



GEF/ME/C.40/Inf.1/Rev.1
May 18, 2011

GEF Council
May 24-26, 2011
Washington, D.C.

COUNTRY PORTFOLIO STUDIES: EL SALVADOR AND JAMAICA

(Prepared by the GEF Evaluation Office)

INTRODUCTION

1. This report presents the main conclusions and lessons learned of the two country portfolio studies conducted in partnership with the UNDP Evaluation Office in El Salvador and Jamaica from October 2010 to April 2011, as contained in the first chapters of the respective reports. Reporting includes a brief description of the studies background and methodology; a brief overview of the portfolio; and the main conclusions and lessons learned. The full reports are published on the Evaluation Office website.¹

I. COUNTRY PORTFOLIO STUDY: EL SALVADOR (1992-2010)

Background and Objectives

2. GEF Country Portfolio Studies (CPSs) are an addition to the GEF Country Portfolio Evaluations (CPEs) which is one of the main evaluation streams of work of the GEF Evaluation Office.² By capturing aggregate portfolio results and performance of the GEF at the country level they provide useful information for both the GEF Council and the countries. CPEs' relevance and utility will increase in GEF-5 with the increased emphasis on country ownership and portfolio development at the country level. The CPSs complement the CPEs and provide additional coverage of country portfolios, but have a reduced focus and scope. They are undertaken where opportunities to collaborate with independent evaluation offices of GEF partners present themselves. With a relatively lower investment in costs and efforts the Evaluation Office is able to review the GEF portfolio in a country where a country level evaluation of a GEF Agency is taking place, thus reducing the evaluation burden to these countries while gaining insights and understanding through information exchange and collaboration. In this case, the El Salvador CPS was conducted in collaboration with UNDP's Assessment of Development Results (ADR).

3. The purpose of CPEs and CPSs is 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. These studies will have the following objectives:

- independently evaluate the **relevance** and **efficiency**³ 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;

¹ 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.

² Countries having undergone CPEs during GEF-4 are: Costa Rica, the Philippines, Samoa, Benin, Cameroon, Madagascar, South Africa, Egypt, Syria, Moldova, and Turkey.

³ **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.

- assess the **effectiveness** and **results**⁴ of completed projects aggregated at the focal area;
- 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.

4. CPSs do not have an objective of rating the performance of GEF Agencies, partners or national governments. The studies will analyze the performance of individual projects as part of the overall GEF portfolio, but without rating such projects. However, information on performance will be gathered and integrated into the general reporting of the CPE stream of evaluation work of the Office, as well as the performance stream of work.

Methodology

5. An evaluation team consisting of one GEF Evaluation Office staff and one international consultant conducted the El Salvador CPS between October 2010 and April 2011. The team has experience in formulating sustainable development strategies, evaluation methodologies and the GEF mechanism. The methodology includes a combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques and tools, plus application of triangulations to ensure that the cross-analysis of information results in better understanding of the contributions of the GEF initiatives in El Salvador.

6. The qualitative assessment consisted of: i) review of existing documentation from the GEF, its agencies and different governmental and nongovernmental offices connected with the projects; ii) interviews with key players including the GEF focal point, governmental authorities involved in project monitoring, GEF Agencies (World Bank, IADB, UNDP), donors, NGOs, academia, focal points of the environmental conventions, individuals and beneficiary institutions (municipalities, associations, and communities). In addition, field visits were made to selected sites where projects had been or were being implemented.

7. For the quantitative analyses indicators were used which treated the projects as a single analysis unit. For evaluating the relevance and effectiveness of the GEF contribution indicators such as the tie-in with the national priorities, national policies, and the time and cost needed for preparing the proposals were used. For measuring the GEF's outcomes, indicators such as the progress toward meeting the overall goals of its mandate were used, while for assessing execution, the main indicators were the rates of project execution and completion. The analysis further drew on statistical and scientific sources primarily connected with environmental indicators.

⁴ **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.

8. A Review of Outcomes to Impacts (ROtI) was conducted for the Promotion of Biodiversity Conservation within Coffee Landscapes project implemented between 1999 and 2001. Finally, an Aide Mémoire with the preliminary conclusions was prepared and presented, jointly with UNDP's ADR, at a workshop held in San Salvador on February 25, 2011, with key players, including authorities and implementers, NGOs and members of civil society. The comments received have been taken into consideration and have been incorporated into the evaluation report. The GEF Evaluation Office assumes responsibility for the content of the present report.

9. In accordance with the standard terms of reference for CPSs, the following main questions, were considered for the evaluation and only those for which sufficient information was available have been answered.

Effectiveness, results and sustainability

- a) What are the results (outcomes and impacts) of completed projects?
- b) What are the aggregated results at the focal area and country levels?
- c) What is the likelihood that objectives will be achieved for those projects that are still under implementation?
- d) Is GEF support effective in producing results related to the dissemination of lessons learned in GEF projects and with partners?
- e) Is GEF support effective in producing results which last in time and continue after project completion?

Relevance

- a) Is the GEF support relevant to: the national sustainability development agenda and environmental priorities; national development needs and challenges; action plans for the GEF's national focal areas?
- b) Are GEF and its Agencies supporting environmental and sustainable development prioritization, country ownership and decision-making process of the country?
- c) Is the GEF support in the country relevant to the objectives linked to the different Global Environmental Benefits (GEBs) in biodiversity, greenhouse gases, international waters, land degradation, and chemicals focal areas?
- d) Is the country supporting the GEF mandate and focal areas programs and strategies with its own resources and/or with the support from other donors?

Efficiency

- a) How much time, effort and financial resources does it take to formulate and implement projects, by type of GEF support modality?
- b) What role does Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) play in increasing project adaptive management and overall efficiency?

- c) What are the roles, types of engagement and coordination among different stakeholders in project implementation?
 - d) What are the synergies for GEF project programming and implementation among: GEF Agencies; national institutions; GEF projects; and other donor-supported projects and activities?
10. Each of these questions is complemented with indicators, information sources and methods contained in the standard evaluation matrix for CPEs (see annex). This matrix has been used as reference for identifying the questions that are relevant and for which sufficient information was available.

Scope and Limitations

11. The CPSs face challenges because GEF does not function by establishing country programs that specify the expected achievements by means of objectives, indicators and program goals. The CPS therefore considers the portfolio of projects and activities, their objectives, their internal coherence and how the portfolio has evolved.

12. In the case of El Salvador, identifying the GEF portfolio was a difficult exercise, which took quite some time because there was little information and what was available was not organized systematically by either the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (MARN) or by the GEF Agencies. The evaluation team utilized the GEF database and secured additional information through the Agencies, the helpful cooperation of MARN officials and interviews with current and former project managers, who were not always easy to locate. The cooperation and information provided by the former project managers of the Coffee and Biodiversity project for which the ROTI was done, was excellent. The information gaps were sizable and the limited numbers of project documents and final evaluations brought to light was a cause for concern. There was also found to be a dearth of national studies that would help to identify the impacts of the contributions, to the extent that on some occasions the analysis of accomplishment of goals and of the achievements of projects created questions rather than answers.

13. The identification of regional projects with national components was also a challenge since some of them had not transferred sufficient details to MARN or to the respective GEF Agency. To the extent possible, the team endeavored to track down the project managers and arrange interviews with them in order to ascertain the activities carried out in El Salvador and their results. In this case too, the chief sources of information were the GEF database, UNDP and certain project offices.

14. In evaluating the GEF contributions, the CPS does not claim to portray the GEF as directly responsible for the results and for the country's environmental development process, but rather considers the GEF's support as a contribution to the achievements in general, in association with others, looking at the roles played and the coordination, the synergies and the complementarity plus the sharing of knowledge among various initiatives.

15. The assessment of the impacts of GEF-financed projects was no simple undertaking. In many projects there was no clear or adequate description of the impact expected or, at times, even of the outcomes anticipated from the projects. This limitation was tackled by analyzing the context in which the projects were developed, the activities generated or triangulation with interviews with key players or internal project reports, field visits, and of the total portfolio and of the ROTI made.

16. Finally, the evaluation must be considered in the context of the actual nature of the GEF portfolio in El Salvador. GEF support in El Salvador includes a range of support and capacity-building activities which are not expected to produce a direct impact in the environmental field, but are rather viewed as processes and planning instrument which are now being used for setting up other projects with financing by the GEF itself or other donors. Moreover, due to the small number of projects that have been completed (one national and two regional or global),⁵ it is too early to fully measure the global environmental impact of the GEF portfolio.

Overview of GEF portfolio

17. Since 1994, the GEF has invested about \$11.4 million with about \$22.7 million in cofinancing in El Salvador. As shown in table 1 GEF funding has been through 11 national projects—6 in biodiversity, 3 in climate change, 1 in POPs, and 1 multifocal project. Biodiversity and climate change account for the largest share of funding, 82 and 12 percent of total support respectively.

Table 1. GEF Support to National Projects in El Salvador by Focal Area

Focal Area	Number of projects	GEF grant	Percentage of GEF grant	Total cofinancing	Percentage of cofinancing
		(millions of dollars)			
Biodiversity	6	9.402	82.4	19.112	84.2
Climate change	3	1.395	12.2	3.115	13.7
POPs	1	0.431	3.8	0.396	1.7
Multifocal	1	0.185	1.6	0.085	0.4
Total	11	11.413	100	22.708	100

18. In addition, El Salvador has participated in 20 initiatives financially supported by the GEF with a regional or global scope. Nine of the regional and global projects involving El Salvador are biodiversity projects focusing on protected areas and biosafety. The goal of the seven projects in the climate change focal area is capacity building.

⁵ Ten additional projects have been completed, but these are enabling activities, planning or capacity-strengthening processes.

Results and Effectiveness in Generating Global Benefits

Conclusion 1: The GEF has had an important role in supporting the country in complying with its obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Stockholm Convention and in the generation of national strategies, but its contribution has been smaller in the strengthening of the legal framework.

19. The GEF, the financial mechanism of the CBD, UNFCCC and the Stockholm Convention, of which El Salvador is a signatory, has supported MARN in complying with its international obligations under these conventions. This support has taken different forms:

- By means of the enabling activities,⁶ the GEF has assisted MARN in preparing the “Country Reports” required under these conventions.
- Also through enabling activities, the GEF has supported El Salvador in the organizing the environmental management of the areas covered by its mandate through the formulation of the first “Biodiversity Strategy” and the generation of inputs for the strategies that will be devised by MARN for dealing with climate change and persistent organic pollutants (POPs).⁷ It should be noted that the level of detail of the goals proposed in these strategies varies, which is in part connected to the degree of detail of the technical guidelines provided by the GEF for their implementation (for example under the POPs heading these guidelines are more detailed than those laid down for other particular areas).
- It has assisted MARN to strategically position some environmental areas promoted by these conventions; for instance, with the work on the enabling activities it was able to press for environmental matters such as POPs to be placed on the agenda, to the extent that they were included in the Five-Year Development Plan for Environmental Policy and Risk Management for 2010-2014. The topic of climate change has also gained in importance in recent years and at the moment there are various related projects under implementation. On the other hand, fewer advances have been made in biodiversity conservation, integrated management of ecosystems and land-use planning (despite the fact that MARN had been working in these areas prior to GEF support being received and notwithstanding the various contributions by the GEF) and in the topics of adaptation to climate change and international waters. There have not been any contributions made toward assisting with land degradation.

⁶ Two enabling projects in biodiversity, 2 in climate change, 1 in POPs and 1 Multipurpose.

⁷ GEF funding was used to prepare proposed Strategies that were not adopted as such by MARN but were used as inputs.

20. In contrast, the GEF has not made any significant contributions toward the strengthening or generation of the environmental legal framework; its main contribution in this respect has been to provide inputs for the Law on Protected Natural Areas (PNAs) approved in 2005 on the basis of information generated by actions such as the consolidation of the biological corridor in El Salvador and the Coffee and Biodiversity project.

21. Regarding the strengthening of the institutional framework, the GEF's contribution has been limited in nature, consisting of financing of the enabling activities such as the NCSA⁸, through which MARN now has the "National Action Plan for Capacity Strengthening for Environmental Management," and enabling activities for capacity building in climate change and biodiversity. The GEF also offers the option of financial assistance for strengthening of the focal point, but El Salvador has not taken advantage of this offer.

Conclusion 2: The GEF has made an important contribution toward capacity building in environmental management in MARN.

22. The GEF has contributed to the capacity strengthening for environmental management in MARN. It should be noted that capacity building in itself does not generate direct global benefits but these would follow if said capacities were to bring forth concrete actions.

23. The capacity building for environmental management flows from different types of support:

- i) Through the performance of the enabling activities capacities have been created for use in surveying and systematizing **environmental information** for decision-making purposes. For example, in the inventories carried out in different environmental fields (inventories of biodiversity, identification of sources of greenhouse gases and quantification of possible reductions of the latter);
- ii) Also as a result of these enabling activities and **application of the methodologies** established by the GEF, methodological working guidelines have been laid down, for instance for identifying priorities or for surveying the information to hand (for example, the methodological framework or making inventories of biodiversity);
- iii) Using the planning projects⁹ and the strategies of the enabling activities, the GEF has contributed to generating capacity in MARN for designing **instruments and guidance materials** (which include design frameworks, definition of environmental priorities and their geographic location) which have helped to set the foundations for generation of other larger-scale projects in biodiversity and

⁸ i) National Capacity Self-Assessment; ii) capacity building in climate change; and iii) assessment of needs for training and priorities in biodiversity.

⁹ The regional projects Establishment of a Programme for the Consolidate the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor, and Capacity building for Stage II Adaptation to Climate Change

climate change funded by both the GEF and other sources¹⁰. The application of these instruments has been variable. The regional project *Establishment of a Programme for the Consolidate the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor* (used to identify the zones needed for establishing a corridor connecting Protected Natural Areas) provided the bases for subsequent larger-scale projects and at the same time for the selection of work zones for the Small Grants Programme (SGP). On the other hand, the outcomes of the regional project *Capacity building for Stage II Adaptation to Climate Change* (which identified zones subject to flooding in the Bajo Lempa for purposes of infrastructure planning) were applied for only a short period and for as long as the mayors who were involved in the process remained in office;

- iv) GEF financing has also contributed to building capacities for identifying global/national environmental benefits and utilization of tools for planning and monitoring (such as baseline surveys, use of logical frameworks), by means of the preparation of projects and their subsequent execution. It should be mentioned that this training is continuous since the GEF standards are subject to continuous improvement as a result of periodic evaluations. This capacity building for MARN has been especially important because a considerable number of projects have benefited from close monitoring by the ministry (to the point that, in the case of certain projects, MARN approval was required for particular disbursements). One problem that still persists is the rotation of the trained personnel, a situation which complicates the ensuring of continuity in project preparation and monitoring and obliges the GEF Agencies to provide constant training in the GEF's requirements. Another drawback, reported by the authorities, is that various implementers have been external consultants, which has diminished the possibility of building internal capacities;
- v) The participation of the focal points or their delegates at the Conferences of the Parties of the conventions; and
- vi) The GEF has also generated capacities in environmental management for other governmental institutions (such as PROCAFE or the National Coffee Council) by involving them in project implementation. Similar developments are anticipated with the Ministry of Tourism and the Fishery Secretariat through the national *Mainstreaming Biodiversity Management into Fisheries and Tourism Activities in Coastal/Marine Ecosystems* project that is shortly to be launched.

Conclusion 3: The global benefits achieved by GEF projects are still modest or uncertain.

24. The global benefits achieved are still modest or uncertain since the majority of the national and regional projects are still in an early stage of execution while in the case of the completed projects the information necessary for verifying the scope of the benefits is not available.

¹⁰ IADB, AECI, UICN, USAID, Government of France, Government of Finland, EU, FIAES, FONAES.

25. In biodiversity projects three different approaches have been employed; however, in no case has it been possible to determine with certainty the global benefits generated. The three categories concerned are: i) projects designed to strengthen the Protected Natural Areas (PNAs¹¹) which are still in process of execution and have not yet generated global environmental benefits; ii) a regional project designed to create environmental awareness through use of the mass media, but for which no information is available regarding its impacts; and iii) six biodiversity projects, one dealing with international waters and 77 SGP projects aimed at promoting conservation by means of sustainable production projects. Of these, only one medium size project (Promotion of Biodiversity Conservation within Coffee Landscapes) has been completed and contributions from the SGP projects. The Coffee and Biodiversity project was executed with close monitoring of the producers, who were provided with technical assistance and inputs. This project was most successful since not only were the goals originally set for it met but so also were some others 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, and after the project was completed the executing institutions have continued to play an active part. However, it has still not been possible to ascertain the level of its impact on the overall degree of biodiversity in the area covered.

26. With regard to the SGP initiatives, there is even less information available that would help with evaluation of their overall impacts. For their part, the projects recently started do not include indicators that would make it possible to predict the overall impacts expected, with special reference to the status of the populations or ecosystems managed employing sustainable practices. This applies particularly to the projects where the strategy is to provide microloans or grants to private or group initiatives, but which do not include provision of close technical assistance or gathering of information that would enable determining of their impacts on the ecosystems. In the projects it would be expected that the beneficiaries would acquire a greater environmental awareness and be turned into partners of MARN for working toward the objectives of conservation, but these effects are not seen because the people do not perceive the important role MARN plays in the processes for procuring the economic benefits (grants) they receive.

27. In the international waters focal area, upon completion of the Regional Program of Action and Demonstration of Sustainable Alternatives to DDT for Malaria Vector Control in Mexico and Central America, significant global effects were reported with the destruction of 60 tons of DDT and verification of the effectiveness of the alternative processes for combating malaria.

28. In the climate change focal area steps have been taken to mitigate climate change by means of four projects. Only one of these¹² has been completed which does not offer information for determining its global effects, while the actions included in the other

¹¹ Support for the demarcation of PNAs to facilitate their legal establishment and resolution of any disputes and in the creation of institutional frameworks for the trinational management of two priority transboundary areas.

¹² Regional project *Creation and Strengthening of the Capacity for Sustainable Renewable Energy Development in Central America*.

three¹³ are in a preliminary stage of execution without such benefits up to the moment. These projects do not provide bases for estimating the reduction in terms of tons of CO₂ emissions it is hoped to achieve in El Salvador. The SGP also offers the opportunity to generate global benefits deriving from community actions in the climate change focal area, but no records are available which could be used for determining the actual benefits obtained.

Relevance¹⁴

Conclusion 4: 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.

29. The GEF projects are pertinent, that is to say they are in alignment with the GEF's mandate and the global benefits they promote since they all fall within one or more focal areas established by the GEF, and are in accordance with the criteria governing generation of proposals and their subsequent execution.

30. In addition, the actions have been consistent with the environmental problems and have successfully focused on environmental issues falling within the GEF's mandate in the policy sphere, especially as regards the topics of biodiversity (such as the strengthening of the Biological Corridor), mitigation of climate change (which is presently recognized as such, but used to be lumped with air pollution) and POPs (which are currently included as such in the five-year plan but were formerly placed under the general heading of waste). On the other hand, there is weakness in the areas of international waters and adaptation to climate change and nothing is happening in regard to land degradation. Another weak point is the lack of synergy deriving from the various environmental issues because each of the projects focuses independently on a particular focal area. Quite definitely, the strategy outlined by the present government is to submit for GEF-5 a multifocal proposal that will integrate the different environmental objectives; however, it should be borne in mind that the desired synergy goes beyond having multifocal proposals if they deal separately with different areas as unconnected components. The synergy sought would rather consist in knowing how to utilize ways in which the areas in question could support application of a holistic environmental approach, achieving a balance taking into account the life cycle (positive and negative effects) of the different activities. It should also consider the carrying capacity of the ecosystems (taking into account the size of the population and the degrees of impact created by them), the resilience of the ecosystems and the locality's susceptibility to natural disasters. Achieving this balance between the different environmental fields and

¹³National project *Energy Efficiency in Public Buildings (EPPB)*, and regional projects *Accelerating Renewable Energy Investments through CABEL in Central America* and *Regional Programme on Electrical Energy Efficiency in Industrial and Commercial Service Sectors in Central America*.

¹⁴ In accordance with the Terms of Reference for the evaluation, the chief questions relating to relevance are connected with whether the GEF's portfolio has been relevant to the policies of the country, to the country's environmental priorities, to the GEF's mandate and to the global environmental benefits. Additionally, in regard to relevance, attention must be paid to the importance assigned to the different topics in terms of the number of projects financed.

elements is not easy and requires professionals possessing in-depth knowledge of the different subjects involved and who are capable of not only ‘bringing them together’ but also meshing the various levels of public management: national, regional/departmental and local.

31. The actions undertaken are also in alignment with (i.e., pertinent to) the Salvadorian Government’s Five-Year Plans (1999-2004, 2004-2009 and 2010-2015) and are moreover consistent with the Environmental Strategies (which were formulated in those periods with GEF financial support). However, the level of effort and financing on the part of the GEF has not necessarily been tied in with the priorities set in the Government’s Plans and the country’s strategies. For example, the approach adopted by the Government’s Plan for 1999-2004 in regard to biodiversity emphasized strengthening of the National Protected Areas, whereas the GEF’s projects in this focal area were not started until GEF-3. Regarding climate change the present government is seeking to promote adaptation to such change, but there are various GEF projects focusing on mitigation of climate change.

32. The importance and the approaches of the Government Plans and the GEF financings have developed over the course of their different stages (GEF-1 to GEF-4).¹⁵ For instance, new topics have been included in the Government Plans as a result of the influence of processes financed by the GEF (such as the coverage of POPs as already mentioned or the inclusion of mangrove swamp conservation). For their part, changes of approach and strategies have also been observed in the development of the GEF’s contributions. In GEF-1 and GEF-2 there is a larger number of projects in Biodiversity and, within this area a greater emphasis on conservation outside of PAs by means of sustainable management strategies; i) in GEF-3 and GEF-4 there are two projects (one national and one regional) supporting consolidation of PAs but there is still a considerable emphasis on sustainable management outside of the PAs (by means of medium and large projects and with the SGP); ii) in GEF-3 and 4 there are a large number of climate change initiatives (chiefly focusing on mitigation and with much less emphasis on adaptation); iii) in the most recent projects there is a trend toward a market approach, supporting lines of credit/grants for private or community commercial activities with biodiversity or energy efficiency. In contrast, there is little evidence of the technical assistance processes or the generation of knowledge by scientific and technological methods as happened in the GEF’s first project (Coffee and Biodiversity project).

33. There was also the fact of not having responded to a priority need of global and national significance due to the stipulated condition that the country should take out a loan at a time when the legislature had decided to halt El Salvador’s borrowing. More specifically, despite having invested considerable funds and time in preparation of the proposal, with the cancellation of the Environmental Services Project the GEF lost the possibility of contributing to a topic of great importance for El Salvador because the budget for managing the PAs is minuscule and the country does not have a system for

¹⁵ GEF-1 (1994-1998); GEF-2 (1998-2002); GEF-3 (2002-2007); GEF-4 or RAF (2007-2010); and GEF-5 or STAR (2010-2014).

charging for the environmental services offered. The situation is so critical that, for example, the Montecristo protected area had its power cut off for a period of months because it was unable to pay the electricity bill, when ironically it is the provider of the water source for the country's largest hydroelectric plant. Another example is that of the trees growing in coffee plantations, which are located in highly vulnerable areas where they protect the watersheds; the owners of the land in question would favor appropriate conservation actions if they were to receive remuneration for the environmental services they provide.

Efficiency

Conclusion 5: Efficiency in the preparation of proposals has improved but, there are still weak points, while the efficiency of project implementation is variable.

34. Taking into consideration the time required for the process up to approval, the efficiency of project preparation has been improving over the latest cycles (GEF-3 and 4) as a result of building national capacities coupled with the improvement of the GEF guidelines. Among the weaknesses, which have affected the efficiency of proposal preparation, are staff rotation within MARN and the limited time available for the focal point, who is usually a high-level individual. It is important that the focal point is a person with authority to make policy decisions and grant guarantees, while a designated technical personnel with sufficient decision-making power to represent the focal point in the proposal-preparation and project-monitoring processes. Efficiency in terms of preparation costs has been variable, ranging from projects which have not entailed any financial costs (although staff time has of course been involved) to a maximum investment of \$350,000 for the Environmental Services Project, which was canceled in the final phase of the project cycle.

35. The efficiency as regards cost/benefit ratios of the projects executed has been adequate. Efficiency in the case of the enabling activities has in general been high since the environmental authority has been strengthened at the cost of small investments. The cost/benefit ratio of the medium size Coffee and Biodiversity project was also excellent since with a medium-scale investment a sustainable coffee-production process of a more environment-friendly nature was launched. The efficiency of regional projects has been variable, those which have promoted regional planning processes, information development and training posting better scores than those which have implemented individual actions in the countryside and with communities.

36. The selection process for SGP proposals is considered efficient as regards time taken; however, the analysis of the national and global benefits needs to be deepened in order to have a cost/benefit analysis of the outcomes obtained.

Lessons Learned

37. The most important lessons learned are set forth below; a more detailed description will be found in Chapter 6.

Lesson 1: The perception that the communities have of the environmental authority means that they either perceive it as a partner or an obstacle in environmental management.

38. The communities in zones bordering national protected areas say they perceive the environmental authority as an obstacle in obtaining the permits they need to carry out activities on their land. One strategy that might make it possible to change this perception would be to have the implementers/donors involved in projects convey the message that the environmental authority (MARN) has an important role in securing the funds they receive on account of the privilege of being settled in ecologically important zones; in this connection, the ministry logo could be placed alongside that of the GEF and/or the implementers could wear hats or shirts bearing the MARN logo. A positive perception of the environmental authority could help to turn the communities into partners in environmental management while causing their interest in environmental matters to be no longer primarily tied to the economic benefits they receive from use of the resources.

Lesson 2: 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.

39. The projects that demonstrate greater effectiveness and efficiency have been those which received technical and scientific support; for example: i) they have been based on formal scientific research (performed by academic institutions or in academia/community partnerships)¹⁶; ii) the coordinators of the execution have had high-level formal academic training¹⁷; and iii) their activities have included the gathering of technical information to demonstrate accomplishment of the global objectives.¹⁸ The opposite has been observed in cases in which technical specialists in specific subjects have not taken part, with the result that some singularly unattractive ecotourism facilities have been created.

Lesson 3: The lack of filters or procedures for systematizing and communicating successful projects can result in positive or negative effects when they are replicated in other contexts.

40. To increase the efficiency (in time terms) of proposal preparation it is common practice for ideas for projects to be exchanged within the GEF Agency networks; however, since there is no protocol for systematizing the contexts in which successful

¹⁶ For example, the University of El Salvador performed research on shellfish management in mangrove swamps, the findings of which have subsequently been applied by NGOs, communities and the SGP.

¹⁷ In the *Promotion of Biodiversity Conservation within Coffee Landscapes* project the project manager had obtained postgraduate qualifications at prestigious universities (Oregon State University and the Monterrey Institute of Technology and Higher Studies) together with experience in implementing institutions: PROCAFE with important research on coffee production and Salvanatura with biological research.

¹⁸ For example, the two *Coffee and Biodiversity* projects have generated important scientific research aimed at obtaining a better understanding of the global benefits to biodiversity. Nevertheless more information is needed.

projects have carried out, there is a risk that such projects may be replicated in different contexts with different outcomes. For instance, in El Salvador the great efforts made to promote biodiversity conservation in coffee plantation woods and the small patches of native forest left on farms are understandable, since the greater part of the country's native forests has disappeared. The situation is different in countries which still have sizable remnants of native forests remaining. In this connection, even the criteria for certifying sustainable coffee will need to be reviewed.

Lesson 4: The requirements connected with cofinancing by means of loans can prevent proper attention being paid to GEF priority requirements.

41. The requirement to have cofinancing in the form of a loan or tied to the GEF Agencies' loan portfolios (World Bank/IADB) can affect the GEF's ability to achieve the global benefits of its mandate by: i) not being able to take care of identified environmental priorities, and ii) since the GEF's evaluations are restricted to its own grants, it cannot therefore monitor and evaluate the positive or negative outcomes of a loan. Accordingly, in the case of GEF financings there is a need to study whether the requirement of certain cofinancing constitutes a real cofinancing for the GEF's purposes or, if it does not, whether the GEF's funds constitute cofinancing for inducing the increasing of countries' public debt. It must be studied whether the Banks are or are not prepared to act as implementing agencies if cofinancing other than loans are in place.

Lesson 5: Lack of an integrating approach diminishes the capacity to obtain global and national environmental benefits.

42. Although the financings are channeled by focal areas, the opportunity presents itself to promote a holistic environmental approach, especially when training processes are involved. However, in the majority of cases the projects are treated as self-contained undertakings (including in projects which themselves include actions in different focal areas).

43. Considering the critical situation of vulnerability to natural risks and also with regard to degradation of natural resources—including biodiversity—the country needs a more focused approach based on integral ecosystem management. Failure to do so will affect the sustainability and effectiveness of the projects implemented. It is important to emphasize that to remedy this weakness it is not sufficient just to design multifocal projects if they treat different areas separately.

44. Another important aspect and one that is complementary to the foregoing is how “sustainable” initiatives of communities or associations, which are selected for financing on the basis of competitive proposals, are implemented. This approach has been successful for moving specific initiatives forward in particular associations. However, the need is still apparent for a more program-based treatment focused on the environmental needs of zones with priority ecosystems, the aim being to develop mechanisms for involving the associations which have so far been rejected.

Lesson 6: Greater connectivity between protected areas and areas where coffee is produced by environment-friendly methods could decrease inbreeding in isolated and low mobility populations and enhance the value of coffee certification as a tool for biodiversity conservation.

45. In order to obtain certification as sustainable and biodiversity-friendly ('RFA', formerly Eco – OK), plantations producing shade-grown coffee are required to have at least ten species of trees (native or not) and 40 percent plant cover. These producers are permitted to cut their remnants of native woods provided they have a management plan approved by the competent authorities. However, the studies done GEF projects found that these patches of native woods were of greater value for conservation than the coffee trees, since the majority of the species of birds that were threatened or in danger of extinction between the El Imposible and Los Volcanes national protected areas (34 of 39) were exclusive to patches of native woods while only five were generalist species that were also found in coffee plantations. Accordingly, the value of certification for environment-friendly coffee would be enhanced if more emphasis were placed on conservation of native woods and their cutting were prohibited, even when the producers hold permits from the environmental authorities formerly in office. In addition, in future GEF projects it would be necessary to define in greater detail the existing connections between patches of native woods in order to strengthen the Biological Corridors between the national protected areas.

46. In the area around the El Imposible national protected area, some paujils (*Crax rubra*) with deformities were observed. It is feared that these were the result of inbreeding (endogamy) due to the small size of national protected areas and the limited number of individuals among the populations of some common species. In future GEF projects it would accordingly be necessary to include actions to renew the gene pool by bringing in individuals from other protected areas.

II. COUNTRY PORTFOLIO STUDY: JAMAICA (1994-2010)

Background and Objectives

47. Country Portfolio Studies (CPSs) are an addition to Country Portfolio Evaluations (CPEs), which comprise one of the main evaluation streams of work of the GEF Evaluation Office. The CPSs provide additional coverage of country portfolios, but have a reduced focus and scope. The purpose of CPEs and CPSs is 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:

- i. independently evaluate the **relevance** and **efficiency**¹⁹ 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;
- ii. assess the **effectiveness** and **results**²⁰ of completed projects aggregated at the focal area;
- iii. 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.

Scope and Methodology

48. The Jamaica Country Portfolio Study covered the full range of GEF-financed interventions, including national projects and Jamaican elements of regional and global projects. Although the principal focus was on completed projects, those still active were also assessed in terms of their relevance.

49. The CPS used a variety of evaluation methods. Its starting point was a detailed review of public and internal documents, including those from UNDP, UNEP, the World Bank, the GEF Evaluation Office, Jamaican Government and Non Government Organizations and other sources. These documents yielded initial data sets, which provided directly relevant information, as well as establishing key questions for follow up through primary data collection.

50. After the initial desk review work, a programme of semi-structured interviews²¹ was drawn up with a broad range of partners in Government, Parastatals, Civil Society, International Development Partners and other bodies. Respondents were invited to draw on their understanding and experience of activities, projects, processes, challenges and results. These interviews provided the major source of primary data assembled by the study team.

51. To explore the long-term results of one major GEF activity a Review of Outcomes to Impacts (ROtI) was undertaken for the Jamaica Demand Side Management Project. This is attached as Volume Two of this study. Using the standard ROtI methodology,²² the CPS Team conducted group and individual interviews and critically

¹⁹ **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.

²⁰ **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.

²¹ A list of persons contacted is provided as Annex 2.

²² See: GEFO and Conservation Development Centre (2009), *Towards Enhancing the Impacts of Environmental Projects: the ROtI Handbook*, Washington, DC.

reviewed documents to explore progress along a theoretical chain from outputs to Global Environment Benefits.

52. An additional source of evaluative material was a review of existing evaluations of projects and of the UNDP energy and environment portfolio.²³ The CPS team also undertook limited field level verification of results, to add to the understanding of results achieved, beneficiary perceptions of participating in GEF-supported activities and sustainability of benefits. A coherent understanding of the issues under review was obtained through triangulation of methods (desk review of monitoring data, evaluation reports, interviews and field verification) and sources (Implementing and Executing Agency staff, project personnel and beneficiaries).

53. A specific feature of the Jamaica CPS is that it was conducted in parallel with the UNDP Assessment of Development Results for Jamaica (2002-2010). The Team Leader and consultant conducting the CPS were also responsible for coverage of the UNDP Energy and Environment portfolio. This provided advantages for both studies. For the CPS, as well as cost savings, the sharing of team members meant that the UNDP GEF portfolio was studied in greater detail than would otherwise have been possible. Substantive issues, such as the overlap between GEF and Agency project cycles were also clarified.

Overview of the GEF Portfolio

54. As shown in Table 1.1, in terms of GEF funding and Co-Funding, completed activities in the GEF portfolio are predominantly in the Climate Change Focal Area. However, it will be seen later that these figures are skewed by one early Full Size Project (FSP) and that, apart from this, the portfolio has been balanced between the areas and consists of predominantly small inputs. Table 1.2 clarifies the balance among activities.

55. The national portfolio consists largely of UNDP implemented activities, which are either Enabling Activities or MSPs, often with a focus on capacity development. All projects are under the half million dollar level except for one early World Bank project (\$3.8 million) and two recent FSPs, which are just getting started.

56. In addition to these activities, Jamaica has participated in several regional and global projects. Several of these have had relatively small national capacity development inputs, but others have had pilot or demonstration activities in Jamaica, which have been larger than most activities in the national portfolio. These regional (and global) projects are therefore a considerable and important part of the overall GEF support to Jamaica, a situation likely to be common among SIDs in general and in the Caribbean in particular.

²³ See: UNDP, 'Outcome Evaluation of UNDP's Environment and Energy Programme: A Mid-Term Perspective', by Hugo Navajas, UNDP Jamaica, Kingston, 2010.

Table 1.1: GEF Portfolio by Focal Area and Status

Focal Area	Completed		On-Going		Pipeline		Total GEF	Total	Share of Portfolio	
	GEF	Total	GEF	Total	GEF	Total			GEF	Total
Biodiversity	0.41	0.59	2.77	10.38			3.18	13.74	26.81%	32.64%
Climate Change	4.13	12.95			3.08	9.20	7.21	25.23	60.79%	59.94%
International Waters							0	0	0.00%	0.00%
Multifocal	0.23	0.26	0.50	0.63			0.73	1.39	6.16%	3.30%
POPs	0.24	0.24					0.24	0.24	2.02%	0.57%
Land Degradation			0.50	0.99			0.5	1.49	4.22%	3.54%
TOTAL	5.01	14.04	3.77	12.00	3.08	9.20	11.86	42.09		

Table 1.2: GEF Portfolio by Agency, Focal Area, Modality and GEF support

Agency	Focal Area	Number of Projects	Modality	GEF Support (Million \$)
WB	CC	1	FSP	3.80
UNDP	CC	2	EA	0.33
UNDP	CC	1	MSP	0.72
UNDP	BD	2	EA	0.41
UNDP	BD	1	FSP	2.77
UNDP	POP	1	EA	0.24
UNDP	MF	1	EA	0.23
UNDP	MF	1	MSP	0.50
UNDP	LD	1	MSP	0.50
UNEP	CC	1	FSP	2.36

Notes: BD = biodiversity; CC = climate change; EA = enabling activity; IW = international waters; LD = land degradation;

MF = multifocal; WB = World Bank; FSP=Full Size Project; MSP=Medium Size Project; POP=Persistent Organic Pollutants.

Conclusions

Results

57. GEF biodiversity projects have been broadly successful in delivering their intended results, most of which have enabled Jamaica to meet its obligations to global environment conventions. Jamaica's participation in the many international Conventions and agreements to which it is signatory would have been significantly delayed without GEF assistance.

58. International Waters projects have produced results in terms of capacity development, enhanced regional collaboration and successful pilot/demonstration activities, but prospects for sustainability of benefits are weak. Activities in the marine environment and watershed management are of critical importance to Jamaica and have received effective support from GEF activities. However, the high costs of investments proposed in Kingston Harbour were beyond national resources and the community based environmental management processes demonstrated by IWCAM have also already encountered sustainability issues, in the absence of continued benefit flows to communities.

59. In the field of Climate Change, some measurable environmental benefits have been attained through the large scale adoption of Compact Fluorescent Light bulbs, with limited additional gains from energy efficiency measures taken by Government. 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 climate change and to plan responses to them. The major challenge concerns how the country can finance the measures necessary for further mitigation and to adapt effectively and reduce vulnerabilities associated with Climate Change.

60. In some areas, the results of individual GEF projects have made a cumulative contribution towards broader environmental benefits. The first set of activities that has allowed accumulation of results supported integrated watershed management, sustainable land use, national communications to UNFCCC, energy efficiency and renewable energy; all of which have contributed to national policies and actions related to climate change mitigation and adaptation. A second, partially overlapping set has contributed to biodiversity conservation, as well as the quality of international waters; through strengthened national participation in the CBD, management of watersheds in areas rich in biodiversity, conservation of areas important for bird life, coastal zone management and measures to address Invasive Alien Species.

Conclusion 1: 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.

61. Most of the activities completed with GEF assistance have been of an enabling, capacity development or pilot nature and the real challenges come with the need to sustain and scale up the results achieved. Given the limited resources available to the Jamaican Government, the prospects for this to happen appear slight. This raises the importance of effective collaboration among GEF Agencies and with other international development partners, to maximize the complementarity between their activities. However, the possibilities for such collaboration are limited by the low profile of the GEF portfolio among these international stakeholders. Regarding the GEF Agencies; after an initial engagement with Jamaica through an FSP, the World Bank has mainly been active in regional activities affecting the country. Inter-Agency collaboration between the UNDP Country Office and UNEP Regional Office was found to be at a low level. International stakeholders outside the GEF Agencies claimed little knowledge of the portfolio and were therefore unable to effectively respond to it.

Conclusion 2: The process of developing and managing the GEF portfolio has strengthened networking amongst national agencies engaged in environmental management.

62. Partnership building is an additional benefit expected to result from participating in GEF activities. This is particularly important for a relatively small programme, such as that in Jamaica. In several cases, national Agencies have expanded their partner networks through GEF projects. For example, the IWCAM project has helped the National

Environment and Planning Agency develop a new approach to working with government agencies, local government and community organizations. The Meteorology Service, which is the national Focal Point for the UN Convention on Climate Change, strengthened its contacts with the Cabinet of Ministers and line agencies while preparing the Second National Communication on Climate Change and (for the first time) worked directly with an NGO on climate change.

Conclusion 3: It would be more appropriate to talk of “national adoption” than of “national ownership” of the GEF portfolio.

63. The GEF portfolio has been mainly designed by Agencies, but relevant to national priorities. The Government and other stakeholders have committed to activities at various stages of design and implementation, but cannot be said to have led the process. Many national stakeholders indicated that the availability of environmental specialists in the UNDP Country Office allows for a more inclusive approach to design and implementation of GEF activities than is possible from distant offices. At national level, there is little coherence to GEF monitoring and evaluation processes, which are primarily driven by Agency systems. National stakeholders are involved in collecting monitoring data proposed by Agencies and in evaluations undertaken by these Agencies, but they are not actively engaged in design or implementation of a system to cover the entire GEF portfolio in the country.

Relevance

64. There has been GEF substantial support since the mid-1990s for Caribbean regional international waters activities, most of which have included Jamaica. The IWCAM project in particular is well-known in the country, by virtue of its substantial national demonstration project on watershed management. Other projects are less visible, although the Kingston project has left detailed analysis and some sustainable benefits to the associated water body.

65. The GEF has engaged in biodiversity activities in Jamaica since 2003; and grew in this area as earlier major funders such as US AID phased down. It has collaborated consistently with the National Environment Protection Agency, which is the main Agency mandated to develop biodiversity conservation in the country. In addition to the national elements of regional activities, there has been a progression from a set of Enabling Activities, through an MSP to the first national FSP, focusing on sustainability of the Protected Area system.

66. In the area of climate change, there was a substantial national FSP early in GEF engagement. In addition to this, the country has participated in a set of national, regional and global activities including enabling, capacity development and pilot projects. Both mitigation and adaptation have received support. Multi-Focal Areas, the Small Grants Programme and newer GEF Focal Areas, notably Land Degradation, have also received support relevant to the country’s national and international priorities. This support has included enabling activities and MSPs.

Conclusion 4: GEF support in Jamaica has been relevant to its national environmental goals and priorities, as well as to the country's efforts to fulfil its obligations under the international agreements to which it is signatory.

67. This support has covered the range of GEF Focal Areas, for which the country is eligible, either through national projects or through Jamaican components of regional or global projects.

Efficiency

Conclusion 5: 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.

68. Both UNEP and the World Bank have experienced substantial delays to their regional projects. With regard to the UNDP, many projects have experienced some form of delay, which frustrates partners and may reduce effectiveness, since projects often have to take short cuts to try to get back on schedule. Few projects have avoided contracting delays, because of limited national and regional availability of qualified environmental expertise, as well as administrative hold-ups. Some of these constraints are a function of the UNDP global system and difficult for its Country Office to resolve.

Lessons Learned

69. In Jamaica, the combination of global, regional and national projects has enabled GEF to provide some degree of coverage in most of the Global Environment areas for which the country is eligible for support, even though the allocations for national projects in RAF and STAR are relatively small. Most of the results and benefits to date have been in terms of developing and assisting in the institutionalisation of environmental management. This is a long term process and there are few measurable environmental outcomes or impacts as yet, after more than fifteen years of GEF involvement.

Lesson 1: The Jamaica portfolio gives cause for concern about the possibilities for sustainable progress in environmental management.

70. Jamaica has high human capacity and a substantial national budget, but high debt repayment obligations mean that Government has very few funds to implement programmes. It therefore has limited possibilities to move forward in managing its environment for the global good. Many of its GEF activities, particularly in regional and global projects, have been of a pilot or demonstration nature. Whilst they have often produced good results at field level, there are serious doubts about the availability of resources to sustain or scale up such results, since the national economy is severely stressed.

Lesson 2: Many Agency procedures are not appropriate for small countries in regions with limited resources. This is seriously hampering the efficiency of GEF implementation.

71. All the three GEF Agencies involved in Jamaica have faced severe efficiency problems. These are neither GEF specific nor Agency specific. Many of them derive from the application of inflexible procedures for recruitment and procurement in a situation where they do not work. The procedures are not adapted to the situation of Small Island Developing States in general or the Caribbean in particular. Often they require competitive bids from a greater number of environmental specialists or supply companies than are actually present in the country. When the conditions are not met, processes are referred to regional or international recruitment, which imposes severe delays. Unless more flexible procedures can be developed and applied for SIDS, desired levels of efficiency and results are very difficult to achieve.

Lesson 3: Some possible procedural improvements have already been suggested by evaluations and reviews of GEF activities by its Agencies.

72. In the case of UNDP, suggested options to improve efficiency include the use of consultant rosters and referrals; the rotation and cost sharing of specialized expertise among projects addressing common issues or “topping up” budget lines for international expertise when national or Caribbean-based candidates are not available. Unrealistic project timelines could be partially offset by budgeting additional time to compensate slow recruitment and start-up processes; and by including inception phases to expedite implementation and contracting arrangements in advance.

73. With regard to the World Bank, suggestions have included: the need for conservative scheduling and planned cost contingencies, particularly to take account of currency fluctuations; careful planning and realistic scheduling for the establishment of new institutions; more realistic assessment of risks to project delivery; realistic assessment of implementation capacity on the ground and adequate allowance for capacity development needs; consistent measures to ensure Government commitment. In view of the complexity of the measures, which have been found necessary to deliver results, project time scales should be more realistic.

74. Concerning the missed opportunities because of the low profile of the GEF portfolio in Jamaica, a UNDP Environment Outcome Evaluation²⁴ proposed that results could be scaled up by earmarking “soft support” to document/ disseminate case studies, facilitate institutional exchanges and mentoring, inform policymakers or parliamentary commissions, and move successful pilot experiences upstream. However, this form of support is not available through traditional GEF project funding modalities, other than through the limited funds provided for Focal Points.

²⁴ *Outcome Evaluation of UNDP’s Energy and Environment Programme: A Mid-Term Perspective*. Hugo Navajas, P 32-33, UNDP Jamaica June 2010.