

GEF Council Meeting
June 5-7, 2012
Washington, D.C.

Agenda Item 8

Management Response to the Annual Country Portfolio Evaluation Report 2012

(Prepared by the GEF Secretariat)

1. The Secretariat welcomes the fifth *Annual Country Portfolio Evaluation Report* (ACPER) prepared by the GEF's Evaluation Office. The report provides a synthesis of the main conclusions and recommendations that have emerged from the information contained in the Country Portfolio Evaluations (CPEs) and Country Portfolio Studies (CPSs) conducted in the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region.
2. The Secretariat supports the approach the Evaluation Office has taken of synthesizing the CPEs and CPSs undertaken within a given region. The Secretariat also welcomes several of the conclusions of the report and is in particular pleased that most projects in the countries' examined received moderately satisfactory or higher ratings and that overall GEF support has been relevant both at the national level and to achieving global environment benefits.
3. The Secretariat notes that **conclusion four** on multifocal area projects, "Many countries in the Latin America and Caribbean region follow an ecosystem approach to environmental conservation and sustainable use, which increases the demand for multifocal area projects". While the ecosystem approach can indeed involve multifocal projects, it can also be applied with a specific focus and a single focal area project as long as its overall goals meet the specific focal area's objectives. The Secretariat agrees that countries in the LAC region *may* in the future undertake a higher proportion of MFAs than has been programmed in the past, however, the classification of a MFA versus a single focal area project should not be based on whether or not an ecosystem approach is being undertaken but rather whether the GEF grant allocations from multiple focal areas are utilized to achieve objectives of more than one focal area.
4. The Secretariat notes conclusion five that scaling-up replication, and sustainability remain a challenge in the portfolios analyzed with some notable exceptions. For instance, the report states that overall "Nicaragua, OECS countries, and Jamaica show a lack of scaling-up and replication." The Secretariat would like to draw attention to examples such as the upscaling and replication of an international waters project in Jamaica which took place after the conclusion of the Jamaica CPS. A Watershed Area Management Mechanism (WAMM) was developed under the GEF funded project, *Integrating Watershed and Coastal Areas Management* (GEF – IWCAM). The model executed by the National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA), in the Drivers River Watershed Management Unit of Portland is currently being replicated throughout Jamaica. In addition to the Drivers Watershed piloted through a GEF grant, another six WMUs have been introduced to the WAMM. The aim of the Ecosystems Management Branch (EMB) of NEPA is to implement the WAMM in all Watershed Management Units in Jamaica. This is an example of a significant upscaling building onto the success of the initial project and most significantly on the tremendous effort of the country ministry to ensure the results of the pilot are sustained.
5. The Secretariat takes note of the remaining conclusions in the 2012 ACPER, including the unique challenges faced by Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in developing and implementing projects. With respect to **recommendation one** "Project approval and implementation in Small Island Developing States should be more flexible and context specific," caution should be exercised in order not to give the impression that each country's unique needs can be met in every case. The specific example of Cuba outlined in paragraph 84 provides an appropriate example where such generalization would be impractical/infeasible. Nevertheless, the GEF Secretariat supports the recommendation that calls for increased flexibility to SIDS whenever it is indeed feasible.

6. The Secretariat has had many discussions with Agencies related to **recommendation two** “The burden of monitoring requirements of multifocal area projects should be reduced to a level comparable to that of single focal area projects.” It should also be noted that using tracking tools for multifocal area projects was only introduced in GEF-5, so it may be premature to draw this conclusion at this time. Furthermore, one should remember that these new tools are required only three times during the life of the project, a very reasonable requirement: at CEO endorsement, mid-term, and project completion. Additionally, for multifocal area projects, the Secretariat does not require the full set of tracking tools be applied. Rather, as the language in paragraph 86 suggests, the tools should only be completed for the “essential focal area indicators that need to be monitored throughout multifocal area projects.” There are currently no multifocal area projects under implementation that require tracking tools from more than one focal area.

7. The Secretariat takes note of **recommendation three** that “South-South cooperation should be enabled as components of national, regional and global projects where opportunities for exchange of technology, capacity development and/or sharing best practices exist.” The Secretariat agrees as is stated in paragraph 89 that enabling South-South cooperation should not be in the form of funding from GEF project financial resources to those Southern countries providing South-South support.