



Global Environment Facility

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PROGRESS REPORT
ON
ACTIONS TO IMPLEMENT THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF
THE STUDY OF GEF'S OVERALL PERFORMANCE AND
THE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
THE SECOND REPLENISHMENT PERIOD

1. The *Study of GEF's Overall Performance*, completed in February 1998, made 19 recommendations, of which seven were labeled "priority recommendations" by the study team. At its March 1998 meeting, the GEF Council requested the Secretariat, in consultation with the Implementing Agencies, to prepare for Council review and approval at its meeting in October 1998, an action plan and time-table for responding to the recommendations of the *Study* and other evaluation reports as appropriate. In addition, the Council endorsed the six policy recommendations for the second replenishment period, most of which relate to the recommendations of the *Study of GEF's Overall Performance*.

2. In response to Council request, the Secretariat presented document *GEF/C.12/7, Actions to Implement the Recommendations of the Study of GEF's Overall Performance and the Policy Recommendations for the Second Replenishment Period*, for Council discussion at the October 1998 meeting. The Council approved the proposed actions,¹ and requested the Secretariat and the Implementing Agencies to take the necessary steps to carry out the approved actions and to report to the Council at its meetings on progress made in implementing such steps.²

3. This information document is a progress report on how the actions have been or are being carried out. It discusses the status of actions taken to implement:

- (a) the seven priority recommendations;
- (b) the other 12 recommendations from the *Study of GEF's Overall Performance*; and
- (c) the two policy recommendations for the second replenishment period that are not otherwise reflected in follow-up to the *Study of GEF's Overall Performance*.

The status of actions to address many of the recommendations are discussed in separate Council working documents or information papers. In such instances, reference is made here to those papers. In other cases, the status is described more fully in this document.

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATION 1: THE FOCAL POINT SYSTEM

In order to enable Operational Focal Points to be more effective advocates for GEF issues in their country, the GEF Secretariat and Implementing Agencies should broaden the existing Project Development Workshop format by involving the Operational Focal Points as much as possible in planning and execution and by focusing more on the coordination and information dissemination functions of the Operational Focal Points.

The GEF should provide resources for translation of basic GEF documents into the local languages of those countries requiring such translated documents.

¹ Subject to the comments made at the meeting and consistent with its decisions on other relevant agenda items before the meeting.

² *Joint Summary of the Chairs*, GEF Council meeting, October 14-16, 1998. Paragraph 9.

4. **Progress.** For details of follow-up on this recommendation, refer to document *GEF/C.13/13, Constituencies and Assistance for Country Level Coordination.*

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATION 2: COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH

The GEF Council should authorize and adequately fund the development of a GEF outreach and communications strategy that targets GEF's multiple constituencies, including the Focal Points and relevant government agencies, NGOs and civil society, the media and the private sector. The strategy should rely on simple, user-friendly materials about the GEF and its operations, and should include provision of basic GEF documents in local languages. This strategy should be coordinated with the broadening of the Project Development Workshops.

5. **Progress.** A GEF task force developed a plan to strengthen country level coordination and a strategy for greater outreach and communication. Its report, including recommended actions for Council consideration, was presented at the October 1998 Council meeting (*GEF/C.12/8*). The work program approved at that meeting (*GEF/C.12/3*) included a global project entitled "GEF Country Dialogue Workshops", which was prepared as a response to these recommendations. The Corporate Budget for FY00 makes provision to fund the outreach and communications strategy (*GEF/C.13/10*).

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATION 3: MAINSTREAMING BY THE IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES

The World Bank should adopt public, measurable goals for the integration of global environmental objectives into its regular operations, including goals related to: 1) staff incentives, 2) funding level and/or number of GEF associated projects, 3) funding level and/or number of projects for the global environment in its regular lending portfolio, and 4) integration into its sector work and the Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) process. It should report regularly to GEF and to the public on its progress in achieving these objectives.

The World Bank should begin a transition from its role in financing conventional power loans to a new role in financing sustainable energy technologies.

The World Bank should allocate increased financial resources to the Global Overlays Program in order to ensure adequate staffing for a substantially higher level of integration of global environment into sector work and the CAS process.

The IFC should maintain a database of its projects with global environmental benefits, so that its mainstreaming of global environment can be assessed in the future.

UNDP should establish a system of tracking projects and components that are relevant to the GEF focal areas and set public, measurable targets related to: 1) funding levels and/or number of core-funded projects for biodiversity conservation, alternative energy and international waters, 2) funding level and/or number of GEF-associated projects, and 3) the Country Cooperation Frameworks (CCFs). It should report regularly to GEF and to the public on its progress in achieving those targets. It should also consider making linkages between potential GEF projects and potential core budget project an explicit objective of the process of preparing the Country Cooperation Frameworks.

UNEP should devise a system of staff incentives, involving at least a revision of staff evaluation criteria, to give adequate consideration to GEF work.

The GEF Secretariat and UNEP should devote more staff time and resources to upstream consultation not only in Washington but in Nairobi to ensure that all relevant UNEP program staff have adequate guidance in formulating GEF proposals.

6. **Progress.** At the October 1998 Council meeting, each Implementing Agency presented a report (*GEF/C.12/4-6*) in response to the issue of mainstreaming. The Council noted its general dissatisfaction with the reports prepared by the Implementing Agencies and requested the CEO to communicate the highlights of its discussions on this agenda item to senior management in each of the agencies. The Council noted the need for a clearer definition of the concept of mainstreaming and called upon the Implementing Agencies to consult with one another and with the Secretariat on a common approach to preparing their strategies and action plans, while recognizing the unique mandate of each agency and their different roles in the GEF.³ In response, each Implementing Agency have agreed to prepare a report for the May 1999 Council meeting. These reports are in documents *GEF/C.13/4-6*.

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATION 4: IMPLEMENTING AGENCY MONOPOLY

The GEF Council should undertake a study of the advantages and disadvantages of various approaches to permitting additional organizations to propose GEF projects directly to the Secretariat and assume direct responsibility for GEF projects.

7. **Progress.** At the October 1998 Meeting, the Council reviewed document *GEF/C.12/10, Expanded Opportunities for Executing Agencies*. The Council noted the current efforts of the Implementing Agencies and the Secretariat to expand the opportunities for all executing agencies. The Council, after having discussed the options outlined in the paper for further enhancing the opportunities for executing agencies, especially the regional development banks, requested the Secretariat, in consultation with the Implementing Agencies and selected executing agencies and based on Council discussions, to prepare a more detailed analysis of the three options for Council consideration at its next meeting. Document *GEF/C.13/3* has been prepared in response to Council request, and includes recommended actions for Council consideration.

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATION 5: INCREMENTAL COSTS

A working group representing the GEF Secretariat and the Implementing Agencies should, in consultation with the convention secretariats, develop simpler, more straightforward guidance and communication for recipient country officials on the calculation of incremental costs and a strategy for increasing their involvement in the process of estimating those costs.

8. **Progress.** A progress report on implementation of the above recommendation was presented in document *GEF/C.12/Inf.4* at the October 1998 Council meeting. Since then, the Secretariat, in partnership with the Implementing Agencies, the convention secretariats, and the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), commissioned a number of papers and convened a workshop to move towards further simplification of incremental costs guidance. The results of these efforts is presented in document *GEF/C.13/7*.

³ *Joint Summary of the Chairs*, GEF Council meeting, October 14-16, 1998. Paragraphs 29 and 30.

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATION 6: PRIVATE SECTOR

The GEF Secretariat and Implementing Agencies should engage business and banking associations and mobilize financing from individual private financial sector companies, such as banks, insurance companies and pension funds. To interest the financial sector in GEF projects, the GEF should use the “incremental risk” of a potential private sector GEF project as a way of determining the size of the GEF grant.

GEF should identify and apply techniques for reducing the risk of the private investors of participating in GEF projects, such as using GEF funds to provide loan guarantees.

9. **Progress.** Document *GEF/13/Inf.5* on modalities for engaging the private sector has been prepared for the Council’s information.

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATION 7: GEF COUNCIL REVIEW

The GEF Council should seriously consider delegating the second review of project proposals to the GEF Secretariat.

10. **Progress.** At the October 1998 Council meeting, document *GEF/C.12/9*, *Streamlining the Project Cycle*, was discussed by the Council. In order to further expedite the project cycle, the Council agreed that in approving work programs, with the exception of certain agreed projects, it would authorize the CEO to endorse final project documents without awaiting a four-week review by Council Members.⁴ This recommendation is closed.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE STUDY OF GEF’S OVERALL PERFORMANCE:

RECOMMENDATION 8

- (a) *The GEF Council should address the need for a clear definition of “new and additional” financing for the GEF, including the indicators that should be used in measuring additionality.*
- (b) *Donor countries should consider separating budget lines for global environmental measures in developing countries and for contributions to GEF from budget lines for development cooperation.*

11. **Progress.** In document *GEF/C.12/7* presented at the October 1998 Council meeting, the Council was invited to discuss this issue and make recommendations for possible follow up, at the individual donor country level and/or at the international level, including the UN General Assembly, ECOSOC and/or the OECD/DAC. No recommendations emerged from the Council discussion. No further action on this recommendation is currently planned.

⁴ *Joint Summary of the Chairs*, GEF Council meeting, October 14-16, 1998. Paragraph 13.

RECOMMENDATION 9

- (a) *GEF should regularly review and compare its own portfolio and project pipeline with those of other institutions to ensure that it is either providing significant additional resources or demonstrating a comparative advantage over other institutions involved in funding the same activities. In this regard, particular attention should be paid to GEF support for solar photovoltaics, energy-efficient lighting, and biodiversity trust funds.*
- (b) *GEF should work with the OECD and other appropriate international institutions to ensure that reliable, comparable data on financing measures to protect the global environment, including data on different types of projects, is compiled and made available to the public.*

12. **Progress.** With respect to recommendation 9 (a), GEF is now preparing a comprehensive report of its pipeline of new proposals. This report is being shared with other donors. In addition, other donor agencies will be invited once a year to a meeting to share pipeline information with GEF. An evaluation of biodiversity trust funds was completed last year, which included a review of the comparative roles of GEF and other donors in supporting these mechanisms.⁵ A review of experience with solar photovoltaics projects, including activities supported by key multilateral and bilateral agencies, is planned for 1999.

13. With respect to recommendation 9 (b), in document *GEF/C.12/7*, the Council was invited to discuss whether, and with what degree of priority, the Secretariat should approach OECD/DAC with the aim of helping correlate more closely the DAC's statistical categories with GEF focal areas. No recommendations emerged from the Council discussion at its October 1998 meeting. No further action on this recommendation is currently planned.

RECOMMENDATION 10

- (a) *The GEF should adopt a rigorous definition of "leveraging" that includes only funding that is additional to existing funding patterns and that is expected to create global environmental benefits. It should apply this definition in the Quarterly Operational Report and other relevant GEF documents. Implementing Agencies should apply this more rigorous definition in their own databases and reports on cofinancing of GEF projects.*
- (b) *When there is sufficient experience with implementation of GEF projects, the GEF's Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator should commission a study of the replicability of projects in the GEF portfolio.*

14. **Progress.** One of the cross-cutting issues examined in the 1998 Project Implementation Review (PIR) was leveraging by GEF of additional resources and actions for activities likely to achieve global environmental benefits. A main recommendation of

⁵ Global Environment Facility, *Experience with Conservation Trust Funds*, Evaluation Report #1-99, January 1999.

the PIR is that GEF should adopt a broader definition of leveraging for its programs and projects that reflects financial resources—both during design and implementation—and actions catalyzed by GEF activities. This recommendation is based on two reasons. First, limiting the calculation of funding leveraged to co-financing identified at the design stage can be misleading. UNDP documented in its PIR reports substantial financial resources that have been stimulated by GEF activities during implementation. Second, in addition to financial resources, the PIR reports identified many actions attributed to GEF projects that produced significant outcomes beyond those associated directly with project activities. They include: (i) replication or expansion of activities based on demonstration or models financed by the GEF; (ii) development of common methodologies; (iii) changes in attitudes and awareness of global environmental issues; and (iv) broader country policy or market-level changes stimulated by project activities or participants. The PIR recommended that the precise details of such a broader definition be developed during 1999 under the leadership of the GEF Secretariat.

15. With respect to recommendation 10 (b), an evaluation of replicability of GEF projects is included in the Secretariat's indicative monitoring and evaluation work program for FY00-02.

RECOMMENDATION 11

The GEF Council should adopt a policy, paralleling that for stakeholder participation, aimed at promoting the greater use of local and regional consultants in projects; encouraging an appropriate mix of local and foreign experts in GEF projects; and securing greater recipient government participation in the screening, short-listing and selection of project consultants.

16. **Progress.** The follow-up to this recommendation is closely linked to follow-up indicated for Recommendation 2 above. In addition, under the proposed strategic partnership with UNEP to mobilize the scientific and technical community (see *GEF/C.13/9*), GEF would be able to stimulate the involvement of local and regional experts in projects.

RECOMMENDATION 12

The GEF Secretariat should work with Implementing Agencies to develop quantitative and qualitative indicators of successful stakeholder involvement at different stages of the GEF project cycle, and to document best practices of stakeholder participation by focal area.

17. **Progress.** During FY00, as part of the preparation and dissemination of the M&E Standards and Guidelines, the corporate monitoring and evaluation team will identify indicators of stakeholder participation.

18. The Secretariat and Implementing Agencies will collaborate to document and gather additional information on examples of best practices in stakeholder participation in GEF-financed projects, and possibly, covering cases from non-GEF community-based projects.

RECOMMENDATION 13

- (a) *The GEF project submission format's description of project risks should call for identification of any specific policies or sectoral economic activities that could negatively affect project success, as well as the steps that need to be taken to reduce the risks to project success from those policies and activities.*
- (b) *The GEF should adopt a policy requiring that Implementing Agencies obtain clear, formal commitments from recipient country governments regarding policies and sectoral activities identified as increasing the risk of project failure before proceeding with project implementation.*

19. **Progress.** As indicated in document *GEF/C.12/7*, no additional steps are necessary to carry out this recommendation. Implementing Agencies have been asked to make explicit reference in project briefs to such policies, activities, and steps. This recommendation is closed.

RECOMMENDATION 14

- (a) *The GEF Secretariat and Implementing Agencies should require that project proposals contain a more thorough assessment of options for achieving financial sustainability.*
- (b) *The GEF Secretariat and Implementing Agencies should encourage the broader use of biodiversity trust funds to help ensure the funding of biodiversity projects in perpetuity. The Implementing Agencies should continue to seek a high rate of leveraging of other sources of trust fund capital.*
- (c) *The Implementing Agencies should provide for longer project implementation periods--for example, five to seven years instead of three to five years--in cases in which project sponsors can show that extra time will be necessary to implement the project and demonstrate its viability for future funders.*

20. **Progress.** With respect to recommendation 14(a), financial sustainability is a key feature examined in the review of project proposals. The GEF Secretariat identifies, during work program preparation, examples of good project design that seek to ensure financial sustainability. Collective experience in this area will be shared with Implementing Agencies so that future project designs can incorporate identified good practice. A workshop on this is planned for FY00. In addition, one of four thematic reviews that will be carried out in 1999 as a result of discussions during the 1998 PIR is on financial sustainability of biodiversity projects.

21. Regarding recommendation 14(b), the evaluation of experience with conservation trust funds provided recommendations to guide further GEF support of these funds. Several projects that include trust fund components are proposed for Council consideration in the current work program (document *GEF/C.12/8, Project Proposals Submitted for Council Approval*).

22. With respect to recommendation 14 (c), a key conclusion of the 1998 PIR was the need for longer term and more flexible approaches to addressing global environmental

problems than is accommodated in current project instruments. In many cases, this calls for a phased approach that sets out firm benchmarks for moving from one phase to the next, and provides assurance of support over ten years or longer if these benchmarks are met.

23. Project proposals currently being received generally have longer implementation periods than the 3-5 years typical of projects previously undertaken. In addition, the World Bank is now actively employing its new “Adaptable Program Loan” instrument – which provides funding on a long-term (10-15 years) – in its GEF portfolio. UNDP is also actively exploring similar approaches.

RECOMMENDATION 15

- (a) *The GEF should play a more proactive role in its relations with the conventions and should, in consultation with Implementing Agencies, prepare more detailed requests for guidance on those issues on which guidance would be most helpful.*
- (b) *The GEF Secretariat, the Implementing Agencies, and the convention secretariats should undertake a comprehensive review of enabling activities before the end of 1998 to determine how successful the projects have been, analyze the reasons for those that have failed, and consider policy and programmatic responses to the problem.*

24. **Progress.** GEF continues to collaborate and interact on GEF’s operational policies and operations, both between and during the Conferences of the Parties of both conventions, as well as their regional and subsidiary body meetings. GEF staff have also increased their organization of specific workshops and seminars at all these events.

25. The GEF corporate monitoring and evaluation team is nearing completion of a study of Biodiversity Enabling Activities.⁶ During 1999, a similar exercise will be begun for Climate Change Enabling Activities.

RECOMMENDATION 16

The Council should provide a new, more sharply focused mandate for the STAP in light of the change in the GEF’s needs and the experience of STAP during GEF 1.

26. **Progress.** The work program of the recently reconstituted STAP has been sharply focused on priorities emerging in the context of GEF’s Corporate Business Plan. As noted in document *GEF/C.12/7*, an amendment of the STAP’s mandate is not regarded as necessary. This recommendation is closed.

⁶ The CBD Secretariat was closely consulted during the design and implementation of the Study.

RECOMMENDATION 17

In order to encourage continued adherence by the World Bank to its streamlined project cycle, the GEF Secretariat should allow the Implementing Agencies to submit a range of estimates when a project is first submitted, on the understanding that a firm estimate will be submitted for final approval.

27. **Progress.** As noted in document *GEF/C.12/7*, current guidelines and practice are regarded as adequate. This recommendation is closed.

RECOMMENDATION 18

The GEF Council should authorize the GEF Secretariat and Implementing Agencies, in consultation with the Secretariat of the CBD, to undertake a formal exercise to identify the ecosystems and ecosystem types within each Operational Program in biodiversity that should be the highest priorities for GEF in terms of a set of agreed criteria, including those specified in the Operational Strategy.

28. **Progress.** As noted in document *GEF/C.12/7*, responsibility for determining program priorities in the biodiversity focal area rests with the Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity. A formal exercise to identify priority ecosystems is not consistent with GEF's country-driven approach. This recommendation is closed.

RECOMMENDATION 19

The GEF Secretariat should compile information on successful projects in sustainable use from NGOs and other bilateral and multilateral agencies worldwide, and disseminate them to Implementing Agencies and recipient country Focal Points.

29. **Progress.** The Secretariat, in collaboration with the Implementing Agencies, will carry out this recommendation.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE SECOND REPLENISHMENT PERIOD:

In policy recommendation number 2, the Secretariat was called upon "...to further develop the GEF resource allocation strategy to maximize global impacts and effectiveness of operations, and to make the development of broad 'performance indicators' a high priority."

Policy recommendation number 4 called for "...the further strengthening of the Secretariat monitoring and evaluation function by providing additional capacity for independent evaluation and for the urgent development of performance indicators...."

30. **Progress.** Development of performance indicators is the top priority in the work program of the GEF corporate monitoring and evaluation team this year. Work is

underway, in cooperation with the Implementing Agencies and STAP, to develop program-level performance indicators for both the climate change and biodiversity operational programs. Sets of indicators in these two focal areas will be available for initial application by July 1999.

31. An additional staff member will join the GEF's corporate monitoring and evaluation team in May 1999. Resources will continue to be provided to the Implementing Agencies in FY00 to allow them to participate actively in corporate monitoring and evaluation activities. This recommendation is closed.

SUMMARY MATRIX
ACTIONS TO IMPLEMENT THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY OF
GEF'S OVERALL PERFORMANCE

RECOMMENDATION	ACTION
(priority recommendations listed first)*	
1. Enable Operational Focal Points to be more effective advocates of GEF issues.	See <i>GEF/C.13/13</i>
2. Authorize and adequately fund GEF outreach and communications strategy.	Strategy for greater outreach and communications approved by Council in October 1998. Also see Corporate Budget for FY00, <i>GEF/C.13/10</i>
3. Mainstreaming by the Implementing Agencies.	Each IA has agreed to prepare a response; see <i>GEF/C.13/4-6</i>.
4. Study approaches to permit additional organizations to propose and carry out GEF projects directly. (Implementing Agency Monopoly)	See <i>GEF/C.13/3</i>.
5. Develop simpler, more straightforward guidance on incremental costs.	Progress report in <i>GEF/C.13/7</i>.
6. Expand participation of private sector.	See <i>GEF/13/Inf.5</i>.
7. Council should consider delegating second review of project proposals to the GEF Secretariat.	Approved by Council in October 1998. Recommendation closed.
8. Council should address need for clear definition of “new and additional” financing for GEF.	No further actions planned.
9. GEF should regularly review its portfolio with other institutions. GEF should work with OECD to assure comparable data.	GEF now prepares comprehensive pipeline report. Donor agencies will be invited to annual meeting to share pipeline information.
10. Adopt and apply a rigorous definition of “leveraging”, and evaluate the replicability of GEF projects.	1998 PIR recommended a broader definition of “leveraging”, and suggested that precise details be developed this year under the leadership of the GEF Secretariat.
11. Council should adopt a policy promoting greater use of local and regional consultants.	Actions incorporated in approved outreach and communications strategy.
12. Develop indicators of successful stakeholder involvement and document best practices.	GEF will document and disseminate best practices as part of M&E Standards and Guidelines.

13. More specifically identify policies and sectoral activities that could negatively affect project success, and steps to reduce these risks.	Recommendation closed.
14. More thoroughly assess financial sustainability. Encourage broader use of biodiversity trust funds. Provide for longer project implementation periods.	Financial sustainability is key feature examined in review of project proposals. Sustainability was addressed in an evaluation of conservation trust funds last year. A review of sustainability of biodiversity projects will be conducted in 1999.
15. GEF should play more proactive role in its relations with conventions. Conduct a comprehensive review of enabling activities.	Collaboration and interaction with conventions has increased considerably during the last year. Studies of biodiversity and climate change enabling activities in FY99 and FY00, respectively.
16. Provide new, more focused mandate for STAP.	STAP work program is focused on priorities identified in Corporate Business Plan. Recommendation closed.
17. Allow IAs to submit a range of estimates of incremental costs when projects are first submitted.	Recommendation closed.
18. Undertake a formal identification of ecosystems and ecosystem types that should be highest priorities for GEF.	Recommendation closed.
19. Compile and disseminate information on successful sustainable use projects.	The Secretariat, in collaboration with the Implementing Agencies, will carry out this activity.
Others: Make development of performance indicators and high priority. Strengthen GEF's M&E capacity.	Identification of program indicators, led by corporate M&E team in cooperation with IAs and STAP, is underway. GEF M&E capacity has been increased.

* The order of the recommendations is not the same as in *the Study of GEF's Overall Performance*.