



CELEBRATING TWENTY YEARS

**GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY**  
INVESTING IN OUR PLANET

Expanded Constituency Workshop Report

Constituency: Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica,  
Panama, Venezuela

**GEF Expanded Constituency  
Workshop,  
Latin America Constituency  
May 2-4, 2011**

**Panama City, Panama**

<b>Registration of Participants</b>	
<b>Welcoming Remarks</b>  <b>Government of Panama</b>  <b>GEF Secretariat</b>	<u>Chair:</u> Raul Pinedo, Panama, Alternate Council Member <u>Vice Chair:</u> GEF Secretariat  Ms. Lucía Chandek, Minister of Environment National Environment Authority (ANAM)  Mr. William Ehlers – Team Leader External Affairs
Introduction to the Workshop Objectives, Agenda, Materials and Resources	<u>Chair:</u> Raul Pinedo, Panama, Alternate Council Member <u>Vice Chair:</u> GEF Secretariat  GEF Secretariat – William Ehlers

### **Opening ceremony**

The meeting opened with welcoming remarks by the GEF Political Focal Point from Panama and the Minister of Environment, National Environment Authority (ANAM), H. E. Ms. Lucia Chandek. She thanked the countries' representatives for attending the meeting and invited the participants to have a fruitful discussion in the coming days. Minister Chandek apologized because due to previous commitments, she was unable to attend the whole meeting, but she expressed that the other delegates from Panama would attend.

Introductory remarks by the GEF Secretariat (GEFSEC) were presented by Mr. William Ehlers, who expressed his appreciation to Panama for hosting the workshop, as well as to the countries' representatives for attending the meeting. Mr. Ehlers noted that the Expanded Constituency Workshop (ECW) is one of the activities of the reformed Country Support Program (CSP), now entirely managed by the GEF Secretariat. He highlighted that a difference between the meetings that used to be carried out (called sub-regional workshops) and the new ECWs is that the participation of the Convention Focal Points and civil society representatives is included, in addition to the GEF Operational and Political Focal Points. Mr. Ehlers also discussed the GEF CEO's guidelines regarding the types of projects the GEF will be financing during the present replenishment period (GEF-5). He stated that projects that should be able to provide tangible results and concrete investments. Additionally, Mr. Ehlers mentioned the following aspects that any proposal need to have in order to increase its probabilities of being included in a work program: (i) a solid articulation of the baseline, its financing, and the incremental activities proposed for GEF-financing; (ii) a clear description on how the baseline was constructed and financed; (iii) an alignment with the comparative advantage of Agencies in terms of their institutional mandates and strategies, the amount of co-financing the Agency is bringing to the project, and the Agency's program and staff capacity in the country; (iv) an alignment with the

GEF-5 strategic objectives, as well as a demonstrates responsiveness to the results-driven agenda; and (v) clear country ownership regarding use of STAR allocations and that the proposed PIF is the best use of such resources (i.e. demonstrating that it was the best use of the allocation, in particular, for those countries with full flexibility for their STAR allocations). In conclusion, he invited participants to work together toward delivering quality projects and results.

### **Workshop objectives, Agenda and Materials Resources:**

The GEFSEC presented an introduction to the workshop objectives and agenda and noted that the objective of the meeting is to keep these stakeholders abreast of GEF strategies, policies and procedures and to encourage coordination. The GEFSEC indicated that all the material related to the different sessions of the meeting would be distributed to the participants at the end of the second day on a flash drive. The mechanics for setting up the bilateral meetings with agencies was explained and participants were also invited to an informal reception at the end of the day to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the GEF.

### **Session 1**

<p>GEF - An Introduction (history, structure)  <i>Q&amp;A session</i>  <i>Discussion</i></p>	<p><u>Chair:</u> Raul Pinedo, Panamá  <u>Vice Chair:</u> GEF Secretariat  <u>Rapporteur:</u> Chris Briggs, UNDP            GEF Secretariat – William Ehlers</p>
<p>GEF 5 – System for Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR)  <i>Q&amp;A session</i>  <i>Discussion</i></p>	<p><u>Chair:</u> Francisca Cárdenas, representing Guatemala OFP  <u>Vice Chair:</u> GEF Secretariat  <u>Rapporteur:</u> Alexandra Ortega, IDB            GEF Secretariat – Henry Salazar</p>

#### **1.1 GEF - An Introduction (history, structure)**

This session was dedicated to an introduction to the GEF followed by open discussion. The presentation by the GEFSEC summarized the history and the role of GEF, its mission, the focal areas, cross cutting issues and their funding allocations, linkages with Global Environment Benefits (GEB), the Least Develop Countries Fund (LDCF) and Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF) funds, organizational structure of the GEF and the GEF Agencies. Most of the questions raised by the participants were related to the allocation of resources (see the session below).

#### **1.2 GEF 5 – System for Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR)**

The presentation by the GEFSEC gave a comprehensive overview of the new allocation system under GEF-5, including a number of significant changes compared to the RAF under GEF-4. Some of the questions and concerns expressed included:

- The representatives from Costa Rica asked why they received more resources allocated to Biodiversity (BD) focal area and fewer to Climate Change (CC).
- The representatives from Honduras wanted to know why the formula used to calculate the System for Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR) allocations was not modified, even if they highlighted this during the last Constituency Meeting.
- The representatives from Guatemala were concerned about the low allocation they received in Land Degradation (LD). They requested the Council Member (who did not attend the meeting) to bring this concern to the next Council Meeting.
- The representatives from Costa Rica and Guatemala requested more information on how the flexibility mechanism works, and how a country can assign resources from one focal area to another.
- A representative from Guatemala raised the question concerning the focal area allocation for Land Degradation, given its importance for food security.
- A Nicaraguan representative requested more information about the Small Grants Program (SPG) and the requirements for core funding and STAR allocation.
- The representative from Venezuela asked about the funds available for projects on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs).
- UNEP sought clarity on the cancellation dates of projects that are prepared under the STAR and outside the STAR, and in the case that a project is cancelled after the last six months of the GEF-5 (1 January 2014), can the resources go to other countries?

The GEFSEC described the replenishment process and how the sum agreed was distributed among focal areas and in that context how the STAR system was developed and applied. A broad explanation of the STAR system covered how allocations were calculated based on a combination of the GEF Benefits Index (GBI), the GEF Performance Index (GPI), and a social and economic index based on the Gross Domestic Product (GDPI), and how the flexibility mechanism works.

All the countries expressed their concern regarding the calculations behind the individual country allocations under the STAR, requesting more clarity and requesting that these calculations be revised in the future. The representatives from GEFSEC encouraged participants to familiarize themselves more closely with the Council document that explains the details of the calculations behind the STAR. The GEFSEC also said that comments and concerns on how the allocations were calculated should be brought to the right place (the GEF Council) at the right time (whenever the Council would meet to discuss the variables and indexes that would be used for calculating the country allocations). The Alternate Member from Panama and the representatives from Mexico expressed their willingness to bring these issues to the Council Member, so she would be able to bring their concerns to the Council's attention during the appropriate Council Meeting.

The GEFSEC also pointed out that the set aside for regional and global projects is not distributed according to any formula but it is decided on an individual project basis. The funds are limited and the participating countries should first use their individual allocations and then request for additional funds from the set aside budget, if necessary.

The GEFSEC explained how the core funds for SGP, that are allocated through UNDP, were approved in the previous Council Meeting and that the way in which funds is allocated to countries would be covered in further detail during the session on SGP. It was also mentioned that projects on POPs are still eligible, but through funds outside of the STAR allocation.

## Session 2

<p>GEF Project Cycle and Review Process and the GEF Programmatic Approach  <i>Q&amp;A session</i>  <i>Discussion</i></p>	<p><u>Chair:</u> Salvador Nieto, El Salvador UNFCCC Focal Point, representing El Salvador OFP  <u>Vice Chair:</u> GEF Secretariat  <u>Rapporteur:</u> Robert Erath, UNEP            GEF Secretariat – Mark Zimsky</p>
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### 2.1 GEF Project Cycle and the Programmatic Approach

A presentation was made by the GEFSEC on the process of preparing and submitting projects to the GEF, as well as on the GEF Programmatic Approach. The questions and answers session that followed focused on more detailed information on direct access and the timeframe for the project cycle process. Many countries, while acknowledging that progress has been made to reduce the time for project preparation, commented that the process remains very complex and pointed out that countries have different internal capacities. Some of the questions included:

- A Honduran representative requested further clarification on the criteria for FSPs and MSPs. It was explained that the criteria are the same for both, but projects have to make sense in terms of scope and impacts relative to amounts requested.
- Guatemala: What is the approximate timeframe that can be expected from PIF submission to GEFSEC until it is approved in the work program? Is there a timeframe for the time prior to this approval? GEFSEC responded by noting that service Standard to respond is 10 days but there is not a simple answer: the time required depends on the complexity of the project and the speed by which the GEF Agency responds to the GEFSEC comments, among other factors. It was also clarified that PIFs are received on a rolling basis.
- A Nicaraguan representative expressed her concern about the timeframe and transaction cost. She stated that too many instances and steps are counterproductive. Also, the process does not account for heterogeneous capacities in the region's countries. The GEFSEC noted that the timeframes are maximums, and the reason behind a PIF is to save time by not developing concepts that are not accepted, to earmark resources when they are and to then develop a proposal on a solid basis. In addition, the process has been streamlined and times and steps have been reduced in some areas.
- A representative from Costa Rica asked why it is not possible to present a PIF in Spanish. The GEFSEC explained that not all the program managers were fluent in Spanish, but they are in English. Similarly other people who also reviewed PIFs, such as STAP and Council Members might only be fluent in English.
- A Costa Rican asked if the PPG compulsory? The GEFSEC responded that the PPG was optional.

The GEFSEC explained the new direct access modality in more detail stating that the main difference is that countries present requests directly to GEFSEC without the intermediation of a GEF Agency. It was also explained that to comply with these procedures, countries will receive technical support/assistance from GEFSEC staff, and that there is no implementation fee when implementing through direct access. Regarding Programmatic Approach, the GEFSEC explained that the main objective for fostering a programmatic approach during GEF-5 is to have a window for a higher impact with more sustainability than with individual projects. For the discussion on the GEF Project Cycle, the two main points, which were summarized, were that the GEFSEC would like focal points to know the basics of the project cycle, but not necessarily be a specialist, and that the GEF is trying to further simplify the Project Cycle, but this is not always easy to do.

### Session 3

<p>GEF and the conventions:          Reports to the conventions          Technology Transfer          Adaptation Fund  <i>Q&amp;A session</i>  <i>Discussion</i></p>	<p><u>Chair</u>: Denis Fuentes, representing          OFP from Nicaragua  <u>Vice Chair</u>: GEF Secretariat  <u>Rapporteur</u>: Rikke Olivera, FAO          GEF Secretariat – William Ehlers</p>
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#### 3.1 The GEF and the Conventions

During this session, GEFSEC presented the linkages between the GEF and the Conventions on Climate Change, Biodiversity, Chemicals and Land Degradation as well as the aspects of Technology Transfer that were agreed upon at the COP meeting of Poznan that guided the GEF action on this issue. During the session, a presentation on the Adaptation Fund was also included. Many countries requested more information and clarifications related to Enabling Activities and reports to different Conventions, their modalities and co-financing.

The GEFSEC explained that direct access would be available shortly for preparing Convention reports on Climate Change, Persistent Organic Pollutants and Land Degradation; and it was also explained that the template guidelines for Biodiversity were already available online - via the GEFSEC web page. Other options for countries were discussed: using a GEF agency or under an umbrella program. All the reports to conventions are financed in full and from funds set aside up to a pre specified maximum.

Some of the more specific questions included:

- Honduras: Are the funds (USD 150,000/country) already available for preparing the reports for Land Degradation, and what is the application process? GEFSEC: The funds are available already, and soon we will also have the forms to apply for direct access. It is possible to complement the available amount from the STAR allocation. Eligible activities are related to alignment of National Action Programs (NAPSS) with the

UNCCD 10-Year Strategy (i.e. NAP Alignment) and reporting process, as per obligations to the UNCCD.

- Costa Rica: Enabling activities under the Stockholm Protocol only apply to substances and topics approved in previous COPs? Or is it possible to carry out activities related to mercury? GEFSEC: At the moment it is only to prepare the reports. We have separated \$10M for the activities related to mercury once the decision has been made at the level of COP. However, the 10 new persistent organic pollutants considered by the Convention can be included in the forthcoming proposals.
- Costa Rica: Are there additional funds available for the enabling activities related to new requirements approved in Nagoya? GEFSEC: There is only one amount available for each country for the three reports mentioned in the presentation. On what was approved in Nagoya, a document will be discussed in the next Council meeting.

## **Technology Transfer**

After the GEFSEC presentation on Technology Transfer, many countries raised questions on the focus on mitigation\ in lieu of adaptation activities. In general –countries argued— there should be more emphasis on learning from local and indigenous adaptation practices, knowledge management and capacity building, intellectual property rights; rather than focusing solely on new mitigation technologies. GEFSEC explained that for adaptation projects, the funds come from LDCF/SCCF; and for mitigation activities, funds come from STAR individual allocations.

Countries were also concerned about synergies between the three Conventions, and creating dependency on outside technology when applying for TT projects. Nicaragua expressed its concerns regarding the lack of considerations related to ancestral technologies, while Guatemala raised questions as to the TT's exclusion of technologies for adaptation in contrast with their inclusion for mitigation. GEFSEC expressed that the COP guidelines were being followed closely. Finally, one country asked how to access the TT funds, and GEFSEC explained that the process to be followed was the same as with any other focal area.

## **Adaptation Fund (AF)**

With regards to the Adaptation Fund, participants were interested in knowing more about governance of the fund, accreditation process and criteria, and how national governmental institutions could be involved in the accreditation process.

- The representative from Nicaragua noted that Latin America region is represented by Uruguay (Jamaica as Alternate Member) in the Adaptation Fund Board.
- The representative from El Salvador asked about the accreditation process for an organization to become a National Implementing Entity (NIE). GEFSEC expressed that any organization interested in implementing Adaptation Fund projects must submit an application for accreditation providing documentation that shows it meets the fiduciary standards adopted by the Board. The applications are reviewed and assessed based on the fiduciary standards by the Accreditation Panel. Additionally, all applications must be endorsed by the Designated Authority (DA), who acts as the focal point for the Adaptation Fund representing the government.

- The representative from Nicaragua asked about the requirements to be accredited and also inquired why the representatives of the Adaptation Fund Secretariat were not present at the meeting alongside the GEFSEC representatives. GEFSEC responded that the principles established for the Adaptation Fund covered three broad areas: Financial Integrity, Management; Institutional Capacity; Transparency and Self-investigative Powers. Moreover, the GEFSEC said that the GEFSEC provided secretariat services to the Adaptation Fund Board on an interim basis in order to support and facilitate its activities.

## Session 4

Country Support Programme <i>Q&amp;A session</i> <i>Discussion</i>	<u>Chair:</u> Cynthia Lezama, representing PFP from Honduras <u>Vice Chair:</u> GEF Secretariat <u>Rapporteur:</u> Claudio Volonte - EO GEF Secretariat – Henry Salazar
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### 4.1 Country Support Programme

GEF Secretariat presented the renewed Country Support Program, that includes the National Portfolio Formulation Exercise, Direct Support to Operational Focal Points, Multi-stakeholder Dialogues, Expanded Constituency-level Workshops, Constituency Meetings, Knowledge management and Familiarization Seminars.

## Session 5

GEF Small Grants Programme <i>Q&amp;A session</i> <i>Discussion</i>	<u>Chair:</u> Lissett Hernandez, Venezuela OFP <u>Vice Chair:</u> GEF Secretariat <u>Rapporteur:</u> Jesús Quintana, IFAD GEF Secretariat – William Ehlers  National SGP Coordinator – Jose Manuel Perez
GEF and Civil Society <i>Q&amp;A session</i> <i>Discussion</i>	<u>Chair:</u> Lissett Hernandez, Venezuela OFP <u>Vice Chair:</u> GEF Secretariat <u>Rapporteur:</u> Jesús Quintana, IFAD GEF Secretariat – William Ehlers

### 5.1 Small Grants Program

The first presentation was made by the GEFSEC and covered the scope, funding and results of the Small Grants Program. This was followed by the presentation of the national SGP coordinator from Panama, Jose Manuel Perez.

The representatives from Honduras and Guatemala expressed the relevance of the SGP in their respective country and requested the GEF to provide more financial support. GEFSEC clarified how SGP is now linked to the STAR and a country can, if they wish, allocate more resources from its STAR allocation within certain limits. It was also explained why some countries receive core funding from the SGP while others are required to use only their STAR allocation. Regarding the evaluation of the SGP (question raised by the representative from Costa Rica), GEFSEC mentioned that there have been evaluations of individual country programs, such as in Costa Rica as well as an overall evaluation of SGP by the Evaluation Office, which have helped to improve the program.

## 5.2. GEF and Civil Society

GEF Secretariat’s presentation on “GEF’s Partnership with Civil Society Organizations” outlined GEF policies on involvement with civil society organizations and highlighted the role the civil society organizations can play in the GEF projects for better performance and impact at the ground level. During the questions and answers session, there were queries primarily regarding the improvement of the participation of NGOs and CSOs in GEF projects, and how to reinforce their role as implementing partners.

- The CSO representative from Guatemala requested the creation of a fund with GEF resources for exclusive use by the CSOs. GEFSEC mentioned that although some proposals on this issue have been presented to the GEF Council, none has been approved.
- A Nicaraguan representative asked about the reasons why although some countries already have submitted their endorsement letters for using the STAR allocation for supporting the SGP, the allocation has not been effective yet. GEFSEC explained that the SGP has already received the largest proportion of GEF funds to date with global program and some upgraded country programs. Therefore the priority must now go to STAR allocations. Further consideration will be given as GEF progresses.

## Session 6

<p>GEF Focal Area and Cross Cutting Strategies          Biodiversity – Mark Zimsky, GEF Secretariat          Land Degradation – Rikke Olivera, FAO          International Waters – Jesús Quintana, IFAD          Programa de Financiamiento Multilateral REDD-Plus- Robert Erath, UNEP          Climate Change - Alexandra Ortega, IaDB          Chemicals – Chris Briggs, UNDP</p>	<p><u>Chair:</u> Irina Pineda, Honduras OFP  <u>Vice Chair:</u> GEF Secretariat  <u>Rapporteur:</u> Jo Albert, World Bank          GEF Secretariat          GEF Agencies</p>
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Capacity Building – William Ehlers <i>Q&amp;A</i> <i>Discussion</i>	
GEF Agencies Panel Topic: Sustainable Forest Management <i>Q&amp;A</i> <i>Discussion</i>	<u>Chair:</u> Patricia Campos, Costa Rica OFP <u>Vice Chair:</u> GEF Secretariat <u>Rapporteur:</u> UNDP GEF Secretariat – Mark Zimsky GEF Agencies

## 6.1 GEF Focal Areas and Cross Cutting Strategies

This session included 2 presentations by the GEF Secretariat and 5 presentations by the Agencies. FAO made a presentation on Land Degradation, IFAD on International Waters, UNEP talked about SFM/REDD+, IADB made a presentation on Climate change mitigation, and UNDP made a presentation on Chemicals. Additionally, GEFSEC presented Biodiversity as well as GEF strategic approach to Capacity Building.

During the Q&A session, more clarity was requested on the type of projects that are eligible under Biodiversity focal area (marine ecosystems), and on Nagoya Protocol. Some of the specific questions included:

- The representative from Guatemala asked whether or not in terms of individual allocations for BD focal area, being part of the group of mega-diverse countries has any effect. GEFSEC responded that allocations were calculated based on the indexes already explained in session I (STAR), and in the case of the Global Benefit Index for BD, it makes maximum possible use of the available, scientifically- reliable information for a cross-country assessment of terrestrial and marine biodiversity. Therefore, one could assume that the information contained in the index reflects any potential variations that may occur in countries that belong to the mega diverse countries group. Additionally, it was also explained that within the index, the weight of the marine biodiversity was increased from 20% (RAF) up to 25% (STAR).
- The representative from Mexico asked if there were some funds available to ratify the ABS (Nagoya) protocol as well as if the POPs resources could be used for the Basel Convention. GEFSEC explained that the Nagoya Protocol Implementation Fund (NPIF) was created specifically to help countries to ratify the Nagoya Protocol: a document on the procedures will be discussed at the next Council Meeting.
- The representative from Nicaragua asked several questions: (i) it has been considered to allocate adequate funds to fulfill the BD goals for plan 2011 – 2020? GEFSEC responded that the COPs mandate is clear to the GEF, but limits are posed by the funds availability for enabling activities, which were the result of the replenishment process; (ii) how the forest accounts differently from being carbon sinks? GEFSEC responded that for GEF-5 –besides its potential of serving as carbon sink— the value of forests is considered by

their potential of generating / storing eco-systemic services at a global level. This is taken into account by the time of assessing proposals that may come in the area of Sustainable Forest Management;

- The representatives from Honduras and Guatemala asked about the reasons why there are more funds for mitigation than for adaptation. GEFSEC answered that actions for mitigation are being financed by the resources available in the GEF Trust Fund while actions for adaptation are being financed by the resources available in the LDCF and SCCF, as well as by the Adaptation Fund. In all cases, procedures and financial arrangements have been approved by the Council.
- The representative from Venezuela asked if a co-financing for projects in POPs of 1:4 would be acceptable. GEFSEC clarified that the level of 1:4 reveals the historic trend, but by no means was a requirement. Co-financing is assessed on a project by project basis based mainly on the characteristics of the project, so no standard rule applies for all the projects in this regard.
- The representative from Costa Rica asked about how to access funds under the special account of the Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) cross-cutting focal area. UNEP responded that besides the need of being aligned with the objectives of SFM, the country should be willing to utilize funds of at least two out of the three focal areas with individual allocations under the STAR. If the project is selected, it will receive 1 dollar from SFM's special account for each 3 dollars allocated by the country.

## 6.2. GEF Agencies Panel

The second part of the 6<sup>th</sup> session included a panel discussion among Agencies on Sustainable Forest Management in this sub-region. The topic for the panel discussion was chosen based on the survey carried out by the GEF Secretariat before the workshop, and the objective of the session was to provide the Agencies an opportunity to talk about their comparative advantages with this important topic. Countries did not comment / ask questions on this topic.

## Session 7

Pre-PIF Process and How to Prepare A PIF	<p><u>Chair:</u> Andrei Bourrouet, Costa Rica PFP</p> <p><u>Vice Chair:</u> GEF Secretariat</p> <p><u>Rapporteur:</u> Claudio Volonte, GEF EO</p> <p>GEF Secretariat – Mark Zimsky, Henry Salazar</p> <p>GEF Agencies: Rikke Olivera, FAO</p>
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## **7.1 Pre-PIF Process**

GEFSEC gave a presentation of the newly launched pre-PIF tracking system available in PMIS. GEFSEC pointed out that pre-PIF process was created at Council's request as a response to concerns and complaints from some of the countries that the Agencies were not very responsive to countries during the Project Concept preparation stage. The discussion that followed clarified the voluntary nature of the tracking system, and sought more details of the process and its sequencing. Participants were encouraged to look at the demonstration video available on the GEF website.

## **7.2. How to prepare a PIF**

Ms. Rikke Olivera from FAO presented a hands-on session on how to prepare a PIF. In addition, her presentation included the GEF5 strategies for focal areas and in particular the Results Based Framework, focusing on identifying the correct idea for GEF financing and then identifying the necessary information to fill in the PIF.

This was followed by a presentation by the GEFSEC Program Manager, Mark Zimsky. He commented on how the GEFSEC reviews the PIF and what type of feedback GEFSEC provides to agencies at this point of project processing. Ms. Rikke Olivera introduced each of the sections in the PIF and then Mark commented on how the GEFSEC reviews it. Both presenters mentioned that the PIF should have enough information to satisfy the requirements of the GEFSEC and the Council. The Agencies and the Secretariat are available to help with the preparation of the PIF as appropriate.

Some of the questions presented during the discussion were:

- Mexico: Are there experiences of countries (or national institutions) that have prepared the PIF on their own without the support of the GEF Agency? Has it happened? Are all PIFs prepared with the help of consultants suggested by the Agencies? This can be rather expensive. GEFSEC responded by noting that there is not a direct access for regular GEF projects yet , meaning that the countries can not send the PIF directly to the GEFSEC. Nevertheless, in many cases, the PIF is prepared together by a GEF Agency and representatives of the government without the use of consultants. Ideally, the government starts the process, defining the objectives of the project, and then the GEF Agency provides support to clarify GEF strategies, policies, and procedures. However, there is not a standard procedure established.
- Nicaragua: is there a resource tool kit on how to best integrate sustainable forest management into other focal area projects? GEFSEC said that the procedure is the same as with any other GEF project: SFM has its own resource based management framework so what is needed is the use of the structure and indicators of that framework. Given the nature of SFM projects, it may be a bit more complicated considering that it is required to include more than one focal area.

## **Session 8**

Monitoring and Evaluation Policy <i>Q&amp;A session</i> <i>Discussion</i>	<u>Chair:</u> Raul Pinedo, Panamá – Miembro Alterno <u>Vice Chair:</u> GEF Secretariat <u>Rapporteur:</u> UNDP GEF Evaluation Office - Claudio Volonte
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## 8.1 Monitoring and Evaluation

GEFG Evaluation Office (GEF EO), represented by Mr. Claudio Volonte, gave a presentation on the Monitoring and Evaluation Policies at the GEF. The discussion that followed focused on country evaluations and the more specific information on the evaluation criteria. Some of the questions presented during the discussion were:

- Guatemala: Is it possible to request a country portfolio evaluation for Guatemala? GEF EO responded that when preparing a country portfolio evaluation, and considering the resource limitations, the EO presents to the Council a request to perform a limited number of country portfolio evaluations, based on some parameters, including regional criteria. When approved by the Council, the EO selects the country /countries to be evaluated using the above mentioned criteria and other parameters that are applicable at that specific moment in time.
- Nicaragua: how likely is it to have more than one country portfolio evaluation? GEF EO responded that given the resource limitations, as well as the potential number of countries that would be subject to be evaluated, it is very unlikely to have more than one country portfolio evaluation.

## Closing Ceremony

The Latin America Constituency GEF Expanded Constituency Workshop closing remarks were presented by the GEF Operational Focal Point for Panama, Ms. Sygrid Barragan. She expressed her gratitude to the representatives and the GEF for a well-structured and well-organized meeting. She also mentioned Panama's commitment to continue working with the GEF support to foster sustainable development activities in the country, and invited the participants to come back to Panama, welcoming the initiative of having this type of meetings with representatives of countries in the region in order to promote the exchange of experiences and synergies.