

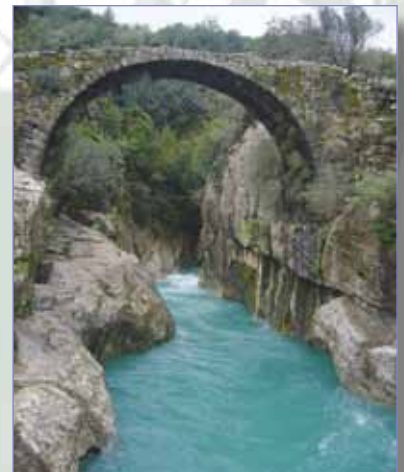
# GEF Annual Country Portfolio Evaluation Report 2010

SEPTEMBER 2010

MOLDOVA



TURKEY



GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY  
EVALUATION OFFICE



**Global Environment Facility  
Evaluation Office**

# **GEF Annual Country Portfolio Evaluation Report 2010**

**September 2010**

*(The main findings and recommendations of this evaluation were presented to the GEF Council in June 2010.)*

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This third *Annual Country Portfolio Evaluation Report* is the synthesis of two country portfolio evaluations focused on Moldova and Turkey, produced by the Evaluation Office of the Global Environment Facility (GEF). Using the country as the unit of analysis, these evaluations examine the totality of GEF support across all GEF Agencies and programs.

Country portfolio evaluations are conducted fully and independently by the Evaluation Office and, when possible, in partnership with other evaluation offices of GEF Agencies, governments, and nongovernmental organizations.

Moldova and Turkey were selected on the basis of their long histories with the GEF, their large and diverse portfolios, the nature of their GEF country allocations under the Resource Allocation Framework (a group allocation for Moldova; an individual allocation for Turkey), and their participation in a number of regional projects in the international waters focal area. The relationship between the European Union accession process and the development of Turkey's environmental and sustainable development agenda was also considered.

The annual report provides feedback in three key areas: (1) the relevance of support to the GEF mandate and national sustainable development policies and priorities, (2) the efficiency of GEF support, and (3) the results and sustainability of GEF support.

The synthesis of the findings from the two countries revealed a number of positive results in biodiversity, climate change, persistent organic pollutants, and international waters. Land degradation did not receive the attention and support the countries were expecting. Further progress toward impact in biodiversity is limited by unresolved institutional barriers and socioeconomic factors. In spite of low funding levels, GEF support in climate change has produced limited but promising results. International waters initiatives strengthened the countries' commitment to regional cooperation, but it is still too early for observable improvements in the water bodies to materialize. GEF support has been relevant to national priorities as well as to the global GEF mandate. National ownership of the GEF portfolio is limited, but improving in both countries. Duration of project processing and implementation compares well to average figures for GEF projects. However, mixed perceptions on the complexity and length of the GEF project cycle linger in both countries. Finally, in both countries, the GEF focal point mechanism has not been fully effective in its coordination and strategic guidance roles, including sharing of information and monitoring and evaluation (M&E).

The GEF Council discussed this *Annual Country Portfolio Evaluation Report* in June 2010, and requested the GEF Agencies to systematically

involve operational focal points in M&E activities by sharing M&E information with them in a timely manner; the Secretariat to consider provision of specific M&E training to the national focal point mechanism through the Country Support Program; and the Evaluation Office to strengthen, in collaboration with the Secretariat on monitoring issues, the role of operational focal points in M&E while revising the GEF M&E Policy. The Council also encouraged the Agencies to give stronger support to environmental issues outside their GEF projects and promote up-scaling with partner governments.

The two governments responded to the evaluations through a letter to the GEF Chief Executive Officer to express their opinions about the evaluation and follow-up actions that were under consideration.

The Evaluation Office continues to be very encouraged by positive responses to the country portfolio evaluations and will continue to invest in them in the coming years.



Rob van den Berg  
Director, Evaluation Office

## Acknowledgments

This report was prepared by Carlo Carugi, Senior Evaluation Officer of the GEF Evaluation Office, who also led the Turkey consultant team. Anna Vighh, GEF Evaluation Officer, led the Moldova consultant team. Maria Soledad Mackinnon acted as research assistant for both evaluations.

The evaluation teams included the following consultants: Claire Dupont (lead consultant), Ludmila Gofman, and Daniela Petrushevski (Moldova); and Wietze Lise (lead consultant), Dennis Fenton, Asım Açıkel, Kerem Kaçar, and Aslı Cakın (Turkey).

Government officials of Moldova and Turkey were extremely supportive and provided full cooperation to these evaluation efforts. The teams are also grateful for the advice and logistical support provided by the GEF Agencies.

This document was presented to the GEF Council in June 2010, and is based on a synthesis of the two draft country portfolio evaluations presented to national stakeholders in Moldova and Turkey in March 2010 and circulated for comment in May 2010.

The Evaluation Office remains fully responsible for the contents of the report.



# 1. Introduction

This third *Annual Country Portfolio Evaluation Report* provides a synthesis of the main conclusions and recommendations of the two country portfolio evaluations (CPEs) finalized by the Evaluation Office of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in fiscal year (FY) 2010 in Moldova and Turkey.<sup>1</sup> Support from the GEF began in 1992 in Turkey and in 1994 in Moldova. These two countries were selected through a process established by the GEF Evaluation Office in 2006 and since used for its CPE series. This process begins with a random selection of countries at the regional level and then selection based on a variety of criteria. Moldova and Turkey were selected for CPE assessment on the basis of their long histories with the GEF, their large and diverse portfolios, the nature of their GEF country allocations under the Resource Allocation Framework (RAF)— a group allocation for Moldova and an individual allocation for Turkey—and their participation in a number of regional projects in the international waters focal area. The influence of the European Union accession process on Turkey’s environmental and sustainable development agenda was also considered. As with previous CPEs, consultations were held with all major GEF stakeholders, particularly those residing in the country. Several visits to project sites were also undertaken.

The Evaluation Office has prepared separate reports for each evaluation: *GEF Country Portfolio Evaluation: Turkey (1992–2009)*, and *GEF Country Portfolio Evaluation: Moldova (1994–2009)*; both of these are available on the Evaluation Office Web site.<sup>2</sup> The responses provided by the respective governments are included as annexes to these reports. The Moldova and Turkey CPEs build on and supplement those conducted in 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009 of Costa Rica, Samoa, the Philippines, Benin, Madagascar, South Africa, Cameroon, Egypt, and Syria. All previous CPEs have been a direct input into the Fourth Overall Performance Study of the GEF recently completed by the Evaluation Office.

This synthesis report begins with a short background description of GEF involvement in Moldova and Turkey, followed by a chapter on objectives, scope, and methods used in the two CPEs. The conclusions are presented here according to the three dimensions of the evaluations: the results of the GEF support, its relevance, and its efficiency. Recommendations are offered to the GEF Council in the closing chapter of the report.

## 1.1 Background

Since 1994, the GEF has invested about \$21.72 million in Moldova, with about \$23.34 million in

<sup>1</sup> The GEF fiscal year is from July 1 to June 30.

<sup>2</sup> [www.gefeo.org](http://www.gefeo.org), through the ASK ME tab.

cofinancing. The portfolio consists of 14 projects—5 in biodiversity, 4 in climate change, 2 in international waters, 2 in persistent organic pollutants (POPs), and 1 multifocal. With eight projects totaling \$18.65 million, the World Bank has been the main channel for GEF support in Moldova, followed by the United Nations Development Programme with four projects totaling \$1.58 million. Moldova has participated in 16 GEF-supported initiatives with a regional or global scope. Most of the regional initiatives involving Moldova are international waters projects for the Danube River and Black Sea.

Turkey's participation with the GEF began during the GEF pilot phase in 1992 with the preparation of the World Bank–implemented “In-Situ Conservation of Genetic Biodiversity” project (GEF ID 71). Since then, Turkey has been involved in an additional 10 national projects plus the national components of two global projects. Turkey's GEF portfolio totals \$36.33 million, with \$82.63 million in cofinancing. An additional \$3.65 million in support was provided through the Small Grants Programme (SGP). About 47 percent of GEF funding in Turkey has supported projects in the biodiversity focal area, 32 percent for climate change, 19 percent for international waters, and 1 percent each for the POPs and multifocal areas. The level of cofinancing has been the largest for international waters (46 percent), followed by climate change (42 percent); it was substantially lower for biodiversity (12 percent). Turkey also participates in 14 regional and 6 global GEF projects, addressing international waters, biodiversity, and climate change.

## 1.2 Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

The Moldova and Turkey evaluations were conducted following the standard CPE terms of reference developed by the Evaluation Office in 2006.

These terms of reference were adapted to each country using the information collected and feedback received during the first scoping missions to the countries conducted in October 2009. Evaluation work was performed from September 2009 to May 2010 by staff of the Evaluation Office and consultants with extensive experience with each country.

The two CPEs were undertaken with the same overall objectives as previous CPEs:

- To independently evaluate the **relevance** and **efficiency** of GEF support in the country from the points of view of national environmental policies and processes, the GEF mandate and achievement of global environmental benefits, and GEF policies and procedures
- To assess the **effectiveness** and **results** of completed and ongoing projects in each relevant focal area
- To provide **feedback** and **knowledge sharing** to (1) the GEF Council in its decision-making process to allocate resources and develop policies and strategies, (2) the country on its participation in the GEF, and (3) the various agencies and organizations involved in the preparation and implementation of GEF support

The main focus of the two CPEs is the projects supported by the GEF at all project stages (preparation, implementation, completion, or cancellation) within the national boundaries. In Turkey, the SGP as a whole was assessed against the national strategy, as opposed to evaluating the individual grants. 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 in each country included a selection of regional and global projects chosen for evaluation based on the following criteria:

- The presence in the country of a project coordination unit and/or project sites
- The importance of the project focal area to the country
- The existence of a clear connection to national projects

The stage of each project determined the CPE focus. For example, **completed projects** were assessed against the usual three evaluation criteria—results (outputs, outcomes, and impact), relevance, and efficiency. **Ongoing projects** were assessed in terms of relevance and efficiency. **Projects under preparation** (that is, those with an approved project identification form or project preparation grant) 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 1.1 presents the portfolios of projects covered in the Moldova and Turkey CPEs.

The methodology used in the GEF CPEs has evolved over time and has become increasingly standardized. In Moldova and Turkey, a mix of qualitative and quantitative data-gathering methods and standardized analytical tools were used. Various information sources were consulted to capture data and inputs at the following levels:

- Project level (project documents, implementation reports, terminal evaluation reviews)

- Country level (documents relevant to the broad national sustainable development and environmental agenda, priorities, and strategies; strategies and action plans relevant to focal areas; GEF-supported strategies and action plans relevant to the global conventions; national environmental indicators)
- GEF Agency level (country strategies and their evaluations and reviews)

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 several field visits were made. Each of the CPEs included a national consultation workshop to discuss and receive feedback on key preliminary findings. The quantitative analysis used indicators to assess the efficiency of GEF support using projects as the unit of analysis (for example, analyzing project preparation and implementation duration and cost).

Important methodological additions to the standard methods used in previous CPEs were made regarding the two CPEs undertaken in FY 2010. Notably, two reviews of outcomes to impact (ROIs) were undertaken in each country, one for a full-size project and the other for an enabling activity. To identify the main findings, both CPEs used a triangulation matrix derived from the initial evaluation matrix included in the respective country-specific

**Table 1.1**

**Project Coverage of Each Country Portfolio Evaluation**

Country	GEF funding (million \$)	Number of projects evaluated			SGP evaluated	Completed national projects
		National full- and medium-size projects	Enabling activities	Regional/global projects		
Moldova	21.72	8	6	14 of 16	No	9
Turkey	36.33	8	5	11 of 20	Yes	9

evaluation terms of reference. In Turkey, field verification of one project's terminal evaluation review was conducted, the results of which will also inform the Office's annual performance report. The Turkey CPE also featured an online survey. This survey was suggested by Turkish stakeholders during the opening workshop, and constitutes a first in the Office's country-level evaluation work. A complete set of stakeholder email addresses for survey conduct was obtained from the GEF Agencies and the national GEF coordination unit.

### 1.3 Limitations and Challenges

The CPEs in Moldova and Turkey faced the same limitations identified and detailed in earlier CPEs:

- **Lack of GEF country or portfolio programs.** The GEF does not operate through country programs that specify expected achievement through programmatic objectives, indicators, and targets.
- **Attribution/contribution dilemma.** CPEs do not attempt to provide a direct attribution of development and even environmental results to the GEF, but instead assess the contribution of GEF support to overall achievements.
- **Challenges in evaluating the impacts of GEF projects.** Many GEF projects, particularly the oldest ones, do not clearly or appropriately specify the expected impact or sometimes even the outcomes of projects. This limitation was partially addressed by reporting results that emerged from triangulation of various sources, including meta-evaluation analysis and original evaluative research conducted through interviews, an online survey, terminal evaluation review field verifications, and field ROI studies.
- **Intrinsic difficulties in defining country portfolios.** Moldova's GEF portfolio was particularly difficult to identify. Here, as elsewhere, the Office looked to establish a clear and reliable data set on projects and project documentation despite inconsistencies, gaps, and discrepancies contained in the initially available data.

## 2. Conclusions

The conclusions presented here are based on the two CPEs conducted in FY 2010 in Moldova and Turkey. These countries were not selected to be representative of the vast and diverse Eastern Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States region, but their experience could be relevant to other countries. While acknowledging the experiences and conclusions from previous CPEs, this report identifies common elements that emerged specifically from the Moldova and Turkey CPEs and tries to bring new conclusions to light. The individual CPEs present more specific conclusions and recommendations. Not all of those are included here, as they are not considered sufficiently broad based.

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

### 2.1 Results

Results are presented in terms of the outcomes and impacts of the various GEF-supported projects. Achievements are presented in terms of the GEF contribution in 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 ROTI methodology in two projects in each country allowed a review of progress toward

impact, including assessment of impact drivers and external assumptions.

**Conclusion 1: GEF support in biodiversity has built robust foundations for the achievement of significant results in Moldova and Turkey. Further progress toward impact is limited by unresolved institutional barriers and socioeconomic factors.**

GEF support in the biodiversity focal area, provided through enabling activities and other projects, contributed to laying down the foundations for introducing modern biodiversity conservation policies, strategies, action plans, and legal frameworks. In both Moldova and Turkey, institutional strengthening and capacity building were of strategic importance in moving forward the national biodiversity strategies and action plans elaborated with GEF support. In Turkey, GEF achievements included an innovative and comprehensive national law on the protection of the environment and biological diversity. Preparation of the law was conducted through a highly consultative process.

GEF-supported national initiatives implemented in parallel or following this foundational support have been innovative and have broken new ground. For example, they introduced in-situ and ex-situ conservation of gene management zones as well as launched participatory approaches in the preparation of protected area management

plans. Planned and unplanned replication of these new approaches has occurred in Turkey, where the proportion of land under some form of protection for nature conservation has increased from 4 percent to 6 percent since 2000. The 22 gene management zones designated by the in-situ conservation project allowed the creation of more than 20 new high-yield, drought- and disease-resistant varieties of wheat, which are preserved ex-situ as well. New gene conservation forests are created year by year.

Significant efforts in awareness raising at the national level—and, in Turkey, a large number of local-level initiatives proposing sustainable livelihoods/biodiversity conservation trade-offs—have also contributed to bringing biodiversity conservation issues to the public at large. The SGP has been particularly effective in this regard, with a large majority of its grants awarded in biodiversity. The small grants components of regional full-size projects have also contributed to awareness raising.

Progress toward impact in biodiversity conservation is limited in both countries by unresolved institutional barriers and socioeconomic factors. In Moldova, many impact drivers—including an adequate and regularly updated information database, continued interaction among stakeholders, and extensive dissemination of project results—have not been achieved. The main barriers are the limited existing capacities and institutional conflicts with other central authorities involved in biodiversity conservation and management. It was for these reasons, for example, that the Moldovan Parliament did not approve the establishment of the Orhei protected area supported by a GEF project. In Turkey, challenges are associated with public participation and government inertia vis-à-vis innovative approaches; institutional conflicts within the environment ministry as well as

among different ministries; poverty at local levels; and threats to conservation from tourism, road construction, forest extraction, grazing, water resource use, and other economic activities. A biodiversity law and most of the protected area management plans supported by the GEF are on hold, and have been for several years, awaiting approval. Implementation of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan approved in June 2008 has not begun. Only recently has Turkey's strong commitment to the European Union's accession process pushed these GEF-supported products to the national environmental policy agenda.

GEF support has been strategic in the field of biosafety with relatively little funding. In Turkey, a biosafety law was prepared with the active involvement of more than 55 institutions, experts, and academics; this law was recently approved. In Moldova, a national biosafety framework is being developed which is expected to result in important legislation, capacity building, and awareness raising at the national and local levels.

### **Conclusion 2: GEF support in climate change has produced limited but promising results in Moldova and Turkey.**

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Enabling activities in climate change have helped countries to comply with the reporting requirements of the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change. They have also contributed to capacity building in creating and maintaining greenhouse gas inventories and vulnerability assessments, including analysis of options for mitigation and adaptation. As a result, climate change has been put higher on the government agenda in both Moldova and Turkey, and is shaping ongoing action and debate, as well as future climate change policy, strategy, and planning decisions. Turkey ratified the Kyoto Protocol in October 2009.



Although relatively recent, GEF support in climate change analyzed with the ROtI methodology in both Moldova and Turkey has shown positive signs of progress toward impact, thanks to the foundational and demonstration activities successfully completed thus far. More progress is expected with the upcoming implementation of major investment projects in energy efficiency.

Climate change adaptation has not yet emerged as a national priority in either country.

**Conclusion 3: International waters initiatives strengthened country commitments to regional cooperation for reducing nutrient discharge and overexploitation of fish stocks. It is too early for observable improvements in the water bodies to materialize.**

GEF support has been a major contributor to countries' involvement in agreements for coordinated regional and international management of marine resources and has helped develop cooperative networks for coherent regional response and action. GEF international waters projects have also significantly improved the scientific basis for regional prioritization of cooperative interventions in managing marine resources and land-based activities affecting these resources.

In Moldova and Turkey, GEF support in the international waters focal area has a clear regional dimension, provided through projects targeting the Danube River and the Black and Mediterranean Seas. These initiatives have been developed and implemented in full compliance with the catalytic approach advocated by the GEF Instrument, where foundational and enabling activities are followed by demonstration and investment projects. Early efforts involved the elaboration of transboundary diagnostic analyses and strategic action plans. Starting in 2000, the demonstration and investment projects that followed were clustered in programmatic partnerships, which included

major national full-size projects aimed at controlling agricultural pollution and reducing nutrient discharge. As these major initiatives are still ongoing, outcomes and impacts are not yet discernible.

**Conclusion 4: GEF support to POPs has been of strategic importance in both countries and facilitated up-scaling in Moldova.**

The enabling activities related to the implementation of the Stockholm Convention on POPs supported Moldova and Turkey in developing a strategic and informed basis for analysis, prioritization, and action in dealing with POPs. GEF support allowed both countries to prepare a National Implementation Plan for the convention.

In Turkey, this catalytic support was instrumental in the recent country ratification of the Stockholm Convention. In Moldova, a mixed and staged combination of further enabling activities and a full-size project supported by the GEF facilitated up-scaling and was complemented by projects financed by various other donors leading to significant additional results, with sustainable outcomes achieved.

**Conclusion 5: Land degradation did not receive the attention and support countries were expecting, including through multifocal area projects.**

The high demand for GEF support in combating land degradation that emerged in recent CPEs was also found in this region. While in Turkey land degradation mostly entails high exposure to soil erosion and desertification risks, in Moldova huge land degradation problems are linked to overexploitation of soils by agriculture with a consequent decline in soil fertility.

Even though both countries are eligible for GEF funding in this area, and both have established land degradation as a priority in their national strategies and action plans, the limited GEF

resources available for this focal area did not permit support to be extended to Moldova and Turkey during GEF-4 (2006–10). Project proposals submitted to the GEF by the two countries could not be considered.

An opportunity was missed to address land degradation through multifocal area projects. Apart from the National Capacity Self-Assessment enabling activities, no other multifocal area projects are included in either the Moldova or Turkey portfolio. No attempts have been made to address land degradation, climate change adaptation, and/or biodiversity through an integrated, holistic approach by which natural resources (land, water, forests, minerals, and the biodiversity that characterizes them) are considered as interconnected in their contribution to generating global environmental benefits.

## 2.2 Relevance

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

**Conclusion 6: GEF support in Moldova and Turkey has been relevant to national sustainable development and environmental priorities, to international conventions, and to regional processes as well as to the GEF mandate. Other national priorities, such as land degradation, have not been addressed.**

As concluded in previous CPEs, GEF support was found to align with national sustainable development needs and challenges, and to the environmental priorities of the countries reviewed. GEF projects have supported national frameworks for developing environmental laws and policies in biodiversity, biosafety, climate change, and POPs. GEF support in helping countries fulfill their

reporting obligations under various international environmental conventions has been relevant as well.

Relevance is demonstrated either by GEF support provided through enabling activities (for prioritization and inventory exercises as well as communications to the conventions) or GEF funding provided for demonstration and investment projects to an already established national priority or applied within an existing framework (for protected areas, energy efficiency, and so on).

Land degradation, which is a high priority for both Moldova and Turkey, has not been addressed. The only support provided by the GEF in this focal area was through the SGP in Turkey, which awarded seven grants addressing land degradation for a total of \$184,290 between 2003 and 2006. Even this low level of support has ceased, however, as the SGP in GEF-4 had to conform to the newly introduced RAF: from then on, only biodiversity and climate change SGP grants could be approved in Turkey. Land degradation has been added to biodiversity and climate change in the new System for Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR), which will replace the RAF in GEF-5 (2010–14).

**Conclusion 7: National ownership of the GEF portfolio is limited, but is improving in both countries.**

Both in the Moldova and Turkey CPEs, evidence was found of slow appropriation of project objectives by national stakeholders. In Turkey, GEF Agencies usually come up with the initial idea; while at first not well understood, support and understanding grow over time. Eventually, national stakeholders (mostly government, but also civil society) take on the project, adapt it to their needs and context, and own and drive it. In Moldova, project offices, convention focal points, and GEF Agencies have, to varying extents, been



the main drivers of projects. Although frequent changes in government have a negative influence on ownership, in the case of POPs projects in Moldova, strong ownership and commitment triggered complementarities of donor support and enhanced cross-fertilization of projects.

Recent positive developments indicate a reinforcement of national ownership in both countries. In Turkey, the Externally Supported Projects Division of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry was tasked in 2004 to serve as the GEF national coordination unit. The division was also tasked with providing operational and administrative support to the national GEF focal point mechanism. Since 2006, GEF project ideas have been discussed in a national project evaluation committee chaired by the operational focal point and composed of 8 to 10 members representing various directorates of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry. Beginning in January 2010, the Externally Supported Projects Division has held a series of workshops on the GEF in seven Turkish provinces covering global environmental issues and the GEF in Turkey. These have attracted a broad participation of stakeholders, including from local government, civil society, and the private sector. This participation demonstrates a more proactive ownership in and by Turkey. However, while the GEF national coordination mechanism has a good grasp on national projects, it has not yet been able to gather information on and coordinate the GEF regional projects in which Turkey is involved.

In Moldova, the need for coordination and strategic planning has been recognized at a high political level, and the government has recently approved new legislation addressing this issue. The regulation on coordination of foreign assistance sets out new procedures, allocation of responsibilities, and institutional restructuring. If fully and efficiently implemented, this regulation could serve as the

much-needed foundation for the country to play a more active role in initiating, implementing, and evaluating GEF projects. This new approach could enhance country ownership through the development of coherent national strategies and plans regarding donor assistance, including that of the GEF.

The new policy on voluntary GEF national portfolio formulation exercises being proposed for GEF-5 will likely help to further increase country ownership.

### 2.3 Efficiency

Efficiency of GEF support is assessed in terms of the 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.

**Conclusion 8: Duration of project processing and implementation compares well to average figures for GEF projects. However, mixed perceptions on the complexity and length of the GEF project cycle remain in both countries.**

On the whole, and in comparison to other countries, both Moldova and Turkey have done remarkably well in getting projects through the GEF project cycle. This finding is in opposition with most, if not all, of the evaluative evidence collected by the Evaluation Office to date on this thorny issue. It is interesting to note that the relatively short durations found in the efficiency analysis conducted within the framework of these two CPEs apply to the entire project portfolios, which in both countries span a period from the early 1990s to December 2009. Therefore, this efficiency cannot be attributed to the relatively recent reforms

of the GEF project cycle introduced in 2007; these are nevertheless expected to contribute further in this positive direction.

In Moldova, the processing time span is comparable to GEF averages for medium-size projects (11 months on average from entry into the GEF pipeline to project start-up) and enabling activities (3 months on average from Chief Executive Officer approval to project start-up). Duration is also comparable to GEF averages for two of the country's three full-size projects; the third project lasted six years, but this exceptionally long duration was due to the particularities of this project. In Turkey, national full-size projects took an average of 2.1 years to move from project entry to implementation—less than half the GEF global average of 5.5 years. Implementation phases have also been relatively quick: the in-situ conservation project took 5.5 years and had no delays. Although the “Biodiversity and Natural Resources Management Project” took 8.2 years to implement—a delay of 1.8 years—this is in line with the GEF global average.

In Moldova, average preparation cost across all national projects was found to be very reasonable compared with the costs identified in previous CPEs. The average costs of project preparation in Turkey are estimated at 3.3 percent of the total GEF contribution, which translates into an average of about \$100,000 for full-size projects and corresponds to about one-third of the amount officially available under the previous GEF project cycle.

National stakeholders in both countries expressed negative views of the GEF project cycle. In Turkey, these perceptions mainly related to the recent delays experienced in the approval of three full-size climate change projects that are about to start implementation. In Moldova, several stakeholders considered GEF project development procedures to be difficult compared to those of other donors,

and maintained that the preparation of a full-size project was overly time consuming, due to the complexity of feasibility studies. As repeatedly highlighted in previous evaluations undertaken by the Office—including the recently completed Fourth Overall Performance Study of the GEF—delays usually occur before projects enter the pipeline, which encompasses project conceptualization at the national level and the frequent back and forth of project identification forms between the GEF Agencies and the GEF Secretariat.

**Conclusion 9: The GEF focal point mechanism has not been fully effective in its coordination and strategic guidance roles, including information sharing and monitoring and evaluation.**

The GEF focal point mechanism is expected to play a key role in providing information and facilitating information sharing among the GEF national stakeholders. In this respect, diversities and commonalities in the two countries have been analyzed and are discussed below.

In Moldova, the environment minister holds the dual position of GEF political and operational focal points, which might negatively affect the efficiency of the focal point mechanism. Moreover, different persons have been appointed as environment minister in recent years, resulting in a lack of strategic guidance on how best to take advantage of GEF support. In Turkey, the national focal point mechanism and the Externally Supported Projects Division in the Ministry of Environment and Forestry are effectively coordinating GEF support. However, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and information sharing across GEF Agencies have not yet been sufficiently addressed.

In Moldova, project offices manage other donor-funded projects in addition to GEF initiatives. GEF projects are seen as a useful tool for maintaining a core team of qualified experts who have

benefited from training and, as a consequence, are now capable of preparing, managing, and implementing other donor-funded projects. However, their existence is very much dependent on available funding, and they often work in isolation. In Turkey, the GEF Agencies often worked in a complementary rather than competitive way. Because many GEF projects operate in isolation, though, is not always shared among projects implemented by different Agencies. The Turkish CPE also found limited evidence of GEF Agencies being corporately involved as an institution in their GEF-financed activities. The country strategies and programs of the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme—the two main GEF Agencies in Turkey—do not provide strong support to GEF issues outside of their GEF-financed projects.

In both Moldova and Turkey, M&E, an important element for learning, mostly occurs at the project level and is largely conducted by the GEF Agencies. Completed enabling activities have neither been evaluated nor closed by a completion report. No portfolio monitoring is carried out in Moldova. In Turkey, such monitoring only encompasses the recording of basic data on national projects, such

as project title, Agency, and focal area; financial information on the GEF grant and cofinancing; project cycle dates (entry into pipeline, approval, and start-up); and project objectives, outcomes, and implementation progress. Other substantive data, such as actual achievements at completion and lessons learned, are not maintained.

M&E information does not always flow from the GEF Agencies to national partners and vice versa. In Turkey, M&E is a matter of concern for the national stakeholders; during the scoping mission, many of them explicitly asked the evaluation team to look into M&E issues. The CPE found that Agencies often have not fully involved the focal point in project-level M&E activities. At the national level, M&E information does not always circulate transversely among the various ministries involved in GEF activities—and sometimes not even among the different departments and divisions of the same ministry. The Externally Supported Projects Division in Turkey's Ministry of Environment and Forestry is not explicitly mandated to conduct M&E activities, nor does it have the requisite skills to satisfactorily perform portfolio-level M&E and/or supervise the execution of M&E tasks at the project level.

### 3. Recommendations

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**Recommendation 1: Operational focal point involvement in M&E should be increased by sharing M&E information, supporting country portfolio-level M&E, and providing M&E training.**

The GEF Agencies should be encouraged to systematically involve the GEF focal points in M&E activities and share M&E information with them in a timely manner to facilitate country portfolio M&E by focal points. M&E of enabling activities should be strengthened.

Some M&E information and support for focal points is already provided by the GEF Country Support Program through its Web site and sub-regional workshops, with the support of the GEF Evaluation Office. These activities should continue in GEF-5. In addition, the Council should consider providing M&E training specifically to the GEF national focal points.

The Evaluation Office should, in collaboration with the GEF Secretariat, consider how to strengthen the role of operational focal points in M&E as part of its revision of the GEF M&E Policy.

**Recommendation 2: GEF Agencies should be encouraged to give stronger support to environmental issues outside their GEF-supported projects and promote up-scaling with partner governments.**

When the GEF catalytic approach is properly pursued and implemented, and when strategic

information is shared among Agencies, multiplier effects can be seen. For example, the Turkish government capitalized on the experiences of its GEF-supported, United Nations Development Programme–implemented initiatives in the climate change focal area to develop a proposal to the World Bank’s Clean Technology Fund. Similarly, in Moldova, relevant central authorities took full advantage of the positive results achieved by GEF-supported projects—most of which were implemented by the World Bank in the POPs focal area—thereby triggering up-scaling through the preparation of two other projects funded by the United Nations Environment Programme and the Canadian International Development Agency. Applications of this catalytic approach should be encouraged.

The GEF Agencies should promote global environmental benefits with their government partners in the context of their non-GEF-supported projects. Given the comparatively small role the GEF can play, it must be catalytic to ensure that any success will be replicated on a scale that can make a difference. The amount of GEF funding, when compared with the major global environmental benefits it has been mandated to achieve, is clearly limited. Opportunities for further promotion of partner governments’ environmental issues that go beyond GEF-funded projects should be pursued whenever possible.

## Annex A. Main Conclusions and Recommendations to the GEF Council from the Moldova and Turkey CPEs

Conclusions			Recommendations
Results	Relevance	Efficiency	
<b>Moldova</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the biodiversity focal area, while bringing significant support to Moldova in fulfilling its obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity, progress toward impact is modest.</li> <li>• In the climate change focal area, GEF support had limited results, but considering upcoming projects, there is potential to achieve meaningful impacts, provided successful replication takes place.</li> <li>• In the international waters focal area, it is too early to assess the results of the two national full-size projects, only one of which was completed and that recently. Results of other projects are limited.</li> <li>• Through a mixed and staged combination of enabling activities and a full-size project, GEF support to the POPs focal area has been of strategic importance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall, GEF support has been relevant to national sustainable development and environmental priorities, to international conventions, and to regional processes as well as to the GEF mandate, except for combating land degradation.</li> <li>• Country ownership is limited mainly due to the absence of coordination and a clear strategy toward GEF support.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total processing time span is comparable to average figures for GEF projects. There are mixed perceptions on the complexity and duration of GEF project preparation and implementation procedures, although the general view is rather positive.</li> <li>• Project offices set up under the Ministry of Environment, GEF Agencies, and some convention focal points play a key role in preparation and implementation of projects.</li> <li>• The dissemination of information and sharing of lessons learned is limited.</li> <li>• The GEF focal point mechanism has not provided sufficient strategic guidance and coordination.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The GEF should fully support the introduction of the SGP in Moldova.</li> <li>• The GEF should provide guidance and establish requirements on the dissemination of project results and lessons learned.</li> </ul>

Conclusions			Recommendations
Results	Relevance	Efficiency	
<b>Turkey</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GEF support to biodiversity in Turkey has contributed to the achievement of significant results, including raising awareness and building capacity.</li> <li>• GEF support of international waters projects has contributed to strengthening Turkey's commitments to global and regional cooperation to reduce the overexploitation of fish stocks and land- and sea-based pollution in the region.</li> <li>• The SGP has been a major success in Turkey, providing many examples of how to meet both global and local objectives.</li> <li>• Results in other focal areas are limited, but in some cases, small funding has had important catalytic effects.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GEF support has been relevant to Turkey's sustainable development agenda and its environmental priorities, with the exception of land degradation.</li> <li>• The GEF paved the way for implementing environmental aspects of the European Union accession process. Turkish initiatives in this regard will now increase the sustainability of impacts started under the GEF.</li> <li>• GEF support in Turkey has neither been fully nationally owned nor fully country driven, but this has improved in recent years.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GEF Agencies have worked in a complementary way. However, there are few synergies and little cross-agency learning. Recently, the situation has been improving.</li> <li>• The traditionally top-down approach to forest management in Turkey applied to nature protection, and cases of insufficient coordination, caused delays; these have decreased recently.</li> <li>• The complexity of the GEF project cycle has not been a barrier to project development in Turkey.</li> <li>• There is little evidence that M&amp;E is contributing to increased efficiency.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase focal points' involvement in M&amp;E activities by sharing M&amp;E information, supporting country portfolio-level M&amp;E, and providing M&amp;E training.</li> <li>• The GEF Agencies should be encouraged to give stronger support to GEF issues outside the GEF-supported projects in which they are involved, and promote up-scaling with partner governments.</li> </ul>

## Annex B. Management Response

*This annex presents the management response to this report, which was presented to the GEF Council in June 2010 as GEF/ME/C.38/3. Minor editorial corrections have been made.*

### **B.1 General Comments**

The Secretariat has taken note of the *Annual Country Portfolio Evaluation Report 2010* prepared by the Evaluation Office. The report is based on country portfolio evaluations conducted in two countries: Moldova and Turkey.

The Secretariat welcomes the main conclusions of the evaluations, in particular the GEF's contribution toward achieving significant results in the biodiversity focal area, leveraging of additional investments, and the dissemination of environmentally sound technologies in climate change. Important progress was also made in achieving results and improving capacities in the climate change, persistent organic pollutants, and international waters focal areas. We also are in agreement with the conclusions regarding the relevance of GEF support to national sustainable development and environmental priorities, international conventions, and regional processes. We take note that national ownership of the GEF portfolio is limited but improving in both countries.

We are pleased to have evidence of replication of GEF-supported activities in biodiversity conser-

vation and sustainable use, including the application of GEF-introduced tracking tools for measuring protected area management effectiveness. It is important to note that management effectiveness at the country level has extended beyond the original scope of the GEF investments. We concur with the conclusion that GEF support to biodiversity conservation and sustainable use has been of strategic importance and has generated significant impacts. To address barriers associated with socioeconomic factors, the GEF Secretariat, in collaboration with GEF Agencies, is in the process of strengthening guidance associated with gender and socioeconomic analysis and the measurement of local benefits.

The Secretariat takes note that the overall conclusions and recommendations for the international waters portfolio provide a positive picture for both countries. We affirm the appropriateness of setting up foundational capacity and enhancing national capacity. These findings confirm the relevance of the GEF's mandate and contribution to achieving national environmental priorities.

With regard to the current Agency fee policy, the GEF Secretariat welcomes the thorough reporting of progress made by Moldova and Turkey in strengthening policy and institutional support for combating land degradation. As mentioned in the management response to *Annual Country Portfolio Evaluation Report 2009*, we find the comments



regarding the lack of funding for land degradation to be vague. Underfunding is an issue that applies across the entire GEF portfolio, and we note that land degradation is not the only area where a higher resource level would help countries better meet their environmental priorities. We welcome the recommendation to the governments of Moldova and Turkey to invest in combating land degradation and highlight that the System for Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR) allocations may facilitate accessing GEF resources and working with the GEF as a strategic partner.

The GEF is committed to working with countries to increase country ownership across the GEF portfolio. The GEF-funded Country Support Program is just one initiative that provides an opportunity to strengthen ownership and capacity. In addition, subregional workshops and constituency meetings are an important forum for focal points to receive updated information about the evolution of the GEF and its procedures from GEF and Agency resource persons.

We are pleased to see that the duration of project processing and implementation compares well to average GEF figures. The new GEF project cycle introduced a streamlining of the approval process, as well as a shortening of the project cycle. The project cycle provides the structural change for efficiency; however its implementation must be

strictly enforced in order to achieve the objectives of the streamlining efforts.

The Secretariat finds it worrying that there is little evidence that M&E contributed to coherent management decisions or increased efficiency (in Turkey). Further, the dissemination of information and sharing of lessons learned is limited. While the Secretariat can provide guidance on dissemination of project results and lessons learned, it is the Implementing Agencies' responsibility to effectively monitor at the project level and ensure dissemination of results in country. The review of the M&E Policy should address these issues.

## **B.2 Response to Recommendations**

We support the recommendation that focal point involvement be enhanced in M&E activities. As part of the M&E Policy review, focal points will be involved in monitoring. As roles and responsibilities are further elaborated, the policy should address ways for the GEF Agencies to more systematically involve operational focal points in M&E, in addition to sharing information in a timely manner.

The Secretariat will review its current consultation process with operational focal points to identify cost-effective ways to deliver guidance and support in the areas of monitoring and results-based management, as a follow-up initiative to the approval of a revised M&E Policy in November 2010.



# GEF Evaluation Office Publications

<b>Number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Year</b>
<b>Evaluation Reports</b>		
57	GEF Annual Performance Report 2009	2010
56	GEF Impact Evaluation of the Phaseout of Ozone-Depleting Substances in Countries with Economies in Transition	2010
55	GEF Annual Impact Report 2009	2010
54	OPS4: Progress Toward Impact—Fourth Overall Performance Study of the GEF (Full Report)	2009
53	OPS4: Progress Toward Impact—Fourth Overall Performance Study of the GEF (Executive Version)	2009
52	GEF Country Portfolio Evaluation: Syria (1994–2008)	2009
51	GEF Country Portfolio Evaluation: Egypt (1991–2008)	2009
50	GEF Annual Country Portfolio Evaluation Report 2009	2009
49	GEF Annual Performance Report 2008	2009
48	GEF Annual Impact Report 2008	2009
47	Midterm Review of the Resource Allocation Framework	2009
46	GEF Annual Report on Impact 2007	2009
45	GEF Country Portfolio Evaluation: Cameroon (1992–2007)	2009
44	GEF Annual Country Portfolio Evaluation Report 2008	2008
43	GEF Country Portfolio Evaluation: South Africa (1994–2007)	2008
42	GEF Country Portfolio Evaluation: Madagascar (1994–2007)	2008
41	GEF Country Portfolio Evaluation: Benin (1991–2007)	2008
40	GEF Annual Performance Report 2007	2008
39	Joint Evaluation of the GEF Small Grants Programme	2008
38	GEF Annual Performance Report 2006	2008
37	GEF Country Portfolio Evaluation: Samoa (1992–2007)	2008
36	GEF Country Portfolio Evaluation: The Philippines (1992–2007)	2008
35	Evaluation of the Experience of Executing Agencies under Expanded Opportunities in the GEF	2007
34	Evaluation of Incremental Cost Assessment	2007
33	Joint Evaluation of the GEF Activity Cycle and Modalities	2007
32	GEF Country Portfolio Evaluation: Costa Rica (1992–2005)	2007
31	GEF Annual Performance Report 2005	2006
30	The Role of Local Benefits in Global Environmental Programs	2006
29	GEF Annual Performance Report 2004	2005
28	Evaluation of GEF Support for Biosafety	2006
	Third Overall Performance Study	2005
	GEF Integrated Ecosystem Management Program Study	2005
	Biodiversity Program Study	2004
	Climate Change Program Study	2004
	International Waters Program Study	2004
<b>Evaluation Documents</b>		
ED-3	Guidelines for GEF Agencies in Conducting Terminal Evaluations	2008
ED-2	GEF Evaluation Office Ethical Guidelines	2008
ED-1	The GEF Evaluation and Monitoring Policy	2006



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