



Global Environment Facility

Summary of Document GEF/C.25/9

Elements for Strengthening National Focal Points and Enhancing Constituency Coordination in GEF Recipient Countries

Recommended Council Decision

The Council, having reviewed the paper GEF/C.25/9, *Elements for Strengthening National Focal Points and Enhancing Constituency Coordination in GEF Recipient Countries*, approves the proposals presented in the paper for a four year program of assistance to strengthen national focal point and Council Members. The Council requests the GEF Secretariat and the Implementing Agencies to collaborate in preparing a project proposal to operationalize the program for approval by the Council.

Executive Summary

GEF Focal Point Support Program

1. The GEF Council approved the funding of a program to support Council Members and focal points in May 1999. The program was designed to provide financing for services that would be delivered through the country office of an agreed Implementing Agency to help the GEF national focal points and Council Members in recipient countries carry out their roles and responsibilities more effectively and raise awareness of the goals and opportunities offered by the GEF.
2. At the Council meeting in May 2003, the Council agreed to continue the program pending an evaluation of the program by the Council to provide information that would assist it in considering whether and how it should be extended in the future.
3. The evaluation recommended that the GEF support program be extended with some redesign. The evaluation proposed options for the future structure of the support program and the GEFSEC proposes that the program should be reshaped in the short term to respond to a number of problems highlighted in the evaluation.

Proposed Focal Point and Constituency Coordination Support Program

4. The GEF Secretariat has proposed some changes to the program to assist countries to:
 - (a) increase awareness of the GEF strategic priorities, policies and programs;

- (b) create institutional memory of GEF policies and programs in the appropriate government ministry;
- (c) increase coordination among national agencies with a view to ensuring greater country ownership and a cohesive approach across the government to global environmental issues and GEF support;
- (d) develop a database to keep track of GEF portfolios in the country;
- (e) promote mainstreaming of global environmental issues into the national sustainable development strategies; and
- (f) strengthen stakeholder involvement in global environmental programs.

And

- (a) assist Council Members to communicate with constituents through telephone, faxes and mail;
- (b) disseminate GEF Council documents;
- (c) hold meetings and telephone conferences for Constituency level coordination as necessary;
- (d) host constituency meetings prior to GEF Council meetings.

5. It is proposed that the Council consider the continuation of the focal point and Council Member support program with the following understandings:

- (a) the support program should be extended for a four-year period, after which its continuation and/or modification will be reviewed by the Council;
- (b) the administration of the program should be streamlined by making financial resources available to focal points and Council Members on the basis of a work plan agreed with the GEF Secretariat;
- (c) new guidelines of eligible expenditures are proposed for Council approval. These guidelines will provide increased flexibility to the focal point to determine activities that will assist in achieving the objectives of the program, while providing emphasis on the need to enhance coordination and mainstreaming of global environmental aims in the policies and programs of the recipient countries; (See Annex B (Focal Points) and Annex C (Council Members) for proposed guidelines);
- (d) accountability for expenditures will be exercised through annual reporting by the focal points and Council Members to the GEF Secretariat in accordance with a standard reporting format;

- (e) spot audits on the use of the focal point and constituency coordination funds may be requested by the GEF Secretariat and financed by the program; and
- (f) funding will be provided to allow Council Members to convene two constituency meetings per year which can be attended by both the political and operational focal points.

Administration of the Program

6. The GEF Secretariat will be responsible for management and strategic oversight of the program, working in collaboration with the Implementing Agencies. UNEP, with the full support and agreement of the Secretariat, the World Bank and UNDP will assist in administering the disbursement of funds to focal points and Council Members. UNEP will also ensure financial accountability, including budget monitoring and financial reporting.

7. Implementing Agencies will continue to exercise a lead role in programming at the country level, undertaking country dialogue on mainstreaming GEF operations within overall country programming and on sector policies, and in supporting countries in the development of projects, as well as the supervision and evaluation of GEF projects.

8. In addition to their policy advisory role, Implementing Agencies through their respective country and regional offices will support GEF Focal Points through the following activities:

- (a) advise on eligibility and design requirements;
- (b) provide information on status of project proposals;
- (c) support to the focal point review process;
- (d) promote and facilitate GEF networks; and
- (e) provide general information on the GEF.

RATIONALE FOR CONTINUED AND ENHANCED SUPPORT TO FOCAL POINTS

9. The rationale for GEFSEC's administration of the program is to enable increased and consistent guidance, information, and advice to operational focal points through direct contact with the GEF Secretariat. Administration of the program by the GEFSEC will also ensure that new GEF strategies and policies are taken into consideration in the implementation of the activities that are supported by the support program and the creation of linkages with other existing and proposed activities currently co-ordinated or administered by the GEF Secretariat e.g.: *Strategic Approach to Capacity Building, National Dialogue Initiative, GEF Familiarization Seminars, GEF Newsletter, Orientation for New Council Members, Pipeline Management Information.*

10. The proposed cost of the focal point and Council Member support program is estimated at \$7,144,000. It is recommended to Council that the Program be approved as outlined in the paper.