



GEF

Global Environment Facility

GEF/C.18Inf.5
November 19, 2001

GEF Council
December 5 – 7, 2001

**PROGRESS REPORT ON MONITORING
AND EVALUATION ACTIVITIES**

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INTRODUCTION

1. The progress report on GEF's Corporate Monitoring and Evaluation Activities (M&E) aims at giving an overview of the various activities carried out throughout the year by the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit, in cooperation with other teams of the GEF Secretariat, the Implementing Agencies and STAP.
2. During 2001 most of the M&E activities have been centered around either facilitating or through specific M&E work supporting the implementation of the Second Study of GEF's Overall Performance.

THE SECOND STUDY OF GEF'S OVERALL PERFORMANCE (OPS2)

3. At its May 2000 meeting the GEF Council requested that OPS 2 be carried out. It subsequently approved the plan and the budget for the exercise in September 2000. In consultation with the GEF CEO and Chairman, the Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator recruited the core team of 8 independent international consultants to prepare the study. The M&E Unit has throughout this period provided the direct management, logistical and technical backstopping to the core team in its many-faceted and comprehensive task of collecting documented material, conducting field visits, interviewing a large number of persons involved with GEF efforts and in the drafting of its report. The M&E Unit facilitated contacts between the OPS 2 team and all GEF entities, Executing Agencies, convention secretariats and NGOs. The unit has arranged for extensive consultations with relevant stakeholders, including GEF Focal Points and other government staff, as well as and non-government institutions during 16 country visits and six regional workshops. OPS 2 will be completed by January 25, 2002 and contribute to the third replenishment and the Second Assembly of the GEF.
4. OPS 2 has been built on a large number of evaluation and monitoring reports. The Evaluation and GEF Coordination Departments of the Implementing Agencies have prepared 41 project completion/evaluation reports which were handed over to the OPS 2 team. The GEF Corporate M&E work programs during the last two years have been carefully crafted to provide comprehensive evaluation and review material to support the work of the OPS 2 team. For this purpose, the GEF M&E Unit has prepared 12 program and cross-cutting evaluations and reviews. Although the main rationale for the program studies was to provide a portfolio-wide body of results, experiences and lessons to assist OPS 2, these reports are also fully-fledged reviews and evaluations in their own right, which have been submitted to the GEF Council or disseminated in other ways.

OTHER STUDIES AND EVALUATIONS IN 2000 AND 2001

5. The Corporate M&E Work Program during 2000 and 2001 aimed at covering major parts of the GEF portfolio in all the focal areas. The reports that had been completed by the end of year 2000 were:

- (a) Interim Assessment of Biodiversity Enabling Activities, prepared as Council Document GEF/C.14/11 and GEF Evaluation Report #2-99;
- (b) Review of Enabling Activities in Climate Change, prepared as Council Document GEF/C.16/10 and GEF Evaluation Report #2-00;
- (c) Study of Impacts of GEF Activities for the Phase-Out of Ozone Depleting Substances, prepared as Council Document GEF/C.14/Inf.6 and GEF Evaluation Report #1-00;
- (d) Thematic Review of Achieving Sustainability of Biodiversity Conservation; published as M&E Working Paper No. 1;
- (e) Thematic Review of the GEF Solar Photovoltaic Portfolio, published as M&E Working Paper No. 2; and
- (f) Thematic Review of Multi-country Project Arrangements in International Waters and Biodiversity, published as M&E Working Paper No. 3.

6. In 2001, a large part of the Corporate M&E resources have been used for the implementation of broad, comprehensive program studies in biodiversity, climate change and International Waters, a linkage study in land degradation and an evaluation of Medium Sized Projects. All the studies were carried out as cooperative tasks which were managed by the M&E Unit. Most of the studies had international consultants as study team leaders and had substantive contributions from the GEF Secretariat, the Implementing Agencies, and to some extent STAP.

THE CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRAM STUDY

7. The Program Study comprised of three major components: (i) a portfolio coverage analysis to assess the relevance of technology applications to targeted markets while supporting development priorities of countries; (ii) reviews of projects in five clusters – grid-connected renewables (14 projects), solar thermal power plants (4 projects), energy service company models and performance (10 projects), energy efficient product manufacturing and marketing (8 projects), off-grid solar PV (23 projects); and (ii) reviews of portfolios in China and Mexico.

8. The Climate Change Program Study has also attempted to test the application and appropriateness of program indicators which were specially developed for the GEF's Climate Change Program in assessing projects at cluster, program national and international levels.

- (i) The seven performance indicators are
- (ii) energy production or savings and installed capacities,
- (iii) technology cost trends,
- (iv) businesses and supporting services development,
- (v) financing availability and mechanisms,

- (vi) policy development,
- (vii) awareness and understanding of technologies, and
- (viii) energy-consumption and fuel-use patterns and shares.

9. The data for the program study have come from published literature, project documentation, including PIR reports and evaluation reports, phone and email communications and interviews with project personnel and other stakeholders, and country visits by members of the study team or by local or international consultants.

10. The Program Study has been reported to the GEF Council (GEF/C.17/Inf.5). It is being prepared for publication as an Evaluation Report. The Cluster Reviews, containing more technical information, will be published as M&E Working Papers. For a larger outreach and dissemination, brief Lessons Notes publications are also being prepared from the Cluster Reviews. These reports will be available in hard copy as well as on the GEF website.

BIODIVERSITY PROGRAM STUDY

11. The study had three main objectives: highlight and assess achievements, initial impacts and lessons learned from the GEF biodiversity portfolio; conduct an analysis of the area covered by GEF-assisted projects, including a comparison with lists of globally important ecosystems (“coverage”) and assess mechanisms for incorporating lessons learned into more recently approved projects. Projects were assessed for achievement of their main objectives, keeping in mind the constraints that arose during project implementation and taking into account the GEF guidelines that were operative at the time of project approval. The methodology utilized in the study included the partition of the GEF biodiversity portfolio as of June 30, 2001 into two cohorts: (1) all full and medium-size projects under implementation as of June 30, 1998, plus all completed projects and (2) all full and medium-size projects that were initiated or entered into the GEF Work Program between July 1, 1998 and June 30, 2000

12. The qualitative analysis of projects from Cohort 1 included two special studies (stakeholder participation and capacity development), the in-depth review of about 30 projects randomly selected and field visits to nine countries: Argentina, Gabon and Central African Republic, Indonesia, Mauritius, Peru, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Yemen. A selected group of forestry projects in Cohort 2 were analyzed to determine the benefits they had derived from the lessons learned during earlier projects.

13. In addition to being a central input to the OPS2 report, the Biodiversity Program Study was discussed by the Biodiversity Task Force and a plan of action to follow-up some of the recommendations proposed was developed. This year’s Biodiversity Portfolio Status Review (input to the GEF Business Plan) uses the Program Study to analyze portfolio gaps and to develop strategies for future operational challenges and opportunities.

14. The program study has been reported to the GEF Council (GEF/C.17.Inf.4) and published as Evaluation Report #2-01.

15. One of the special studies conducted under the Program Study has been published as Lessons Notes #12: "Participation Means Learning through Doing: GEF's experience in biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.

INTERNATIONAL WATERS PROGRAM STUDY

16. The International Waters program study team covered the entire portfolio that had been approved by the time of the review - 41 full projects, 4 medium-sized projects and 22 projects with PDF funding. The program study team reviewed all terminal evaluations and implementation completion reports available for international waters projects at the time of the review. Visits were undertaken on field level to four GEF projects and to the headquarters of one global project. The team made use of a questionnaire survey sent to project managers and others involved in GEF projects in the field and engaged in broad consultations with GEF stakeholders, which participated in the First GEF Biennial International Waters Conference in Budapest.

17. The analysis was made using performance indicators at three levels: (i) process; (ii) stress reduction; and (iii) environmental status. The study team also sought to determine the extent to which current GEF policies agree with the strategic guidance adopted by the Council and recommendations provided by both the Pilot Phase Evaluation and OPS 1. In addition, the following topics were highlighted for in-depth examination and reported upon in unpublished background documents: (1) Experiences with the use of the trans-boundary diagnostic analysis approach for preparing strategic action programs; (2) Multiple versus single Implementing Agency efforts; and (3) Regional approaches to complex situations.

18. The main findings of the International Waters Program Study have been reported to the Council as document GEF/C.17/Inf. 6 and published as GEF Evaluation Report #1-01.

19. An M&E Working Paper is currently under preparation on the International Waters Projects' Contributions to Global and Regional Agreements.

LAND DEGRADATION LINKAGE STUDY

20. As an input to the three above-mentioned program studies and OPS 2 itself, a separate desk study was initiated to identify the results and initial impacts of the land degradation component of those projects which link biodiversity, international waters and climate change to land degradation. The study was carried out by two external consultants, reporting to a Steering Group from the GEF Secretariat and the Implementing Agencies. A total of 103 land degradation linkage projects were reviewed in a desk analysis, while thirty-five were selected for a more detailed analysis. The study assessed to what extent land degradation had been addressed in projects of the three main focal areas of the GEF.

21. The study has been reported to the GEF Council (GEF/C.17/Inf.7) and has been published as GEF M&E Working Paper No. 6.

MEDIUM-SIZED PROJECT EVALUATION

22. An evaluation of the Medium-Sized Projects (MSP) was undertaken in order to provide timely inputs to the OPS 2. Its specific objectives were: (1) to assess whether MSPs are responsive to GEF objectives and policies; (2) to assess whether MSPs are filling a specific niche in GEF that cannot be met by full projects, small grants or enabling activities; (3) to analyze whether the MSP project cycle procedures are effective and to make recommendations for improving MSP processing and effectiveness; (4) to identify the impacts and the likely impacts of MSPs; and (5) to make recommendations towards improving the MSPs. An Evaluation Advisory Working Group was appointed, comprising of 20 persons from the GEF-NGO network, the Implementing Agencies and the GEF Secretariat.

23. At the time of the evaluation, GEF had approved 121 MSPs that were all covered by the evaluation for coverage and statistical purposes. Ten countries were selected for country visits. In addition, three MSP case studies were conducted by consultants supervised by the evaluation core team. Furthermore, a questionnaire survey was conducted to give a wider range of participants an opportunity to provide structured written inputs to the evaluation. NGO inputs were solicited specifically through the GEF-NGO network.

24. The MSP Evaluation report has been submitted as a Council documents (GEF/C.18/Inf.4) and will soon be published as a GEF Evaluation Report.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW AND PERFORMANCE REPORT

25. The GEF Project Performance Report presents the results of the annual GEF Project Implementation Review (PIR). This is essentially a monitoring process based upon reporting by the GEF Implementing Agencies on all ongoing regular and medium-sized projects, in accordance with guidelines prepared by the Senior M&E Coordinator. The report also draws upon additional information and insights about the performance of GEF's programs from other reviews, evaluations and studies.

26. The PIR review process includes extensive reviews and discussions in several meetings with the GEF Focal Area Teams and the Coordinators of the GEF divisions/departments of the Implementing Agencies.

27. The 2000 PIR, included 171 projects that had been in implementation for at least one year as of June 30, 2000. The report provided conclusions and lessons both from the various focal areas, as well as of a cross-cutting nature.

28. The report has been presented as Council Document GEF/C.17/8 and has also been published. A GEF Lessons Note, which is a short summary of the report, is under preparation.

29. The 2001 Project Implementation Review includes all projects that had been under implementation for at least a year as of June 30, 2001. Individual project reports and Implementing Agency overview reports have been prepared and are being reviewed. The GEF Focal Areas Task Forces will arrange focal area review meetings in November, followed by the

annual general review meeting in December. The report will be submitted to the May 2002 GEF Council meeting.

COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION

30. The corporate M&E team has developed several vehicles for communicating the results of its activities. An annual *Project Performance Report* synthesizes the results of the PIR and recent program and project evaluation studies.

31. Evaluation reports and studies are published in English, French and Spanish (and also in additional languages when specific considerations merit it), while thematic studies are published only in English in the M&E Working Papers series. They are available in printed copy or electronically on GEF's website. Customized mailing lists for both printed and electronic distribution of M&E publications, and an E-mail address (geflessons@gefweb.org) enable the dissemination to GEF clients and allow for their feedback.

32. The GEF Lessons Notes disseminate summaries of findings from reviews, evaluations and studies of the GEF Secretariat and Implementing Agencies. By this time we have identified five issues which will be based on evaluation material in 2001, mainly covering specific aspects of the program studies.

33. In addition to publications, the M&E team often provides oral briefings or presentations that highlight the main findings and implications of evaluations and reviews.