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| 1. Project Data : | | | |
| OEDID: | TG005 | | |
| Project ID: | P008562 | | |
| Project Name : | Forest Biodiversity Project | | |
| Country: | Poland | | |
| Sector: | Forestry | | |
| L/C Number: | TG005 | | |
| Partners involved : | Austrian Government | | |
| Prepared by : | Wilfred Candler, OEDST | | |
| Reviewed by : | Hernan Levy | | |
| Group Manager : | Roger Slade | | |
| Date Posted : | 05/01/1998 | | |

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| 2. Project Objectives, Financing, Costs and Components : | | | |
| Protection of globally significant Polish forest biological diversity at four levels, genetic (molecular), species, association and landscape (ecosystem), through a balanced approach of <i>in situ</i> and <i>ex situ</i> measures. As a pilot GEF project it was also to gain experience with environmental benefits, replicability, sustainability, monitoring and evaluation. A GEF grant of US\$4.5 million and US\$0.3 million from the government of Austria and US\$3.6 million from the government of Poland, were spent on <i>in situ</i> conservation of the Bialowieza Primordial Forest (US\$ 1.75 million) and a gene bank and other <i>ex situ</i> conservation activities for the Sudety Mountain badly damaged forests (US\$4.32). Policy reform, training, technical assistance and institutional development featured in the package. | | | |

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| 3. Achievement of Relevant Objectives : | | | |
| The project achieved an attitudinal shift towards more ecologically sensitive forest policies. It reinforced other initiatives which resulted in the Bialowieza Primeval Forest National Park being expanded and the creation of a buffer zone around the park. It resulted in international co-operation with the Czech Republic and the Ukraine to protect the highly degraded Sudety ecosystem. It provided a gene bank to protect germ plasm for threatened species, so that they could be re-established once acid rain and air pollution depositions decrease. It demonstrated the use of GEF funds for transfer of ecological technology to a Ministry with little initial expertise in this area. | | | |

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| 4. Significant Achievements : | | | |
| The project was extended modestly beyond its original objectives, as by its extension from the Bialowieza forest to the neighbouring Beloveskaya Forest in Belarus, to the Sudety Mountains in the Czech republic, in extending the scope of materials stored in the gene bank, and extended use of the GIS (Geographical Information System) beyond the initial forest areas. | | | |

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| 5. Significant Shortcomings : | | | |
| Frequent changes in the top officials in the Ministries of Forestry and the Environment (3 replacements of the under-secretary and of the state forest director) during the project. An initial reluctance to accept technical assistance helped delay implementation by 14 months, and the actual construction cost for the (somewhat expanded) gene bank turned out to be twice the appraised estimate. | | | |

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| 6. Ratings : | ICR | OED Review | Reason for Disagreement /Comments |
| Outcome : | Satisfactory | Satisfactory | |
| Institutional Dev. : | Substantial | Substantial | |
| Sustainability : | Likely | Likely | |
| Bank Performance : | Satisfactory | Satisfactory | |
| Borrower Perf. : | Satisfactory | Satisfactory | |
| Quality of ICR : | | Satisfactory | |

7. Lessons of Broad Applicability :

The ICR claims that the project shows *in situ* conservation to be more cost effective than *ex situ* conservation; and that unless *in situ* conservation is directly linked to *ex situ*, the latter is likely to be jeopardised. This lesson is probably more site specific and degradation specific, than recognised by the ICR. Nevertheless it provides a useful hypothesis to guide the design of other GEF projects .

8. Audit Recommended? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Why? Pioneer GEF project in a formerly centrally planned economy . Apparently successful, especially in stimulating cross-border cooperation. Also provides a comparison of *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation, and problems with a forest eco-system under threat, and one which has been very badly damaged .

9. Comments on Quality of ICR :

The ICR is of good quality, with a good analytical comment from the former director of the Project Implementation Unit (PMU). The ICR would have benefited if more of the substance could have been spelt out. Thus the comments of the PMU director, include allusions to his experience in trying to work with NGOs, which if it had been expanded on in the ICR, could well have usefully raised the consciousness of Bank staff in the appraisal of similar GEF projects . The ICR lacks a plan for future projects operation; and does not include cofinancier's views .