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COMPLEMENTARITY OF UNEP'S CORE ACTIVITIES AND ITS GEF INTERVENTIONS

Information Note on the Measures Initiated by UNEP to
Mainstream GEF Operations in its Regular Activities

(Prepared by the United Nations Environment Programme)



United Nations Environment Programme

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 PROGRAMME DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT • PROGRAMA DE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS PARA EL MEDIO AMBIENTE
 ПРОГРАММА ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ ОБЪЕДИНЕННЫХ НАЦИЙ ПО ОКРУЖАЮЩЕЙ СРЕДЕ

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INFORMATION NOTE ON THE MEASURES INITIATED BY UNEP TO MAINSTREAM GEF OPERATIONS IN ITS REGULAR ACTIVITIES

INTRODUCTION

1. With the establishment of the GEF as a pilot phase, UNEP's ClearingHouse Unit was entrusted, in 1991, in addition to its regular activities to act as a focal point for GEF activities. Following the adoption, in 1994, of the *Instrument for the Restructuring of the GEF*, UNEP decided to establish a GEF Coordination Office reporting directly to the Office of the Executive Director. The GEF Coordination Office has been fully operational since July 1996 when all the posts were filled. It comprises eight professionals only, including a Liaison Officer based in Washington DC.

2. Since the establishment of the GEF Coordination Office, a number of measures have been initiated with a view to mainstreaming the GEF operations and procedures in UNEP and in particular in the following five areas: coordination with the substantive programs and regional offices, building synergy between STAP and the scientific and technical activities of UNEP in the GEF, integrating the principles guiding the GEF project cycle in UNEP's administrative procedures, training and outreach.

I. ENHANCING THE COORDINATION BETWEEN THE SUBSTANTIVE UNITS AND UNEP/GEF COORDINATION OFFICE.

3. With a view to mainstreaming the GEF in UNEP's core activities and ensuring better coordination of the activities of all UNEP/GEF partners, the Executive Director of UNEP convened on 5 October 1996 a retreat on the GEF with the participation of more than 50 senior UNEP managers including the Directors of regional and outposted offices.

4. As a result of the UNEP/GEF retreat of senior managers, the Executive Director issued on 5 December 1996 an Executive Directive addressed to all UNEP staff containing the *Modus Operandi of UNEP's GEF Work Program*. The Executive Directive provides a clear delineation of the role and responsibilities between the UNEP/GEF Coordination Office, the substantive units and the regional and outposted offices. It contains the terms of reference of the UNEP/GEF Coordination Office, the role of the three Senior Program Officers (Climate change, Biodiversity and International waters), the role and function of substantives entities, including the regional and outposted offices. The Executive Directive is contained in the Annex.

5. Pursuant to the Modus Operandi, the Atmosphere, Biodiversity, Land and Water units as well as all regional offices have designated part-time GEF focal points, paid by UNEP's Environment Fund, with the following terms of reference:

- i. Comment, or coordinate the unit/office's comments, on all projects presented by the Implementing Agencies related to their programs/regions;
- ii. In consultation with stakeholders, identify and/or develop project ideas of relevance to UNEP's mandate as an Implementing Agency of GEF, particularly in collaboration with their partner organizations;
- iii. Liaise with UNEP/GEF Coordination Office on all matters pertaining to the activities of the GEF in their programs/regions; and
- iv. For regional focal points, liaise with the relevant authorities and in particular, the GEF Operational and Political Focal Points of their regions on issues related to UNEP/GEF activities.

6. To facilitate the flow of information and to ensure adequate coordination of activities, meetings between the staff of the GEF Coordination Office and the UNEP/GEF focal points located in the substantive units are convened on a weekly basis. The minutes of the meetings are distributed electronically to all relevant UNEP staff.

7. The Modus Operandi also establishes the UNEP/GEF Program Coordination Committee composed of the Heads of the substantive units with the following mandate:

- i. Ensure the adequate preparation of UNEP's pipeline;
- ii. Review UNEP's official GEF submission of projects and concepts;
- iii. Oversee and monitor the implementation of UNEP/GEF work program.

8. Since its establishment in early 1997, the UNEP/GEF Program Coordination Committee held nine meetings (five meetings a year). Following the reorganization of UNEP on a functional basis, the UNEP/GEF Program Coordination Committee will comprise in the future the Heads of the newly established Divisions and will be chaired by the Deputy Executive Director.

9. In addition, UNEP/GEF task forces have been established for the following issues: Project Implementation Review (PIR); Review of UNEP's pipeline, Technical Support Group on land degradation as it relates to the GEF focal areas.

10. To ensure a better integration of GEF operations in UNEP's activities, the Executive Coordinator of the UNEP GEF Coordination Office is a member of the UNEP Management Board chaired by the Executive Director. Such integration is also sought through the physical location in the substantive unit of the task managers of UNEP/GEF projects.

II. BUILDING SYNERGY BETWEEN STAP AND UNEP'S SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL ACTIVITIES IN THE GEF

11. Providing scientific and technical backstopping to STAP remains one of the priorities for

UNEP in its capacity as the organization that provides the Secretariat to STAP. In addition, UNEP actively participates in all thematic workshops organized by STAP and backstopped the four meetings on the reconstitution of STAP. Further, UNEP in consultation with STAP, provided the necessary support for ensuring a high quality Roster of Experts for reviewing potential GEF projects.

12. UNEP as an Implementing Agency of the GEF has worked closely with STAP to put science on the agenda of GEF operations. In this context, UNEP has worked with STAP for the preparation of the Global International Waters Assessment (GIWA), adopted by the GEF Council in October 1997. UNEP has also taken an active role in mainstreaming the recommendations of STAP into GEF which have resulted in a portfolio of activities addressing land degradation as it relates to the GEF focal areas. Recommendations from STAP have also resulted in GEF funded PDF A's on biodiversity indicators and on a socio-economic assessment of the Indonesian Fires which will further help in mainstreaming science into GEF operations through UNEP project activities in the GEF work programme.

13. All workshops organized for UNEP staff, Convention Secretariats, and Regional Offices have included a presentation on STAP. In addition, information material on STAP and its role in GEF operations has been circulated widely with the aim of mainstreaming the recommendations of STAP into UNEP's activities.

14. The new Division in UNEP on Environmental Information and Assessment has a strong focus on research and will help in mainstreaming STAP into UNEP activities and will provide the institutional framework to strengthen the UNEP/STAP collaboration.

III. INTEGRATING THE GEF PROJECT CYCLE IN UNEP ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

15. UNEP's Project Approval Group has adopted a number of measures aimed at shortening the project cycle of UNEP/GEF activities while continuing to ensure the conformity of UNEP/GEF submissions to UNEP's mission.

16. On 14 November 1997, the Project Approval Group adopted modified procedures for the processing and approval of GEF projects. The Project Approval Group agreed on :

- i. Expedited procedures for Climate Change and Biodiversity enabling activities, including the Clearing-House Mechanism add on activities;
- ii. Simplified procedures regarding the processing of UNEP/GEF Medium Sized projects;
- iii. Specific procedures for the internalization of UNEP/GEF PDF As and Bs;
- iv. Submission of UNEP/GEF projects in GEF format and not in UNEP format for internal approval.

17. In order to avoid duplication and overlap, a delineation of responsibilities between the UNEP/GEF Program Coordination Committee and the UNEP Project Approval Group has been also agreed upon.

18. Special efforts have been undertaken by the United Nations Offices in Nairobi (UNON) to accommodate the reporting requirements based on the GEF fiscal year that differs from the UNEP calendar year reporting system.

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1 TRAINING

19. In July 1996, an operational manual for UNEP staff on GEF guidelines, procedures and policy was prepared by UNEP/GEF Coordination Office and distributed to all UNEP staff as well as to the Committee of Permanent Representatives. A revised version of the UNEP/GEF operational manual for UNEP staff will be prepared by the end of this year to incorporate the latest developments that have taken place in relation to GEF operations, including the results of the first GEF Assembly and the expected decisions from the 12th session of the GEF Council.

20. Immediately after their appointment, a training session of two weeks duration of the UNEP/GEF Regional Focal points offices was organized in June 1996 in New York and Washington DC at the headquarters of UNDP, the World Bank and the GEF Secretariat.

21. A seminar on Incremental Costs was organized in collaboration with the GEF Secretariat for UNEP staff at the headquarters of UNEP in Nairobi on 17-19 April 1996.

22. A seminar on GEF Logical Framework for UNEP staff was convened in collaboration with the Monitoring and Evaluation Department of the GEF Secretariat, Nairobi 2-3 September 1996.

23. A workshop on GEF Targeted Research and Medium-Sized Projects for UNEP staff was convened in Nairobi on 6 June 1997.

24. The following workshops on the GEF and the role of UNEP were also organized at:

- i. Headquarters of UNEP in Nairobi, on 6 May 1996;
- ii. UNEP Office in Geneva, 28 May 1996;
- iii. UNEP Industry and Environment Office, Paris 6 June 1996;
- iv. Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, Mexico City, 22 July 1996;
- v. Regional Office for West Asia, Bahrain, 1-2 September 1996;
- vi. Regional Office for North America, New-York, 11 October 1996;
- vii. Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, 9 December 1996;
- viii. Permanent Commission of South Pacific, Quito, 11-12 June 1997.

2 OUTREACH

25. A number of outreach activities have been undertaken on UNEP/GEF activities with government representatives, the secretariats of GEF-related environmental conventions as well as with non-governmental organizations.

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1 OUTREACH WITH GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES

26. Immediately after the adoption by UNEP Management Board meeting, held in June 1996, of the UNEP/GEF work program for 1996-1997, a number of meetings were convened with governments representatives on UNEP's priorities in the GEF and in particular:

- i. Briefing with the regional representatives of UNEP Committee of Permanent Representatives; Nairobi 2 July 1996;
- ii. Briefing with the UNEP Committee of Permanent Representatives, Nairobi 27 September 1996;
- iii. Briefing with the Permanent Missions in New-York, 11 October 1996;
- iv. Briefing with the Permanent Missions in Geneva, 9 October 1997.

27. Shortened version of the GEF Project Development Workshop with special emphasis on the role of UNEP and STAP were organized with the Committee of Permanent Representatives in Nairobi on 23 October 1996 and with the Group of 77 on 23 September 1997.

28. A press conference with UNEP's accredited media on UNEP/GEF activities in Africa was also held in Nairobi on 12 March 1998.

B. OUTREACH WITH THE SECRETARIAT OF THE ENVIRONMENT GEF RELATED CONVENTIONS

29. Workshops on GEF and the role of UNEP were also convened for the staff of the UNEP administered Conventions and in particular with :

- i. Convention on the International Trade of Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora (CITES), Geneva 28 May 1996;
- ii. Representatives of the UNEP's Regional Seas Programs, Geneva, May 1996;
- iii. Participants attending the Seventh meeting on the Coordination of the Environmental Conventions, Geneva 14-15 July 1997;
- iv. Convention on Migratory Species, Bonn, 9-10 June 1998.

C. OUTREACH WITH THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

30. The following workshops on UNEP/GEF activities have been convened with the representatives of the non governmental organizations:

- i. Meetings with the Regional Networks of Non-Governmental Organizations accredited to the GEF, Geneva May 1996;
- ii. Meeting with the Caribbean Non Governmental Organizations on UNEP/GEF Medium Sized program; Barbados, 25 July 1997;
- iii. Meeting with the Non Governmental Organizations accredited to the Convention on Migratory Species, Bonn 11 June 1998.

4 INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

31. The following communication materials have been prepared, most of them in the six official languages of the United Nations and distributed at major GEF related meetings, including the UNEP Governing Council :

- i. Brochure on the GEF and the role of UNEP in it, April 1996;
- ii. UNEP/GEF information kits, December 1996;
- iii. Articles on UNEP's activities in the GEF were regularly published in UNEP's magazine *Our Planet*. In addition, special issues of the GEF were produced for the GEF Assembly in March 1998 and for COP-4 of the UNFCCC in Buenos Aires;
- iv. Biodiversity enabling activities brochure, June 1997;
- v. Climate Change enabling activities brochure, July 1997;
- vi. Brochure on the Medium Sized Program, March 1998;
- vii. Leaflet on STAP, March 1998;
- viii. Brochure on UNEP/GEF Land Degradation activities, March 1998;
- ix. Poster on UNEP/GEF activities, March 1998.

32. The UNEP/GEF homepage was constructed in December 1996 and is regularly updated.

33. Exhibits on UNEP/GEF activities have been mounted at the 19th session of the UNEP Governing Council, January 1997 and its Fifth Special Session held on 20-22 May 1998 in Nairobi as well as at major GEF related meetings.

CONCLUSION

34. Based on the measures initiated by UNEP, since the establishment of its GEF Coordination Office, to familiarize its staff with GEF operations and procedures, the Study of GEF's Overall Performance recognizes in its paragraphs 306 and 307 that "*UNEP has taken several initiatives to acquaint senior management, substantive units, and regional offices with GEF's policies, procedures, and operational guidelines, including a retreat for senior management, workshops at headquarters and in all regional offices, and distribution of manual on UNEP GEF operations. UNEP's familiarization efforts and consultations with the GEF Secretariat have led to an improvement in UNEP's programming with regard to the additionality requirements.*"

35. However, the study team was of the view that UNEP has not provided incentives for work on GEF projects. It is the view of the UNEP management that this issue of staff incentives should be addressed in relation to UNEP/GEF annual administrative budget, which should be increased to respond to the recommendation of the GEF's Overall Performance Study.