



Global Environment Facility

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GEF Council
June 12-15, 2007

Agenda Item 8

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO GEF COUNTRY PORTFOLIO EVALUATION: SAMOA (1992-2007)

Recommended Council Decision

Please see recommended decision in document GEF/ME/C.31/5, *GEF Country Portfolio Evaluation: Samoa (1992-2007)*.

INTRODUCTION

1. This is the management response to document, GEF/ME/C.31/5, *GEF Country Portfolio Evaluation: Samoa (1992-2007)*, prepared by the GEF Evaluation Office. The management response has been prepared by the GEF Secretariat in consultation with the GEF Implementing and Executing Agencies.

2. The objective of the evaluation is to provide the GEF Council with an assessment of how the GEF is implemented in Samoa. It reports on results from projects and assesses how these projects are linked to national environmental and sustainable development strategies as well as the GEF mandate of generating global environmental benefits within its focal areas. In line with these objectives, the evaluation explores three key questions for the GEF and Samoa:

- (a) Is the GEF support relevant to the Strategy for the Development of Samoa (SDS) 2005-2007, the national development needs and challenges as well as the action plans for the GEF's focal areas and the GEF mandate, objectives, policies and focal areas programs and strategies?
- (b) Is GEF support efficient as indicated by the time, effort and money it takes to develop and implement GEF projects; any particular issues related to regional projects; and synergies and partnerships between GEF projects and between GEF and government agencies as well as other GEF stakeholders? and
- (c) What are the results of completed projects, aggregated at the focal area and country levels?

3. We generally agree with the overall recommendations provided by the GEF evaluation office and are pleased with many of the conclusions of the report.

Evaluation Conclusions

4. We welcome work carried out to evaluate the portfolio of 19 projects funded by the GEF from 1992-2006. We are encouraged by the conclusions reached on the relevance and results of the GEF support to Samoa and take note of the conclusions on the need for improved efficiency of carrying out projects in Samoa.

Conclusion 1: GEF support has been relevant to the Samoa Development Strategy (SDS) and national environmental policies

5. We are pleased that GEF support has had direct linkages to the key outcomes of the Samoa Development Strategy and that all modalities supported thus far have been appropriate to the state of Samoa's development. We also take note of the finding that the availability of funding to prepare projects has been highly valued by different GEF stakeholders as this funding makes it possible to devote the time and resources needed to achieve a thorough understanding of the issues and modalities of intervention in preparation for a project.

Conclusion 2: All GEF funded projects are highly relevant to the GEF mandate and focal areas but slow follow-up support from government sources could jeopardize the sustainability of results.

6. We are pleased with the finding that all GEF funded projects were developed and approved on the basis of their relevance to the GEF mandate and focal area strategies. We are, however, concerned that the sustainability of project results could be jeopardized by slow follow-up support from the government.

Conclusion 3: Enabling activities have supported Samoa in building the foundations for its environmental frameworks and strategies which are necessary conditions for generating global environmental benefits

7. Since the majority of GEF projects carried out in Samoa are enabling activities we are pleased that GEF support achieved its greatest results in the area of policy and strategy development.

Conclusion 4: Completed projects have achieved on-the-ground results but reporting on results has limitations because of poor quality of final evaluations and limited baselines

8. We are pleased with the finding that GEF support in the biodiversity focal area enabled the conservation and sustainable management of forest and marine ecosystems. We do however recognize the limitations of the findings due to the poor quality of final evaluations and limited baselines but believe that the highlighting of this issue in several Evaluation Office reports and the issuance of the ‘The GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy’ (Feb 2006) will lead to more complete terminal evaluations of GEF projects in the future. We also recognize the complications associated with evaluating the impacts of GEF funded initiatives.

Conclusion 5: Samoa has improved its efficiency to access GEF funding

9. We are pleased that Samoa has improved its efficiency to access GEF funding but acknowledge that there are still some obstacles. We believe that the introduction of the streamlined project cycle will help to alleviate some of these issues.

Conclusion 6: Most GEF Agencies have not been engaged in Samoa mainly because of the high transaction cost and limited understanding of GEF objectives and procedures.

10. We take note of the findings that the leading GEF agency in Samoa thus far has been the UNDP and that most relevant GEF agencies now have a presence in the Pacific region.

Evaluation Recommendations

Recommendation 1: The proposed programmatic approach for the Pacific SIDS should take into account Samoa's experience

11. We agree with the above recommendation that the lessons from Samoa's experience with the GEF should be taken into account when developing the proposed regional programmatic approach for Pacific SIDS for implementation in GEF-4.

12. Samoa has long recognized that regional cooperation is an excellent way to overcome the problems of small size and the resulting lack of economies of scale and capacity. In the field of environment, the Government has benefited from cooperation in regional approaches to regulatory issues and reducing costs of governance by sharing skills and capacity.

13. Considering the shared and common environmental problems faced by Samoa, the GEF proposes that in GEF-4 national projects are agreed to after considering the opportunities available for regional synergies. Such a multi-focal programmatic approach for the Pacific is meant to achieve economies of scale in gathering expertise and making it available to Pacific countries, so that each Government reduces its cost by avoiding duplication of capacity that is best shared regionally. We believe a regional approach would allow countries to better address common problems and those that are trans-boundary in nature.

14. The GEF approach for the Pacific region will aim to strike a balance between efforts at the regional versus country levels. As a standard practice the GEF operations will be conducted at the country and sub-national levels through national executing agencies. Regional work will be undertaken in areas where regional cooperation is needed to support and complement these country-level efforts.

15. The GEF Pacific program will therefore be an aggregation of nationally executed projects that will help in reducing transaction costs, ease reporting to GEF and help in raising co-financing.

Recommendation 2: Environmental concerns as cross-cutting issues need to become visible in the Samoa Development Strategy

Recommendation 3: Increased participation by other stakeholders (ministries, civil society, and private sector) in implementing GEF supported projects will increase national capacity

16. We note that recommendations #2 and #3 are to the Government of Samoa, and we look forward to helping the Government implement these recommendations in the context of developing and implementing the programmatic approach for the Pacific SIDS. The attached letter (Annex 1) provides feedback from the Government of Samoa.

ANNEX 1. LETTER FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF SAMOA



GOVERNMENT OF SAMOA

Ministry of Natural Resources & Environment

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30 April, 2007

Monique Barbut
Chief Executive Officer
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USA

Dear Ms. Barbut

GEF Country Portfolio Evaluation: Samoa, 1992 – 2007

On behalf of the Government of Samoa I wish to acknowledge the GEF Council decision to undertake the assessment of GEF programmes in Samoa by the Evaluation Office. This has been a most valuable exercise for Samoa, taking stock of our partnership with the GEF during the past fifteen years and using the lessons we have learned to determine the focus of GEF's programmes in Samoa in the future.

We have reviewed the draft evaluation report and fully endorsed its findings. In general we are satisfied that with GEF funding to date Samoa was able to put in place a broad scope of national enabling environmental frameworks including the NBSAP, NAPA, NIP, NBF and NAP with associated information management systems as well as implement capacity building and awareness programmes for the relevant stakeholders.

Parallel with this development is the growing government support for sustainable environmental management as highlighted in the integration of natural resources management functions with environmental support services under the new Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment. This has expanded staff levels from less than 25 in 1989 to over 450 today. The Ministry has also been designated the Operational Focal Point for GEF with a new local consultant for GEF Programmes appointed to work full-time in the coordination of GEF activities.

As raised in the report we also support the GEF's programmatic approach for Pacific SIDS and will be happy to share Samoa's experience in the finalisation of that programme. With the enabling and institutional frameworks now established we are confident that Samoa is more than ready for the implementation phase of its approved plans and strategies. This is expected to be mirrored strongly in the next Strategy for the Development of Samoa 2008-2010 where the environment sector will be accorded a high priority.

Finally Samoa anticipates a stronger and more fruitful partnership with the GEF in the future and looks forward to the approval of the Pacific SIDS programme and accessing financial resources under GEF4 for its implementation.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tu'u'u', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the left.

Tu'u'u Dr. Ieti Taule'alo
Chief Executive Officer
& GEF Operational Focal Point for Samoa

cc: Rob D. van den Berg
Director GEF Evaluation Office