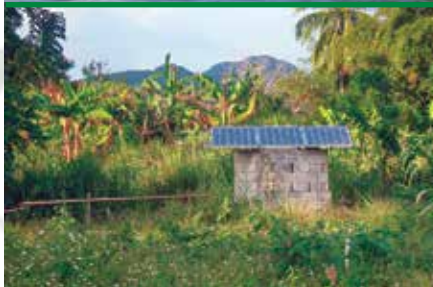


A GEF  
ANNUAL  
REPORT

# GEF Annual Country Portfolio Evaluation Report 2012





GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY  
EVALUATION OFFICE

# GEF Annual Country Portfolio Evaluation Report 2012

December 2012

EVALUATION REPORT NO. 74

*The main findings and recommendations of this evaluation were presented to the GEF Council in June 2012.*

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*Cover photos:* Clockwise from upper right: Estero Real River, Puerto Morazán municipality, Nicaragua, by Anna Viggh, GEF Evaluation Office; Greggs Village Ecotourism Development Association on an eco-trail rehabilitated with support from an SGP grant in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, by Carlo Carugi, GEF Evaluation Office; solar panels, Mafoota, St. Jamies, Jamaica; photo courtesy of the GEF Small Grants Programme, Jamaica; Jiquilisco Bay in San Dionisio municipality, Usulután Department, El Salvador, by Anna Viggh, GEF Evaluation Office; tobacco plantations with improved land use practices to reduce erosion under the GEF Land Degradation Program in Pinar del Rio, Cuba, by Clemencia Vela; Jarú reserve, Rondonia state, Brazil, by Carlo Carugi, GEF Evaluation Office

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# Foreword

The fifth *Annual Country Portfolio Evaluation Report* provides a synthesis of the main conclusions and recommendations from the country portfolio evaluations (CPEs) and country portfolio studies (CPSs) conducted in Latin America and the Caribbean by the Global Environment Facility (GEF). These include two CPSs finalized in fiscal year 2011 in El Salvador and Jamaica, which were presented to the GEF Council in May 2011 and evaluative evidence from which is reconsidered in this report in the wider context of the Latin America and the Caribbean region; two CPEs completed in the first half of 2012 in Nicaragua and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (focusing on the GEF-eligible members Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines); and two CPEs—in Brazil and Cuba—that were being finalized at the time this report was being written. The report was presented to and discussed with the GEF Council at its June 2012 session.

On the results of GEF support, the report concludes that most projects in the six portfolios analyzed achieved moderately satisfactory or higher outcome ratings in their focal areas. Although global environmental benefits are still modest, progress toward impact is occurring. Climate change adaptation in Central America and the Caribbean is becoming increasingly important—albeit to varying degrees—in the portfolios analyzed. Individual and institutional

capacity development is overall good, with a few exceptions at the local level. Many countries in the Latin America and the Caribbean region follow an ecosystem approach to environmental conservation and sustainable use, which translates into a demand for multifocal area projects. Scaling-up, replication, and sustainability remain a challenge in the portfolios analyzed, with some notable exceptions. Opportunities for South-South cooperation through national, regional, and global projects and/or project components exist, but are not fully taken up.

The relevance of GEF support to national environmental conservation and sustainable development policies and to the GEF international mandate of achieving global environmental benefits is overall confirmed. Mixed ownership is observed: it is strong in middle-income economies and less so in small island developing states (SIDS), with the exception of Cuba. Efficiency analysis concluded that SIDSs face challenges in project approval processes and implementation due to the specific circumstances in which they operate and to their specific needs. Monitoring and evaluation for adaptive management as well as environmental monitoring are challenging.

When it discussed the fifth *Annual Country Portfolio Evaluation Report* in June 2012, the Council requested that the Secretariat consider ways to make project approval and implementation

in SIDS more flexible and context specific; to reduce the burden of monitoring requirements of multi-focal area projects to a level comparable to that of single-focal area projects; and to enable South-South cooperation activities as components of national, regional, and/or global projects where opportunities for exchange of technology, capacity development, and/or sharing of best practices exist.

We are very grateful for the positive engagement of country stakeholders with these evaluations and for their comments, suggestions, and insights. The GEF Evaluation Office remains fully responsible for the content of this report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized initial 'R' followed by several horizontal strokes.

Rob D. van den Berg  
Director, GEF Evaluation Office



# Acknowledgments

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This report was prepared by Carlo Carugi, Senior Evaluation Officer and Task Team Leader for country-level evaluations at the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Evaluation Office; he also managed the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States Cluster Country Portfolio Evaluation (CPE) and the Brazil CPE, and co-managed the Cuba CPE together with Marina Cracco, Consultant. Anna Viggh, Senior Evaluation Officer, contributed to the launching of the Cuba CPE and

managed the Nicaragua CPE. Napoleao Dequech Neto, Consultant, and Marina Cracco acted as research assistants.

Government officials of the Latin America and the Caribbean countries included in the report were all very supportive and provided full cooperation to these evaluation efforts. The teams are also grateful for the advice and logistical support provided by the GEF Agencies.

# Abbreviations

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ACPER	Annual Country Portfolio Evaluation Report	OPS5	Fifth Overall Performance Study
ARPA	Amazon Region Protected Areas (Brazil)	POP	persistent organic pollutant
CBD	Convention on Biodiversity	PROBIO	National Biodiversity Project (Brazil)
CPE	country portfolio evaluation	ROtI	review of outcomes to impacts
CPS	country portfolio study	SGP	Small Grants Programme
FUNBIO	Biodiversity Fund Project (Brazil)	SIDS	small island developing states
FY	fiscal year	UN	United Nations
GEF	Global Environment Facility	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
NCSA	National Capacity Self-Assessment	UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
OECS	Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States	UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

All dollar amounts are U.S. dollars unless otherwise indicated.

# 1. Introduction

This fifth *Annual Country Portfolio Evaluation Report* (ACPER) provides a synthesis of the main conclusions and recommendations that emerged from the evaluative evidence contained in the country portfolio evaluations (CPEs) and country portfolio studies (CPSs) recently conducted by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in Latin America and the Caribbean.<sup>1</sup> These include two CPSs finalized in fiscal year (FY) 2011 in El Salvador and Jamaica,<sup>2</sup> and two CPEs finalized in FY 2012 in Nicaragua and in a cluster of member countries of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)—specifically, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. ACPER 2012 also contains validated findings, conclusions, and preliminary recommendations from CPEs in Brazil

and Cuba begun this fiscal year and presently nearing completion.<sup>3</sup>

GEF support to these countries began in 1992 in Brazil, Cuba, and the OECS; in 1994 in El Salvador and Jamaica; and in 1996 in Nicaragua. These particular countries were selected for evaluation through a process established by the GEF Evaluation Office in 2006 and updated in 2010, based on the size, diversity, and maturity of the respective country portfolio of projects (GEF EO 2010a). The countries selected include large, medium, and small recipients of GEF support, as well as a considerable number of small island developing states (SIDS). Although most of the countries are in the Caribbean, among those selected for evaluation is one of the largest recipients of GEF support in Latin America and the world—Brazil. As with previous CPEs, consultations were held on these evaluations with all major GEF stakeholders, particularly those residing in the country. Several visits to project sites were also undertaken.

The Evaluation Office has prepared separate reports for each evaluation completed thus far, and these are available on the Office's website ([www.gefeo.org](http://www.gefeo.org)); the main conclusions and recommendations/lessons learned emerging from each evaluation are available as print documents as well

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<sup>1</sup> The Latin America and the Caribbean region includes the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

<sup>2</sup> The El Salvador and Jamaica CPSs were reported on in ACPER 2011. However, the two studies are considered here in the context of the consolidated conclusions and recommendations emerging from the GEF's country-level evaluation work in the region.

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<sup>3</sup> The GEF fiscal year runs from July 1 through June 30.

(see the list of GEF publications at the end of this document). As of this writing, the final reports for the Brazil and Cuba CPEs had not been completed. However, the main preliminary recommendations identified and validated during the final consultation workshops held in Brasilia on April 10 and Havana on April 13 are considered in this report.

The CPEs and CPSs reported on in ACPER 2012 along with those reported on in ACPER 2011 (El Salvador and Jamaica) and ACPER 2010 (Turkey and Moldova) will be a direct input into the Fifth Overall Performance Study of the GEF (OPS5).

ACPER 2012 begins with a short background section containing an update on progress to date of the GEF-5 (2010–14) multiannual cycle of country-level evaluations, and a description of GEF involvement in Latin America and the Caribbean. The next section describes the objectives, scope, and methods of the evaluations considered here, and the limitations encountered. Conclusions are presented in chapter 2, according to the three dimensions of the evaluations—results of GEF support, its relevance, and its efficiency. Recommendations to the GEF Council are in chapter 3.

## 1.1 Background

Brazil and Cuba complete the country evaluation coverage in the Latin America and the Caribbean region that was planned in the GEF-5 multiannual CPE cycle begun in FY 2011. During the last quarter of FY 2011, country evaluation work began in the Asia and Pacific region, with pre-evaluation missions to India (in November 2011) and Sri Lanka (in February 2012) and the subsequent launch of CPEs in those two countries. A third CPE is planned for the Pacific Islands to complete the evaluation coverage of the region. The Office plans to report to the Council on the Asia and Pacific region in ACPER 2013. In fall 2012, the first CPE in the Africa region will be launched.

From October 2011 to April 2012, a CPS was conducted in East Timor jointly with country evaluation work performed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Evaluation Office. The GEF East Timor CPS was conducted using the same approach agreed to and followed in El Salvador and Jamaica in 2011 with the UNDP Evaluation Office. The consultant who conducted the CPS also handled the environment and energy section of the UNDP assessment of development results for East Timor. Evaluative information, evaluation costs, and events (i.e., most of the interviews as well as the final workshop) were shared by and benefited both evaluations.

The Latin America and the Caribbean region's participation in the GEF began during the GEF pilot phase in 1992. Since then, the GEF has invested around \$1.95 billion (plus about \$7.20 billion in cofinancing) in 605 active or completed projects. These projects consist of 533 national and 72 regional projects; the region also participates in 52 global GEF projects. The active national and regional projects represent 73 percent of the total portfolio or \$6.7 billion (including GEF support and cofinancing); the completed projects account for the remaining 27 percent (\$2.5 billion). All GEF focal areas are addressed by the 605 national and regional projects: namely, 273 in biodiversity, 166 in climate change, 24 in international waters, 22 in land degradation, 40 in persistent organic pollutants (POPs), and 80 multifocal. UNDP is the GEF Agency responsible for most of the national projects in the region (56 percent), followed by the World Bank (23 percent) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) (12 percent). Brazil and Mexico have the largest GEF portfolios, together accounting for 43 percent of total GEF support provided for national-level projects in the region.

This ACPER compiles the information obtained through the CPEs implemented in Brazil, Cuba,

the OECS, and Nicaragua as well as from the CPSs conducted in El Salvador and Jamaica. The country portfolios covered by this ACPER comprise 145 national projects in all GEF focal areas: 59 in biodiversity, 39 in climate change, 21 multifocal, 12 in land degradation, 10 in POPs, and 4 in international waters (table 1.1).

In biodiversity, the national portfolios analyzed total approximately \$233 million in GEF financing

and around \$645 million in cofinancing. In climate change, the sum of all national portfolios analyzed is approximately \$115 million in GEF financing and \$470 million in cofinancing. The GEF has invested approximately \$46 million in multifocal area projects with \$116 million cofinancing. In land degradation, the GEF has invested around \$30 million with \$151 million cofinancing. In POPs, GEF financing was approximately \$10 million and cofinancing \$16 million. Brazil is the only port-

TABLE 1.1 National Projects by Focal Area

Country	Biodiversity	Climate change	International waters	Land degradation	POPs	Multifocal	Total
Brazil	19	12	4	2	2	6	45
Cuba	11	3	0	3	1	1	19
El Salvador	6	3	0	0	1	1	11
Jamaica	3	5	0	1	1	2	12
Nicaragua	5	4	0	1	2	4	16
OECS	15	12	0	5	3	7	42
Total	59	39	4	12	10	21	145

TABLE 1.2 National Portfolio by Focal Area (million \$)

Country	Biodiversity	Climate change	International waters	Land degradation	POPs	Multifocal	Total
<b>GEF funding</b>							
Brazil	180.11	86.43	13.35	13.99	6.47	35.63	335.98
Cuba	27.00	6.00	0.00	10.00	0.50	0.20	43.70
El Salvador	9.40	1.40	0.00	0.00	0.43	0.18	11.41
Jamaica	3.18	7.20	0.00	0.50	0.24	0.73	11.85
Nicaragua	10.30	12.10	0.00	3.00	1.30	5.40	32.10
OECS	2.78	1.79	0.00	2.50	1.06	4.19	12.32
Total	232.77	114.92	13.35	29.99	10.00	46.33	447.36
<b>Cofinancing</b>							
Brazil	483.05	346.03	32.96	21.04	13.13	104.49	1,000.70
Cuba	83.00	18.00	0.00	108.00	0.10	0.07	209.17
El Salvador	19.10	3.10	0.00	0.00	0.39	0.08	22.67
Jamaica	7.79	14.90	0.00	0.49	0.00	0.43	23.61
Nicaragua	51.30	87.80	0.00	17.50	2.10	6.40	165.10
OECS	0.79	0.00	0.00	4.10	0.25	5.00	10.14
Total	645.03	469.83	32.96	151.13	15.97	116.47	1,431.39

folio that hosts national projects in international waters, with GEF financing equivalent to approximately \$13 million and cofinancing of \$33 million (table 1.2). UNDP is the primary channel for GEF support with 88 projects, followed by UNEP and the World Bank with 25 and 24 projects, respectively (table 1.3).

A description of the GEF portfolios included in this ACPER follows.

- **Brazil.** Since 1992, the GEF has invested about \$336 million (with about \$1 billion in cofinancing) in Brazil through 45 national projects: 19 in biodiversity, 12 in climate change, 4 in international waters, 2 in land degradation, 2 in POPs, and 6 in multifocal area projects. With 16 projects totaling \$194 million, the World Bank has been the main channel for GEF support in Brazil, followed by UNDP with 17 projects totaling approximately \$80 million. Brazil has participated in 36 GEF-supported initiatives with a regional or global scope. Most of the regional projects involving Brazil have focused on biodiversity, followed by climate change and multifocal projects.

- **Cuba.**<sup>4</sup> GEF support to Cuba began in 1992 and now totals \$43.7 million (with approximately \$209.2 million in cofinancing) provided through 19 national projects (11 in biodiversity, 3 in climate change, 3 in land degradation, 1 in POPs, and 1 multifocal). UNDP, with 10 projects totaling about \$28 million, has been the main implementer of GEF support in Cuba, followed by UNEP (8 projects totaling \$10 million). A \$5.7 million project in the land degradation focal area is implemented jointly by UNDP, UNEP, and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Cuba is also involved in 15 regional and global projects supported by the GEF.

- **El Salvador.** GEF funding in El Salvador totals about \$11.4 million with \$22.7 million in cofinancing; this is distributed among 11 national projects—6 in biodiversity, 3 in climate change, 1 in POPs, and 1 multifocal project. Eight of these projects are implemented through UNDP, making this Agency the main chan-

<sup>4</sup> Figures for the Cuba portfolio analysis are preliminary.

TABLE 1.3 National Projects by GEF Agency

Country	UNDP	UNEP	WB	FAO	IDB	IFAD	UNDP- WB	UNDP- UNEP-FAO	UNDP- IDB	Total
Brazil	17	7	16	2	1	1	0	0	1	45
Cuba	10	8	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	19
El Salvador	8	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	11
Jamaica	10	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	12
Nicaragua	12	0	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	16
OECS	31	8	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	42
Total	88	25	24	2	2	1	1	1	1	145

NOTE: FAO = Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; IDB = Inter-American Development Bank; IFAD = International Fund for Agricultural Development; WB = World Bank.

nel for GEF support in El Salvador. Two of the remaining three projects are implemented through the World Bank; UNEP implements one project. El Salvador has additionally participated in 20 GEF-supported initiatives with a regional or global scope. Nine of the regional and global projects involving El Salvador are in biodiversity, focusing on protected areas and biosafety.

- **Jamaica.** Since the country began its participation in the GEF in 1993, it has been involved in 12 national projects totaling about \$11.9 million in GEF support and about \$23.6 million in cofinancing. Jamaica has supported three projects in biodiversity, five in climate change, one each in land degradation and POPs, and two multifocal projects. With 10 projects, UNDP is the main channel for GEF support in the country. The World Bank and UNEP each implement one project. In addition to its national portfolio with the GEF, Jamaica has participated in 15 regional or global projects.
- **Nicaragua.** Overall, the GEF has invested \$32.1 million in Nicaragua, with \$165.1 million in cofinancing. The GEF portfolio in Nicaragua consists of 16 national projects: 5 in biodiversity, 4 in climate change, 1 in land degradation, 2 in POPs, and 4 multifocal. UNDP has been the main channel for GEF support in Nicaragua, implementing 12 projects totaling about \$12.5 million. Two projects totaling \$7.8 million are implemented through the World Bank, and one project totaling \$4 million is implemented through the Inter-American Development Bank. In addition, the World Bank and UNDP have jointly implemented a climate change project totaling \$7.9 million.
- **OECS.** Participation in the GEF by OECS countries—Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines—began during

the GEF pilot phase in 1992 with the preparation of the World Bank–implemented Wider Caribbean Initiative for Ship-Generated Waste project (GEF ID 585), which involved a total of 22 countries in the region. Today, the GEF portfolio among the OECS countries includes 42 national projects valued at about \$12.3 million, with about \$10.1 million in cofinancing. Most of the national projects are enabling activities. The GEF portfolio in the OECS countries is comprised of 15 projects in biodiversity, 12 in climate change, 5 in land degradation, 3 in POPs, and 7 multifocal. UNDP is the main implementer of national projects in the six OECS countries. The OECS countries covered by this evaluation have been or are involved in an additional 17 regional projects.

## 1.2 Objectives, Scope, Methods, and Limitations

Evaluation work was conducted by staff of the Evaluation Office and consultants with extensive experience with each individual country. The El Salvador and Jamaica CPSs were conducted and completed during FY 2011. The Nicaragua CPE was conducted between December 2010 and June 2011, and the OECS Cluster CPE was conducted between January and August 2011. The Brazil CPE was launched in May 2011, and the Cuba CPE the following month; these two evaluations were projected to be completed by end June 2012.

### OBJECTIVES

The CPEs and CPSs reported on in this ACPER were conducted in accordance with the standard terms of reference for CPEs and CPSs.<sup>5</sup> These terms of reference were adapted to each country

<sup>5</sup> The standard terms of reference for CPEs and CPSs can be accessed here: <http://www.thegef.org/gef/CPE%20Standard%20Terms%20of%20Reference>.

using the information collected and the feedback received during the scoping phase. In compliance with the standard terms of reference, the CPEs and CPSs included in this ACPER were conducted with the following objectives:

- Independently evaluate the **relevance and efficiency**<sup>6</sup> of GEF support in the country from several points of view: national environmental frameworks and decision-making processes, the GEF mandate and the achievement of global environmental benefits, and GEF policies and procedures
- Assess the **effectiveness and results**<sup>7</sup> of completed projects aggregated at the focal area
- Provide **additional evaluative evidence** to other evaluations conducted or sponsored by the GEF Evaluation Office
- Provide **feedback and knowledge sharing** to (1) the GEF Council in its decision-making process to allocate resources and to develop policies and strategies; (2) the country on its participation in, or collaboration with, the GEF; and (3) the different agencies and organizations involved in the preparation and implementation of GEF-funded projects and activities

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<sup>6</sup> *Relevance*: the extent to which the objectives of the GEF activity are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, global priorities, and partners' and donors' policies; *efficiency*: a measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results.

<sup>7</sup> *Results*: the output, outcome, or impact (intended or unintended, positive and/or negative) of a GEF activity; *effectiveness*: the extent to which the GEF activity's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance.

## SCOPE

The CPEs and CPSs included in this ACPER mainly focused on the projects supported by the GEF within the national boundaries at all project stages (preparation, implementation, and completion). The Small Grants Programme (SGP) was assessed against the respective national strategy and not on the basis of each individual SGP grant. Project ideas from either the governments or GEF Agencies included in the respective pipelines were not considered in the analysis. In addition to national projects, the GEF portfolios assessed include a selection of regional and global projects selected according to a set of criteria, including the presence in the country of a project coordination unit and/or project sites; the importance of the project focal area to the country; and the existence of a clear connection to national projects. Regional projects were a specific focus of the OECS Cluster CPE as this is the main modality of GEF support in the OECS.

The stage of each project determined the evaluation focus. For example, completed projects were assessed against the usual three evaluation criteria—results and effectiveness (outputs, outcomes, and impacts), relevance, and efficiency. Ongoing projects were assessed in terms of relevance and efficiency. Projects under preparation—i.e., those with an approved project identification form (PIF) or project preparation grant—were assessed primarily in terms of relevance, with some limited assessment of efficiency. The results and sustainability of GEF support—particularly at the global environmental benefits level—were given special attention. Table 1.4 summarizes the project portfolios covered in the CPEs and CPSs included in this ACPER.



TABLE 1.4 Project Coverage of Each Country Portfolio Evaluation and/or Study

Country	Type of evaluation	Number of projects included in the evaluation				National completed projects
		National full-/medium-size projects	SGP	Enabling activities	Regional/global projects	
Brazil	CPE	41	Yes	4	36	20
Cuba	CPE	14	Yes	5	15	10
El Salvador	CPS	5	Yes	6	20	6
Jamaica	CPS	6	Yes	6	15	7
Nicaragua	CPE	10	Yes	6	24	9
OECS	Cluster CPE	7	Yes	35	25	36
Total		83		62	135	88

## METHODS

Since 2006, the Office has completed 13 CPEs and 3 CPSs in all the geographical regions in which the GEF operates. A broad range of quantitative and qualitative methods and tools are used in these evaluations—including traditional ones such as desk reviews, portfolio analyses, and interviews—as well as CPE/CPS-specific ones such as country environmental legal framework analysis and global environmental benefits assessment. In line with the Office’s goal of transparency, CPE/CPS methods and tools are available on the country portfolio evaluation webpage of the Office website (<http://www.thegef.org/gef/CPEs>). CPE/CPS methods are constantly updated and refined.

For the CPEs and CPSs reported on in this ACPER, additional evaluative evidence at the country level was drawn from other Office evaluations. Statistical data and scientific sources were consulted, particularly with regard to national environmental indicators. Interviews were conducted with representatives of all GEF stakeholders, and a substantive number of field visits were made. Each of the CPEs and CPSs included a national consultation workshop to discuss and receive feedback on the key preliminary findings. The quantitative analysis used indicators to assess the efficiency of GEF support using projects as the unit of analysis (e.g.,

analyzing project preparation and implementation duration and costs).

Progress toward impact was assessed through a sizable number of field review of outcomes to impacts (ROtI) studies conducted in all the CPEs and CPSs included in this ACPER. Two ROtIs were conducted in Nicaragua and as part of the OECS Cluster CPE; one was conducted in El Salvador and one in Jamaica. Five ROtIs are being conducted in Brazil and two in Cuba.<sup>8</sup>

Triangulation of evaluative evidence has become a standard method and was consistently applied in all CPEs and CPSs reported on in ACPER 2012. The application of triangulation ensures that the cross-analysis of information results in better understanding of the contributions of the GEF initiatives in the country portfolios analyzed. Triangulation is used at the end of the data gathering and analysis phase to identify preliminary findings.

As reported in ACPER 2011, the Office has begun to shift its country-level evaluation efforts toward more joint work with GEF member countries and

<sup>8</sup> The ROtI study of the Amazon Region Protected Areas project in Brazil is being conducted in coordination with the GEF Evaluation Office Performance Team.

Agencies. At its May 2011 session, the GEF Council encouraged the Office to continue to work in this direction. In FY 2012, the Office established national independent quality assurance/peer review panels to support its CPEs; these were set up in Brazil, India, and Sri Lanka. Beyond providing scientific, technical, and methodological support to evaluations, the main purpose of these panels is to provide advice on the conclusions and recommendations formulated; increase country ownership; and facilitate follow-up action, especially with regard to recommendations addressed to the countries themselves. The Sri Lanka CPE will be jointly managed by the GEF Evaluation Office and the Department of Project Management and Monitoring of the Sri Lankan Ministry of Finance, with independent national quality assurance support provided by a panel consisting of experts from the Sri Lanka Evaluation Association.

## LIMITATIONS

GEF country evaluations usually face limitations and challenges. The following were noted in the CPEs and CPSs summarized in this report:

- CPEs are challenging as the GEF does not as yet establish country programs (or regional programs) that specify expected achievement through programmatic objectives, indicators, and targets.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Voluntary national portfolio formulation exercises (NPFs) have been introduced in GEF-5. CPEs and CPSs that will be conducted in countries that have chosen to

- Attribution is another area of complexity. CPEs/CPSs do not attempt to provide direct attribution of development and even of environmental results to the GEF, but instead assesses the contribution of GEF support to overall achievements.
- Evaluating the impacts of GEF-funded initiatives is not straightforward. Many projects, especially the oldest ones, do not clearly or appropriately specify the expected impact and sometimes even the outcomes of projects. This was partially addressed by reporting results that emerged from triangulation of various sources, including meta-evaluation analysis and original evaluative research conducted through interviews and field ROtI studies.
- Intrinsic difficulties exist in defining the portfolio prior to undertaking a CPE/CPS. Establishing a clear and reliable set of data on projects and project documentation in the face of inconsistencies, gaps, and discrepancies contained in the initial available data remains a challenge in many evaluations conducted by the Office.
- CPSs face the challenge of a limited level of effort as compared with fully fledged CPEs, especially in relation to the limited time and resources available to conduct fieldwork.

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do an NPF will use it as a basis for assessing the aggregate results, efficiency, and relevance of the GEF country portfolio.

## 2. Conclusions

The countries covered in the CPEs and CPSs included in this ACPER were not selected to be representative of the vast and diverse Latin America and the Caribbean region, but their experience could be relevant to other countries. ACPER 2012 identifies common elements emerging from the four CPEs and two CPSs conducted in the region, and draws on findings from previous evaluations, to highlight overarching conclusions to the GEF Council. The individual CPE/CPS reports present more specific conclusions and recommendations. Not all of these are presented here, as they are not considered sufficiently representative.

Conclusions are presented here according to the three dimensions of the evaluations: the results of GEF support, its relevance, and its efficiency.

### 2.1 Results

Results are presented in terms of the outcomes and impacts of the various GEF-supported projects. Achievements are presented in terms of the GEF contribution toward addressing global and national environmental issues as well as national-level priorities, including raising awareness and building national institutions and capacities. The use of the ROtI methodology enabled examination of progress toward impact, including impact drivers and external assumptions.

**CONCLUSION 1: Most projects achieved moderately satisfactory or higher outcome ratings in their focal areas. Global environmental benefits are still modest, though progress toward impact is happening.**

This conclusion draws on data from the “GEF Annual Performance Report 2011,” which found that 90 percent of the 93 terminal evaluation reviews received by the GEF Evaluation Office rated projects as moderately satisfactory or higher in achieving their stated outcomes (GEF EO 2012). Of the 18 terminal evaluation reviews received for the subset of Latin America and the Caribbean countries included in this ACPER, 78 percent were rated moderately satisfactory or higher in achievement of projects’ stated outcomes. To date, these project ratings have not yet translated into significant global environmental benefits, although progress toward impact can be observed in the portfolios analyzed.

Overall, GEF support to Brazil has generated a long-term approach to biodiversity that has translated into sustainable results. Cuba has achieved satisfactory results in several focal areas, particularly in biodiversity and biosafety. In both Brazil and Cuba, GEF support has generated much valuable scientific knowledge. Nicaragua has achieved satisfactory results in climate change mitigation through renewable energy projects. OECS countries have achieved satisfactory results in climate change adaptation.

On the negative side, overly ambitious goals in biodiversity have led to unfulfilled expectations in terms of progress toward impact in achieving global environmental benefits in Nicaragua. In OECS countries and in Jamaica GEF support has not yet moved much beyond foundational and demonstration activities.

GEF support to Brazil contributed to the creation and consolidation of key environmental institutions. The Biodiversity Fund Project (FUNBIO), established with GEF support in the early 1990s, is a unique institution in Brazil which continues to play a fiduciary role in implementing several important biodiversity projects, including the two-phase Amazon Region Protected Areas (ARPA) project, as well as projects from other national and international private and public institutions. FUNBIO also developed projects with several important environmental nongovernmental organizations still active today; it is applying to become a GEF Agency.

The GEF's National Biodiversity Project (PROBIO) strongly supported biodiversity conservation efforts in Brazil. Before this project, the country's Ministry of Environment lacked a biodiversity division. PROBIO was critical in promoting the creation of the Secretariat of Biodiversity and Forests and its Directorate for Biodiversity. These institutions are now responsible for the National Biodiversity Program. PROBIO has also been fundamental in structuring Brazil's biodiversity legal framework and in formulating a national biodiversity strategy. Finally, it has generated several of the most important publications on biodiversity produced by the national government. Stakeholders involved in the ARPA project have singled out a PROBIO publication that indicates priority areas for conservation in the Amazon region as a key reference in ARPA project design.

In addition to the development of biodiversity strategies, action plans, and laws, GEF support

has strengthened Cuba's institutional capacity. The National Biodiversity Strategy introduced a shift in the country's environmental policy toward strengthening institutions and increasing environmental awareness. The Strengthening the National System of Protected Areas project (GEF ID 968) also contributed to institutional capacity and to the financial sustainability of Cuban protected areas through the development of a financial sustainability strategy for the National System for Protected Areas and the proposed creation of the National Protected Areas Fund. The ongoing three-phase Sabana-Camagüey project (through its two completed projects and a third under implementation, GEF IDs 363, 591, and 2633) introduced integrated coastal management in Cuba and built capacity for planning scientific research with a focus on conservation and decision making. Several affected ecosystems were thereby recovered, including Bahía de los Perros, where some mangrove sites were regenerated and trawling was eliminated, with consequent recovery of fisheries and seagrass beds. GEF support also raised the profile of biosafety in the Cuban political arena, which contributed to its institutionalization. A biosafety legal framework has been developed and methodologies designed to engage institutions and actors responsible for the manipulation of living organisms. The National Biosafety Center of Cuba was strengthened through the development of an Information Exchange Center on Biosafety. Cuba is known worldwide for its achievements in the area of biosafety.

Valuable scientific knowledge is being produced through GEF support in Brazil and Cuba. GEF projects have enabled not only Brazil's national greenhouse gas inventories, but also consolidated knowledge in this area, which has been of great importance in supporting research. For example, the country's Second National Greenhouse Gas Inventory was used as the reference for the establishment of the national greenhouse gas emissions

target for 2020. The GEF-supported Biomass Power Generation: Sugar Cane Bagasse and Trash project (GEF ID 338) has compiled a high-quality publication that consolidates previously dispersed knowledge on the use of sugar cane leaves in energy creation; this has leveraged further academic research on the topic.

Several projects in Cuba demonstrate the importance of the interaction between the scientific community and administrative and decision-making institutions. The Sabana-Camagüey project has created a link between the scientific and technical sectors of academia within the administrative levels of state agencies and decision makers.

The global benefits achieved through GEF-supported projects are still modest in El Salvador, since the majority of the national and regional projects in the country are at an early stage of execution. Further, a lack of information impedes verification of the scope of such benefits in the case of the completed projects. Different approaches have been employed in El Salvador's biodiversity projects, none of which allow determination with any certainty of the global benefits generated. Projects designed to strengthen protected natural areas are ongoing, and thus have not yet generated global environmental benefits. A regional project designed to create environmental awareness through the use of mass media has not provided any information regarding its impacts.

Of 6 biodiversity projects, 1 dealing with international waters, and 77 SGP projects aimed at promoting conservation by means of sustainable production, only the Promotion of Biodiversity Conservation within Coffee Landscapes project (GEF ID 466) was successful. The project met not only the goals originally set for it, but also some new goals that were added after it was under implementation. Important information was gathered on the species that lived in the plantations and the

wildlife inhabiting the native woods. Since project completion, the executing agencies have continued to play an active part in sustaining the results achieved. However, it has still not been possible to ascertain the level of the project's impact on the overall degree of biodiversity in the area covered by the initiative.

GEF support in all focal areas has helped Jamaica develop good capacity in environmental management and to link to international best practices. However, the country lacks the resources to scale up from these initial benefits, and the GEF portfolio is not sufficiently well known to Jamaica's other international development partners to maximize collaboration and follow-up. Most of the activities completed with GEF assistance have been of an enabling, capacity development, or pilot nature; these efforts need to be sustained and scaled up for long-term results to be achieved. Given the limited resources available to the Jamaican government, the prospects of this occurring appear slight.

A large share of GEF support in Nicaragua concerned climate change mitigation, focusing on the provision of energy access through the development of micro-hydro and solar renewable energy schemes for isolated rural communities. Examples include the Small Scale Hydro-electricity for Productive Uses project (GEF ID 1266) implemented through UNDP and the Off-grid Rural Electrification for Development project (GEF ID 1079) implemented through the World Bank. In terms of global environmental benefits, these projects reported avoidance of 19,408 metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions over a four-year period; the postproject portfolio impact has been calculated to be 67,478 metric tons of carbon dioxide per year. The Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Fund (GEF ID 667), implemented through the International Finance Corporation, was similarly successful. Focusing on the promotion of renewable energy schemes in Nicaragua, the project provided

working capital to TECNOSOL, a Nicaraguan firm, to support business growth of this supplier of photovoltaic solutions in isolated rural areas.

In the biodiversity focal area, Nicaragua's projects have not been as successful. The challenge of effective biodiversity management has been compounded by weak formulation coupled with overly ambitious goals, a lack of adequate prefeasibility studies at the project design stage, inadequate supervision from the GEF Agencies and/or weak executing agencies on the ground, and decentralized project management. The early achievements of the Atlantic Biological Corridor project (GEF ID 117) in establishing a vision for corridor development and management are to be built upon at the community level through the ongoing Corazon Transboundary Biosphere Reserve project (GEF ID 2099). This project has suffered delays and is consequently at a relatively early stage of implementation. It was overly ambitious in its design, and at midterm it is unlikely to meet its original objective.

GEF-supported national climate change enabling activities helped OECS countries prepare initial national communications to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Enabling activities also supported the development of national implementation plans for the elimination of POPs in Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, and St. Lucia. Evidence shows that enabling activities have played a valuable role in the portfolio by enhancing capacity and building awareness of global environmental issues at the national level. GEF support through enabling activities has also facilitated the implementation of United Nations (UN) environmental conventions by providing a regular, if limited, stream of support to key government agencies responsible for responding to the conventions and providing technical and financial assistance to develop the capacity of the environmental departments within these agencies.

Although the GEF has been providing funding in the OECS region for 17 years, efforts completed to date can be described as primarily focused on enabling support, and are still in the early stages of demonstration-level support. The only exception is in the climate change focal area, where an extensive body of work and knowledge in adaptation has been completed.

**CONCLUSION 2: Climate change adaptation in the Central America and Caribbean region is becoming increasingly important in the GEF portfolios analyzed. In some countries, this is fully evident, while in other countries adaptation is still in its initial stages.**

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The high vulnerability of Latin America and the Caribbean, especially the region's SIDS, to climate change makes consideration of adaptation increasingly important. In Brazil, for example, it features as a key element in many multifocal area projects. Projects in Cuba and Jamaica address adaptation, and it is particularly well addressed in the OECS by the World Bank's Pilot Program on Climate Resilience. Adaptation has not been mainstreamed yet in Nicaragua.

In Cuba, land degradation projects demonstrate the cumulative effects of climate change adaptation. The Application of a Regional Approach to the Management of Marine and Coastal Protected Areas in Cuba's Southern Archipelagos project (GEF ID 3607) recognizes that climate change will likely affect marine and coastal ecosystems over time. As this project integrates planning measures and adaptive management for potential effects of climate change, there will be an increase in the capacity of marine protected areas to maintain ecosystem functions and components of biodiversity by increasing its size and greater connectivity to terrestrial protected areas. The Agricultural Biodiversity Conservation and Man and Biosphere Reserves in Cuba: Bridging Managed and Natural Landscapes project (GEF ID 4158) seeks to cushion



the effects of climate change on communities near the biosphere reserves by transferring agricultural biodiversity management practices to them to increase their adaptation capacity.

In El Salvador, the government is seeking to promote adaptation to climate change, while most GEF projects focus on climate change mitigation.

GEF support has helped Jamaica substantially increase its capacity in such fields as renewable energy, energy efficiency, adaptation, and energy sector planning and management. Adaptation activities have enhanced capacity to understand and track the effects of climate change and to plan responses to them. The major challenge in this area involves how Jamaica can finance the measures necessary to adapt effectively and reduce vulnerabilities associated with climate change.

While adaptation to climate change has been recognized by authorities as a priority for Nicaragua, only one project in the portfolio has this specific focus. The main results of the regional project Capacity Building for Stage II Adaptation to Climate Change (Central America, Mexico, and Cuba; GEF ID 1060) have been capacity building at the individual and institutional levels, and support in the production of national reports on adaptation issues. In Nicaragua, this project specifically supported the development of an adaptation strategy for hydrological resources and watershed agricultural systems. The project also fed into the country's Second National Communication to the UNFCCC. While considering the portfolio as a whole, the majority of the remaining GEF projects have not paid much attention to adaptation concerns in either their design or their execution. In the project design documents of the majority of the portfolio, with the exception of Capacity Building

for Stage II Adaptation to Climate Change, there has not been a sufficient analysis of the risks posed by the effects of climate change to global environmental benefits in the long term and at the global level, as well as of the risks posed to the financial investment in the projects themselves. These have remained peripheral issues to GEF support in Nicaragua.

The climate change portfolio in the OECS region has demonstrated a long-term strategic approach to addressing the issues critical to the region. Initial efforts received a boost from the Caribbean Planning for Adaptation to Global Climate Change project (GEF ID 105), implemented between 1997 and 2001, which focused on vulnerability assessments, adaptation planning, and capacity-building activities. The regional adaptation portfolio was expanded by the development of the Adaptation to Climate Change in the Caribbean project funded by the Canadian International Development Agency, followed by the GEF-funded Caribbean: Mainstreaming Adaptation to Climate Change project (GEF ID 1084), which built on the previous efforts. Complementing these regional initiatives, the Special Program on Adaptation to Climate Change project (GEF ID 2552) was developed to support efforts by Dominica, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines to implement specific integrated pilot adaptation measures addressing the impacts of climate change on the natural resource base.

These various Caribbean-focused initiatives are now complemented by the World Bank's Pilot Program on Climate Resilience, which is designed to provide finance for climate-resilient national development. The project's financial mechanisms provide significantly greater resources than those made available through the GEF to date.

**CONCLUSION 3: Capacity development at both the individual and institutional levels was good overall, with a few exceptions at the local level.**

Overall, there has been satisfactory capacity strengthening in Brazil, Cuba, El Salvador, and Nicaragua; this was less evident in the OECS and at the local level in El Salvador and Nicaragua.

In Brazil, institutional/individual capacity building and the publication of quality documents are key to the maintenance and replication of efforts that lead to global environmental benefits. As mentioned earlier, GEF projects contributed to the creation and consolidation of significant national environmental institutions. GEF projects also have often resulted in publicly available reports that are used by other projects. The Biomass Power Generation: Sugar Cane Bagasse project helped build capacity among the university researchers involved.

Much has been done to improve institutional capacity for water basin management across the country. GEF support in this focal area began in 1999, one year prior to the creation of the National Water Agency. Once that institution was created, it became the executing agency of all GEF projects in this focal area. Three such projects have been completed in the São Francisco, Pantanal, and Guarani aquifers; a fourth is under implementation in the Amazonas aquifer. These projects were an important laboratory for the National Water Agency's technical staff and contributed to the creation of several river basin management committees, river basin agencies, and state hydro-resource secretariats.

Development of the GEF-supported National Capacity Self-Assessment (NCSA) allowed Cuba to incorporate an ecosystem approach to project results, giving the country the ability to identify and define specific needs for key ecosystems (mountain, coastal, and marine; watershed basins and bays; and productive agro-ecosystems). The

Strengthening Protected Areas System project built institutional capacity and the financial sustainability of protected areas in the national system through the development of a financial sustainability strategy and a proposal for creating a national protected areas fund. The operating and management plans implemented by this project continued to be developed for the other protected areas under the national system. The regional Capacity Building for Stage II Adaptation to Climate Change project developed future climate projection scenarios that, which provided a basis for land use planning policies, weather monitoring, and prevention funded by the Cuban government.

The main goal of El Salvador's seven projects in the climate change focal area is capacity building. The GEF contribution to strengthening the institutional framework has been limited to financing enabling activities for capacity building in climate change and biodiversity and the NCSA. However, it is because of this latter project that the Ministry of Natural Resources has a national action plan for capacity strengthening for environmental management.

In Nicaragua, capacity has been built at the national level in the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources to meet convention commitments. Nicaragua has now issued its Fourth National Communication to the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD). Capacity was also developed through medium- and full-size national and regional projects, including the Atlantic Biosphere Corridor project focusing on building awareness of key stakeholders and supporting the development of plans promoting the protection of priority biodiversity areas and indigenous community development. In the climate change focal area, GEF support enabling Nicaragua to prepare its Initial National Communication to the UNFCCC (GEF ID 440) allowed the country to build its awareness of climate change concerns and its capacity



in meeting its obligations. Through this enabling activity, a national commission on climate change was created. This effort was later followed by the Additional Financing for Capacity Building in Priority Areas enabling activity for climate change (GEF ID 1011), which facilitated, among other activities, training on carbon fixation; exchanges of experiences; and studies on adaptation to climate change in relation to the availability, quality, and quantity of hydrological resources. Support of capacity building in the Ministry of Energy and Mines through the Productive Uses of Hydroelectricity on a Small-Scale in Nicaragua and the Off-grid Rural Electrification for Development projects can also be cited as an example of good capacity development.

Almost all projects in Nicaragua have targeted local populations in one way or another. The majority of enabling activities have involved participants from local populations and/or civil society. Nonetheless, local institutional sustainability of civil society actors remains a challenge. Field visits and interviews highlighted the difficulty beneficiary institutions had in understanding basic concepts of production costs and financing. Also, although the implementation of decentralized management has been promoted and strengthened in general terms, GEF funds and institutional capacity development appear to be primarily focused on central institutions and government entities. A number of projects and enabling activities have such entities as their main targets. On the other hand, the SGP, although working with civil society organizations, focuses its support essentially on achieving particular environmental and socioeconomic objectives, sometimes without proper emphasis and technical support to build the capacity of the civil society organizations themselves to sustain their efforts over time.

National capacity strengthening is an important priority in the OECS region to ensure that national

agencies can participate in developing and managing GEF projects. Of the six OECS portfolios analyzed, only Antigua and Barbuda is implementing a full-size project in this regard, the design and approval of which was a strongly country-driven process by Antigua and Barbuda's Environment Department. The only other national project in the OECS countries—a medium-size project on forestry in Grenada—did not have strong stakeholder ownership from national institutions during design and implementation, and had little continuing activity or support following project completion. Capacity development is also critical in civil society, which is currently constrained in its ability to play an active and engaged role in contributing to effective environmental management in the region. This situation is particularly evident at the SGP level, where few civil society and community-based organizations have the capacity to engage with the program and take advantage of available resources.

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**CONCLUSION 4: Many countries in Latin America and the Caribbean follow an ecosystem approach to environmental conservation and sustainable use, which increases the demand for multifocal area projects.**

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While the trend in Brazil's project portfolio seems to suggest an increase in multifocal area projects over time, it is not clear whether such projects are actually more common now, or whether new projects are simply being classified as multifocal more than in the past. It is also too early to conclude that multifocal approaches are more common in certain biomes or in certain groups of focal areas. Projects classified as multifocal comprise 11 percent of the GEF portfolio in Brazil in terms of grant resources, and 13 percent in terms of number of projects.

The first multifocal project in Brazil entered the GEF pipeline in 2001, began implementation in 2004, and was concluded in December 2010. Only one other multifocal project has been completed thus far; it ended in November 2011. Current

multifocal area projects tend to have a major focus on biodiversity and land degradation; a significant portion of these projects involve the Caatinga biome. Multifocal projects are expected to become more common to exploit and address the interrelations between many GEF focal areas.

A review of the Brazilian portfolio shows that many GEF projects in Brazil classified under a single focal area in fact have objectives in other focal areas as well, and could easily have been classified as multifocal. This is the case for 9 full-size and 1 medium-size projects out of 41 national projects (not including enabling activities). This classification problem is well known in the SGP as well, and is especially clearly illustrated in Brazil where all projects were classified as biodiversity to date, even though most projects addressed a broader range of objectives.

The only project in Cuba classified as multifocal is the NCSA, but it is not really a multifocal area project per se. However, of the country's 14 national projects (not including enabling activities), 9 have multifocal elements. Overall, the portfolio of projects supported by the GEF in Cuba focuses on its main ecosystems. Land degradation projects demonstrate cumulative effects on the issue of climate change adaptation. The South Archipelagos project recognizes that climate change will likely affect marine and coastal ecosystems over time, and integrates planning measures and adaptive management for potential effects of climate change to address this concern. Through this project there will be an increase in the capacity of marine protected areas to maintain ecosystem functions and components of biological diversity by increasing their size and through greater connectivity to terrestrial protected areas.

Nicaragua's integrated land use-based approaches to the management of natural resources are a stated priority of the Ministry of Environment and

Natural Resources. Such approaches seek to balance economic, social, and cultural opportunities in a specific territory with the need to maintain and enhance the health of the area's ecosystem. Some efforts have been made to address this concern in GEF-supported activities—e.g., through support of the biological corridor and the development of integrated regional management plans, a monitoring system, community development plans, and sector plans. Watershed management approaches are also beginning to be promoted. Thus, the new GEF-supported Integrated Management in Lakes Apanás and Asturias Watershed project (GEF ID 3981) has made watershed management an integral part of its design.

Beyond the GEF, efforts at fully integrating land use-based management approaches with in-situ interventions are somewhat limited in Nicaragua. This is because the country's land use planning law has a multitude of authorities involved in its implementation; also, capacity is lacking at the local level.

#### **CONCLUSION 5: Scale-up, replication, and sustainability remain a challenge in the portfolios analyzed, with some notable exceptions.**

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According to the "GEF Annual Performance Report 2011," 70 percent of terminal evaluation reviews rated sustainability of project outcomes as either moderately likely or likely (GEF EO 2012). The sustainability of project outcomes for the country portfolios analyzed in this ACPER were rated much lower. A variety of factors contribute to this disparity, among them the need to strengthen economic and environmental policies at the national level to ensure incentives for beneficiaries to switch from current livelihood practices to more sustainable alternatives.

Overall, the GEF portfolios in Jamaica, Nicaragua, and the OECS lack scale-up and replication. Climate change adaptation initiatives in the OECS are

noteworthy exceptions to this trend, as is the GEF portfolio in Cuba as a whole. In Cuba, continuity is a government priority that applies to all externally funded projects. In Brazil, biodiversity projects have followed a historical sequence that has led to some scale-up and replication.

GEF support to biodiversity in Brazil has followed a progression that started with PROBIO and FUNBIO and culminated in the ARPA project, which is one of the largest and most important GEF-supported biodiversity projects worldwide. Brazil's success in biodiversity is demonstrated by the creation and consolidation of key national environmental institutions such as FUNBIO, which plays a fiduciary role in implementing several biodiversity projects—including ARPA, as well as projects from other national and international private and public institutions. The historical progression of GEF support to Brazilian biodiversity conservation efforts clearly shows up-scaling and replication. Nonetheless, in a country of Brazil's geographic dimensions, political challenges (diverging economic interests and the present tense discussions on the new Forest Code), and ecosystem complexity (e.g., Amazonas), this progression may not be sufficient.

The nature of the GEF projects in Cuba creates a basis for financial sustainability and results continuity. Government funding has supported the achievement of results from GEF and other donors' projects, allowing the deployment of further efforts in these areas. For example, projects supported by the GEF and other partners mainstream environmental awareness through various Cuban departments responsible for natural resource management. The creation of new job opportunities for local communities in the new infrastructure built for visitors in protected areas is a direct outcome of the completed Strengthening Protected Areas System project, which contributes to its financial sustainability. Funds outside the national budget have

increased by 5 percent through the creation of the Financial Sustainability Strategy for the National System for Protected Areas. The protected areas and archipelagos projects include strategies to increase local participation in tourism to reduce pressures on natural resources in protected areas. The effectiveness and sustainability of the projects are also a result of the interaction between the Cuban scientific community involved in such projects and government decision makers.

Substantial follow-up actions are needed to expand the outcomes, demonstration value, and policy effects of GEF-supported activities in Jamaica if these are to be sustained and replicated. However, GEF activities are not well known throughout the country, which may seriously restrict the possibilities of raising cofunding or developing partnerships with other Jamaican international partners. This weakness is particularly important in view of the extremely limited sources available to the government of Jamaica for environmental activities, including those of high national priority.

In Nicaragua, the economic and financial sustainability of GEF-supported results are partially guaranteed by financial resources from the government, which can be seen in the medium-term budget approved by the General Budgetary Law of the Republic for 2011. This law indicates that the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources has been assigned treasury resources amounting to \$3.4 million per year for the period 2011–14. Additional funds to cover GEF project support are taken from international funding, estimated at \$4.5 million per year during the same period. Clearly, financial sustainability to promote the global environmental agenda in Nicaragua remains a challenge. Three biodiversity projects—the National Biodiversity Strategy, and Action Plan and Report to the Conference of the Parties (GEF ID 35), the Establishment of a Programme for the Consolidation of the Meso-American Biologi-

cal Corridor (GEF ID 243), and an Assessment of Capacity Building Needs Add-on (GEF ID 1380)—focused on generating management tools. However, the financial resources required for their successful implementation were not available, and the GEF Agreement Plan 2011–2020 defines the necessity of preparing an evaluation of financial resources that are required for ensuring that the goals for this time frame are met. The three completed biodiversity initiatives promoted with GEF support ended their activities once funding was terminated. With regard to national and regional medium- and full-size projects, neither strategies nor sustainability plans were developed to ensure adequate financing for scale-up and further development of many completed biodiversity projects such as the Atlantic Biosphere Corridor and Meso-American Biological Corridor. The Conservation of Dry Forest and Coastal Biodiversity of the Pacific Coast of Southern Nicaragua: Building Private-Public Partnerships project (GEF ID 1735) made efforts to involve the private sector in its financial strategy for project sustainability. However, due to policy changes, it was required to opt for a new tariff system, which does not generate sufficient funding to continue project activities. The Productive Uses of Hydroelectricity on a Small-Scale and Off-grid Rural Electrification for Development projects also lacked an adequate sustainability plan. Nevertheless, management successfully searched for additional funds from donors, and attempted to develop a financial mechanism to feed money recovered from tariffs paid from an increased numbers of users to be used after project completion.

The climate change portfolio in the OECS region has demonstrated a long-term strategic approach to addressing the climate change adaptation issues that are critical to the region—namely the Caribbean Planning for Adaptation to Climate Change, Mainstreaming Adaptation to Climate Change, and Special Program on Adaptation to Climate Change series of projects. The aggregation of these Carib-

bean-focused initiatives is now complemented by the World Bank’s Pilot Program on Climate Resilience. This sequence of efforts demonstrates the kind of up-scaling, follow-up, and sustained effort at the regional and national levels required by the GEF and other donors in all focal areas.

**CONCLUSION 6: Opportunities for South-South cooperation through national, regional, and/or global projects and/or project components exist, but are not fully taken up.**

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The issue of South-South cooperation in the GEF is not new. South-South cooperation activities have been informally conducted through the transfer of knowledge, technology, and best practices between Southern centers of excellence such as the Caribbean Community Climate Change Center and other beneficiary Southern countries. In recent years, South-South cooperation has increasingly been seen as a modality that should be further explored. This is demonstrated by recent guidance from the CBD to the GEF (CBD COP 2010). Because this is an issue that ranks high on their national agendas, the GEF Evaluation Office was asked by national stakeholders to look into whether the GEF has supported South-South cooperation as it conducted the Brazilian and Cuban CPEs.

During GEF-3 (2003–06), the GEF supported many projects that included activities—when these were well justified and well documented—to promote the exchange of international experiences (not just South-South). During GEF-4 (2006–10), however, countries and GEF Agencies were specifically instructed *not* to include funding for international travel in the framework of national projects.

While it is reasonable to expect that GEF projects in Brazil in the near future could present evidence of supporting South-South cooperation efforts, this is not yet the case. Some GEF projects in Brazil have resulted in informal and uncoordinated cooperation with other Southern countries, especially

on knowledge-sharing issues. For example, technicians from the Biomass Power Generation project provided technical assistance for a similar project in Cuba, and technicians from the Integrated Management of Land-Based Activities in the São Francisco Basin project (GEF ID 586) participated in international seminars in Latin America to present project results and lessons learned.

However, these exchanges are not seen by the Brazilian government as part of its official South-South cooperation, which must be coordinated with the government—specifically, through the Brazilian Cooperation Agency. This agency is not entirely familiar with the GEF portfolio and its potential for South-South cooperation, although it has expressed interest in learning about and promoting such potential.

The only GEF project in the Cuban portfolio that specifically mentions South-South cooperation is the Agricultural Biodiversity and Biosphere Reserves (for which a project preparation grant has been recently approved). This project aims to disseminate global benefits it generates that are relevant to other tropical island biomes through UNESCO’s Man and the Biosphere Programme’s South-South collaboration initiatives.

GEF-supported projects in Cuba have indirectly resulted in the transfer of information and knowledge among Southern countries. Initially, such activities were not defined as South-South cooperation, but in fact they materialized as opportunities for such cooperation. A natural tendency toward this type of activity between countries with similarities or common interests occurred without formal incentives within the programming of projects. For example, Cuba’s enabling activity on climate change (GEF ID 525) unexpectedly resulted in technology transfer of methodologies for inventories and vulnerability and risk to other Caribbean countries, including the Dominican Republic and Haiti.

## 2.2 Relevance

The relevance of GEF support was assessed against the country’s national development and environmental agendas, the GEF mandate, and the country’s responsibilities and obligations to the global conventions.

**CONCLUSION 7: Overall, GEF support has been relevant to both national environmental conservation and sustainable development policies, and to the GEF international mandate of achieving global environmental benefits.**

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The GEF supported all of the countries included in this ACPER in their reporting obligations to the international environmental conventions to which they are signatories. Overall, GEF support was relevant to the development of national frameworks for environmental laws and policies in most focal areas. GEF support has also been relevant to all countries analyzed in this ACPER.

A few exceptions are noted. Regional projects in which OECS countries participated had less relevance for them than for the other countries involved, as the project focus was typically not in line with national priorities. Specifically, a difficulty was observed in aligning global and regional project objectives to OECS member countries’ national priorities. Furthermore, the relevance of regional project objectives and outputs was not always clear to national stakeholders, as in the case of the Montreal Protocol, which is not a national priority for OECS countries. In El Salvador, land degradation, which is a national priority, was not addressed by GEF support.

**CONCLUSION 8: Mixed ownership is observed in the portfolios analyzed; ownership is strong in middle-income economies and less so in SIDS, with the exception of Cuba.**

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GEF support in Brazil is clearly nationally owned and country driven. The large majority of GEF



projects developed in the country originated from ideas proposed by Brazilian individuals or institutions—although Brazilian stakeholders recognize that the GEF Agencies contributed to the improvement of the original project ideas. For example, one project originated from a national pledge to achieve the target of at least 10 percent strict conservation of all forest types in Brazil. Another project was conceived by state government entities working together with nongovernmental organizations.

Similarly, the government of Cuba has strong ownership of GEF-supported projects. All GEF-supported projects are integrated into the matrix of government decision making. The GEF operational focal point, the various environmental agencies (e.g., the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment), other ministries (e.g., the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of the Interior, and the Ministry of Commerce and Trade), and academia are all involved in the design and implementation of GEF-supported projects. Ownership in Cuba is also demonstrated by the significant synergy that exists between several projects supported by the GEF; this is in line with a government approach aimed at maximizing externally funded investments.

In the case of Brazil, most cofinancing, a good indicator for ownership, comes from government (51 percent), followed by the private sector (29 percent). In Cuba, cofinancing comes mostly from the government.

Less ownership of the GEF portfolio is observed in Jamaica and the OECS. In Jamaica, it would be more appropriate to talk of “national adoption” than of “national ownership” of the GEF portfolio. The country’s portfolio has been designed mainly by the GEF Agencies, although it is relevant to national priorities. The government and other

stakeholders have committed support to activities at various stages of design and implementation, but cannot be said to have led the process.

In the OECS, ownership is linked to specific projects. For example, some projects have featured a strongly country-driven process, while others did not have strong stakeholder ownership from national institutions during design and implementation, and little continuing activity or support following project completion. In cases where GEF-funded efforts have clearly been driven by OECS national stakeholders, a greater sense of stakeholder ownership was observed.

## 2.3 Efficiency

The efficiency of GEF support is assessed in terms of the time, effort, and financial resources needed to prepare and implement GEF projects; the different roles and responsibilities of the various GEF stakeholders (national, international, and local) and the synergies between projects and these stakeholders; and the role and functioning of the national GEF focal point mechanism.

Overall, GEF project cycle efficiency for four of the portfolios analyzed in this ACPER (those of Brazil, Cuba, Nicaragua, and the OECS) has been mixed. The average time from proposal receipt and entry into the pipeline to project implementation is 42 months for full-size projects, 28 months for medium-size projects, and 11 months for enabling activities. At 29 months—well below the average processing time—Cuba has the shortest project cycle for full-size projects. OECS countries have the longest full-size project cycle, at 54 months. For medium-size projects, Nicaragua has the shortest cycle (an average of 17 months), followed by Cuba (22 months), Brazil (25 months), and the OECS (46 months). On the other hand, OECS countries process enabling activities in less than half the

time required by the other countries: an average of 5 months, compared to 10 and 11 months for Nicaragua and Brazil, respectively, and 18 months for Cuba.

The success of synergies and coordination in the portfolios analyzed has been mixed. Weak coordination and synergies were observed in Nicaragua, where project approval and implementation were slowed by the time needed for negotiations involving many actors. Coordination and overall implementation arrangements were problematic and expensive in the OECS; the successful Integrating Watershed and Coastal Area Management in the SIDS of the Caribbean project (GEF ID 1254) was the exception rather than the rule. In Brazil, GEF Agencies have worked independently of one another, without any clear overall coordination and/or synergies. However, the resulting competition between GEF Agencies seems compatible with the nationally driven nature of Brazil projects.

Although a substantial variety of actors have been involved in the implementation of the GEF portfolios, a lack of coordination between government ministries has been apparent at times. When coordination did take place, it tended to be centralized in the capital. In Cuba, there is strong interaction between actors from different national institutions; this stems from the country's programmatic approach that applies to all externally funded projects. Moreover, this involvement is maintained even after projects have been completed. The country benefits not only from working groups established around various environmental issues—such as the Working Group on Climate Change and the Working Group on Government Sanitation and Conservation of the Bay of Havana—but also from strong participation by high levels of government.

**CONCLUSION 9: SIDS face challenges in project approval processes and in implementation due to the specific circumstances in which they operate and to their specific needs. This hampers the achievement of greater global environmental benefits.**

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Complexity in the contexts in which GEF projects are designed and implemented hampers achievement of global environmental benefits. SIDS tend to be vulnerable economies. Hurricanes and other extreme weather-related events such as droughts add to this complexity. Although some of these contextual elements can be mitigated or accounted for in project design and implementation, their existence has undoubtedly affected—and continues to affect—projects supported by the GEF and other donors in SIDS.

In Cuba, the impact of the *Período Especial*,<sup>1</sup> the embargo, and the recent global financial crisis have affected the design and implementation of GEF projects. The hurricanes that hit the island in 2008 affected infrastructure, creating an inadvertent source of competition for resources and labor needed in GEF project work. The demand to meet the population's basic needs for housing, hospitals, and schools took priority over the building of environment-related infrastructure in two GEF projects.

The effects of hurricanes and other weather-related events, coupled with the global financial crisis, also caused delays in project implementation. Some project delays were due to contributions committed by donors other than the GEF being received later

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<sup>1</sup> The dissolution of the former Soviet Union, a key trade and economic partner, required Cuba to adjust to a new world system and to insert itself into the global economy. The decade of the nineties, during which these adjustments began, constituted a period of difficulty and hardship for the population, referred to as the *Período Especial* (Special Period).

than expected—a consequence of administrative difficulties in the international transfer of funds between the European Union and Cuba. Difficulties and delays in funding disbursements, identification of equipment suppliers, procurement, and payments negatively affected implementation. Delays and difficulties in obtaining visas also affected the participation in international events of Cuban specialized technical personnel involved in GEF projects.

A variety of structural issues challenge GEF projects in the OECS region. These include inadequate communication and coordination between different levels of the GEF partnership (the UN environmental conventions; the GEF Secretariat; the GEF Agencies; the GEF focal points; and regional, national, and local stakeholders); limited capacity, limited resources, and the limited number of personnel involved in environmental management; and the complexity of fostering cooperative relationships between many actors, including between the countries themselves. Communication and coordination in the region can be challenging, and face-to-face communication is practically a requirement for effective cooperation. Within this already difficult context, there remains an inadequate flow of information of all types related to the GEF as an institution, the nature and status of activities undertaken with GEF support, and the operating environment for GEF-supported activities.

**CONCLUSION 10: Monitoring and evaluation for adaptive management, as well as environmental monitoring, are challenging.**

Adaptive management has been exercised in the portfolios analyzed in this ACPER, with some exceptions. Nicaragua has used monitoring and evaluation information inconsistently. Some projects did not demonstrate adequate change in implementation in the field based on recommendations provided by midterm reviews. Adequate adaptive management was observed in Brazil, Cuba, and the OECS countries.

In Brazil, there are indications that adaptive management occurred in projects undergoing midterm reviews and/or evaluation. For example, in the two-phased protected areas project, recommendations included in the terminal evaluation of the first phase were clearly taken into consideration in the design of the second phase.

In Cuba, changes in the logical frameworks of ongoing projects have been made. For example, the introduction of annual meetings allowed a biodiversity project to make changes to certain aspects of project activities. The project also acted on several recommendations formulated by the midterm review. In OECS countries, projects undertook good adaptive management actions as a direct result of monitoring and evaluation. Some projects underwent a major restructuring following their midterm review, including extension to allow completion of key project activities.

In general, tracking tools are still considered challenging. Stakeholders in Brazil indicated that they have difficulty in filling out tracking tool spreadsheets and in understanding the relevance of some of the indicators included. Additionally, baselines are not yet well established in most projects.

Lack of a centralized knowledge management information system compounds the challenges to monitoring and evaluation for adaptive management and environmental monitoring in Cuba. There is no one institutional home for all environmental monitoring data for a particular project, and the information generated is not easily accessible by all institutions participating in the projects that require such information in order to make sound decisions. Limited access to technical information is a factor, as equipment for information management and exchange is not universally available.

Monitoring and evaluation of GEF support in Nicaragua occurs mainly at the project level. Difficul-



ties involving baseline information and properly worded indicators and outcomes were observed in a number of projects reviewed.

Tracking tools are not well used in OECS countries. Furthermore, assessing impact-level results in these countries is extraordinarily challenging due to a lack

of solid baseline data on the status of environmental resources, and a corresponding lack of systematic monitoring data to assess trends over time.

Monitoring and evaluation issues will be taken up further in OPS5 and in the Evaluation of GEF Focal Area Strategies.

## 3. Recommendations

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The findings and conclusions emerging from the CPEs and CPSs conducted in the Latin America and the Caribbean region yield the following recommendations.

### **RECOMMENDATION 1: Project approval and implementation in SIDS should be more flexible and context specific.**

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A specific recommendation of the Samoa CPE (GEF EO 2008b), endorsed by a corresponding Council decision in June 2007, called for more flexibility in considering specificities related to SIDS. These include being sufficiently flexible to accommodate the different capacities of the various Pacific Island countries, and recognizing the high transaction costs associated with the Pacific region. The evaluative evidence emerging from the OECS and Jamaica evaluations underlines this call for greater contextual specificity and flexibility. In the OECS region, the design and implementation of regional projects showed the need for recognizing higher transaction costs for improved implementation arrangements, particularly concerning coordination and communication between different levels of the GEF partnership and within the participating countries. The OECS evaluation also highlights the need for adequate attention being given to the capacity of environmental civil society organizations and public sector environmental agencies. In Jamaica, GEF Agency procedures related to procurement and other administrative responsibilities were shown to hinder project efficiency.

In Cuba, the embargo and the recent global financial crisis affect the design and implementation of GEF-supported projects. The analysis of the GEF portfolio in Cuba suggests that in countries with particularly complex contexts, the GEF should be more pragmatic concerning administrative procedures and proactively respond to anticipated difficulties through planned procurement steps and specific guidance so that greater environmental benefits can be achieved through improved efficiency.

### **RECOMMENDATION 2: The burden of monitoring requirements of multifocal area projects should be reduced to a level comparable to that of single-focal area projects.**

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In recent years, an ecosystem approach to environmental conservation and sustainable use has been emerging across the GEF. In June 2008, based on a recommendation included in ACPER 2008 (GEF EO 2008a; which comprised the Benin, Madagascar, and South Africa evaluations), the GEF Council requested that the GEF Secretariat strengthen the concept of integrated multifocal area approaches, including addressing transboundary issues. This decision has caused a corresponding increase—also observed in the Fourth Overall Performance Study of the GEF (GEF EO 2010b)—of multifocal area projects in GEF country portfolios in the various geographic regions where the GEF operates.

As was observed in the Africa region, many countries in Latin America and the Caribbean follow

an ecosystem approach to environmental management. In this region, the complexity of multifocal area project monitoring requirements—in particular, of indicators—is considered a challenge by many project planners and executors, as baselines and corresponding tracking tools have to be submitted for all the focal areas involved in such projects. The result is that these projects have a considerably higher monitoring burden than comparable single-focal area projects, even though their efforts in the respective focal area may be less intense, as their emphasis is on cross-cutting and synergetic issues. This burden could be reduced by deciding on essential focal area indicators that need to be monitored in multifocal area projects, rather than applying the full set of tracking tools. This could reduce the monitoring burden to a level comparable to that in single-focal area projects.

**RECOMMENDATION 3: South-South cooperation should be enabled as a component of national, regional, and global projects where opportunities for exchange of technology, capacity development, and/or sharing of best practices exist.**

South-South cooperation is becoming a priority for UN environmental conventions, as demonstrated by the specific guidance given to promote such cooperation by the CBD in Nagoya, Japan, in 2010 (CBD COP 2010). Analysis of this form of coopera-

tion has been included in the Brazil and Cuba CPEs in response to a specific request from national stakeholders during the scoping missions to the two countries.

Overall, informal South-South cooperation occurs through the transfer of information and knowledge between various GEF member countries in GEF regional projects. This was observed in Brazil and Cuba as well. The evaluative evidence gathered indicates that the two countries showed strong interest in South-South cooperation for various reasons. These reasons include a desire to enhance their international reputation and status, and the fact that political and economic linkages between Southern countries in the same geographic region (e.g., the Caribbean for Cuba) or other regions (e.g., lusophone countries for Brazil) facilitate the export of locally developed technologies and best practices to countries with similar conditions where they could be suitably adopted. Last but not least, South-South cooperation is pursued, as in Cuba, for philanthropic purposes.

However, South-South cooperation activities and components in national, regional, and/or global projects should not be enabled via funding from GEF project financial resources to those Southern countries providing South-South support.

# Annex A. Conclusions, Recommendations, and Lessons

Conclusions				
Results	Relevance	Efficiency	Recommendations	Lessons
<b>Brazil</b>				
<p>The GEF helped pave the way for institutional capacity required for lasting environmental benefits in most focal areas. Also, GEF projects in Brazil often produce quality publications that have remained as leading national references in most focal areas.</p>	<p>GEF support has been relevant to Brazil's sustainable development agenda and environmental priorities, particularly in the areas of biodiversity and climate change.</p>	<p>The GEF project approval process in Brazil is on average shorter than in other countries, but still perceived as too long by stakeholders.</p>	<p>The burden of monitoring requirements for multifocal area projects should be reduced to a level comparable to that of single-focal area projects.</p>	
<p>Multifocal area projects have always had a presence in the Brazilian portfolio, although they have only been recently classified as such.</p>	<p>GEF support in Brazil is clearly nationally owned and country driven.</p>	<p>GEF Agencies have worked independently of one another, without any clear overall coordination and/or synergies.</p>	<p>The GEF should implement a more robust information and knowledge management system to improve exchange of experiences among projects within each country and internationally. Such a system could serve as a tool to promote South-South cooperation.</p>	
<p>The engagement of the private sector varies in form and size across focal areas. GEF support has been particularly effective in engaging the private sector on climate change, and somewhat less effective in other focal areas.</p>	<p>Cofinancing levels are generally satisfactory and in line with GEF support, and it is clear that this cofinancing generates additional global environmental benefits.</p>	<p>Coordination among participating entities in completed and ongoing GEF projects seems generally efficient. Several GEF projects indicate proximity between institutions that were historically distant from one another, particularly agricultural and environmental government institutions.</p>	<p>The GEF should promote and encourage exchange of experiences on monitoring and evaluation procedures, which is perceived by many stakeholders as one of the greatest challenges faced by projects.</p>	

Conclusions				
Results	Relevance	Efficiency	Recommendations	Lessons
<p>GEF support to Brazil's South-South cooperation efforts has been minimal and informal at best.</p>	<p>The GEF biodiversity portfolio in Brazil contains projects focusing on both sustainable use and strict protection. Whether a project focuses on sustainable use or strict protection appears to be linked more to the density of the surrounding population than biodiversity parameters.</p>	<p>GEF projects tend to have an above-average monitoring and evaluation process when compared to similar projects funded by national sources. Periodic evaluations are carried out, and there are indications that adaptive management occurs. On the other hand, it has been observed that biodiversity projects consistently ignored biodiversity indicators during project execution.</p> <p>The SGP upgrade in Brazil during GEF-5 has all the characteristics of an ongoing learning-by-doing process.</p>	<p>The Brazilian portfolio could explore new sources of financing and support more technology development and market transformation activities in order to induce greater environmental benefits in the long term.</p> <p>Brazil's GEF focal point should promote exchange of experiences between projects implemented by different GEF Agencies. Stakeholders have proposed annual meetings between executing agencies of GEF projects.</p>	
<b>Cuba</b>				
<p>GEF support has achieved important results in biodiversity (including biosafety), land degradation, climate change, international waters, and POPs.</p>	<p>GEF support has been relevant to environmental priorities and strategies, the international environmental conventions (CBD, UNFCCC, UNCCD, and the Stockholm Convention on POPs) and to the GEF mandate and strategies.</p>	<p>The approval process for medium- and full-size projects is on average shorter in Cuba than in other countries in the region where CPEs have been conducted. Project preparation costs are lower when compared to the overall GEF portfolio.</p>	<p>The GEF should put more effort into mainstreaming adaptation in project design and implementation in all focal areas, and provide additional support and guidance to countries in the design and implementation of multifocal projects that include adaptation.</p>	
<p>Results of GEF support to Cuba build on lessons from previous projects thanks to continuity of policies, institutions, staff, and people involved in implementation.</p> <p>GEF projects have indirectly supported South-South cooperation as this is a high priority for Cuba.</p>	<p>The government of Cuba has strong ownership of GEF-supported projects.</p>	<p>Overall, institutional arrangements for the design and implementation of GEF-supported projects in Cuba are efficient.</p> <p>Project-level monitoring and evaluation occurs for adaptive management and compilation of monitoring information. However, access to monitoring data for decision making presents challenges.</p>	<p>In countries with particular contexts like Cuba's, the GEF should be more pragmatic concerning administrative procedures for achieving greater global environmental benefits.</p> <p>The GEF should enable South-South cooperation in project and program design and implementation in all focal areas, especially through regional projects and programs.</p>	

Conclusions				
Results	Relevance	Efficiency	Recommendations	Lessons
The sustainability of results in Cuba is ensured through the government's programmatic approach to ensure subsequent projects funded by it, the GEF, and other donors.		Cuba's economic and geographic context negatively affects the implementation and results achieved by GEF-supported projects.	The GEF should develop an information management strategy to strengthen knowledge sharing from GEF projects and programs at the national level and to better achieve global environmental benefits.	
<b>El Salvador</b>				
The GEF has had an important role in supporting the country in complying with its obligations under the CBD, the UNFCCC, and the Stockholm Convention and in the generation of national strategies, but its contribution has been smaller in strengthening the legal framework.	The GEF contribution has been relevant to the country's environmental priorities, the mandate of the international conventions, and the mandate of the GEF, with the exception of combating land degradation.	Efficiency in the preparation of proposals has improved, but there are still weak points; the efficiency of project implementation is variable.		The perception that the communities have of the environmental authority means that they either see it as a partner or as an obstacle in environmental management.
The GEF has made an important contribution toward capacity building in environmental management in the Ministry of Natural Resources.				The effectiveness and efficiency (cost/benefit) of the projects for generating global benefits is connected to the quality of the technical level of project interventions.
The global benefits achieved by GEF projects are still modest or uncertain.				The lack of filters or procedures for systematizing and communicating successful projects can result in positive or negative effects when projects are replicated in other contexts.
				The requirements connected with cofinancing by means of loans can prevent proper attention being paid to GEF priority requirements.
				Lack of an integrating approach diminishes the capacity to obtain global and national environmental benefits.
				Greater connectivity between protected areas and areas where coffee is produced by environmentally friendly methods could decrease inbreeding in isolated and low-mobility populations and enhance the value of coffee certification as a tool for biodiversity conservation.

Conclusions				
Results	Relevance	Efficiency	Recommendations	Lessons
<b>Jamaica</b>				
<p>GEF support in all focal areas has helped Jamaica develop good capacity in environmental management and link to international best practices. However, the country lacks the resources to scale up from these initial benefits, and the GEF portfolio is not sufficiently well known among Jamaica's other international development partners to maximize collaboration and follow-up.</p> <p>The process of developing and managing the GEF portfolio has strengthened networking among national agencies engaged in environmental management.</p> <p>It would be more appropriate to talk of "national adoption" than of "national ownership" of the GEF portfolio.</p>	<p>GEF support in Jamaica has been relevant to its national environmental goals and priorities, as well as to the country's efforts to fulfill its obligations under the international agreements to which it is a signatory.</p>	<p>All three GEF Agencies active in Jamaica—UNDP, UNEP, and the World Bank—have experienced problems in keeping projects within their intended time limits.</p>		<p>The Jamaica portfolio gives cause for concern about the possibilities for sustainable progress in environmental management.</p> <p>Many Agency procedures are not appropriate for small countries in regions with limited resources. This is seriously hampering the efficiency of GEF implementation.</p> <p>Some possible procedural improvements have been suggested by evaluations and reviews of GEF activities by its Agencies.</p>
<b>Nicaragua</b>				
<p>Capacity development has been a strong component in all projects with sustainable achievements, establishing an adequate enabling policy environment for future larger-scale actions.</p> <p>In the biodiversity focal area, goals have tended to be overambitious, leading to unfulfilled expectations for actual results and impacts; modest progress toward impacts can be reported.</p>	<p>Overall, GEF support has been relevant to national human development/sustainable development strategies and environmental priorities, international conventions, regional processes, and the GEF mandate.</p>	<p>Project processing times are generally twice as long for full-size projects as for medium-size projects in Nicaragua.</p> <p>Monitoring and evaluation information is used inconsistently throughout the portfolio to enhance project performance. Combined with weak GEF Agency supervision, this shortcoming has been an impediment to the efficiency and effectiveness of several projects.</p>	<p>In highly vulnerable countries, the GEF should put more effort into mainstreaming adaptation to climate change in project design in all focal areas and to building synergies with adaptation actions funded by other donors.</p> <p>Avoid overly ambitious project designs and ensure an adequate focus on building the institutional and financial capacity of local actors needed to help secure the sustainability of results.</p>	

Conclusions				
Results	Relevance	Efficiency	Recommendations	Lessons
<p>Climate change mitigation projects have, on the whole, been successful in yielding both environmental and socioeconomic benefits, particularly through the promotion of renewable energy in isolated rural communities.</p> <p>Adaptation to climate change is not well mainstreamed in the GEF Trust Fund portfolio, nor is it a focus of GEF project interventions, even though it is increasingly a central priority for Nicaragua.</p> <p>Support in the land degradation and POPs focal areas is promising in terms of progress toward impact. Efforts in both areas are still at an early stage, but to date, they have achieved the majority of key outcome.</p> <p>Integrated land use-based approaches are not fully taken into account in GEF interventions in Nicaragua, particularly in terms of ensuring that biodiversity concerns are mainstreamed into other GEF focal areas.</p> <p>Despite current efforts, institutional capacity at the local level, particularly of civil society actors, remains a challenge.</p> <p>The financial and economic sustainability of results, particularly in the biodiversity focal area, remains a challenge. Local benefits are essential for sustainability..</p> <p>The three completed GEF-supported biodiversity initiatives ceased operation once funding ended. Projects that have sustained actions and results beyond project completion are in the climate change focal area.</p>		<p>There has been significant involvement of actors from various sectors in GEF projects. The extent of coordination among them was mixed.</p>	<p>Working closely with the GEF Agencies, provide for proper baseline, monitoring, and evaluation data in project implementation and at the national level.</p>	



Conclusions				
Results	Relevance	Efficiency	Recommendations	Lessons
<b>OECS countries</b>				
To date, GEF support in the OECS region has produced mixed results; positive achievements include regional-level results on climate change adaptation, and in reporting to conventions.	GEF support has been relevant to OECS countries' national environmental priorities, but regional approaches have diluted relevance on efforts that are not a direct output of country-driven initiatives.	On average, greater time has been required to develop and approve projects in the OECS region than in other countries receiving GEF support.	The design and implementation of future regional projects in SIDS should be based on a participatory, stakeholder-driven process and include tangible, on-the-ground activities in participating countries as well as adequate resources for coordination.	
While regional approaches are appropriate for the OECS, they have not adequately incorporated tangible national-level activities. Within the full portfolio, on-the-ground results, catalytic up-scaling, and replication have been limited.	GEF support has been relevant to global environmental benefits in the OECS region and to GEF operational policies, strategies, and procedures.	There has been inadequate communication and coordination among different levels of the GEF partnership (the global conventions; the GEF Secretariat; the GEF Agencies; the GEF focal points; and regional, national, and local stakeholders).	Provided cost-effectiveness is ensured and risks have been fully assessed, OECS countries should be supported in their efforts to increase the scope for national projects with their System for Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR) allocations.	
While the GEF portfolio in the region is still in the early stages of demonstration-level support and there are a few highlights, there has, overall, been insufficient focus on sustainability within the portfolio.		Implementation arrangements for regional approaches have not been fully designed and supported to ensure efficiency, communication, and execution.	GEF support in the OECS region should include adequate attention for the capacity of environmental civil society organizations at the systemic and institutional levels.	
GEF support has expanded in scope within the OECS region, but has to date had limited progression in scale beyond the climate change adaptation area.		GEF support in the region has leveraged an increasing proportion of resources over time.	In countries where public sector environmental agencies have inadequate institutional capacities, modalities should be explored that will ensure stronger engagement of national stakeholders—including civil society—beyond the focal point mechanism.	

Results	Conclusions		Recommendations	Lessons
	Relevance	Efficiency		
Institutional and individual capacity for environmental management remains a critical issue in the region.		<p>The evolution of the SGP from a subregional program to a more nationally based approach presents opportunities but needs to be properly managed.</p> <p>Project-level monitoring and evaluation has supported adaptive management in the portfolio, but tracking impact-level results is hampered by a lack of environmental monitoring data.</p>	As the SGP shifts from subregional to nationally based programs, resources should be allocated to ensure support from the subregional node at least during the transition period.	

NOTE: As of this writing, the Brazil and Cuba CPEs were not yet complete.

## Annex B. Management Response

*This annex presents the management response to this report, which was presented to the GEF Council in June 2012 as GEF/ME/C.42/03. Minor editorial corrections have been made.*

The Secretariat welcomes the fifth *Annual Country Portfolio Evaluation Report* prepared by the GEF's Evaluation Office. The report provides a synthesis of the main conclusions and recommendations that have emerged from the information contained in the country portfolio evaluations and country portfolio studies conducted in the Latin America and the Caribbean region.

The Secretariat supports the approach the Evaluation Office has taken of synthesizing the CPEs and CPSs undertaken within a given region. The Secretariat also welcomes several of the conclusions of the report and is in particular pleased that most projects in the countries examined received moderately satisfactory or higher ratings, and that overall GEF support has been relevant both at the national level and in achieving global environmental benefits.

The Secretariat notes Conclusion 4 on multifocal area projects: "Many countries in Latin America and the Caribbean follow an ecosystem approach to environmental conservation and sustainable use, which increases the demand for multifocal area projects." While the ecosystem approach can

indeed involve multifocal projects, it can also be applied with a specific focus and a single-focal area project as long as its overall goals meet the specific focal area's objectives. The Secretariat agrees that countries in the Latin America and the Caribbean region should in the future undertake a higher proportion of multifocal area projects than has been programmed in the past; however, the classification of a multifocal area versus a single-focal area project should not be based on whether an ecosystem approach is being undertaken, but rather whether the GEF grant allocations from multiple focal areas are utilized to achieve objectives of more than one focal area.

The Secretariat notes Conclusion 5: "Scale-up, replication, and sustainability remain a challenge in the portfolios analyzed, with some notable exceptions." For instance, the report states that "Overall, the GEF portfolios in Jamaica, Nicaragua, and the OECS lack scale-up and replication." The Secretariat would like to draw attention to examples such as the upscaling and replication of an international waters project in Jamaica that took place after the conclusion of the Jamaica CPS. A watershed area management mechanism was developed under the GEF-funded Integrating Watershed and Coastal Area Management project. The model executed by the National Environment and Planning Agency in the Drivers River watershed management unit of Portland is currently being replicated throughout Jamaica. In addition to the Drivers watershed

piloted through a GEF grant, another six watershed management units have been introduced to the watershed area management mechanism. The aim of the Ecosystems Management Branch of the National Environment and Planning Agency is to implement the watershed area management mechanism in all watershed management units in Jamaica. This is an example of a significant upscaling building on the success of the initial project, and most significantly on the tremendous effort of the country ministry to ensure the results of the pilot are sustained.

The Secretariat takes note of the remaining conclusions in the 2012 ACPER, including the unique challenges faced by SIDS in developing and implementing projects. With respect to Recommendation 1: “Project approval and implementation in SIDS should be more flexible and context specific,” caution should be exercised in order not to give the impression that each country’s unique needs can be met in every case. The specific example of Cuba outlined in the report provides an appropriate example where such generalization would be impractical/infeasible. Nevertheless, the GEF Secretariat supports the recommendation that calls for increased flexibility to SIDS whenever it is indeed feasible.

The Secretariat has had many discussions with Agencies related to Recommendation 2: “The bur-

den of monitoring requirements of multifocal area projects should be reduced to a level comparable to that of single-focal area projects.” It should also be noted that using tracking tools for multifocal area projects was only introduced in GEF-5, so it may be premature to draw this conclusion at this time. Furthermore, one should remember that these new tools are required only three times during the life of the project, a very reasonable requirement: at Chief Executive Officer endorsement, midterm, and project completion. Additionally, for multifocal area projects, the Secretariat does not require that the full set of tracking tools be applied. Rather, as the language in the report [suggests](#), the tools should only be completed for the “essential focal area indicators that need to be monitored on multifocal area projects.” There are currently no multifocal area projects under implementation that require tracking tools from more than one focal area.

The Secretariat takes note of Recommendation 3: “South-South cooperation should be enabled as a component of national, regional, and global projects where opportunities for exchange of technology, capacity development, and/or sharing of best practices exist.” The Secretariat agrees as is stated in the report that enabling South-South cooperation should not be in the form of funding from GEF project financial resources to those Southern countries providing South-South support.

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44	GEF Annual Country Portfolio Evaluation Report 2008	2008
43	GEF Country Portfolio Evaluation: South Africa (1994–2007)	2008
42	GEF Country Portfolio Evaluation: Madagascar (1994–2007)	2008
41	GEF Country Portfolio Evaluation: Benin (1991–2007)	2008
40	GEF Annual Performance Report 2007	2008
39	Joint Evaluation of the GEF Small Grants Programme	2008
38	GEF Annual Performance Report 2006	2008
37	GEF Country Portfolio Evaluation: Samoa (1992–2007)	2008
36	GEF Country Portfolio Evaluation: The Philippines (1992–2007)	2008

## Evaluation Documents

ED-4	The GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy 2010	2010
ED-3	Guidelines for GEF Agencies in Conducting Terminal Evaluations	2008
ED-2	GEF Evaluation Office Ethical Guidelines	2008

## Learning Products

LP-3	The Journey to Rio+20: Gathering Evidence on Expectations for the GEF	2012
LP-2	Climate Change and the GEF	2010
LP-1	Biodiversity and the GEF	2010

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