



Global Environment Facility

Summary of Document GEF/C.25/5

Review of the GEF Operational Program 12: Integrated Ecosystem Management

Recommended Council Decision

The Council, having reviewed the *GEF Office of Monitoring and Evaluation Review of the GEF Operational Program 12: Integrated Ecosystems Management* (document GEF/ME/C.25/5), requests the OPS3 team to take it into consideration when preparing their final report. The Council also requests the GEF Office of Monitoring and Evaluation to report on follow-up actions taken to implement the management response in June 2006, taking into account the decision of the Council on the management response.

Executive Summary

1. This study had two main objectives: (1) to assess the consistency of the projects in the OP12 (Operational Program 12, Integrated Ecosystem Management [IEM]) portfolio and (2) to glean lessons from the OP12 experience to promote more effective integration among Global Environment Facility (GEF) activities. As most of the projects have been approved only recently, the study relied on the review of the 38 project documents in the OP12 portfolio and interviews with staff of the Implementing Agencies and the GEF Secretariat. Rather than project performance per se, the review thus assessed quality of entry—i.e., issues related to project preparation and design.
2. The review found that, overall, project documents did a good job in addressing process-related issues such as partnership arrangements, country-drivenness, stakeholder participation, and the identification of procedures for cross-sectoral management. Projects did not score as well, however, on technical factors that are important to potential success. Such factors include sound initial diagnosis of problems and assessment of potential solutions, accurate establishment of baselines, appropriate scientific and technical approaches to problem solution, monitoring of change or impact, and mechanisms to learn from experiences and adapt accordingly. Very few projects convincingly presented potential synergies among focal areas—an important criterion for success of OP12 projects.

3. Two important considerations require more attention during project preparation:
 - (i) “Win-wins” versus trade-offs must be assessed carefully in terms of working to achieve (a) development and/or poverty alleviation while maintaining or increasing global environmental goods and services, and (b) synergies (a more positive form of win-win) between or among focal areas.
 - (ii) In some projects, synergies may be questionable to the point that the risk of “double jeopardy” arises in having to establish baselines and achieve and measure separate but synergistic impacts. That is, it may be that holding projects responsible for multifocal outcomes could be beyond project capabilities and budgets.
4. In addition to the issues related to project preparation, other considerations contribute to potential failure to achieve the desired impacts of multifocal, synergistic integration. These include lack of strategic guidance of the operational program and unclear guidelines for designing and achieving successful IEM projects. The report presents some options for addressing this problem within the context of the current OP system. More drastic changes may also be considered, including a broader scale rethink of integrative approaches in the GEF and restructuring of the OPs. The review concludes that OP12 is useful for the GEF, but will require more careful strategic prioritizing, improved quality of entry, and improved methods for monitoring and learning from IEM approaches.
5. Several key factors need to be considered as the GEF moves forward to integration:
 - Clarification and consensus regarding terms are needed.
 - The GEF and its partners must continually identify, synthesize, and build on lessons learned.
 - The conditions under which integration is necessary must be defined. All activities and projects do not need to be integrated. Those in the OP12 portfolio that should be integrated should be judiciously selected.
6. Special attention must be given to technical rigor, avoiding overly ambitious objectives, and the balance between global environmental benefits and local benefits.