

Summary of Document GEF/ME/C.39/4

Evaluation of the GEF Strategic Priority for Adaptation

Recommended Council Decision

The Council, having reviewed documents “*Evaluation of the GEF Strategic Priority for Adaptation*” (GEF/ME/C.39/4) and “*Management Response to the Evaluation of the GEF Strategic Priority for Adaptation*” (GEF/ME/C.39/5), requests the Secretariat to ensure that the mainstreaming of resilience and adaptation in the GEF focal areas continues, as a means of reducing risks of climate change impacts to the GEF portfolio, and requests the Secretariat to report to its November 2012 meeting on steps taken and progress made.

The Council requests the Secretariat to continue managing the implementation of the SPA with sufficient funding to ensure lessons can be learned from the portfolio. It requests the Evaluation Office, STAP and the Adaptation Task Force to provide guidelines for evaluations of adaptation projects to learn from outcomes and impacts of the projects.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. In the November 2008 GEF Council meeting, the GEF Evaluation Office was mandated to conduct an independent evaluation of the SPA pilot to be submitted at its November 2010 meeting. It was expected that the lessons learned from this evaluation will assist the GEF Council in taking further decisions on Adaptation in the GEF. The SPA evaluation was developed and implemented by staff from the GEF Evaluation Office with support from an external consultant with extensive experience in the field of adaptation. The main objectives of the evaluation were to:
 - Assess the SPA strategy and its implementation;
 - Assess the SPA projects;
 - Identify lessons on how to increase the resilience of the GEF supported projects.
2. A consultation workshop took place on September 27, 2010 to present the preliminary findings of the evaluation and receive feedback from key stakeholders on possible factual errors and analysis. Comments were reviewed and incorporated as appropriate into the final report. The present document presents the main conclusions and recommendations. The full evaluation report, as published on the website of the GEF Evaluation Office (www.gefeo.org), includes a thorough portfolio examination as well as detailed assessments of each of the key elements of this evaluation.
3. The SPA portfolio consists of 26 projects and programs amounting to \$48.35 million financed by the GEF. GEF SPA financed projects also received co-financing from other GEF Focal Areas, as well as from other sources for a total of \$780 million. The portfolio includes 17 Full Sized and 9 Medium Sized Projects. While all funding for the SPA was approved under GEF3, around 57% of the SPA funding was committed under GEF3 and the remainder, approximately \$20.8 million (43%), was committed under GEF4.
4. The evaluation reached the following ten conclusions:

- 1) All SPA projects fulfilled the GEF requirement regarding Global Environmental Benefits and explicitly included climate change impacts on these, and are relevant to the GEF mandate.
- 2) The \$50 million SPA initiative has the potential, to varying degrees, of providing climate resilience to \$780 million of investments.
- 3) The portfolio of projects represents diversity in sectors, themes and focal areas, with an emphasis on biodiversity and land degradation.
- 4) Projects were developed in accordance with the elements and requirements of the SPA Operational Guidelines, with some exceptions.
- 5) Adaptation measures proposed in SPA projects were found to be generally “no-regrets” measures, dealing with management of natural resources.
- 6) Results achieved so far have been at the output level; most projects are either in early stages of implementation or have not started yet.
- 7) There was evidence of mainstreaming of adaptation at the GEF - mainly at strategic level and to some extent in project design - but some limitations are preventing this integration from becoming fully effective.
- 8) Although the portfolio is still in the early stages of implementation some lessons could be extracted for the GEF as a whole.
- 9) There were weaknesses in the management of the SPA portfolio but there is still time to correct them.
- 10) As a learning pilot within the GEF, the SPA has yet to achieve its full effectiveness.

5. It should be recognized that resilience is an intrinsic part of protecting or creating global environmental benefits and that there is strong convergence between global environmental benefits, development and adaptation. The GEF should provide the necessary non-financial incentives and tools to operationalize the integration of resilience in its programming. A second step could involve the mobilization of financial incentives.

Recommendation 1: The GEF should continue providing explicit incentives to carry on the mainstreaming of resilience and adaptation into the GEF focal areas, as a means of reducing risks to the GEF portfolio.

6. The relative youth of the SPA portfolio indicates that the SPA – although fully committed – still needs to be managed from within the GEF, particularly if it is to deliver the learning results it was intended.

Recommendation 2: To continue to manage the implementation of the SPA, the GEF needs to provide sufficient resources to the GEF Secretariat, beyond resources dedicated to the processing of a pipeline of projects.

7. GEFO, STAP and the GEF Adaptation Task Force should work on developing guidelines for conducting midterm or final evaluations with specific emphasis on how to review, select and improve adaptation measures.

Recommendation 3. Given that adaptation measures in SPA projects are still under implementation, further evaluations could provide opportunities to learn from outcomes and progress toward impact.

8. Despite ongoing work to elaborate screening tools for climate change, the GEF Council decision on the climate screening tools is yet to be fulfilled.