



GEF Evaluation Office



UNDP Evaluation Office

Joint Evaluation of the GEF Small Grants Programme

Country Program Case Study: Cuba

Prepared by

**Aaron Zazueta
GEF Evaluation Office
Washington, D.C.**

and

**Alejandro A. Imbach
Geolatina
Costa Rica**

August 2007

Contents

Foreword	ii
Abbreviations	iii
1 Key Findings	1
2 Background	1
3 Brief Appraisal of the Cuba SGP	2
3.1 Relevance of the SGP to GEF, Host Country, Local Community, and Civil Society Priorities	3
3.2 Effectiveness of the Cuba SGP	5
4 Efficiency and Cost Effectiveness of the Cuba SGP	10
4.1 Efficiency of Program Administrative Structure	10
4.2 Program Cost Effectiveness	10
5 Recommendations	11
Annex A: List of Reviewed Documents	12
Annex B: List and Description of Projects Visited/Reviewed	14

Foreword

In accordance with the 2006 Monitoring and Evaluation Policy of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), one of the overarching objectives of the GEF with respect to monitoring and evaluation is to promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing on results and lessons learned among the GEF and its partners as a basis for decision making on policies, strategies, program management, and projects; and to improve knowledge and performance. In this context, the GEF Evaluation Office is pleased to present nine country program case studies that were part of the data collected for the Joint Evaluation of the Small Grants Programme (SGP).

In June 2006, the GEF Council requested the GEF Evaluation Office undertake an independent evaluation of the SGP. The GEF Evaluation Office invited the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Evaluation Office to participate in this initiative. The purpose of the joint evaluation was to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and cost effectiveness of SGP objectives in relation to the overall GEF mandate. In addition the evaluation assessed the results of the SGP, the factors affecting these results, and the monitoring and evaluation systems of the program as implemented. It also traced the evolution of the SGP, the changes that have taken place in the program, and the drivers of these changes. Country case studies were prepared as part of the evaluation. Although the studies are unique and particular to each country, the analytical framework used was that provided by the evaluation's approach paper.

While the findings and conclusions are the responsibility of the authors, the case studies were undertaken under the direction of the GEF and UNDP evaluation officers with relevant regional experience. National consultants were hired to carry out the majority of the project site visits. Staff from the GEF and UNDP Evaluation Offices provided methodological guidance to the local consultants, participated in the initial site visits, and supervised the drafting of the case studies to ensure consistency within and among the country studies.

The contents of this report are based on the findings of the evaluation team and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of GEF or UNDP.

The GEF Evaluation Office would like to thank all who collaborated with the evaluation: its staff and consultants, national coordinators, members of the national steering committees, and the staff from the country offices. In addition, we would like to acknowledge and thank the main authors of the reports.

Abbreviations

ACPA	Cuban Association of Animal Production
ARIJ	Agricultural Research Institute Jorge Dimitro
FSP	full-size project
GEF	Global Environment Facility
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MSP	medium-size project
NGO	nongovernmental organization
NSC	national steering committee
SGP	Small Grants Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature (also known as World Wildlife Fund)

1 Key Findings

This review rates Cuba's Small Grants Programme (SGP) as highly satisfactory.¹ The review found that its relevance to Global Environment Facility (GEF), country, local community, and civil society priorities is satisfactory; and that its effectiveness and cost effectiveness are highly satisfactory. The program also has effective supervisory and monitoring systems, and has made provisions for project evaluation at closeout.

Particularly noteworthy are the partnerships the program has established with government agencies, research institutions, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and local governments. These partnerships draw on the country's strong institutional and human resources and have given the program access to high-quality and timely technical assistance, frequent onsite supervision, and regular monitoring of progress toward project results. Through these partnerships, the program is also helping to strengthen collaborating institutions' capacities to address global environmental challenges while responding to national and community development priorities.

2 Background

Cuba is comprised of several islands and archipelagos; it has a high level of biodiversity and a number of important endemic species. Human development indicators in Cuba, particularly in the areas of health and education, are high compared with those of other developing countries.

In the last decade, Cuba has carried out important legal, policy, and institutional changes to better address environmental issues. Some of the reforms include a change in article 27 of its 1976 constitution, which introduces the concept of sustainable development and environmental protection and the right of citizens to a clean environment. Additionally, the Ministry of Science, Technology, and the Environment was created in 1994, and Law 81 on the Environment was passed in 1997. These legal and institutional reforms were accompanied by numerous environmental technical norms in line with such international standards as ISO 4001. Cuba is also a signatory to a large number of international environmental conventions.

¹This review was carried out as an input to the Joint Evaluation of the GEF Small Grants Programme, which was carried out by the Evaluation Offices of the Global Environment Facility and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Note that this is not a comprehensive review of the Cuba Small Grants Programme, but instead focuses on a few key aspects. The report is based on findings obtained during an April 8–13, 2007, country visit conducted by Senior Evaluation Officer Aaron Zazueta of the GEF Evaluation Office. During his visit, Dr. Zazueta met with the country GEF focal point and national coordinator, members of the National Steering Committee, the resident UNDP representative, and various representatives of the Cuban government and partner organizations in Havana. He also visited the site and/or met with representatives of the seven randomly selected grants. The information thus obtained was supplemented by a desk review, carried out by consultant Alejandro A. Imbach, of relevant documentation (see annex A) and of seven randomly selected grants from the Cuba SGP portfolio (see annex B).

Cuba is characterized by strong institutions and an abundance of well-trained professionals. A growing number of environmental initiatives seek to improve management of natural resources and the environment; these have facilitated the development of further capacities in universities and research institutions, trade organizations, community groups, and—more recently—NGOs. Exemplifying the strong institutional and human resources in Cuba are the following:

- At the local level, there is a solid base of community organizations already in place; these are well organized and can serve as the basis for project implementation.
- There is a reasonably well-developed public sector operating under a clearly defined legal framework and within a coherent policy framework. Cuba has clear and concise development and environmental strategies at the central government level. These strategies are operationalized at the regional and local levels through a set of other planning instruments. These tools have enabled the SGP to focus its efforts on initiatives closely related to national and local priorities.
- There are many technical and scientific organizations (universities, research centers, and the like) able and willing to work with local communities and other entities. Several are already working with the SGP, providing technical assistance in specific topics such as capacity building and scientific monitoring.
- The country has a large number of technical professionals who are well organized in trade associations active at the national, regional, and local levels.

3 Brief Appraisal of the Cuba SGP

The Cuba SGP started in June 2004. In just a few years, it has reached a high level of maturity. The program successfully coordinates GEF, country, and local priorities. The Cuba SGP is well integrated in local processes through extensive partnerships with numerous organizations of different types (community, government, trade association, academic, and other) and operating at different levels (local, municipal, state, and regional).

The SGP focuses its interventions on a few issues and regions, and has engaged partners to extend and expand its ability to provide technical assistance, follow-up, and grant financing. Most of the grant sites are located in the western part of the main island, in the provinces of Granma and Guantanamo, which have the lowest indexes of social development in the country and are the areas of the country where most biodiversity resources remain. The program concentrates its operations mainly in the GEF focal areas of biodiversity, climate change, and land degradation. The program has explicitly decided not to invest in international water initiatives at the present time. Currently, the program manages 20 to 24 grants, mostly ranging in

value from \$20,000 to \$40,000.² No projects had been closed out at the time of the evaluation field visit.

3.1 Relevance of the SGP to GEF, Host Country, Local Community, and Civil Society Priorities

The overall relevance of the program is satisfactory, and all seven of the grants randomly selected for assessment were rated as satisfactory or higher in this regard.. Although the program has no direct operational links with GEF full-size projects (FSPs) or medium-size projects (MSPs), it does operate in the same geographical areas as other GEF projects, and several National Steering Committee (NSC) members are managers or former managers of GEF FSPs. The SGP is thus very much aligned with other GEF operations in the country.

Fit of Country SGP Objectives with GEF Mission

Finding the appropriate balance between GEF and country priorities might pose a challenge to a country program when the host country has a robust sustainable development policy framework as is the case in Cuba. In Cuba, it seems that the SGP management team has addressed this challenge well. All projects visited were assessed as being relevant to GEF priorities. So far, most projects have focused on priorities related to biodiversity, climate change, and land degradation—such as reducing pressure on protected areas by introducing sustainable land management approaches in the protected areas’ neighboring communities, reducing greenhouse gas emissions by introducing solar panel technology in remote off-grid areas, and conserving the country’s agrobiological resources. Grants are often relevant to two or more focal areas. Given the geographical concentration of program operations, it is likely that land degradation will continue to figure prominently in the portfolio. The Cuba SGP might face a challenge in ensuring balance across focal areas, particularly between land degradation grants on the one hand and biodiversity and climate change grants on the other. One way to address this challenge is by continuing to ensure that projects meet GEF relevancy criteria in at least two or more focal areas.

The SGP national coordinator and NSC members have played a significant role in ensuring the high level of relevance of program grants to the GEF mission. They also have a good understanding of the GEF purpose and its mandate, are familiar with national policies and institutions, and seem to have a good sense of areas of potential common interest. This circumstance gives the SGP a significant advantage in selecting project ideas that best meet both GEF and national priorities.

Alignment of the SGP with Country-Level Sustainable Development and Environmental Priorities and Programs

Cuba has a very strong and well-developed planning structure at the central government level; the strategies defined at this level are then clearly articulated with other regional plans. In this way, the Cuba SGP is able to attain a strong alignment between country/local priorities and the

²All dollar amounts are U.S. dollars unless otherwise indicated.

initiatives it funds. Specifically, the country's National Environmental Strategy defines its primary national priorities and establishes guidelines regarding Cuba's commitments to international conventions. Subsidiary to this general strategy are a biodiversity strategy and a desertification combat strategy; these define strategic actions and the geographical focus for these actions in more detail and specificity. Using these planning tools, the SGP has been able to direct its efforts at identified national priorities in a systematic and precise way.

Relevance to Local Communities and Civil Society

Although the NGO sector is not as developed in Cuba as in other Latin American countries, Cuba's civil society organizations do include some NGOs; additionally, its communities are often well organized at the local level, national trade associations often have chapters at the regional level, and the country as a whole has an extensive network of high-quality universities and research institutions. These multiple institutional and organizational lines can be used to tap state financial resources; most importantly, however, they are a source of technical knowledge and information. For example, local chapters of the Cuban Association of Animal Production (ACPA) can provide technical assistance to community goat producers on how to improve productivity, as well as information on market outlets and ways of marketing goat cheese. By providing the opportunity to civil society organizations to develop new roles and methods by which they interact with one another, the government, and community organizations, the SGP is becoming increasingly relevant and contributes to the strengthening of civil society in Cuba.

With regard to local communities, the Cuba SGP has insisted from the start that its projects directly meet the needs of local grantees. The SGP national coordinator and NSC members often visit a project site one or several times to meet and assess project ownership and determine the grantee's readiness to engage in the project. A local governance structure that guarantees transparency and participation in decision making is a requirement for project approval. Regular grantee meetings are held throughout project implementation, and major decisions regarding project modifications are made by grantees with the appropriate technical support. The program also routinely assigns grantee organizations a role in the reporting of progress prior to any disbursements and monitoring of project results.

Relevance of the SGP to the GEF FSP and MSP Country Portfolios

There appears to be good correspondence between the SGP and other GEF MSPs and FSPs in Cuba. Several SGP projects are implemented in the same geographical areas in which other GEF projects are taking place or will be implemented in the short term. The participation of GEF project managers on the SGP NSC helps ensure coherence between SGP grants and other GEF operations. In addition, at the local level, there are direct interactions among local key players.

Cuba's first country strategy (2005–2008) defined the eastern region of the country as the primary geographic focus. This has permitted the identification of SGP projects that are located in the same areas of intervention as FSPs (for example, Strengthening of the National System of Protected Areas, and Support to the Implementation of the National Program against

Desertification). Moreover, it was possible to identify experiences at the local community level that are useful for developing FSPs.

So far, 7 of the approved 19 SGP projects in Cuba take place in geographical and focal areas (biodiversity conservation and land degradation) that coincide with the 3 FSPs that are currently being developed in the country.

The new country strategy for the SGP (2007–2010) incorporates lessons learned and explicitly addresses the importance of alliances with FSPs and MSPs as a way to achieve a greater impact. Some NSC members who have managed GEF FSPs believe that the time horizons, level of operations, and overall management requirements of FSPs and small grants are quite different; early exploration during project design might allow for the identification of opportunities for joint initiatives. This would be particularly useful for FSPs that include demonstrations and community work.

Beneficial Impact of the SGP's Reputation

Over the past two years SGP-funded projects have won awards and have been featured in the media. This kind of exposure has raised the SGP profile not only at the local and regional levels, but also at the central government level. All national, regional, and local government officials interviewed were pleased with the performance of the program and acknowledged its important contributions in linking various institutions and strengthening community initiatives. The SGP is well known for its ability to establish partnerships and generate synergies with other entities. The reputation it has built is already paying off with international donors: for example, Italy's Directorate General for Development Cooperation (Italian Cooperation), the Canadian International Development Agency, and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) have approached the SGP to channel their resources through its partner organizations.

While the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been a big beneficiary of the success of the SGP, UNDP's reputation has also contributed to the success of the SGP in Cuba. There is a mutually beneficial close working relationship between UNDP and the GEF SGP in Cuba. The program has benefited greatly from this partnership, particularly profiting from UNDP's image and recognition, and by using UNDP's contact network as a starting point to implement the SGP strategy. UNDP promotes and supports the program's work and shares in the benefits accruing from its successes. While the GEF logo is not always in evidence for all projects, some beneficiaries do display the logo and referred to the GEF in interviews during the evaluation field visit. And for government officials in Havana dealing with international cooperation, the relationship between the SGP and the GEF is clear.

3.2 Effectiveness of the Cuba SGP

The overall effectiveness of the Cuba SGP is highly satisfactory. All seven grants from the random sample selected for review were rated as satisfactory or highly satisfactory. While it is difficult to account for specific direct benefits, it is safe to say that the program is contributing to the generation of global environmental benefits in the areas of concern to the GEF. The program

is making important contributions in terms of forging partnerships that mainstream capacities within collaborating institutions in Cuba to address global environmental challenges while responding to national and community development priorities. These partnerships have enabled the program to ensure high-quality and timely technical assistance, frequent onsite supervision, and regular monitoring of progress toward project results; and have been vital in the program's ability to scale up and sustain project results.

Direct Global Environmental Benefits Generated or Likely to Be Generated by Small Grants

Direct global environmental benefits usually take place at a local scale, and their aggregation does not reach significant levels compared to the overall magnitude of the environmental issues in the area of SGP intervention. It is difficult to quantify and ascertain the direct benefits generated by the program, partly because the local direct environmental achievements of small projects can be changed by any of several factors, given the scale and time span of the operation. Having said this, the Cuba SGP is set up to demonstrate community approaches to generate the following benefits:

- Conservation of Cuban biogenetic resources
- Reduction of pressure around protected areas by promoting alternative income-generating activities that are environmentally friendly and by demonstrating approaches to regenerate degraded landscapes in low-resilience ecosystems
- Reduction of carbon dioxide emissions by installing rural electrification systems based on photovoltaic energy, introducing improved stoves, and promoting reforestation
- Control of exotic invasive species in protected area buffer zones, in favor of local species (endemic species, in some cases)

SGP Contribution to Global Environmental Benefits in Ways That Address Local Needs and National Sustainable Development Priorities

The Cuba SGP has carved a niche for itself as a catalyst and promoter of partnerships for sustainable development, drawing on the robust policy, legal, and institutional framework and strong capacities in the local government and civil society. In just three years, the program has become particularly skilled in pooling a variety of complementary resources in support of community initiatives. SGP grants leverage financial resources, technical assistance and follow-up, and political and institutional support from a wide range of partners that include government entities, universities and research institutions, local governments, communities, trade associations, and NGOs. Mainstreaming is also taking place as the program provides opportunities to partner institutions to strengthen their capacities in environmental issues, develop synergistic relations with one another, and work with community groups.

Six of the seven grant sites randomly selected for examination in this evaluation included two- to six-partner institutions which provided technical support as well as financial and in-kind contributions to the respective project. The role of each organization involved seems well

matched to its competencies. One example that illustrates the way in which partnerships work in the SGP is the indigenous goats (cabra criolla) demonstration project. The project seeks to conserve the indigenous goats as a genetic resource in Cuba; its main objective is to establish a genetically controlled herd of goats that can serve as a source of genes for the rest of the country.³ The project was initiated with two partner organizations: the Agricultural Research Institute Jorge Dimitro (ARIJ) of the Ministry of Science, Technology, and the Environment, which is responsible for providing technical assistance to the project, carrying out the necessary field research to monitor the genetic lines, and monitoring project results; and the Cuban Association of Animal Production, which contributes to the effort by opening lines to markets and other goat producer associations across the country. The local presence of these two institutions allows them to provide timely technical assistance to farmers while performing supervision and project monitoring. During the field visit, it was evident that several farmers participating in the project had a good understanding of productive and cultural practices of goat rearing and were well versed in methods for monitoring the goats' genetic lines. ARIJ and ACPA are moving forward, based on the experience and lessons learned. Although only 20 farmers participate in the demonstration project, ARIJ has approved a budget to expand to six additional communities, using the methodology and instruments for community participation and training developed by the demonstration project. At the time of the evaluation, conversations were taking place with Italian Cooperation and the Canadian International Development Agency for project expansion and the development of a local cheese industry with national markets for its products. With the support of these donors, cheese recipes have been tested, and a marketing strategy is being prepared.

The indigenous goat project also has a very strong mainstreaming component in helping develop new capacities among partner institutions. "This project helped us learn to work with the community," reported the lead animal husbandry technician from ARIJ for the project. Senior representatives from ARIJ and the Ministry of Science, Technology, and the Environment confirmed this observation, noting that eight of the regional extensionists have been assigned to provide technical assistance to different SGP projects and are learning to carry out research in tandem with farmers. The ARIJ regional director indicated that the experience with SGP projects was gradually transforming the institute's methods of carrying out research to ways that are more responsive to farmers' needs. And organizations such as ACPA, which have traditionally maintained a strict production perspective, are learning to incorporate environmental considerations in their work.

Other grants have partnership arrangements similar to that of the indigenous goat demonstration project. In the community of San Narciso, the NGO Cuba Solar provided training, monitoring, and equipment to participating community members; the municipality provided resources to fix

³This project qualifies for GEF support under Operational Program 13, Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity Important to Agriculture, which includes activities that support "capacity-building efforts that promote the preservation and maintenance of indigenous and local communities' knowledge, innovation, and practices relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of agrobiological diversity" (paragraph 19 [iv]).

the road in to the community so as to allow for the transport of solar panels and other equipment; and the Coordination Center for Sustainable Development provided technical support for the production of seedlings and for reforestation. Also in the San Narciso project, local leaders were briefed on project monitoring results, specifically with regard to fuelwood consumption in the wake of the improved stoves the project introduced. Cuba Solar is playing an important role in scaling up and replicating the project; at the time of the field visit, the NGO was in conversation with other donors to replicate the project in eight other communities around the protected area near San Narciso. Similarly, the Agrodiversity Conservation Project in Peralejo included four different collaborating organizations, each providing specific support in areas such as technical assistance and training, agroforestry, fruit processing, marketing, and monitoring of results. The Peralejo project has been working with the local credit union to establish financial and accounting systems to ensure proper funds management as the project moves into its production and marketing phases.

Three factors have contributed to the SGP's achievements in the promotion of partnerships and mainstreaming of new ways of doing business:

- **SGP access to foreign currency.** Although local currency is available for financing projects in Cuba, the extreme scarcity of foreign resources poses a severe constrain in implementing environmental and development projects. In Cuba, foreign currency is required to purchase foreign-made materials and equipment. Strong human resources and institutional capacities in effect represent a large absorptive capacity of development assistance in Cuba, which actually results in a heavier demand for foreign currency. This mix of scarce foreign currency and high absorptive capacity makes the availability of foreign currency one of the most important constraints to development processes in the country.
- **Link with UNDP.** UNDP has a long track record in Cuba and is trusted and valued by Cuban institutions. The SGP's link with UNDP and the support of the UNDP resident representative to the SGP has allowed the program to establish itself quickly and set up agreements with various types of institutions. Two additional factors—a very capable and well-regarded national coordinator with a good understanding of the institutional landscape in Cuba and a prestigious NSC membership—serve to guarantee the integrity of the SGP in Cuba.
- **Careful assessment of technical capacities of partner institutions during the project preparation and selection process.** The SGP national coordinator and NSC place special attention on confirming that institutions participating in project proposals have the capacities and resources to deliver the services they commit. Partner institutions formally commit financial (mostly in the form of local currency) and in-kind resources before the NSC approves a grant. The grant approval process also includes at least one field visit, during which the national coordinator verifies that partner institutions and local community groups have a clear understanding of the resources and roles each partner brings to the project.

Effectiveness of the Country SGP Governance Structure

The NSC, SGP national coordinator, and UNDP together play an important stewardship role in ensuring that SGP resources are used effectively in ways that address global environmental values and simultaneously respond to country priorities and local needs. As in other SGP country programs, the governance structure of the Cuba SGP is robust—a further reason for the program’s good reputation in Cuba. The NSC has a high level of credibility insofar as it is comprised of prominent individuals who are noted national specialists in the GEF focal areas. Several members of the NSC are or were managers of GEF FSPs and bring with them extensive knowledge and understanding of GEF objectives and priorities. Further strengths of the SGP governance structure are outlined below.

- **Function and composition of the NSC.** The committee has an important role in defining program priorities and directions and in grant approval, supervision, and evaluation. It is comprised of highly credible individuals, representing a cross section of sectoral expertise. The NCS membership includes two vice ministers (one from the Ministry of Science, Technology, and the Environment and one from the Economy and Investment Ministry), four NGO representatives (three national NGOs and one international), two experts from national research institutions selected on the basis of their technical expertise and standing in their respective subject areas, and the UNDP resident representative. The NSC meets each quarter to review grants.
- **Project selection process.** The program holds competitive calls for proposals that are then reviewed and screened by the national coordinator and NSC. Any questions that arise during the review process are sent to the proponents. Once the NSC selects the most likely candidates, the coordinator visits the project site to verify knowledge of the project by prospective grantees, needs, and the readiness of community and support institutions to participate in the project. On the basis of the national coordinator’s report, the NSC approves or declines the grant. In the last round of grants, there were 50 applications, and fewer than 10 grants were awarded.
- **Supervision and oversight.** The national coordinator demonstrates a high level of professionalism and extensive knowledge of the institutional and policy framework in Cuba. He and the SGP program assistant are responsible for all field visits (at least three are made to each project), project supervision to ensure that projects are on track and receive timely technical support from partner institutions, administrative supervision, coordination of monitoring and evaluation (M&E), resource leverage, and partner networking. Day-to-day supervision of the projects is provided by the partners, most of which have a local presence and interact continually with the grantees.

Effectiveness of the Country M&E and Supervision

The program has a robust M&E and supervision system in place that draws heavily on the local presence of partner institutions and is complemented by periodic reports from grantees and field visits by the national coordinator and program assistant. These facets are delineated below.

- **Monitoring and evaluation.** The SGP requires that all grant proposals include an M&E system consisting of baseline studies, specific result indicators, and process and frequency of information collection. Following the global SGP guidelines, the Cuba program also carries out a midterm review and completion report. Monitoring is normally carried out by trained community leaders in close collaboration with one of the supporting partner institutions. In several cases, supporting partners such as universities and research institutes also carry out monitoring; these tend to be more rigorous and scientific in nature. In some cases, controls are used to trace environmental changes. For example, in the Nim Tree project, which is an ecosystem restoration project, a research institution is monitoring changes in biodiversity as tree plantations develop.
- **Small grants supervision.** Grantees submit regular financial and progress reports to the program. Reports are required prior to any disbursements being made. As previously noted, partner institutions play an important role in supervision as they are in constant contact with grantees. Additionally, every SGP project is visited at least three times: a preparation visit to help align groups with the project design; a second visit once the project has been approved and before execution begins; and at least one more visit during project implementation, often during midterm review. As of this writing, no projects have yet been closed out, but the evidence indicates that program standards for supervision have been met or exceeded in most cases. Supervision visits generally include examination of books, review of activities' progress, discussion of problems or potential problems, and definition of follow-up actions. The SGP also works closely with the Cuba Economy and Investment Ministry, which is in charge of controlling all expenses, allocations, and disbursements through a meticulous financial control system.

4 Efficiency and Cost Effectiveness of the Cuba SGP

The overall cost effectiveness of Cuba's SGP is highly satisfactory. Through partnerships, the SGP has found ways to multiply the results of GEF resources and enhance replication, mainstreaming, and sustainability of project results.

4.1 Efficiency of Program Administrative Structure

The Cuba SGP started in June 2005 and is currently operating between 20 and 24 projects. Now that the systems have been established and tested, the program plans to expand over the next two years to 40 or 50 projects. The national coordinator believes that the program's current staffing (one coordinator and one program assistant) will allow this expansion without any risks to quality.

4.2 Program Cost Effectiveness

Although the program has some potential of expansion without incurring significant increases in management costs, even at its current level, it can be rated as highly cost effective given the high level and intensity of technical assistance and supervision that its partners bring to the projects. Also significant is the progress made in mainstreaming and scaling up, and the program's

attention to sustainability concerns. This is attested to by the fact that after just two years of operation, other donors (such as Italian Cooperation, the Canadian International Development Agency, and WWF) are making arrangements to channel funding through SGP grantees and mechanisms.

5 Recommendations

Because this review did not entail a full evaluation of the Cuba SGP, it does not present comprehensive recommendations for the program. Instead, it proffers suggestions aimed at improving program effectiveness. One action that might help the program become more effective is the drafting of a succinct strategy. Such a strategy is not fully captured in the country program strategy. This clear articulation of strategy should be sure to address the program objectives related to mainstreaming and scaling up of projects, and the ways in which the program is seeking to achieve these goals.

Annex A: List of Reviewed Documents

Project Documents

The basic project documents (project proposal, reports from oversight visits, notes from monitoring visits, and final reports) for all seven projects sampled (see annex B) were reviewed.

Other Documents

Agencia del Medio Ambiente. 1997. *Estrategia Ambiental Nacional*. 30 pp.

Agencia de Medio Ambiente Instituto de Ecología y Sistemática Centro Nacional de Biodiversidad. Centro de Gestión e Inspección Ambiental. Dirección de Política Ambiental. 2001. *Estrategia Nacional para la Diversidad Biológica y Plan de Acción en la República de Cuba*. 91 pp.

Agencia de Medio Ambiente del Ministerio de Ciencia, Tecnología y Medio Ambiente. 1999. *Primer Informe Nacional a la Cuarta COP del Convenio sobre Diversidad Biológica*. 16 pp.

———. 2001. *Segundo Informe Nacional a la Convención sobre Diversidad Biológica*. 100 pp.

———. 2005. *Tercer Informe Nacional a la Convención sobre Diversidad Biológica*. 226 pp.

Gobierno de la República de Cuba. 2000. *I Informe nacional de la República de Cuba a la IV Conferencia de las Partes del Convenio de las Naciones Unidas de Lucha Contra la Desertificación y la Sequía*. 31 pp.

———. 2001. *Primera Comunicación Nacional a la Convención Marco de las Naciones Unidas sobre Cambio Climático*. 166 pp.

———. 2002. *II Informe Nacional Comité de Revisión Implementación de la Convención Naciones Unidas de Lucha Contra la Desertificación y la Sequía*. 50 pp.

———. 2003. *Informe Temático sobre Áreas Protegidas*. 7 pp.

———. 2006. *III Informe Nacional Comité de Revisión Implementación de la Convención Naciones Unidas de Lucha Contra la Desertificación y la Sequía*. 49 pp.

Grupo Nacional de Lucha Contra la Desertificación y la Sequía. 2000. *Programa Nacional de Lucha contra la Desertificación y la Sequía en la República de Cuba*. www.medioambiente.cu/deselac/pan.htm.

Ministerio de Ciencia, Tecnología y Medio Ambiente. 2004. *Situación Ambiental de Cuba 2003*. 113 pp.

———. 2005. *Situación Ambiental de Cuba 2004*. 70 pp.

Ministerio de Ciencia, Tecnología y Medio Ambiente, Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Medio Ambiente, Fondo para el Medio Ambiente Mundial. 2006. *Perfil Nacional sobre el Manejo de Sustancias Químicas*. 39 pp.

Oficina Nacional de Estadísticas. 2002. *Censo de Población y Viviendas, Cuba 2002*. 400 pp.

Programa de Pequeñas Donaciones, Fondo para el Medio Ambiente Mundial. *Estrategia Nacional de Cuba*. Tercera Fase Operativa 2005–2008, 2005

United Nations Development Programme. 2006. *Human Development Report 2006. Beyond Scarcity: Power, Poverty and the Global Water Crisis*. New York. 440 pp.

Yale Center for Environmental Law and Policy, Columbia University Center for International Earth Science Information Network, World Economic Forum, and Joint Research Centre, European Commission. 2005. *2005 Environmental Sustainability Index. Benchmarking National Environmental Stewardship*. 63 pp.

Web Sites

Cuba Small Grants Programme, www.undp.org/cu/ppd.html

Global Environment Facility, www.gefweb.org/

United Nations Convention on Biological Biodiversity, www.biodiv.org/

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, www.unccd.int/

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, <http://unfccc.int/>

Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, www.pops.int/

El portal del medio ambiente en Cuba, www.medioambiente.cu/

Annex B:

List and Description of Projects Visited/Reviewed

Project number	Project name	Recipient		Grant amount	Execution status
		Name	Type		
CUB/ 05/006	Support to Agrobiodiversity Conservation and Rural Development in Peralejo Community	William Soler Popular Council	CBO	\$22,231	Ongoing
CUB/ 05/007	Rescue and Conservation of the Cuban Creole Goat: Genetic Resource in Danger	Circunscripción 37, Jiguani Municipality, Granma Province	CBO	\$18,375	Ongoing
CUB/ 05/008	Direct Sowing: New Conservationist Approach to Improve Soil Conditions, Promoting a Sustainable Agriculture for Small Farmers	La Posta Popular Council and Farmers Cooperative Ramón Naranjo, Montes Grandes Community, Majibacoa, Las Tunas	CBO	\$22,502	Ongoing
CUB/ 05/009	Photovoltaic Electrification in San Narciso Rural Settlement in the Mountain Ecosystem in Guamuhaya	Las Moscas Popular Council	CBO	\$46,672	Ongoing
CUB/ OP3/ 2/06/02	Support to Environmental Conservation and Improvement of Corralillo Popular Council Economy	Corralillo Popular Council, Corralillo, Guisa, Granma Province	CBO	\$28,998	Ongoing
CUB/ OP3/ 2/06/06	New Livelihoods Opportunities for the Zabalo Rural Community, Premise for the Sustainable Management of a RAMSAR Site	Zabalo Popular Council, Jobabo Municipality, Las Tunas Province	CBO	\$20,265	Ongoing
CUB/ OP3/ 05/03	Nim Tree: A Sustainable Solution for Reforestation, Soil Improvement and Natural Insecticide Production with Community Participation in the Semi-Arid Region of San Antonio South, Guantanamo	San Antonio Southern Popular Council, San Antonio Southern Municipality	CBO	\$39,661	Ongoing

Note: CBO = community-based organization.