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Agenda Item 7

ANNUAL COUNTRY PORTFOLIO EVALUATION REPORT 2011

(Prepared by the GEF Evaluation Office)

Recommended Council Decision

The Council, having reviewed document GEF/ME/C.40/02, “*Annual Country Portfolio Evaluation Report 2011*,” document GEF/ME/C.40/03, “*Management Response to the Annual Country Portfolio Evaluation Report 2011*,” and having taken note of the two Country Portfolio Studies in El Salvador and Jamaica (GEF/ME/C.40/Inf.1) requests the Evaluation Office to continue developing and implementing during GEF-5 joint and/or coordinated country level evaluation work with either GEF agencies’ independent evaluation offices or with independent national institutions with recognized expertise in both evaluation and environment.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This fourth *Annual Country Portfolio Evaluation Report* introduces and describes the new multiannual cycle of country level evaluations for GEF-5, reports on progress to date of ongoing country portfolio evaluations in the Eastern Caribbean region, in Nicaragua and in Brazil, and provides a synthesis of the main conclusions emerging from two Country Portfolio Studies (CPS) finalized in this year in El Salvador and Jamaica. The report reflects on the CPS as a new instrument for country level evaluation work, in terms of its potential contribution to the country level evaluative knowledge produced by the Office.

2. The new cycle of country level evaluations started this fiscal year in the Latin America and Caribbean region with the Nicaragua CPE and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Cluster CPE, covering Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, and St Kitts and Nevis, as well as the two CPSs in respectively El Salvador and Jamaica. The Brazil CPE has also been launched, with a proposal to join forces with a national independent and reputed institution, with recognized expertise in evaluation and environment. Next fiscal year the CPE in Cuba will be launched.

3. Both the El Salvador and the Jamaica country portfolio studies were conducted from October 2010 and April 2011 in coordination and synergy with the country level evaluations conducted by the UNDP Evaluation Office. Drafts of the two CPSs were presented and discussed together with the drafts of the UNDP evaluations, and comments were received from GEF stakeholders at consultation workshops in each country. Chapters 1 of both CPS reports include the main conclusions and lessons learned and are provided in a separate Council information document. The full reports are provided on the Evaluation Office website. GEF support to these two countries started during the pilot phase of the GEF for El Salvador and Jamaica.

Table 1.1 Project Coverage of each Country Portfolio Study

Country	GEF funding (US mil.)	Number of projects included in the evaluation				National completed projects
		National FSPs and MSPs	SGP	Enabling activities	Regional/ global projects	
El Salvador	11.41	5	Yes	6	20	6
Jamaica	11.86	6	Yes	6	15	7

4. The following four conclusions on the GEF support emerged from the two studies:

- 1) GEF support to El Salvador and Jamaica in all Focal Areas has positively contributed to global environmental benefits. Prospects for sustainability as well as for scaling up the initial benefits achieved are mixed.
- 2) GEF support has contributed to development of capacity in the two countries.

- 3) GEF support has been relevant to the national environmental goals and priorities, as well as to the countries' efforts to fulfill its obligations under the international agreements to which they are signatory.
- 4) Overall, efficiency of project preparation has improved recently in the two countries. GEF projects experience delays during implementation.
5. The experiences gained in the two CPSs led to a valuable lesson learned for the Office: joint and/or coordinated evaluation work with the independent evaluation offices of GEF Agencies, when portfolios under analysis largely coincide, increases its relevance to countries, as it provides deeper insights than would otherwise be possible.

Recommendation

6. Based on the experience gained this year on the coordinated evaluation work conducted in El Salvador and Jamaica with the independent Evaluation Office of UNDP, as well as the proposal of performing joint evaluation work with a national institution in Brazil, the ACPER 2011 recommends that joint and/or coordinated country level evaluation work with either GEF agencies' independent evaluation offices or with independent national institutions with recognized expertise in both evaluation and environment should be pursued during GEF-5.

1. INTRODUCTION

7. This fourth *Annual Country Portfolio Evaluations Report* introduces and describes the new multiannual cycle of country level evaluations for GEF-5, reports on progress to date of ongoing Country Portfolio Evaluations in the Eastern Caribbean region, in Nicaragua and in Brazil as well as the ongoing meta-evaluation of country portfolio evaluations conducted to date, and provides a synthesis of the main findings and conclusions emerged from two Country Portfolio Studies (CPS) conducted in coordination with UNDP Evaluation Office's country level evaluations in El Salvador and Jamaica.¹ This new modality was introduced to Council² in the Progress Report of the Director of the Evaluation Office in November 2010 as a new modality that would increase country level evaluation coverage through joint work between the Office and the independent evaluation offices of GEF Agencies where feasible.

8. The two CPSs have been finalized this year. The Office has prepared separate reports for each study: *GEF Country Portfolio Study: El Salvador (1992–2010)*, and *GEF Country Portfolio Study: Jamaica (1994–2010)*. Chapters 1 of both reports, focusing on the main conclusions and lessons learned, are provided in a separate Council information document. The full reports are published on the Evaluation Office website.³ This report reflects on CPS as a new instrument for country level evaluation work, in terms of its potential contribution to the country level evaluative knowledge produced by the Office.

2. MULTI-ANNUAL CYCLE OF COUNTRY PORTFOLIO EVALUATIONS DURING GEF-5

9. At its 38th meeting in June 2010 the GEF Council decided that for GEF-5 the Evaluation Office will have a multi-annual budget for its evaluation work program, including country level evaluations. Country Portfolio Evaluations (CPE) and Country Portfolio Studies (CPS) will be run consecutively, meaning every 3 to 5 months a CPE and/or CPS will be launched. The multi-annual planning of CPEs will be supported by a multi-annual budget.

10. The new multi-annual CPE cycle has started this fiscal year with the launching of three evaluations in the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region. One has started in September 2010 in Nicaragua, one in January in a cluster of countries members of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and a third one in May 2011 in Brazil. Two CPSs have taken place in respectively El Salvador and Jamaica. These CPEs and CPSs will be followed by at a minimum a further 14 in the next four years, covering all geographical regions.

11. It is envisaged that the 5th Overall Performance Study (OPS-5) will be progressively built on the evaluative evidence collected during GEF-5 in the four streams

¹ UNDP Evaluation Office defines its country level evaluations as *Assessment of Development Results* (ADR). This acronym is used throughout this report when referring to the UNDP country level evaluations in El Salvador and Jamaica.

² See GEF/ME/C.39/1, Paragraph 27.

³ The first chapter of the GEF El Salvador CPS is available both in English and Spanish, while the full report is available in Spanish only.

of evaluation work mentioned above. The CPEs/CPSs aim at providing country level evaluative evidence to feed into OPS-5.

12. In the two CPEs conducted in fiscal year 10 in Moldova and Turkey field work by local consultants increased through the conduct of two field Reviews of Outcomes to Impact (ROtI) studies of completed projects in each country. More field work caused an increase in the budgetary allocation for consultants in that fiscal year's CPE budget, as compared with that of previous years. CPE funding also increased as a consequence of CPEs having a closer look at regional and global projects. A higher budget allowed to significantly improve the evaluative knowledge gained on results in the Office's country level evaluation work.

13. Both in Moldova and Turkey the available budget allowed to adequately analyze the two portfolios, given their financial dimensions and composition. However, future CPEs might look at financially larger or smaller, and more technically diverse portfolios than those analyzed thus far. As a consequence, the Office adopted a CPE budgeting approach in which the size, diversity and maturity of the GEF portfolio under analysis are taken into account when determining the funding of a given portfolio to be analyzed through a CPE or CPS. This has already been done for the first three CPEs and the two CPSs launched in fiscal year 11 and is also reflected in the multi-annual budget proposal included in the Office's Work Plan and Budget for GEF-5 (GEF/ME/C.40/05).

2.1 Country Selection Process

14. The selection procedure for CPEs developed by the Office in 2006 has been updated and is available on the Office website⁴. Countries are selected based on quantitative criteria, such as the diversity, financial weight and maturity of the portfolio; the Least Developing Country (LDC) and/or Small Island Developing State (SIDS) status; and the coverage from previous evaluations conducted by the Office. Qualitative selection criteria include evaluability and synergies with evaluations conducted by the independent evaluation offices of GEF Agencies as well as with thematic subjects on the GEF Council agenda, amongst others. The standard terms of reference for the Country Portfolio Evaluations have also been updated.⁵

15. The new country selection note foresees the conduct of a new multi-annual CPE cycle encompassing CPEs in 15 countries sequenced as follows: four CPEs each in the LAC, Asia-Pacific, and Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) regions, followed by one CPE in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region and two in the Europe and Central Asia (ECA) region.

16. Countries were divided into four groups according to their STAR allocation in each geographical region. In the LAC region after running the quantitative steps of the new selection process, the following 4 countries emerged as first choices in each of the four STAR allocation groups: (2nd and 3rd choices are also mentioned):

⁴ www.thegef.org/gef/node/2054

⁵ www.thegef.org/gef/node/2050

- a. Brazil (2nd choice Colombia, 3rd choice Argentina) for Group A,
- b. Cuba (2nd choice Jamaica, 3rd choice Bolivia and Guatemala) for Group B,
- c. Haiti (2nd choice Nicaragua, 3rd choice Guyana) for Group C, and
- d. El Salvador (2nd and 3rd choice Antigua & Barbuda, and Barbados) for Group D.

17. Both **Brazil** and **Cuba** were retained after the application of qualitative criteria to Groups A and B, while Haiti and El Salvador were not. In Group C **Nicaragua** was retained instead of Haiti, as it was considered neither appropriate nor feasible to conduct a country level evaluation covering the last 16 years of project work while the country is struggling to recover from the recent earthquake. In the case of Group D, El Salvador was covered through a CPS, joining forces with UNDP's Evaluation Office, which was just launching a country level evaluation. Another opportunity was seized in the case of Group B, again with UNDP Evaluation Office, with a planned country level evaluation in Jamaica.

18. All the other Group D countries are SIDS; while their national portfolios are rather small to be analyzed with a fully fledged CPE, both from the financial and the number of projects point of view, they are all involved in a sizeable number of important regional projects. A cluster approach was therefore proposed, in which 6 countries members of the **OECS** (including **Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada, Dominica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and St. Kitts and Nevis**) would undergo a CPE. This was considered an excellent opportunity to look at countries in which regional projects are predominant and assess the real impact of that particular GEF modality at country level.

2.2 Methods, Tools and Processes

19. CPEs will be conducted drawing upon the experience gained by the Office since 2006 to date. Furthermore, CPE methods and tools are constantly being updated and refined. Methodological guidelines on how to conduct triangulation analysis have been prepared for use by consultants. A major improvement vis-à-vis previous CPE work consists in setting up of a CPE peer review mechanism as a quality check on the evaluation methods and tools used. The Office is exploring the application arrangements and modalities of such peer review mechanism with the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) in the UK, with whom a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was established in late 2010. Furthermore, the Office developed specific terms of reference for the Country Portfolio Studies as well.⁶

2.3 Progress to Date

20. The Nicaragua CPE is being finalized. The final stakeholder consultation workshop is expected to be held in Managua on 10 May 2011. The Office will provide an update on the results of the workshop at the Council meeting in May 2011. Completion is foreseen by end of June 2011. The OECS Cluster CPE is in its evaluation analysis phase,

⁶ <http://www.thegef.org/gef/node/3918>

the final stakeholder workshop is expected to be held in St Lucia on 31 May 2011. Completion of this CPE is foreseen by end of August 2011.

21. In the first week of May a pre-evaluation mission will take place to Brasilia, to explore with Brazilian counterparts how the CPE could be implemented through joint work with a reputed Brazilian institution, with recognized competencies in evaluation and environment, as well as knowledge of government policies. Such an arrangement would increase the credibility and independence of the evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations, while at the same time enhancing ownership by GEF Brazilian stakeholders for evaluation follow-up action. The last CPE in the Latin American and Caribbean region will be in Cuba, which will be launched in fiscal year 12.

22. The meta-evaluation of the 11 CPEs completed during GEF-4 is on-going. It will include as well as the nine country case studies conducted by the Office during the 4th Overall Performance Study (OPS4). This meta-evaluation will provide important inputs into the CPEs and CPSs that will take place in the coming years. The main objectives of the meta-evaluation of GEF country level evaluations are to:

- a. Share synthesized knowledge of common lessons and findings of country level evaluations with the GEF Council and the GEF partnership.
- b. Improve the process and tools of country level evaluations.
- c. Review and follow up on country level evaluations in the relevant countries and within the GEF partnership.
- d. Provide insight on how to integrate country level evaluations into other GEF EO evaluation streams during GEF-5 for OPS5.

3. COUNTRY PORTFOLIO STUDIES IN EL SALVADOR AND JAMAICA

23. The El Salvador and the Jamaica CPSs were conducted in collaboration with the UNDP ADR studies in the two countries. The rationale behind this approach was that in both countries UNDP was the main GEF Agency, while from the point of view of UNDP GEF is one of the main UNDP funders in those two countries. Furthermore, initially it was considered that the timing of the two parallel exercises would coincide.⁷ This collaboration between the two offices enabled:

- a. More informed evaluation reporting;
- b. Lower evaluation burden to the countries;
- c. Cost savings of the evaluation effort.

24. Coordinated evaluation work was mainly performed by sharing the same consultants in the two countries, as well as key steps in the evaluation processes of both

⁷ In both Jamaica and El Salvador, the Office joined forces with UNDP Evaluation Office at a time when both ADRs had already started. In the case of Jamaica, the ADR was at an early stage and it was possible to synchronize the CPS with UNDP's evaluation. In the case of El Salvador the different timings of the UNDP and the GEF studies challenged the organization of the final workshop. This was known from the beginning and in the end it did not hinder the achievement of a satisfactory outcome.

the ADR and CPS, including field work and the final stakeholder workshops. In El Salvador, the Team Member covering the Environment and Energy portfolio of UNDP was also the consultant conducting the CPS, while in Jamaica the Team Leader of the ADR was also Team Leader of the CPS. He was assisted in the CPS by the national consultant responsible for coverage of the UNDP Energy and Environment portfolio in the ADR.

25. The El Salvador and Jamaica CPSs were conducted following the standard Terms of Reference for country portfolio studies developed by the Evaluation Office in November 2010.⁸ These TOR are specifically designed to conduct studies that are complementary to country level evaluations conducted by the independent evaluation offices of GEF Agencies, in collaboration with which they are expected to be conducted. In both El Salvador and Jamaica, evaluation work was conducted from October 2010 to April 2011.

3.1 Objectives, Tools and Methods

26. CPSs provide additional coverage of country portfolios, but have a reduced focus and scope when compared with CPEs. CPSs are to be considered evaluations, designed to provide additional evaluative coverage to CPEs in all geographical regions. Table 1.1 provides a snapshot of the main differences between CPEs and CPSs.

Table 1.1 Main differences between CPEs and CPSs

Evaluation component	CPE	CPS
Objectives	Same as for CPS (see paragraph 27 here below).	Same as for CPEs.
Scope	All GEF supported activities in the country at different stages (ongoing and completed) and implemented by all GEF Agencies in all focal areas. Scoping is performed through a mission to the country. Country specific TORs are produced after the scoping mission.	Same scope as for CPEs, to be covered with less detail in function of the extent of the CPS evaluation effort. No scoping mission is performed in the country and the standard CPS TORs are used in the evaluation.
Key evaluation questions	22 key questions divided by results, relevance and efficiency.	Same questions as for CPEs. Each CPS will report only on questions for which sufficient information could be found, in function of the extent of the CPS evaluation effort.
Desk and literature review	Project and country related documentation.	Same, with cost efficiencies derived from the parallel desk and literature review performed by the other evaluation with which the CPS is conducted.
Portfolio analysis	National portfolio by Agency, project status and typology, and focal area. GEF project cycle dates and project preparation costs analyses.	Same as for CPEs.
Country environmental legal framework analysis	Historical perspective of the context in which the GEF projects have been developed and implemented, accompanied by a timeline analysis relating GEF support to the development of the national environmental legislation and policies, as well as to the international agreements signed by the country.	Same as for CPEs, with less detail in function of the extent of the CPS evaluation effort.

⁸ Ibid.

Global environmental benefits assessment	Description of the country's contribution to the GEF mandate of achieving Global Environmental Benefits in its focal areas.	Same as for CPEs, with less detail in function of the extent of the CPS evaluation effort.
Field work	25 % of overall evaluation effort, including at least two field studies, including a field Review of Outcomes to Impact (ROtI) study and/or field verification of a project terminal evaluation.	Limited field work as compared with a CPE, but including at least one field study (ROtI or field verification of a terminal evaluation).
Interviews	Interviews with a wide range of GEF national stakeholders.	Reduced number of interviews than for CPEs.
National consultation workshop	Conducted in the country with representatives of all the persons and institutions met during the course of the CPE.	Organized in collaboration with the relevant GEF Agency evaluation unit with which the CPS has been conducted.
Evaluation results	Findings, conclusions and recommendations are provided.	Findings and conclusions are provided. Lessons learned are provided instead of recommendations.
Follow-up to the evaluation	A management response is requested from GEF Secretariat. Countries are invited to provide a response to the evaluation which is annexed to the final CPE report.	Neither a management response nor a country response is requested.

27. As for CPEs, also CPSs have the purpose to provide the GEF Council with an assessment of how GEF is implemented at the country level, to report on results from projects and assess how these projects are linked to national environmental and sustainable development agendas as well as to the GEF mandate of generating global environmental benefits within its focal areas. The studies have the following objectives:

- a. independently evaluate the relevance and efficiency of the GEF support in a 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;
- b. assess the effectiveness and results of completed projects aggregated at the focal area;
- c. 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.

28. The main focus of the two CPSs conducted in El Salvador and Jamaica is the projects supported by the GEF at all project stages (preparation, implementation, completion, or cancellation) within the national boundaries. 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:

- a. the presence in the country of a project coordination unit and/or project sites;
- b. the importance of the project focal area to the country; and
- c. the existence of a clear connection to national projects.

29. Table 1.2 presents the portfolios of projects covered in the El Salvador and Jamaica CPSs.

Table 1.2 Project Coverage of each Country Portfolio Study

Country	GEF funding (US mil.)	Number of projects included in the evaluation				National completed projects
		National FSPs and MSPs	SGP	Enabling activities	Regional/ global projects	
El Salvador	11.41	5	Yes	6	20	6
Jamaica	11.86	6	Yes	6	15	7

30. The methodology used in El Salvador and Jamaica, applies a mix of qualitative and quantitative data gathering methods and standardized analytical tools. Various information sources were consulted to capture data and inputs at:

- a. project level (project documents, implementation reports, terminal evaluations);
- b. country level (documents relevant to the broad national sustainable development and environmental agenda, priorities, and strategies; strategies and action plans relevant to focal areas; GEF-supported strategies and action plans relevant to the global conventions; national environmental indicators), and
- c. GEF Agency level (country strategies and their evaluations and reviews).

31. 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 limited number of field visits were made. As highlighted earlier, each of the CPSs included a national consultation workshop jointly conducted with the UNDP Evaluation Office to discuss and receive feedback on the respective preliminary conclusions and lessons learned. The quantitative analysis used indicators to assess the efficiency of GEF support using projects as the unit of analysis (e.g. analyzing projects preparation and implementation durations and costs).

32. As was the case with the CPEs undertaken in fiscal year 10 the practice of conducting field ROtI studies in each country was followed also in El Salvador and Jamaica. One field ROtI study was conducted on a full size project in Jamaica and one on a medium size project in El Salvador.

3.2 Limitations and Challenges

33. The El Salvador and Jamaica CPSs faced the following limitations:

- a. Limited effort as compared with fully fledged CPEs, especially in relation to the limited time and resources available to conduct fieldwork.
- b. Lack of GEF country or portfolio strategy specifying expected achievement through programmatic objectives, indicators, and targets.⁹

⁹⁹ Voluntary National Portfolio Formulation Exercises (NPFEs) have been introduced in GEF-5. CPEs and CPSs that will be conducted in countries having chosen to do an NPFE will use it as a basis for assessing the aggregate results, efficiency and relevance of the GEF country portfolio.

- c. Attribution/contribution dilemma. Similarly to CPEs, also CPSs do not attempt to provide a direct attribution of development and even environmental results to the GEF, but assess the contribution of GEF support to overall achievements.
- d. Challenges in evaluating the impacts of GEF projects and how to tackle them. 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, field work and field ROtI studies.
- e. Intrinsic difficulties in defining the portfolio prior to the undertaking of the CPE. How to establish a clear and reliable set of data on projects and project documentation, despite inconsistencies, gaps, and discrepancies contained in the initial available data, is a challenge in many other evaluations conducted by the Office.

3.3 Conclusions from the Two CPSs

34. Common elements emerged from the El Salvador and Jamaica CPSs, which are brought to the attention of Council. The individual CPSs for the two countries present more specific conclusions and lessons learned.¹⁰

Results

35. Results are presented in terms of the outcomes and impacts of the various GEF-supported projects. Achievements are presented in terms of 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 on one project in each country allowed a review of progress toward impact, including impact drivers and external assumptions.

Conclusion 1: GEF support to El Salvador and Jamaica in all Focal Areas has positively contributed to global environmental benefits. Prospects for sustainability as well as for scaling up the initial benefits achieved are mixed.

36. The results of individual GEF projects have made a cumulative contribution towards broader environmental benefits. However, the global benefits achieved by GEF projects are still modest or uncertain, and the real challenges come with the need to sustain and scale up the results achieved.

37. In Biodiversity, GEF projects have been broadly successful in delivering their intended results, most of which have enabled the two countries to meet their obligations to global environmental conventions as well as developing national strategies. Jamaica's participation in the many international conventions and agreements to which it is signatory would have been significantly delayed without GEF assistance. In El Salvador,

¹⁰ As CPSs are limited in scope compared to CPEs, they are not designed to provide recommendations. Lessons learned are provided instead.

GEF support has helped ongoing efforts by the national environmental authority on land planning, integrated ecosystem management and biodiversity conservation. However, progress in recent years in those areas has been weak. Several projects have been executed; however, the global environmental benefits cannot be determined as yet. An important contribution was provided by the GEF in strengthening the legal framework in El Salvador.

38. International Waters projects have developed capacity, enhanced regional collaboration and completed successful pilot/demonstration activities in the marine environment and watershed management. Prospects for sustainability of benefits vary in the two countries. In the case of Jamaica, the high costs of investments proposed in the Kingston Harbour project were beyond national resources and the community based environmental management processes demonstrated by the IWCAM project (GEF ID 1254) have also already encountered sustainability issues, in the absence of continued benefit flows to communities. Achievement of important global benefits can be shown in El Salvador, specifically resulting from the completed regional project on sustainable alternatives to DDT for Malaria Vector.

39. In the field of Climate Change, some measurable environmental benefits have been attained through the large scale adoption of Compact Fluorescent Light bulbs in Jamaica,¹¹ with limited additional gains from energy efficiency measures taken by Government. In El Salvador, climate change mitigation has gained importance in the last years. El Salvador counts with several projects under implementation, of which only one has been completed, with the limitation that it lacks information to determine achieved global benefits. Less progress has been found in the area of adaptation to climate change.

40. The subsequent step of sustain and scale up the results achieved is still to occur. The two countries lack the resources to scale up from these initial benefits and synergies with other international development partners active in the environment sector have not been sufficiently pursued yet.

Conclusion 2: GEF support has contributed to development of capacity in the two countries.

41. Most of GEF support completed in the two countries has been of an enabling, capacity development or pilot/demonstration nature. In El Salvador, the GEF has made a significant contribution to capacity building within the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (MARN) in environmental management. These capacities have been created around compilation and systematization of environmental information, application of established methodologies, and the design of guidelines and tools. GEF support has helped Jamaica to substantially raise its capacity in such fields as renewable energy, energy efficiency, adaptation and energy sector planning and management. The adaptation activities have raised the capacity to understand and track the effects of

¹¹ More information can be found in the ROtI study of the Jamaica Demand Side Management Project (volume 2 of the GEF Jamaica CPS).

climate change and to plan responses to them. The sustainability concerns raised in conclusion 1 also apply for the results achieved in capacity development.

Relevance

42. 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 toward the global conventions.

Conclusion 3: GEF support has been relevant to the national environmental goals and priorities, as well as to the countries' efforts to fulfill its obligations under the international agreements to which they are signatory.

43. As concluded in previous CPEs, in both El Salvador and Jamaica GEF support was found to align with national sustainable development needs and challenges, and to environmental priorities of the countries reviewed. GEF projects have supported national frameworks for developing environmental laws and policies in biodiversity, biosafety and climate change, and POPs. GEF support to fulfilling countries' obligations to report to international environmental conventions has been relevant as well.

44. Differences exist between the two countries. While in Jamaica the GEF has engaged in activities covering the range of its focal areas for which the country is eligible either through national projects or through Jamaican components of regional projects, in El Salvador some deficiencies have been found, notably in international waters, in climate change adaptation, and in land degradation, which did not receive support. The strategy of the actual government is to present a multi-focal area project proposal to be funded under its STAR allocation in order to address such deficiencies.

Efficiency

45. Efficiency of GEF support was assessed in terms of 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.

Conclusion 4: Overall, efficiency of project preparation has improved recently in the two countries. GEF projects experience delays during implementation.

46. In Jamaica, for what concerns the part of the GEF activity cycle managed directly by the GEF, it appeared that there was no clear trend of delays, but that there were substantial differences between projects. In El Salvador the project preparation time has improved from GEF-3 to GEF-4, while efficiency of implementation varies from project to project.

47. The main reasons for project implementation inefficiencies in Jamaica are common to the three main GEF Agencies, UNDP, UNEP and the World Bank. These

have clustered around issues of recruitment, procurement and capacity of institutions designated to house project personnel. Jamaica faces a range of challenges associated with SIDS operating in inflexible institutional systems designed for larger countries and portfolios. These systems require competitive processes, which cannot be met in countries and regions with limited specialist environmental personnel and suppliers.

48. While in Jamaica the focal point mechanism has been functional in developing proposals through the GEF Support Group established in 2004 despite the limited resources available, in El Salvador this was less the case. There, the high staff turnover within the national environmental authority (i.e. the MARN) and the limited availability of the Operational Focal Point, usually placed in a high level authority role, hindered efficiency. The Ministry, where the GEF is housed, is considering the set up of a projects directorate that would also deal with GEF projects. Co-financing is considered a major challenge to project proposal development in Jamaica, along with issues around baselines and incremental costs have also posed many difficulties. In El Salvador, the conditions of cofinancing through loans may divert attention away from GEF requirements and national identified priorities.

3.4 Lessons Learned

49. The El Salvador and Jamaica CPSs provide lessons learned that are specific to the two countries. For this reason, these are not considered in this report, but are presented together with conclusions in a summary table in Annex 1. This section discusses the experience of the Evaluation Office with this new country level evaluation modality and its relevance for the country level evaluation work of the Office.

50. In 2009 the Office collaborated with the Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) of the World Bank in a country level evaluation in Peru. IEG focused on evaluating the outcomes of the World Bank Group support to Peru and the GEF Evaluation Office conducted an impact evaluation of five completed biodiversity projects. The findings from this impact evaluation were integrated into IEG's report and reported to the GEF Council in the Annual Report on Impact at the June 2009 meeting. On the basis of this limited but positive experience it was decided to explore further possibilities. The El Salvador and Jamaica experiences now add to the Peru experience. Given the positive results of these two studies, the Office should continue to explore them in other regions and with other independent evaluation offices in GEF Agencies.

Lesson: Joint and/or coordinated evaluation work with the independent evaluation offices of GEF Agencies when portfolios under analysis largely coincide increases its relevance to countries, as it provides deeper insights than would otherwise be possible.

51. The CPSs were appreciated by national partners, who welcomed the reduction in the “evaluation burden”, which was exemplified by not being interviewed twice for the same project. In Jamaica, one reason that made this coordinated evaluation relevant to the national stakeholders was the fact that 60% of the project funding managed by the UNDP

Country Office comes from the GEF, while 10 out of the 12 GEF-funded national projects are implemented by UNDP. In El Salvador this was even more the case, with more than 90% of the project funding managed by the UNDP Country Office coming from the GEF, and 8 out of 11 national projects being or having been implemented through UNDP.

52. The UNDP Evaluation Office and GEF Evaluation Office arrangement of conducting coordinated evaluation work in those two countries provided advantages for both of the UNDP and GEF studies. From the point of view of the CPS, the UNDP GEF portfolio was studied in greater detail than would otherwise have been possible. From the point of view of the ADR, the environment and energy portfolio also benefited from a more in depth perspective and analysis. Substantive issues, such as the overlap between GEF and Agency project cycles were also clarified. Overall, in both countries the two studies confirm and reinforce each other's findings and conclusions.

3.5 Recommendations

53. The findings and conclusions emerging from the two CPS conducted in Jamaica and El Salvador turned out to be solid evaluative evidence in all respects. This evidence will add to the evidence that will emerge from the four CPEs in the LAC region, thus allowing a wider regional coverage in a cost effective way. The Office is also currently exploring possibilities to shift country portfolio evaluations in the direction of more joint work with GEF member countries.

Recommendation: Joint and or coordinated country level evaluation work with either GEF agencies' independent evaluation offices or with independent national institutions with recognized expertise in both evaluation and environment should be pursued during GEF-5.

54. The Office intends to pursue collaborations with the independent evaluation offices of GEF Agencies wherever possible during GEF-5. Similarly, the Office will pursue jointly managed country level evaluation work partnering with national independent and recognized institutions in both environment and evaluations, in big GEF recipient countries like Brazil as well as in any other countries where such arrangements would be feasible.

Annex 1
Conclusions and lessons learned from the two Country Portfolio Studies included in the ACPER 2011

Conclusions		Lessons learned	
Results	Relevance		Efficiency
Jamaica			
• GEF support in all Focal Areas has helped Jamaica to develop good capacity in environmental management and to link into 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. • The process of developing and managing the GEF portfolio has strengthened networking amongst national agencies engaged in environmental management. • It would be more appropriate to talk of “national adoption” than of “national ownership” of the GEF portfolio.	• 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 signatory.	• All the three GEF Agencies active in Jamaica, namely UNDP, UNEP and the World Bank, have experienced problems in keeping projects within their intended time limits.	• The Jamaica portfolio gives cause for concern about the possibilities for sustainable progress in environmental management. • Many Agency procedures are not appropriate for small countries in regions with limited resources. This is seriously hampering the efficiency of GEF implementation. • Some possible procedural improvements have already been suggested by evaluations and reviews of GEF activities by its Agencies.
El Salvador			
• The GEF has played an important role in supporting the country in meeting its obligations to the CBD, UNFCCC, the Stockholm Convention and in the development of national strategies, but a minor contribution in strengthening the legal framework. • The GEF has made a significant contribution to capacity building within the MARN in environmental management. • The global benefits achieved by GEF projects are still modest or uncertain.	• The GEF's contribution has been relevant to the environmental priorities of the country, with the mandate of international conventions and the GEF's mandate, with the exception of combating land degradation.	• The efficiency in the preparation of proposals has improved, but weaknesses still exist, while the efficiency of project implementation is variable.	• The perception that communities have of the national environmental authority, as an ally or an obstacle, would impact, positively or negatively, the design and implementation of environmental interventions. • The effectiveness and efficiency (cost / benefit) of projects to generate global environmental benefits is related to the technical quality of project interventions. • The lack of procedures to systematize and communicate successful interventions can lead to positive or negative results when being replicated within other contexts and for other interventions. • Conditions of co financing through loans may prevent attention to GEF requirements

			and national identified priorities. • Lack of an integrated approach reduces the ability to obtain national and global environmental benefits. • Increased connectivity between existing protected areas and environmentally friendly coffee-growing areas would decrease inbreeding in isolated and low mobility populations and therefore strengthen the value of coffee certification as a biodiversity conservation tool.
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