



Global Environment Facility

Summary of Document GEF/ME/C.35/1

GEF Evaluation Office: Annual Country Portfolio Evaluation Report - 2009

Recommended Council Decision

The Council, having reviewed document GEF/ME/C.35/1, “*Annual Country Portfolio Evaluation Report – 2009*,” document GEF/ME/C.35/2, “*Management Response to the Annual Country Portfolio Evaluation – 2009*,” and having taken note of the three Country Portfolio Evaluations in Cameroon, Egypt, and Syria (GEF/ME/C.34/Inf. 3 and GEF/ME/C.35/Inf. 2-3) requests the Secretariat to:

- (1) Explore within the GEF partnership modalities to address the significant gap of available resources for combating land degradation to support key challenges facing countries like Egypt, Syria, and Cameroon.
- (2) Conduct a survey of countries in exceptional situations concerning limited access to GEF partner International Financial Institutions, like Syria.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This second Annual Country Portfolio Evaluation Report provides a synthesis of the main conclusions and recommendations coming from three country portfolio evaluations finalized in fiscal year 2009:¹ Egypt, Syria, and Cameroon. The Cameroon Country Portfolio Evaluation was conducted between September 2007 and June 2008 (the publication was finished in October 2008) whereas the ones for Syria and Egypt were conducted between September 2008 and April 2009. Drafts of the three reports were presented and discussed and comments were received from GEF stakeholders at consultation workshops in each country. All three countries have provided responses to the evaluations, which are included in the reports. The full reports are presented on the website of the Evaluation Office and their first chapters with main findings and recommendations have been made available as information documents.

2. GEF support to these three countries started during the pilot phase of the GEF for Egypt and Cameroon and after the GEF restructuring (1994) for Syria.

Table 1.1 Project Coverage of each Country Portfolio Evaluation

Country	GEF funding (US mil.) ²	Number of projects included in the evaluation				
		National FSPs and MSPs	SGP	Enabling activities	Regional/ global projects	National completed projects
Egypt	92.19	13	Yes	7	8 of 24	9
Syria	12.72	10	Yes	5	8 of 13	13
Cameroon	25.55	10	Yes	5	11 of 19	5

¹ July 2008 to June 2009.

² GEF funding is for nationally implemented full- and medium-size projects plus the total support through the GEF Small Grants Programme, provided between 1992 and February 2009.

3. This synthesis report focuses on: the relevance of the GEF support to the GEF and to the countries; the efficiency of GEF support; the role and responsibilities of GEF stakeholders and the result and sustainability of GEF support, particularly at the global environmental benefits level.

Conclusions

4. The following conclusions were reached on the results of the GEF support:

- 1) GEF support to biodiversity conservation and sustainable use has been of strategic importance and has generated some impacts.
- 2) It is difficult to quantify direct GHG emissions reduction or avoidance from GEF support to climate change but GEF has introduced the topic in these countries and has influenced markets, particularly in energy efficiency.
- 3) Results in the other focal areas have been limited to setting up the foundation for national and regional action plans, policy development, and enhancing national capacity.
- 4) Long-term sustainability of achievements is still a challenge.

5. On relevance of GEF support the following conclusions should be noted:

- 5) GEF support is relevant to national environmental priorities and to the conventions the GEF serves as their financial mechanism although there is no GEF country framework or vision.
- 6) Country ownership of the GEF portfolio varies, with many project ideas driven by GEF Agencies and other external factors, including global issues. This is particularly true in the case of regional and global projects.

6. The efficiency of the GEF support was assessed as follows:

- 7) The potential benefits of the new project cycle have not reached the country level yet.
- 8) Syria has limited access to GEF investment agencies, since the World Bank and the regional Banks do not have programs in Syria.
- 9) The efficiency of the focal point mechanism has a direct correlation to the size of the GEF portfolio.

Recommendations

- 1) The GEF should address the significant gap of available resources for combating land degradation to support key challenges facing countries like Egypt, Syria, and Cameroon.
- 2) The GEF should focus attention on countries in exceptional situations concerning limited access to International Financial Institutions, like Syria.

Observations

- 1) Databases of GEF activities at the GEF Secretariat, GEF Agencies or national focal points are still not accurate.
- 2) As requested by the Council, the GEF will continue to monitor the results of the Forest and Environment Support Program (FESP) budgetary support approach to see whether this approach could be followed in other countries.