

## **Technical Paper #7: Stakeholder Survey**

### **ANNEX: COMPILATION OF FREE RESPONSES FROM THE RAF MTR STAKEHOLDER SURVEYS**

This collection does not include all free responses, but instead the responses have been selected to allow ready access to comments that articulate the diversity of points of view conveyed in the MTR online surveys. The survey source is given in parentheses after each quote. Narrative was drawn from MS Excel downloads of data from the MTR stakeholder survey data on Survey Monkey ([www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)). See the Technical Paper #7: Stakeholder Survey for more information.

Note that “general survey” is predominantly constituted by responses from GEF Agency staff. Thematic categories of responses were developed inductively from a review of the comments themselves. The categories include:

- Climate Change: Adaptation
- Countries with Specific Circumstances
- Corporate Budget Cut
- Country Allocations
- Country Ownership
- Design
- Design vs. Implementation, Importance of
- Fifty Percent Rule
- Global and Regional
- Knowledge Sharing
- Project Cycle and GEF Changes
- Programmatic Approaches
- RAF: Costs and Benefits
- RAF: Overall Comments
- Recommendations for Improvement
- Roles: Agencies
- Roles: Focal Points
- Roles: General
- Roles: NGOs, Civil Society, Private Sector
- Roles: Secretariat
- Small Grants Programme
- SIDS
- Strengths and Weaknesses
- Support and Guidance, Knowledge Gap, and Transparency
- Time and Process Constraints
- Utilization
- Other Comments

Please keep in mind that free-response comments are not to be considered statistically representative of the views of all or most survey respondents.

### **Climate Change: Adaptation**

Local groups, both Govt, NGO and private sector, were very discouraged to see that while the Pacific bears a significant cost due to climate change caused by other countries, (One highway funded by the World Bank in China, will cause disappearance of some of the smaller islands and create havoc for people now living on the water close to main cities in the Pacific Islands) yet funds are not available to deal with this, but the large allocations go to the polluting countries. While the rationale is understandable, there is international injustice. (general survey)

### **Countries with Special Circumstances:**

La notion de compétitivité ne tient plus compte des réalités et contextes (capacités d'absorption) propres de chaque pays et notamment les pays en crise. (general survey)

### **Corporate Budget Cut:**

Although the termination of the corporate budget is not linked to the RAF, this came at a very bad time for UNEP because while the cost of conducting GEF business increased with the RAF (UNEP is expected to have most of its portfolio at the regional and global levels), the organization lost a significant portion of its income as a result of its relatively small portfolio. (general survey)

### **Country Allocations:**

The lack of certitude about the real amount of money allocated to each country or "the group" conspires against planification and good governance. Focal Points were told that allocations, when "indicative", would be awarded to countries with good general performance and sound projects. Eventually, mega-diverse or mega-polluters know how much money they can expect, but countries of the group never know if the allocation is a roof, a real allocation or a mirage. (FP respondent)

Mostly the allocations are so small that the new GEF financing has stopped entirely because the projects are too expensive to process and administer. (general)

It [relationship of costs and benefits] depends on whether you are a group or an individual allocation country, I suppose. (FP respondent)

Decisions of where to develop new projects in CC and BD have been very strongly influenced by availability of available RAF allocations of sufficient scale, not on need or opportunity. (general)

The country allocation was somewhat positive, however, some countries with relatively low allocations (in the 4-6M margin) would have wanted to program all their allocation for one project. The fear of losing their allocation if they hadn't submitted any project by the end of the two year term resulted in the submission of projects that may not be the top priority but that were submitted to lock in resources. As a result, these countries are left with two or three projects rather than one large strategic project. (respondent to general survey)

I work in the Pacific. The original RAF allocation for the countries in the Pacific was so low, that it was not worth even considering using GEF financing. (general survey)

First programming was completely delayed by the complete confusion of the first 18 months with unclear and shifting guidance and constantly changing procedures and templates because the GEF Secretariat was

not prepared when the RAF came into force and essentially began implementing the RAF flying by the seat of their pants. At the outset, there was considerable disgruntlement between the 'haves' and the 'have nots', and also because a number of countries lost proposals that had been under development in GEF 3 and were quite advanced. This served to further delay programming as countries were understandably reluctant to give up projects that were developed in response to national priorities. There was no transparency or equity in how decisions were made about which projects were retained and which were 'cancelled' and the responsibility for making the hard decisions was conveniently shifted to the IAs. This did not serve to get implementation of the RAF off to a good start. (general)

The RAF has effectively distorted the GEF and created perverse incentives as well as new disincentives. It has penalized many smaller countries, which are not only rich in biodiversity (eg Bhutan), but where it is also possible to achieve good conservation impacts because of a variety of factors that have not been adequately considered in the design of the RAF. It has also penalized small countries rich in marine rather than terrestrial biodiversity, eg Maldives, the Pacific SIDS. For many small countries, with more limited resources and capacity, the hassle of applying for GEF funds is simply not worth it for just a \$1 million project. It is even less worth their while to try and develop an FSP for slightly more in the second half of the GEF. These kinds of considerations have also affected programming in the countries with relatively small allocations (in the \$5-6 million range), which has meant that they could either develop only relatively small projects because of the 50% rule or have to wait till the second half of the GEF. Meanwhile, large allocations to already rich developing countries (China, India, Brazil) have made a mockery of the spirit of Rio and the GEF. The only people to benefit from this are effectively a few individuals - the GEF Operational Focal Points and their division within relatively weak environment ministries. The individual GEF allocations is trivial compared to the economies of these countries and therefore is of limited consequence within government as a whole, particularly when it comes to Finance and Planning Ministries, where the real decisions that impact NRM management are made. A bit more money, however, could make a huge amount of difference in many of the smaller group countries. (general survey)

Country allocation is positive due to the fact that it ensures predictability of GEF resource for planning sake. It also helps to direct assistance to where resource is need most and high impact is anticipated. (general survey)

Group allocations are very difficult to track and manage by the countries. If this is compounded with the 50% rule it is even worst. (general survey)

The current formula to not take into account (a) the potential impact of GEF resources relative to overall public expenditures on GEF focal activities, and the associated potential to influence policy reform and leverage other sources of finance, and (b) the fact that administration costs per project do not correspond with the size of the GEF grant, so the rules increase administration costs relative to the costs of GEF grant flows. In ECA I believe that Russia and Kazakhstan have not been able to fully utilize their allocations, while there are many other smaller countries which desperately need GEF resources, especially if the could be provided as large enough allocations to make the project processing and administration worthwhile. (general survey)

The question on focal points and project executing partners should have been divided between group and national allocation countries. For group countries it was more negative as expressed above. For national allocation countries it was more positive. (general survey)

Countries with high emissions and being big polluters were rewarded with big country allocations so this is not rewarding countries for their performance but rather the contrary. (general survey)

The RAF is not favourable to innovation and initiative for group countries due to limitations of allocations and also does not favour regional activities which could leverage better global environmental benefits because countries though interested may not be able to take part due to resource constraints (general survey)

Evaluate the RAF based on the opportunity costs that it has imposed to vulnerable and threatened countries. Although the formula may give a sense of fairness, in term of population, complexity and magnitude of environmental problems and what not, but the actual allocations for countries present a very wide range of access to RAF funding - which defeat the sense of fairness across countries. (general)

There is significant disadvantage to countries with group allocation. A number of innovative interventions that would have been funded in climate change had to be aborted. The shift to Medium size and full size projects has resulted in significant delays and lack of timely delivery. The restriction on group allocation should be removed, and provision should be made for at least a portion to be allotted to SGP. Further allocation to programs in general should be based on performance. (SGP NCs)

[The RAF] does not sufficiently include countries that are most in need of help, precisely because they have not been able to perform well on biodiversity or climate change. (STAP)

### **Country Ownership:**

Individual allocations truly put the countries in the driver's seat and country driven-ness can reach its full manifestation. Countries can plan use of the resources in a more structured and methodical way that the previous first-come, first-served policy never allowed. (general survey)

[Effect of the RAF is] positive; the allocation amount within RAF for some specific countries is clear from the beginning - better possibility for allocation strategies per country. (NGOs)

The RAF has killed the possibility of doing projects with the private sector. (general survey)

Government driven RAF brings down the program to its knees. (SGP NCs)

The Group Allocations were bad in themselves because they created great uncertainty as to how to work and made the majority of countries feel as if they were being left out. When combined with the 50% rule (which was not in fact 50%) the effect was compounded. Nobody wants to put in a lot of work for 1 million dollars. National allocations were good because they provided certainty. Allocations to global and regional projects were relatively insignificant and there was no clarity on how they were to be used. (general survey)

Countries with individual allocations have, for the first time in most cases, taken GEF programming seriously, instead of reacting to agency- or NGO-driven submissions. This has been a somewhat painful exercise in those countries with which I have been involved, but ultimately has resulted in substantially increased capacity of the GEF focal point and associated staff. (general survey)

The countries in the Pacific are still struggling with selecting the different range of allocations to suit their needs and capacities. For many of these small islands states regional and group allocations are the preferred mode as it needs extensive external support to their limited human resources to efficiently administer and maximize the use of funds. (general survey)

Competition for and limited resources under RAF may result in less strategic prioritization (tailoring needs to available resources rather than the other way round). (general survey)

Programming has been further distorted by the GEF Secretariat's notion that empowering a single individual within the Ministries of Environment, ie the GEF OFP, is equivalent to ensuring country drivenness and national ownership. The OFP often does not even represent the consensus within the Ministry let alone ensure that there is true stakeholder consultation. But worst of all, despite this rhetoric of increased national ownership and empowerment, the greatest empowerment has been of the GEF Secretariat, with undue interference and control by some Task Managers and the GEF CEO as a result of their new 'direct relationship' with GEF OFPs. This has meant that GEF CEO and some Task Managers with little understanding of the country context have sometimes completely changed the course of programming to suit their own whims - for example, strongly 'encouraging' countries (i.e the GEF OFP) to adopt a programmatic approach and to allocate resources from different focal areas in particular ways. This has added further layers of complexity (programmes can only be submitted to full Council meetings) - rules about programmes also kept changing, so programmes could not be submitted without a PIF attached by 2008, all of which have contributed to further delays in programming and delivery. (general survey)

The RAF appears to add an extra layer of complexity without any benefit. Local country ownership is not enhanced, and the 50% rule, given that project development times are fairly long, merely results in more smaller projects, not better projects. Group allocations add further confusion. In addition we have heard that there is an unspoken 90% rule also being applied (countries cannot allocate more than 90% of the RAF allocation) - which underlines the arbitrary nature of the approach. (general survey)

RAF has also negative implications on the size of projects in group countries. therefore GEF impact might decrease for these countries. (general survey)

The RAF certainly negatively impacted the access to GEF resources by international/ regional/local NGOs and private sectors since the allocation of resources are based on the country prioritization strongly influenced by government processes. (general survey)

The Ministries hosting the GEF OFP often take advantage of the control they have of the GEF resources and in some countries deliberately exclude line ministries and in particular NGOs that used to have better opportunities to develop MSPs with a community-based focus. (general survey)

As mentioned earlier, the RAF has not helped support public involvement and participation, and increased rivalry and competition rather than donor harmonization. (general survey)

We have been completely unable to put forth any new projects with the private sector under the RAF. It has made it virtually impossible to obtain focal point endorsement. Hopefully the new mechanism for private sector (The GEF Earth Fund) will help solve this problem; however the funding allocation is low for these kinds of activities. (general survey)

The roll out of the RAF could have been better thought out and done in a positive enabling environment. Instead a number of constraints were added at the same time by the GEF Sec. For example, while countries were just learning about the impact of the RAF on them, the GEF Sec mandated that countries have to send a letter to them identifying their priorities, then the GEF Sec came up with a mostly arbitrary set of comparative advantages for agencies and expanded the GEF agencies to include the EAs at which time they also terminated the IA budget. On top of this, the GEF Sec then started calling countries and making decisions for countries on what are their priorities and what agency they can work with. This is so contrary to a country-driven process. The GEF Sec is not accepting the guidance from the COPs either - which is where the countries, especially developing countries state their needs to implement their obligations under the Conventions. On the contrary, the guidance is used as "under consideration" and

therefore another slap for any country driven process the GEF may ascertain too. (general)

The developing countries that need the most support and assistance, have been completely short changed in this process. Most of these countries neither understand the process nor have the capacity to overcome the affects of the process and therefore are being doubly short changed. A new radical fund is needed now to take over from the GEF to help countries most in need of the support that is required. (general)

[The RAF] has had the effect of eliminating altogether any private sector participation, which could be crucial to achieving the objectives of the GEF, particularly in CC and BD. (general)

Predictability in funding has gone down even with RAF because the window of time was shortened and now all the risk in up-front time invested was shifted back to governments and agencies. This perception is leading to risk adverse behavior in terms of deciding whether or not to involve GEF contributions in projects. Resources available have also gone down making GEF a less significant and less reliable partner at the outset. (general)

While it is the case that the RAF allows greater "predictability of funding", this is small consolation when the funding envelope is so low for many small countries. (general)

[The RAF] may encourage the development of country GEF strategy that may in turn lead to better implementation of national environmental action plans and Conventions (general)

GEF Council/Secretariat should stress the need to develop participatory mechanisms within countries to promote broader identification and more transparent selection of proposals, rather than arbitrary allocation of slots/ceilings to a few partners. (general)

GEF itself should look at possible larger leverage of its resources. One of the fundamental principles of success: local ownership, appears to be neglected in the GEF strategy, and it exchanged for the words "ownership by international organizations". (general)

RAF, in principle, is generally good. The problem comes with preparedness of countries and agencies to respond to the evolving GEF procedures. In some cases, Agencies are not doing enough due to various reasons. Therefore, both countries and agencies should bear the blame of under performance. (general)

Project Execution Partners and Local NGOs have no input in the decision making process. Their needs and limitations cannot be known by the GEF. As a result the whole exercise is top down with GEF giving a handout and NGOs receiving. Its necessary for NGOs to interface with GEF directly say in a workshop and the information exchanged to be treated confidentially so as not to pit the Country UNOPS offices (UNDP/GEF Small Grants Programs) against the local NGO and jeopardize their chance of being supported with finances for their projects. For instance UNDP account procedures delay funds disbursements, the composition of the Country Selection Committees keeps some worthy NGOs from receiving funding because it was appointed and not elected, etc. (NGOs)

National NGOs are concerned that the RAF gains eligibility for the country, but unlike the past, creates a sense of entitlement in these resources in national government institutions, and diminishes the expectation upon national governments that they use the scientific and technical capacity of NGOs in the implementation of projects. (NGOs)

GEF has a very low visibility at the local NGO levels, because the Governmental Focal Points rarely inform the NGOs on GEF issues. Besides as GEF documents are mainly published in English and there

are no economic ways to translate into other languages the participation and engagement of NGOs is practically null. (NGOs)

NGOs, indigenous peoples and civil society in general are generally not favoured by the RAF. The overall focus of the RAF on governments could be redesigned to encompass a wider group of stakeholders. (NGOs)

Some specific effects we have identified is that the RAF allowed the country to define their own priorities in a very participatory process. The process of identifying priorities empowered the national agencies and created good ownership of the proposals. (NGOs)

Country ownership is an important hallmark of the RAF. However, there seems to be a disconnect between the planning processes of enabling activities and the "additional layer" of GEF4 programmatic approaches (such as the Pacific Alliance for Sustainability) which do not necessarily complement the earlier nationally driven decisions and priorities. In addition, certain GEF Secretariat-led steering committees have placed conditions on access to the RAF which were not openly discussed and debated by the GEF Council. The GEF Council for example may wish to directly engage the question of RAF access for SGP for countries in the "group" RAF category. (NGOs)

The RAF has discouraged governments and well-organized NGOs in submitting interesting proposals, at the time that is major certainty on climate change and clear negative impacts on global biodiversity. (NGOs)

Group countries appear to have their expectations initially raised by the RAF, only to be generally sidelined by the GEF Secretariat and Agencies who are struggling to handle an overly complex system. (NGOs)

The presence of government officials that know what SGP is doing has helped a lot for the commitment of government fund to SGP. (SGP NCs)

RAF may shift decision power in favor of the GEF Focal Points at the country level. GEF FPs consider themselves as the decision body of the whole GEF. In our case, the GEF Focal Point does not at all invite anybody out of the Ministry to the decision making processes (prioritising the projects etc). Thus, RAF has taken the transparency of the GEF. (SGP NCs)

RAF is strengthening governments' roles in portfolio planning; but this is not a strength! The government does not involve any stakeholders (inc. GEF agencies) into decision making. So how this can provide increased transparency in resource allocation? RAF may empower governments in negotiating with implementing or executing agencies. But it does also weaken the implementing or executing agencies vis-a-vis governments. It may also enhance interactions between government and SGP. However, make SGP more vulnerable to political influences. (SGP NCs)

The factors that determine country allocation is too complicated, as such the predictability of the funding is uncertain. (SGP NCs)

There is a better opportunity for the government to have a bigger role on the portfolio planning and look for impact on the GEF Focal Areas. [It calls for] more work, more analysis at the country level but better impact. (SGP NCs)

RAF has encouraged donors and private sector to contribute to environmental initiatives through co-financing. The RAF is however, so complicated that it seems to confuse stakeholders, particularly

eligibility of projects for funding, as if no country has the right to decide on its priorities. (Government staff)

Projects must be country driven and countries have their own priority to meet the overall global targets on environment. GEF must take this into account. This has not been the case with RAF to a certain extent as we have experienced it ourselves. (Government staff)

Within the countries receiving the RAF allocations, the program has been largely beneficial in allowing the countries to create integrated and coherent portfolios of interventions that would not have been possible otherwise. As noted above, however, these projects MAY not have been the "best" in an absolute sense. (STAP)

**Design:**

In my limited experience country allocations appeared to have more to do with overall biodiversity assets (strongly favoring large tropical countries), and little to do with performance vis a vis biodiversity or climate change. (general survey)

Performance indicators weight too low for rewarding countries and potentially modify their allocation (general survey)

The Global environmental benefits for biodiversity have been detrimental to (i) drylands biodiversity; (ii) countries where limited assessments have taken place - i.e. where IUCN and others have had limited interests; (iii) marine biodiversity. This has definitely had a huge impact on some countries. (general survey)

A country might not score very high in terms of biodiversity, and maybe it is degraded, but exactly for that we need to save the little forest left. The marginal value is very high! (general)

International NGOs felt particularly that the focus on national allocations undermined longstanding efforts at encouraging transboundary conservation efforts. (NGOs)

The RAF seems to be rigged against small countries and LDCs. (NGOs)

While the rules of the game may be clearer, the idea of rewarding countries based on macro statistics is simplistic and does not recognize that even in countries with poor track records on conservation, there are individuals and institutions that are doing cutting edge work. And the framework provides disincentives to bioregionalism at an international level, or sharing lessons beyond national boundaries. Biodiversity does not respect country boundaries. (NGOs)

Criteria of global environmental benefits are extremely unhelpful and do not match with country specific sustainability needs. It's terrible. (NGOs)

The limitation of the RAF to biodiversity and CC can reduce achieving global benefits in the field of environment, due to a lack of synergy effect, because some environmental issues require a simultaneous consideration of multi focal areas (biodiversity, international waters and sustainable land management ...). (SGP NCs)

The two largest problems in terms of allocation criteria are (a) the relative devaluation of marine biodiversity versus terrestrial biodiversity, which unfairly disadvantages SIDS and skews biodiversity allocations for others (e.g. Indonesia should get more, given its #1 marine biodiversity ranking in addition

to its high terrestrial biodiversity); and (b) the fact that GHG emissions from LULUCF are not factored into the climate change indicators, even though they account for around 20% of the global total. These two errors need to be rectified in the revision of the RAFT. (Government staff)

The RAF climate change only addresses Mitigation when our country priority is on adaptation, which is not funded under RAF. (Government staff)

### **Design vs. Implementation, Importance of:**

It's hard to separate out the implementation of the RAF with the staff and CEO changes at the GEF, but both had negative effects. (general survey)

It's hard to think of a single positive result from RAF implementation, and easy to come up with a huge list of problems. (general)

It is absolutely true that a performance based tool is needed to help countries and it is also true that predictability of funding is required. However, due to lack of transparency from the GEF Sec and the way RAF has been implemented till now, there is no progress in the GEF vis- a-vis countries or global benefits. (general)

The RAF with all its limitations could still have been implemented in a way that generated some good results in many countries. In the balance, the far greater problem has been in the interpretation and application of the RAF by the GEF Secretariat under the new GEF CEO. (general)

### **Fifty Percent Rule:**

The 50% rule deterred many countries from really developing something programmatic and strategic using all available resources - it forced most to develop smaller initiatives (especially for those countries with small allocations) (respondent to general survey)

The 50% rule was surrounded with unclarity and many countries in the group have preferred to wait until the end of the two year term to submit projects with higher financial allocations. In terms of project design, countries in the group were constrained by the MSP size, and project design was capped by the financial rather than by the technical aspects. This is further compounded by the fact that 1MUS\$ does not allow the delivery of additional resources. (FP respondent)

50% rule: restricts the process. (general survey)

Application of 50% rule for countries with group allocation left them the only alternative, i.e. to pursue one MSP (1mln\$) project in first half of GEF 4. In combination with rapid depreciation of USD, this creates very little incentive for group countries to bother with project development. It is very little that a country can achieve with 1 mln \$ project. (general survey)

Rigidity in the 50% rule worked against being able to do larger more efficient projects with greater impact. Rather than do smaller projects, we delayed two years, which was silly. The uncertainty in allocations led two large and two small GEF recipient countries to delay a project two years, at which time it was easier to do nationally but without regional impacts. (general survey)

### **Global and Regional:**

Global and regional projects should have a bigger allocation if this system is going to persist. Maybe a different formula can be found, this one seems not to be too adequate. (FP respondent)

The use of global and regional exclusion is totally unclear. (general survey)

The lack of funding for regional and/or global projects has greatly hurt the GEF process. (NGOs)

Use of allocations to regional projects becomes a secondary importance as countries wish to use most of the funds for national activities. Those that have to then manage group allocations are unable to concentrate on regional projects (general survey)

The RAF exclusion for Regional and Global projects (5% of the total funding available for BD and CC) is clearly insufficient to meet the needs for this type of projects. In addition, the process of obtaining country allocations for regional projects has made the project development process extremely cumbersome resulting also in a cost increase. (general survey)

The RAF system has in essence destroyed regional approaches furthermore for countries such as South Africa it has limited the action we can take and furthermore limited our regional work. (general survey)

Small island countries in the Pacific have not been able to benefit from allocations to local or regional projects. (general survey)

International (regional) NGOs is highly challenged to sort out how best to implement their mandates under the influence of the RAF systems, i.e., the key question of how to maintain global and regional focus in the face of the extensive financial resource that are made directly available to the countries. (general survey)

Global projects were sometimes taxing country allocations while the global and regional allocations were done in a non transparent manner. (general survey)

Although the GRE is a helpful factor it is not large enough. Also, the rules under which the 5% is allocated are not fully transparent. (general survey)

Clearly the RAF has negatively affected some Group countries' potential to access GEF resources, especially the SIDS and African countries with low GHG emissions and relatively low biodiversity scores. The CEO has worked to fix this through the Pacific Islands program and the SIP, and the fact that these special initiatives were needed points to a flaw in the current system that needs to be rectified. There has also been a negative impact on global/regional projects, due to the cap on funds available for such projects, but whether that is a good or bad thing for the ultimate global environmental objectives remains to be seen. (Government staff)

Development of Regional projects has become very difficult under the new directions. A proposal developed by us for a multi-country project in the Central Asian Region which was agreed to by the separate countries was stopped as a result of this. (STAP)

### **Knowledge Sharing:**

I am not sure why group and individual allocations. Is it the size of the country or the performance over time? Nevertheless, by knowing one's individual allocation, it makes it easy to develop a proposal. (Government staff)

Is this [method of scoring countries according to RAF indices] something new? I seem to have not been informed about the new scoring method. (STAP)

### **Programmatic Approaches:**

Programming has been further distorted by the GEF Secretariat's notion that empowering a single individual within the Ministries of Environment, ie the GEF OFP, is equivalent to ensuring country drivenness and national ownership. The OFP often does not even represent the consensus within the Ministry let alone ensure that there is true stakeholder consultation. But worst of all, despite this rhetoric of increased national ownership and empowerment, the greatest empowerment has been of the GEF Secretariat, with undue interference and control by some Task Managers and the GEF CEO as a result of their new 'direct relationship' with GEF OFPs. This has meant that GEF CEO and some Task Managers with little understanding of the country context have sometimes completely changed the course of programming to suit their own whims - for example, strongly 'encouraging' countries (i.e. the GEF OFP) to adopt a programmatic approach and to allocate resources from different focal areas in particular ways. This has added further layers of complexity (programmes can only be submitted to full Council meetings) - rules about programmes also kept changing, so programmes could not be submitted without a PIF attached by 2008, all of which have contributed to further delays in programming and delivery. (general survey)

Programmatic approaches have largely been forced on countries and agencies rather than resulting organically or naturally from the RAF. They have been challenging to design and will be equally nightmarish to implement effectively. Few if any constitute coherent programmes - ie something that would stand up to independent scrutiny! (general survey)

Encouragement of programmatic approaches has been GEF Secretariat driven for the most part, politically driven due to expediency of the GEF CEO. Programmatic approaches have been around at the GEF for much longer than the current GEF CEO, but those which were in existence prior to the current GEF CEO have fallen out of favor, regardless of technical/results-based performance or country-demand. (general survey)

In reality, what could have been a good idea [programmatic approach in the Pacific] was not implemented successfully due the lack of consultation and reference to institutional memory in the region. A plan that did not look at the details of on the ground implementation and realities was thus released and has not taken advantage of available resources on the ground. The programmatic approach that had been looked forward to has not materialized. (Government staff)

Overall GEF projects have a project oriented approach in stead of a programmatic approach. Project development is extremely time consuming, but once approved the general project implementation period is limited and takes insufficient notice of limitations in absorption capacity. A programmatic approach, stretched over longer time periods with relatively smaller funding flows may in many cases be more conducive to achieving better and sustainable results. (STAP)

### **Project Cycle and GEF changes:**

Should there be delays in project approval, then the strict rules of timing in the RAF cannot be applied, especially when the GEF and/or the IA are responsible for the delays, in some cases due to lack of clarity in the implementation of council decisions. (FP respondent)

The process of accessing RAF funds has been so slow that it is too early to show any negative or positive effects. (general survey)

Individual allocations in BD were welcomed as they gave countries an indicative amount to programme; but with more scrutiny put in analyzing project budgets (i.e. TBWP); many of project proponents feel that the GEF want to micro manage projects and losing the big picture/strategic objectives/outcomes and GEF was focussing too much at input levels. There is a negative disincentive in GEF approving detailed TBWP (inputs) vs Outcomes (very much welcomed as PIF). So while for e.g. PIF is a very welcome strategic programming tool at pipelining; the detailed TBWP at CEO Endorsement seem to cancel out any gain made with the PIF. (general survey)

The close-out and restarting of the GEF pipeline, changes in the programming cycle and programmatic approaches have all had very negative impacts. Close out: precluded submissions until July 07 and required additional work (9 point annexes etc...) for projects that were in country, agency and GEF pipelines. All of a sudden many of these were cancelled and demanded a lot of explanation efforts, rework... The changes in programming cycle (in terms of focal area strategies and submission requirements/documents) took a lot of efforts - or resulted in a wait and see attitude - and affected country access to projects. (general survey)

The transaction costs, delays, uncertainties, spill-over effects on other focal areas (OFPs were confused about this) and criteria used for RAF allocations have had more negative effects than positive ones on project design and the conservation of GEBs. The discussions between GEFSEC and OFPs have often resulted in the selection of projects that will not deliver GEBs, but have been coopted between GEFSEC and OFP. The CEO's promises taken in the context of spot discussions have also affected programming and often favored projects that result in lower GEBs; countries considered that a good way to bypass agencies and get rid of the conditionality related to technical and GEBs issues. In terms of investment of GEF funds the overall cost/benefit of the RAF definitely leans towards a high cost exercise with limited benefit to the global environment, mainstreaming environmental issues, sound programming and transparency. Even the GEF as a fund, its donors and implementing agencies have been affected by this in terms of credibility, fairness and transparency. The parallel processes and practices of GEFSEC and CEO have further compounded this situation. GEF is no longer of interest to serious stakeholders. (general)

The RAF's complexity, the lack of transparency and all its exclusion and special rules have lead to a lot of helplessness and bureaucracy among GEF stakeholders. (general)

Efforts by the GEF Secretariat to streamline and simplify and speed up the application process are appreciated, but these have been often negated by the unreasonable demands for information particularly of a quantitative nature at an early stage of project design even before any preparatory funds have been obtained. The whole process is retrograde and runs counter to everything we know about good project design and ensuring aid effectiveness. (general)

After this RAF first cycle, countries are aware of the process and therefore the next cycle should be less ambiguous (general)

Managing the RAF alone should have been given a priority; the main problems with the RAF were compounded by the multiple reforms that were undertaken and therefore made things much worse. (general)

I am a task team leader and I see the RAF seems to have put artificial caps, helped squash or shrink projects that were already in the pipeline, and created some unpleasant conflicts within countries about which/whose projects will be put forward. I am aware the overall climate in the GEF has become more conflictual, that a lot of people are unhappy, that the rules of the game are not that well understood. (general)

After trying (once more) to engage GEF in some very promising local conservation activities and after receiving encouragement from a GEF Implementing Agency, we didn't get anywhere in the bureaucratic jungle of GEF and found that we had wasted a lot of time of our local partners, creating disappointment at the level GEF says it wants to support. (NGOs)

The activity cycle changed several times with new formats and requirements that resulted in significant delays and ultimately in displeasure within national agencies responsible for the integration of proposals. The close/restart of the pipeline was beneficial in reorganizing priorities, but also allowed the government to realize that there had been focal point endorsements for projects that the agencies had not submitted to the pipeline. With Small Grants there seems to be conflicting elements within the RAF programming guidance and country-drivenness, versus decisions made by the SGP steering committee at the corporate level, especially regarding the 2.4M cap that does not respond to country-level considerations. The direct contact with GEFSEC has been useful. (NGOs)

We had success in developing a MSP in-country in 2004. This was extremely hard for us to do. Under current rules we would not be able to do this. I feel the GEF system is more accessible to large NGOs and governments based in more developed situations.

In general the information, formats and assistance provided is difficult to access, interpret and use. Too frequent changes only add to difficulties.

The Fiji UNDP office - a main contact for GEF activities in our country - is understaffed (both in terms of numbers and capacity of staff), and has difficulty supporting effectively people at a country level. (Preceding 3 comments from SGP NCs)

I don't think policies such as RAF particularly make a difference to our experience. (Government staff)

However, I feel there is too much emphasis on generic applications for generic projects and with applications being coordinated regionally rather than locally. (Government staff)

I have submitted projects, supported projects, provided TA. I find the constant rule changes confusing and the application process as a whole harder to access. (Government staff)

The GEF "rules" are complicated - sometimes even misinterpreted by the staff - and keep changing. In theory, it is a good idea to use GEF funds to address the country priorities. But the process of priority development - if it is to be inclusive - could take years, and should have been phased in over time. At the same time, there are a number of issues eg invasive species, which are best addressed at regional or international level, and these are not adequately catered for. (STAP)

The RAF limits the ability of the GEF to fund projects outside of the RAF allocation countries. The RAF places pressure on the allocation countries to develop GEF-able projects. While these were subject to STAP Expert review, there was a better guarantee that RAF projects were consistent with the GEF philosophy and were likely to meet GEF objectives. The "new" approach of STAP Panel checklist review weakens the whole process and eliminates one of the strengths of the GEF--that of ensuring the best

possible projects design right from the start. Combined with reduced allocations available because of RAF allocations, these changes COULD negatively affect the overall impact and effectiveness of the GEF. (STAP)

**RAF Costs and Benefits:**

I do not know what RAF's costs are, but since I do not see any benefits I would say that whatever the costs are they are not justified. (SGP NCs)

We feel that those countries having good Environmental track record are significantly penalized because of RAF, as those with better environment are getting lesser amounts. (SGP NCs)

It is to my point of view too soon to respond to this question. For the time being it would seem that RAF have been a lot of costs and the benefits if any would only be known after a few years of implementation. (SGP NCs)

In the case of SGP, the reduction in the administration budget especially for countries in group RAF was very costly to the programme as very little could be done to help grantees. In addition, it made the programme to lose out on previous relations, linkages and networks established in the past. The modifications should have been gradual so that the country programmes find time to adjust. (SGP NCs)

In the initial stages of RAF, it was not clear or was not mentioned that countries in group could not allocate funds to SGP. Therefore, countries worked on the climate change and biodiversity with the hope that they could take funds to country level through SGP. When the condition came in, it meant that such countries had to go back to the drawing board. This made countries to lost out as they could probably not access as much funds as they could wish. (SGP NCs)

I believe countries, especially least developed among them, gain more benefits than cost incurred. (Government staff)

[I have] no idea what the costs are. And not at all sure what the benefits are. (Government staff)

Concept was positive but the formula for allocation based on land issues severely disadvantaged Pacific and the continuing changes in policy damaged what we had hoped had been some good intentions. (STAP)

Successful interventions remain inextricably linked to sound preparation; outcomes are only as good as the effort put into project preparation. More localised projects, with clearly defined champions tend to do better than very large-scale interventions--this will remain a reality. On the other hand, IW projects, which tend to be very large-scale, have inspired significant change at both the local level (more structural change) and at the basin level (more policy change), both of which typically benefit shared water resources. That said, RAF allocations do not always ensure that the best projects are funded, since block funds take discretionary funds away from the program as a whole. While RAF funds are generally put to good use, there are opportunity costs in the lack of funds available for other interventions. (STAP)

The costs are opportunity costs, or the fact that RAF allocations reduced the overall pool of funds available to other country, regional and/or global projects that MAY have had a greater impact than the suite of projects actually funded. This is essentially unquantifiable, although the GEF Secretariat should review all submissions made during the period within which the RAF program was in effect--perhaps the STAP Panel of Experts could provide an overall evaluation of the actually-funded RAF projects versus the whole suite of project proposals submitted during this period (within each portfolio?). Some

assessment of this nature would be illustrative and helpful in assessing the overall "cost" or "benefit" of the RAF program. (STAP)

**RAF Overall Comments:**

The RAF is very best program!!! (FP respondent)

It's [expletive] up. The basic proposition behind the RAF -- that resources should be focused on countries where the problem is biggest in absolute terms -- is patently false. The scale of GEF resources in relation to the size of the global warming problem is miniscule. Therefore, what counts are factors like appropriateness of implementation environment, cost effectiveness, host country commitment, demonstration value, replicability, etc. Tell the donors to get their ego-swelled heads out of their asses! (general survey)

Resource Allocation Frameworks were first designed and applied in the context of development assistance (development banks primarily). Resources allocated in this context were meant to address national priorities. The GEF was established to achieve global environmental benefits, therefore, it is questionable whether the RAF is an appropriate tool for the GEF. (general survey)

Country Operational Focal Points remain terribly confused to this day, and are mis-fed information by those Agencies which have the most to gain by continuing to spread misinformation. STAP reform, which has come independent of the RAF process, is the most positive outcome of this era of the GEF. The proliferation of poorly-conceptualized programmatic and/or multi-focal area and/or MSPs in this era of RAF for those focal areas with RAF is absolutely appalling. No amount of results-based management gloss will begin to contain the evidence that RAF has wasted billions of GEF dollars/euros. (general survey)

Many other changes than the RAF have occurred in the way GEF operates in the last 2 years and it is very difficult to fully separate what accrues to RAF and what does not in the changes. (general survey)

This [the RAF] has been the most disastrous of GEF efforts. Sooner it is reversed the better. (general survey)

The RAF has been a joke. It has completely undermined any effort of IBRD to work on GEF activities in biodiversity and climate change. It is designed largely to favor the inadequacies of UN agencies which do not need to integrate their program into long-term and on-going dialogues like the Bank does through its CPS and CAS process. (general survey)

Countries with viable proposals have been cut out and are looking at other sources of finance- including in several cases just loans blended with direct bilateral grant co-finance. GEF has worked itself out of business in many countries I am engaged in. (general)

I am surprised that you are asking these questions now at a stage at which the GEF is effectively being replaced by the CIF. Now it's too late for any improvement. (general)

Overall the PAS will benefit. (general)

I think RAF has been very negative and undermined the potential of GEF to create important biodiversity benefits, especially in smaller countries. (general)

The RAF system is destroying the GEF as the financing mechanism for addressing global environmental challenges (general)

There is no visible benefit to the RAF in our experience. There are significant costs. The selection of projects based on merit is hampered. NFP's in the countries we are working in do not engage in the processes. There is a danger that governments disadvantage private sector initiatives, although we have not seen it in our particular countries. (general)

The RAF disconnects the GEF more and more from the Conventions on Climate Change and Biodiversity, because it follows its own system/indicators for allocations (examples: The RAF does not contain indicators for marine biodiversity and no biosafety-indicators; the RAF includes performance indicators within the GPI that the Convention do not have). (general)

While the GEF's RAF may promote equity, it is equity in the sense that we now do little GEF-financed work in any of our client countries. It is equity at the zero level rather than the development of interesting proposals to encourage innovation and creative processes in whatever countries which may have innovative ideas and proposals. (general)

I would like to emphasize that there are no factors that are areas of strength in the RAF. (general)

There is always trade-offs between efficiency and equity. RAF to some extents compromises efficiency and over-emphasize equity, which at the end may not lead to the ultimate equity - a global environment that is well preserved for future generations. (general)

Ultimately, one has to acknowledge that RAF is a failure and should be abolished. (general)

GEFSEC has systematically put in place a daunting, cumbersome, GEFSEC-driven process which undermines country ownership, which discriminates against Bank-funding for biodiversity and climate change, favors inept UN-managed 'process-oriented' projects rather than Bank-managed 'results' oriented projects, and has resulted in the virtual disappearance of biodiversity funding from the Bank's portfolio pipeline in the region in which I work. These outcomes of the RAF speak for themselves. (general)

GEF could be an important resource and a force in climate change mitigation. It has now become irrelevant. However, there is time to change, if GEF wants to change. Firstly, CEO must recognize that it not her personal domain to do as she wants, rather to run it in a principled way. To do this requires an honest reappraisal and so am glad the first step is being taken through this survey. (general)

The achievement of global environment benefits through GEF the concept is too ambitious and complicated to do it honestly. It is a game, the countries and implementing agencies what the GEF wants to hear. The GEF in turn tells the council the same, at the end is all since fiction. The latter is especially true in biodiversity projects. (NGOs)

On climate and biodiversity for each individual country there is clearly less budget available. The competition factors for allocation in each country have a negative impact on possible regional cooperation / joint programme proposals. Positive: the allocation amount within RAF for some specific countries is clear from the beginning - better possibility for allocation strategies per country. Small countries, e.g., Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan will actually get less allocation within RAF. (NGOs)

While performance and performance indicators are very important for the future health and vitality of the GEF, and the RAF can help in this respect, it is a mistake to treat the GEF like it is a multilateral development bank. It is not, and a cookie-cutter application of MDB standards and procedures to the

GEF is not appropriate for a grant-making institution focused on the incremental costs of global environmental benefits. (Government staff)

It's hard to say how the RAF has affected funding across the focal areas, but it's reasonable to think that focal areas without a RAF may not gain as much in replenishment b'c Council members believe that a RAF leads to more efficient use of funds. But I'd hate to see IW and Chemicals come under the RAF (using scoring criteria to evaluate the relative merits of proposals is a good thing, but indicative funding is not). (STAP)

**Recommendations for Improvement:**

Reconsider the 50% rule. (FP respondent)

To extend the RAF to the other focal areas. (FPs)

To increase transparency in determining country allocations. (FP respondent)

Need for training workshop on RAF. (FP respondent)

There should be more information seminars particularly to NGOs that want to avail of grants. (NGOs)

The RAF should be designed on the basis of enough money so that every country can have a set amount of money. It may not be necessary for each country to have an allocation per focal area. Some may simply have XX dollars for the full GEF cycle and to be used according to their priorities. This would provide certainty and a feeling of being less dependent on the vagaries of changing rules and regulations, especially for small countries. (general)

The system needs to be modified so that costs do not continue to exceed benefits. Things that need to be considered are: financing of national communications, the 50% rule, how to promote co-operation over competition in the group through for example programs and regional projects, increasing transparency in the assessment of factors used to determine allocation size including relevant national policies for cc/bd. We think that at performance and global benefits system should continue, but with significant modification for GEF 5. (general)

Drop the darn thing entirely and leave GEF funding open for healthy competition emerging from the qualified demand from recipient countries. GEBs can be estimated out of the portfolio of approved projects, and reported back to the donors on a regular basis, using the existing (or improved) system of indicators. Glaring gaps (countries) on the accrual of GEBs would then be tackled by GEF and GEF agencies in a more strategic way. (general)

1) Eliminate 50% rule. 2) Eliminate the global and regional pool of resources. 3) Give each country an individual allocation, no matter how small. Eliminate the group allocation. 4) Create a bar chart on the GEF website that is updated every day that shows how much each country has programmed against its allocation. (general)

The RAF method should be applied to other priority areas, not only to climate change and biodiversity. (general)

Abandon RAF ! (general)

Abolish it. (general)

Eliminate it. (general)

Scrap it. (general)

How about getting rid of it? (general)

The RAF should be discontinued. (general)

Abandon it. Unfortunately, it has made the GEF much, much less relevant in our work. (general)

I would like to emphasize that the RAF should be discontinued as soon as possible. It may have benefitted client relations with our donors. However, it has been a disaster vis-a-vis our clients, i.e. in GEF-recipient countries. (general)

Change the CEO, her performance has been disastrous to the GEF and its objectives. (general)

GEF Council and GEF Secretariat should more know about field realities. (general)

Drop the 50% rule. Prevent the GEF CEO from making arbitrary decisions. Make the GEB calculations transparent, which was promised but never done. Incorporate into RAF calculations the extent to which countries have accessed GEF funding previously. At the moment they are penalized - for example, with no history of GEF projects they score a "0". However, countries that have accessed large amounts of GEF funds previously - yet still have major environmental problems - are rewarded. Such countries should be penalized for having wasted GEF resources in the past (general)

Need to return to a first come first serve programming to give countries incentives for speed and to promote higher capacity proposals. (general)

Stop the group/ non-group allocation. (NGOs)

Individual allocations should be abolished, because they seem to impede competition and will probably influence the quality of project design. Transparency: All indicators used in the RAF have to be either disclosed or abolished. Simplicity/Transparency: As it is obvious that the system is too complicated to understand it has to be simplified. The question of this evaluation is which effects rules as the 50%-rule, floors, ceilings and exclusions had on project design. A possible way forward might be to abolish all these special rules and find a way to a fair system that is much simpler. Pragmatism was one of the elements the Council asked for when developing the RAF. (general)

Clear indication on the funding level of each country in the group allocations is essential. Greater possibilities and flexibility to have full-size projects in the group allocation countries (the full size project is not expected to have at all at the moment). (NGOs)

Keep half of GEF resources outside of RAF system so that some valuable proposals, no matter in group or individual countries, can be fully funded for their significant global environmental benefits. Strict review of evaluation of effectiveness of RAF allocations should be done for GEF FPs. Agency support shall be provided to a certain extent to subsidize small size but meaningful projects for group countries, or even individual countries. (general)

-Abolishment of the 50% rule: a clear allocation for a full 4 year GEF period. Include all GEF focal areas under the RAF and apply more flexibility to draft integrated programs making use of the different

allocations. Working towards 4 year integrated country programs with uniform reporting schedule and format meant for the GEF AND the conventions. (general)

Remove/revise 50% rule; allow SGP contributions (within specific limits) from group allocations; make country benefits and performance indexes exercise more transparent and public (general)

Increase accountability of the countries with the largest individual allocations to ensure that they are really delivering on a) the global environmental benefits; b) providing adequate cofinancing. Also clearly establish the baseline - some of the countries currently rewarded through the RAF have an abysmal performance on the environmental front by all objective measures! There is no immediate consequence for poor project performance and so some countries continue not to invest in effective project oversight or making the committed cofinancing available. (general)

Project cycle should be quicker; Global Portfolios need to be decided and funds released as soon as possible (general)

Look at the issues around how the indexes have been formulated. Consider the issues of the least able countries (note; that does not mean LDCs) but those who have the poorest record of performance and lack absorptive capacity and figure out different ways to work with them so that they can actually perform better. (general)

The system needs to also factor in the issue of vulnerability. (general)

The RAF should be flexible. For countries with a good performance in utilizing GEF funds they should be given a negotiated increase in allocation whenever requested. (general)

That any internal changes (such as GEF PAS) during RAF be put on hold or piloted instead of rolling it out together with RAF period. (general)

Identify institutions on the ground and work more closely with them. Improve communications protocol/arrangements and in a timely manner. More transparent in processes and decision making. Put quality assurance over and above politics, if that is possible (general)

Simpler; more environmental performance based; funds open to all counties => no group allocations; no ceilings for smaller countries; allocation must be in conformity with the dimension of the problem, not with the envelope allocation. (general)

To modify the way by which global environmental benefits in climate change will be calculated. To imagine a way to encourage Agencies to assist all the countries, no matter what allocation they have. To increase the efforts for having more funds for the next period, so countries within the group could have a most decent allocation. Alongside with the latter, to spread the RAF to the other focal areas, so countries will have an "individual" RAF allocation, so they may need to design multi-purpose projects with better impacts (having said that, one has to imagine as well as to how to respond to the Conventions' mandate). To create a system of incentives for promoting regional projects. (general)

1. Take out 50% rule; 2. Strengthen national operation focal point so that he/she understand how to best manage RAF and programme resources; 3. Allow countries in the group to combine RAF from CC&BD and others into a national GEF programme rather than going for individual MSPs which are ineffective and costly to manage; 4. Give incentives to IA to help countries in the group; as the level of resources involved and the 10% fees rule do not encourage IA to deal with those countries; it is not worth from economic point of view (general)

Outreach and training material to countries must be improved in order to improve their understanding of the RAF and non-RAF focal areas. (general)

More innovations in the design should be allowed for the projects since environmental issues are getting more complex involving several sectors all at the same time. (general)

I would like to emphasize that the RAF should not be expanded to other Focal Areas. (general)

Set aside additional funds for mid sized innovative projects in countries and regions that are not major beneficiaries of the RAF. Set aside additional funds on a competitive basis and based also on leverage and direct up front counterpart contributions for multinational and trans-border projects that benefit countries that are not major beneficiaries of the RAF for innovative activities that can enhance national performance and rankings of the RAF. (NGOs)

Formalized input sessions to the widest numbers of non-profit and business NGOs. (NGOs)

Maybe GEF should have a database of NGO and other organizations working in each of the countries that benefit from GEF funding, then, GEF should establish a good communication system to provide these organizations with the necessary information regarding the RAF and other important issues of funding, project cycle, etc. (NGOs)

To engage Civil Society on GEF Council is one thing but to have an NGO representative on Council will be another innovative way of engaging Civil Society. (NGOs)

Funding for national planning on how to use RAF and compliment it through impact oriented collective programme among national stakeholders is terribly needed. This can be an important series of event that would capacitate GEF constituents; creating a two ways communication between GEF and country level stakeholders and IAs; producing a more comprehensive road map and facilitate complimentary roles of each proponents and future project implementers. (SGP NCs)

In order to provide more benefit to community in implementing community based environmental protection initiatives, countries which have small amounts of RAF allocation or in the group countries, GEF Sec./Government of the specific country should be allow to share additional RAF to SGP. (SGP NCs)

1. From a SIDS country in the GROUP category, my view is that it is essential that the NGO/Civil Society oversight of SGP be maintained.
2. More resources be allocated for national consultation during the period prior to the beginning of GEF operational phases. Prior to OP4, more Funds were allocated to Regional consultation but it should be more to the national instead of regional.
3. GEF National Support fund be increased to allow for nationally driven processes that would then supported by IAs. (Preceding 3 items from SGP NCs)

More flexibility in terms of the ceiling of allocated amount for SGP. (SGP NCs)

Develop a transparent and well documented performance based criteria at country level for allocation of resources among implementing agencies. (SGP NCs)

RAF is not beneficial. I do not think it can be and should be improved. It is better to be abandoned. (SGP NCs)

Each country should be made to prepare a country strategy document indicating what the problems are and how they intend to solve them. Based on the plan and past performance funds could be made available for the countries to apply. (SGP NCs)

Simplify. Less bureaucracy. Assessment of project by people who are familiar with the location/issue. (Government staff)

Simplify. Focus on basic principles, and allow flexibility thereafter. Ensure resources devoted to activities that will have an effect (not so much baseline documentation, indicators, etc). Don't devote excessive resources to indicators nor rely on indicators when these are (usually) essentially arbitrary estimates, often of properties not directly reflective of intended outcomes. (STAP)

The system works reasonably well but as a project reviewer I find a large amount of common material in all applications, particularly where the project is part of a broader successful program such as European land sourced marine pollution. I wonder whether it might be possible to develop an exception based design and review that could reduce the volume of work for the preparation team and clarify the focus for the reviewers and the GEF Board. (STAP)

There needs to be a decision-tree process for applying for funds. In other words applicants should be told as they complete the application whether they are eligible..... In what countries are you proposing to undertake your work.....? USA.... Sorry you are not eligible unless you are doing..... This requires a lot of thought but should help streamline the application process and the evaluation of performance. (STAP)

Reduce the percentage allocation of total funding under the RAF to, say, 50% and then have open bidding for the rest but guided by the FA Strategy and the programmatic approach. (STAP)

Fair allocation formula, better communication of information and do not change process once countries have been told to do one thing and then done it. (STAP)

It [allocation] should be based on the importance of issues, not countries. (STAP)

This reviewer would suggest that the weaknesses of the RAF outweigh the benefits, and would recommend discontinuation of the program in favor of open competition among countries/regions for project funding. (STAP)

### **Roles: Agencies:**

All 15 PICs need capacity built through, in this case, implementation of projects. Replication and knowledge sharing is essential and GEF-PAS is providing this more enabling development environment. However, GEF-PAS IAs have impacted the overall effect of the RAF by not being prepared, by not responding urgently and by being poorly staffed. (general survey)

IAs with strong country presence were privileged vis-a-vis other Agencies with less or minimum country presence. Country presence was a key factor for some agencies to monopolize the RAF allocations hence hindering the positive progress made by the recent reform aiming at levelling the playing field between all EAs and IAs and also developing diversified GEF portfolio. RAF helped GEF Sec to have more predictability in portfolio development and pipeline management. The RAF system handicapped new EAs with small country presence, the competition was higher but not to the interest of countries. As a consequence most of RAF resources are monopolized by one IA leading to a undiversified portfolio focusing mainly on CB. (general survey)

Again, the RAF has led us to simply not initiate GEF-financed project preparations. It simply isn't considered, as there are too many constraints to financing. (general survey)

The Bank has dropped any efforts at GEF because the hassle factor with the RAF is way too high. It is simply not cost-effective for us to work with GEF under these tightly constrained circumstances. (general)

We simply do not discuss GEF financing to the degree that we used to with our client countries. (general)

Fatigues that happened at the beginning of RAF and template changes has put a demotivating factor in potential project developers as they took a back sit sort of waiting for templates to completely be finalized without any more changes before they can engage in PIF proposal writing. In many instances the IAs have to step in and assist the countries in meeting both technical, procedural and financial requirements---this has been a very time consuming and added greatly to the normal role of the of the IAs---increased quality assurance role. (general)

The RAF has led us to (a) severely curtail preparation of projects that previously would have been financed by the GEF and (b) severely cut back on NRM related work, which otherwise would have received co-financing from the GEF, thereby "buying-down" the cost of projects to countries. (general)

Countries within the group have difficulties in getting prompt and efficient technical assistance from Agencies (general)

The implementing agencies use the GEF as one of their principal sources of finance, and would obviously dislike any constraints placed on their more discretionary targeting of funds toward pet projects. (NGOs)

[RAF has provided] better coordination and aid effectiveness. (NGOs).

An Investment Based Industrial Energy Efficiency Project was developed in Turkey to use GEF resources allocated for Climate Change. According to "Comparative Advantage by Focal Area and Type of Intervention", WB is the only GEF agency to implement such projects in Turkey. However, WB has been reluctant to work as implementing agency for this project, since it has relatively a small budget. (By nature, GEF Projects are already small budget projects.) Therefore, integrated projects in the field of Climate Change could not be realized in Turkey with GEF resources, only because they have investment components. Accordingly, all the resource allocated for climate change, had to be used for "capacity building", "awareness raising", etc. for projects implemented by UNIDO and UNDP. Since Turkey is a donor country, it cannot implement projects with other implementing agencies such as EBRD and ADB. In this framework, WB existence is critical; and "Comparative Advantage by Focal Area and Type of Intervention" should be reviewed accordingly. In accordance with our observations, UNIDO and UNDP can be implementing agencies for projects with investment components, in other countries such as Romania. So, we have difficulty to understand the exact role of implementing agencies which supposed to have homogeneous structures in all countries. (NGOs)

### **Roles: FPs:**

The good effect on FPs is due to the new responsibilities and the need of a national strategy to decide endorsements. This makes the whole decision process more national oriented and gives focal points good reasons to say yes or no to project proposals. But if the final allocation is not what countries were told at the beginning of the process, national strategies relaying on GEF funds fail and both FPs and the GEF as such suffer. (FP respondent)

The RAF does not empower countries, it empowers GEF OFPs - as individuals. If properly managed, the RAF should empower countries vis a vis GEF agencies, GEF SEC and the donor countries. It has failed to do so. (general)

**Roles: General:**

It is not clear what the roles are of the GEF Secretariat, Council and STAP in making sure that national and regional proposals collectively contribute to the strategic programs which have initially been the basis for allocation of funds in each focal area. (NGOs)

The GEF secretariat in Ghana has been very effective and impacted to the NGOs and Stakeholders for the past four years. (NGOs)

Although the RAF is designed to promote cooperation among the GEF agencies, it has instead promoted strong competition, with the aspect of survival of the fittest. In addition, SGP is keen to build partnerships with its "big brothers" for increased effectiveness in working with communities, but instead it is viewed as a spoiler. (SGP NCs)

**Roles: NGOs, Civil society, Private Sector:<sup>1</sup>**

International NGOs are not monolithic --- the mega-international NGOs like TNC, CI, WWF, RSPB, and some of their affiliated groups have benefitted from the RAF. The smaller international AND REGIONAL NGOs (like my own organization) have been damaged by the RAF. (NGOs)

The positive, has enabled the NGOs to access the funds for implementation. The NGOs have been uplifted and have opportunities to interact and share information with different stakeholders in development process especially on the environmental issues as well as other sectors of development. (NGOs)

Medium sized projects have almost disappeared since the implementation of the RAF. (NGOs)

Only delays of release of funds has affected smooth implementation of activities, like the time of signing contracts and receiving funds takes along time. (NGOs)

The fact that projects are country driven means just governmental driven. The governments manage projects according to the interests and the priorities of the current operative and political focal points. When governments are changed their priorities also change. There is not long term view on environmental issues, as long as in most of the democratic countries of the world governments remained in power for four or five years. That is the time table for setting priorities on biodiversity or climate change issues.

The role of civil society is overlooked and their views rarely are taking into account for promoting projects, encourage transparency in the allocation of resources, and supporting public participation and engagement. (NGOs)

There should be no counterpart fund requirement before an NGO qualified for the funds. (NGOs)

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<sup>1</sup> See also "Country Ownership."

Many NGOs do not know much about the RAF. Some national governments are also not helping matters to disseminate information. It would be good to find ways to improve communications (and transparency) to NGOs in order to better participate in this important framework. (NGOs)

It is important to engage the NGO community in the evaluations of Governmental Focal Points performance and RAF projects successes or failures. The NGOs have the expertise to participate with the Independent Monitoring and Evaluation Unit in the evaluation processes in a transparent and accountable way. The NGO community is tired of consultations. It requires active participation and engagement not only in GEF projects but in their monitoring and follow up. (NGOs)

Supporting public involvement depends solely on each country's OFP to reach out to NGOs and other civil institutions, in our case this has not been the case. (SGP NCs)

The RAF is a way of telling the NGOs that they cannot get access to GEF funds and thereby cannot participate in GEF focal area activities. (SGP NCs)

[The RAF] may enhance interactions between government agencies and civil society stakeholders. (SGP NCs)

#### **Roles: Secretariat:**

I think the role of the GEF Sec has to be redefined. Currently, they have a higher decision making power than even the Council and yet they are supposed to be reporting to the Council. They absolutely have more power than the COPs - which are a higher legal entity than the GEFSec. So its all turned on its head and is completely messed up. (general)

The development of the GEF Pacific Alliance for Sustainability (GPAS) would be a good case study to illustrate the impacts of the RAF on programming and delivery. Apart from the top-down un-transparent approach of the GEF Secretariat in developing this, the process has meant that two years into the RAF, the Pacific countries are yet to start implementing any GEF4 projects. Finally, not all the problems in GEF4 can be attributed solely to the RAF. More than the RAF, it has been the interpretation and application of the RAF by the GEF CEO and the GEF Secretariat that have probably created the greatest problems in programming and delivery. The development and management of the GPAS process is again a good case in point. (general survey)

As mentioned several times earlier, the RAF has been the lesser problem - the greater problem has been how the RAF has been interpreted and applied through new GEF Secretariat/GEF CEO driven policies and procedures. (general survey)

Since the start of GEF-4 the GEFSEC and particularly the GEF CEO has increasingly made arbitrary decrees concerning how much money should be spent by a country on what issues. These decrees are made on the basis of some arbitrary issue (for example, impressions formed during very brief country visits) and very much work against the principles that the GEF has been preaching to countries of the need for careful and strategic planning. This development has been by far the most damaging aspect of the "new" GEF. (general)

Of the most hindering factor is the perceived unclarity/inconsistency between official role of the GEF secretariat and in the same time leading/convening large program initiatives to accelerate desired change in programmatic approach; While the second is certainly most appreciated it is not really efficiently addressed due to under capacities both in term of competence/knowledge of the geographic/thematic situations and the facilitating/convening role if there is absence of leading IA. (NGOs)

The role of GEF Secretariat in handling the "mathematics" of the RAF may be vulnerable to loss of institutional memory on account of trivial details about country allocations, 50% rule and tedious intricacies. The increased burden of responsibility (and power) of the GEF Secretariat in this regard may not be a welcome development. (NGOs)

### **Small Grants Programme:**

In the case of the SGP, the added bureaucracy and paperwork of the 50% rule substantially increased transaction costs to the programme, reducing the time that National Coordinators spend visiting SGP projects in the field, thereby increasing risks to the programme and reducing programme impact. Group allocation countries without access to SGP have also been "neglected" by many IAs and EAs. The option for Group countries to contribute an equivalent amount of RAF funds corresponding with one MSP to the SGP (i.e. \$1M) could be further considered. (NGOs)

The RAF has substantially increased transactions costs on the SGP and may increase risks to this "flagship programme" of the GEF which received a very positive evaluation in 2007. The GEF Evaluation Office SGP Evaluation submitted to the GEF Council lists in detail a number of the risk factors linked to the RAF for the SGP relevant to the RAF MTR. A key recommendation for GEF5 would be to maintain the current RAF-exclusion funds for the SGP. Without the RAF-exclusion funds, the programme could be irreparably altered and damaged. This is not to say that RAF has had an overall negative affect on the SGP, only that the programme would not have been able to adapt to the RAF environment without the existence of the "core" SGP funds for use in negotiations with governments. (NGOs)

RAF has certainly ensured a better focus on climate change and biodiversity but at the same time it has limited the scope of funding of SGP by trying to make projects converge into a same "container" (= the approved RAF Strategy) with its limited flexibility. It is too soon to tell but RAF may affect negatively SGP because of this lack of flexibility which it imposes on SGP. Also RAF has complicated the administrative procedures of SGP in the event a project is funded under both RAF and CORE funds. The 50,000 US \$ ceiling is certainly not worth all the administrative pressure which is put on both the SGP grantees and the SGP National Coordinator. (SGP NCs)

The universal ceiling fund to country programmes is a real and strong hindering factor to SGP as some countries are willing to utilize much larger amounts via SGP as an effective mechanism for achieving good practical results. (SGP NCs)

The exclusion of countries belong to the RAF group to access to RAF funds is in contradiction with the political decision of those countries which had planned to donate RAF funds to the GEF SGP, which has been a limiting factor. (SGP NCs)

The Universal Ceiling on funds for SGP placed a significant limiting factor on country programmes, especially in cases where more funds would have been allocated. The ceiling should either be removed, or a ceiling imposed for all implementing agencies of the GEF. (SGP NCs)

I want to emphasize the fact that "SGP's 'neutral' role may be weakened due to strong government influence on RAF allocation". THIS IS A VERY SERIOUS RISK.. PLEASE BE WARNED. (SGP NCs)

The current structure to keep SGP Group countries outside of RAF can insure better Civil Society and Community/Grassroots access to GEF Resources (regardless if government is supportive or not supportive of SGP) (SGP NCs)

The process for obtaining the resources allocation for the Mexican SGP through the RAF was not an easy task. As a matter of fact it became the main activity of the Programme, to which we dedicated during ten months almost the 60% of work time. At the end we obtain an endorsement for 2 million for the first two years and the compromise of 2.5 for the second two year. But the limitation of a \$600,000 by year for pure SGP RAF countries made our effort really inefficient. (SGP NCs)

With the onset of GEF RAF, amplified by the series of associated decisions and changes stemming from the GEF Sec, the once thriving GEF SGP programme itself has, unfortunately, become operationally stifled by far too many cumbersome, procedural, time-consuming, not-too-well-explained and non-participatory protocols, bureaucracies and micro-managements, with is most likely to contribute to interruptions and frustrations, which is already affecting the morale, performance and commitment of its staff in so many countries. (SGP NCs)

As the evaluation of 2008 has showm SGP has been a successful programme before RAF. Therefore with the introduction of RAF special care should be made to not to influence its methodology ie being demand driven, ownership of the project ideas by the grantee while linkage with policy matters is seen in the project design, projects being owned by the civil society with contribution by the government and not vice versa and ...RAF is a top down issue with a lot of influence by the governments. Even in this first year countries that were evaluated positively could have been excluded totally by their focal points denying the allocation to SGP. So SGP has become more vulnerable and not stronger as a result of RAF with less trust in it from the CSOs. These points need to be taken into consideration for improvement of RAF. (SGP NCs)

Countries in group RAF should be allowed to allocate funds to SGP just like in individual RAF countries. Since the target for GEF funding is the people and environment, the same could be done through SGP. The lessons learnt through SGP programmes that were allocated RAF should provide the basis for such an initiative. Alternatively, countries in group RAF could be allocated more funds from core resources. (SGP NCs)

The GEF RAF scenario, coupled with the various unilateral decisions and changes emanating from the GEF Sec, particularly on the hitherto positively recognized and reiterated operations of the GEF SGP, appears to only symbolize yet another manifestation of the maxim "if it ain't damaged or broken, why bother to try and fix it in the first place?" Back to the basics for its mission and mandate would be my recommendation for the GEF SGP. (SGP NCs)

#### **SIDS:**

I am concerned that the focal areas, in particular Biodiversity, and conditions placed within those focal areas do not reflect the specificities of small island states, where protected areas are very small and thus, although important globally, do not take the same concept as the Amazon or other large forest areas. Such lack of specificities sometimes imposes constraints in the development of projects for small islands, where the inter-linkages and complexities are very much different from continents. (FP respondent)

Taking into account that the GEF Benefits Index for Biodiversity for a country is a weighted average of the country's scores for marine biodiversity and terrestrial biodiversity, with the terrestrial score being weighed 80 percent and the marine score weighted 20 percent, Small Island Developing States are clearly at a disadvantage when you take into account the size of their EEZ relative to their land mass. This should be addressed. (NGOs)

#### **Strengths and Weaknesses:**

Some of these "weaknesses" might be considered good, e.g., may weaken the role of the GEF Council. (STAP)

These are the overwhelmingly greatest strengths:

- May strengthen predictability of funding;
- May provide increased transparency in resource allocation. (STAP)

### **Support & Guidance, Knowledge Gap, Transparency:**

Very good changes with financial support program for GEF Focal Points (general survey)

Information from GEF confusing. We have a regional project and were told there is no regional allocation and had to use part of each country individual allocation. (general survey)

The RAF in the first year of its operation slowed everything down as people tried to come to grips with what it meant, how they could apply etc particularly for those countries in the group allocation. The problem was compounded by implementing agencies often giving conflicting advice and I had the sense that they were also not entirely sure what to do. There was also a sense that the RAF had been thrust upon everyone in contravention with the guidance of the conventions such as the CBD in terms of the financial mechanism. That has calmed down now as people are becoming more knowledgeable. (general survey)

Many project proponents were very sceptical with the GEF fearing that they will invest resources (time, money) in programming and developing project concepts which will be rejected by GEF as there were no clear guidelines of project selection nor there were common templates. Documents were changing a lot and not enough time given to either IAs and OFPs to absorb and fully understand the new changes. (general survey)

The interpretation and application of the RAF by the GEF Secretariat has not been transparent from the start and while things have been slowly clarified through various Council Papers over the last 9 months, there is still much that is not transparent. There was no clarity for example on what resources group countries could access - first each country assumed they could access up to 50% of the max available over the GEF4 period - then they were told they could only access up to \$1 million in the first half of the GEF. It is still unclear what will happen to the group pot of money should many countries not access it. (general survey)

Not clear and sometimes changing guidance in some aspects of project design. For example: (1) Funding of hardware for demonstrations; (2) Ratio of GEF and co-financing share in project management cost; (3) Limit in % GEF contribution in project management cost; (4) etc. (general survey)

Basic lack of clarity in the communications channel has been very poor and hindered country access because of the confusion that resulted in the launching of the GEF PAS in the Pacific. Existing institutions and the advantages they provided that could have supported the launch of GEF PAS was not taken seriously. The reality of capacity challenges in the Pacific were not seriously considered or perhaps, not understood (general survey)

CO has not been informed of the RAF processes/decisions hence were not able to communicate GEFSEC those to OFP/government. The lack of clarity has not helped the OFP to communicate well to line government agencies and other stakeholders in terms of programming of RAF resources for the different thematic areas. (NGOs)

GEF OFPs in small countries often lack the capacity to prioritise which are the most important issues for GEF to address under the RAF. Does GEF evaluate the ability and training given to GEF OFP's a year following training for example? IN the case of SIDS, GEF OFP's operate as a form of environmental controller - deciding where funding and projects should occur, often with little insight into wider environmental issues, or an understanding of cumulative effects, downstream issues, etc. This is not good. (NGOs)

My organization has been working in regional/international environmental issues full time since 1972. I can authoritatively say that no one from this group has ever received a briefing or even AN INVITATION to a briefing about the RAF by the GEF or any of the implementing or executing agencies. (NGOs)

GEF does not listen to anyone but GEF. It tries to, but it is often listening to the wrong people/organizations. (NGOs)

[Re: Help/hinder:] Not knowing the logic behind the selection of countries into high/medium/low for BD and CC thematic areas. Also limiting access to RAF for group allocation countries. (SGP NCs)

GEF's direct communication with OFPs is good when the communication is timely and is clear. But when the communication is delayed, or is confusing, the OFP is unable to act and make decisions, which causes lengthy delays. The guidance received from the SGP CPMT was instrumental in assisting SGP country programs understand the process, and meet the requirements. (SGP NCs)

There still seems to exist much uncertainty on the scope and thrust (other than they should be for BD and/or CC) of the kinds and priorities of the GEF RAF projects, be it at the level of the IA, Government, private sector or civil society. (SGP NCs)

#### **Time and Process Constraints:**

RAF has helped to make programming possible. However, the two year cycle conditionality and the reallocation rule may not be tantamount to the preparedness of GEF agencies. Therefore there is risk of losing the country allocation. (general survey)

Although the idea of establishing priorities was OK, and while even the allocations themselves were OK, the way those allocations were implemented was arbitrary and led to piecemeal and slow responses. (general survey)

A very confusing and time consuming process, with high transaction and staffing costs (for countries), marginal and uncertain benefits, changes in the rules that are not improvements, and an overly technical process with specialist language a definitions that excludes everyone that doesn't have both a higher level university degree and 100% proficiency in English. It is discriminatory to LDCs and SIDS. Its costs are so great that the RAF is actually undermining the pursuit of sustainability in many countries as too much staff time is spent trying to understand the process and go through the cycle, often for little if any gain. (NGOs)

The GEF should increase efforts to improve efficiency with respect to review and approval of projects. The current delay places great delay on programme implementation, a factor which is sometimes ignored when evaluation is being done. (SGP NCs)

In some of the RAF projects such as GCLME, there are many trainings and meetings but no significant or impact is observed at the country level. For example for the 5 demonstrative project within the GCLME,

contract of 1,200,000 has been giving to consultants but in each of the 6 countries nothing concrete is on the ground. (STAP)

I think that the categories eligible for support are often too rigid. For example, an excellent potential project was considered in the bailiwick of biodiversity, and not sustainable land use, and so not suitable for potential funding. It was both. (STAP)

The counterpart funding requirement is a large stumbling block to countries. Pipeline times are too long, Also, much capacity created lacks potential for sustainability for a myriad of reasons. (STAP)

I am very sorry but I don't know what is this scoring method and how the GEF applies this method. What I know is that Georgia has submitted (3 times in 2006-2007; Three times country has issued endorsement letter? ) adaptation proposal for the Black Sea coastal zone and unfortunately country didn't receive officially any decision from the GEF. We don't know whether this is rejected because of this scoring method or what Georgia has to do to get the "first" resource for climate change adaptation. (STAP)

The system works reasonably well but as a project reviewer I find a large amount of common material in all applications, particularly where the project is part of a broader successful program such as European land sourced marine pollution. I wonder whether it might be possible to develop an exception based design and review that could reduce the volume of work for the preparation team and clarify the focus for the reviewers and the GEF Board. (STAP)

#### **Utilization:**

Programming has been severely curtailed since the RAF was put into place. (respondent to general survey)

#### **Other Comments:**

The SGP graduation policy whereby countries can receive SGP funding for a maximum of 8 years is mostly counterproductive. In the first instance, it adversely affects SGP inter country learning mechanism but secondly it denies rather prematurely LDCs and SIDS development opportunities. (SGP NCs)

I see little or no coordination, follow-up, use of lessons learned, and most important, no presence of GEF other than a source of funding to be manipulated by recipient countries. For example, one of the least effective and most problematic protected areas in China is now pushing for its second round of GEF funding (first under UNDP-GEF, now ADB-GEF). This should not happen but it does. Where is GEF in the field? (STAP)

The link between "think global" and "act local" needs strengthening. A service delivery ethic also needs to be enshrined in the modus operandi of the GEF instrument. (STAP)

My involvement has been focused in the International Waters focal area. GEF involvement has proven effective in generating cross-sectoral discussion and broadening awareness of inter-connectedness of water resources, economic development, and environmental protection at the basin and sub-basin scales. Implementation of GEF-inspired initiatives has been very successful at the local scale; at the basin or sub-basin scales GEF-inspired initiatives have led to significant policy changes but few wholesale changes in economic development practices. Given the scope of most river basins, this outcome is not unexpected. The results achieved at the local level, however, have both incremental benefit to the resource and tutorial

benefit for the basin. However, efforts at replication have not been entirely successful in the absence of specific champions and dedicated funding. (STAP)

GEF funds are horribly abused, misused, wasted. I don't know about RAF performance in this but I do know that lack of project-level follow-up is ensuring repeated waste of funds. (STAP)

Increase follow-up and monitoring of funded projects. There is a disproportionate effort in project design and approval as compared with real, on-the-ground follow up. So many projects end in short-lived, ephemeral and costly initiatives. (STAP)

I should like to extend my appreciation for the opportunity to participate in this process. It is a good thing to be doing and congratulations on the initiative. (STAP)

Restoration of peer review of projects during the project development process would reinstitute one of the strengths of the GEF: that of being able to submit not only fully developed projects but also projects that are scientifically and technically sound and mature. This review process (that occurred during project preparation) differentiated the GEF from traditional grant programs and, in the opinion of this reviewer, resulted in better projects, more likely to achieve their scientific and technical objectives. (STAP)