

Terms of Reference

Nicaragua Country Portfolio Evaluation (1996-2010)

GEF Evaluation Office

March 2011

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

1. Country Portfolio Evaluations (CPEs) are one of the main evaluation streams of work of the GEF Evaluation Office. 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.
2. As of September 2009, 11 CPEs have been completed in GEF-4.¹ This year, with the new CPE cycle for GEF-5 starting, Nicaragua has been selected to undergo a CPE, while a second CPE is taking place of a cluster of countries belonging to the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), consisting of Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Kitts and Nevis and St. Lucia. Two Country Portfolio Studies are also being conducted this year in El Salvador and in Jamaica in collaboration with the UNDP Evaluation Office.² These terms of reference relate to the Nicaragua CPE.
3. Countries are selected for portfolio evaluations among 160 GEF eligible countries, through a multi-step procedure which is described in detail in a note available on the GEF Evaluation Office Web site.³ Nicaragua was considered a good choice given the country's comparatively diverse, large, and mature portfolio.
4. With approximately 50 percent of a population of about 6 million living below the poverty line (2005), Nicaragua is considered to be the second poorest country in Latin America, after Haiti. With nearly two-thirds living in extreme poverty (<\$1.25/day), the rural population has a much lower average income than the urban population. Development aid amounts to approximately 20.4 percent of GDP, and agriculture, forestry and fisheries, account for 65 percent of the country's exports and provide livelihoods for two-thirds of the labor force. The large agricultural sector utilizes less modern technologies than its neighboring countries and capacity to process raw materials is low. In addition, due to the undiversified and narrow export base, the economy of Nicaragua is vulnerable to global market trends and price fluctuations. In 2004, Nicaragua secured \$4.5 billion in foreign aid debt reduction under the G8 Highly Indebted Poor Country initiative, and in 2007, the IMF approved its new poverty reduction and growth facility program in Nicaragua. In response to 2008 election fraud, donors temporarily curtailed funding, and economic growth has been slow in 2009 due to a drop in demand from major importers in Central America and the United States.
5. Land use change and forestry are by far the largest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions in the country. The emission reduction potential of the agriculture sector is large, but not sufficiently explored. It is estimated that Central America produces less than 0.5 percent of global carbon emissions, but is one the most vulnerable regions to climate change-related impacts on the planet. Agriculture is highly vulnerable to climate variability and weather extremes and this is coupled with problems of land degradation in the country.⁴ As of 2011, approximately 17 percent of Nicaragua's total land area is protected.

¹ Countries having undergone CPEs during GEF-4 are: Costa Rica, the Philippines, Samoa, Benin, Cameroon, Madagascar, South Africa, Egypt, Syria, Moldova and Turkey.

² Country Portfolio Studies (CPSs) provide additional coverage of country portfolios, but have a reduced focus and scope. CPSs are undertaken where opportunities to collaborate with independent evaluation offices of GEF partners present themselves. With a relatively lower investment the GEF portfolio in a country is analyzed in collaboration with an ongoing country level evaluation.

³ http://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/documents/CPE_final_country_selection_note-0910_0.pdf

⁴ Source: World Bank web page: <http://beta.worldbank.org/node/5511>

6. Since 1996, the GEF has invested about \$32.3 million (with about \$165.2 million in cofinancing) through 16 national projects in Nicaragua (5 biodiversity, 4 climate change, 1 land degradation, 2 POPs, 4 multifocal). Table 1 breaks down GEF support according to GEF Agencies and focal areas. UNDP, with 12 projects totaling about \$12.5 million, has been the main channel for GEF support in Nicaragua, followed by the World Bank (2 projects totaling \$7.8 million). One project is implemented jointly by the World Bank and UNDP in climate change (\$7.9 million). The majority of closed national projects were implemented via UNDP and the World Bank while the ongoing and more recently approved interventions are through UNDP and IADB.

Table 1: GEF Support to National Projects by Focal Area and GEF Agency

Agency	Focal area	GEF amount (million \$)	Number of projects
UNDP	Biodiversity	3.212	4
	Climate change	4.274	3
	Land degradation	3.000	1
	POPs	1.354	2
	Multifocal	0.665	2
	<i>Sub-total</i>	<i>12.505</i>	<i>12</i>
World Bank	Biodiversity	7.100	1
	Multifocal	0.725	1
	<i>Sub-total</i>	<i>7.825</i>	<i>2</i>
UNDP/World Bank	Climate change	7.890	1
IADB	Multifocal	4.041	1
	Total	32.261	16

7. In biodiversity, GEF support has concentrated on conservation and management of protected areas, and in meeting convention obligations. In climate change, it has focused on renewable energy from small micro-hydro and solar, on sustainable transport in urban areas and in meeting convention obligations. In POPs, the focus has been on management of pesticides and in meeting convention obligations as well. In terms of multifocal interventions, the focus has been on renewable energy and forest conservation, as well as on integrated watershed management and mainstreaming of multilateral environmental agreements into country legislation. GEF support included a series of enabling activities for all the focal areas under the GEF as their financial mechanism, as per convention guidelines. Financing for the enabling activities supported by the GEF totals \$1.5 million.

Table 2: Regional and Global Projects involving Nicaragua by Focal Area and GEF Agency

Focal area	WB	UNDP	UNEP	IADB	Total
Biodiversity	2	2	3		7
Climate change	1	4	2	1	8
International waters		1	3	1	5
Multifocal	1	2	1		4
Total	4	9	7	2	24

8. Nicaragua has also participated in 24 regional or global projects supported by the GEF. Table 2 breaks down these projects. Regional projects in which Nicaragua participated covered the following focal areas: biodiversity, climate change, international waters, as well as multifocal interventions. The global projects focused mostly on renewable energy and biosafety and include the 4th operation phase of the GEF Small Grants Programme.

OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

9. The purpose of the Nicaragua CPE is to provide GEF Council with an assessment of how GEF is implemented at the country level, a 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 evaluation will have the following specific objectives:

- Independently evaluate the **relevance** and **efficiency** of the GEF support in Nicaragua from several points of view:⁵ national environmental frameworks and decision-making processes; the GEF mandate and the achievement of global environmental benefits; and GEF policies and procedures.
- Assess the **effectiveness** and **results** of completed projects aggregated at the focal area.⁶
- Provide additional evaluative evidence to other evaluations conducted or sponsored by the GEF Evaluation Office.
- 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) Nicaragua 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.

10. The Nicaragua CPE will assess the performance of individual projects as part of the overall GEF portfolio, but without rating such projects. CPEs do not aim at evaluating or rating the performance of GEF Agencies, partners or national governments.

11. The CPE will also be used to provide information and evidence to other evaluations being conducted by the GEF Evaluation Office. Furthermore this CPE will contribute, along with the other CPEs being conducted in the past or being conducted now, to the body of experience to be made available to the GEF Council on the different experiences and lessons on how the GEF is implemented at the national level.

KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS

12. CPEs are guided by a set of key questions to be answered based on the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the evaluative information and perceptions collected during the evaluation exercise. The Nicaragua CPE will be guided by the following key questions:

*Effectiveness, results and sustainability*⁷

- a) What are the results (outcomes and impacts) of GEF support at the project level?
- b) What are the results of GEF support at the aggregate level (portfolio and program) by focal area and at the country level?
- c) What are the outcomes of GEF support and their impact on local populations and on the global environment?
- d) What has been the extent of the emphasis on land-use based approaches in the management of natural resources?
- e) To what extent is GEF support addressing Nicaragua's vulnerability to climate change and the options it has to address those changes in the future?
- f) Is GEF support effective in producing results related to the dissemination of lessons learned in GEF projects and with partners?

⁵ **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.

⁶ **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.

⁷ **Sustainability:** the likelihood that an intervention will continue to deliver benefits for an extended period of time after completion.

- g) Is GEF support effective in producing results which last in time and continue after project completion? What are the challenges related to ensuring sustainable results?

Relevance

- a) Is GEF support relevant to: the National Human Development Plan, development needs, priorities and challenges, the National Strategy for Climate Change and its Action Plan, the National Biodiversity Strategy and the Environmental Action Plan, as well as the action plans for other GEF national focal areas?
- b) Is GEF support in Nicaragua relevant to the objectives linked to the different global environmental benefits (GEBs) in biodiversity, greenhouse gases, international waters, land degradation, and chemicals focal areas?
- c) Are GEF and its Agencies supporting environmental and sustainable development prioritization, country ownership, and decision-making process of Nicaragua?
- d) What is Nicaragua doing within the GEF focal area programs and strategies with its own resources and /or with the support from other donors?
- e) To what extent has the design and implementation of GEF supported activities focused on participatory processes and gender?

Efficiency

- a) How much time, effort and financial resources does it take to formulate and implement projects, by type of GEF support modality, including SGP?
- b) What are the roles, types of engagement and coordination among different stakeholders in project implementation?
- c) What are the synergies for GEF programming and implementation among: GEF Agencies; national institutions; GEF projects; and other donor-supported projects and activities?
- d) What role does monitoring and evaluation (M&E) play in increasing project adaptive management and overall efficiency?

13. Each of these questions is complemented by a preliminary evaluation matrix presented in annex 1. The matrix contains a tentative list of indicators or basic data, potential sources of information, and methodology components, and will be validated and/or further developed by the evaluation team during the evaluation.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

14. The Nicaragua CPE will cover all types of GEF supported activities in the country at different stages of the project cycle (pipeline, ongoing, and completed) and implemented by all GEF Agencies in all focal areas, including applicable GEF corporate activities such as the Small Grants Programme. The main focus of the evaluation will be on national projects.

15. In addition, a selection of regional and global projects in which Nicaragua participated and that are of special relevance to Nicaragua will be reviewed. This will feed into the aggregate assessment of the overall GEF support to Nicaragua.

16. The stage of the project will determine the expected CPE focus (see table 3).

Table 3: Focus of Evaluation According to the Stage of the Project

Project status	Focus		On a exploratory basis	
	Relevance	Efficiency	Effectiveness	Results
Completed	Full	Full	Full	Full
Ongoing	Full	Partially	Likelihood	Likelihood
Pipeline	Expected	Processes	n.a.	n.a.

17. CPEs are challenging as the GEF does not establish country programs that specify expected achievements through programmatic objectives, indicators, and targets.⁸ In general, CPEs entail some degree of retrofitting of frameworks to be able to judge the relevance of the aggregated results of a diverse portfolio of projects. Accordingly, the approach to conduct CPEs will be adapted and informed by the other relevant national and GEF Agencies' strategies, country programs and/or planning frameworks as a basis for assessing the aggregate results, efficiency, and relevance of the GEF portfolio in Nicaragua.

18. GEF support is provided through partnerships with many institutions operating at many levels, from local to national and international level. It is therefore challenging to consider GEF support separately. The CPE will not attempt to provide a direct attribution of development results to the GEF, but address the contribution of GEF support to the overall achievements, that is, to establish a credible link between what the GEF supported and its implications. The evaluation will address how GEF support has functioned in partnership with others through questions on roles and coordination, synergies and complementarities, and knowledge sharing.

19. The assessment of results will be focused, where possible, at the level of outcomes and impacts rather than outputs. Project-level results will be measured against the overall expected impact and outcomes from each project. Progress towards impact of a representative sample of mature enough projects (that is, completed at least since two years) will be looked at through field Reviews of Outcome to Impact (ROtI) studies. Expected impacts at the focal area level will be assessed in the context of GEF objectives and indicators of global environmental benefits. Outcomes at the focal area level will be primarily assessed in relation to catalytic and replication effects, institutional sustainability and capacity building, and awareness. The inclusion of regional and global projects increases the complexity of this type of evaluation since these projects are developed and approved under different context (that is, regional or global policies and strategies) than national countries. However, a representative number of regional and global projects will be included based on criteria such as the relevance of the regional project for the country, the implementation unit being located in the country, among others.

20. The context in which these projects were developed, approved, and are being implemented constitutes another focus of the evaluation. The context will include a historical assessment of the national sustainable development and environmental policies, strategies, and priorities; the legal environment in which these policies are implemented and enforced; GEF Agency country strategies and programs; and GEF policies, principles, programs, and strategies.

21. Weaknesses of M&E at the project level and GEF program levels have been mentioned in past CPEs and other evaluations of the Evaluation Office, and may pose challenges to the Nicaragua CPE as well. Not all information which will be used for the analysis will be of a quantitative nature.

METHODOLOGY

22. The Nicaragua CPE will be conducted by staff of the GEF Evaluation Office and national and international consultants, led by a task manager from the GEF Evaluation Office. The team includes technical expertise on the national environmental and sustainable development strategies, evaluation methodologies, and the GEF. The consultants selected must qualify under the GEF Evaluation Office Ethical Guidelines, and are requested to sign a declaration of interest to indicate no recent (last three to

⁸ Voluntary National Portfolio Formulation Exercises (NPFs) are being introduced in GEF-5. CPEs 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.

five years) relationship with GEF support in the country. The GEF focal point in Nicaragua, although not a member of the evaluation team, will be an essential partner in the evaluation.

23. The methodology includes a series of components using a combination of qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods and tools. The expected sources of information include the following:

- At the project level, project documents, project implementation reports, terminal evaluations, terminal evaluation reviews, reports from monitoring visits, and any other technical documents produced by projects
- At the country level, national sustainable development agendas, environmental priorities and strategies, GEF-wide, focal area strategies and action plans, global and national environmental indicators
- At the agency level, country assistance strategies and frameworks and their evaluations and reviews
- Evaluative evidence at the country level from other evaluations conducted by the GEF Evaluation Office, by the independent evaluation offices of GEF Agencies, or by other national or international evaluation departments
- Interviews with GEF stakeholders, including the GEF focal point and all other relevant government departments, bilateral and multilateral donors, civil society organizations and academia (including both local and international NGOs with a presence in the country), GEF Agencies, SGP, and the national convention focal points
- Interviews with GEF beneficiaries and supported institutions, municipal governments and associations, and local communities and authorities
- Field visits to selected project sites, using methods and tools developed by the GEF Evaluation Office such as the Guidelines for Terminal Evaluation Reviews (TER) or the Review of Outcomes to Impact (ROtI) Handbook
- Information from national consultation workshops

24. The quantitative analysis will use indicators to assess the relevance and efficiency of GEF support using projects as the unit of analysis (that is, linkages with national priorities, time and cost of preparing and implementing projects, and so forth) and to measure GEF results (that is, progress towards achieving global environmental impacts) and performance of projects (such as implementation and completion ratings). The analysis will also use available statistics and scientific sources, especially for national environmental indicators.

25. The evaluation team will use standard tools and protocols for the CPEs and adapt these to the national context. These tools include a project review protocol to conduct the desk and field reviews of GEF projects and interview guides to conduct interviews with different stakeholders.

26. The CPE will include field visits to project sites. The criteria for selecting the sites will be finalized during the implementation of the evaluation, with emphasis placed on both ongoing and completed projects. The evaluation team will decide on specific sites to visit based on the initial review of documentation and balancing needs of representation as well as cost-effectiveness of conducting the field visits.

27. Quality assurance on evaluation methods, tools and processes used will be performed at key stages of the process by two external experts renowned in the international evaluation community and academia. To this end, memorandums of understanding will be prepared and signed by the GEF Evaluation Office and appropriate institutions to which the experts belong.

PROCESS AND OUTPUTS

28. These country-specific terms of reference have been prepared based on an initial GEF Evaluation Office visit to Nicaragua in January 2011, undertaken with the purpose of scoping the evaluation and identifying key issues to be included in the analysis. It was also an opportunity to officially launch the evaluation, while at the same time introducing the selected international and national consultants to GEF stakeholders. These terms of reference conclude the Nicaragua CPE preparatory phase, and set the scene for the evaluation phase during which the evaluation team will complete the following tasks:

- Complete the ongoing literature review to extract existing reliable evidence.
- Prepare specific inputs to the CPE, including:
 - **GEF portfolio database**, which describes all GEF support activities within the country, basic information (GEF Agency, focal area, GEF modality), their implementation status, project cycle information, GEF and cofinancing financial information, major objectives and expected (or actual) results, key partners per project, and so on
 - **Country Environmental Legal Framework**, which provides the historical perspective of the context in which the GEF projects have been developed and implemented. This document will be based on information on environmental legislation, environmental policies of each government administration (plans, strategies, and similar), and the international agreements signed by the country presented and analyzed through time so to be able to connect with particular GEF support
 - **Global Environmental Benefits Assessment**, which provides an assessment of the country's contribution to GEF focal areas based on appropriate indicators, such as those used in the System for the Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR) (biodiversity, climate change, and land degradation) and other indicators extracted from projects documents
- Conduct site field visits of ongoing and completed projects, and studies (terminal evaluation review and ROTI) of completed national projects, selected in consultation with GEF Evaluation Office staff, which will contribute to strengthen the information gathering and analysis on results.
- Conduct the evaluation analysis and triangulation of collected information and evidence from various sources, tools, and methods. This will be done during the GEF Evaluation Office staff's second country visit to consolidate the evidence gathered so far and fill in additional information and analysis gaps before formulating findings, conclusions, and preliminary recommendations. During this visit, additional analysis, meetings, document reviews and field work will be undertaken as needed.
- Conduct a national consultation workshop with the government and national stakeholders, including project staff, donors, and GEF Agencies, to present and gather stakeholders' feedback on the main CPE findings, conclusions, and preliminary recommendations to be included in an aide-mémoire. The workshop will also be an opportunity to verify eventual errors of facts or analysis in case these are supported by adequate additional evidence brought to the attention of the evaluation team.
- Prepare and circulate to peer reviewers and stakeholders a draft Nicaragua CPE report, which incorporates comments received at the national stakeholder consultation workshop;
- Consider the eventual incorporation of comments received to the draft report and prepare the final Nicaragua CPE report.⁹

EVALUATION KEY MILESTONES

29. The evaluation is conducted between December 2010 and August 2011. The key milestones of the evaluation are presented in table 4 below:

⁹ The GEF Evaluation Office will bear full responsibility for the content of the report.

Table 4: Evaluation Milestones

Milestone	Deadline
Finalization of the GEF country portfolio database	January 31, 2011
Country Environmental Legal Framework	February 15, 2011
Global Environmental Benefits Assessment	February 15, 2011
Field studies	April 1, 2011
Data collection/interviews and project review protocols	April 1, 2011
Consolidation and triangulation of evaluative evidence, additional analysis/gap-filling	April 3-7, 2011
Presentation of key preliminary findings in a national consultation workshop	May 9, 2011
Draft CPE report sent out to stakeholders and peer reviewers for comments	June 3, 2011
Incorporation of comments received in a final CPE report	June 30, 2011
Country response to the CPE	August 30, 2011

CPE REPORT OUTLINE

30. The Nicaragua CPE report should be a concise, stand-alone document organized along the following general table of contents:

CHAPTER 1. Main Conclusions and Recommendations

Background

Objectives, Scope and Methodology

Conclusions

- Relevance
- Efficiency
- Results and effectiveness

Recommendations

CHAPTER 2. Evaluation Framework

Background

Objectives and Scope

Methodology

Limitations

CHAPTER 3. Context

Nicaragua: General description

Environmental resources in key GEF support areas

The environmental legal framework in Nicaragua

The environmental policy framework in Nicaragua

The Global Environmental Facility: General description

CHAPTER 4. The GEF portfolio in Nicaragua

Defining the GEF Portfolio

Activities in the GEF Portfolio

Evolution of GEF Support by Focal Area and by GEF Agency

Corporate, Regional and Global Programs

CHAPTER 5. Effectiveness, results and sustainability of GEF support to Nicaragua

Global Environmental Impacts

Catalytic and Replication Effects

Institutional Sustainability and Capacity Building

Results by Focal Area

CHAPTER 6. Relevance of GEF support in Nicaragua

Relevance of GEF Support to the Country's Sustainable Development Agenda and Environmental Priorities

Relevance of GEF Support to Country's Development Priorities and Challenges

Relevance of GEF Support to National Action Plans within GEF Focal Areas

Relevance of GEF Support to the achievement of Global Environmental Benefits

Relevance of the GEF Portfolio to Other Global and National Institutions

CHAPTER 7. Efficiency of GEF supported activities in Nicaragua

Time, Effort, and Financial Resources Required for Project formulation

Coordination and synergies

Monitoring and Evaluation for Project Adaptive Management

Roles and Responsibilities among Different Stakeholders in Project Implementation

The GEF Focal Point Mechanism in the Country

Learning

ANNEXES

A. Country Response

B. Country-specific Terms of Reference

C. Evaluation Matrix

D. Interviewees

E. Sites Visited

F. Workshop Participants

G. GEF Portfolio in Nicaragua

H. Bibliography

Annex 1
Nicaragua CPE - Evaluation Matrix

Key question	Indicators / basic data	Source of information	Methodology
Effectiveness, Results and Sustainability			
What are the results (outcomes and impacts) of GEF support at the project level?	- Project outcome and impacts - Existing ratings for project outcomes (i.e., self-ratings and independent ratings) - Changes in global benefits indexes and other global environmental indicators	- Projects' staff and beneficiaries, national and local government representatives - ROtI studies - Project related reviews, (implementation reports, terminal evaluations, TE reviews, etc.) - Evaluative evidence from projects and donors, Global Environmental Benefits Assessment	- Focus groups and individual interviews - ROtI methodology - Desk review, project review protocols - Literature review, meta analysis of evaluation reports
What are the results of GEF support at the aggregate level (portfolio and program) by focal area and at the country level?	- Aggregated outcomes and impacts - Catalytic and replication effect - Contribution by the GEF - Overall outcomes and impact of GEF support	- Projects' staff and beneficiaries, national and local government representatives - ROtI studies - Project related reviews, (implementation reports, terminal evaluations, TE reviews, etc.), PMIS, Agencies' project databases - Data from overall projects and other donors	- Field visits, focus groups and individual interviews - ROtI methodology - GEF portfolio aggregate analysis - Desk review, ROtI
What are the outcomes of GEF support and their impact on local populations and the global environment?	- Aggregated outcomes and impacts from above	- Project related documentation (project document and logframe, implementation reports, terminal evaluations, ROtI report TE reviews, etc.), PMIS, Agencies' project databases	- Focus groups and individual interviews - ROtI - GEF portfolio aggregate analysis - Desk review
What has been the extent of emphasis on land-use based approaches in the management of natural resources?	- Types of endogenous land-use based approaches promoted and used in GEF initiatives - Level of appropriation and retention by local communities	- Project related reviews, (implementation reports, terminal evaluations, TE reviews, etc.) - Evaluative evidence from projects and donors, Global Environmental Benefits Assessment	- Desk review, project review protocols - Focus groups and individual interviews - GEF portfolio aggregate analysis

Key question	Indicators / basic data	Source of information	Methodology
To what extent is GEF support addressing Nicaragua's vulnerability to climate change and the options it has to address those changes in the future?	- Use of vulnerability indicators as cited in First National Communication - Integration of climate change adaptation issues in portfolio	- Climate change strategy - Project related reviews, (implementation reports, terminal evaluations, TE reviews, etc.) - Projects' staff and beneficiaries, national and local government representatives	- Desk review, project review protocols - Interviews and focus groups
Is GEF support effective in producing results related to the dissemination of lessons learned in GEF projects and with partners?	- Project design, preparation and implementation have incorporated lessons from previous projects within and outside the GEF	- Project related reviews, (implementation reports, terminal evaluations, TE reviews, etc.) - NGO staff, projects' staff and beneficiaries, national and local government representatives	- Desk review, ROtI methodology, GEF portfolio and pipeline analysis - Focus groups and individual interviews
Is GEF support effective in producing results which last in time and continue after project completion? What are the challenges related to ensuring sustainable results?	- Availability of financial and economic resources - Stakeholders' ownership, social factors - Existence of technical capacity - Environmental risks - Existence of an institutional and legal framework	- Project related reviews, (implementation reports, terminal evaluations, TE reviews, etc.) - Country Legal Environmental Framework	- Focus groups and individual interviews - Project review protocols - ROtI methodology - GEF portfolio analysis - Literature review, timelines, historical causality, etc
Relevance			
Is GEF support relevant to: the National Human Development Plan, development needs, priorities and challenges, the National Strategy for Climate Change and its Action Plan, the National Biodiversity Strategy and the Environmental Action Plan, as well as the action plans for other GEF national focal areas?	- GEF support is within Nicaragua's sustainable development agenda and environmental priorities - GEF supports development needs (i.e., income generating, capacity development) and reduces challenges - The GEF's various types of modalities, projects and instruments are in coherence with countries' needs and challenges - Level of GEF funding compared to other ODA in the environmental sector - GEF support has country	- Human Development Plan, the National Environmental Action Plan, the Climate Change and Biodiversity Strategies - Project related documentation (project document and logframe, implementation reports, terminal evaluations, TE reviews, etc.), PMIS, Agencies' project databases - Available databases (international as WB, OECD, etc., and national, i.e. dept of statistics, other) - Government officials, agencies' staff, donors and civil society representatives	- Desk review, GEF portfolio analysis by focal area, Agency, modality and project status (national) - Stakeholder consultation (focus groups, individual interviews) - Literature review, timelines, historical causality, etc.

Key question	Indicators / basic data	Source of information	Methodology
	ownership and is country based (i.e., project origin, design and implementation) - GEF support linked to the national environmental action plans (PANIC); National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP); national communications to UNFCCC; POPs National Implementation Plans (NIPs); National Capacity Self Assessment (NCSA); adaptation to climate change (NAPA), etc.	- Country Legal Environmental Framework - GEF-supported enabling activities and products (NCSA, PANIC, national communications to UN conventions, etc.) - Small Grant Programme country strategy - Government officials, agencies' staff, donors and civil society representatives	
Is GEF support in Nicaragua relevant to the objectives linked to the different Global Environmental Benefits (GEBs) in biodiversity, greenhouse gases, international waters, land degradation, and chemicals focal areas?	- Project outcomes and impacts are related to the RAF/STAR Global Environmental Benefit index (for biodiversity and climate change) and to other global indicators for POPs, land degradation and international waters - GEF support linked to national commitments to conventions	- National convention action plans, RAF, BD scorecard, etc. - Country Legal Environmental Framework - Project related documentation (project document and logframe, implementation reports, terminal evaluations, TE reviews, etc.), PMIS, Agencies' project databases - Government officials, agencies' staff, donors and civil society representatives - Global Environmental Benefits Assessment	- Desk review, project field visits, project review protocols - Literature review, timelines, historical causality, etc. - GEF portfolio analysis by focal area, agency, modality and project status (national) - Stakeholder consultation (focus groups, individual interviews) - Literature review
Are GEF and its Agencies supporting environmental and sustainable development prioritization, country ownership and decision-making process of Nicaragua?	- GEF Agencies' support to national environment and sustainable development prioritization, country ownership and country decision-making process	- GEF Secretariat staff and technical staff from GEF Agencies - Government officials, agencies' staff, donors and civil society representatives - GEF Instrument, Council decisions, focal area strategies, GEF4 programming strategy, GEF Agencies' country strategies and plans - Project-related documentation (project document and logframe,	- Stakeholder consultation (focus groups, individual interviews) - Desk review, GEF portfolio analysis by focal area, Agency, modality and project status (national)

Key question	Indicators / basic data	Source of information	Methodology
		implementation reports, terminal evaluations, TE reviews, etc.), PMIS, Agencies' project databases	
What is Nicaragua doing within the GEF focal area programs and strategies with its own resources and /or with the support from other donors?	- Activities by the government and others - Amount and percentage of cofinancing by source and focal area	- GEF focal area strategies - Project related reviews (implementation reports, terminal evaluations, TE reviews, etc.) and analysis of cofinancing - Database of project - Global Environmental Benefits Assessment - Country Legal Environmental Framework	- Desk review of relevant country-level information - Analysis of project information and database on cofinancing - Interviews and focus groups
To what extent has the design and implementation of GEF supported initiatives focused on participatory processes and gender?	- Types of gender sensitive methods used in GEF initiatives - The promotion of gender sensitive methods in GEF initiatives - Types of participatory processes used in GEF initiatives - Types of participatory processes promoted in GEF initiatives	- Project related reviews, (implementation reports, terminal evaluations, TE reviews, etc.) - NGO staff, projects' staff and beneficiaries	- Focus groups and individual interviews - Desk review
Efficiency			
How much time, money and effort does it take to develop and implement a project, by type of GEF support modality, including SGP?	- Process indicators: processing timing (according to project cycle steps), preparation and implementation cost by type of modalities, etc. - Projects drop-outs from PDF and cancellations - GEF vs. cofinancing	- Project related documentation (project document and logframe, implementation reports, terminal evaluations, TE reviews, etc.), PMIS, Agencies' project databases - GEF Secretariat and agencies' staff and government officials - National and local government officials, donors, NGOs, beneficiaries	- Desk review, GEF portfolio analysis, timelines - Interviews, field visits, project review protocols
What are the roles, engagement and coordination among various stakeholders in project implementation?	- Level of participation - Roles and responsibilities of GEF actors - Coordination between GEF projects - Existence of a national (/regional)	- Project related reviews, (implementation reports, terminal evaluations, TE reviews, etc.) - Project staff, government officials - GEF Secretariat staff and technical staff from GEF agencies	- Desk review and meta analysis of evaluation reports, interviews and field visits - Interviews, field visits, institutional analysis

Key question	Indicators / basic data	Source of information	Methodology
	coordination mechanism for GEF support		
What are the synergies for GEF programming and implementation among: GEF Agencies; national institutions; GEF projects; and other donor-supported projects and activities?	- Acknowledgment between GEF agencies of each other's projects, and between institutions of each other's projects - Effective communication and technical support by GEF project Agencies, organizations and institutions - Complementarity of GEF support	- Project related reviews, (implementation reports, terminal evaluations, TE reviews, etc.) - GEF Agency staff, national executing agencies - NGO staffs and donors' representatives - Evaluations of other donors' funded projects	- Desk review and meta analysis of evaluation reports, interviews and field visits - Meta analysis of evaluation reports
What role does M&E play in increasing project adaptive management and overall efficiency?	- Quality of M&E outputs - Quality and level of adaptive management applied to projects and programs - Project compliance with GEF and GEF Agency M&E policies - Level of independence, quality and timeliness of external evaluations	- Project related reviews (implementation reports, mid-term reviews, terminal evaluations, TE reviews, etc.) - Local and national government - GEF Secretariat staff - Executing agency staff	- Desk reviews: project review protocols, meta-analysis of evaluation reports - Stakeholder consultation: individual interviews, focus groups - Project field visits