



the greenline

FOCUS ON BIODIVERSITY

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Contents

Letter from the CEO.....	2
Implementing GEF's Biodiversity Strategy: Results from the Field	4
Indigenous Communities and Biodiversity	8
GEF's Engagement in the International Year of Biodiversity	9
Cartagena de Indias and the Cartagena Protocol on Biodiversity (CPB)	10
2010 Biodiversity Indicators Partnership: Measuring Global Biodiversity Trends to Support National and International Policy makers.....	12
Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs (CTI), Fisheries and Food Security	15
GEF Program for Sustainable Forest Management in the Congo Basin	18
GEF is implementing the Strategic Program on Technology Transfer	20
4 th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention adds nine new POPs under control of the Convention	21
First Review Meeting for the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management Calls on the GEF for Support	23
News on the Country Portfolio Evaluations 2008-2009	24
On the status of OPS4	25
A project for Stabilization of Ravines along River Mahi.....	26
World Environment Day commemoration In Lesotho.....	29
The best part of Humphrey Year	31
Investing in Sustainable Urban Transport.....	32
Cleaning Up: Ridding the World of Dangerous Chemicals.....	32
New Focal Points and Council Members	33
Upcoming Events	34
Credits	34

Letter from the CEO



Dear Colleagues,

I hope the summer finds you well. Here at the GEF we started the season celebrating our 35th meeting of the GEF Council. When these men and women entrusted me to be the CEO of this path-breaking institution three years ago, I made a promise: that with the help and direction of our stakeholders, I would make deep reforms to maximize the impact of GEF investments on the ground. Today because of this shared vision with our partners in the public, private and non-profit sectors we can point to numerous successes: nearly all the recommendations for GEF-4 are now in place. By taking these important steps forward, we have ensured the GEF does not become an antiquated institution, failing to meet the needs of a changing world.

At our latest council meeting we reviewed the progress made by the GEF Agencies with regard to fiduciary standards. We also examined the way the balance of the GEF-4 resources should be reallocated: a task that has been much complicated by the financial crisis. The Secretariat will of course continue to closely monitor the level of available resources and, if necessary, revisit how they should be reallocated.

The council agenda also sought guidance on the method by which we allocate our resources. The current system certainly has many positive aspects: for starters it helped increase the sense of ownership that many recipient countries feel over GEF projects and activities. That being said, the system can still be very much improved. In light of last November's debate and the work of an ad hoc group made up of Council Members last March, the Secretariat worked on various formulas for improvement. It proposed a revamped system for transparent allocation of resources, otherwise known as "STAR". Look for a more detailed discussion of this exciting new framework this fall.

The GEF Council also approved a special initiative designed to build global awareness and catalyze decisive action during the upcoming 2010 International Year of Biodiversity (IYB). As recognized by the United Nations General Assembly, the International Year of Biodiversity is an opportunity for the global community to greatly expand awareness about the impending biodiversity crisis and its crucial role in people's well-being. As the financial mechanism supporting the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the GEF will work with its multitude of partners, including the private sector and civil society to increase global recognition about biodiversity and the need to harness unprecedented support and financial resources.

To that end we highlight our biodiversity focal area in this latest Talking Points newsletter. Among the features I encourage you to read is an update on the innovative work being done in the Congo as part of our Sustainable Forest Management program. Similarly we detail in these pages the latest developments surrounding the Coral Triangle Initiative, another multi-national effort funded largely by

the GEF. This past May six heads of state reaffirmed their commitment to this 1.6 billion acre region that supports some of the world's richest concentration of marine biodiversity.

The two programs I mention here are just two examples of how the GEF is committed to allocating future resources strategically, while accounting for the needs of the most vulnerable, as well as ensuring that we have sufficient operational flexibility.

Replenishment

We hope to continue this vision in the years ahead. At the June Replenishment meeting, the Secretariat shared with its partners three major papers for their consideration in the months ahead. The first one is an adaptation strategy for the LDCF&SCCF; the second one includes our proposed GEF-5 Programming Strategy; and the final document offers a plan for governance reform we hope will help strengthen this institution to meet the changing needs of countries who will need our help more than ever to meet global environmental expectations.

The proposed reform agenda covers:

- enhancing accountability to conventions, including through engagement of conventions at the Council in approval of GEF work programs.
- being more responsive to countries, including piloting direct access
- improving effectiveness and efficiency, by refining the programmatic approach and streamlining the project cycle;
- strengthening funding base, by seeking new donors including foundations and private sector; and
- institutional and legal reform to help the GEF exercise legal capacity to undertake many of the above-mentioned reforms.

Participants also agreed that two representatives of civil society could participate in the GEF Replenishment meetings as observers; and in fact under interim rules, two CSO members participated on the second day of the June meeting. Formal rules are under development to ensure CSO participation in future meetings and I welcome this action as an important step forward toward strengthening the GEF network. Stay tuned for more news on the replenishment-our next meeting is scheduled this fall and I am very confident we will continue to make great progress toward our shared goals.

We have a roadmap for the days, weeks and months to come. Hard work awaits us and we will have to show creativity and courage, yet I am also certain that we will look back at this period with pride, knowing that we have made significant progress to reshape the GEF into a state of the art institution that can carry forward the simple, yet for me still relevant concept of the GEF: a single financial mechanism that draws upon the best of many institutions to better protect the global environment.

Natural Resources

Implementing GEF's Biodiversity Strategy: Results from the Field

By Mark Zimsky, Program Manager, Sr. Biodiversity Specialist,

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Catalyzing Sustainability of Protected Area Systems: Strengthening the Protected Area Network (SPAN) in Namibia

Namibia lies at the heart of the species-rich Namib-Karoo-Kaokoveld Desert, one of the WWF's Global 200 Ecoregions. The country has a high level of endemism and is an evolutionary hub for groups of organisms including melons, succulent plants, solifuges (commonly known as false spiders), geckos and tortoises. Namibia's conservation efforts have also made the country a stronghold for populations of large animals such as black rhinoceros (almost a third of the world's population) and cheetah.

Namibia has established an impressive system of state-managed protected areas (PAs), as a cornerstone of its conservation programme. The system comprises 20 national PAs, covering 13.8 % of the country's 114,000 Km² terrestrial area. There is huge potential for these areas to be woven into a tight, cohesive and effective network of PAs, providing an effective buffer against threats to biodiversity. However, several barriers hinder the improvement of PA management effectiveness including: a fragmented policy framework; weak institutional capacities, weak human capacities for PA operations, incomplete bio-geographic coverage, and the absence of tested mechanisms for public-private-community partnerships.

The SPAN Project was designed to address three broad intervention areas: i) strengthening systemic capacity, i.e. creating an enabling legal/policy environment and financial mechanisms for PA management; ii) strengthening institutional capacity; and iii) demonstrating new ways of PA management. Four field demonstration sites – Bwabwata-Mudumu-Mamili Complex (Etosha); Skeleton Coast Link, Ai-Ais and Sperrgebiet – were selected for this component.

So far SPAN has provided technical and financial support for Namibia's new Parks Bill (2008) and provided technical and financial support to finalizing park management related policies, including: the Policy on Tourism and Wildlife Concession on State Land approved by the Cabinet in June 2007; the Human Wildlife Conflict Management (HWCM) policy approved by the Minister in December 2007; and the Policy on Parks, Neighbors and Resident People to be finalized in 2008.

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Ongoing (2005-2011)

GEF grant US\$ 8.550 million

Co-finance US\$ 33.677 million

Project cost US\$ 42.227 million

Website: www.span.org.na

The project's studies and economic analysis has played a catalytic role in the MET's efforts to dramatically increase government funding for PAs. As a result the park management budget has increased by over 130 percent within two years and a total of US\$ 7.46 million additional funding has been sourced for park management and infrastructure consolidation from EU, KfW, USFWS and international NGOs.

Namibia will soon proclaim the 26,000 Km² Sperrgebiet National Park, increasing Namibia's PA coverage to about 17 percent of its territory. Much of the Sperrgebiet is in the succulent Karoo biome, one of the world's few arid biodiversity hotspots. Sperrgebiet means "forbidden area" in German and, as a national diamond mining concession area, has been off-limits to the public for many years. The SPAN project has helped prepare a solid foundation for the new park including development of park management, business, and tourism plans and the establishment of a co-management mechanism with stakeholders such as the mining and fishery sectors.

Integrated silvo-pastoral approaches to ecosystem management (Colombia, Costa Rica, and Nicaragua)

The project aimed to improve ecosystem functioning of degraded pasture lands through the development of more intensive silvo-pastoral systems that generate global environmental benefits while providing socio-economic benefits.

Silvopastoral systems (SPS) were successfully introduced in the three participating countries. The project has been successful in demonstrating and measuring the effects of the introduction of payment incentives to farmers for the adoption of integrated Silvopastoral farming systems, resulting in 12,262 hectares of improved biodiversity status and enhanced carbon sequestration indices by the end of implementation (the target was 12,000 hectares). Many other environmental benefits of Silvopastoral systems were demonstrated: improvement of water infiltration; soil retention; soil productivity; reduction of fossil fuel dependence (e.g. substitution of inorganic fertilizer with nitrogen fixing plants); diversification of farm benefits; scenic beauty enhancement; and land rehabilitation.

Perhaps one of the most innovative outcomes of this project was the establishment of a differentiated payment scheme according to the degree of environmental service being provided. This was innovative in various fronts. First, it eliminated the inefficiencies of paying a flat fee per hectare for conservation on a farm irrespective of the level of conservation effort applied by the farmer. This scheme allowed farmers to decide "how much" conservation they were willing to undertake. While the flat fee is easier to manage it is not as economically efficient. Based on their experience in this project of applying the

Project Manager: Juan Pablo Ruiz Soto, Senior Natural Resources Management Specialist, World Bank

*GEF grant US\$ 4.5 million
Co-finance US\$ 3.5 million
Project cost US\$ 8.0 million*

differentiated silvopastoral payments, Costa Rica is now considering a differentiated scheme of payments for other payment for ecosystem service schemes they are currently applying.

The ability of the Silvopastoral project to effectively integrate biodiversity conservation into cattle ranching was innovative. Farmers have been able to increase productivity, reclaim degraded soils and increase biodiversity conservation. The increased tree cover enhanced habitat for a wide diversity of species and facilitate the genetic flow of species by providing a biodiversity-friendly vegetative corridor. Another important outcome is in the use of SPS in improving productivity and mitigation of greenhouse gases. Carbon was sequestered both in the soil and above ground in the trees that were planted through the project. A resource monitoring methodology was developed which was used to measure carbon sequestration and biodiversity conservation. Carbon stocks measured in Silvopastoral habitats were higher than in degraded lands, and emission of green house gases was found to be lower in Silvopastoral habitats.

The project has been instrumental in increasing the awareness of the potential of integrated ecosystem management has on providing critical environmental services including the restoration of degraded pasture. This has been achieved through extensive training, capacity building and dissemination of knowledge generated through the project.

Finally, based on the results of this project, Colombia is currently developing a national sustainable cattle ranching project that will incorporate lessons learned from the regional pilot project.

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Georgia: Landrace Revival Saves Agricultural Heritage

*Duration: 2004-2009
GEF grant: \$ 0.98 million
Co-financing: \$ 1.72 million
Web-site: www.elkana.org.ge*

Georgia lies on the southeastern boundary of Europe, between the Greater and Lesser Caucasus and the Black Sea, an area defined by Conservation International as one of the world's biological hotspots. The country's agriculture is traced back seven thousand years, when first Georgian tribes began to domesticate basic crops such as wheat, barley, oat, rye, grain, legumes and fruit species. With only 69,700 Km², Georgia has over 350 local species of grain crops, more than 100 species of seed and stone fruit-trees, nuts and wild berries, 500 local varieties of grapes.

Until the beginning of the 20th century Georgia had a diversified agricultural production. However during the Soviet Union local landraces were generally only cultivated by agricultural research centers, while most family plots and collective farms grew introduced varieties. When public funding ceased, the loss of agro-biodiversity intensified, as valuable collections and stocks of landraces began to deteriorate in the context of the collapse of the extension services, increased application of agrochemicals, and vacuum in the nature resource use policies. By mid-1990s the local varieties were simply not available for planting, and the research centers lacked capacity to assist farmers to reintroduce them.

This project was launched in 2004 in the Samtskhe-Javakheti region in order to remove the institutional, knowledge and market barriers that hampered the sustainable use of the region's agro-biodiversity. It facilitated experience-sharing among farmers and enhanced information access to farmers, authorities, research stations, donors and other stakeholders.

RESULTS

- The project has established a seed multiplication programme to encourage local farmers to pursue agro-biodiversity objectives. Seed material stored in the Institute of Botany has been multiplied on the Institute's demonstration plot and distributed to farmers. A fruit nursery has been also established at the demonstration plot and planting material for further multiplication has been collected in the region.
- The land races that the project has introduced are highly adapted to local conditions and exhibit a higher level of resistance to crop pests. Although their yields are lower, they require fewer inputs, attract a higher price and provide potential access to international markets. The reintroduction of landraces – particularly a greater range of pulses – has also improved the nutritional intake of the farming community.
- The project has collected and documented traditional ways of using indigenous crops. A recipe book has been published and widely distributed to raise consumer awareness. Dishes prepared from local varieties have also been promoted through food tasting events and the media. As a result, the local demand for indigenous varieties has grown.
- A local farmers' association *Farezi* was established, involving over 150 farmers in on-site conservation activities. The association serves as the main vehicle for the production and distribution of seed and planting material and experience sharing. A seed fund has been created and all members agreed to join the seed multiplication system by returning 1.5 times the original amount of seed distributed to them.
- The project has arranged for a local company to market the crops produced by participating farmers. It has carried out a market study and developed five products that use "regional" or "organic" branding systems that are attracting growing demand in local supermarkets. The company pays farmers a 10% premium on the existing market price for beans and at the same time buys directly from farmers, skipping the middleman and maximizing returns at the farm level.

Georgia is a part of the Fertile Crescent, where many modern staple foods originated. Not long ago, the widely cultivated crops in Georgia included millet, rye, endemic wheat varieties, chickpea, lentil, beans and peavine, as well as plants grown for their oil and fiber content. Today, many of these crops are absent or under-represented in the local farming systems. The project has therefore promoted community-driven, on-farm initiatives supported through supplies of seed and planting materials, knowledge dissemination, marketing, and publicity in order to re-introduce indigenous varieties in Georgia.



Indigenous Communities and Biodiversity

By Yoko Watanabe, GEF Program Manager, Biodiversity Specialist, ywatanabe@thegef.org

Indigenous peoples often inhabit or reside in proximity to areas important for biodiversity conservation, and frequently possess significant traditional knowledge that is invaluable in reaching our shared goals of preserving and protecting globally significant flora and fauna.

Since its inception, the GEF biodiversity focal area strategy has promoted the participation of indigenous peoples at all stages of project design, implementation, management and monitoring. GEF programs and projects sometimes focused specifically on indigenous peoples, and sometimes include the preservation of their culture in larger conservation initiatives at different levels (protected area, landscape, and national policy).

In Venezuela, for example, , a large scale project to protect the unique mosaic of ecosystems in the 3 million hectares of the Canaima National Park, includes a specific emphasis on indigenous organizations as vital stakeholders in the effort. Another example is the more targeted global project, "Assessment and Recommendations on Improving Access of Indigenous Peoples to Conservation Funding", , that it's working to expand indigenous people capacity to access international conservation funding by creating an active network of indigenous practitioners to share results, ideas and best practices. A third example can be found in Brazil where, given the indigenous people crucial role in forest conservation, an existing successful protected area management program was expanded to include indigenous lands as part of the protected area estate and as an integral part of the country's National Protected Area Plan.

In April 2008, the GEF Secretariat has conducted the first analysis of its project portfolio related to indigenous peoples that was compiled in the publication "Indigenous Communities and Biodiversity." The study concluded that since its inception, the GEF has supported more than 100 projects that involve indigenous communities. These projects have focused on co-management or direct participation in protected area management as well as on mainstreaming biodiversity in production landscape, through activities such as promoting sound agriculture practices utilizing traditional knowledge of indigenous communities.

In addition to the full and medium size projects, the GEF Small Grants Programme has also served as a key funding modality reaching out to indigenous and local communities world-wide, funding more than 1600 projects (about 15% of the entire SGP portfolio) that involved indigenous communities with biodiversity and other initiatives.

The contributions of indigenous and local communities will remain crucial to the overall success of relevant GEF projects, and to achieving the goals of GEF biodiversity program. The GEF plans to undertake a series of actions to facilitate more effective involvement of indigenous communities in GEF financed projects, including establishing appropriate tools, exchange of best practices, and ensure appropriate funding to promote effective engagement of indigenous communities.

GEF's Engagement in the International Year of Biodiversity

By Yoko Watanabe, GEF Program Manager, Biodiversity Specialist, ywatanabe@thegef.org

The celebration of the International Year of Biodiversity (IYB) in 2010 provides an excellent opportunity to build on the results of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and the ongoing global study, "The Economics of Ecosystems & Biodiversity" and demonstrate the contribution of biodiversity in maintaining ecosystem processes that provide food, water, and materials to human societies.

The IYB is an unprecedented opportunity to significantly raise the awareness of the global community to the alarming rate of biodiversity loss, calculated from 100 to 1000 times faster than any geological record. If successful, this set of actions could become the tipping point necessary to foster the needed interventions that will reduce and hopefully halt the loss of biodiversity beyond the 2010 target. The IYB will also represent an opportunity for the GEF, given its role as the financial mechanism of the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD), to take visible actions and work together with other partners to increase global recognition on the importance of biodiversity.

The GEF Secretariat has prepared a proposal that outlines a number of activities through which the GEF could most effectively contribute towards the objectives of the IYB. Through forums, workshops, and other communication and knowledge sharing activities, the GEF will showcase innovative solutions to conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, demonstrating the link between biodiversity management and the provision of ecosystem goods and services through its programs and projects, and play a key role in promoting dialogues among key stakeholders. In each activity, a strong emphasis is placed on GEF's role in catalyzing biodiversity conservation, sustainable use, and access and benefit sharing with a wide range of partners in the developing world.

The GEF Secretariat has contributed in a similar fashion during the International Year of Deserts and Desertification in 2006 and the World Summit for Sustainable Development in 2002. The proposal will be discussed at the GEF 36th Council Meeting in June 2009, when the Council members are invited to consider these activities and approve additional resources for the IYB, as a special initiative, as part of FY09-10 corporate budget of the GEF.

The GEF contribution for these activities sums up to \$895,000 with an expected co-financing of US\$1 million from other sources, including the CBD Secretariat and other partners. Upon completion of all the activities, the GEF Secretariat will report back to the Council on the achievements of the IYB with a special highlight on the GEF funded activities.

Cartagena de Indias and the Cartagena Protocol on Biodiversity (CPB)

By Jaime Cavelier, GEF Sr. Biodiversity Specialist, jcavelier@thegef.org

Cartagena de Indias in Colombia, was founded on 1st June 1533 by Spanish commander Pedro de Heredia. The city was built in the former seat of the indigenous village of *Calamari*. Although Cartagena is now a quiet Caribbean city and the epicenter of domestic and international tourism (Cartagena has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site), this was not always the case. For almost three centuries Cartagena was the most important city in the Americas; it served as the main exit point for the gold and silver coming from the modern territories of Colombia and Peru, and the entry point of slaves. Indeed, Cartagena and Veracruz (Mexico) were the only two cities authorized to trade slaves under the Spanish rule.



In the most recent years, Cartagena has been closely associated not with precious metals, but with the international protocol which seeks to protect biological diversity from the potential risks posed by Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs), taking into account human health; The Cartagena Protocol on Biodiversity (CPB) was adopted on 29 January 2000 by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biodiversity.

Since the inception of the CPB, significant efforts have been made to put in place the appropriate administrative and scientific structures to implement the protocol. These activities include the National Biosafety Frameworks (NBF) and the Biosafety Clearing House Mechanism. As of today, there are over 150 countries engaged in developing their NBFs and BCHs. About 25 countries are taking concrete steps in the implementation of the NBF.

The GEF has been in support of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety since its inception in 2000. During GEF-4, the Biodiversity Strategy included a specific strategic objective to safeguard biosafety, including assisting with financial resources to build capacity for the implementation of the CPB. In GEF-4 alone thirty countries have received GEF grants to prepare the projects for the implementation of their National Biosafety Framework. Another twenty countries are expected to submit their requests to GEF before the end of GEF-4 (June 2010). Other 10-20 countries are already planning on approaching GEF for financial assistance to work on their NBF.

Once the NBF and BCH are in place, countries should be ready to start using these systems for the day to day work on GMOs. Indeed, some countries are already using the systems and should be looked at as

role models by other countries in similar stages of development. The use of the NBF and BCH should increase sharply, as the demand for developing, importing and exporting of GMOs is rapidly increasing worldwide. There is an expectation that Biosafety issues will gain importance and visibility in developing countries, because biodiversity (and genetic resources in particular) are at the core of their development agendas. Since these countries are the repository of remarkable biodiversity resources, and the cradle of many of the species that currently feed the world, biosafety should be of the outermost importance for the national and provincial governments. If Cartagena played such a critical role as the port for exporting mineral and goods from the New World to the markets in Europe from the 1500's to the early 1800's, the Biosafety Protocol born in that same city, should provide the tools for the world to handle the treasures and risks hidden in the genetic resources in the years to come.

2010 Biodiversity Indicators Partnership: Measuring Global Biodiversity Trends to Support National and International Policy makers

By Tristan Tyrrell, 2010 BIP Secretariat, Tristan.Tyrrell@unep-wcmc.org

The 2010 Biodiversity Indicators Partnership (2010 BIP) was established in 2007 with a mandate from the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to track progress towards achieving the 2010 biodiversity target of *“a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national level as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on Earth”*.



The 2010 BIP is a global initiative supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) through the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). It brings together over forty international organizations to develop, implement and promote indicators for the consistent monitoring and assessment of biodiversity, thereby providing the best available information on biodiversity trends to the global community. The 2010 BIP has three main objectives:

- 1) To ensure improved global biodiversity indicators are implemented and available;
- 2) To generate information on biodiversity trends which is useful to decision makers;
- 3) To establish links between biodiversity initiatives at the regional and national levels to enable capacity building and improve the delivery of the biodiversity indicators.

Improving the quality, consistency and delivery of the biodiversity indicators is an imperative for the 2010 BIP. All Indicator Partner organizations are progressing with indicator development utilizing the best available data and analyses.

Biannual reports from Partners have confirmed advancement on almost all the indicators since June 2007. While some indices are still in the early stages of development, most are well progressed, with a number now considered complete. Some 149 publications, ranging from books and scientific literature to policy guidance documents and awareness-raising material, have been produced by Partner organizations since the 2010 BIP was formed.

With the breadth of collaborating organizations, one of the main roles of the 2010 BIP Secretariat is to ensure that the mission, progress and results of the Partnership are clearly conveyed to an audience of policy makers, resource managers,



scientists, media, and other stakeholders.

A website (www.twentyten.net) has been developed to convey the vast amount of information coming from the Partner organizations. It is regarded as the primary resource for those wishing to know more about measuring biodiversity status and trends or familiarize themselves with the 2010 BIP. A newsletter, *BIPNews*, is issued quarterly and provides a neat synopsis of recent and upcoming highlights that are of interest to the Partnership's audience.



The flagship publication from the CBD in 2010 is the third edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO-3), which will include a chapter on the 2010 BIP indicators, and has therefore been identified as a key communications outlet. Work is progressing to ensure that up-to-date information is included and consolidated to provide the most comprehensive status of biodiversity. Consideration is also being given to 2010 BIP-specific publications and other communications throughout 2010 in the run-up to CBD COP10.

Following numerous discussions, the CBD 2010 biodiversity target is now included in the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The 2010 BIP therefore is represented on the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on MDG Indicators, and contributed to its 2008 annual report.

Making the global indicators relevant to national-level policy makers is key to the success of the 2010 BIP. To this end, a series of guidance documents are being produced on the process of indicator development, and supplemented by examples from the 2010 BIP suite. To date, publications on the applicability of the Red List Index, Coverage of Protected Areas and Living Planet Index indicators are available.

In addition to the guidance documents, direct engagement with stakeholders is actively being pursued. To date, successful regional workshops have been run in South-East Asia and the Caribbean. Similar events will imminently be held in Mesoamerica (Central America and Mexico), and South America. A series of parallel workshops are also being run in East and Southern Africa, to which the 2010 BIP is providing major support.

The 2010 BIP continues to engage closely with a range of regional and national Affiliate Indicator Partners to ensure relevance and cohesive



approaches in indicator development and their use in guiding policy.

The 2010 BIP has direct engagement at a number of major international meetings and events –ensuring input, regular feedback and awareness-raising with the global community. These include representation at an assortment of meetings, including the thirteenth meeting of the CBD Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), the ninth meeting of the CBD Conference of the Parties (COP), CMS COP 9, the third meeting of the Governing Council (GC) of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Agriculture (IT PGRFA) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) GC 25; attendance at Ramsar COP 10 and the CITES Animals & Plants Committees; and a stall at IUCN World Conservation Congress 2008. The 2010 BIP will be directly contributing to a number of high-level meeting and events over the remainder of 2009 and throughout 2010 to ensure that the global objectives of the 2010 BIP is achieved. Events include UNCCD COP 9, the Sixth Trondheim Conference on Biodiversity, CBD SBSTTA 14, and CBD COP 10.

The Partnership will continue to the year 2010 and beyond to provide the best available information on biodiversity trends to all its users, and to promote the various ways in which the global indicators can be applied and communicated. We welcome comments and contributions for improving information to reduce biodiversity loss. More information can be found at www.twentyten.net.

Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs (CTI), Fisheries and Food Security

By Nicole Glineur, GEF Program Manager, Sr. Biodiversity Specialist, nglineur@thegef.org

Six Heads of States/Governments signed the CTI Declaration in Indonesia on May 15, 2009



Photo: TNC

At the confluence of the Indian and Pacific Oceans, spanning Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste, the 1.6 billion acre Coral Triangle supports: (a) five commercial tuna species which spawn there and migrate to the Indian and Pacific Oceans - where 90% of the world's catch

occurs; and (b) the richest concentration of marine biodiversity: the highest numbers of coral, crustacean, mollusk, and marine plant species; and 3,000 species of fish – twice that of any other region. The Coral Triangle also hosts 51 of the world's 70 mangrove species and 23 of the 50 sea grass species. Vital to livelihood of 120 million people, the Coral Triangle is not only a source of food but also a way of life fostered across generations by a close dependence on the marine environment. The Triangle supports the largest tuna fishing industry in the world, which generates billions of dollar in global income each year and its reef ecosystems also buffer coastal communities from cyclones and tsunamis.

The Coral Triangle Initiative (CTI) is centered on high-level political commitments and proactive implementation by governments of the Coral Triangle area, and supported by multilateral and bi-lateral agencies, non-governmental organizations, and private sector partners (development partners). The six countries have chosen to address, in partnership, the management, conservation and adaptation to climate change of the tuna fisheries and coral ecosystems in that region.

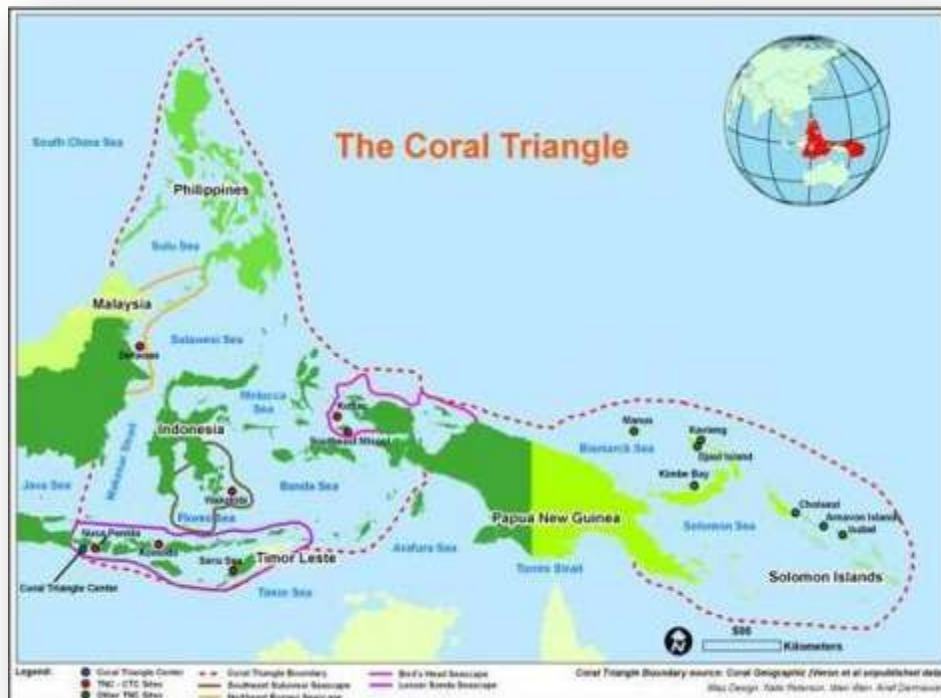


Photo: Scubazoo

Sponsored by President Yudhoyono of Indonesia, the six CTI governments (Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Solomon Islands and Timor Leste)

met in a first formal CTI Senior Officials Meeting in Bali in December 2007, where they agreed on: a common understanding of the value of the CT's marine and coastal biological resources; nine Guiding Principles; and a framework for a CTI Plan of Action to be developed during 2008 and adopted at the highest political level.

This meeting was followed by a consultation event attended by senior officials from the governments of Australia and United States, and from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), CTI, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) during which the development partners endorsed the outcomes and offered support to CTI. Other meetings at ministerial level have followed, culminating into the CTI Summit, held in Manado in May 2009, where the six heads of states/governments signed the historical **inter-state agreement** CTI declaration adopting a 10-year plan of action to avert the growing threats to the region's coral reefs, fish, mangroves, vulnerable species and other vital marine and coastal living resources. The CTI declaration provides a strong example of cooperation for the world.



In his speech Indonesian President Yudhoyono highlighted that the aim of the CTI Summit was opening up a brighter future for the next generation in the region. He referred to the 1992 Rio Earth Summit where leaders failed to sign a treaty for the preservation of oceans which cover 72 percent of the earth.

"That is why we are gathering here now to prevent the destruction of the reefs and safeguard them for the next generation," he said. He announced Indonesia's plan to designate 20 million hectares of marine protected areas across the archipelago by 2020, as well as the intention of the government, over the

next 3 years, to double the current amount of funding from its national budget dedicated to specific programs and activities stipulated in the CTI Plan.

"This Initiative brings together for the first time all the partners needed to mobilize action in the countries of Southeast Asia and the Pacific," says Monique Barbut, GEF CEO and Chairperson. "The sustainable management of these resources is crucial to ensure that an adequate supply of food exists to sustain millions of people living along the coastlines."

So far, the GEF is the largest contributor of funds to the CTI. To support the Initiative, the GEF Council endorsed, in April 2008, a program of \$63 million that covers biodiversity, international waters, and adaptation to climate change activities. The program has also been able to catalyze more than \$300 million of co-financing for CTI to conserve tuna and coral ecosystems while alleviating poverty.

The planning of the GEF CTI program was led by the countries and it was accompanied by the Asian Development Bank, the coordinating agency, and four other GEF agencies: FAO, UNDP, UNEP and the World Bank. A year later, the 76% (\$45.5 million) of the funds have already been allocated for the implementation of nine projects in the six participating countries.

The following are some of the projects that are currently under implementation or that are about to start:

- Strengthening marine and coastal resource management in the Coral Triangle of the Pacific, ADB implementing agency, started in March 2009;
- Strategies for Fisheries Bycatch Management, a regional project implemented by FAO and included in the April 2009 GEF Work Program.
- Philippines CTI Integrated Natural Resources and Environmental Management project implemented by ADB and approved by the GEF Council in June 2009.



Photo: Scubazoo

GEF Program for Sustainable Forest Management in the Congo Basin

By Jean-Marc Sinnassamy, GEF Sr. Biodiversity Specialist, jsinnassamy@thegef.org

A significant progress has been made in term of time management for GEF development program and project in the Congo Basin: the GEF program for sustainable forest management in region was developed in less than 8 months, the first complete project document was endorsed by the CEO in six months, 10 project concepts (PIFs) have also been recommended for council approval in six months. All this efforts to achieve the objective of approving Medium Size Projects in less than 12 months and Full Size Projects in less than 22 months.

This is the result of a collective effort of all GEF partners and a concrete application of the reforms launched by the GEF CEO: a revised framework for programmatic approach, a simplified project cycle, a proactive role of the GEF Secretariat with countries, agencies, and all partners who want to look for synergy and combine efforts for a better impact.



The GEF-4 program for Sustainable Forest Management in the Congo Basin was approved by the GEF Council in November 2008. This was possible thanks to the efforts of all partners to implement the Libreville roadmap approved by the Ministers of the region in February 2008. The countries were in the driver seat and fueled the program with national and regional priorities. The World Bank played an important role as the coordinating agency that submitted the program and they will continue to supervise the implementation of key projects on REDD issues or the support to the COMIFAC for instance. The WB will inform the Council on the state of advancement of the Program on a regular basis.

The Program has been developed involving key regional partners and following existing programmatic initiatives (Convergence Plan, COMIFAC, and the Congo Basin Forest Partnership). Thirteen regional and national projects are programmed: Regional projects are dealing with 1) enhancing institutions on REDD issues with the WB, 2) sustainable financing of protected areas with UNDP, 3) sustainable management of bush meat with FAO, and 4) the sustainable timber management with a particular attention to the illegal logging with UNEP, and 5) strengthening COMIFAC capacities for regional coordination and monitoring with the WB.

Projects at national level will aim at reinforcing the network of protected areas (DRC, Equatorial Guinea, and Central Africa Republic) and the sustainable management of mangroves (Cameroon). A pilot project on Payment for Environmental Services will be developed in the Mbe riverbasin in Gabon. A transboundary project will aim at the protection and the sustainable management of Lake Tele and Lake Tumba between DRC and Congo. US\$ 50 million are set aside for the Program and US\$ 159 million

cofinancing have been pledged. This amount should increase with the development of the last projects in Cameroon and Congo.

Many GEF-3 projects are now under implementation in Congo Basin countries supporting Sector Programs on Forest and Environment or strengthening institutions in charge of protected area management or fighting against land degradation. More than US\$40 million are currently engaged in countries and lessons learned will be taken into consideration to improve the GEF-4 portfolio implementation.

The next GEF cycle (GEF-5, 2010-2014) will start in twelve months. At the moment different elements and reforms are in discussion that could help to foresee an ambitious follow up to the GEF-4 Program in the Congo Basin region (individual allocations, combining multi-focal area allocations, direct access, new agencies, framework for SFM in GEF5, etc).

CLIMATE CHANGE & CHEMICALS

GEF is implementing the Strategic Program on Technology Transfer

By Joseph Buchinger, GEF Jr. Professional Officer, jbuchinger@thegef.org

GEF is implementing the Poznan Strategic Program on Technology Transfer as a step toward scaling up the level of investment in technology transfer (TT) in order to help developing countries address their needs for environmentally sound technologies. Since COP14 in December GEF has undertaken the following activities:

Technology Needs Assessments

The Technology Needs Assessments (TNA) project will provide targeted financial and technical support to assist developing countries in carrying out improved TNAs within the framework of Article 4.5 of the UNFCCC. The project will support up to 45 developing countries in preparing their TNAs and field test the methodologies of the revised TNA Handbook, recently published by UNDP.

With wide stakeholder participation and with the facilitation of the GEF Secretariat, UNEP is developing the global TNA project for GEF funding (\$9 million), to be drawn from the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF). UNEP submitted the concept in late March and it was approved by the LDCF/SCCF Council in the April 2009 Intersessional Work Program. The project concept is available at the GEF website: http://thegef.org/interior_right.aspx?id=24356. The CEO endorsement is expected for July and the project start soon after.

Technology Transfer Pilot Projects

On March 25, 2009, the GEF CEO circulated a call for proposals for TT pilot projects to all national GEF operational focal points. Funding from the GEF will support priority pilot projects with a view to scaling up investment in the transfer of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries. Successful pilot TT projects can be replicated and scaled up in the future. The GEF Secretariat has been working actively with the GEF agencies and interested parties to address their queries, to discuss project ideas, and to facilitate the development of project proposals. The deadline for submitting proposals is August 14, 2009. The target funding level from the GEF for pilot projects is \$40 million.

Long-Term Implementation of the Strategic Program

In keeping with the COP14 decision that requested the GEF to consider the long-term implementation of the strategic program on TT, the GEF Secretariat has identified TT as a long-term priority objective of the GEF in the climate change focal area. Based on the pilot TT program, the GEF intends to mainstream TT throughout its climate change projects and programs. Linking to the replenishment of the GEF Trust Fund, the GEF Secretariat is currently developing a climate change strategy for the period of the fifth

replenishment from 2010 to 2014, in consultation with the Technical Advisory Group, GEF STAP, GEF agencies, and other stakeholders.

Technology transfer is featured in the draft GEF-5 strategy in the climate change focal area. The working document for GEF-5 replenishment, “Future Strategic Positioning of the GEF”, includes preliminary ideas for TT for GEF-5. Available on the GEF website: <http://thegef.org/interior.aspx?id=24216>.

4th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention adds nine new POPs under control of the Convention

By Laurent Granier, GEF Program Manager, Sr. Chemicals Specialist, lgranier@thegef.org

The Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Stockholm Convention met May 4-8, 2009 in Geneva Switzerland. The most significant outcome of the meeting was the historic decision to add nine new Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) to the list of chemicals under control of the treaty. This is the first time that the Convention has been amended in this way, testifying to the maturity and vitality of the treaty.

The decision was a difficult one to reach, but one that was made easier by the confidence built up over the years through the GEF’s support of Convention implementation. Indeed, the COP (Decision 26) welcomed the positive report on the second review of the financial mechanism, noting in particular “the significant contribution of the Global Environment Facility of 360 million dollars for persistent organic pollutants projects since the Convention was adopted in 2001.”

The availability of future financial assistance, through the GEF, to support developing countries and countries with economies in transition in their efforts to phase out and reduce releases of the nine new POPs was an important part of the debate. The COP, in its Decision 47, “calls on developed countries, in the context of the fifth replenishment of the Global Environmental Facility [...] and in the light of the [...] listing of new persistent organic pollutants, to make all efforts to make adequate financial resources available [...].”

One of the reasons that this decision was so debated is that, as noted in a November 2008 article of Talking Points from Dr Bo Walhstrom of STAP, many of these new POPs are still widely used and traded today as pesticides, flame retardants and in a number of other commercial uses. The “new” POPs are



alpha- and beta hexachlorocyclohexane (by-products); lindane and chlordecone (pesticides); tetra- and hexabromodiphenyl ether, hexabromobiphenyl, pentachlorobenzene, perfluorooctane sulfonic acid and perfluorooctane sulfonyl fluoride (industrial chemicals).

Another key outcome of the meeting was adoption of a groundbreaking decision on synergies, following adoption of the same decision by the COPs of the Rotterdam and Basel Conventions. This process will be carried forward through an Extraordinary COP to take place in early 2010, bringing together for the first time the COPs of the three chemicals and wastes treaties.

GEF Presence at the COP

Throughout the week, the GEF secretariat interacted with delegations, delivered formal or informal interventions, participated in contact groups, and participated in or organized a number of side events.

At the opening of the High-Level Segment, Dr Robert Dixon, Team Leader for Climate and Chemicals, emphasized the considerable achievements of the GEF in this domain, as highlighted in the GEF Report to the COP (See March 2009 Talking Points). Bob also introduced a side-event, jointly organized with the Stockholm Convention Secretariat, aimed at sharing countries' experiences and lessons learned when mobilizing GEF and additional financial resources for implementation of the Stockholm Convention (see http://thegef.org/interior_right.aspx?id=24728).

Mr Ibrahima Sow, Program Manager for POPs, participated in a WHO-organized side-event and presented an overview of the GEF's program related to the demonstration and assessment of alternatives to DDT for vector control, and more generally to building the capacity of developing countries to make informed and cost-effective vector control decisions. This side-event also served as the occasion for the GEF, WHO, and UNEP to hold a signing ceremony for the DDT Program, and to formalize the organizations' commitment to work towards the improvement and protection of health and the environment in a rejuvenated international effort to combat malaria with an incremental reduction of reliance on the synthetic pesticide DDT.

Dr Laurent Granier, Cluster Coordinator for Chemicals, gave a very well attended presentation, followed by a lively question and answer session, on "a Review of GEF Processes and Programs in Support of the Stockholm Convention" to brief COP participants about the recently introduced changes to GEF processes to improve its efficiency, including through simplification of the documentation and steps required for project approval. The presentation reviewed and discussed the GEF's new simplified rules, and provided an overview of the development of GEF programs in the implementation of Stockholm Convention COP guidance (see presentation at http://thegef.org/interior_right.aspx?id=24728).

The GEF secretariat will be working with the GEF agencies to assess all the implications of listing nine new chemicals under the Stockholm treaty, to see how the latest additions will influence GEF programs. What's more, as the GEF continues to develop its Chemicals Strategy for its fifth replenishment (2010-14, GEF-5), the secretariat will be integrating the new Stockholm pollutants into its future plans. These are exciting times for all members of the international chemicals management community.

First Review Meeting for the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management Calls on the GEF for Support

By Laurent Granier, GEF Program Manager, Sr. Chemicals Specialist, lgranier@thegef.org

The second session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM2) was held 11-15 May 2009 in Geneva, Switzerland, immediately following the Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention.

Since the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) was adopted by the ICCM at its first session in 2006, this was the first time that the ICCM could meet to review progress in the SAICM process and to function as a global policy forum for multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral discussion and exchange of experience on chemicals management issues.



ICCM2 evaluated SAICM implementation so far, addressed emerging policy issues (nanotechnology, chemicals in articles, lead in paint and electronic waste), considered long-term financing of SAICM, took strategic decisions on the future direction of SAICM, determined future reporting arrangements, and allowed exchange of scientific and technical information.

A number of side events and exhibitions were held throughout the week. One was organized by the GEF Secretariat working with the GEF agencies to highlight some of the contributions of the GEF to the objectives of the SAICM, with examples of projects that strengthen sound chemicals management capacities in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, such as with PCB management and phase-out projects; management, disposal, and prevention of obsolete pesticides; and support to the development of Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers. These ideas were also elaborated in the information paper on “GEF’s Work in Support of the Implementation of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management” (SAICM/ICCM.2/INF/23).

Discussions of long-term financial arrangements for the implementation of the SAICM were a key element of the meeting, and the ICCM adopted an extensive resolution on financial and technical resources for its implementation. The resolution notably “welcomes the consideration being given to the sound management of chemicals during the fifth GEF replenishment process, [and] urges the GEF, within this process, to consider expanding its activities related to sound chemicals management to facilitate SAICM implementation, while respecting its responsibilities as the financial mechanism for the Stockholm Convention.”

Over the coming months, this will surely be an important item for discussion by the GEF replenishment participants and by the GEF Council in the context of the development of GEF-5 strategies.

From the Evaluation Office

News on the Country Portfolio Evaluations 2008-2009

By Sandra Romboli, GEF EO Evaluation Officer, sromboli@thegef.org

The Evaluation Office undertook two Country Portfolio Evaluations (CPEs) in the Middle East between September 2008 and March 2009 in Egypt and Syria. Findings from these and from the Cameroon CPE have been synthesized in the Annual Country Portfolio Evaluation Report 2009 presented by the Evaluation Office to the GEF Council in June 2009. The CPEs respond to three questions relevance of GEF support to countries' sustainable development and environmental priorities as well as to the GEF's mandate; efficiency of GEF implementation; and results from GEF support. These countries were selected to cover a range of country contexts, with target countries reflecting a mix of environmental allocations, geography and wealth.

The findings of the CPE's pointed towards a number of positive results, including achievements at the global environmental level; particularly in biodiversity conservation and sustainable use which has proven to be of strategic importance and has generated some impacts. GEF support was found to be relevant to national environmental priorities and to conventions. Another interesting finding was that the efficiency of the focal point mechanism is "directly related" to the size of the GEF portfolio. For example the establishment of the GEF Unit in Egypt (very large GEF portfolio) has improved efficiency of GEF implementation in terms of transparency, project cycle, prioritization, selection criteria etc.

The CPEs also identified two main shortcomings that were brought to the attention of the Council: (1) the need for GEF to address the significant gap of available resources in land degradation to support key challenges facing countries like Egypt, Syria and Cameroon; and (2) the need for GEF to focus attention on countries in exceptional situations concerning limited access to GEF international financial institutions, like Syria.

Moving forward, CPE's continue to play an increasingly important role in capturing aggregate portfolio results and country-level implementation experiences. For FY10 two new CPE are planned in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The CPEs are also feeding into the forthcoming OPS4 report that will be presented at the GEF Replenishment meeting in October 2009.

Individual CPE's, as well as the annual synthesis reports, are available on the Evaluation Office web site (www.gefeo.org). For more information, please contact: cvolonte@thegef.org.

On the status of OPS4

By Soledad Mackinnon, GEF EO Knowledge Management Consultant, mmackinnon@thegef.org

OPS4 is expected to be delivered on time to the fifth replenishment process in October 2009. During the week of June 22nd the Interim Report of OPS4 was presented at the GEF replenishment meeting and discussed during an informal session of the GEF Council. The interim report contains an overview of the evidence emerging so far and can be found at <http://www.gefeo.org>.

In collecting and analyzing data and drawing conclusions and recommendations, OPS4 is based on a variety of sources of information, methods of analyses and meta-evaluation techniques to ensure that the findings will be valid, credible, and legitimate. In general, a mixed methods and theory-based approach are being followed, including literature and document reviews, desk studies, field visits and verifications, interviews, surveys, portfolio analysis, stakeholder consultations. Furthermore, country case studies and have also been undertaken.

To date, the Evaluation Office has undertaken nine country case studies, desk reviews of 210 finished projects, field reviews of nine of these projects, and a fully fledged impact evaluation on Ozone Depleting Substances. Findings are being triangulated with survey results, evaluative evidence from earlier GEF EO reports, focal area strategies and portfolio analyses.

In regards to the consultations with major stakeholders, the GEF Evaluation Office conducted meetings with Focal Points and Civil Society Organizations that possess extensive experience in dealing with the GEF. These consultations covered various topics with particular emphasis on results of the GEF support to their countries as well as examples of the relevance of GEF activities to the national/regional environmental priorities and issues related to sustainable development.

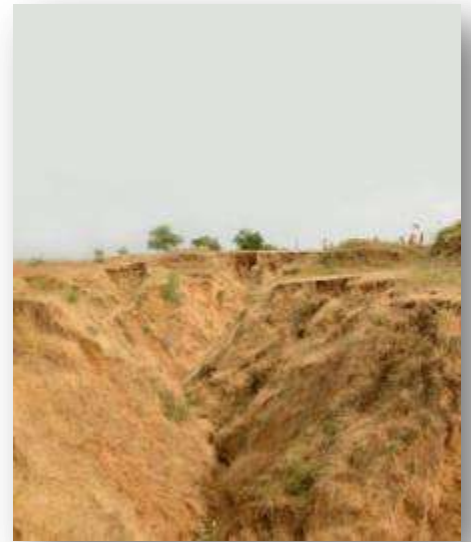
So far seven consultations have taken place with representatives from all regions of the world. One more meeting will take place in Accra, Ghana on July 9-10, 2009 and will include West and Central African countries. The results from the meetings will be included in the final report of OPS4, which will be completed by mid September 2009. For more information about it, please visit <http://thegef.org/gefevaluation.aspx?id=25030>.

FROM OUR PARTNERS

A project for Stabilization of Ravines along River Mahi

By Mayank Trivedi, Senior Project Officer ,PSG Foundation for Ecological Security, mayank@fes.org.in

The River Mahi originates in Southern Rajasthan and passes through the districts of Panchmahals, Baroda, Kheda and Anand in the State of Gujarat, to finally drain into the Arabian Sea at the Gulf of Cambay. Even though the basin has a high density of trees and is characterized by rich biodiversity, the undulating topography coupled with loose and sandy to sandy-loam soil renders the area highly susceptible to land degradation and erosion. The absence of vegetative cover aggravates the situation, leading to the formation of deep gullies and ravines on the Commons and private lands of the area. The embankments of the 100-mile long River Mahi are **not** an exception and are found to be severely ravined.



Ravines not only impact the provisioning of ecosystem goods and services such as food, fuel wood, fiber and water regulation, they are also responsible for the loss of arable land which in turn threatens the livelihoods of the poorest farmers with marginal landholdings. A preliminary survey conducted in 107 villages infringing the river, revealed that the ravines had affected no less than 18,000 ha of Common as well as private land. The problem is further compounded on the Common lands of the villages as they are cared for by none and exploited by all. This can be largely attributed to the lack of proper tenurial arrangements and the absence of local institutions for managing Common lands such as grazing and revenue wastelands.

Project Background: With the objective of checking the further spread of ravines to prevent damage to the valuable tablelands and to work towards the stabilization of highly degraded and ravinous lands along river Mahi, a Project was initiated by FES with assistance from Global Environment Facility (GEF)-United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Small Grants Programme (SGP) in 2005. The Project encompassed the villages of Himmatpura, Dugripura and Tansiya of Savli Taluka falling in Vadodara District; thereby bringing a total 560 ha of degraded land, associated village communities and local institutions under its ambit.

Project Objectives: Intervention during the Project period was primarily aimed at:

- Working towards restoration and stabilization of ravines along River Mahi through appropriate soil and water conservation measures and improved vegetative cover

- Strengthening tenure arrangements and village institutions in the nature of Tree Growers' Cooperatives, with the intention of improving the governance of natural resources and ensuring the stabilization of the ravine lands

Activities:

Institution and Capacity Building

- Three local village level institutions in the nature of Tree Growers Cooperative Societies were strengthened by helping them secure tenure over the land in the form of long term lease with emphasis on the principle of universal membership and the inclusion of women and marginalized sections. All three TGCSs were assisted in framing the village specific byelaws for protection and benefit sharing of resources.
- Groups of community members were trained and capacitated to undertake perspective planning and assist in GIS-based mapping exercises. A total of 75 training programs and meetings were conducted in all, in which 1532 odd members consisting of no less than 397 women members participated. Ecological restoration plans and treatment plans were drawn using participatory tools and techniques.



Facilitating the involvement of the local communities in planning and incorporating local wisdom at the initial stage leads to better understanding and implementation of the project by them.

SMC and other Interventions

- Regeneration activities were undertaken in about 102 ha of Common land, which included the planting of more than 49,000 saplings of 18 tree species, dibbling of 946 kg of seeds of 21 tree species, around 100 kg of grass seeds and 8,300 root slips of three grass species. Community contributions towards regeneration activities amounted to Rs. 89,347 (33%).
- More than 85,000 saplings of 12 tree species were raised in six decentralized nurseries in three villages of the project area. The total contribution by the members in raising the saplings amounted to Rs. 30,248 (25%).
- Considering the abundance of sandy-loam soil in the affected areas, boribandh or sand bag structures were used to plug gullies across 102 ha of common land. Close to 343 ha. of private land was also treated through farm bunding, land leveling and gully plugs.
- More than 28,000 saplings were planted on farm bunds, in which the contribution by the members was Rs. 356,895 (33%).



Appropriate soil conservation measures have succeeded in reducing erosion and increasing silt deposit

- In collaboration with Gujarat Land Development Corporation (GLDC), farm bunding and leveling was undertaken in 297 ha of farm land. An additional 46 ha of farm ravines were covered under bunding and gully plugging activities by FES.
- Installation of energy efficient devices was undertaken to reduce pressure on regenerated biomass. A total of 86 smokeless chulhas were installed. Sixty pressure cookers were also distributed amongst the local community members, the community contribution towards which was to the effect of Rs 24,382 (50%)

Way Ahead

A successful project of this nature, aimed at stabilizing ravines based on the simple principle of promoting natural regeneration and vegetative measures as able mechanisms for preventing soil erosion, is a well-suited illustration for replication at a larger scale. In its three years of implementation, the project has yielded some encouraging results. One of the project studies shows that 28.34 MT/ha. of silt has deposited in 102 ha. of Common lands that were treated. Local communities have benefitted in terms of employment, fodder, fuel wood and NTFP like ber, datun, gum etc. A significant learning has been that low cost SMC structures supported by vegetation are one of the most effective methods for treating ravines, where vegetation plays an important role in arresting ravination over longer periods of time. Local communities have successfully managed their common lands through institutional mechanisms for protection, benefit sharing, democratic decision-making and conflict-resolution, and this has further helped the process of natural regeneration.

FES envisages scaling up riverbank stabilization activities to all 107 villages on the banks of River Mahi. Similar projects have already been started in two villages with support from NABARD and in another four villages under NREGS. We plan to build a concerned citizens' group to address the issue of land degradation in Mahi ravines at a larger scale. Attempts to bring all the villages and concerned civil society organizations to a common platform for collective and integrated efforts have already been initiated.



Women members took the lead in raising and managing nurseries at the village level, thereby ensuring ready availability of saplings at the onset of monsoons. Interested participants were trained in the basics of bed preparation, watering, seed treatment, manure application, bag filling, weeding, hoeing, shifting, grading, hardening, pest and disease management, transportation of saplings and transplantation for this purpose. Six nurseries were raised in this manner, totaling the number of saplings to 85,758.

World Environment Day commemoration In Lesotho

Nthabiseng Majara, National Coordinator, GEF-SGP Lesotho, nthabiseng.majara@undp.org

The World Environment Day was commemorated, in Lesotho, on March 6 2009. It has become a norm in Lesotho to organize the event in summer or spring and not in June when it is cold and dry. The event this year was organized in commemoration of two important days, World Environment Day and International Biodiversity Day. The commemoration was organized by the Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Culture and was hosted by one of the GEF Small Grants Programme



grantees in Lesotho, *Qholaqhoe Herbal Centre Association*. Present at the event were among others, the Office of the Principal Chief and area chiefs, the Member of Parliament for the Mechachane Constituency No. 1, the District Council, District Heads of Department, District Environment Officers from the ten districts of Lesotho and local primary schools. The event was officiated by the District Administrator for Botha Bothe, who also took guest on a tour of the botanical garden established by the *Qholaqhoe Herbal Centre Association*.

The pinnacle of the event was a symbolic handing over of grant award check of almost US\$ 38,000 and a set of hand tools to the Association by the GEF National Focal Point on behalf of the Minister for Tourism, Environment and Culture. The primary objective of the *Qholaqhoe Herbal Centre* is to conserve and preserve endemic plant species of economic value and those that are threatened through propagation for re-establishment of the locally extinct endemic plants species; for educational purposes and for sale to herbalists and traditional healers, for income generation and poverty alleviation. The Centre is located at Qholaqhoe in Botha Bothe, in the northern foothills of Lesotho. To this end, the Association with technical assistance from the Katse Botanical Garden and the Department of Environment, establishment of a botanical garden, for biodiversity conservation and educational purposes; and for ecotourism. In recognition of the Association's hard work, the Department of Environment donated one thousand (1000) fruit trees as motivation and to augment the livelihood support component of the initiative.

On realizing the need for re-introduction of locally extinct plant species and to take advantage of the afforestation programme of the Ministry of Forestry and Land Reclamation, which provides a ready market for indigenous tree seedlings, the Association submitted a proposal to GEF-SGP Lesotho, for establishment of a nursery for production of seedlings of endemic plant species particularly those with economic value and indigenous trees seedlings for re-introduction into the botanical garden and for sale. Lesotho has been experiencing severe drought for the past few years and the Qholaqhoe Herbal Centre was not spared. Since nurseries require a substantial amount of water and the newly planted plants

cannot withstand excessive drought, the proposal included harnessing of water from a natural spring to provide the much needed water.

It is envisaged that in two years and in the long term, the local community and other stakeholders including school children will be sensitized about biodiversity conservation and its sustainable use; and the livelihoods of the beneficiaries will be enhanced through income generated from the sale of fruits, indigenous tree and medicinal plant seedlings and ecotourism activities.



In a bid to strengthen the partnership between the SGP and NGOs in Lesotho, UNDP-Lesotho also pledged their support in the form of school supplies in support of the commemoration of World Environment Day organized by the Lesotho Council of NGOs (LCN), on June 5, 2009. The event was organized by LCN through one of its member organizations, Durham Link. In preparation for the event nine local primary schools entered a poetry and art competition on the theme *“My Footprint”*. The top three schools were awarded a total of 50 apple trees and some school supplies. Durham Link will

monitor nurturing of the trees as part of its environmental education programme.

About the GEF Small Grants Programme in Lesotho

The GEF-SGP Country Programme for Lesotho was established in December 2007. It was officially launched in February 2009 by the Minister for Tourism, Environment and Culture and the UNDP Resident Representative and was marked by awarding of the first batch of grants to three Non-Governmental Organizations and one (Community Based Organization. All four grants which amounted to US\$ 111,568 were awarded for projects under the biodiversity conservation focal area. An additional five projects, the majority of which are multifocal, have been approved by the National Steering Committee, expanding the GEF-SGP Lesotho Project Portfolio to nine and bringing the total amount of funds committed in grants to US\$ 247,886.

Voice of the GEF staff



The best part of Humphrey Year

By Meena Adhikari, Visiting Humphrey Fellow, meena.kunwar@gmail.com

I never realized that my professional affiliation in Global Environment Facility Secretariat would be the best experience of my Fulbright Humphrey Year in US.

This program brings fellows from many nations to participate in one year of non-degree graduate study and related practical professional experiences in the United States. After completing the first part of the program at the University of California Davis, I joined the GEF for 8 weeks with the objective to improve my understanding of the GEF policies, procedures and financial mechanisms, to be able to develop a sustainable forest management (SFM) project for Nepal.

In Nepal, my home country, as the program manager of the Livelihoods and Forestry Program-Terai (a bilateral program of Government of Nepal and Department for International Development (DFID) of the United Kingdom), I was involved in designing and managing projects in areas such as decentralized forest sector planning, sustainable forest management, public land management and forest enterprise development.

Being in the Secretariat and working with profoundly knowledgeable experts, I have enriched my insights on small as well as large scale projects that could be developed for country like Nepal in relation to climate change mitigation and adaptation. Many are the lessons that I take away from this experience but the most important have been improving my understanding of GEF policies, procedures, and strategies, gaining insights on the importance of sustainable forest management and land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF) in the context of Climate Change mitigation and adaptation and available various financing mechanisms. Similarly, I also learned about the possibility to address both climate change and development issues through mitigation projects. Participating in seminars, round table discussions, and training in the GEF and the World Bank has been a central part of my experience. In particular, the GEF Familiarization Seminar, that gathers GEF focal points from around the world, was rare opportunity to learn about the global scale of the GEF impact, the international climate negotiation issues and the GEF agencies.

Once back I have an ambitious plan to accomplish: finalizing the forestry project I drafted during my stay in GEF, initiating a large scale SFM project, establishing an institute of climate change related studies, and contributing to accelerate the design of the framework for a national strategy for Nepal to adapt to climate change. The exceptional experience in GEF helped me to successfully finalize the Humphrey year providing me with invaluable knowledge, experience and a professional network that will allow me to make difference. I am especially grateful to the GEF Climate Change and Chemicals team for helping me to make this happen and hope to share very soon good news on the progress made on climate change mitigation and adaptation actions in Nepal.

New Publications

Investing in Sustainable Urban Transport



This brochure provides an overview of the challenges we are facing in transport sector and summarizes the GEF's investment, history, as well as a future vision for sustainable urban transport investments. The transport sector is critical to global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Over the past decade, GHG emissions from the transport sector have increased faster than emissions from any other relevant sector. To address this global challenge, the GEF has funded 37 projects in more than 70 cities worldwide, with \$201 million committed and an additional \$2.47 billion leveraged, which constitute one of the largest sustainable urban transport investment programs in the world.

Cleaning Up: Ridding the World of Dangerous Chemicals



The new GEF brochure on chemicals was unveiled in May 2009 on the occasion of the Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention. The brochure provides an overview of GEF's POPs and ODS programs and of their achievements. The GEF has invested more than \$360 million in POPs reduction since the adoption of the Stockholm Convention in 2001, leveraging \$440 million of co-financing for a total portfolio of over \$800 million. Concrete examples of impacts on the ground of this work are provided where GEF interventions reduce exposure of local populations to POPs and to hazardous chemicals, and contribute to reducing the burden of chemicals in the global environment. This important work is illustrated by photos, all from GEF projects in the field.

New Focal Points and Council Members

Country	Name	Category	Nomination Date
Argentina	Conesa, Graciela	Operational Focal Point	1-Apr-09
Barbados	Ward, Rickardo	Council Member/ Operational Focal Point	1-Apr-09
Belize	Alegria, Martin	Alternate Member/ Operational Focal Point	1-Apr-09
Burundi	Nduwimana, Deogratias	Political Focal Point	19-May-09
Burundi	Nduwimana, Joseph	Operational Focal Point	19-May-09
Cape Verde	Borges, Moises	Operational Focal Point	7-May-09
Comoros	Ahamada Soilihi, Hassani	Alternate Member/ Operational Focal Point	5-Jun-09
Ethiopia	Gebre Egziabher, Tewolde Berhan	Council Member/ Operational Focal Point / Political Focal Point	3-Jun-09
Grenada	Antoine, Timothy N.J.	Operational Focal Point	15-May-09
Grenada	Williams, Dr. Dessima	Political Focal Point	15-May-09
Libya	Elfallah, Mahmoud	Political Focal Point	19-Apr-09
Mozambique	Abreu, Alcinda	Political Focal Point	1-Apr-09
Mozambique	Manjate, Marilia Telma Antonio	Operational Focal Point	1-Apr-09
Nepal	Ghimire, Kapil Dev	Operational Focal Point	2-Apr-09
Paraguay	Rivas, Oscar	Political Focal Point	9-May-09
Paraguay	Torres, Gilda	Operational Focal Point	9-May-09
Seychelles	Nourrice, Joseph	Political Focal Point	8-Apr-09
Somalia	Hamza, Buri	Operational Focal Point/ Political Focal Point	5-May-09

Upcoming Events

Date	Event	Venue
Oct. 12-16	5th Meeting of the POPs Review Committee	Geneva, Switzerland
Oct. 26-29	Fifth Biennial GEF International Waters Conference	Australia
Nov. 2-6	CBD - Sixth meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions (WG8J 6)	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Nov. 4-8	21st Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer	Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt
Nov. 9-13	Consultations and 36th GEF Council Meeting	Washington DC
Nov. 9-15	CBD - Eighth meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-sharing (WG ABS 8)	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Dec. 7-18	UNFCCC COP-15	Copenhagen, Denmark

Credits

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