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Agenda Item 8

Annual Country Portfolio Evaluation Report 2012

(Prepared by the GEF Evaluation Office)

Recommended Council Decision

The Council, having reviewed document GEF/ME/C.42/03, “*Annual Country Portfolio Evaluation Report 2012*,” document GEF/ME/C.42/04, “*Management Response to the Annual Country Portfolio Evaluation Report 2012*,” and having taken note of the two Country Portfolio Evaluations in Nicaragua and OECS (GEF/ME/C.42/Inf.02) requests the Secretariat:

- 1) To consider ways to make project approval and implementation in Small Island Developing States more flexible and context-specific.
- 2) To reduce the burden of monitoring requirements of multifocal area projects to a level comparable to that of single focal area projects.
- 3) To enable South-South cooperation activities as components of national, regional and/or global projects where opportunities for exchange of technology, capacity development and/or sharing of best practices exist.

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Executive Summary

1. This fifth *Annual Country Portfolio Evaluation Report* (ACPER) provides a synthesis of the main conclusions and recommendations coming from country portfolio evaluations (CPEs) and Country Portfolio Studies (CPSs) conducted in the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region. These include two CPSs finalized in fiscal year 11 in El Salvador and Jamaica, two completed CPEs completed in fiscal year 12 in Nicaragua and OECS (comprising of Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) and two ongoing CPEs that are presently in their finalization stage in Brazil and Cuba. Key findings and recommendations were presented and discussed and comments were received from GEF stakeholders at consultation workshops in each country. Chapters 1 of the two completed CPE reports (Nicaragua and OECS) include the main conclusions and recommendations and are provided as Council information documents. The full reports are provided on the GEF Evaluation Office website. The responses provided to the evaluation by the respective government are annexed to these two reports.

2. Support from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to those countries started in 1992 in OECS, Brazil and Cuba, in 1994 in El Salvador and Jamaica, and in 1996 in Nicaragua.

Country	Type of evaluation	Number of projects included in the evaluation				National completed projects
		National FSPs & MSPs	SGP	Enabling activities	Regional/global projects	
Nicaragua	CPE	10	Yes	6	24	9
OECS	Cluster CPE	7	Yes	35	25	36
Brazil	CPE	41	Yes	4	36	20
Cuba	CPE	14	Yes	5	15	10
El Salvador	CPS	5	Yes	6	20	6
Jamaica	CPS	6	Yes	6	15	7

3. This ACPER focuses on: the relevance of the GEF support to the GEF and to the countries; the efficiency of GEF support; the role and responsibilities of GEF stakeholders and the result and sustainability of GEF support, particularly at the global environmental benefits level.

Conclusions

4. The following conclusions were reached on the results of the GEF support:
- (1) Most projects achieved moderately satisfactory or higher outcome ratings in their focal areas. Global environmental benefits are still modest, though progress toward impact is happening.
 - (2) Climate change adaptation in the Central America and Caribbean region is becoming increasingly important in the GEF portfolios analyzed. In some

- countries this is fully evident, while in other countries adaptation is still in its initial stages.
- (3) Capacity development at both individual and institutional level was overall good, with a few exceptions at the local level.
 - (4) Many countries in the Latin America and Caribbean region follow an ecosystem approach to environmental conservation and sustainable use, which increases the demand for multifocal area projects.
 - (5) Scaling-up, replication and sustainability remain a challenge in the portfolios analyzed, with some notable exceptions.
 - (6) Opportunities for South-South cooperation through national, regional, and global projects and/or project components exist, but are not fully taken up.
5. On relevance of GEF support the following conclusions should be noted:
- (7) Overall, GEF support has been relevant to both national environmental conservation and sustainable development policies, and to the GEF international mandate of achieving global environmental benefits.
 - (8) Mixed ownership is observed in the portfolios analyzed, strong in middle income economies and less so in Small Island Developing States, with the exception of Cuba.
6. The efficiency of the GEF support was assessed as follows:
- (9) Small Island Developing States face challenges in project approval processes and in implementation due to the specific circumstances in which they operate and to their specific needs. This hampers the achievement of greater global environmental benefits.
 - (10) Monitoring and evaluation for adaptive management as well as environmental monitoring are challenging.

Recommendations

- (1) Project approval and implementation in Small Island Developing States should be more flexible and context-specific.
- (2) The burden of monitoring requirements of multifocal area projects should be reduced to a level comparable to that of single focal area projects.
- (3) South-South cooperation should be enabled as components of national, regional and/or global projects where opportunities for exchange of technology, capacity development and/or sharing of best practices exist.

Introduction

7. This fifth *Annual Country Portfolio Evaluations Report* (ACPER) provides a synthesis of the main conclusions and recommendations emerged from the evaluative evidence contained in the Country Portfolio Evaluations (CPEs) and Country Portfolio Studies (CPSs) conducted in the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region. These include two CPSs finalized in fiscal year 11¹ in El Salvador and Jamaica,² and two CPEs finalized in fiscal year 12 in Nicaragua and in a cluster of countries members of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) comprising Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.³ The ACPER 2012 also contains validated findings, conclusions and preliminary recommendations from two other CPEs started this fiscal year and presently nearing completion, in Brazil and in Cuba.

8. Support from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to those countries started in 1992 in OECS, Brazil and Cuba, in 1994 in El Salvador and Jamaica, and in 1996 in Nicaragua. These countries were selected through a process established by the GEF Evaluation Office in 2006 and updated in 2010, based on the size, diversity and maturity of their portfolios of projects.⁴ The countries selected include large, medium, and small GEF recipients, as well as a considerable number of Small Island Developing States (SIDSs). Although most of the countries belong to the Caribbean region, the selection of countries includes one of the largest GEF recipients in Latin America and in the world, Brazil. As with previous CPEs, consultations were held on these evaluations with all major GEF stakeholders, particularly those residing in the country. Several visits to project sites have also been undertaken.

9. The Evaluation Office has prepared separate reports for each evaluation completed in fiscal year 12. Chapters 1 of the *GEF Country Portfolio Evaluation: Nicaragua (1996–2010)*, and the *GEF Cluster Country Portfolio Evaluation: GEF Beneficiary Countries Members of the Organization of the Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) (1992–2011)* include the main conclusions and recommendations and are provided as Council information documents. The full reports are provided on the Evaluation Office website. The responses provided to the evaluation by the respective government are annexed to these two reports.

10. The reports of the *GEF Country Portfolio Evaluation: Brazil (1991–2011)* and the *GEF Country Portfolio Evaluation: Cuba (1992–2011)* will be completed by the end of June 2012. However, the main findings and conclusions emerged from these two CPEs and validated during the final consultation workshops held in Brasilia on 10 April and in

¹ July 2010 to June 2011.

² The Jamaica and El Salvador CPSs were already reported in the ACPER 2011. However, the evaluative evidence emerged from these two studies is considered again in the ACPER 2012 in the wider context of reporting to Council on the consolidated conclusions and recommendations emerged from the country level evaluation work conducted in the LAC region.

³ July 2011 to June 2012.

⁴ http://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/documents/CPE_final_country_selection_note-0910_0.pdf

La Havana on 13 April, as well as the main preliminary recommendations identified during the workshops are considered in this report.

11. The CPEs and CPSs reported on in this ACPER 2012 along with those reported in ACPER 2010 (Turkey and Moldova) and ACPER 2011 (El Salvador and Jamaica) will be a direct input into the 5th Overall Performance Study of the GEF (OPS5).

12. The ACPER 2012 begins with a short background section containing an update on progress to date of the GEF-5 multi-annual cycle of country level evaluations, followed by a description of GEF involvement in the LAC region. The next chapter narrates the objectives, scope and methods used, and the limitations encountered. Conclusions are presented according to the three dimensions of the evaluations: that is, in terms of the results of the GEF support, its relevance, and its efficiency. Recommendations are offered to the Council in the closing chapter of the report.

Background

13. Brazil and Cuba complete the country evaluation coverage in the LAC region that was planned in the GEF-5 multi-annual CPE cycle started in fiscal year 11. During the last quarter of 2011 country evaluation work has started in the Asia and Pacific region, with pre-evaluation missions to India (in November 2011) and Sri Lanka (in February 2012) and the following launch of two CPEs in those two countries. A last CPE is being planned in the Pacific Islands to complete the evaluation coverage of the Asia region. The Office plans to report to Council on the Asia and Pacific region in the ACPER 2013. In fall 2012 the first CPE in the Africa region will be launched.

14. From October 2011 to April 2012 a CPS has been conducted in East Timor jointly with country evaluation work being conducted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Evaluation Office. The GEF East Timor CPS was conducted with the same approach agreed and followed in El Salvador and Jamaica last year with the UNDP Evaluation Office. The consultant who conducted the CPS was the same who covered the environment and energy section of the UNDP Assessment of Development Results for East Timor. Evaluative information, evaluation costs and events (most of the interviews as well as the final workshop) were shared and benefited both evaluations.

15. The LAC region's participation in the GEF started during the GEF pilot phase in 1992. Since then, the GEF has invested around \$1.95 billion (plus about \$7.20 billion in co-financing) through 605 active or completed projects. These are divided in 533 national projects, 72 regional projects and 52 global projects. The active national and regional projects represent 73% of the total portfolio or \$6.7 billion (including GEF amount and co-financing) while the completed projects represent the remaining 27 % (\$2.5 billion). These projects covered all GEF focal areas, namely 273 in biodiversity, 166 in climate change, 24 in international waters, 22 in land degradation, 40 in Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), and 80 multifocal area projects. UNDP is the implementing agency responsible for most of the national projects in the region (56%) followed by the World Bank (23%) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) (12%). Brazil and

Mexico are the biggest portfolios, representing 43% of the total finances applied in national level projects in the entire LAC region.⁵

16. This ACPER compiles the information obtained through the CPEs implemented in Brazil, Cuba, OECS and Nicaragua as well as from the two CPSs conducted in El Salvador and Jamaica. The country portfolios in focus for this ACPER include 145 national projects allocated in all GEF focal areas (59 in biodiversity, 39 in climate change, 12 in land degradation, 21 in multifocal, 10 in POPs and 4 in international waters). In biodiversity the national portfolios analyzed total approximately \$233 million in GEF financing and around \$645 million in co-financing. In climate change, the sum of all national portfolios analyzed totals approximately \$115 million in GEF financing and \$470 million in co-financing. The GEF has invested in multifocal area projects approximately \$46 million with \$116 million co-financing. In land degradation, the GEF has invested around \$30 million with \$151 million co-financing. In POPs, the GEF financing was equivalent to approximately \$10 million and \$16 million co-financing. Brazil is the only portfolio that hosts national projects in international waters, with a GEF financing equivalent to approximately \$13 million and co-financing of \$33 million. UNDP is the main channel for GEF support with 88 projects, followed by the World Bank and UNEP with 24 and 25 respectively.

17. A description of GEF portfolios included in this ACPER follows in the paragraphs here below:

- (i) *Brazil*: since 1992, the GEF has invested \$335.9 million (with about \$1 billion in co-financing) in Brazil through 45 national projects, namely 19 in biodiversity, 12 in climate change, 4 in international waters, 2 in land degradation, 2 in POPs, and 6 in multifocal area projects. With 16 projects totaling \$194 million, the World Bank has been the main channel for GEF support in Brazil, followed by UNDP with 17 projects and approximately \$80 million. Brazil has participated in 36 GEF-supported initiatives with a regional or global scope. Most of the regional projects involving Brazil have focused on the biodiversity focal areas, followed by the ones on climate change and multifocal area.
- (ii) *Cuba*: the GEF support to Cuba started in 1992 and at the present totals \$44 million (with approximately \$209.1 million in co-financing) through 19 national projects (11 biodiversity, 3 climate change, 3 land degradation, 1 POPs, 1 multifocal). UNDP, with 10 projects totaling about \$28 million, has been the main implementer for GEF support in Cuba, followed by UNEP (8 projects totaling \$10 million). One project is implemented jointly by UNDP, UNEP and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in land degradation

⁵ The LAC region includes Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

(\$5.7 million). In addition Cuba is involved in 15 regional and global projects supported by GEF.⁶

- (iii) *Nicaragua*: overall, the GEF has invested about \$32.27 million in Nicaragua, with \$165.24 million in co-financing. During this period GEF portfolio in Nicaragua was formed of 16 national projects (5 biodiversity, 4 climate change, 1 land degradation, 2 POPs, and 4 multifocal). UNDP has also been the main channel for GEF support in Nicaragua with 12 projects totaling about \$ 12.5 million followed by the World Bank with 2 projects totaling \$7.8 million. In turn, the World Bank and UNDP carried out jointly a project on climate change (\$ 7.9 million).
- (iv) *OECS (Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines)*: OECS countries participation in the GEF started during the pilot phase in 1992 with the preparation of the World Bank–implemented Wider Caribbean Initiative for Ship-Generated Waste Management project, which involved a total of 22 countries in the region. Today, the GEF portfolio among the OECS countries includes 42 national projects valued at \$12.32 million, with \$10.13 million of co-financing. Most of the national projects are enabling activities. The GEF portfolio in the OECS countries is comprised of 15 projects in biodiversity, 12 on climate change, 7 on multifocal area, 5 on land degradation and 3 on POPs. UNDP is the main implementer of national project among the six OECS countries. In addition, the OECS countries covered by this evaluation have been or are involved in an additional 17 regional projects.
- (v) *El Salvador*: the GEF funding in El Salvador totals about \$11.4 million with \$22.7 million in cofinancing and is distributed among 11 national projects—6 in biodiversity, 3 in climate change, 1 in POPs, and 1 multifocal project. UNDP is the main channel for GEF support in El Salvador with 8 projects. The remaining 3 projects are implemented by the World Bank (2) and UNEP (1). In addition, El Salvador has participated in 20 initiatives financially supported by the GEF with a regional or global scope. Nine of the regional and global projects involving El Salvador are biodiversity projects focusing on protected areas and biosafety.
- (vi) *Jamaica*: the country’s participation with the GEF began in 1993. Since then, Jamaica has been involved in 12 national projects totaling \$11.86 million in GEF support and \$23.65 in co-financing. Jamaica has supported projects in biodiversity (3 projects), climate change (5 projects), multifocal area (2 projects), land degradation (1 project) and POPs (1 project). With 10 projects, UNDP is the main channel for GEF support in Jamaica. The World Bank and UNEP are the agencies responsible for the implementation of the remaining 2 projects. In addition to its national portfolio with the GEF, Jamaica has participated in 15 regional or global projects.

⁶ Figures for the Cuba portfolio analysis are preliminary.

Table 1.1: National Portfolio Resource Allocation by Focal Area

Country	Biodiversity		Climate Change		Land Degradation		Multifocal		POPs		International Waters		Total	
	GEF	Co-financing	GEF	Co-financing	GEF	Co-financing	GEF	Co-financing	GEF	Co-financing	GEF	Co-financing	GEF	Co-financing
Nicaragua	10.30	51.30	12.10	87.80	3.00	17.50	5.40	6.40	1.30	2.10	0.00	0.00	32.10	165.10
OECS	2.78	0.79	1.79	0.00	2.50	4.10	4.19	5.00	1.06	0.25	0.00	0.00	12.32	10.14
Brazil	180.11	483.05	86.43	346.03	13.99	21.04	35.63	104.49	6.47	13.13	13.35	32.96	335.98	1,000.70
Cuba	27.00	83.00	6.00	18.00	10.00	108.00	0.20	0.07	0.50	0.10	0.00	0.00	43.70	209.17
El Salvador	9.40	19.10	1.40	3.10	0.00	0.00	0.18	0.08	0.43	0.39	0.00	0.00	11.41	22.67
Jamaica	3.18	7.79	7.20	14.90	0.50	0.49	0.73	0.43	0.24	0.00	0.00	0.00	11.85	23.61
Total	232.77	645.03	114.92	469.83	29.99	151.13	46.33	116.47	10.00	15.97	13.35	32.96	447.36	1,431.39

Table 1.2: National Projects by GEF Agencies

Country	WB	UNDP	UNEP	IFAD	FAO	IADB	WB/UNDP	UNDP/UNEP	UNDP/IADB	Total
Nicaragua	2	12	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	16
OECS	3	31	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	42
Brazil	16	17	7	1	2	1	0	0	1	45
Cuba	0	10	8	0	0	0	0	1	0	19
El Salvador	2	8	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	11
Jamaica	1	10	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	12
Total	25	87	25	1	2	2	1	1	1	145

Table 1.3: National Projects by Focal Area

Country	Biodiversity	Climate Change	Land Degradation	Multifocal	POPs	International Waters	Total
Nicaragua	5	4	1	4	2	0	16
OECS	15	12	5	7	3	0	42
Brazil	19	12	2	6	2	4	45
Cuba	11	3	3	1	1	0	19
El Salvador	6	3	0	1	1	0	11
Jamaica	3	5	1	2	1	0	12
Total	59	39	12	21	10	4	145

Objectives, Scope, Methods, and Limitations

18. Evaluation work was conducted by staff of the Evaluation Office and consultants with extensive experience with each individual country. The El Salvador and Jamaica CPSs were conducted and completed during fiscal year 2011. The Nicaragua CPE was conducted between December 2010 and June 2011; the OECS Cluster CPE was conducted between January and August 2011; the Brazil CPE was launched in May 2011 and the Cuba CPE in June 2011; completion of these two evaluations is foreseen by end of June 2012.

Objectives

19. The CPEs and CPSs reported on in this ACPER were conducted following their respective standard Terms of Reference (TORs).⁷ The standard TORs were adapted to each country using the information collected and the feedback received during the scoping phase. In compliance with the standard TORs for these evaluations, the CPEs and CPSs included in this ACPER were all conducted with the following objectives:

- independently evaluate the relevance and efficiency⁸ of the GEF support in a country from several points of view: national environmental frameworks and decision-making processes; the GEF mandate and the achievement of global environmental benefits; and GEF policies and procedures;
- assess the effectiveness and results⁹ of completed projects aggregated at the focal area;
- provide feedback and knowledge sharing to (1) the GEF Council in its decision making process to allocate resources and to develop policies and strategies; (2) the Country on its participation in, or collaboration with the GEF; and (3) the different agencies and organizations involved in the preparation and implementation of GEF funded projects and activities.

Scope

20. The main focus of the CPEs and CPSs included in this ACPER was the projects supported by the GEF at all project stages (preparation, implementation and completion) within the national boundaries. The Small Grants Programme (SGP) was assessed against the respective national strategy and not on the basis of each individual SGP grant. Project ideas from either the governments or GEF Agencies included in the respective pipelines were not considered in the analysis. In addition to national projects, the GEF portfolios assessed include a selection of regional and global projects selected according to a set of criteria, including the presence in the country of a project coordination unit and/or project sites; the importance of the project focal area to the country; and the existence of a clear connection to national projects. Regional projects were a specific focus of the OECS Cluster CPE as this is the main modality of GEF support in this region.

21. The stage of each project determined the evaluation focus. For example, completed projects were assessed against the usual three evaluation criteria, namely effectiveness and results (outputs, outcomes and impacts), relevance and efficiency. Ongoing projects were assessed in terms of relevance and efficiency. Projects under preparation, i.e. those with an approved Project Identification Form (PIF) or Project

⁷ http://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/documents/EO_CPE_STORs_ENG.pdf

<http://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/documents/CPE-Standard%20CPS%20TOR.pdf>

⁸ **Relevance:** the extent to which the objectives of the GEF activity are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, global priorities and partners' and donors' policies; **Efficiency:** a measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results.

⁹ **Effectiveness:** the extent to which the GEF activity's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance; **Results:** the output, outcome or impact (intended or unintended, positive and/or negative) of a GEF activity.

Preparation Grant (PPG), were assessed primarily in terms of relevance, with some eventual limited assessment of efficiency. The results and sustainability of GEF support, particularly at the global environmental benefits level, were given special attention. Table 1.4 presents the portfolios of projects covered in the CPEs and CPSs included in this ACPER.

Table 1.4 Project Coverage of each Country Portfolio Evaluation and/or Study

Country	Type of evaluation	Number of projects included in the evaluation				National completed projects
		National FSPs & MSPs	SGP	Enabling activities	Regional/global projects	
Nicaragua	CPE	10	Yes	6	24	9
OECS	Cluster CPE	7	Yes	35	25	36
Brazil	CPE	41	Yes	4	36	20
Cuba	CPE	14	Yes	5	15	10
El Salvador	CPS	5	Yes	6	20	6
Jamaica	CPS	6	Yes	6	15	7
Total		83		62	135	88

Methods

22. Since 2006 to date the Office has completed 13 CPEs and 3 CPSs in all the geographical regions. A broad range of quantitative and qualitative methods and tools are used in these evaluations, including traditional ones such as desk reviews, portfolio analyses and interviews as well as CPE/CPS-specific ones such as the country environmental legal framework analysis and the global environmental benefits assessment. In line with the Office's choice of transparency, CPEs/CPSs methods and tools are available in the country portfolio evaluation webpage under the Office website. CPEs/CPSs methods are constantly being updated and refined.

23. For the CPEs and CPSs reported in this ACPER, additional evaluative evidence at the country level was drawn from other Office evaluations. Statistical data and scientific sources were consulted, particularly with regard to national environmental indicators. Interviews were conducted with representatives of all GEF stakeholders, and a substantive number of field visits were made. Each of the CPEs and CPSs included a national consultation workshop to discuss and receive feedback on the respective key preliminary findings. The quantitative analysis used indicators to assess the efficiency of GEF support using projects as the unit of analysis (e.g., analyzing projects preparation and implementation durations and costs).

24. Progress toward impact was assessed through a sizeable number of field Review of Outcome to Impact (ROtI) studies conducted in all the CPEs and CPSs included in this ACPER. Four field ROtI studies conducted in the Nicaragua CPE and in the OECS Cluster

CPE (two ROtIs each) add to the two conducted in El Salvador and Jamaica. Five field ROtI studies are being conducted in Brazil and two in Cuba.¹⁰

25. Triangulation of evaluative evidence has become a standard method that is consistently applied in all CPEs and CPSs reported in this ACPER 2012. The application of triangulation ensures that the cross-analysis of information results in better understanding of the contributions of the GEF initiatives in the country portfolios analyzed. Triangulation is used at the end of the data gathering and analysis phase to identify preliminary findings.

26. As reported in ACPER 2011, the Office started shifting country level evaluation work in the direction of more joint work with GEF member countries and Agencies. At its 2011 May session, Council encouraged the Office to continue to work in this direction. In fiscal year 12 the Office introduced the setting up of national independent quality assurance / peer review panels in support to its country portfolio evaluations.¹¹ Beyond providing scientific / technical as well as methodological support to these evaluations, the main purpose of these panels is to provide advice on the conclusions and recommendations formulated, increase country ownership and facilitate follow up action, especially concerning the recommendations addressed to the countries themselves. The Sri Lanka CPE will be jointly managed by the Office and the Department of Project Management and Monitoring of the Sri Lankan Ministry of Finance, with independent national quality assurance support provided by a panel consisting of experts from the Sri Lanka Evaluation Association (SLEvA).

Limitations

27. GEF country evaluations usually face limitations and challenges. The following includes the ones found in the CPEs and CPSs summarized in this report:

- Lack of GEF country or portfolio programs specifying expected achievement through programmatic objectives, indicators, and targets.¹²
- Attribution/contribution dilemma. CPEs do not attempt to provide a direct attribution of development and even environmental results to the GEF, but assess the contribution of GEF support to overall achievements.
- Challenges in evaluating the impacts of GEF projects and how to tackle them. Many projects, especially the oldest ones, do not clearly or appropriately specify the expected impact and sometimes even the outcomes of projects. This was partially addressed by reporting results that emerged from triangulation of various

¹⁰ The field ROtI study of the Amazon Region Protected Areas (ARPA) project in Brazil is being conducted in coordination with the GEF EO Performance Team.

¹¹ National quality assurance panels have been set up in Brazil, India, and Sri Lanka.

¹² Voluntary National Portfolio Formulation Exercises (NPFs) have been introduced in GEF-5. CPEs and CPSs that will be conducted in countries having chosen to do an NPF will use it as a basis for assessing the aggregate results, efficiency and relevance of the GEF country portfolio.

sources, including meta-evaluation analysis and original evaluative research conducted through interviews and field ROI studies.

- Intrinsic difficulties in defining the portfolio prior to the undertaking of the CPE. How to establish a clear and reliable set of data on projects and project documentation, despite inconsistencies, gaps, and discrepancies contained in the initial available data, remains a challenge in many other evaluations conducted by the Office.

28. CPSs faced the challenge of limited effort as compared with fully fledged CPEs, especially in relation to the limited time and resources available to conduct fieldwork.

Conclusions

29. The countries covered in the CPEs and CPSs were not selected to be representative of the vast and diverse LAC region, but their experience could be relevant to other countries as well. While acknowledging experiences and conclusions from previous CPEs, the ACPER 2012 identifies common elements emerging from the four CPEs and brings overarching conclusions to Council. The individual CPEs present more specific conclusions and recommendations. Not all of these are presented here, as they are not considered representative enough.

30. The conclusions are presented here according to the three dimensions of the results of the GEF support, its relevance, and its efficiency.

Results, Effectiveness and Sustainability

31. Results are presented in terms of the outcomes and impacts of the various GEF-supported projects. Achievements are presented in terms of GEF contribution toward addressing global and national environmental issues as well as national level priorities, including raising awareness and building national institutions and capacities. The use of the ROI methodology allowed looking at progress toward impact, this including impact drivers and external assumptions.

Conclusion 1: Most projects achieved moderately satisfactory or higher outcome ratings in their focal areas. Global environmental benefits are still modest, though progress toward impact is happening.

32. This conclusion draws from the Annual Performance Report (APR) 2011 data, showing that 90% of the 93 Terminal Evaluation Reviews (TERs) rated projects moderately satisfactory or higher in the achievement of their stated outcomes. 78% of the 18 project TERs for the subset of LAC countries included in this ACPER are rated moderately satisfactory or higher in the achievement of their stated outcomes. To date, these project ratings have not yet translated into significant global environmental benefits, although progress toward impact can be observed in the portfolios analyzed.

33. Overall, Nicaragua has achieved satisfactory results in climate change mitigation through renewable energy projects. OECS countries have achieved satisfactory results in climate change adaptation. Cuba has achieved satisfactory results in various focal areas, particularly in biodiversity and biosafety. Similarly, GEF support to Brazil has generated a long term approach in biodiversity that translates into sustainable results. In both Cuba and Brazil the GEF support has generated an important amount of valuable scientific knowledge. On the negative side, overambitious goals in biodiversity have led to unfulfilled expectations in terms of progress toward impact in achieving global environmental benefits in Nicaragua. In OECS countries and in Jamaica not much the GEF support has not yet moved beyond foundational and demonstration activities.

34. A larger share of GEF support in Nicaragua concerned climate change mitigation, focusing on the provision of energy access through the development of micro-hydro and solar renewable energy schemes for isolated rural communities. Examples include the Productive Uses of Hydroelectricity on a small-scale in Nicaragua (PCH) project implemented by UNDP and the Off-grid Rural Electrification for Development (PERZA) project by the World Bank. In terms of global environmental benefits, these projects reported avoidance of CO² emissions in the order of 19,408 metric tons (MT) over a four year period, whereas the post-project portfolio impact has been calculated to be 67,478 MT CO² per year. Similarly, a global climate change project with successful actions in Nicaragua, the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency project implemented through the International Finance Corporation (IFC), focused as well on the promotion of renewable energy schemes in Nicaragua. The project provided working capital to TECNOSOL, a Nicaraguan firm, to support business growth from this supplier of photovoltaic solutions in isolated rural areas.

35. National climate change enabling activities assisted OECS countries to prepare initial national communications to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Enabling activities also supported the development of national implementation plans for the elimination of POPs in Antigua & Barbuda, Dominica, and Saint Lucia. Evidence shows that enabling activities have played a valuable role in the portfolio by enhancing capacity and building awareness on global environmental issues at the national level. GEF support through enabling activities has also facilitated the implementation of the UN environment conventions by providing a regular, if limited, stream of support to key government agencies responsible for the conventions and providing technical and financial assistance to develop capacity of the environment departments within these ministries. However, although the GEF has been providing funding in the OECS region for 17 years, efforts completed to date can be described as primarily focused on enabling support, and are still in the early stages of demonstration level support. The only exception is in the climate change focal area under adaptation where there is an extensive body of completed work and knowledge.

36. GEF support to Brazil contributed to the creation and consolidation of key environmental institutions. The Biodiversity Fund Project (FUNBIO), established in the early nineties, is a unique institution in Brazil which still today plays a fiduciary role in implementing several important biodiversity projects, including the two-phase Amazon

Region Protected Areas (ARPA) project, as well as projects from other national and international, private and public institutions. FUNBIO also developed projects with several important environmental non-governmental organizations still active today. FUNBIO is applying to become a GEF project agency. The National Biodiversity Project (PROBIO) strongly supported biodiversity conservation efforts in Brazil. Before this project, Brazil's Ministry of Environment lacked a biodiversity division. PROBIO was critical in promoting the creation of the Secretariat of Biodiversity and Forests and its Directorate for Biodiversity, institutions which are now responsible for the National Biodiversity Program (NBP). PROBIO has also been fundamental in structuring the biodiversity legal framework and in formulating a national biodiversity strategy. Finally, PROBIO has generated several of the most important publications on biodiversity produced by national government. Stakeholders involved in the ARPA project have stated that one PROBIO publication, indicating priority areas for conservation in the Amazon region has been used as key reference in the ARPA project design.

37. In addition to the development of biodiversity strategies, action plans and specific laws, GEF support strengthened Cuba institutional capacity. The National Biodiversity Strategy (ENBio) introduced a change in the national environmental policy toward strengthening institutions and increasing environmental awareness in Cuba. The Strengthening Protected Areas System project also contributed to institutional capacity and financial sustainability of Cuban protected areas through the development of a financial sustainability strategy for the National System for Protected Areas (SNAP) and the proposal for the creation of the National Protected Areas Fund (FONAP). The ongoing three-phased Sabana-Camagüey project introduced integrated coastal management in Cuba and built capacities for planning scientific research with a focus on conservation and decision making. Several affected ecosystems were recovered, as in the case of the Bahía de los Perros with the regeneration of some mangrove sites and the elimination of trawling with consequent recovery of fisheries and sea grass beds. GEF support also raised the profile of biosafety in the Cuban political arena, which contributed to its institutionalization in Cuba administration. A biosafety legal framework has been developed and methodologies designed to engage institutions and actors responsible for the manipulation of living organisms. The National Biosafety Center of Cuba (CSB) was strengthened through the development of an Information Exchange Center on Biosafety (CIISB). Cuba is known worldwide for its achievements in the area of biosafety.

38. An important amount of valuable scientific knowledge is being produced through GEF support in Cuba and Brazil. Several projects in Cuba demonstrate the importance of the interaction between the scientific community and the administrative and decision making institutions. The Sabana-Camagüey project has created a link between the scientific and technical sectors of the academy within the administrative levels of state agencies and decision makers. In Brazil, not only the National Greenhouse Gas (GHG) inventories, but also the knowledge consolidation presented in those communications has been of great importance to supporting research. An emblematic example is the fact that the Second National GHG Inventory was used as the reference for the establishment of the national GHG emissions target for 2020. Furthermore, the Biomass Power Generation: Sugar Cane Bagasse project has also compiled a high quality publication, consolidating the then

dispersed knowledge on sugar cane leaves energetic use, and also the knowledge then created, leveraging further academic research on the theme.

39. GEF support in all focal areas has helped Jamaica to develop good capacity in environmental management and to link into international best practices. However, the country lacks the resources to scale up from these initial benefits and the GEF portfolio is not sufficiently well-known among Jamaica's other international development partners to maximize collaboration and follow-up. Most of the activities completed with GEF assistance have been of an enabling, capacity development or pilot nature and the real challenges come with the need to sustain and scale up the results achieved. Given the limited resources available to the Jamaican Government, the prospects for this to happen appear slight.

40. A review of the GEF biodiversity portfolio in Nicaragua shows that the challenge of effective biodiversity management has been compounded by weak formulation coupled with too ambitious goals; the absence of adequate prefeasibility studies at the design stage of projects; inadequate supervision from the GEF Agencies and/or weak executing agencies on the ground; and the challenges of decentralization in project management. The early achievements of the Atlantic Biosphere Corridor (ABC) project in terms of setting the vision for the development and management of the Atlantic Corridor are now meant to be built upon at the community level through the ongoing Corazon Transboundary Biosphere Reserve project. This project has suffered delays and as such is still at a relatively early stage of implementation. It was overly ambitious and at mid-term it is unlikely to meet its original objective.

41. The global benefits achieved are still modest in El Salvador since the majority of the national and regional projects are still in an early stage of execution, while lack of information impedes verifying the scope of such benefits in the case of the completed projects. Three different approaches have been employed in biodiversity projects, none of which allowing to determine with certainty the global benefits generated. Projects designed to strengthen the protected natural areas are still in process of execution and have not yet generated global environmental benefits. A regional project designed to create environmental awareness through use of the mass media does not provide information regarding its impacts. Finally, out of six biodiversity projects, one dealing with international waters and 77 SGP projects aimed at promoting conservation by means of sustainable production projects, only the Promotion of Biodiversity Conservation within Coffee Landscapes project was successful since not only were the goals originally set for it met but also some new goals were met that were added after it was under implementation. Important information was gathered on the species that lived in the plantations and the wildlife inhabiting the native woods, and after the project was completed the executing institutions have continued to play an active part. However, it has still not been possible to ascertain the level of its impact on the overall degree of biodiversity in the area covered.

Conclusion 2: Climate change adaptation in the Central America and Caribbean region is becoming increasingly important in the GEF portfolios analyzed. In some countries this is fully evident, while in other countries adaptation is still in its initial stages.

42. Adaptation to climate change in Central America and in the Caribbean is increasingly important due to high vulnerability, especially for SIDS. While adaptation has not been mainstreamed in Nicaragua, it is being well addressed in OECS with the new World Bank's Pilot Program on Climate Resilience (PPCR). Adaptation to climate change in Brazil comes out clearly as an important element of multifocal area projects.

43. The climate change portfolio in the OECS region has demonstrated a long-term strategic approach to addressing the climate change adaptation issues that are critical to the region. Initial efforts received a boost from the implementation of the Caribbean Planning for Adaptation to Climate Change (CPACC) project, implemented between 1997 and 2001, which focused on vulnerability assessments, adaptation planning, and capacity building activities. The regional adaptation portfolio was then expanded by the development of the Adaptation to Climate Change in the Caribbean (ACCC) project funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), followed by the GEF-funded Mainstreaming Adaptation to Climate Change (MACC) project, which built on the previous projects. Complementing these regional initiatives, the Special Program on Adaptation to Climate Change (SPACC) project was developed to support efforts by Dominica, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to implement specific integrated pilot adaptation measures addressing the impacts of climate change on the natural resource base of the region. The aggregation of these Caribbean-focused initiatives is now complemented by the World Bank's PPCR, designed to provide finance for national climate resilient national development. This PPCR represents considerable up-scaling through concessional loans and other financial mechanisms providing significantly higher resources than what has been available through the GEF to date.

44. While adaptation to climate change has been recognized by the Nicaraguan authorities as a priority for the country, only one project in the portfolio has this specific focus. The main results of the regional project Capacity Building for Stage II Adaptation to Climate Change (Central America, Mexico and Cuba) have been in terms of capacity building at the individual and institutional level, and of support for the production of national reports on adaptation issues. In Nicaragua, this project specifically supported the development of an adaptation strategy for the hydrological resources and agricultural systems for watershed. The work done with support from this project also fed into the second national communication to UNFCCC. While considering the portfolio as a whole, the majority of the remaining GEF projects have not paid much attention to adaptation concerns in their design, nor their execution. In the project design documents of the majority of the portfolio, with the exception of Capacity Building for Stage II Adaptation to Climate Change, there has not been a sufficient analysis of the risks posed by the effects of climate change to global environmental benefits in the long term and at the global level, as well as the risks posed to the financial investment in the projects themselves. These have remained peripheral issues to the GEF support in Nicaragua.

45. In El Salvador, the present government is seeking to promote adaptation to climate change, while most GEF projects focus on climate change mitigation. GEF support has helped Jamaica to substantially raise its capacity in such fields as renewable energy, energy efficiency, adaptation and energy sector planning and management. There, the adaptation activities have raised the capacity to understand and track the effects of climate change and to plan responses to them. The major challenge concerns how Jamaica can finance the measures necessary to adapt effectively and reduce vulnerabilities associated with climate change.

46. In Cuba, land degradation projects demonstrate cumulative effects on climate change adaptation. The South Archipelagos project recognizes that climate change will likely affect marine and coastal ecosystems over time. This project integrates planning measures and adaptive management for potential effects of climate change. Furthermore, there will be an increase in the capacity of marine protected areas to maintain ecosystem functions and components of biological diversity by increasing its size and greater connectivity to terrestrial protected areas. The Agricultural Biodiversity and Biosphere Reserves project seeks to cushion the effects of climate change on communities near the biosphere reserves by transferring management practices of agricultural biodiversity to increase their ability to adapt to change.

Conclusion 3: Capacity development at both individual and institutional level was overall good, with a few exceptions at the local level.

47. Overall, there has been satisfactory capacity strengthening in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Brazil, and Cuba; less so in OECS and at the local level in El Salvador and in Nicaragua.

48. In Nicaragua, capacity has been built at the national level in the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (MARENA) to meet convention commitments. Nicaragua has now issued its 4th national communication to the UN Convention on Biodiversity (UNCBD). Capacity was also developed through medium-size and full-size national and regional projects, including the ABC project focusing on building awareness of key stakeholders and supporting the development of plans promoting the protection of priority biodiversity areas and Indigenous community development. In the climate change focal area, the support for enabling Nicaragua to prepare its initial national communication in response to its commitments to UNFCCC allowed Nicaragua to build its awareness of climate change concerns and its capacity in meeting its obligations. Through this enabling activity, a national commission on climate change was created. This was later followed by the Additional Financing for Capacity Building in Priority Areas enabling activity for climate change, which provided amongst other, training on carbon fixation, exchanges of experiences, and support for studies on adaptation to climate change in relation to the availability, quality and quantity of hydrological resources. Support to building capacity in the Ministry of Energy and Mines (MEM) through the PCH and the PERZA projects can also be cited as an example of good capacity development.

49. The development of the National Capacity Self Assessment (NCSA) allowed Cuba to incorporate an ecosystem approach to project results, giving the country the ability to identify and define specific needs for key ecosystems (mountain, coastal and marine ecosystems, ecosystems in watersheds basins and bays, and productive agro-ecosystems). The Strengthening Protected Areas System project promoted the realization of a series of actions, many of which continued to perform and/or were replicated after completion. This project strengthened institutional capacity and financial sustainability of protected areas of SNAP, through the development of Financial Sustainability Strategy for the SNAP and the proposal for the creation of the FONAP. The Operating and Management Plans implemented by this project continued to be developed for the other SNAP protected areas. The regional project Phase II Enabling Capacity Building for Climate Change Adaptation, in which scenarios were developed against future climate projections, provided the basis for land use planning policies, weather monitoring and prevention funded by the Cuban Government.

50. In Brazil, institutional/individual capacity building and publication of quality documents are important for maintenance and replication of efforts that lead to global environmental benefits. As mentioned earlier, GEF projects contributed to the creation and consolidation of key national environmental institutions. Also, GEF projects have often resulted in publicly available reports that are used by other projects. The Biomass Power Generation: Sugar Cane Bagasse project helped building capacity for the university researchers involved. Furthermore, much has been done to improve institutional capacity for water basin management across the country. GEF support in this focal area started in 1999, one year prior to the creation of the National Water Agency (ANA). Once ANA was created, it became the executing agency of all GEF projects in this focal area. Three projects have been completed in Sao Francisco, in Pantanal and in the Guarani aquifers and a fourth project is under implementation in the Amazonas aquifer. These projects were an important laboratory for the technical staff of ANA, and also contributed to the creation of several river basin management committees, river basin agencies, and state hydro resources secretariats.

51. In OECS, national capacity strengthening is an important priority in the region to ensure national agencies can engage in developing and managing GEF projects. However, out of the six portfolios analyzed, only Antigua & Barbuda is implementing a full-size project, the design and approval of which was a strongly country-driven process by Antigua's Environment Department. The one other national project, a forestry medium-size project in Grenada, did not have strong stakeholder ownership from national institutions during design and implementation, and had little continuing activity or support following project completion. Capacity development is also critical within civil society, which is currently constrained in its ability to play an active and engaged role in contributing to effective environmental management in the region. This is further highlighted at the level of the SGP, where few civil society and community-based organizations have the capacity to engage with the program and take advantage of the available resources.

52. Almost all projects in Nicaragua have targeted in one way or another local populations. The majority of enabling activities have involved participants from local

populations and/or civil society. Despite this, local institutional sustainability of civil society actors remains a challenge. Field visits and interviews highlighted the difficulty with which beneficiary institutions could explain basic concepts of production costs and financing. Although the implementation of decentralized management has been promoted and strengthened, in general terms, GEF funds and institutional capacity development appear to be primarily focused on central institutions and government entities. A number of projects and enabling activities have such entities as their main targets. On the other hand the SGP, although working with civil society organizations, focuses its support essentially on achieving particular environmental and socio-economic objectives, sometimes without proper emphasis and technical support to build the capacity of the civil society organizations themselves to sustain their efforts overtime.

53. In El Salvador, the main goal of the seven projects in the climate change focal area is capacity building. GEF contribution to the strengthening of the institutional framework has been limited, consisting of financing of enabling activities such as the NCSA through which the Ministry of Natural Resources (MARN) now has a national action plan for capacity strengthening for environmental management, and enabling activities for capacity building in climate change and biodiversity.

Conclusion 4: Many countries in the Latin America and Caribbean region follow an ecosystem approach to environmental conservation and sustainable use, which increases the demand for multifocal area projects.

54. Nicaragua's integrated land-use based approaches to the management of natural resources are a stated priority of MARENA. Such approaches seek to balance the economic, social and cultural opportunities in a specific area of the territory with the need to maintain and enhance the health of the area's ecosystem. Some efforts have been made to address this concern in GEF supported activities, for instance, through the support for the biological corridor and the development of integrated regional management plans, a monitoring system, community development plans and sector plans. In addition, watershed management approaches are starting to be promoted. For instance, the new GEF supported Integrated Management in Lakes Apanás and Asturias Watershed project has made that an integral part of its design. Beyond the GEF, efforts at fully integrating land-use based management approaches within in-situ interventions are still somewhat limited in Nicaragua, due to the fact that the land use planning law of Nicaragua suffers in its implementation from both the multiplicity of authorities that are involved in its implementation and the lack of capacity at the local level.

55. The only project in Cuba classified as multifocal project is the NCSA, but it is not a multifocal area project per se. However, 9 out of 14 national projects (not including enabling activities) include multifocal elements. Overall, the portfolio of projects supported by GEF in Cuba focuses on its main ecosystems. Land degradation projects demonstrate cumulative effects on the issue of climate change adaptation. The South Archipelagos project recognizes that climate change will likely affect marine and coastal ecosystems over time, and integrates planning measures and adaptive management for potential effects of climate change to address this concern. Through this project there will be an increase in the

capacity of marine protected areas to maintain ecosystem functions and components of biological diversity by increasing its size and greater connectivity to terrestrial protected areas.

56. While the trend in Brazil's project portfolio seems to suggest an increase in multifocal area projects over time, it is not clear whether multifocal area projects are actually more common now, or whether new projects are simply being classified as multifocal area projects more frequently than they were previously. It is also too early to conclude that multifocal approaches are more common in certain biomes or among a certain group of focal areas. Projects classified as multifocal area represent 11% of the GEF portfolio in Brazil in terms of grant resources, and 13% in terms of number of projects. The first multifocal project in Brazil entered the GEF pipeline in 2001, started implementation in 2004, and it was concluded in December 2010. There is only one more multifocal project that has been concluded and this occurred in November 2011. Current multifocal area projects tend to have a major focus on biodiversity and land degradation and a significant fraction of these projects are oriented to the Caatinga biome. Multifocal projects are expected to become more common due to the interrelations between many GEF focal areas. A review of the Brazilian portfolio shows that many GEF projects in Brazil, classified under a single focal area, in fact have objectives in other focal areas as well. They could easily have been classified as multifocal. This concerns 9 full sized projects and 1 medium sized project out of 41 national projects (not including enabling activities). This classification problem is well known in the SGP as well, and particularly well illustrated in Brazil where all projects were classified as biodiversity to date, even though most projects addressed a broader range of objectives.

Conclusion 5: Scaling-up, replication, and sustainability remain a challenge in the portfolios analyzed, with some notable exceptions.

57. While 70% of TERs were rated moderately likely or likely on sustainability of outcomes in the APR 2011, the country portfolios analyzed in this ACPER score lower on sustainability for a variety of reasons, among which is the need to strengthen economic and environmental policies at the national level to ensure incentives for beneficiaries to switch from current livelihood practices to available more sustainable alternatives.

58. Overall, Nicaragua, OECS countries, and Jamaica show lack of scaling-up and replication. Climate change adaptation in OECS and the overall portfolio in Cuba are noteworthy exceptions. In Cuba, continuity is a government priority concerning all externally funded projects. Biodiversity projects in Brazil follow an historical sequence that led to some up-scaling and replication.

59. In Nicaragua, the economic and financial sustainability of GEF supported results are partially guaranteed by financial resources from the Government, which can be seen in the medium term budget approved by the General Budgetary Law of the Republic for 2011. This law indicates that MARENA has been assigned treasury resources amounting to \$3.4 million per year for the period 2011 to 2014. Additional funds to cover GEF project support are taken from international funding, estimated to \$4.5 million per year during the

same period. Clearly, financial sustainability to promote the global environmental agenda in Nicaragua remains a challenge. Three biodiversity projects, namely the National Strategy and Action Plan and Report to the COP, the Mesoamerica Biosphere Corridor project, and an Assessment of Capacity Building Needs-Add-on, focused on generating management tools. However, the financial resources required for their successful implementation were not available and the GEF Agreement Plan 2011-2020 defines the necessity of preparing an evaluation of financial resources that are required for ensuring that the goals for this timeframe are met. The three completed biodiversity initiatives promoted with GEF support ended their actions once funding was terminated. With regard to national and regional medium-size and full-size projects, neither strategies nor sustainability plans were developed to ensure the adequate financing for scaling up and further development of many completed biodiversity projects such as the ABC and MBC. The Dry Forest made efforts to involve the private sector in its financial strategy for project sustainability. However, due to policy changes, it was required to opt for a new tariff system, which does not generate sufficient funding to continue the project activities. The PCH and PERZA projects also lacked an adequate sustainability plan. Nevertheless, management successfully searched for additional funds from donors, and made attempts to develop a financial mechanism to feed money recovered from tariffs paid from increased numbers of users to be used after project completion.

60. The climate change portfolio in the OECS region has demonstrated a long-term strategic approach to addressing the climate change adaptation issues that are critical to the region, covering the CPACC, MACC, and SPACC projects. The aggregation of these Caribbean-focused initiatives is now complemented by the World Bank's PPCR. This sequence of efforts demonstrates the kind of up-scaling, follow-up and sustained effort at the regional and national levels, among GEF and other donors, required in all the focal areas.

61. For sustainability and replication of most of the GEF-supported activities to be viable in Jamaica, substantial follow-up actions are needed to expand their outcomes, demonstration value and policy effect. However, outside of the immediate circles in which they are involved, GEF activities are not well-known in the country. This may seriously restrict the possibilities of raising co-funding or developing partnerships with other Jamaican international partners. This weakness is particularly important in view of the extremely limited sources available to the Government of Jamaica for environmental activities, including those of high national priority.

62. The programmatic nature of the projects in Cuba presents the basis for financial sustainability for the continuation of the results. The funding from the Government of Cuba has been supporting the achievement of the results of projects supported by GEF and other donors that serve to continue further efforts in these areas. For example, the projects supported by GEF and other partners mainstream environmental awareness through the various Cuban departments in charge of natural resource management. Financial sustainability of the completed Strengthening Protected Areas System project is demonstrated by new job opportunities for local communities, due to the new infrastructure built for visitors in protected areas. Funds outside the national budget have increased by

five percent, with the development of the Financial Sustainability Strategy for the SNAP. The GEF Strengthening of Protected Areas Systems and Archipelagos projects include strategies to increase local participation in tourism to reduce pressures on natural resources in protected areas. Effectiveness and sustainability of the projects occurs also thanks to the interaction of the Cuban scientific community involved in such projects with decision-making levels in the Government.

63. GEF support to biodiversity in Brazil has followed a progression that started from PROBIO and FUNBIO and culminated in the ARPA project, one of the largest and most important GEF supported biodiversity projects worldwide. The Brazilian success in biodiversity is demonstrated by the creation and consolidation of key national environmental institutions such as FUNBIO, which presently plays a fiduciary role in implementing several biodiversity projects, including ARPA as well as projects from other national and international, private and public institutions. The historical progression of GEF support to Brazilian biodiversity conservation efforts clearly shows up-scaling and replication, although in a country of the geographical dimensions, political challenges (diverging economic interests and the present tense discussions on the new Forest Code) and ecosystem complexity (Amazonas) of Brazil this may still be insufficient.

Conclusion 6: Opportunities for South-South cooperation through national, regional and/or global projects and/or project components exist, but are not fully taken up.

64. The issue of South-South cooperation in the GEF is not new. South-South cooperation activities have been informally conducted in the form of transfer of knowledge, technology and best practices between Southern centers of excellence such as the Caribbean Community Climate Change Center (CCCCC) and other benefiting Southern countries. The Brazil and Cuba CPEs have been asked by national stakeholders to look into whether GEF has supported South-South cooperation because it is an issue that is high on the national agenda. In recent years South-South cooperation is increasingly seen as a modality that should be further explored. This is demonstrated by the recent guidance to the GEF provided by UNCBD on the subject.¹³

65. During GEF-3, projects included activities to promote the exchange of international experiences (not just South-South cooperation related). This was acceptable when well-justified and documented. During GEF-4, guidance was given to countries and GEF agencies not to include funding for international travel (again, not just South-South cooperation related) in the framework of national projects.

66. While it is reasonable to expect that GEF projects in Brazil in the near future could present evidence of support to South-South cooperation efforts, this is not yet the case. Some GEF projects in Brazil, however, have resulted in informal and uncoordinated cooperation with other Southern countries, especially on knowledge sharing issues. Examples include technicians from the Biomass Power Generation project having provided technical assistance for a similar project in Cuba and some others from the Sao Francisco

¹³ <http://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/cop/cop-10/official/cop-10-18-add1-rev1-en.pdf> (accessed in March 2012)

project that participated in international seminars in Latin America to present project results and lessons learned. However, these exchanges are not seen by the Brazilian government as part of its South-South cooperation, which necessarily needs to be coordinated with the government and specifically through the Brazilian Cooperation Agency. This agency is not entirely familiar with the GEF portfolio and its potential for South-South cooperation, although it expressed interest in learning about and promoting such potential. The only project that directly mentions South-South cooperation is the Agricultural Biodiversity Conservation and Man and Biosphere Reserves in Cuba (Bridging Managed and Natural Landscapes, of which the PPG has been recently approved). This project aims to disseminate global benefits generated by the project relevant to other tropical island biomes through UNESCO/Man and the Biosphere's South-South cooperation program.

67. GEF supported projects in Cuba indirectly resulted in the transfer of information and knowledge among Southern countries. Initially, such activities were not defined as South-South cooperation ones, but in fact they materialized as opportunities for such cooperation. A natural tendency toward this type of activities between countries with similarities or common interest can be noted, which occurred without formal incentives within the programming of projects. For example, the enabling activity on climate change in Cuba unexpectedly resulted in technology transfer of the methodologies for inventories and vulnerability and risk to other Caribbean countries, including the Dominican Republic and Haiti.

Relevance

68. Relevance of GEF support was assessed against the country's national development and environmental agendas, the GEF mandate, and the country's responsibilities and obligations toward the global conventions.

Conclusion 7: Overall, GEF support has been relevant to both national environmental conservation and sustainable development policies, and to the GEF international mandate of achieving global environmental benefits.

69. GEF supported the countries included in this ACPER on their reporting obligations toward the international environmental conventions to which they are signatory parties. Overall, GEF support was relevant to the development of national frameworks for environmental laws and policies in most focal areas. GEF support has also been relevant to all countries analyzed in this ACPER.

70. A few exceptions are noted. Regional projects in the OECS region had lower relevance for participating countries as often their focus was not in line with national priorities. Specifically, a difficulty was observed in aligning global and regional projects objectives to OECS member countries' national priorities. Furthermore, the relevance of regional projects objectives and outputs were not always clear to national stakeholders, as in the case of the Montreal Protocol, which is not a national priority for OECS countries. In El Salvador, land degradation, a national priority, was not addressed by GEF support.

Conclusion 8: Mixed ownership is observed in the portfolios analyzed, strong in middle income economies and less so in Small Island Developing States, with the exception of Cuba.

71. GEF support in Brazil is clearly nationally owned and country-driven. The large majority of GEF projects developed in Brazil originated from ideas of Brazilian individuals or institutions, although Brazilian stakeholders recognize that the GEF agencies also contributed to the improvement of the original project ideas. For example, one project originated from a national pledge to achieve the target of at least 10% strict conservation of all forest types in Brazil. Another project was conceived by state government entities working together with NGOs. Likewise, the Government of Cuba has strong ownership of GEF supported projects. All GEF-supported projects are integrated into the matrix of government decision making. The GEF Operational Focal Point (OFP), the various environmental agencies (CITMA), other ministries (MINAG, MININT and MINCEX) and the academia are all involved in the design and implementation of GEF supported projects. Ownership in Cuba is also demonstrated by the significant synergy that exists between several projects supported by GEF, which is in line with the government approach aiming at maximizing externally-funded investments. In the case of Brazil most co-financing, a good indicator for ownership, comes from Government (51%), followed by and the private sector (29%). In Cuba, co-financing comes mostly from the Government.

72. Lower ownership of GEF portfolios is observed in OECS and Jamaica. In OECS, ownership is linked to specific projects. For example, some projects have included strongly country driven process while others did not have strong stakeholder ownership from national institutions during design and implementation, and had little continuing activity or support following project completion. In cases where GEF funded efforts have clearly been driven by OECS national stakeholders, a greater sense of stakeholder ownership was observed. In Jamaica it would be more appropriate to talk of “national adoption” than of “national ownership” of the GEF portfolio. The GEF portfolio has been mainly designed by GEF agencies, although relevant to national priorities. The Government and other stakeholders have committed to activities at various stages of design and implementation, but cannot be said to have led the process.

Efficiency

73. Efficiency of GEF support was assessed in terms of time, effort, and financial resources needed to prepare and implement GEF projects; the different roles and responsibilities of the various GEF stakeholders (national, international, and local) and the synergies between projects and these stakeholders; and the role and functioning of the national GEF focal point mechanism.

74. Overall, GEF project cycle efficiency for four (Brazil, Cuba, Nicaragua, and OECS) of the portfolios analyzed in this ACPER has been mixed. The average time from the reception of the proposal and pipeline to when the project begins implementation for full-size projects, medium-size projects and enabling activities is 42, 28, and 11 months respectively. Cuba presents the shortest project cycle as compared to OECS, Brazil and

Nicaragua, way below the average at 29 months. OECS presents the longer time with 54 months for full-size projects. In Nicaragua, the GEF project cycle for medium-size projects took on average 17 months, followed by Cuba with 22 months and Brazil with 25 months. OECS presents the longest project cycle for medium-size projects, with an average of 46 months. Concerning enabling activities, in OECS, the project cycle took on average 5 months, while for Nicaragua and Brazil, the project cycle averaged 10 and 11 months respectively. The average cycle time of the Cuban enabling activities has been above average (18 months) when compared to the other portfolios analyzed in this ACPER (11 months).

75. Synergies and coordination in the portfolios analyzed is mixed. Weak coordination and synergies has been observed in Nicaragua, where project approval and implementation was slowed by the time needed for negotiations in which many actors were involved. Coordination and overall implementation arrangements were problematic and expensive in OECS (with the successful Integrating Watershed and Coastal Area Management in the SIDSs of the Caribbean - IWCAM - project being the exception rather than the rule). In Brazil, GEF agencies have worked independently from one another, without any clear overall coordination and/or synergies. However, competition between GEF agencies seems compatible with the nationally-driven nature of Brazil projects. Although a substantial variety of actors have been involved in the implementation of the GEF portfolio, there appears to be at times a lack of coordination between government ministries. When coordination did take place, it tended to be centralized in the capital. In Cuba there is a strong interaction between actors from different national institutions, resulting from the Cuba programmatic approach that applies to all externally funded projects. This involvement is maintained even after projects are completed. Besides the existence of working groups on various environmental issues in Cuba, such as the Working Group on Climate Change and the Working Group Government Sanitation and Conservation of the Bay of Havana, there is strong participation by higher levels of the government.

Conclusion 9: Small Island Developing States face challenges in project approval processes and in implementation due to the specific circumstances in which they operate and to their specific needs. This hampers the achievement of greater global environmental benefits.

76. Complexity in the contexts in which GEF projects are design and implemented hampers achievement of global environmental benefits. SIDSs tend to be vulnerable economies. Hurricanes and other extreme weather-related events such as draughts add to this complexity. While some of these contextual elements can be mitigated or accounted for in the design and implementation of projects, their combined effect has undoubtedly affected and still affects GEF and other donors-supported projects in SIDSs.

77. In OECS, challenges are due to a variety of structural reasons in the OECS region. This includes inadequate communication and coordination between different levels of the GEF partnership (UN environment conventions, GEF Secretariat, GEF agencies, GEF focal points, and regional, national and local stakeholders), limited capacity, limited

resources, and a limited number of people involved in environmental management, and complex co-operation relationships between many actors, including between the countries themselves. Furthermore, communication and coordination in the region can be challenging, and face-to-face communication is nearly a requirement for effective cooperation. In this context, there remains an inadequate flow of all different types of information related to the GEF as an institution, the nature and status of activities undertaken with GEF support, and the operating environment for GEF-supported activities.

78. In Cuba, the impact of the Special Period,¹⁴ the embargo and the recent global financial crisis have affected the design and implementation of GEF projects. The hurricanes that hit the island in 2008 affected infrastructure and therefore increased the demand for basic building materials and labor necessary for constructions stipulated in two GEF supported projects. The need to meet the population's basic needs (housing, hospitals, and schools) came before the building of GEF supported environment-related infrastructure. The effects of hurricanes and other weather related events coupled with the global financial crisis were the main issues that caused delays in implementation. Some projects faced delays in its implementation because the contribution committed by another donor entered later than expected, due to administrative difficulties for the international transfer of funds between the European Union and Cuba. Difficulties and delays of funding disbursements identification of equipment suppliers, procurement and payments affect negatively implementation. Delays and difficulties also occurred with the participation of Cuban technicians in international events.

Conclusion 10: Monitoring and evaluation for adaptive management as well as environmental monitoring are challenging.

79. Adaptive management occurs in the portfolios analyzed in this ACPER, with some exceptions. Inconsistent use of monitoring and evaluation information occurs in Nicaragua. Some projects did not demonstrate adequate change in implementation in the field based on recommendations provided by mid-term reviews. Adequate adaptive management was observed in OECS, Brazil, and Cuba. In OECS, projects undertook good adaptive management actions as a direct result of monitoring and evaluation activities. Some projects underwent a major restructuring following its mid-term evaluation including extension to allow the completion of key project activities. In Cuba, changes in the logical frameworks of ongoing projects have been made. For example, the introduction of annual meetings allowed a biodiversity project to make changes to certain aspects of the project activities. In addition to that, the project acted on several recommendations formulated by the mid-term review. Similarly, in Brazil there are indications that adaptive management occurred in projects undergoing mid-term reviews and/or evaluation, as for example in the case of the two-phased Protected Areas project,

¹⁴ The disappearance of the USSR, the main trade and economic partner, led Cuba to adjust to a new world system and to insert itself into the global economy. The decade of the nineties, during which these adjustments began, constituted a period of difficulties and hardship for the population. It is referred to as the "Período Especial" or Special Period.

where recommendations included in the terminal evaluation of a first phase were clearly taken into consideration in the design of a second phase.

80. In general, tracking tools still are considered challenging. These tools are not well used in OECS. Furthermore, assessing impact level results in the OECS countries is extraordinarily challenging due to a lack of solid baseline data on the status of environmental resources, and a corresponding lack of systematic monitoring data to assess trends over time. Brazilian stakeholders indicated that they have difficulties in filling out the tracking tool spreadsheets, or difficulties in understanding the relevance of some of the indicators included. In addition to that, in most projects baselines are not yet well established. Biodiversity indicators in Brazil are often ignored, even when they represent a significant component of the project. Several possible explanations have been provided: lack of staff, training, or funding; poorly designed indicators that are difficult to monitor; and lack of knowledge about biodiversity monitoring. Monitoring and evaluation of GEF support in Nicaragua occurs mainly at the project level and difficulties at this level regarding baseline information and properly worded indicators and outcomes were present in a number of projects reviewed. Lack of a centralized knowledge management information system compounds the challenges to monitoring and evaluation for adaptive management and environmental monitoring in Cuba. There is no single institution home to all environmental monitoring data for a particular project and the information generated is not easily accessible by all institutions participating in the projects that need such information to make sound decisions. In part this is due to limitations on access to technical information as not always the equipment for information management and exchange is available.

81. Monitoring and evaluation issues will be taken up further in OPS5 and in the focal area strategy evaluation.

Recommendations

82. The findings and conclusions emerging from the CPEs and CPSs conducted in the LAC region provide the following recommendations.

<p>Recommendation 1: Project approval and implementation in Small Island Developing States should be more flexible and context-specific.</p>

83. A specific recommendation of the Samoa CPE, endorsed by a corresponding Council decision in June 2007, called for more flexibility in considering the specificities related to SIDSs. These include being sufficiently flexible to accommodate the different capacities of the various Pacific Island countries, and recognizing the high transaction costs associated with the Pacific region. The evaluative evidence emerged from the OECS and Jamaica evaluations underline this call for greater context-specificity and flexibility. In the OECS region the design and implementation of regional projects showed the need for recognizing higher transaction costs for improved implementation arrangements, particularly concerning the coordination and communication between different levels of the GEF partnership and within the participating countries. The OECS

evaluation also calls for adequate attention for the capacity of environmental civil society organizations and public sector environmental agencies. In Jamaica, the administrative procedures (on procurement and other administrative aspects) applied by many GEF agencies have shown to hinder project efficiency.

84. In Cuba, projects are designed and implemented under the combined effects of the embargo and the recent global financial crisis affecting the design and implementation of GEF supported projects. The analysis of the GEF portfolio in Cuba suggests that in countries with particularly complex contexts the GEF should be more pragmatic concerning administrative procedures and proactively respond through planned procurement steps and specific guidance such that greater environmental benefits can be achieved thanks to improved efficiency.

Recommendation 2: The burden of monitoring requirements of multifocal area projects should be reduced to a level comparable to that of single focal area projects.

85. In recent years, an ecosystem approach to environmental conservation and sustainable use is emerging more and more across the GEF. In June 2008, based on a recommendation included in the ACPER 2008 (comprising the Benin, South Africa and Madagascar evaluations) the GEF Council requested the GEF Secretariat to strengthen the concept of integrated multifocal areas approaches, including addressing transboundary issues. This decision has caused a corresponding increase – also observed in the 4th Overall Performance Study of the GEF – of multifocal area projects in GEF country portfolios in the various geographic regions where the GEF operates.

86. Similarly to what was observed in the Africa region, many countries in the LAC region follow an ecosystem approach to environmental management. In the LAC region, the complexity of monitoring requirements of multifocal area projects and in particular of indicators, is considered a challenge by many project planners and executors, as baselines and corresponding tracking tools have to be submitted for all the focal areas involved in such projects. This means that these projects have a considerably higher burden in monitoring than comparable single focal area projects, whereas their efforts in the respective focal areas may be less intense, as the focus is more on cross-cutting and synergetic issues. This monitoring burden could be reduced through deciding on essential focal area indicators that need to be monitored throughout multi-focal area projects, rather than to apply the full tracking tools. This could bring the burden down to a comparable level to that in single focal area projects.

Recommendation 3: South-South cooperation should be enabled as components of national, regional and global projects where opportunities for exchange of technology, capacity development and/or sharing of best practices exist.

87. South-South cooperation is becoming a priority for UN environment conventions, as demonstrated by the specific guidance given to promote such cooperation by UNCBD in Nagoya in 2009. The analysis of this form of cooperation has been included in the

evaluations in Brazil and Cuba due to a specific request from national stakeholders during the scoping missions to the two countries.

88. Overall, informal South-South cooperation happens through transfer of information and knowledge between various GEF member countries in GEF regional projects. This was observed in Cuba and Brazil as well. The evaluative evidence gathered indicates that the two countries showed strong interest in South-South cooperation for various reasons. These include gaining a higher international reputation status and the fact that political and economic linkages between Southern countries both in the same geographic region (Cuba in the Caribbean region) and in other regions in the world (i.e. Brazil with lusophone countries) facilitate exporting locally developed technologies and best practices to other Southern countries with similar conditions where they would be suitably adopted. Last but not least, South-South cooperation is pursued for ethical and philanthropic reasons (i.e. Cuba).

89. Enabling of South-South cooperation activities and components in national, regional and/or global projects should not be in the form of funding from GEF project financial resources to those Southern countries providing South-South support.

Annex 1

Main conclusions and recommendations to the GEF Council from the Country Portfolio Evaluations and Studies conducted in the LAC region and included in the Annual Country Portfolio Evaluation Report 2012

Status	Conclusions			Recommendations	Lessons
	Results	Relevance	Efficiency		
Completed	Nicaragua				
	Capacity development has been a strong component in all projects with sustainable achievements, setting up an adequate enabling policy environment for future larger scale actions	Overall, GEF support has been relevant to national human development/sustainable development strategies and environmental priorities, to international conventions, regional processes and to the GEF mandate.	Project processing times are generally double the length for full-size projects than for medium-size projects in Nicaragua.	In highly vulnerable countries, GEF should put more efforts into mainstreaming adaptation in project design in all focal areas and building synergies with adaptation actions funded by other donors.	
	In the biodiversity focal area, goals have tended to be over ambitious which has led to unfulfilled expectations for actual results and impacts, whereas modest progress toward impacts can be reported.		The use of monitoring and evaluation information to enhance project performance is inconsistent throughout the portfolio. Combined with weak GEF Agency supervision, this has been an impediment to the efficiency and effectiveness of several projects.	Refrain from overambitious project designs and ensure adequate focus on building institutional and financial capacity of local actors to help secure the sustainability of results	
	Climate change mitigation projects have as a whole been successful in yielding both environmental and socio-economic benefits, in particular through the promotion of renewable energy in isolated rural communities.		There has been significant involvement from actors from various sectors in GEF projects. The extent of coordination among them was mixed.	Provide for proper baseline, monitoring and evaluation data in project implementation and at the national level, working closely with the GEF Agencies.	
	Adaptation to climate change is not well mainstreamed in the GEF Trust Fund portfolio nor is it a focus of interventions, while increasingly being a central priority for Nicaragua.				
	Support in the land degradation and persistent organic pollutants focal areas is promising in terms of progress toward impact. Both areas are still at an early stage, but to				

date, they have achieved the majority of key outcomes.				
Integrated land-use based approaches are not fully taken into account in GEF interventions in Nicaragua, in particular in terms of ensuring that biodiversity concerns are mainstreamed into such approaches in other GEF focal areas in the specific context of Nicaragua				
Despite current efforts, institutional capacity at the local level, particularly of civil society actors, remains a challenge.				
The financial and economic sustainability of results, particularly in the biodiversity focal area, remains a challenge. Local benefits are essential for sustainability.				
The three completed biodiversity initiatives promoted with GEF support ended their actions once funding was terminated. Projects that have sustained actions and results beyond project completion are in the climate change focal area.				
OECS				
To date, GEF support in the OECS region has produced mixed results; positive achievements include regional level results on climate change adaptation, and in reporting to conventions	GEF support has been relevant to OECS countries' national environmental priorities, but regional approaches have diluted relevance for participating countries on efforts that are not a direct output of OECS-country driven initiatives	On average, greater time has been required to develop and approve projects in the OECS region compared to other countries receiving GEF support	The design and implementation of future regional projects in SIDS should be based on a participatory, stakeholder-driven process, and include tangible, on-the-ground activities in participating countries as well as adequate resources for coordination	
Regional approaches are appropriate to the context of the OECS region, but historically have not adequately incorporated	GEF support has been relevant to global environmental benefits in the OECS region, and to GEF operational	Due to a variety of structural reasons in the OECS region there was inadequate communication and	Provided cost-effectiveness is ensured and risks have been fully assessed, OECS countries should be	

	tangible national level activities. Within the full portfolio, on-the-ground results, catalytic up-scaling, and replication have been limited thus far.	policies, strategies and procedures	coordination between different levels of the GEF partnership (COPs, GEF Secretariat, GEF Agencies, GEF Focal Points, and regional, national and local stakeholders)	supported in their effort to increase the scope for national projects with their STAR allocations	
	While the GEF portfolio in the region is still in the early stages of demonstration-level support and there are a few highlights, there has, overall, been insufficient focus on sustainability within the portfolio		Implementation arrangements for regional approaches have not been fully designed and supported to ensure efficiency, communication, and execution	GEF support in the OECS region should include adequate attention for the capacity of environmental civil society organizations at the systemic and institutional levels	
	GEF support in the OECS region has expanded in scope within the region, but has had limited progression in scale to date with the exception of the climate change adaptation focal area		GEF support in the region has leveraged an increasing proportion of resources over time	In countries where public sector environmental agencies have inadequate institutional capacities, modalities should be explored that will ensure stronger engagement of national stakeholders, including civil society, beyond the focal point mechanism	
	Institutional and individual capacity for environmental management remains a critical issue in the region		The evolution of the SGP from a sub-regional program to a more nationally-based approach presents opportunities but also needs to be properly managed	During the shift of the SGP from the sub-regional to nationally-based programs, resources should be allocated to ensure support from the sub-regional node, at a minimum during the transition period	

			Project level monitoring and evaluation has supported adaptive management in the GEF's OECS portfolio, but tracking impact level results and the improvement of environmental management is hampered by a lack of environmental monitoring data in the region		
Jamaica					
GEF support in all Focal Areas has helped Jamaica to develop good capacity in environmental management and to link into international best practices. However, the country lacks the resources to scale up from these initial benefits and the GEF portfolio is not sufficiently well-known among Jamaica's other international development partners to maximize collaboration and follow-up.	GEF support in Jamaica has been relevant to its national environmental goals and priorities, as well as to the country's efforts to fulfill its obligations under the international agreements to which it is signatory.	All the three GEF Agencies active in Jamaica, namely UNDP, UNEP and the World Bank, have experienced problems in keeping projects within their intended time limits.			The Jamaica portfolio gives cause for concern about the possibilities for sustainable progress in environmental management.
The process of developing and managing the GEF portfolio has strengthened networking amongst national agencies engaged in environmental management.					Many Agency procedures are not appropriate for small countries in regions with limited resources. This is seriously hampering the efficiency of GEF implementation.
It would be more appropriate to talk of "national adoption" than of "national ownership" of the GEF portfolio.					Some possible procedural improvements have already been suggested by evaluations and reviews of GEF activities by its Agencies.
El Salvador					
The GEF has had an important role in supporting the country in complying with its obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the	The GEF contribution has been relevant to the country's environmental priorities, the mandate of the international conventions and the mandate of	Efficiency in the preparation of proposals has improved but, there are still weak points, while the efficiency of project implementation is variable.			The perception that the communities have of the environmental authority means that they either perceive it as a partner or

	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Stockholm Convention and in the generation of national strategies, but its contribution has been smaller in the strengthening of the legal framework.	the GEF, with the exception of combating land degradation.			an obstacle in environmental management.
					The effectiveness and efficiency (cost/benefit) of the projects for generating global benefits is connected to the quality of the technical level of project interventions.
	The GEF has made an important contribution toward capacity building in environmental management in MARN.				The lack of filters or procedures for systematizing and communicating successful projects can result in positive or negative effects when they are replicated in other contexts.
	The global benefits achieved by GEF projects are still modest or uncertain.				The requirements connected with co-financing by means of loans can prevent proper attention being paid to GEF priority requirements.
					Lack of an integrating approach diminishes the capacity to obtain global and national environmental benefits.
					Greater connectivity between protected areas and areas where coffee is produced by environment-friendly methods could decrease inbreeding in isolated and low mobility populations and enhance the value of coffee certification as a tool for biodiversity conservation.

Ongoing (nearing completion)¹⁵	Brazil				
	The GEF helped pave the way for institutional capacity required for lasting environmental benefits in most focal areas. Also, GEF projects in Brazil often produce quality publications that have remained as leading national references in most focal areas.	GEF support has been relevant to Brazil's sustainable development agenda and environmental priorities, particularly in the areas of biodiversity and climate change.	The GEF project approval process in Brazil is on average shorter than in other countries, but still perceived as too long by stakeholders.	The burden of monitoring requirements for multifocal area projects should be reduced to a level comparable to that of single focal area projects.	
	Multifocal area projects have always had a presence in the Brazilian portfolio, although they have only been recently classified as such.	GEF support in Brazil is clearly nationally owned and country-driven.	GEF agencies have worked independently from one another, without any clear overall coordination and/or synergies.	The GEF should implement a more robust information and knowledge management system to improve exchange of experiences amongst projects within each country and internationally. Such system could serve as a tool to promote South-South cooperation.	
	The engagement of the private sector varies in form and size across focal areas. GEF support has been particularly effective in engaging the private sector on climate change, and somewhat less effective in other focal areas.	Co-financing levels are generally satisfactory and in line with GEF support and it is clear that this co-financing generates additional global environmental benefits.	Coordination among participating entities in concluded and ongoing GEF projects seems generally efficient. Several GEF projects indicate approximation between institutions historically distant from one another, particularly agricultural and environmental government institutions.	The GEF should promote and encourage exchange of experiences on Monitoring and Evaluation procedures, which is perceived by many stakeholders as one of the greatest challenges faced by projects.	
	GEF support to Brazil's South-South cooperation efforts has been minimal and informal at best.	The GEF biodiversity portfolio in Brazil contains projects focusing on both sustainable use and strict protection. Whether a project focuses on sustainable use or strict protection appears to be linked more to the density of the surrounding population than biodiversity parameters.	GEF projects tend to have an above-average M&E process when compared to similar projects funded by national sources. Periodic evaluations are carried out, and there are indications that adaptive management occurs. On the other hand, it has been observed that biodiversity projects consistently ignored	The Brazilian portfolio could explore new sources of financing and support more technology development and market transformation activities in order to induce greater environmental benefits in the long term.	

¹⁵ The Brazil and Cuba CPEs conclusions have been validated at the final stakeholder workshops and therefore can be considered as final. Areas of recommendations were also identified during those workshops. These are included in this table as such, i.e. not yet in their final form.

			biodiversity indicators during project execution.		
			The SGP upgrade in Brazil during GEF-5 has all the characteristics of an on-going learning-by-doing process.	Brazil's GEF Focal Point should promote exchange of experiences between projects implemented by different GEF Agencies. Stakeholders have proposed annual meetings between executing agencies of GEF projects.	
Cuba					
The GEF support has achieved important results in biodiversity (including biosafety), land degradation, climate change, international waters, and POPs	GEF support has been relevant to environmental priorities and strategies, the International Environmental Conventions (CBD, UNFCCC, UNCSD and the Stockholm Convention) and to the GEF mandate and strategies.	The approval process for MSPs and FSPs is on average shorter in Cuba than in other LAC countries where CPEs have been conducted. Project preparation costs are lower when compared to the overall GEF portfolio.	GEF should put more efforts into mainstreaming adaptation in project design and implementation in all focal areas, and provide additional support and guidance to countries in the design and implementation of multifocal projects that include adaptation.		
Results of GEF support to Cuba build on lessons from previous projects thanks to continuity of policies, institutions, staff and people involved in implementation	The Government of Cuba has strong ownership of GEF supported projects	Overall, institutional arrangements for the design and implementation of GEF supported projects in Cuba are efficient.	In countries with particular contexts like Cuba, GEF should be more pragmatic concerning administrative procedures for achieving greater global environmental benefits.		
GEF projects have indirectly supported South-South cooperation as the high priority of Cuba for such cooperation has made this possible.		Project level monitoring and evaluation occurs for adaptive management and compilation of monitoring information. However, access to monitoring data for decision making presents challenges.	GEF should enable South-South cooperation in project and program design and implementation in all focal areas, especially through regional projects and programs.		
The sustainability of results in Cuba is ensured through the programmatic approach of the Government to ensure subsequent projects funded by the Government, GEF and other donors		The economic and geographic context in Cuba negatively affects the implementation and results achieved by GEF supported projects	Develop an information management strategy to strengthen knowledge sharing from GEF projects and programs at the national level and to better achieve global environmental benefits.		