Global Environment Facility

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PROGRESS REPORT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM

1.   At the June 2005 Council meeting, Council reviewed the draft *Third Overall Performance Study* (OPS3) (GEF/ME/C.25/4), and the *Annual Performance Report 2004* (GEF/ME/C.25/1). Council recognized that the GEF Secretariat's existing system for managing project information was inadequate and was no longer meeting the needs of the GEF. Council took note of the findings and the recommendations of these reports and requested the GEF Secretariat to prepare for Council review, a number of options for making project proposal status information available to proponents through internet accessible databases and project tracking tools. In addition, the Council also requested the GEF Secretariat, Implementing Agencies, and Executing Agencies to update information on the projects funded by the GEF Trust Fund.

2.   In November 2005, Council reviewed a specific proposal from the GEF Secretariat, *GEF Management Information System* (MIS) (GEF/C.27/10), and recognized the need to establish a reliable management information system to enable the GEF and its partners to improve effectiveness across all areas of GEF business. The Council endorsed the proposal for developing a management information system and approved US$700,000 as a supplementary special initiative for this purpose.

3.   In June 2007, the GEF Secretariat reported to Council on the status of GEF's MIS through the Management Action Record included in the *GEF Annual Performance Report 2006* (GEF/ME/C.31/1), informing the Council that:

(a)   the detailed needs assessment for the MIS took considerable time and was completed only in December 2006;

(b)   the technology architecture of the MIS has been changed to contain costs;

(c)   the MIS would be developed in-house instead of being outsourced; and

(d)   a consultant had been selected to assist the Secretariat in this task for completion by December 2007.

4.   The Council noted that negligible progress has been made in developing an MIS and requested the Secretariat to make this a priority activity for completion before the end of the calendar year.

5.   The GEF Secretariat has set up a three track process consisting of: (i) the provision of project tracking capabilities on the internet; (ii) the cleanup, reconciliation and reconstruction of full project data; and (iii) the development, testing, documentation and migration to the new MIS. Coordination between tracks has been achieved by staff working on multiple tracks. An internal advisory panel with participation from all of the teams across the Secretariat and the Evaluation Office has been the central driver of the process. It sets targets, advises on content and format, and reviews the achievements of the development process during regular weekly meetings. The internal advisory panel has been supplemented by an interagency advisory panel, which will review and guide the further development of the new system and provide feedback on the areas that are essential for full GEF Agency functioning. For logistical reasons, the inter

agency panel will meet virtually at the early stages, but in due course will meet physically for training and broader consultations.

6.   This report summarizes the key milestones reached along each of these three tracks through March 2008 and provides a timeline for the planned activities for the remainder of the year. A summary of the major milestones is contained in Annex 1.

PROVISION OF PROJECT TRACKING CAPABILITIES - COUNTRY PROFILE PAGE

7.   The GEF Secretariat has developed a web portal – the Country Profile page – on the GEF website to provide all stakeholders with instant public access to available project level information. It was launched in December 2007 and can be publicly accessed at http://www.gefonline.org/Country/CountryProfile.cfm. From this page, the public can track a project as it moves through different stages of the GEF activity cycle from preparation to approval, implementation, and closure. The page also provides public access to information on: (i) the RAF allocations of countries, (ii) utilization of allocations by the approval of PIFs and Project Preparation Grants, and (iii) the existing pipeline of projects that have been cleared by the CEO for approval.

8.   In addition, national GEF focal points can also access a secured area of the portal to track the status of PIFs and projects from their respective countries during the approval process from the instant a project enters into the GEF system through the PIF review/ PIF clearance/PIF approval and on to project approval or endorsement. The secured area will also contain information on the resources requested by the submitted PIFs.[1] GEF Agency staff will be able to access the secured part of the Country Profile page once agreement has been reached on the security protocols.

9.   The Country Profile page contains data as they exist in the current MIS on all projects that have been submitted to the GEF Secretariat since the establishment of the GEF. Missing or incorrect data on projects is being updated continuously as it becomes available.

10.   Since its launch until March 12, 2008, the Country Profile page has been accessed over 3760 times, or about 50 times per day. User comments have generally been positive and indicate the usefulness of the Country Profile page. As with any system, the GEF Secretariat welcomes suggestions to further improve these pages to become more useful for our various stakeholders. A demonstration of the Country Profile page will be presented to Council during the April 2008 meeting.

Cleanup, reconciliation and reconstruction of project data

11.   The MIS is only as good as the data that is entered into it. Unfortunately, some of the data in the current MIS is old and inaccurate, and some is still missing. The existing MIS was built in 2001 - ten years after the establishment of the GEF. The migration of older project data from original paper archives and the consolidation of all project information into a single authoritative

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[1] Implementation of this feature of the MIS remains to be completed pending a resolution of the appropriate protocols. It is expected to be completed by June 2008.

source has never been completed. These deficiencies have been made clear to GEF Council in the various evaluation reports presented to Council during the past few years. In particular, the *Joint Evaluation of the Activity Cycle and Modalities* noted this deficiency and reconstructed and re-assembled key project information for a number of projects. The Secretariat has since consolidated all this data into the existing MIS.

12.   As noted in the June 2007 *Trustee Report* (GEF/C.31/Inf.3), the Trustee and the Agencies completed a comprehensive reconciliation of the data shared between them to fill in missing data. The Secretariat is now coordinating with the Trustee to ensure that the Trustee and the Secretariat have a mutually agreed set of common data. The Trustee and the Secretariat will work together, with the Agencies, if necessary, to resolve any data inconsistencies that are found between the Trustee's data and that of the Secretariat.

13.   The Trustee's data is limited to those financial transactions that have an impact on the funding status of the GEF Trust Fund. Documents and data required by the Secretariat that is not maintained by the Trustee, such as project documents, implementation reports, evaluations, and project milestones will be reconciled with the Agencies directly.

14.   The Secretariat's data cleanup, reconciliation and reconstruction process began in November 2007. Missing data is being entered into the existing MIS from paper archives, as well as from the records of the GEF Agencies and the Trustee on a continuing basis. This effort is progressing well and is expected to be completed by July 2008.

Development, testing, documentation and migration to the new Management Information System

15.   The development and testing of the new MIS is being completed in three phases. The first phase is focused on development and testing of the system to meet the specific needs and requirements of the GEF Secretariat and the Evaluation Office. The second phase is focused on development and testing of the system to meet the specific needs of the GEF Agencies, the Trustee, and STAP, while incorporating efficiency and enhancing features such as increased automation in the data transfer between Agencies and automated data checking. Upon completion of the first two phases, the system will be documented and, as part of the third phase, staff will be trained in the use of the new system.

16.   The first phase of the MIS development and testing has been completed.[2] It was guided by an advisory panel with broad participation from across the Secretariat and the Evaluation Office. The panel set targets and reviewed their achievement during regular weekly meetings. Templates for data entry at each step of the activity cycle including PIF, PIF review, PPG, review by CEO, project endorsement and CEO endorsement review, and associated budget tables and summaries were developed and tested. Existing automated reports and data analyses were re-designed and included in the new system. Additional reports and analyses that are not in the existing MIS will be developed during March and April.

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[2] While the new MIS is ready for use by the Secretariat and the Evaluation Office, the migration to the new system has been deferred so that the April work program could be finalized.

17.   The new MIS employs the following features to ensure the security of the system:

(a)   The data is stored on a World Bank server and is automatically backed up every night as part of regular World Bank operations. Additionally, the GEF Secretariat will perform supplemental backups of the data nightly.

(b)   Public queries to the MIS will be through predefined access ways on a backup copy of the database.

(c)   A broader section of the MIS will be accessible to authorized users at the GEF Secretariat, the Evaluation Office, the GEF Agencies, Trustee, Operational Focal Points, and Council Members in a secure area of the database.

(d)   Authorized users can enter data into the system only in the parts for which they are authorized to input data. For instance, Agency staff will only be allowed to enter the data submissions for the projects for which they are responsible.

(e)   All data entered (with the exception of long text fields) and changes made to the database will be tracked, monitored, and maintained with full audit trials.[3]

18.   The new MIS will initially be demonstrated during the April Council meeting for the benefit of Council Members. It will be launched in May 2008 for the GEF Secretariat and the Evaluation Office, after Council comments and suggestions have been incorporated and all of the available reconciled data on projects has been transferred. Migration to the new system will be scheduled to ensure minimal interruption to the intersessional work programs. Documentation and training necessary to ensure a smooth transition to the new system will be provided to GEF Secretariat and Evaluation Office staff.

19.   The second phase of the MIS development and testing began in March 2008 and is expected to be completed by October 2008.   It will be guided by an advisory panel with representation from all GEF Agencies, the Trustee, and STAP. For logistical reasons, much of the work of the panel will be conducted virtually, as panel members provide feedback and review the system as it is developed. A number of physical meetings will be organized as appropriate.

20.   The GEF Secretariat has acquired two servers to securely store the data for the purposes of development and testing the new MIS. The test server has already been populated with existing data from the current MIS. The GEF Secretariat will provide Agencies, the Trustee, and STAP open access to the server after setting up the necessary internal controls for data security and based on the needs of the partners. The system will allow any member of the internal advisory panel to log in, explore and test out the new MIS system, and provide feedback on the work flow and design of the system. The other server will be populated with similar real data and

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[3] Any field capable of accepting more than 4000 characters is defined as a long text field. Examples of this include the question on PIF justification. Allowing this exception: i) significantly reduces the load on the server, and ii) avoids the need to undertake extensive programming to back up this data, since this is not a standard feature of the SQL Server.

made available with secure passwords to GEF Agency staff in the interagency advisory panel for their testing and feedback in structured regular meetings, just as it has been done for the internal advisory panel.

21.   The new system will be designed to increase the efficiency of the GEF partnership by eliminating the need for repeated data entry by partners. Agency staff will be able to securely access relevant sections of the new MIS to directly enter all relevant data and submit requests to the GEF secretariat. This includes data on PIF and PPG requests, CEO endorsement, PIR and other data submissions to the GEF Secretariat. This will be facilitated by the development of uniform agreed terminology and data across the GEF partners. The automated data entry and its transfer will also reduce data errors and inconsistencies across GEF partners. In addition, protocols will be established for multiple agency projects so that the Agency-specific databases match with the data that has been entered into GEF's PMIS. The new PMIS will provide partners as well as focal points the ability to generate reports directly from the system.

22.   The third phase of MIS development will start in June 2008 and will be completed by October 2008, when the new MIS will be formally launched for all stakeholders. During the third phase, the GEF Secretariat will develop full documentation and user manuals to train and guide all users. Training will be provided as well to designated resource persons in each Agency, the Trustee, and STAP, who can provide instruction to colleagues at their respective institutions. Additionally, the GEF Operations Manual will be revised as necessary to reflect the changes brought about by the new PMIS.

23.   Development costs for the new MIS to date have been around $96,000, largely to pay consultants for developing the front end interface to the new MIS. Most of the other tasks have been integrated into the existing MIS system maintenance, and development tasks, and have been covered through the corporate budget.

Annex 1

KEY MILESTONES ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW MIS

June 2005	Draft OPS3 and Annual Performance Report 2004 recognized shortcomings of existing PMIS
November 2005	Council reviewed and approved GEFSEC proposal for developing new MIS
June 2006	Council requested Trustee and the GEF Agencies to reconcile all financial data related to the GEF Trust Fund.
November 2006	Council reviewed an evaluation of the Activity (project) cycle and requested GEFSEC to develop new project cycle.
April 2007	Trustee and GEF Agencies completed reconciliation of all financial data related to the GEF Trust Fund.
June 2007	Council approved the new project cycle and provided further guidance on development of PMIS
July 2007	Started Phase 1 -- development and testing to meet GEFSEC and EO needs
October 2007	Started development of Country Profile Page for GEF Focal Points
November 2007	Started GEFSEC data cleanup, reconciliation and reconstruction process
December 2007	Launched of Country Profile Page for GEF Focal Points
March 2008	Started Phase 2 -- development and testing to meet Agency, Trustee, and STAP needs
April 2008	Complete Phase 1 -- development and testing to meet GEFSEC and EO needs; Demonstration of the PMIS to Council
May 2008	Launch PMIS internally to GEFSEC and EO
June 2008	Start Phase 3 – develop documentation and user manuals
July 2008	Complete GEFSEC data cleanup, reconciliation and reconstruction process
October 2008	Public Launch of PMIS for all stakeholders; Train resource persons at GEF Agencies, Trustee, and STAP