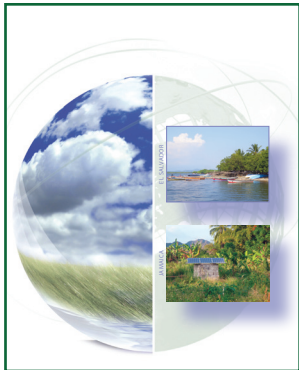


GEF Annual Country Portfolio Evaluation 2011: El Salvador and Jamaica



In 2011, the Evaluation Office of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) conducted two country portfolio studies in El Salvador and Jamaica, performed in collaboration with parallel evaluations by the United Nations Development

Programme's Evaluation Office. Country portfolio studies are a new modality for the GEF's country-level evaluation work. As collaborative efforts, they enable more informed evaluation reporting, a lower evaluation burden on the countries, and cost savings. This year's annual country portfolio evaluation report summarizes the conclusions and lessons deriving from these studies.

Findings

Results and Effectiveness

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

Individual GEF projects have made a cumulative contribution toward broader environmental benefits. Jamaica's participation in the many international conventions and agreements to which it is a signatory would have been significantly delayed without GEF assistance. In El Salvador, GEF support has helped ongoing efforts by the national environmental authority in land planning, integrated ecosystem management, and biodiversity conservation.

By focal area, biodiversity 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 to develop national strategies. International waters projects have developed capacity, enhanced regional collaboration,

and completed successful pilot/demonstration activities in the marine environment and watershed management. Achievement of important global benefits is particularly evident in El Salvador, as a result of a completed regional project on sustainable alternatives to DDT for malaria vector control. Jamaica has achieved measurable benefits in climate change mitigation through large-scale adoption of compact fluorescent light bulbs.

The challenge ahead lies in sustaining and scaling up the results achieved thus far with limited national resources. A lack of resources in Jamaica has prevented development of the proposed Kingston Harbour project. Potential synergies with other international development partners have not yet been sufficiently pursued, which has also reduced opportunities for scale-up.

In many cases, the global benefits achieved by GEF projects are modest or uncertain. Recent progress in land use planning, integrated ecosystem management, and biodiversity conservation in El Salvador has been weak. While several projects relating to these issues have been executed, the global environmental benefits are yet to be determined. And while some benefits have been attained from climate change projects in Jamaica, similar activities are far less developed in El Salvador and the benefits remain uncertain.

GEF support has contributed to capacity development in the two countries. Most GEF support provided in the two countries has been of an enabling, capacity development, or pilot/demonstration nature. El Salvador's Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources has developed environmental management capabilities around the compilation and systematization of environmental information, application of established methodologies, and the design of guidelines and tools. Jamaica has substantially increased its capacity in renewable energy, energy efficiency, and the ability to understand and track the effects of climate change

for adaptation purposes. The sustainability of the results achieved in capacity development is uncertain.

Relevance

GEF support has been relevant to national environmental goals and priorities, as well as to the countries' efforts to fulfill their obligations under the international agreements to which they are signatories. In both El Salvador and Jamaica, GEF support was found to align with national sustainable development needs, challenges, and environmental priorities. GEF projects have supported national frameworks for developing environmental laws and policies regarding biodiversity, biosafety and climate change, and persistent organic pollutants. GEF support has also helped fulfill countries' reporting obligations under international environmental conventions.

While the GEF has engaged in activities covering the full range of focal areas for which Jamaica is eligible, there have been some deficiencies in GEF support to El Salvador. No support has been provided to El Salvador for international waters, climate change adaptation, or land degradation. The government seeks to remedy this deficiency by introducing a multifocal area project proposal to be funded under the current allocation.

Efficiency

Overall, efficiency of project preparation has recently improved in the two countries, but GEF projects experience delays during implementation. Project preparation time in El Salvador improved from GEF-3 to GEF-4, while efficiency of implementation varies from project to project. There were substantial differences in delays among projects in Jamaica, but there is no clear trend. All three of the primary GEF Agencies in that country (the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme, and the World Bank) have experienced similar implementation efficiency problems; these relate to recruitment and procurement systems that were designed for larger countries and require competitive processes. Such requirements cannot be met in small countries that have limited specialist environmental personnel and suppliers.

The focal point mechanism in Jamaica has been helpful in developing proposals through the GEF Support Group established in 2004. In El Salvador, the focal point mechanism has been less effective because of high staff turnover within the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources and the limited availability of the operational focal point. The ministry is considering establishing a projects directorate that would deal with GEF projects.

Cofinancing is considered a major challenge to project proposal development in Jamaica, and issues regarding baselines and incremental costs have also posed many difficulties. In El Salvador, the conditions on cofinancing exerted through loans may divert attention away from GEF requirements and nationally identified priorities.

Lesson

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

Follow-Up

The GEF Council has asked the GEF 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 independent national institutions with recognized expertise in evaluation and environment.

Photos: Jiquilisco Bay in San Dionisio municipality, Usulután Department, El Salvador, by Anna Viggh, GEF Evaluation Office; solar panels, Mafoota, St. Jamies, Jamaica, photo courtesy GEF Small Grants Programme, Jamaica.

The GEF Evaluation Office is an independent entity reporting directly to the GEF Council, mandated to evaluate the focal area programs and priorities of the GEF.

The full version of *GEF Annual Country Portfolio Evaluation 2011* (Evaluation Report No. 64, 2012) and the individual reports *GEF Country Portfolio Study: Jamaica (1994–2010)* and *Estudio de la cartera de proyectos del FMAM en El Salvador (1994–2010)* (Evaluation Reports No. 66 and 67, 2012; the latter is in Spanish with conclusions and lessons learned in English) are available on the GEF Evaluation Office website, www.gefeo.org. For more information, please contact the GEF Evaluation Office at gefevaluation@thegef.org.