

GEF EVALUATION OFFICE

Country Portfolio Evaluation Interview Guide

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This document presents the CPE standard guide for interviews with representatives from Government Agencies, GEF Agencies, Civil society and the GEF Small Grants Program.

The interview guide consists of a predetermined set of broad questions/topics for discussion during individual semi-structured interviews with key GEF stakeholders. The fairly open framework of general questions/topics presented here may be covered in a particular order depending on circumstances of the interview itself. This allows for focused, conversational, two-way communication.

These interview guides are structured in a way that allows cross-checking the perceptions collected from different stakeholders (i.e. the interviewees) with the evaluative evidence collected through other evaluation tools and methods during the CPE evaluative analysis phase. Interviews can provide reliable, comparable qualitative data, particularly when interviewing different categories of GEF stakeholders.

This guide allows for flexibility for the interviewer to follow leads and probe for more information. An analysis of the interview's results leads to more in depth exploration of the evaluation questions.

Topics for discussion with Government Agencies

Involvement in GEF portfolio

- What GEF projects has your agency been involved in?
- What type of participation?

Efficiency of GEF implementation

- In your opinion, what is the role of the GEF in your country?
- What is your experience with the GEF project design and implementation processes? What is your perception of the process?
 - How does it compare with other donors?
- What is your perception of the GEF Secretariat and GEF Agencies (World Bank, UNDP, UNEP, etc.)?
 - How have GEF operations evolved since the beginning of involvement in your country?
 - What mechanisms are available for projects to learn from each other?

- How do government agencies learn?
- Are government officials involved in monitoring and evaluation?
 - Barriers to involvement?
 - Role of independents?
- What is the government's impression of the GEF Resource Allocation Framework and the STAR¹?
 - What do you see as the advantages?
 - Disadvantages?
 - RAF / STAR= country driveness/increased government control?
 - Whose priorities; government or the GEF?
 - Change in modalities – what kind of project does this favor (National vs. Regional, MSP vs. FSP, etc.)?
- How are GEF operations coordinated in your country?
 - What is the role of the GEF Operational Focal Point
 - Challenges faced?
 - Is there a GEF committee?
 - If yes, what role does it play?
 - How long has it been in existence?
 - Membership?
 - Advantages/disadvantages?
- Do you have any recommendations for GEF activities in your country?

Relevance

- Had the GEF supported the development of national environmental laws, policy or strategies in your country?
 - Where has GEF support for policy and strategy been most helpful and why?
- To what extent are those GEF supported national policies and strategies owned by the government?
 - Perceptions of many plans and strategies? Is there too much?
 - Which strategies does the government use/implement?
 - Have the following been useful for the government and why (e.g., in identifying concepts or ideas for GEF projects)?
 - National Reports to Environmental Conventions (CBD, UNFCCC, POPs)
 - National Capacity Self Assessment
 - National Action Plan for Adaptation
- What is your perception about the country ownership and driveness of the GEF supported initiatives?

¹ The STAR: System for Transparent Allocation of Resources. With the STAR, the GEF Secretariat allocates resources in an indicative way to its eligible countries in a replenishment period. It was developed during 2009-2010 to upgrade the RAF, which was the former GEF resource allocation system used in the fourth replenishment period of the GEF (GEF-4). (GEF. Not dated. STAR. <http://www.thegef.org/gef/pubs/STAR>)

- How are GEF projects developed? Whose idea?

Results

- What are the key results of GEF projects in your country?
 - Shortcomings, and why?
 - Areas for improvement?

LAST QUESTION

- What would be your key recommendations for the evaluation?

Please provide any documents that we should include in our literature review regarding the implementation of GEF activities through your agency in the country in any of the GEF focal areas.

Country Portfolio Evaluation

Topics for discussion with GEF Agencies

GEF Agency portfolio

- Please review the list of projects attached and confirm the data.
 - Show project portfolio table

Efficiency of GEF implementation

- What is your experience with the GEF project cycle?
 - Efficient/inefficient?
 - Quality of guidance from GEF Secretariat? Responsiveness?
 - Quality of interaction with government partners?
- Who does what in each of the steps? What is the role of the different stakeholders?
- How much time, effort (measured in human resources) and money does it take to develop GEF projects and activities?
- Does your Agency coordinate with other GEF Agencies, bilaterals and NGOs to develop and implement GEF projects activities?
 - How (e.g., GEF committee)?
 - Give examples? Quality of the coordination?
 - What are the factors that influence coordination?
 - Good/poor coordination experiences, why?
- How are your Agency's GEF projects monitored and evaluated?
 - Supervised how often?
 - Tools used in supervision?
- What have been the implications of the RAF and STAR implementation for the country?
 - Flexibility, predictability of funding?
 - Increased/decreased GEF Agency coordination or competition?
 - Empowered/disempowered government?
 - Increased/reduced opportunities for GEF activities?
- Are there any problems or challenges in the implementation of GEF activities? If yes, how could these problems and challenges be overcome in future support?
- Do you have any recommendations for GEF activities in the country?

Relevance

- Is GEF support relevant to:
 - National environmental laws and policies? If yes, where has GEF support for environmental law and policy been most helpful?
 - The balance struck between national priorities (poverty reduction and development) and global (GEF) priorities?
 - Your Agency's country framework (e.g., CAS's) and mandate (poverty reduction and economic growth)?
- What is your perception of the country ownership and driveness of GEF supported initiatives and activities?

Results

- What are the results of GEF activities implemented through your Agency (provide examples)?
 - At the outcome level (i.e., changes in behavior, policies, enabling environment, removal of barriers, sustainable management of natural resource and biodiversity)
 - At the impact level (changes in environmental status by focal area)
- How are lessons and best practices currently being shared between GEF projects?
- Are there any examples of dissemination of best practices beyond project boundaries?
- Are there any completed project showing results which last after project closure until today?

LAST QUESTION

- What would be your key recommendations for the evaluation? What do you think we should look closer into?

Please provide any documents that we should include in our literature review regarding the implementation of GEF activities through your agency in the country in any of the GEF focal areas.

Country Portfolio Evaluation

Topics for discussion with Civil Society (NGOs, academia, private sector)

GEF portfolio

- What projects is your institution participating in?
 - What type of participation?

Efficiency of GEF implementation

- How much time, effort (measured in human resources) and money does it take for your institution to develop and implement a project?
 - Non-GEF
 - GEF
- What mechanisms do you have in place to share lessons coming from projects within your organization and other relevant projects or agencies?
- How do you conduct monitoring and evaluation of your projects?
- Are you aware of the RAF and STAR? If yes, what have been the implications of the RAF and STAR implementation in your country for civil society institutions?
 - Advantages/disadvantages?
- What would be your recommendations for improving the implementation of GEF projects in your country?

Relevance

- What are the main environmental issues or problems in your country?
 - To what extent do you think the GEF assistance is targeted/designed to address them?
- What is your perception of the country ownership and drivenness of GEF supported initiatives and activities?
- To what extent is the GEF involved in supporting your organization's strategy and agenda?
 - Involvement in full-size projects
 - Medium-size projects
 - Small Grants Programme

Results

- What are the key results of your projects or program in your country?
- Are there examples of replication of SGP project best practices by non-beneficiaries beyond project boundaries?
- Are there project results lasting beyond project closure and continuing without further project support?

LAST QUESTION

- What would be your key recommendations for the evaluation? What do you think we should look closer into?

Country Portfolio Evaluation

Topics for discussion with Small Grants Programme

Overview/General Questions:

- History of the SGP in the country

Project cycle process:

- I am a grantee and I am coming to you with a project idea, how could I get a SGP grant (take me through the project cycle process)?
- Project development – how is advice given? When, who, how?
- How much time does it take for each step? What is the total time?
- What are the transaction costs for NGOs/CBOs?
- What are the main barriers for NGOs/CBOs for applying to SGP?
- Acceptance versus rejection rates? What criteria?

Relevance:

GEF Focal Area or Geographical Focus

- Focus/focal area priorities for SGP in the country – How were these selected?
- Or Geographical focusing? And why?
 - What is the structure of the portfolio?
 - Which focal area has dominance and why? Measures taken to address this?

Relations with Focal Points and Conventions

- To what extent has the SGP involved GEF focal points in governance/oversight of SGP operations?
- What is the relationship between the SGP and Convention Reporting by the Government? (probe - why?)
- How are focal points (GEF and Convention) involved in the SGP?

PR

- To what extent does the SGP contribute to GEF ‘visibility’ in the country? What are the main benefits of visibility?

Strategy, objectives and formulation

- What are the main country objectives? Vision or logic behind it or main assumptions behind the strategy?
 - Poor and marginalized, why not focus on rich?
 - What is the process for putting together the strategy?
 - Who is involved and why?
 - Potential conflicts and tensions between stakeholders – how are these resolved?

Links with GEF MSP – FSPs

- To what extent do the new SGP country strategies propose steps to link with FSP/ MSP country portfolio? If, so which project and why?

Conflicts and Tensions – Place holder for discussion on strategy/projects

- What have been the main tensions and conflicts among, local – national and global priorities?
- Government attitude to local NGOs/CBOs – positive/negative why?

Effectiveness

Results

- From your experience, what are the major *expected* results of the SGP?
 - Or what is the potential – based on working with communities?
- What are the main SGP *expected* local capacity building results?
 - Individual/institutional?
 - Policy change/influence?
 - Knowledge/lesson-learning across the portfolio (and to MSP/FSPs)
- How and to what extent is the SGP *developing* approaches to produce environmental benefits?
 - Give examples?
- How has (*or will*) the SGP contributed to awareness raising and knowledge of global environmental issues?

Sustainability

- To what extent are the results of the SGP likely to be sustainable?
 - What are the factors that will contribute to sustainability (positive/negative)? Give examples.
- What are the main risks that could compromise sustainability of SGP projects?
 - Exit strategies? How?

Lesson learning – Replication/Scaling-Up

- How do you plan to disseminate project results down the road?
- How does the SGP address replication/scaling-up?
 - Give examples of replication strategies foreseen – factors necessary etc?
 - Examples of constraints?

Efficiency

General Information on Costs

- How much does it cost to administer the SGP?
- What are the main elements/line items of the costs?
 - What factors influence the SGP costs?

Co-financing

- To what extent has the SGP been able to leverage co-finance (in-kind or monetary)?
 - Do you have strategy for raising co-finance?
 - From who?
 - Biggest contributor?
 - What are the main strengths and barriers in this area?

LAST QUESTION

- What would be your key recommendations for the evaluation? What do you think we should look closer into?