

GEF Country Portfolio Evaluation: Brazil (1991–2011)



The Independent Evaluation Office of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) carried out a country portfolio evaluation of GEF support to Brazil for the

period 1991 to 2011. Brazil was selected due to its large portfolio which includes a significant emphasis on biodiversity and climate change, among other areas.

There are 45 national projects in the GEF Brazil portfolio, which together total \$336 million (\$5 million in project preparation grants) with \$1 billion in cofinancing. A majority of the funding for national projects supports the biodiversity and climate change focal areas (49.6 percent and 32.4 percent respectively). Brazil also participates in 14 regional and 21 global GEF projects in all focal areas except land degradation.

Findings

Results

- The GEF helped pave the way for the institutional capacity required for lasting environmental benefits in most focal areas. Also, GEF projects in Brazil often produce quality publications which have continued to be leading national references in most focal areas.
- Multifocal area projects have always existed in the Brazilian portfolio, even though they have only recently been classified as such.
- The engagement of the private sector varies in form and magnitude across focal areas. GEF support has been particularly effective in engaging the private sector on climate change, and less effective in other focal areas.
- In the international waters focal area, there is evidence that GEF support contributed to strengthening Brazil's commitment to regional cooperation.

- GEF support to Brazil's South-South cooperation efforts has been minimal and informal at best.

Relevance

- GEF support has been relevant to Brazil's sustainable development agenda and environmental priorities, particularly in the areas of biodiversity and climate change.
- GEF support in Brazil is clearly nationally owned and country driven.
- Cofinancing levels are generally satisfactory and in line with GEF support, and it is clear that this cofinancing generates additional global environmental benefits.
- The GEF biodiversity portfolio in Brazil includes projects focusing on both sustainable use and strict protection. Whether a project focuses on sustainable use or strict protection appears to be linked more to the density of the surrounding population than to biodiversity parameters.

Efficiency

- The GEF project approval process in Brazil is on average shorter than in other countries, but is still perceived as too long by stakeholders.
- The GEF Agencies have worked independently of one another, without any clear overall coordination and/or synergies.
- Coordination among participating entities in concluded and ongoing GEF projects seems generally efficient. Several GEF projects foster collaboration between agricultural and environmental government institutions that had not coordinated with each other before.
- GEF projects tend to have an above-average M&E process compared to similar projects funded by national sources. Periodic evaluations are carried out, and there are indications that adaptive management occurs. On the other hand, it has been observed that biodiversity

projects have consistently ignored biodiversity indicators during project execution.

- Moving from funding Brazil's SGP through the program's core resources to a national FSP modality out of Brazil's STAR allocation has been slow and has shown characteristics of a learning-by-doing process.

Recommendations

To the GEF Council

- The burden of monitoring requirements for multifocal area projects should be reduced to a level comparable to that for single-focal area projects.
- The GEF should implement a more robust information and knowledge management system to improve the exchange of experiences among projects within each country and internationally. Such a system could serve as a tool to promote South-South cooperation.
- The GEF should promote and encourage the exchange of experiences on M&E procedures, which are perceived by many stakeholders as one of the greatest challenges faced by projects.

To Brazil

- The Brazilian portfolio could explore new sources of financing and support more technology development and market transformation activities in order to induce greater environmental benefits in the long term.
- Brazil's GEF focal point should promote the exchange of experiences among projects implemented by different GEF Agencies.

Follow-Up

The findings of this evaluation were presented to the GEF Council in June 2012 as an input to the *GEF Annual Country Portfolio Evaluation Report 2012*. The main conclusions and recommendations of the Brazil country portfolio evaluation were then presented to the GEF Council in May 2013 as an information document.

The GEF Independent 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 *Avaliação de Portfólio de Projetos do GEF: Brasil (1991–2011)* (Evaluation Report No. 81; in Portuguese, with conclusions and lessons learned in English) is available on the GEF Independent Evaluation Office website, www.gefeo.org. For more information, please contact the Office at gefevaluation@thegef.org.