needs. Regional advisors were secured with retainer contracts, offering the project greater flexibility in fielding advisors and reducing recruitment processing considerably. Travel services for the project team and regional advisors were contracted to a specialized private firm (MKI) with good results; several respondents felt the BCH would have been "impossible" to implement without this arrangement. Such practices have pilot value for UNEP and could be replicated in other global projects as well.

" …A lot of technical input has gone into the planning of the BCH project…"

- A National Project Coordinator

Delivery and coordination were supported by on-line management information systems: ANUBIS (https//anubis.unep.ch) is a data base for internal use that offers updated access to project reports, country missions, national training workshops, and tabulations of advisor travel and work-days. The project also used MOODLE (http//moodle.unep.ch), an open-source knowledge sharing platform to create a data base for regional advisors. MOODLE has encouraged communication and exchanges between regional advisors.

Countries were offered four options for connecting to the BCH central portal by the secretariat for the Conference on Biological Diversity (CBD) that hosts the portal, including a non-internet alternative. Although the third and more advanced option was affected by technical interoperability problems, and most respondents feel that fewer but more reliable options would have been easier to manage, the effort to accommodate country preferences merits recognition. Despite the project's global scale, its budget was considered adequate for the activities implemented by most respondents. With existing resources the project was able to produce training modules, case studies and reference manuals that apply innovative learning technology and have been highly commended in content and method by training participants. All participant countries have been connected to the BCH and received basic training. During the project lifetime there were four budget revisions that transferred funds between budget lines without raising the total budget.

Initial staffing provisions did not meet the project's significant management and coordination needs, which largely fell on the project coordinator. The approved project budget did not include technical support staff, and funds were reallocated to hire a team of regional coordinators that assisted the Project Manager. Funds were also reassigned from regional conferences and other lines to national workshops in order to reach wider in-country audiences. Despite these adjustments staffing constraints persisted and each coordinator was responsible for a large number of countries, especially in the case of Africa. Although monitoring funds were allocated under each outcome, travel by regional coordinators (at least those based in Latin America and the Caribbean) had to be authorized on a case-by-case basis, lowering responsiveness. The long

[4] In practice, many countries were assisted by BCH regional coordinators in completing their MOUs.

delays of many countries in completing the MOUs could have been shortened with quick missions by the coordinators, instead of extended phone calls and e-mails that did not move things. Monitoring was largely conducted by telephone, skype and e-mail, largely due to the high numbers of countries that needed to be attended. The purchasing of computers for participating countries was considered unnecessary by several respondents. This expenditure has absorbed most of the country grants, exceeding allocations for training. In many cases the computers are presently destined to uses unrelated to the BCH or biosafety practices.

Project design was relevant to country needs, even when enabling biosafety legislation or institutional mandates were lacking. Of the 139 countries eligible for the BCH project, 120 sent endorsements and 112 eventually completed MOUs. An indicator of the project's relevance was its ability to leverage national resources; a number of countries (*Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Czech Republic* and *Ethiopia* among others) provided in-kind contributions that considerably exceeded the value of the GEF-UNEP grant. Practically all countries have at least matched the project contribution.

The countries visited face different biosafety challenges but shared common needs: *Mongolia* is a landlocked country that imports almost 70% of its food and feed supply from China, Russia and countries in the region. Although it's first national biosafety law was recently approved, Mongolia doesn't have the technical capacity or border controls to monitor GMOs that presently enter without detection. As an EU accession county, *Albania* must meet European environmental standards that include biosafety regulations; however the current biosafety legislation is dispersed and must be harmonized. *Uruguay* is an important exporter of GMO soybean, maize and rice among other grains. Uruguayan exporters need to know which GMO regulations apply in market destinations; many have had to restrict cultivation of transgenic crops due to import restrictions. Although the Cartagena Protocol hasn't been ratified, a new biosafety law and institutional mechanisms must be drafted within the coming year by government decree. *Ethiopia* has significant transboundary movements of grain and seed from southern Africa and Kenya that aren't monitored, and receives food donations that contain GMOs. The Ethiopian parliament has yet to act on proposed biosafety legislation that was drafted with assistance from the NBF project. In all countries there was a felt need for the relevant institutions and individuals to begin (or continue) working together, in order to put biosafety on the national agenda once more.

2.2 ATTAINMENT OF OBJECTIVES, OUTCOMES AND PLANNED RESULTS

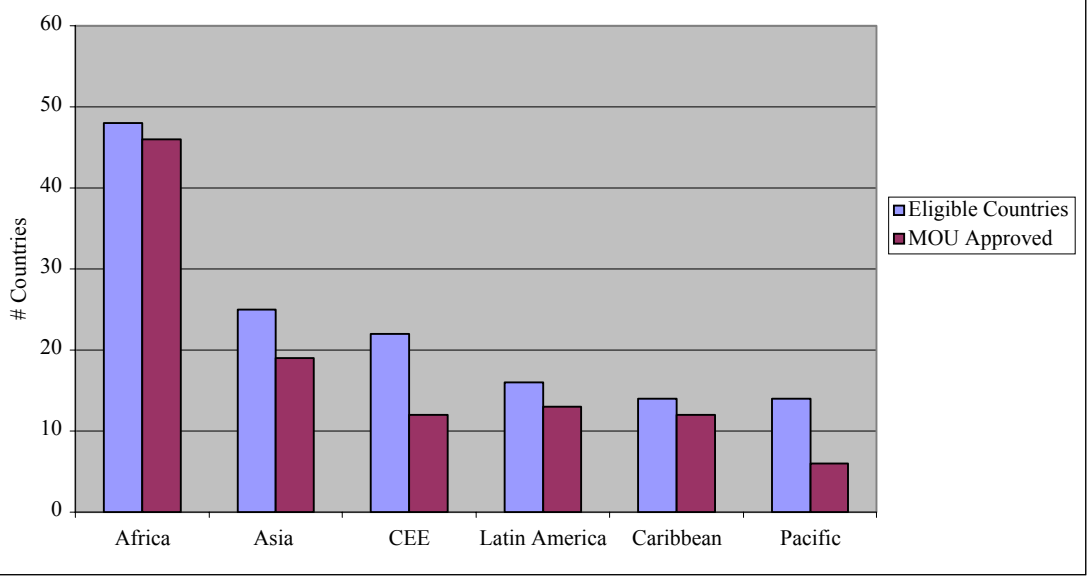
By the project's termination in December 2008, 112 of the 136 eligible countries had joined the project. In order of magnitude they were distributed between Africa (46), Asia (19), Central/East Europe (16), Latin America (13), the Caribbean (12) and the Pacific region (6). Although the process of obtaining country endorsements and in particular approving Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) was slow and delayed country implementation,[5] most of the eligible countries in each region eventually joined the project, generating a scale with enhanced opportunities for global impact. The largest regional country share corresponded to Africa

[5] Due to the extended delays, regional coordinators ultimately had to assist most countries in filling out the MOU forms. The slow response by countries in completing their MOUs delayed the project's commencement.

(Figure 1), while participation was lowest among the small island states of the Pacific region due to isolation and connectivity problems.

Figure 1

BCH Project: Regional Distribution of Participant Countries



Source: 2008 Project Implementation Report (PIR)

With the MOU's approval participant countries received a 75% advance on project grants that ranged from US$ 45,000 to US$ 50,000 with an average grant size of US$ 45,926. Although the BCH project finished operations in December 2008 after two extensions, 17 countries (mostly in Africa) haven't closed their MOUs and received the 25% grant balance. This is affected by the workload of the regional coordinators in processing MOU terminations as well as by implementation delivery at the country level. The project's country-based activities country activities were generally conducted in the space of 18—24 months. In many countries, training and other project activities continued after MOU closure by using the 25% grant balance; most did not advanced funds for reimbursement but instead waited for the final disbursement to finish their training events.

In general the project was very effective in delivering grants, training support and connectivity, despite technical problems with the more advanced connection options and deficient training translations in some languages such as Russian. The project's obligations under the MOUs were fulfilled in most if not all countries and participant feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Country workshops were conducted by regional advisors who trained national trainers to deliver BCH workshops. The quality of the training modules and case studies have been commended by many respondents.

" It was a small project but very successful. Everything that was planned was done and all the project reports were sent."

- National BCH Focal Point from Mongolia

"The project has been the main trigger of an increased awareness on the BCH…The production of excellent training materials has greatly contributed to the eficiency of the project.""

- CBD Focal Point

The BCH project can be considered very successful in having delivered quality training and technical support to 112 countries effectively.

Yet in spite of the assistance provided, the achievement of planned outcomes was uneven. The use of capacities acquired under the BCH project is declining in many if not most countries. [6] Institutional memory appears to be fading as well. Discontinuity at the country level is nurtured by a general lack of national biosafety frameworks that operate and are functional. This is reflected by gaps in enabling legislation, unclear institutional mandates, low risk assessment capacities, limited laboratory infrastructure, and lack of budget. Very few countries participating in the project have undertaken risk assessments or made the LMO decisions that are needed by the BCH central portal. In practice, most countries are not meeting their obligations to the Cartagena Protocol or the BCH component - which undermines the fundamental rationale and objective of the project. Not surprisingly, this has affected the project's performance and ability to have lasting impact.

Opportunities to use the BCH and apply capacities are in most cases limited by these realities. Impact has depended inordinately on the enabling conditions found in each country, and the momentum created by the GEF-UNEP project for Development of National Biosafety Frameworks (NBF) that began earlier in many countries. The BCH project was designed as an add-on to the more comprehensive NBF project, and its impact possibilities were therefore tied to the performance of that initiative. Both projects engaged the same participants; national BCH task forces were often built onto NBF coordination committees. However, in a number of countries synergies between both projects were weak, lowering their cumulative effect and potential for mutual reinforcement. [7]

In general, the BCH project was successful in achieving its first objective – strengthening the capacity of eligible Parties through support for capacity building – and partially achieved the second objective of creating an enabling environment for Parties to meet their obligations for implementing the Protocol, as the absence of national biosafety frameworks in most countries undermines the potential impact of better hardware/software capabilities. The third objective - supporting further capacity building through the dissemination of a computer-based training package - was achieved insofar as the availability of training materials is concerned; however, their continued use is unlikely to occur in most countries unless additional project support is provided.

The following section analyzes project performance and impact according to the achievement of expected outcomes and results:

Outcome 1: Strengthened capacities of potential users of BCH in relevant ministries and other institutions in order to fulfill requirements of CPB with reference to BCH

[7] Although both the BCH and NBF projects were implemented simultaneously in much of the Caribbean region, there was little coordination - or contact - according to a regional coordinator. This may reflect on design and implementation arrangements of both projects, as well as the absorptive capacity of national institutions.

This outcome was achieved to a large extent, through the effective delivery of well-designed training materials and an innovative strategy that mobilized a network of trained regional advisors who in turn trained national focal points in each country. The project's efforts in creating regionally-based advisor networks, combined with the use of interactive modules, case studies and simulations, have contributed decisively to the implementation of capacity building support. By focusing training resources on national workshops instead of regional events, the project was able to cover more ground by reaching wider audiences of national participants.

The BCH training package is comprehensive and consists of modules, [8] case studies, reference guides, quizzes and other learning materials that were designed with technical guidance from the CBD Secretariat, UNITAR and InWest (a German training organization); and submitted for peer review by NGOs and industry groups. The training package was designed around the following topics:

- Database design and data management;
- Searching BCH for information
- Access and use of BCH information
- Registration of information on the BCH
- Use of non-Internet based media as provided by the CBD Secretariat

All project training materials are presently accessible on the project web page, CBD website and BCH central portal [9] in 5 of 6 official UN languages. In addition to training national stakeholders in participating countries, these materials were used to train BCH National Focal Points at several COP/MOP events. The European Union also contracted training support for 25 EU BCH focal points.

The BCH project implemented over 370 national workshops and 7 regional encounters in Africa, the Asia-Pacific region, Latin America, the Caribbean and Europe. Four global workshops were held parallel to the Conference on Biosafety MOPs. Forty-five regional advisors participated in training-of-trainer (ToT) courses and delivered biosafety and IT training to 96 countries. As of October 2008, 3,160 persons from 139 countries had been trained [10] including national BCH focal points and country participants from government ministries, academic/research institutions and the private sector. [11] Although post-project attrition has reduced the level of BCH engagement considerably, the training package remains available on-line and clearly has future utility.

The training package is exceptional in its scope and pedagogic approach. Several modules are interactive and use advanced on-line learning software. Many exercises guide the user step-by-step in accessing or uploading data to the BCH portal, or resolving case studies on diverse biosafety topics. The modules had translation problems that were gradually improved but still need attention for some languages. From the standpoint of design and content, the combined

[8] Using NETOP, the BCH training website.
[9] Training materials have also been adapted for the BCH central portal's "Help" section to guide on-line users.
[10] As of June 2008 (2008 Project Implementation Report). The total number of trainees is considered to have increased since then, although updated figures are not available.
[11] According to the BCH Project Status Report (October 2008).

training materials are well-suited to strengthen national capacities for fulfilling BCH requirements.

However, the extent to which this happened – or was sustained – has depended more on the level of national commitment and biosafety practice in each country. Without an operational framework to apply the acquired knowledge, most countries are not "in a better position to make timely and informed decisions on LMO transboundary movements and to report on those decisions as required by the Protocol" (one of the outcome outputs). Retaining new capacities is extremely difficult under these circumstances. While more time or money for training might have helped to extend capacity improvements to a wider country audience, these cannot be internalized or sustained when enabling legislation and institutional mandates are lacking.

Figure 2

A (Partial) Listing of BCH Training Materials

Training Modules:
- Introduction to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety
- Introduction to the Biosafety Clearing-House
- Surfing the BCH Central Portal
- Finding Information in the BCH
- Using the Management Center
- Registering National Data
- Sharing Biosafety Information
- Using BCH Modules to meet stakeholder needs
- Using the Case Studies
- Ready Reference Library

Interactive Training Modules:
- Introduction to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety
- Introduction to the Biosafety Clearing-House

Case Studies:
- A trader wants to import cotton seed that may contain GMOs
- A regulator wants to inform border control about monitoring issues
- A BCH Focal Point creates National Authorized Users
- A National Authorized User and BCH Focal Point create a Core Contact Reference and a Competent National Authority
- A National Authorized User and BCH Focal point register a new LMO and LMO Decision
- A National Authorized User and BCH Focal Point register a risk assessment and natl law
- A customs officer receives documentation on transgenic maize import
- A researcher conducts experimental field trials of transgenic cotton
- A Competent National Authority reports a decision on release of transgenic cotton
- A researcher contacts a Competent National Authority to import mice for contained use
- A food company contacts a Competent Natl Authority to import transgenic corn for food use
- A development agency contacts a Competent Natl Authority for information on capacity building programs
- A National Authorized User registers a risk assessment
- A member of the public looks for information about a genetically modified product
- An organization registers a contact person
- An organization registers a biosafety newsletter
- A university lecturer registers a biosafety course and a workshop
- A journalist researches a story about a possible illegal/unintentional transboundary movement

The national workshops raised awareness on the Cartagena Protocol and BCH but had less effect on raising technical capacities, according to various participants. Contributing factors included budget limitations, short training durations (further shortened in some countries to encourage participation), a focus on general biosafety topics with limited depth, and high participant turnover. With project assistance, countries have uploaded data on contact persons, workshop reports, policies and laws (when available) to the BCH portal. But few developing countries have registered LMO decisions or risk assessments because these usually aren't practiced. In most cases the training given by the project has not fit into a working system and regular

opportunities to apply new knowledge are not available. This is undermining the retention of capacity improvements at the country level.

Most respondents felt the project's greatest contribution has been general awareness-raising, "demystifying" the Cartagena Protocol and BCH in the words of one participant. National participants are better informed and have the opportunity to work together. In several countries, contacts between institutions and individuals were made for the first time; in others they were reactivated from earlier NBF project committees. This advanced biosafety agendas in many countries, as described in the following examples:

- *Mongolia* approved a Law on Living Modified Organisms in 2008 with guidance from project staff and the BCH central portal (with prior assistance from the NBF project). The government is in the process of registering 32 vaccines on the BCH central portal.
- Project participants from *Albania, Guatemala, Belize* and *Uruguay* have consulted national legislation and regulations posted on the BCH central portal in their efforts to approve or amend national biosafety laws.
- In *Uruguay***,** government participation in the project may expedite the ratification of the Cartagena Protocol before national elections are held this year. The project has expanded the discussion on LMOs beyond agriculture and seeds to micro-organisms and animal products. The BCH and NBF projects influenced a government decree on biosafety that creates an inter-ministerial committee and mandates the design of biosafety legislation. The remaining budget will fund workshops with the parliamentary commission assigned to this. Although a moratorium on LMO decisions remains in effect, the government has proposed a new LMO application form that was inspired by the BCH.[12] Country LMO decisions and legal guidelines registered on the portal have been consulted by an industry group representing Uruguay's grain exporters.
- In *Albania,* the BCH portal and training modules assisted Tirana University's biotechnology faculty in including biosafety and BCH topics within the academic curriculum.
- An *Ethiopian* NGO promoting consumer rights has requested that an edible oil with GMOs found in the capital's markets be registered on the BCH central portal.
- *Albanian* and *Ethiopian* NGO members of the Task Force used data from the BCH portal to support research and advocacy.
- In *Guatemala* some BCH training modules are being used at stakeholder workshops to help participants design a new biosafety project.
- *Honduras* ratified the Cartagena Protocol during the BCH project's implementation.

<u>Outcome 2:</u> Support provided for the improvement of the physical infrastructure of national BCH components

This component was achieved after early connectivity problems were resolved. All countries are now connected and able to access the BCH Central Portal.

In the project MOUs, countries were given four connection options developed by the CBD secretariat, in compliance with the decision of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol:

[12] The new application is presently on the government's environmental web page for public comments

- *Direct connection* by which country data is entered and managed by the BCH Central Portal.
- A *non internet* option by which countries send information to the CBD Secretariat via mail, fax, e-mail or CD-ROM.
- The *pull* option by which the national server creates and manages a database of required information that interacts with the BCH Central Portal, allowing the Central Portal to draw information from it.
- The *push* option by which the national server creates and manages a database of required information that interacts with the BCH Central Portal, pushing information from the national database to the Central Portal.

> *"…One of the greatest achievements in my mind is the exposure of technical officers to the world of information technology – how information can be accessed and shared over electronic media."*
>
> *- A National Project Coordinator*

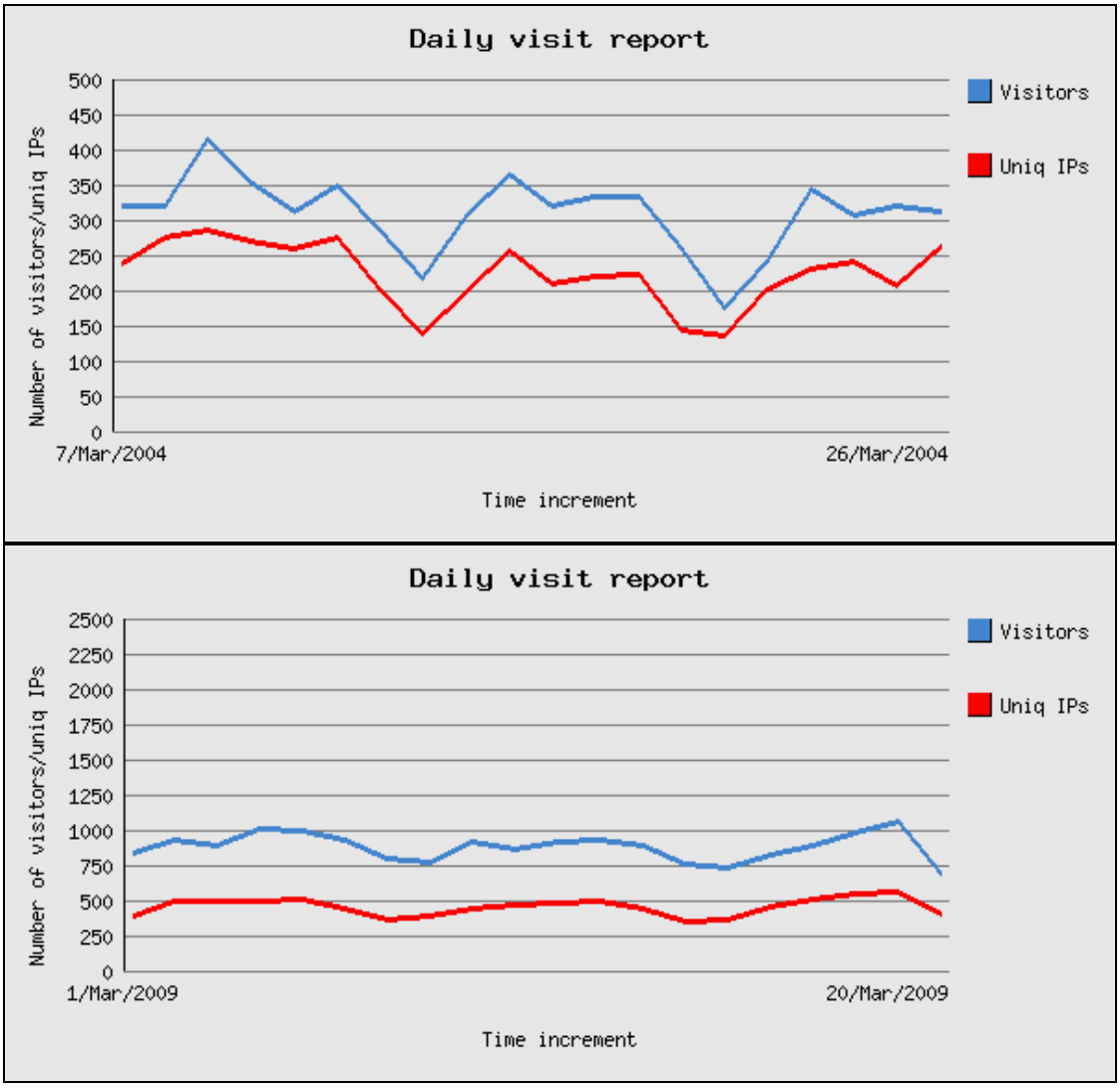
The choice of four connectivity options was commendable in its flexibility and intent to accommodate country preferences. Yet it also extended the time spent by countries in making the selection and being connected. According to several respondents, the connectivity options brought more problems than solutions. Around 80% of participant countries chose direct connection to the BCH central portal, which was easier technically and cost-effective. Countries with more developed ICT capabilities preferred the more advanced "push" and "pull" options. But these were more costly to maintain and faced technical problems that were eventually overcome with HERMES, an online content management system that enabled countries to create compatible BCH data bases; and the Ajax plug-in that facilitated the central portal's integration with other websites. Connection to the BCH central portal encouraged some countries (*Guatemala* and *Uruguay* among others) to include BCH sections in national websites. In *Costa Rica,* project support led to the creation of a Center of Information Exchange that links key government institutions with biosafety mandates, enabling them to access information and upload decisions to the BCH central portal.

Although visits to the BCH portal tend to decline in countries after project activities are terminated, CBD statistics indicate that global utilization of the BCH is rising (Figure 4): Between March 2004 and March 2009, the average number of visitors per day increased by 184% (309 to 878), average hits per day by 216% (4,520 to 14,295) and page-views by 410% (829 to 4,228).[13] The statistics cover a broad spectrum of users, confirming the BCH's global relevance and utility.

[13] 123 Log Analyzer Reports for March 2004 and March 2009

Figure 3

BCH Central Portal Daily Visit Reports: March 2004 and March 2009



Source: CBD Secretariat

Different views were expressed concerning the purchase of equipment with project funds. Computers were acquired by participating countries with portions of the grant that usually exceeded the training allocation. While the free hardware encouraged country buy-in and probably filled gaps in several countries, the tendency of earmarking over half the project grant for equipment – in countries that lack operational biosafety systems and have significant capacity needs – does not seem cost-effective. Some project participants feel it sets a questionable precedent for future projects. In visited countries that have finished project activities and closed their MOUs, the use of computers for BCH or biosafety activities is negligible. Governments that don't have or cannot implement biosafety policies have less incentive to assign new computers for this purpose.

<u>Outcome 3</u>: Sustained capacity to use and access the BCH established in-country

This outcome was most affected by the systemic constraints that affected project impacts at the country level. Use of the BCH by national stakeholders and overall momentum tend to decline in countries that lack operating biosafety frameworks and practices. Most countries are not able to apply or sustain capacity improvements because the enabling conditions aren't in place. Gaps in legislation, institutional mandate and coordination need to be addressed before the knowledge generated by the project can be used systematically and retained. Outputs relating to this outcome were not in evidence in the countries visited. The outcome was not achieved for reasons that are more closely linked to national commitment and enabling environment than project performance.

Nevertheless, the project bears some responsibility. The BCH project triggered renewed momentum and capacity building, but in most cases these haven't consolidated into a system or culture of practice that can be sustained without external support. Exchanges between countries were limited to the regional workshops; opportunities to promote country partnerships and mentoring was not given sufficient attention. Although the BCH central portal enables national focal points to network and collaborate on their own initiative, there are few indications this has happened. The training workshops and regional advisory support have raised country awareness and familiarized participants with the BCH, but greater continuity and follow-up are needed to make these capacities operational. The implementation of 6-8 training workshops over the course of a year or two are insufficient to achieve this – or train replacements as planned - especially when there is a high turnover of participants.

These "misses" raise questions on the timing of the BCH project: Was it prematurely implemented in countries that are at incipient stages of national biosafety framework development? Should the project have been implemented in countries where basic enabling conditions were lacking? Do general awareness-raising benefits (considered as the project's main contribution by many) justify the US$ 14.9 million expense when the capacity acquired is not exercised?

The ultimate responsibility for applying and sustaining new capacities lies with the country stakeholders. Yet few countries – none of those visited – are ready to do this at present: Biosafety legislation is lacking or requires substantive revision in *Ethiopia, Albania, Guatemala* and *Uruguay* as well as the *Caribbean* area in general. In *Uruguay* a moratorium on LMO decisions has been in effect for two years and is likely to continue until a new law is approved. *Guatemala* has three government decrees with biosafety provisions that lack consistency and need to be harmonized. Draft biosafety legislation for *Ethiopia* was drafted with support from the NBF project, but needs to be adjusted to a model adopted by the African Union. *Costa Rica* has approved legislation that establishes a National Biosafety Commission and regulates agricultural biosafety, yet needs to be expanded to other categories of LMOs. While there is no biosafety law in *Belize,* the enabling Act of the Belize Agricultural Health Authority (BAHA) assigns biosafety functions and prescribes risk analysis procedures for agricultural, plant and animal products. However, Belize does not import agricultural LMOs and risk assessments haven't been conducted on these commodities.

Without enabling legislation, many of these countries cannot formalize institutional arrangements or technical procedures. A system cannot be put in motion, resources can't be committed, and decisions cannot be made. Under these circumstances there is little incentive to

use the BCH other than for research purposes. On a positive note, the inclusion of biosafety and BCH sections in national websites facilitates uploading data to the BCH central portal; this is encouraging and may help to sustain capacities. It is also important to signal successful case stories; for example, in the LAC region Costa Rica, Brazil, Peru, Ecuador, and Dominican Republic have approved biosafety laws and implemented national bch websites. Similar examples are likely to exist in other regions as well, although the limited amount of country feedback given to the evaluation (outside those visited) prevents deeper analysis.

2.3 IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH

As a global initiative that grew from 50 to 112 countries - and was implemented by a UN agency without country representation - the BCH project faced many challenges. Its ability to respond to these challenges has been one of the project's main strengths and reflects an intelligent, well-planned implementation strategy.

The design of the BCH project involved a deliberative, consultative process. This has shaped an implementation approach that benefited from the experiences of the earlier NBF project, input from external experts and peer reviews. Innovative alternatives were introduced to standard project arrangements that have facilitated implementation considerably: Memoranda of Understanding substituted the project documents that would have been required from each country. The regional advisory network expanded the project's presence, improving its "fit" with national contexts and retaining capacity in the regions (for the time being). Their impact on project implementation was significant – regional advisors conducted 400 national visits, 31 global missions, 142 workshops and trained over 2,000 persons.[14] The use of retainer contracts to hire regional advisors gave the project flexibility in fielding technical expertise while drastically reducing processing and paperwork. An on-line management information system tracked the multitude of documents, country activities, mission travel and expenditures generated by the global project. Training resources were refocused on national workshops instead of regional meetings to reach wider in-country audiences. Travel services for the continuous stream of missions and country visits were outsourced to a private company. [15] In retrospect, the project would not have been feasible on a global scale without these arrangements.

"Having a team of both biosafety and IT advisors going to a country really helped the countries to understand the project from both biosafety and technical perspectives, thus enabling its effective implementation."

"Everything that UNEP did to make the project successful was very well thought out and planned…Although there were problems during the execution of the project (adjustments to training materials, problems with the Option 3 setup, etc.) UNEP was very quick to respond."

- BCH Regional Advisors

The project has addressed a number of problems effectively, demonstrating good adaptive management practices: Technical problems affecting the third and fourth BCH connectivity options were eventually overcome by HERMES software and Ajax plug-in filters. Translation problems detected in the training modules were gradually corrected and languages adapted to the

[14] Based on data from the 2008 PIR and Anubis
[15] These are described in Sec. 4.1 "Project Preparation and Readiness"

vernacular. The pace of implementation was affected by a slow start-up phase and frequent delays with MOU negotiations (on the country side). The project's termination date was extended twice from June to December 2008 and subsequently until March 2009. Although the project ended 9 months behind schedule and 17 country MOUs remain active, the evaluation found project management and responsiveness to be very effective in general.

Coordination was essential to the viability of a global initiative designed to serve a broader program context. The BCH project expected to "…synergize with the larger global effort at capacity building in support of implementation of the Protocol." [16] Activities were coordinated with a wide range of stakeholders at all stages of the project cycle. This intelligent approach benefited the project in its design, outreach capabilities and implementation. In addition to working closely with the CBD Secretariat, there was collaboration with the following partners:

- Project formulation benefited from consultations with the staff and a panel of national coordinators from the *NBF project*. Their experiences and "lessons learned" contributed towards an effective implementation strategy that has facilitated project management and improved overall performance.
- I*nWent* (the German government training agency) and *UNITAR* supported the design of training materials by providing technical assistance on adult learning techniques and pedagogic methods. The training modules went through peer review by NGOs and industry groups including the *Third World Network* and *Global Industry Coalition*.
- *UNEP*, *STAP* and I*TU* participated in the screening of regional advisors, selecting 41 candidates from over 300 applicants.
- Although the United States is not a Cartagena Protocol signatory, the *U.S. State Department* and *Geological Survey's* National Biodiversity Information Infrastructure (NBII) donated technical staff time to assist workshops and the design of training materials.
- The NGO *Environment Canada* has supported workshops to set up regional BCH nodes in the South Pacific and Caribbean.
- The *Republic of South Korea* organized a regional BCH knowledge-sharing workshop for the Asia and Pacific, and funded the participation of 15 country representatives. The Korean BCH has expressed interest in supporting similar events in the future.
- Project oversight and guidance were provided by the *BCH Informal Advisory Committee*, composed by national focal points, technical experts and organizations that include the *International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology* (ICGEB), *Third World Network* and *Global Industry Coalition*. The Third World Network and Global Industry Coalition also participated in peer reviews of project training materials.

The global scale of activities required close coordination and regular communication between dispersed participants. This was handled effectively by the ANUBIS on-line data management system that tracked country activities, workshops, missions and travel; and through MOODLE, an open-source knowledge sharing program that enabled regional advisors to access documents, share files and communicate**.** ANUBIS and MOODLE offered permanent on-line support to project coordination and communication, complementing the occasional regional workshop where training, strategic planning and group discussions. The consistent efforts of the project

[16] BCH Project Document, pg. 7

team - regional coordinators in particular - in managing activities across a wide country spectrum and coordinating with UNEP in Nairobi – were essential for the day-to-day coordination on this scale.

Coordination with UNEP-GEF Development of National Biosafety Frameworks (NBF) project was particularly important. The BCH project was "designed and executed as an add-on to the NBF Development project" [17] The "enabling environment" encountered in each country was often influenced by the NBF project. Country participants were moved from the NBF coordination committees or served on both. According to a semi-annual report "…The project has benefited greatly from the synergies with the UNEP-GEF project for the implementation of NBFs and UNEP-GEF demonstration projects for the implementation of NBFs." [18]

The BCH project saved time and started implementation quickly in many countries thanks to the earlier work of the NBF project. There was coordination between both projects in Geneva and Nairobi. However, synergies at the country level varied considerably and were understandably weaker when more time had lapsed since the NBF project's implementation. Despite its achievements, the NBF was not able to consolidate national biosafety frameworks in a number of countries where more sustained and long-term support – and national commitment – is needed. In such cases the enabling conditions required for lasting impact are absent. The statement that "…National Biosafety Frameworks have already been developed in almost all of these countries and national laws on biosafety already exist in the majority of the countries" [19] did not apply in the countries visited.

2.4 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The project's monitoring and evaluation approach was multi-faceted, involving regional coordinators and advisors, annual and semi-annual reporting, management information systems and monthly team meetings to review progress and discuss implementation issues. The combined practices have strengthened the project's ability to deliver support to 112 countries effectively, apply adaptive management and respond to emergent challenges.

A commendable aspect of the project m&e strategy was its attempt to develop country baselines during the design phase. As noted in the project document, "…The baseline for all subsequent activity will be produced from two major sources: The global results obtained from the BCH questionnaire and the national statements made by countries in applying for funding….The information produced will provide a blueprint for further negotiation of the national components of the BCH and will be employed in monitoring the national projects." In 2003 a questionnaire was circulated by UNEP-GEF and the CBD Secretariat, to assess the access and use of the Biosafety Clearing-House in each country. The survey results identified training and other needs that were fed into the project's design.[20]

[17] BCH Project Document, p. 7
[18] BCH Semi-Annual Report (12/2007)
[19] BCH Project Document, p. 6
[20] BCH Project Brief, p. 4

In addition, the Memoranda of Understanding required for country participation contained a needs assessment section. This was intended to generate a rapid self-appraisal of country needs and preparedness, identify the main stakeholders and provide a baseline for monitoring progress. However, extended delays of many countries in completing their MOUs prompted the direct assistance of regional coordinators to finish the task. This lowered the exercise's value, but the initiative merits recognition nonetheless.

Indicators were identified to monitor progress in the achievement of outputs and outcomes. Although measurable and relevant, they do not depend exclusively on project performance and are (once again) influenced by levels of biosafety practice in each country and the momentum generated by the NBF project. The indicators are:

- *Number of hits on the BCH Central Portal*
- *Number of increased records available through the BCH Central Portal*
- *Number of persons trained at the country-level by the Regional Advisors*
- *Number of persons being trained at a global and sub-regional level*
- *Number of Regional Advisor missions*
- *Number of Regional Advisor country visits*
- *Number of national level training workshops being conducted*

Semi-annual progress reports and annual project implementation reports (PIRs) were prepared on schedule. Using different formats, both offered detailed information on the status of project outputs, progress achieved and issues affecting implementation. The project team met monthly to review implementation, discuss adjustments and plan ahead. Workshops organized for regional advisors in Bangkok (2006), Delhi (2007) and Cairo (2008) included participant analysis of project strengths and weaknesses, sustainability and "lessons learned" as part of the wider experience-sharing exercise. Such meetings provided important spaces for group reflection, enhancing adaptive management and learning. The learning derived from the project was distilled in an excellent project publication. [21] There were internal reporting practices as well, including monthly work plans by regional coordinators that were sent to the Project Manager; however, this task consumed a high percentage of the regional coordinators time and was considered redundant by some.

Monitoring project activities in 112 countries has been a time-consuming endeavor that demanded continuous attention from regional coordinators, particularly in the case of Africa's 46 countries or the geographic dispersion of the Asia and Pacific region. With large country portfolios and time zone differences, regional coordinators have relied on skype, sms, e-mail and phone communication, even when they were region-based as was the case with Latin America and the Caribbean. This arrangement also reflected the lack of regional monitoring budgets, as monitoring funds were allocated by outcome and regional coordinators needed to request approval for country missions. However, most countries were visited by the regional coordinator or Project Manager at least once. Funds were earmarked for external mid-term and terminal evaluations, as required by UNEP and GEF.

[21] "The Global UNEP-GEF Capacity Building Project: Learming from Experience" (April 2008)

Monitoring was supported by the network of regional advisors and availability of an on-line information system (both described in previous sections of the report). Regional advisors had to submit reports after every country mission. End-of-workshop evaluations were required for the over 300 national training events that were conducted by regional advisors and national trainers. Regional advisors focused attention on training and connectivity issues, and some respondents felt they could have played a more active role in general project monitoring (although this required additional training and longer contracts). The large volume of reports and information generated was organized by ANUBIS, a management system data base that provided quick access to country documents, mission reports, workshop evaluations, project expenditures and regional advisor availability. ANUBIS and especially MOODLE, an open knowledge-sharing platform used by regional advisors, have facilitated knowledge management through communication and learning.

2.5 COUNTRY OWNERSHIP AND STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION

A challenge faced by the BCH project team was balancing the global dynamics and consistency needed to work in 112 countries, with national ownership and stakeholder participation – both of which are central to the project concept. One of the main purposes of building BCH capacities in developing countries was to broaden the range of stakeholders using and accessing the Central Portal.

In design and delivery, the project has made tangible efforts to adjust training and technical support to the needs of participating countries; and strengthen national ownership in order to sustain capacities and build on the momentum generated. Examples include the following:

- A questionnaire was launched by UNEP-GEF and the CBD Secretariat in 2003 to assess the access and use of the Biosafety Clearing-House in each country, in order to "further understanding of their urgent needs". [22] National BCH capacity needs were discussed at the ICCP-3 (Cartagena Protocol Intergovernmental Committee) meeting that set guidelines for the project's design.

- MOU formats were based on a common template that ensured programmatic consistency and facilitated processing, yet offered countries flexibility in adjusting project support to their capacity needs. The inclusion of self-assessment and sustainability statements and the choice of four connectivity options encourage national ownership.

- The BCH training strategy used national workshops instead of regional events to reach a wider range of country participants. Training modules were offered at three levels of computer literacy to adjust training to country capacity levels. A "training of trainers" (TOT)

"…A prior exercise by government to identify the main users and solicit input from a broader range of stakeholders to identify their needs, as users will be needed before the training sessions in country will commence. After identification, government will decide on what stakeholders will be involved in the training courses. The persons, who will be likely to be benefiting from the workshops, will include relevant stakeholders identified by the relevant National Authorities in different sectors…"

- BCH Project Brief

[22] Project Brief

approach was followed by which regional advisors were initially trained by the project, to subsequently train national focal points. As a result, country workshops were incrementally delivered by national trainers, with the regional advisors assuming a supportive role.

- BCH Task Forces were organized in each country to coordinate country activities, based on the NBF project's national coordination committees and often involving the same members.

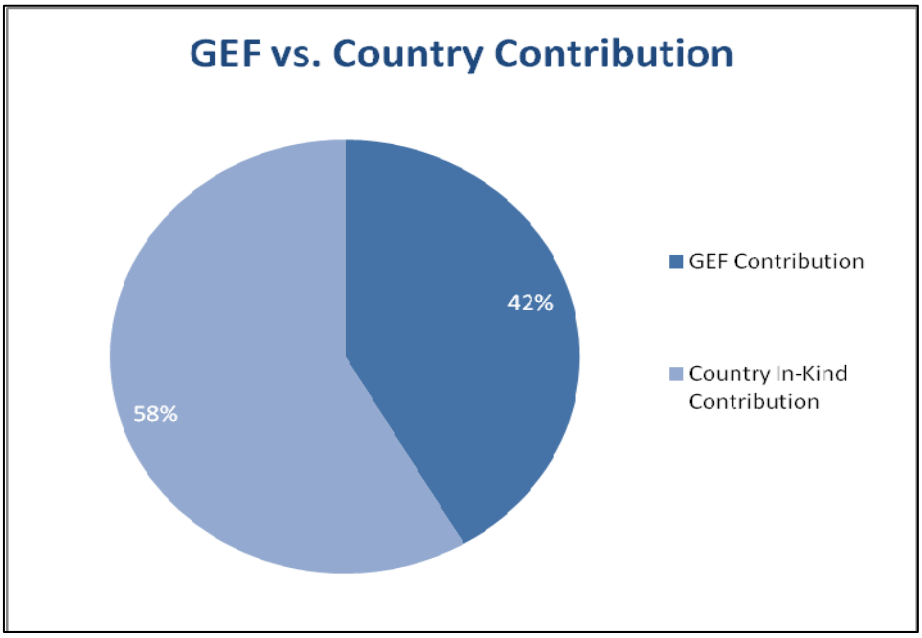
- The project has helped countries develop national biosafety/BCH websites. This encouraged ownership and facilitates transferring national data to the BCH central portal.

The regional advisors raised the project's presence at the country level and improved compatibility with national contexts, enabling countries to select "one of their own" for training and technical support. National participants expressed satisfaction in working with advisors from their regions. According to the 2008 Project Implementation Report (PIR) the advantages offered by regional advisors included language compatibility, similar work ethics and socio-cultural realities, understanding of national IT capabilities, and the ability to make it easier for countries to accept their advice.[23]

To an extent, national commitment and ownership were assumed to already be in place. All participating countries had endorsed the project concept and ratified – or expressed intention to ratify - the Cartagena Protocol. As signatories to the Protocol and having assumed its obligations, countries were already in a sense the project "owners." The BCH project's relevance to country needs is reflected in its ability to leverage national resources, which often surpassed the grant award: Country in-kind contributions averaged US$ 63,840, exceeding the average grant amount of US$ 45,926 (Figure 5). Practically all countries have at least matched the GEF grant with some standing out for their contribution - *Brazil, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Ecuador* and *El Salvador* among others.

[23] PIR: FY 08, p. 27

Figure 5



Source: BCH Project Status Report (10/08)

Yet ownership and participation by countries – and relevant national institutions – varied considerably for reasons that were often outside project control. Countries that joined the project with relatively operational biosafety frameworks in place – i.e. *Republic of Korea, Brazil* and *Costa Rica* among others – tended to assume greater ownership and make better use of available resources. In other countries, the lack of enabling legislation, institutional mandates and budget support clearly influenced national response. The high turnover of national participants and trainees affected participation and ownership as well.

As noted in the 2008 Project Implementation Report (PIR) the absence of designated national project coordinators or focal points "led to long delays in developing national-level activities due to lack of a dedicated person initiating and engaging with the BCH project…". [24] In several countries participants agreed that the presence of a national project coordinator would have raised project performance and continuity, and have suggested that the post be budgeted in future projects. While this perception does not say much for ownership, it does reflect national budget realties and the low policy priority assigned to biosafety in most countries. The decision of *Albania's* environment ministry to assign a national project coordinator and project director, paid with government funds, was one of the few exceptions encountered and deserves recognition.

Ministries of environment and agriculture were often the leading project "movers" at the country level. The involvement of universities and research institutions varied considerably – from being key users of BCH data (*Albania*) to minimum engagement (*Uruguay).* Private sector

[24] 2008 Project Implementation Report (PIR), p. 29

participation was strong in Uruguay through the association of grain producers that is largely export-oriented, but low in other countries. The participation of customs authorities was low across the country sample, reflecting the lack of national capacity, policy and resources for monitoring transboundary movements of LMOs. The level of institutional engagement was often determined by the enabling conditions of each country; hence institutional ownership (and memory) tended to be lower in countries that lacked functional biosafety frameworks. *Ethiopia* is one of the countries that paid "sitting fees" to Task Force members as an incentive to attend meetings, whereas other countries visited during the evaluation avoided this practice. Task Force meetings were discontinued after project termination in all countries visited. In most developing countries, BCH and related biosafety initiatives in general are project-driven and likely to remain so for the foreseeable future. A key lesson emerging from the project is that minimum enabling conditions – in terms of legislation, institutional mandate and budget - need to be in place before countries can be expected to consolidate or sustain biosafety capacities.

Positive examples of ownership were also encountered: As mentioned, *Albania* contributed two project posts (project director, national coordinator) and allocated funds for BCH publications from its national biodiversity project. Guatemala funded a full-time post to operate CONAP's environmental website that has a biosafety page. A few countries contributed national case studies to the BCH training package. NGOs were active participants in most countries and have used the project to broaden their understanding of the Cartagena Protocol and strengthen advocacy platforms. Several countries recognize the need to further involve the entrepreneurial sector and in particular organizations linked to the food industry (i.e. associations of seed producers, grain exporters).

2.6 UNEP SUPERVISION AND BACKSTOPPING

The project's administrative and financial arrangements was based on the standard procedures for UNEP-GEF projects, yet departed from the norm in aspects that facilitated delivery and coordination. The statistics are supportive: Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) were signed with 112 countries, and 124 of the 139 eligible countries have participated in project activities. Project activities were completed and MOUs closed in 95 countries; the remaining 17 countries will finish within the next 3-4 months. Although the project terminated operations 9 months behind its original schedule, delays were often attributable to slow country response and implementation rather than the project performance. The responsiveness of the BCH regional coordinators and project team in general were praised by respondents in all countries visited.

Several of the BCH project's administrative and coordination arrangements were innovative and could be replicated in other UNEP global initiatives. Country approval was simplified by substituting the standard project document with compact MOUs that were easier to administer. Grant disbursements were simplified by releasing funds in two payments - 75% on approval of the MOU and 25% on termination of activities to reimburse final expenses. Delays were still experienced: Many countries responded slowly in completing their MOUs, which in turn delayed project commencement. Others have finished but haven't closed their MOUs, especially in Africa. Project closure was also delayed in part by the reluctance of countries to advance funds as expected under the MOUs; instead many have waited for the final disbursement to reactivate implementation and finance pending workshops or other activities. In both cases, the project team has made efforts to adjust timelines and intervened in a number of countries to help national focal points finish the MOU document.

> *"The delay in getting the project off the ground provided limited time for the execution of the project. It would have been much better if the time allocated for training was more spread out – so that the training could be undertaken over a number of months,so that more participants could be trained and the visibility gained would keep Bioafety on the agenda of the government, rather than the concentrated training that had to be impelemented because of time constraints partially due to the late signing of the MOU…"*
>
> *- A National Project Coordinator*

As a global initiative, the project had major travel and logistical needs that exceeded its administrative capacity and probably that of UNEP's support staff as well. The potential for recurrent delays in travel and re-scheduling of missions or workshops would have weakened implementation - and the project's viability. The decision to contract out travel services for the more than 250 missions by the project's 41 regional advisors to a private company (MKI) ensured an efficient flow of training and technical advice. The U.N. Office for Project Services (UNOPS) administered the regional advisor contracts and disbursed their fee for an 8% service charge; UNOPS performance was effective and the service charge "well worth it" according to a UNEP financial manager. By contracting travel and DSA, UNEP was better placed to focus on quality and delivery. Respondents in all visited countries praised the timeliness of UNEP disbursements and the responsiveness of regional coordinators and advisors. This contrasted a very negative assessment of UNDP Country Office performance in countries where they were contracted to disburse funds, purchase equipment and manage finances; the only exception among the evaluation sample was Uruguay, where better service was provided.

Project support and responsiveness was very much aided by the regional advisors. Their contribution to implementation - conducting 170 workshops, training more than 3,162 persons, [25]improving project compatibility to national contexts, and retaining capacity in the regions – is a central to project effectiveness. The investment of time and money to train and operate the regional advisory network was cost-effective and has utility for future biosafety projects. The use of retainer contracts covering long periods - instead of service agreements for specific missions - raised project efficiency by reducing recruitment processing and paperwork significantly, while giving the project team more control and flexibility in fielding advisor missions.

[25] Based on figures published in the BCH Project Status Report (October 2008)

Financial planning and management were done effectively by UNEP and the project team. Country grants were sufficient in most cases for the scale of activities conducted and absorptive capacity of many countries. There were four budget revisions during the project lifetime that transferred funds between budget lines but did not alter the total budget. While the initial budget did not include technical support staff for the Project Manager, the reallocation of funds between budget lines enabled the recruitment of regional coordinators. Despite substantial workloads (the regional coordinator for Africa looked over 46 countries, the Latin America regional coordinator supervised more than 30) the combined human and financial resources were adequate and used efficiently in most cases - with the noted exception of computer purchases that absorbed the largest share of the country grants, are often not being used as intended, and carried a high opportunity cost vis-à-vis biosafety capacity needs. Some countries finished project activities with unspent funds that will be used for additional training, as in *Uruguay.* National focal points in *Ethiopia* lamented the lack of funds for extending workshops to the provinces and suggested that future grants consider country population and size variables.

Because UNEP lacks country representation, UNDP was contracted to handle disbursements, procurement and finances in countries where government institutions weren't allowed to manage donor funds (or where it wasn't advisable due to complex budget systems). This arrangement was one the project's greatest weaknesses: The performance of UNDP Country Offices was strongly criticized by national focal points in all of the visited countries that used this modality, with the notable exception of *Uruguay*. Similar opinions were expressed for the Caribbean region and elsewhere. Examples given included calculation errors and delays of disbursements and equipment procurement, delays in the transfer of computers and equipment to national institutions, and general low responsiveness. There were also difficulties in reconciling UNEP's financial reporting formats with UNDP's Atlas system. UNDP may have offered the best – or only – option in a number of countries. However, it's service was below acceptable standards and did not justify the 5% service charge that Country Offices charged. Only in *Uruguay* has UNDP offered satisfactory support according to respondents.

2.7 ASSESSMENT OF SUSTAINABILITY RISKS

In-country retention of knowledge is the most important issue arising from this evaluation. It is critical for enabling continued access and use of the BCH, helping countries to meet reporting obligations under the Cartagena Protocol. The country MOUs included a section for describing how capacity building and use of the BCH would be sustained. However, sustainability is the BCH project's most vulnerable aspect. It is dependent on the availability of opportunities to apply new capacities, which in turn depends on the level of biosafety practice in each country. The evaluation findings suggest that most of the countries participating in the BCH project lack operational biosafety frameworks and often biosafety practices in general as well.

Gaps in (or absence of) legislation, institutional mandates and budgets were found throughout the country sample.[26] Proposed biosafety laws have been drafted and sent to parliament in *Ethiopia*, *Albania* and *Belize*. Although cabinet approval was secured in some cases, they have not yet become legislation and have low political priority. *Guatemala* has three government decrees with biosafety components that are incompatible and need to be replaced with new legislation. *Uruguay's* Ministry of Livestock and Agriculture has conducted LMO risk assessments with a focus on transgenic crops and animal feeds; there is need to broaden institutional involvement and extend biosafety practices to other LMOs such as microorganisms. Uruguay has not ratified the Cartagena Protocol and there is presently a moratorium on LMO decisions. However, a recent government decree mandates new biosafety legislation and parliament may ratify the Cartagena Protocol in the coming months. *Mongolia* is the only country in the sample with a recently-approved biosafety law in effect. However the technical knowledge, lab infrastructure and budget needed to implement the law are lacking. [27] The government does not have a policy position on LMOs; food security clearly supersedes biosafety as a policy priority. Most countries are not in the position to make decisions related to LMOs and therefore upload this information on the BCH. Risk assessments and laboratory tests on LMOs are not conducted in most of the countries considered by the evaluation; the exceptions being *Belize*, *Costa Rica* and *Uruguay* (where a moratorium is in effect).

> *"Developing national capacity to use the [BCH] portal is excellent, but without continuity it will be lost."*
>
> *- A BCH Regional Coordinator*

> *"The state of administrative systems (in biosafety) is the main factor of sustainability of its national BCH. Absence of effective international control (by SCBD or UNEP) in the fulfillment of BCH obligations leads to laziness of national administrative systems."*
>
> *- A Regional Advisor*

Without enabling biosafety legislation, policies or institutional mandates, the knowledge generated by the project cannot be fed into a system. At present it seems that most developing countries are not in a position to meet their obligations to the Cartagena Protocol and have few practical incentives for using the BCH outside of research. Over time and as people change, the retention of knowledge and capacities will decline – participant memories are already fading - unless countries receive continued support to consolidate their national biosafety frameworks. Until then, implementation of the Cartagena Protocol and its BCH component will remain project-driven with limited sustainability perspectives. Fortunately the training materials and many regional advisors remain available and can be used by other projects or national institutions if there is interest to do so.

Other sustainability risks are linked to systemic constraints. High turnovers of workshop participants, weak institutional coordination and insufficient budgetary support were outside the project's control and threaten the retention of capacities.

[26] Among the countries that provided input to the evaluation, *Costa Rica* stands out in terms of approved legislation and established risk assessment practices addressing agricultural LMOs.
[27] Mongolia will set up a biosafety "level 2" laboratory for avian influenza with World Bank support.

The sustainability of the BCH central portal was also raised during interviews. The portal requires regular updating and maintenance, and data needs to be entered permanently. This has fallen behind occasionally and there is presently a backlog of data entries. The portal is managed by one person based at the BCH Secretariat. Although not part of the evaluation, the observation on the BCH Central Portal is included because sustainability needs to cover various levels when these are interdependent.

3. CONCLUSIONS

- **The BCH project stands out as a well-planned initiative that incorporates a number of good design practices. This has contributed to a practical and innovative implementation approach, enabling the project to meet global implementation challenges and deliver support to 112 countries effectively.**

The design process was preceded by a country needs assessment survey and benefited from extensive consultation. The experience and learning from the UNEP-GEF "Development of National Biosafety Frameworks" (NBF) project were fed into the BCH project's design: National project coordinator posts were not funded to encourage national ownership and free resources for other needs. The training strategy was implemented through country workshops instead of regional events, reaching a wider range of national stakeholders. The network of trained biosafety and IT regional advisors raised the project's profile at the country level, alleviated delivery pressures and improved project compatibility to national contexts. A comprehensive training package was developed using advanced on-line learning programs, with assistance from specialized organizations, IT and educational expertise, and peer reviews; the overall quality is excellent although translation improvements are still needed. Countries were given four BCH connectivity options and training was offered at three levels of computer literacy; training materials included biosafety case studies based on practical situations. The combined training materials are the project's most important - and sustainable - contribution to the implementation of the Cartagena Protocol and its BCH obligations.

- **Overall project impact was satisfactory. Significant advances were made in strengthening national capacities to fulfill BCH obligations under the Cartagena Protocol (outcome one), and the second outcome of improved physical infrastructure was fully achieved. However, limited progress was made in sustaining country capacities as foreseen by the third project outcome; to a large extent due to in-country factors outside the project's control. The most frequently mentioned project contributions were raising awareness of the Cartagena Protocol and BCH and reactivating discussions on biosafety issues, more than improved capacities.**

The BCH project and implementation strategy were carefully planned. Training and BCH connectivity were adjusted to national preferences. After initial delays in starting up, the project has met the deliverables outlined in the MOUs in most all countries. Disbursements were on time when managed by UNEP (not so when managed by UNDP in most cases). National respondents were consistently positive in their assessment of project training, regional advisors and overall performance.

Although the project did the right things and was very effectively implemented, it didn't fully achieve its outcomes to the extent planned. The project's effectiveness and efforts of the project team were not always reflected in country impact levels. This was influenced by enabling conditions in each country and other constraints outside project control**,** as well as the brevity of project activities. The low level or absence of biosafety practices in many countries has limited the application of biosafety knowledge and capacity improvements from the project, undermining their retention as well.

- **In many countries the knowledge generated by the project does not feed into a functioning system. In such cases there are few opportunities or incentives to use the BCH outside of research**. **A number of countries will have more need for BCH training once laws are approved and some type of framework has been activated.**

Momentum seems to decline rapidly after countries finish project activities and close their MOUs. Task Force meetings are phased out, visits to the BCH central portal drop and computers are put to other uses. Knowledge and capacities lapse over time as people change. National memory of the project is already declining in countries that finished activities a couple of years ago. The regional advisor network will not last without project support, although many advisors continue to be available.

However, it is important to note that total visits and hits to the BCH central portal on a global scale have increased over the past years, as documented by the CBD Secretariat.[28]

- **Many countries still need to consolidate the process started under the UNEP-GEF "Development of National Biosafety Frameworks" project.**

Policy recommendations have yet to be adopted, draft laws approved, institutional mandates assigned and budgets allocated. As a result, levels of national biosafety practices tend to be low or absent in most developing countries. Most project countries aren't conducting risk analysis studies or making LMO decisions. In several cases the project reactivated dormant meetings and discussions on biosafety issues, placing it on the national agenda once again. Most country respondents felt the project's main contribution was raising awareness on the Cartagena Protocol and BCH rather than strengthening technical capacities. In many countries participants were connected for the first time by the BCH project

- **Given the close linkages between the BCH and National Biosafety Framework (NBF) projects, a thematic evaluation of the UNEP-GEF biosafety portfolio may be more appropriate than individual project evaluations, by offering deeper insight on the cumulative impacts and synergy of UNEP-GEF support. If further support is approved, this option should be considered by the CBD Secretariat, DGEF and UNEP-GEF biosafety focal points in planning future evaluations.**

The BCH project was an important component of a broader process that aims to develop national capacities for implementing the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. The BCH was not

[28] Based on the comparison of BCH Central Portal Daily Visit Reports for March 2004 and March 2009

intended as a "stand alone" project and was explicitly designed to build on the progress achieved by the NBF project. Project performance at the country level was directly influenced (and often depended on) the dynamics and enabling conditions generated by the NBF project. For these reasons, performance and impact are probably better viewed from the broader perspective of GEF/UNEP support - to which the BCH played a contributing role - rather than focusing on impacts directly attributable to BCH activities. In most cases, the advances and impacts observed on the ground were the combined effect of both projects.

4. LESSONS LEARNED

- **In spite of initial delays and technical problems, project implementation was very effective and demonstrated good adaptive management practices.**

The project team took full advantage of the inception phase to build its implementation strategy through consultation, adjusting inputs and introducing new arrangements such as those described above. This period was also devoted to negotiating and approving MOUs with eligible countries. The MOU format used a common template for all countries that provided consistency needed for an initiative of this scale, yet countries were encouraged to adjust project support to their needs. There were delays resulting from the slow pace of many countries in completing their MOUs. However, the time invested was critical to establish conditions for effective delivery. This has contributed to a consistent implementation process that didn't face major disruption, subsequent delays or budget problems despite it's global scale. Based on the findings and information provided, the BCH project fulfilled its MOU country obligations in quantity and quality.

Setbacks were inevitable for a project of this size and demonstrated the project team's adaptive management abilities. Technical problems with the third BCH option, inadequate translations of training modules and other flaws were detected and remedial actions taken. Search tools and other aspects of the BCH home page were improved, making it easier to use. Four budget revisions were made during the project period without major changes to the total budget. The views expressed by national respondents on project performance were overwhelmingly positive in all countries visited

- **Administrative and financial arrangements were adjusted in ways that departed from standard practice yet facilitated implementation considerably. Some have pilot value and could be replicated in future projects.**

Efficiency gains were realized from:

- Using Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) listing project activities and mutual obligations that were easier to approve and administer than project documents for each country.
- The release of grant funds in two payments facilitated disbursement and monitoring.
- The approval of retainer contracts for regional advisors allowed the project to use their services with more flexibility, while reducing recruitment processing and paperwork.
- Outsourcing of the project's considerable travel needs to a specialized firm.
- Using on-line management information systems – the ANUBIS data base and MOODLE knowledge sharing platform – these enabled the project team and UNEP to process

significant amounts of data and monitor resources effectively; while encouraging communication and learning among regional advisors.
- External consultation and expert reviews of training materials and implementation strategies to raise project preparedness and improve quality control.

Some of these were innovative and could be replicated in other global initiatives.

- **The timing of the BCH project may have been premature in countries that lacked operational biosafety frameworks. In such cases, countries were unable to make full use of training, infrastructure support and advisory services. This raises questions on the level of country preparedness that should be considered for project eligibility – and the cost-effectiveness of investing in capacities that aren't applied and cannot be sustained.**

The lack of enabling conditions at the country level is a recurrent theme in this report, due to the influence it has on various aspects of project performance. Despite the recognized quality of the project training materials, there is little stimulus to apply the acquired knowledge in countries that don't implement biosafety practices or have a framework. Capacity improvements are difficult to retain in these conditions and likely to fade over time, as is already happening is some of the visited countries. In such cases, training will need to be repeated at a later stage, after the enabling conditions are inz place. The future availability of the BCH training materials and regional advisory services are important for this purpose.

- **In most developing countries, the implementation of the Cartagena Protocol and related BCH obligations is project-driven and will remain so for the foreseeable future. Under present conditions, biosafety capacity development cannot be sustained without external support. Continued technical and financial assistance are required over the medium term.**

The training materials and many regional advisors are (still) available to assist future projects. But enabling conditions need to be in place at the country level if new initiatives are to have lasting effect. Unless capacity improvements are fed into a functional system, there is little point in spending more money as these processes will remain project-driven with limited national ownership or sustainability. This needs to be considered as countries are encouraged to develop new proposals and expectations are raised.

5. PROJECT PERFORMANCE RATINGS

Criterion	Evaluator Summary Comments	Evaluator Rating
Attainment of project objectives and results (overall rating) **Sub criteria (below)**	The first and second outcomes were mostly achieved. Limited progress with the third outcome, largely due to the lack of enabling conditions at the country level.	S

Criterion	Evaluator Summary Comments	Evaluator Rating
Effectiveness	Effective implementation arrangements were the project's strongest quality. The project team demonstrated good adaptive management capabilities.	HS
Relevance	Direct link to country obligations under the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. Flexibility and availability of options increased country relevance.	S
Efficiency	Effective administrative and financial arrangements (MOUs, retainer contracts, simplified disbursements) were applied and use of project resources was generally efficient. The purchase of computers with country grants was cost-ineffective and unnecessary in many cases.	S
Sustainability of Project outcomes (overall rating) **Sub criteria (below)**	The lack of enabling conditions and operational biosafety frameworks undermines the sustainability of capacity improvements in most countries. Training materials are available for future use.	U
Financial	Biosafety has low budget priority in most countries.	U
Socio Political	Lack of biosafety practices; low policy priority in most countries.	U
Institutional framework and governance	Institutional mandates and coordination for biosafety are lacking in most countries.	U
Ecological	Biosafety practices are still lacking in most countries.	U
Achievement of outputs and activities	Very effective delivery in general, despite low achievement of outputs under outcome 3.	S

Criterion	Evaluator Summary Comments	Evaluator Rating
Monitoring and Evaluation (overall rating) **Sub criteria (below)**	Project monitoring tools and practices helped coordination and delivery on a global scale.	HS
M&E Design	The project intended to develop country baselines to measure progress. The inclusion of ANUBIS and MOODLE facilitated monitoring and knowledge management.	HS
M&E Plan Implementation (use for adaptive management)	Very effective use of management information systems and regional advisors assisted monitoring on global scale. The project team has documented lessons learned from implementation.	HS
Budgeting and Funding for M&E activities	Regional coordinators did not have monitoring or travel budgets.	MU
Catalytic Role	The project reactivated biosafety discussions and connected stakeholders in many countries. However its effect on national policies or practice was limited.	MU
Preparation and readiness	Project design built on the experience of earlier biosafety initiatives. Design was aided by country needs assessment surveys, technical advice and peer reviews. Project team demonstrated effective adaptive management capabilities.	HS
Country ownership / driveness	Project design and implementation arrangements encouraged country ownership. National in-kind contributions often exceeded project grant. However, country BCH and biosafety processes are project-driven and require external support.	S
Stakeholders involvement	Varied by country and institutions.	S

Criterion	Evaluator Summary Comments	Evaluator Rating
Financial planning	Country grants were sufficient for the planned scale of activities in most cases. Budget revisions enabled the recruitment of regional coordinators, which were not included in the approved budget.	S
UNEP Supervision and backstopping	Efficient administrative and backstopping support was provided by UNEP despite the project's global scale. UNDP performance was criticized in most countries where it participated.	S
Overall Rating	Project impacts were limited by the lack of operational biosafety frameworks and enabling conditions in most countries; and by the brevity of project interventions.	S

Rating Scale:

Highly Satisfactory (HS): The project had no shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of relevance, effectiveness or efficiency.

Satisfactory (S): The project had minor shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of relevance, effectiveness or efficiency.

Moderately Satisfactory (MS): The project had moderate shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of relevance, effectiveness or efficiency.

Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): The project had significant shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of relevance, effectiveness or efficiency.

Unsatisfactory (U) The project had major shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of relevance, effectiveness or efficiency.

Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): The project had severe shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives, in terms of relevance, effectiveness or efficiency.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- **The regional advisor network should be continued. It retains biosafety and IT expertise in the region, knows how to move at the country level and understands the UNEP project cycle.**

The main stakeholders promoting the Cartagena Protocol – the CBD secretariat, UNEP-GEF biosafety focal points, signatory countries – should ensure that regional advisory teams participate in future biosafety initiatives when feasible. Aside from their demonstrated usefulness in training and technical assistance, further involvement is important to reap full benefit and justify the investment made in their recruitment and training. Without continued involvement the advisors will gradually disband as people move on. With few exceptions (Armenia and Macedonia) interviewed regional advisors had not received support requests from countries after terminating project activities and closing MOUs. Presently, the advisors can play a role in improving translations of BCH central portal and training materials where needed (for example the Russian version), assist the formulation of a new global project, or help UNEP appraise the draft proposals that are being designed in many countries.

- **Future project support should help countries consolidate their national biosafety frameworks, addressing needs in legislation, policy and coordination in addition to technical capacity building.**

The NBF process needs to advance in many countries before technical capacity improvements can be internalized and put to use. Many countries still lack the enabling conditions to fulfill their obligations to the Cartagena Protocol and cannot apply the knowledge derived from the BCH project. The insertion of the BCH project within a broader capacity building approach makes sense and is closer to national realities.

- **Training and technical support need to be adjusted to different levels of national capacity and need, as done by the BCH project.**

A "one size fits all approach" is not useful to anyone at this stage. Three of the five countries visited were preparing project proposals for continued support on BCH and other biosafety needs. The proposals have been designed with the encouragement and guidance of regional coordinators and UNEP staff. In Guatemala, BCH training materials are used at project formulation workshops financed by GEF project development assistance. All countries are proposing medium-size projects that include "hands-on" BCH guidance within a wider menu of support needs.

- **The overriding need at present is to assist countries in generating the enabling conditions for biosafety practices to take hold.**

This requires more than training or equipment. Project funds need to be earmarked for the legal and technical consultancies, lobbying and coordination efforts that are needed in many countries to move biosafety agendas forward. If country eligibility is to be more closely screened on the

basis of national commitment and enabling conditions, UNEP-GEF support needs to be channeled in that direction.

There are fundamental needs that are shared by many countries. These include approving and operationalizing biosafety laws; sensitizing decision-makers; exploring financing and cost-recuperation mechanisms; and practical training on LMO monitoring and risk analysis. They offer opportunities for country mentoring and peer-to-peer collaboration that weren't available under the BCH project. In some cases technical support could be subcontracted to competent regional institutions - or regional advisors - to streamline expenditures and build regional synergy. [29] This may be important if GEF replenishments are affected by present global financial conditions, [30] lowering funding possibilities for medium-size country projects.

- **The DGEF SPO responsible for biosafety should ensure that future projects consider "exit strategies" that will enable them to consolidate BCH and other biosafety capacities in countries and target future project resources.**

Political and budgetary realities need to be considered: Countries that have ratified the Cartagena Protocol are automatically eligible to receive support regardless of actual commitment or enabling conditions. On the other hand, funding for global biosafety projects is not infinite. At some point UNEP may need to focus resources on developing countries with nascent frameworks that have created their own momentum and are "taking off"; or channel enabling support to lagging countries where opportunities to apply biosafety knowledge and capacities remain low. Contracting a wider range of support services to regional advisors (or involving area institutions) should also be considered to encourage regional dynamics and synergy.

- **Periodic "reality checks" of country biosafety preparedness need to be in place to make better use of project opportunities and resources.**

Data and links available from the BCH central portal could assist this endeavor. Improved country screening – for example, monitoring national progress on selected biosafety indicators - would help UNEP focus resources on countries that are moving forward, raising the catalytic effect of its assistance. Project support could be linked to country-to-country mentoring arrangements on transboundary movements and others issues of mutual interest. Institutional and social actors vary from country to country, and project designer's needs to understand who the key movers are. These could be individual persons, seed companies, grain producers, import-export firms, university faculties or NGOs – and not only the traditional UNEP-GEF partners in the ministries. The regional advisors can play a role in formulating the next round of projects according to specific country and regional needs; monitor country progress in developing biosafety frameworks; and assist in raising country preparedness.

[29] The Costa Rica-based IICA center recently gave training on LMO risk analysis to Central American countries at a regional workshop.
[30] A concern raised in Eastern Europe and Latin America.

ANNEXES:

List of Persons Interviewed
Documents Reviewed
BCH Project Financial Statement
Evaluation Terms of Reference

ANNEX 1

LIST OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED

BCH Project Team

Jyoti Mathur-Filipp, Project Manager
Lydia Eibl-Kamolleh, Administrative Coordinator
Prakash Bista, Regional Coordinator – Asia and Pacific *
Ernesto Ocampo, Regional Specialist/Coordinator – Latin America
Marydelene Vazquez, Regional Specialist/Coordinator – Caribbean *

Regional Advisors

B. Bogale - Ethiopia
B. Anoshenko – CEE *
E. Revilla – Latin America *
F. Machado – Latin America
C. Fellegi - Uruguay

CBS Secretariat

G. Ferraiolo, BCH Focal Point *

Albania

Z. Dedej, Ministry of Environment / National Project Director
A. Koci, National Project Coordinator
P. Abeshi, General Secretary, Ministry of Environment
R. Troja, Faculty of Natural Sciences, University of Tirana
A. Bacu, Chief Biotechnology Department, University of Tirana
E. Kongjika, Director, Biological Research Institute
A. Luzati, Institute of Public Health
L. Ferruni, Head, Organic Agriculture Association

Belize

Michael De Shield, National Project Coordinator *

Costa Rica

M. Jimenez, National Project Coordinator *

Ethiopia

W. Tesfaye - National Project Director / Environmental Protection Agency
B. Geda – National Project Coordinator / Environmental Protection Agency
A. Wuke – Environmental Protection Agency
M. Endale – Quality & Standards Authority
D. Michael – Institute for Sustainable Development

Mongolia

B. Endes, National Project Coordinator / Ministry of Nature & Environment
S. Bayarkhuu, General Secretary, National Biosafety Committee, Ministry of Nature & Environment
J. Saule, Vice-Minister of Food, Agriculture and Light Industry
B. Badral, Head, Agricultural Land Management Division, Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Light Industry

Uruguay

V. Canton, Director, National Directorate for the Environment / National Project Coordinator
A. Torres, Director of Environment, Ministry of Housing, Territorial Planning & Environment
H. Almirati, Director-General, Minisrtry of Livestock and Agriculture
S. Fernandez, International Cooperation Advisor, Ministry of Housing, Territorial Planning & Environment
R. Elissalde, Advisor, Ministry of Housing, Territorial Planning & Environment
E. Benech, President, National Seed Institute
D. Bayce, Manager, Uruguayan Seed Chamber

* Contacted by phone interview or e-mail questionnaire

ANNEX 2

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

"Building Capacity for Participation in the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH)" Phase I Project Document (2005)

"Building Capacity for Participation in the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH)" Phase I Revised Brief (no date)

BCH Mid-Term Review (J. Kinderlerer, 2007)

BCH Project Implementation Reports (PIR): 2006-2008

BCH Project Revisions: A-E

BCH Bi-Annual Progress Reports: 2006-2008

BCH Training Modules and Case Studies

BCH Project Status Report (October 2008)

"The Global UNEP-GEF BCH Capacity Building Project: Learning from Experience" (April 2008)

Informal Advisory Committee of the BCH: Minutes of Meetings (November 2004, February/October 2007)

Memoranda of Understanding: Albania, Belize, Guatemala, Ethiopia, Mongolia, Uruguay
Project Identification Form (May 2008)

"Project Inception Workshop on Biosafety Implementation" – Power Point presentation (July, 2007)

"UNEP-GEF Project for Building Capacity for Effective Participation in the BCH - Phase II": Project Identification Form (May 2008)

Various documents and statistics contained in the ANUBIS data base

ANNEX 3

BCH PROJECT FINANCIAL STATEMENT (JUNE 2009)

Biosafety Clearing House Project

GFL/2328-2716-4771/Rev04

GF/6010-04-02

UNEP BUDGET LINE/OBJECT OF EXPENDITURE	Current Budget						
	2004	2005	2006	2007 Actual	Actual 2008	Planned for 2009	Total GEF Funding
	US$	US$	US$	US$	US$		US$
10 PROJECT PERSONNEL COMPONENT							
1100 Project Personnel							
1101 Project Manager	129,284	143,483	163,102	171,639.62	181,907.74	-	789,416.30
1102 IT Specialist	48,535	97,391	101,943	112,470.20	33,672.38	-	394,011.45
1103 Task Manager Afric/Mid East	-	123,183	133,684	145,449.83	166,999.55	30,000	599,316.73
1104 Task Manager CEECCA	-	-	124,131	120,013.18	138,393.19	95,000	382,537.14
1199 Subtotal	**177,819**	**364,057**	**522,859**	**549,572.83**	**520,972.86**	**125,000**	**2,165,281.62**
1200 Consultants							
1201 Consultants	6,574	77,239	53,229	(275.13)	31,280.00	27,000	195,046.39
1202 Consultant for Training Material	-	1,700	12,750	-	-	-	14,450.00
1203 Consultant for Translation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1299 Subtotal	**6,574**	**78,939**	**65,979**	**(275.13)**	**31,280.00**	**27,000**	**209,496.39**
1300 Administrative Support							
1301 Administrative Assistant	40,768	72,502	78,264	85,369.99	3,058.51	-	279,961.82
1321 Temporary Assistance	-	19,300	4,100	20,115.27	51,331.49	17,000	111,846.61
1381 UNOG/UNON Support	9,741	16,545	25,787	53,337.78	-	-	105,410.33
1399 Subtotal	**50,509**	**108,347**	**108,150**	**158,823.04**	**54,390.00**	**17,000**	**497,218.76**
1600 Mission Travel							
1601 Team Travel	51,726	84,513	150,343	231,471.20	125,374.43	25,000	668,427.53
1603 Travel Visa	-	-	-	2,147.50	-	-	2,147.50
1699 Subtotal	**51,726**	**84,513**	**150,343**	**233,618.70**	**125,374.43**	**25,000**	**670,575.03**
1999 Component Sub-Total	**286,628**	**635,856**	**847,331**	**941,739.44**	**732,017.29**	**194,000**	**3,542,571.80**
20 SUB-CONTRACT COMPONENT							
2100 Sub-contracts							
2101 Multicountry Training Activities Development and Management	179,535	18,474	(34,223)	-	-	-	163,786.70
2102 Country-Level Procurement and Training Activities	-	172,743	1,504,343	2,174,848.35	526,394.75	585,000	4,963,329.19

	2103 UNOPS (INCL mki RA Travel+DSA)	-	186,050	428,762	1,038,856.84	1,100,676.00	320,479	3,074,824.25
	2199 Subtotal	**179,535**	**377,267**	**1,898,883**	**3,213,705.19**	**1,627,070.75**	**905,479**	**8,201,940.14**
	2999 Component Sub-Total	**179,535**	**377,267**	**1,898,883**	**3,213,705.19**	**1,627,070.75**	**905,479**	**8,201,940.14**
30 TRAINING COMPONENT								
	3300 Technical Meetings							
	3301 BCH Meetings	-	27,911	6,347	237.92	(3,939.38)	-	30,556.17
	3302 Project Steering Committee	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	3303 ToT and RA Workshops 2 glb & 5		255,910	-	96,337.16	795,263.06	-	1,147,510.57
	3304 Sub-Regional Training	-	-	12,427	205,851.78	59,856.53	151,000	429,135.30
	3399 Subtotal	**-**	**283,821**	**18,774**	**302,426.86**	**851,180.21**	**151,000**	**1,607,202.04**
	3999 Component Sub-Total	**-**	**283,821**	**18,774**	**302,426.86**	**851,180.21**	**151,000**	**1,607,202.04**
40 EQUIPMENT COMPONENT								
	4100 Expendable equipment							
	4101 Office supplies	71	-	7,262	2,013.86	(44.76)	500	9,802.07
	4199 Subtotal	**71**	**-**	**7,262**	**2,013.86**	**(44.76)**	**500**	**9,802.07**
	4200 Non- Expendable equipment							
	4201 UNOG Rental					29,702.84	(29,703)	-
	4202 Office equipment / furniture	-	-	2,189	364.31	2,614.04	-	5,167.72
	4203 Office rental and maintenance	-	16,126	20,000	12,209.00	4,500.00	1	52,835.98
	4299 Subtotal	**-**	**16,126**	**22,189**	**12,573.31**	**36,816.88**	**(29,702)**	**58,003.70**
	4999 Component Sub- Total	**71**	**16,126**	**29,452**	**14,587.17**	**36,772.12**	**(29,202)**	**67,805.77**
50 MISCELLANEOUS COMPONENT								
	5200 Reporting costs							
	5201 Publication of relevant documents and reports	15,872	-	-	5,360.38	12,024.35	-	33,256.31
	5299 Subtotal	**15,872**	**-**	**-**	**5,360.38**	**12,024.35**	**-**	**33,256.31**
	5300 Sundry							
	5301 Communication and mailing costs	2,781	7,734	10,106	21,727.78	10,574.66	1	52,923.94
	5399 Subtotal	**2,781**	**7,734**	**10,106**	**21,727.78**	**10,574.66**	**1**	**52,923.94**
	5500 Evaluation							
	5501 Evaluation costs		-	-	-	-	15,000	15,000.00
	5599 Subtotal	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**15,000**	**15,000.00**
	5999 Component Sub-Total	**18,652**	**7,734**	**10,106**	**27,088.16**	**22,599.01**	**15,001**	**101,180.25**
	GRAND TOTAL GEF FINANCING	**484,887**	**1,320,804**	**2,804,545**	**4,499,546.82**	**3,269,639.38**	**1,236,278**	**13,520,700.00**

	13,520,700.00

ANNEX 4

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Objective and Scope of the Evaluation

The aim of this terminal evaluation is to establish whether the project achieved its objective of building the capacity of 139 countries to access and use the BCH effectively**.** The evaluation will also assess project performance and the implementation of planned project activities and planned outputs against actual results. In addition, the evaluation will review the recommendations of the mid term Evaluation and their implementation. The evaluation will focus on the following main questions:

1. Did the project strengthen capacities of potential users of BCH in relevant ministries and other institutions to fulfil requirements of CPB with reference to BCH?
2. Did the project improve the physical infrastructure of national BCH components ?
3. Did the project build sustainable capacity to use and access the BCH in country and regionally?

2. Methods

This terminal evaluation will be conducted as an in-depth evaluation using a participatory approach whereby the UNEP/DGEF Task Manager, key representatives of UNEP and other relevant staff are kept informed and regularly consulted throughout the evaluation. The consultant will liaise with the UNEP Evaluation and Oversight Unit (EOU) and the UNEP DGEF Task Manager on any logistic and/or methodological issues to properly conduct the review in as independent a way as possible, given the circumstances and resources offered. The draft report will be circulated to UNEP/DGEF Task Manager and the UNEP/EOU. Any comments or responses to the draft report will be sent to UNEP / EOU for collation and the consultant will be advised of any necessary revisions.

The findings of the evaluation will be based on the following:

1. A desk review of project documents including, but not limited to:
   (a) The project documents, outputs, monitoring reports (such as progress and financial reports to UNEP and GEF annual Project Implementation Review reports) and relevant correspondence.
   (b) Notes from the Steering Group meetings.
   (c) Other BCH-related material produced by the project staff or partners.
   (d) Relevant material published on the project web-site: www.unep.ch/biosafety.

2. Interviews with project management and technical support including the current BCH team based in Switzerland and key actors involved, including the Secretariat for the Convention on Biological Diversity.

3. Interviews and Telephone interviews with users for the project outputs and other stakeholders involved with this project, including in the 139 participating countries and the Regional Advisors and other international bodies. The Consultant shall determine whether to seek additional information and opinions from representatives of donor agencies and other organisations. As appropriate, these interviews will be combined with an email questionnaire.

4. Interviews with the UNEP/DGEF Project Task Manager and Fund Management Officer, and other relevant staff in UNEP dealing with biosafety-related activities as necessary. The Consultant shall also gain broader perspectives from discussions with relevant GEF Secretariat staff.

5. Country visits to Kenya, Mongolia, Uruguay, Guatemala, Albania, Belize and Ethiopia.

Key Evaluation principles.
In attempting to evaluate any outcomes and impacts that the project may have achieved, evaluators should remember that the project's performance should be assessed by considering the difference between the answers to two simple questions ***"what happened?***" and ***"what would have happened anyway?"***. These questions imply that there should be consideration of the baseline conditions and trends in relation to the intended project outcomes and impacts. In addition it implies that there should be plausible evidence to attribute such outcomes and impacts to the actions of the project.

Sometimes, adequate information on baseline conditions and trends is lacking. In such cases this should be clearly highlighted by the evaluator, along with any simplifying assumptions that were taken to enable the evaluator to make informed judgements about project performance.

3. Project Ratings

The success of project implementation will be rated on a scale from 'highly unsatisfactory' to 'highly satisfactory'. In particular the evaluation shall assess and rate the project with respect to the eleven categories defined below:[31]

A. Attainment of objectives and planned results:
The evaluation should assess the extent to which the project's major relevant objectives were effectively and efficiently achieved or are expected to be achieved and their relevance.

- *Effectiveness:* Evaluate how, and to what extent, the stated project objectives have been met, taking into account the "achievement indicators". In particular, the analysis of outcomes achieved should include, *inter alia*, an assessment of the extent to which the project has resulted into sustainable capacity to use and access the BCH in the 139 participating countries and regionally?

  As far as possible, also assess the potential longer-term impacts considering that the evaluation is taking place upon completion of the project and that longer-term impact is expected to be seen in a few years time. Frame recommendations to enhance future project impact in this context. Which will be the major 'channels' for longer term impact from the project at the national and regional scales? The evaluation should formulate recommendations that outline possible approaches and necessary actions to facilitate an impact assessment study in a few years time.
- *Relevance*: In retrospect, were the project's outcomes consistent with the focal areas/operational program strategies? Ascertain the nature and significance of the contribution of the project outcomes to the wider portfolio of the UNEP.
- *Efficiency*: Was the project cost effective? Was the project the least cost option? Was the project implementation delayed and if it was, then did that affect cost-effectiveness? Assess the contribution of cash and in-kind co-financing to project implementation and to what extent the project leveraged additional resources. Did the project build on earlier initiatives, did it make effective use of available scientific and / or technical information. Wherever possible, the evaluator should also compare the cost-time vs. outcomes relationship of the project with that of other similar projects.

B. Assessment of Risks to Sustainability of project outcomes:

[31] However, the views and comments expressed by the evaluator need not be restricted to these items.

Sustainability is understood as the probability of continued long-term project-derived outcomes and impacts after the project funding ends. The 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, e.g. stronger institutional capacities or better informed decision-making. Other factors will include contextual circumstances or developments that are not outcomes of the project but that are relevant to the sustainability of outcomes. The evaluation should ascertain to what extent follow-up work has been initiated and how project outcomes will be sustained and enhanced over time.

Four aspects of sustainability should be addressed: financial, socio-political, institutional frameworks and governance, and environmental. The following questions provide guidance on the assessment of these aspects:

- *Financial resources.* Are there any financial risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project outcomes? What is the likelihood that financial and economic resources will not be available once the GEF assistance ends (resources can be from multiple sources, such as the public and private sectors, income generating activities, and trends that may indicate that it is likely that in future there will be adequate financial resources for sustaining project's outcomes)? To what extent are the outcomes of the project dependent on continued financial support?
- *Socio-political:* Are there any social or political risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project outcomes? What is the risk that the level of stakeholder ownership will be insufficient to allow for the project outcomes to be sustained? Do the various key stakeholders see that it is in their interest that the project benefits continue to flow? Is there sufficient public / stakeholder awareness in support of the long term objectives of the project?
- *Institutional framework and governance.* To what extent is the sustenance of the outcomes of the project dependent on issues relating to institutional frameworks and governance? What is the likelihood that institutional and technical achievements, legal frameworks, policies and governance structures and processes will allow for, the project outcomes/benefits to be sustained? While responding to these questions consider if the required systems for accountability and transparency and the required technical know-how are in place.
- *Environmental.* Are there any environmental risks that can undermine the future flow of project environmental benefits? The TE should assess whether certain activities in the project area will pose a threat to the sustainability of the project outcomes?

C. Achievement of outputs and activities:

- Delivered outputs: Assessment of the project's success in producing each of the programmed outputs, both in quantity and quality as well as usefulness and timeliness.
- Assess the soundness and effectiveness of the methodologies used for developing the technical documents and related management options in the targeted project area.
- Assess to what 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.

The evaluation shall include an assessment of the quality, application and effectiveness of project monitoring and evaluation plans and tools, including an assessment of risk management based on

the assumptions and risks identified in the project document. The Terminal Evaluation will assess whether the project met the minimum requirements for 'project design of M&E' and 'the application of the Project M&E plan' (see minimum requirements 1&2 in Annex 4). GEF projects must budget adequately for execution of the M&E plan, and provide adequate resources during implementation of the M&E plan. Project managers are also expected to use the information generated by the M&E system during project implementation to adapt and improve the project.

M&E during project implementation

- *M&E design.* Projects should have sound M&E plans to monitor results and track progress towards achieving project objectives. An M&E plan should include a baseline (including data, methodology, etc.), SMART indicators (see Annex 4) and data analysis systems, and evaluation studies at specific times to assess results. The time frame for various M&E activities and standards for outputs should have been specified.
- *M&E plan implementation.* A Terminal Evaluation should verify that: an M&E system was in place and facilitated timely tracking of results and progress towards projects objectives throughout the project implementation period (perhaps through use of a logframe or similar); annual project reports and Progress Implementation Review (PIR) reports were complete, accurate and with well justified ratings; that the information provided by the M&E system was used during the project to improve project performance and to adapt to changing needs; and that projects had an M&E system in place with proper training for parties responsible for M&E activities.
- *Budgeting and Funding for M&E activities.* The terminal evaluation should determine whether support for M&E was budgeted adequately and was funded in a timely fashion during implementation.

E. Replicability/Catalytic role:
What examples are there of replication and catalytic outcomes? Replication approach, in the context of GEF projects, is defined as lessons and experiences coming out of the project that are replicated or scaled up in the design and implementation of other projects. Replication can have two aspects, replication proper (lessons and experiences are replicated in different geographic area) or scaling up (lessons and experiences are replicated within the same geographic area but funded by other sources). Specifically: Evaluation should describe the catalytic or replication actions that the project carried out.

Assess whether the project has potential to be replicated, either in terms of expansion, extension or replication in other countries and/or regions and whether any steps have been taken by the project to do so and the relevance and feasibility of these steps

F. Preparation and Readiness
Were the project's objectives and components clear, practicable and feasible within its timeframe? Were the capacities of executing institution and counterparts properly considered when the project was designed? Were lessons from other relevant projects properly incorporated in the project design? Were the partnership arrangements properly identified and the roles and responsibilities negotiated prior to project implementation? Were counterpart resources (funding, staff, and facilities), enabling legislation, and adequate project management arrangements in place?

G. Country ownership/driveness:
This is the relevance of the project to national development and environmental agendas, recipient country commitment, and regional and international agreements. Examples of possible evaluative questions include: Was the project design in-line with the national sectoral and development

priorities and plans? Are project outcomes contributing to national development priorities and plans? Were the relevant country representatives, from government and civil society, involved in the project? Did the recipient government maintain its financial commitment to the project? The evaluation will:

- Assess the level of country ownership. Specifically, the evaluator should assess whether the project was effective in providing and communicating information that catalyzed action in participating countries to improve decisions relating to the Bio safety Clearing House (BCH).
- Assess the level of country commitment to Strengthened capacities of potential users of BCH in relevant ministries and other institutions in order to fulfill requirements of CPB with reference to BCH.
- Assess the level of country support to the improvement of the physical infrastructure of national BCH components.

H. Stakeholder participation / public awareness:

This consists of three related and often overlapping processes: information dissemination, consultation, and "stakeholder" participation. Stakeholders are the individuals, groups, institutions, or other bodies that have an interest or stake in the outcome of the UNEP financed project. The term also applies to those potentially adversely affected by a project. The evaluation will specifically:

- Assess the mechanisms put in place by the project for identification and engagement of stakeholders and establish, in consultation with the stakeholders, whether this mechanism was successful, and identify its strengths and weaknesses.
- Assess the degree and effectiveness of collaboration/interactions between the various project partners and institutions during the course of implementation of the project.
- Assess the degree and effectiveness of various public awareness activities that were undertaken during the course of implementation of the project.

I. Financial Planning

Evaluation of financial planning requires assessment of the quality and effectiveness of financial planning and control of financial resources throughout the project's lifetime. Evaluation includes actual project costs by activities compared to budget (variances), financial management (including disbursement issues), and co- financing. The evaluation should:

- Assess the strength and utility of financial controls, including reporting, and planning to allow the project management to make informed decisions regarding the budget and allow for a proper and timely flow of funds for the payment of satisfactory project deliverables.
- Present the major findings from the financial audit if one has been conducted.
- Identify and verify the sources of co- financing as well as leveraged and associated financing (in co-operation with the IA and EA).
- Assess whether the project has applied appropriate standards of due diligence in the management of funds and financial audits.
- The evaluation should also include a breakdown of final actual costs and co-financing for the project prepared in consultation with the relevant UNON/DGEF Fund Management Officer of the project. (Table attached in Annex 2 Co-financing and leveraged resources).

J. **Implementation approach**:

This includes an analysis of the project's management framework, adaptation to changing conditions (adaptive management), partnerships in implementation arrangements, changes in project design, and overall project management. The evaluation will:

- Ascertain to what extent the project implementation mechanisms outlined in the project document have been closely followed. In particular, assess the role of the various committees established and whether the project document was clear and realistic to enable effective and efficient implementation, whether the project was executed according to the plan and how well the management was able to adapt to changes during the life of the project to enable the implementation of the project.
- Assess the effectiveness of the Regional Advisors system as tool for project execution, its replicability and longer-term sustainability.
- Evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency and adaptability of project management and the supervision of project activities / project execution arrangements at all levels (1) policy decisions: Steering Group; (2) day to day project management.
- Assess the effectiveness of supervision and administrative and financial support provided by UNEP/GEF.
- Identify administrative, operational and/or technical problems and constraints that influenced the effective implementation of the project.
- Assess whether the logical framework was used during implementation as a management tool and whether feedback from M&E activities more broadly was used for adaptive management.

K. UNEP Supervision and Backstopping

- Assess the effectiveness of supervision and administrative and financial support provided by UNEP/DGEF.
- Identify administrative, operational and/or technical problems and constraints that influenced the effective implementation of the project.

The *ratings will be presented in the form of a table*. Each of the eleven categories should be rated separately with brief justifications based on the findings of the main analysis. An overall rating for the project should also be given. The following rating system is to be applied:

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

4. <u>Evaluation report format and review procedures</u>

The report should be brief, to the point and easy to understand. It must explain; the purpose of the evaluation, exactly what was evaluated and the methods used. The report must highlight any methodological limitations, identify key concerns and present evidence-based findings, consequent conclusions, recommendations and lessons. The report should be presented in a way that makes the information accessible and comprehensible and include an executive summary that encapsulates the essence of the information contained in the report to facilitate dissemination and distillation of lessons.

The evaluation will rate the overall implementation success of the project and provide individual ratings of the eleven implementation aspects as described in Section 3 of this TOR. *The ratings will be presented in the format of a table* **<u>with brief justifications based on the</u> findings of the main analysis.**

Evidence, findings, conclusions and recommendations should be presented in a complete and balanced manner. Any dissident views in response to evaluation findings will be appended in an annex. The

evaluation report shall be written in English, be of no more than 50 pages (excluding annexes), use numbered paragraphs and include:

i) An **executive summary** (no more than 3 pages) providing a brief overview of the main conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation;

ii) **Introduction and background** giving a brief overview of the evaluated project, for example, the objective and status of activities; The GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy, 2006, requires that a TE report will provide summary information on when the evaluation took place; places visited; who was involved; the key questions; and, the methodology.

iii) **Scope, objective and methods** presenting the evaluation's purpose, the evaluation criteria used and questions to be addressed;

iv) **Project Performance and Impact** providing *factual evidence* relevant to the questions asked by the evaluator and interpretations of such evidence. This is the main substantive section of the report. The evaluator should provide a commentary and analysis on all eleven evaluation aspects (A − K above).

v) **Conclusions and rating** of project implementation success giving the evaluator's concluding assessments and ratings of the project against given evaluation criteria and standards of performance. The conclusions should provide answers to questions about whether the project is considered good or bad, and whether the results are considered positive or negative. The ratings should be provided with a brief narrative comment in a table (see Annex 1);

vi) **Lessons (to be) learned** presenting general conclusions from the standpoint of the design and implementation of the project, based on good practices and successes or problems and mistakes. Lessons should have the potential for wider application and use. All lessons should 'stand alone' and should:

- Briefly describe the context from which they are derived
- State or imply some prescriptive action;
- Specify the contexts in which they may be applied (if possible, who when and where)

vii) **Recommendations** suggesting *actionable* proposals for improvement of the current project. In general, Terminal Evaluations are likely to have very few (perhaps two or three) actionable recommendations.

Prior to each recommendation, the issue(s) or problem(s) to be addressed by the recommendation should be clearly stated.

A high quality recommendation is an actionable proposal that is:

1. Feasible to implement within the timeframe and resources available
2. Commensurate with the available capacities of project team and partners
3. Specific in terms of who would do what and when
4. Contains results-based language (i.e. a measurable performance target)
5. Includes a trade-off analysis, when its implementation may require utilizing significant resources that would otherwise be used for other project purposes.

viii) **Annexes** may include additional material deemed relevant by the evaluator but must include:

1. The Evaluation Terms of Reference,
2. A list of interviewees, and evaluation timeline
3. A list of documents reviewed / consulted
4. Summary co-finance information and a statement of project expenditure by activity

5. The expertise of the evaluation team. (brief CV).

TE reports will also include any response / comments from the project management team and/or the country focal point regarding the evaluation findings or conclusions as an annex to the report, however, such will be appended to the report by UNEP EOU.

Examples of UNEP GEF Terminal Evaluation Reports are available at www.unep.org/eou

Review of the Draft Evaluation Report

Draft reports shall be submitted to the Chief of Evaluation. The Chief of Evaluation will share the report with the corresponding Programme or Project Officer and his or her supervisor for initial review and consultation. The DGEF staff and senior Executing Agency staff are allowed to comment on the draft evaluation report. They may provide feedback on any errors of fact and may highlight the significance of such errors in any conclusions. The consultation also seeks feedback on the proposed recommendations. UNEP EOU collates all review comments and provides them to the evaluators for their consideration in preparing the final version of the report.