

OPS4

PROGRESS TOWARD IMPACT



FOURTH OVERALL PERFORMANCE STUDY OF THE GEF

COUNTRY CASE STUDIES: TERMS OF REFERENCE

METHODOLOGICAL PAPER #II

FOURTH OVERALL PERFORMANCE STUDY (OPS4)

COUNTRY CASE STUDIES & FIELD VISITS

Terms of Reference

September 10, 2008

Introduction

1. OPS4 will collect data using different types of methods. One of the most important and relevant to OPS4 will be Country Case Studies. These studies will include visits to a selected number of countries (see below for the list) to interview key GEF stakeholders at the national level and to verify project accomplishments and results through visits to a few completed projects.¹ This document is based on the Standard TORs for Country Portfolio Evaluations (CPE), one of the annual activities of the GEFEO workprogram. Given the scope of OPS4, the Country Case Studies should include questions from three out of the five clusters: results, relevance and performance. This exercise should be a light CPE, with more concrete questions (directly coming from OPS4), more limited number of stakeholders to be interviewed (basically the key actors participating in the GEF in the country) and visits to projects (one or two completed projects to verify results). It is estimated that each of the case studies should be prepared in about 30 days of work for a senior consultant working locally in the country.

2. The following list includes the countries selected as case studies for OPS4:

- Latin America and Caribbean: Chile, Mexico, Uruguay and Belize
- Africa: Mozambique, Seychelles, and Ethiopia
- Asia: Indonesia, Iran, China, and Bhutan

3. Additional countries will be visited for purposes of the Annual Country Portfolio Report (Egypt and Syria) and the Impact Evaluation on Ozone Depleting Substances (Russia, the Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan) with the possibilities of exploring some of the questions that are being studied in these TORs. Furthermore, GEF Agency and Donor visits will take place as well, and again the possibilities for taking on board a reduced number of issues will be explored.

Background to OPS4

4. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) is a mechanism for international cooperation to provide new and additional funding to meet the agreed incremental costs of securing global environmental benefits, working in partnership with GEF Implementing Agencies (UNEP, UNDP, and the World

¹ The selection of projects will be done according to the Terminal Evaluation Verification exercise, part of the Annual Performance Report (APR) exercise.

Bank), seven Executing Agencies, national governments, and civil society. More information can be found at its website: www.thegef.org.

5. The GEF is replenished by donors every four years. All replenishments have been informed by “overall performance studies”, which have provided an independent assessment of the achievements of the GEF up to the time of the study. The GEF Assembly requested the Council at its third meeting to ensure the preparation of a fourth overall performance study of the GEF for submission to the next assembly meeting.²

6. The GEF Evaluation Office proposed to Council in its Four-Year Rolling Work Plan and Budget for fiscal year 2008 in June 2007 to undertake the Fourth Overall Performance Study (OPS4) as part of its regular work program. Council approved the principle that OPS4 would be managed and implemented by the Evaluation Office, except for study components where this would pose a conflict of interest.³ Terms of Reference for OPS4 were approved by Council in August 2008 and are available in the Evaluation Office website.

7. Following the overall objectives of previous overall performance studies and bearing in mind specifically articles 14a and 15 of the Instrument, the overall objective of the Fourth Overall Performance Study will be:

***To assess the extent to which the GEF is achieving
its objectives and to identify potential improvements***

8. OPS4 will be based on the GEF objectives as laid down in the GEF Instrument and in reviews by the Assembly, and as developed and adopted by the GEF Council in operational policies and programs for GEF-financed activities.

9. More than in previous overall performance studies, OPS4 will report on portfolio outcomes, the sustainability and catalytic effect of those outcomes and the impacts that were achieved in its focal areas. There are five clusters of questions on which OPS4 will focus:

- **Role and added value** of the GEF: to assess the relevance of the GEF within the international architecture for tackling global environmental problems, of which the various multilateral environmental agreements are important building blocks.
- **Results** of the GEF: to assess concrete, measurable and verifiable results (outcomes and impacts) of the GEF in its six focal areas, and in multi-focal area efforts and how these achievements relate to the intended results of interventions and to the problems that they were targeted at.
- **Relevance** of the GEF to the conventions it serves as a financial mechanism and to recipient countries.
- **Performance** of the GEF: to investigate whether the performance is up to the best international standards or whether improvements are needed.
- **Resource mobilization and financial management**: on the level of the Facility itself.

² Chair’s Summary of the Third GEF Assembly, Cape Town, South Africa, August 29-30, 2006, paragraph 12

³ Joint Summary of the Chairs, GEF Council Meeting, June 12-15, 2007, paragraph 14

10. The Country Case Studies will concentrate on three of the five clusters: results, relevance and performance. These studies will collect data, information and opinions through interviews and/or focus groups with representatives from country recipient governments, focal points and project stakeholders and beneficiaries, as well as from GEF agency representatives in the countries. The country studies will include visits to GEF funded activities to record or verify results and achievements of completed projects.

Country Selection

11. The Evaluation Office has to visit a sufficient number of countries within the context of OPS4 to ensure representativeness of findings, within given time and financial constraints. Already a high number of countries have been visited in GEF evaluations over the past four years since OPS3. In order to achieve a solid coverage of regions, groups of countries, high and low recipients, coverage of focal areas, it was decided that 11 additional countries will be chosen to conduct specific reviews for OPS4.

12. The country selection was firstly conducted by region. Two regions were considered adequately covered by on-going evaluations this year: MENA (two Country Portfolio Evaluations in Egypt and Syria) and ECA (impact evaluations for Ozone Depleting Substances in Russia and Ukraine). Countries in the other regions were selected first through a random selection, then by taking in to account previous evaluations conducted by the Office and finally by considering certain criteria that would make the selection relevant to OPS4 and improve the representativeness (i.e., size and diversity of portfolio, RAF allocation type, number of completed projects, SIDS, LDCs, land-locked countries, etc.). The following table presents the list of countries selected for OPS4 Country Case Studies:

Table 1. OPS4 Country Case Studies OPS4

Region	Country	Type of evaluation	RAF Group		RAF individual		LDC	SIDS	Land Locked
			Bio	CC	Bio	CC			
MENA	Egypt	CPE			X	X			
MENA	Syria	CPE				X			
ECA	Russia	Impact			X	X			
ECA	Kazakhstan	Impact			X	X			X
ECA	Uzbekistan	Impact	X			X			X
ECA	Ukraine	Impact	X			X			X
LAC	Chile	Case			X	X			
LAC	Mexico	Case			X	X			
LAC	Uruguay	Case	X	X					
LAC	Belize	Case	X	X				X	
Africa	Mozambique	Case		X	X		X		
Africa	Seychelles	Case			X			X	
Africa	Ethiopia	Case			X	X	X		X
Asia	Indonesia	Case			X	X			
Asia	Iran	Case			X	X			

Region	Country	Type of evaluation	RAF Group		RAF individual		LDC	SIDS	Land Locked
Asia	China	Catalytic			X	X			
Asia	Bhutan	Case	X	X			X		X

Objectives and Key Questions

13. Based on the TORs for OPS4, the Country Case Studies will have the following objectives:

- Report on concrete, measurable and verifiable **results** (outcomes and impacts) of GEF supported activities (particularly at the national level, but when applicable and relevant national results coming from regional and global activities with national components in the country). The risks to the sustainability of these results should also be reported. Specific questions will be guided by the questions in the results cluster of OPS4.
- Assess the **relevance** of the GEF support in the country from several points of view: national sustainable development and environmental frameworks/strategies/priorities; the GEF mandate to achieve global environmental benefits; and the guidance to conventions. Specific questions will be guided by the questions in the relevance cluster of OPS4.
- Report on **performance** issues affecting results of the GEF such as the functioning of the GEF Focal Point mechanism, project cycle, RAF implementation, cost-effectiveness of GEF activities, preparation, supervision and evaluation of projects. Specific questions will be guided by the performance cluster of OPS4.

14. The Country Case Studies do not have an objective of rating the performance of the 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 and overall OPS4 assessment.

15. The OPS4 Country Case Studies will be guided by the following key questions and each case study will report only on those that are appropriate and for which sufficient information could be found (also identifying which questions were inappropriate and for which questions insufficient information was available):

Results of the GEF support

- Which concrete, measurable and verifiable results have been achieved by the GEF in the six focal areas and in multi-focal area activities?
- To what extent has the GEF support contributed to the identification, development and implementation of national policies/strategies/priorities on environment and sustainable development and institutional capacities?
- What have been the concrete, measurable and verifiable results on this?
- What are the risks to the sustainability of results: socially, institutionally and financially?

Relevance of GEF support

- a) Is the GEF support relevant to: the national sustainable development agenda and environmental priorities; national development needs and challenges; decision-making processes; action plans and prioritization for the GEF's national focal areas?
- b) Is the GEF support in the country relevant to the objectives of the different global environmental benefits (i.e., biodiversity, greenhouse gases, international waters, POPs, land degradation, ozone)?
- c) Is the country supporting the GEF mandate and focal areas programs and strategies with its own resources and/or the support from other donors? To what extent is country ownership evident in the GEF portfolio?
- d) Have trade-offs between global environmental benefits and local development benefits been handled adequately?
- e) To what extent has the GEF support promoted international cooperation in environmental areas, particularly in relationship to international waters?

Performance issues affecting results of the GEF

- a) How much time, effort and financial resources does it take to develop and implement projects, by type of GEF support modality?
- b) What are the roles, types of engagement and coordination among different stakeholders in project implementation?
- c) To what extent are GEF project lessons and results disseminated?
- d) What are the linkages and coordination between GEF projects, GEF Agencies; national institutions and other donor-supported projects and activities?
- e) To what extent have GEF operations changed after the introduction of RAF?

16. Each question is further developed in a preliminary evaluation matrix which is under development. The matrix will contain a tentative list of indicators or basic data, potential sources of information, and methodology components. As a basis, the evaluation will use the indicators in the GEF project documents as well as indicators of each of the focal areas and RAF as well as any appropriate national sustainable development and environmental indicator. Weaknesses of M&E at the project and GEF program levels have been mentioned in past evaluations, and may pose challenges to the assessment. Not all the information is of a quantitative nature.

Scope and Limitations

17. The Country Case Studies will cover all types of GEF supported activities in the country at all stages of the project cycle (pipeline, on-going 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 nationally implemented projects. In addition, all regional and global projects in which the selected country participates will be taken into consideration, particularly national components, to present the overall support and participation in the GEF but without attempting to fully assess their aggregate relevance, results and performance. Special attention will be paid to international waters projects which are usually regional in nature as well as UNEP's portfolio, also usually regional in nature. The GEF portfolio is defined as the national projects plus all relevant regional and/or global projects.

18. The stage of the project will determine the expected focus.

Table 2. Focus of case study according to stage of project

Project Status	Focus		
	Relevance	Performance	Results
Completed	Full	Full	Full
On-going	Full	Partially	Likelihood
Pipeline	Expected	Processes	Not applicable
SGP	Expected	Processes	Likelihood

19. The GEF does not have country programs, so there is no GEF framework with predetermined objectives against which to assess overall results of the GEF support. The country case study will therefore consider the portfolio of projects and activities, their objectives, internal coherence and how the portfolio has evolved. The country programs of the GEF Agencies, as agreed with the Government and the country's national strategies and mid and long term goals, will be considered as a relevant framework for GEF support.

20. GEF support is provided through partnerships with many institutions, so it is challenging to consider GEF support separate from the contribution of partners. The country study will not attempt to provide a direct attribution of development results to the GEF, but address the contribution of the GEF support to the overall achievements.

21. In addition, the context in which these projects were developed, approved and are being implemented constitutes a focus of the study. Furthermore, the study will include a brief historical presentation of the national sustainable development and environmental policies, strategies and priorities, legal environment in which these policies are implemented and enforced and their relationship to GEF Agency country strategies and programs and the relevant GEF policies, principles, programs and strategies.

Methodology

22. The OPS4 Country Case Study will be conducted by staff of GEF Evaluation Office and consultants based in the country or with extensive country experience (the study team). The GEF Focal Point in the country, although not a member of the study team, will be an essential partner in the study. The consultant(s) should qualify under the GEF Evaluation Office Ethical Guidelines, and will be requested to sign a declaration of interest to indicate no recent (last 3-5 years) relationship with GEF support in the country. The Evaluation Office will provide extensive support in identifying and providing documentation and contact with relevant institutions as well as any logistical arrangements at the local level.

23. The methodology includes a series of components using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods and tools. The main method used will be a desk review of existing documentation to be provided primarily by the Office and collected in country. The expected sources of information include:

- Project level: project documents, project implementation reports, terminal evaluations, reports from monitoring visits, documents produced by projects
- Country level: national sustainable development agendas, environmental priorities and strategies, GEF-wide, focal area strategies and action plans, GEF supported national capacity self-assessment, global and national environmental indicators

- GEF Agency levels: country assistance strategies and frameworks and their evaluations and reviews
- Evaluative evidence at country level from GEF Evaluation Office evaluations, such as the joint Evaluation of the GEF Activity Cycle, the Overall Performance Studies, or from national evaluation organizations
- Statistics and scientific sources, especially for national environmental indicators
- Interviews with GEF stakeholders: GEF Focal Points, other relevant government departments (particularly convention focal points), key NGOs with direct experience with the GEF; and representatives of the GEF agencies and SGP in the country.
- Interviews with selected GEF beneficiaries, particularly those identified in completed projects.
- Field visits to one or two project sites, particularly those completed, to verify results.
- Information from national consultation workshops.

24. The desk review will gather and describe quantitative data to assess the relevance and performance of GEF support using projects as the unit of analysis (that is, linkages with national priorities, time and cost of preparing and implementing projects, implementation and completion ratings, etc.) and to measure GEF results (that is, progress towards achieving global environmental impacts).

25. The study team will be provided with standard tools and protocols, which will have to be adapted to the particular country context. These tools include a project review protocol to conduct the desk and field reviews of GEF projects; and questionnaires to conduct interviews with different stakeholders. There will be two types of project review protocols: one developed for nationally implemented projects and another one for regional/global projects. A selection of projects will be visited. The criteria for selecting them will be finalized during the implementation of the study but emphasis will be placed on completed projects and those cluster within a particular geographic area, given time and financial resources limitations. Furthermore, the verification visit will have additional protocols and questions. An additional budget will be made available where necessary.

Process and Outputs

26. Each of the studies is expected to be conducted within a maximum of a 2 month period with a maximum input from consultants of 30 days in the most complex, larger countries. All studies need be ready by the end of March at the latest. These general TORs will be used to guide the study without having to prepare separate TORs. The study team will complete the following tasks, with support from the GEF Evaluation Office:

Task	Primary Responsibility	Maximum days from consultants
1) Preparatory desk review: gathering and analyzing of existing documents, preparation of context and GEF portfolio.	Evaluation Office	0
Literature review: existing evaluative evidence: (program, focal area, project)	Evaluation Office	1
Literature review: national context of focal area context and sustainable development/environmental priorities	Consultant	3

GEF portfolio database of all GEF supported activities to the country with basic information (name, GEF Agency, focal area, GEF funding, executing agency), implementation status, project cycle information, cofinancing, major objectives and expected (or actual) results.	Evaluation Office	1
Collection of documents on projects and the GEF	Evaluation Office	0
2) Field work		
Project(s) verification	Consultant	4
Interviews	Consultant	3
3) Data analysis and draft report		
Data analysis	Consultant	13
Draft report (including incorporation of comments from major GEF key stakeholders)	Consultant	5

27. The GEF Focal Point will be requested to provide support to the study such as: suggestion on key people to be interviewed, facilitation of communication with relevant government departments, support with the agenda of the evaluation, field visits and meetings, and suggestions on main documents. The GEF Agencies will be requested to provide support to the study regarding their specific projects or activities supported by the GEF, including suggestions on key project and Agency staff to be interviewed, participation in interviews, arrangement of field visits to projects, and provision of project documentation and data.

28. The main output will be a report consisting of a systematic treatment of the key questions, including data, analysis and evaluative judgments. See Annex 1 for a tentative outline. The GEF Evaluation Office will bear full responsibility for the content of the report. Government and national stakeholders will be able to review and comment on a draft prior to finalization.

29. The GEF Evaluation Office will take sole responsibility for including the data, analysis and judgments in the Fourth Overall Performance Study of the GEF and will determine at a later date to what extent and in which way the Country Case Studies could be made public, if that would be possible, given time and funding constraints.

ANNEX 1. OPS4 COUNTRY CASE STUDIES - REPORT OUTLINE

The report should be a concise, stand-alone working document (it will be determined at a later date to what extent the report will be made public beyond the request for comments from key stakeholders on the draft). The format should be a presentation of data per key question, analysis of these findings and an initial evaluative judgment. Data should be separately presented to the GEF Evaluation Office to allow for incorporation in the overall OPS4 database and inclusion in OPS4.

A draft of this report, which does not have to contain the detailed data, will be prepared for review and comments by major GEF stakeholders at the national level. It should ideally be circa 20 pages.

CHAPTER 1. Study Framework Background and Objectives

- Key Questions

- Methodology

CHAPTER 2. Results Global Environmental Impacts by focal area and in multi-focal area activities

- Achievements in supporting national priorities, including capacity building

- Catalytic and replication effects

- Risks to sustainability of results

CHAPTER 3. Relevance

- GEF Support and Sustainable Development and Environmental Priorities

- GEF Support and global conventions and international waters agreements

- GEF Support as regards GEF mandate

- Country ownership

CHAPTER 4. Performance

- Time, effort and money

- Roles and Responsibilities

- GEF Focal Point Mechanism

- Lessons Learned

- Synergies

ANNEXES:

- Terms of Reference

- Project results

