GEF Annual Impact Report 2010

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Contents

Foreword

This is the fourth annual impact report produced by the Global Environment Facility's (GEF's) Evaluation Office. In these impact reports, the Office presents information on the progress of ongoing impact evaluations, methodological developments, and other related efforts. In addition, whenever an evaluation or an assessment is completed during a reporting period, a summary of its findings and conclusions are included in the report.

Annual Impact Report 2010 highlights the evaluation of GEF biodiversity projects in Peru. This work was undertaken in collaboration with the Independent Evaluation Group of the World Bank and was completed during this reporting period. The evaluation aimed at assessing the impact of GEF support on biodiversity and environmental stress reduction and the socioeconomic status of local communities.

The report also presents the preparatory work currently being performed on the international waters evaluation to assess impacts of GEF activities in the South China Sea and adjacent areas. The objective of this evaluation is to analyze the extent to which GEF contributions have led or are likely to lead to changes in policies, technology, management practices, and other behaviors that will address the priority transboundary environmental concerns that affect the socioeconomic and environmental services of the South China Sea, the Gulf of Thailand, and the surrounding areas.

During the reporting period, the Evaluation Office continued to advance its work on theory-based approaches and its review of outcomes to impacts (ROtI) methodology.

The report did not present any recommendations to the GEF Council. Consequently, it was presented to the Council during its November 2010 meeting only as an information document.

The GEF Evaluation Office would like to thank all who collaborated with our impact assessment work: our staff and consultants, national focal points, members of the national steering committees, and the GEF Agencies. I would like to thank all those involved for their support and constructive criticism. We also thank the numerous individuals who were interviewed in the course of these evaluations.

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

Rob D. van den Berg
Director, Evaluation Office

Acknowledgments

The work presented in *Annual Report on Impact 2010* is the joint effort of a number of Global Environment Facility (GEF) Evaluation Office staff and consultants. Serving as the task team leader for the general supervision of the work presented in the report was Aaron Zazueta, Senior Evaluation Officer in the GEF Evaluation Office. Neeraj Kumar Negi, Evaluation Officer, drafted the report.

This year's impact report primarily presents key findings of the biodiversity impact evaluation in Peru and progress made on the ongoing international waters impact evaluation on GEF activities in the South China Sea and adjacent areas.

The biodiversity impact evaluation was led by Claudio Volonté, Chief Evaluation Officer. Marina Cracco, consultant, was a team member.

Aaron Zazueta is the task team leader for the ongoing international waters impact evaluation on GEF activities in the South China Sea and adjacent areas. Neeraj Kumar Negi and Jeneen Reyes Garcia, consultant, are the team members of this evaluation.

Abbreviations

GEF	Global Environment Facility
OPS4	Fourth Overall Performance Study
PROFONANPE	Fondo para Áreas Naturales Protegidas del Perú (Peruvian Trust Fund for National Parks and Protected Areas)
ROtI	review of outcomes to impacts
SINANPE	Sistema Nacional de Áreas Naturales Protegidas por el Estado (Peruvian National System of Protected Areas)
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group

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

1. Overview of Impact Evaluation Work in 2010

This document is the fourth annual report on impact presented by the Evaluation Office of the Global Environment Facility (GEF). It presents a summary of the findings and conclusions of the impact evaluations completed by the Office during the reporting period October 1, 2009, to September 30, 2010, and of progress made on ongoing impact evaluations, methodological developments, and other related efforts.

The period since the last annual impact report has been a year of transition as a new impact evaluation team was brought on board. The team is building on the methodological achievements, such as development and implementation of the review of outcomes to impacts (ROtI) methodology, made by its predecessor. With the completion of the Fourth Overall Performance Study (OPS4) of the GEF in 2009, the focus of the Office's impact evaluation work has shifted to planning and undertaking evaluations to feed into the Fifth Overall Performance Study.

The major product of 2010 was evaluation of the impacts of a cluster of five GEF biodiversity projects in Peru. The evaluation aimed at assessing the impact of GEF support on biodiversity and environmental stress reduction and the socioeconomic status of local communities, particularly indigenous groups that depend on biological resources for their livelihoods. The evaluation made the following conclusions:

- The GEF has been a key contributor in Peru to biodiversity conservation in and around protected areas.
- The GEF projects are partially equipped to sustain improved alternative livelihoods for communities.
- There is limited evidence of intended impacts and global environmental benefits.

The evaluation called for better coordination among the monitoring and evaluation projects in the biodiversity focal area so that baseline information constraints are addressed at a systemic level. It also identified the need to address potential trade-offs that arise from conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity resources through community-based approaches. The second section of this report covers this evaluation in greater detail.

Also in 2010, the Evaluation Office initiated an impact evaluation in the international waters focal area to assess impacts of GEF activities in the South China Sea and adjacent areas. The evaluation is a follow-up to an OPS4 recommendation that an in-depth assessment of progress toward impacts be carried out in this focal area. The objective of the impact evaluation, which is ongoing, is to analyze the extent to which GEF contributions have led or are likely to lead to changes in policies, technology, management practices,

and other behaviors that will address the priority transboundary environmental concerns that affect the socioeconomic and environmental services of the South China Sea, the Gulf of Thailand, and the surrounding areas.

A technical advisory group was established to provide quality assurance and support on methodological, scientific, and technical issues. A reference group, representing institutional stakeholders such as GEF implementing and executing agencies, other important organizations working on relevant concerns, and GEF focal points of the countries surrounding the South China Sea, was also established; the group's purpose is to provide feedback and support, and to facilitate the uptake of and follow-up on findings and conclusions. In 2010, a draft approach paper for the evaluation was prepared, shared, reviewed, discussed, and subsequently updated. Information gathering for the evaluation is presently under way. The final evaluation report should be completed by April 2012.

The Office also continued its work on developing theory-based approaches and the ROtI methodology and applying these in its evaluations. The OPS4 experience with impact assessment, in which these methodologies had been applied, was presented at the Annual General Meeting's Evaluation Practice Exchange in May 2010 in Vienna. The presentation was made by a senior consultant to the Office who had previously led the impact evaluation team. The ROtI methodology has been employed by the Office in its country portfolio evaluations and, in the coming months, the team will address its incorporation in the guidelines for terminal evaluations of GEF projects.

The Office continues to be an active participant in relevant collegial and professional organizations. In March 2010, the Office participated in the Network of Networks on Impact Evaluation meeting in Bonn where various approaches to impact evaluation were discussed. As a member of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), the impact evaluation team of the GEF Evaluation Office is participating in the activities of the UNEG impact evaluation task force, especially its subgroups on attribution in multistakeholder interventions or contribution analysis and on joint evaluation.

2. Impact Evaluation of Biodiversity Projects in Peru

In 2007, the Evaluation Office initiated an impact evaluation of GEF support to biodiversity in Peru, particularly of GEF projects implemented through the World Bank. Peru was selected because of its high level of GEF support, and the opportunity it offered to advance the ROtI methodology by applying it at a cluster level. This evaluation also let the Office address the lack of previous evaluations examining the role of local communities and indigenous people in biodiversity conservation. In addition, a concurrent integrated country-level evaluation of Peru piloted by the World Bank's Independent Evaluation Group provided a context within which to evaluate the impact of several projects over several years.[1]

2.1 Context

Peru is among the most biodiverse countries on Earth, and it has a wide range of tools and laws that establish protected areas and protect biological resources (CONAM 2001). Despite economic expansion over the last decade, a significant proportion of Peru's population lives in poverty (UNDP 2009). Most of Peru's poor belong to indigenous or rural communities; a high proportion of indigenous citizens are considered poor, and half live in extreme poverty.[2] These communities generally live in or adjacent to protected areas. Because protected areas have been created on traditional indigenous lands, conflicts have arisen between local communities on the one hand and protected area authorities and conservation organizations on the other (Barragán 2008). Most of the World Bank–implemented GEF biodiversity projects in Peru include activities to improve livelihoods for local communities, including indigenous people, and participatory approaches to conservation.

2.2 Objectives and Methodology

The evaluation addressed two main questions:

- What impact has GEF support had on biodiversity and environmental stress reduction?
- What impact has GEF support had on the socioeconomic status of local communities and, in particular, indigenous groups that depend on biological resources for their livelihoods?

[1] The Independent Evaluation Group's evaluation was presented to the World Bank Committee of Development Effectiveness in September 2010, and included inputs from the GEF Evaluation Office's own evaluation.

[2] These data are from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean's Population Division (ECLAC CELADE) database, www.eclac.org/celade/default.asp?idioma=IN; also see the International Fund for Agricultural Development's rural poverty portal at www.ruralpovertyportal.org/web/guest/country/home/tags/peru.

To answer these questions, the evaluation selected five biodiversity projects (listed in table 2.1) for in-depth analysis and utilized mixed-method and theory-based approaches, including a ROtI analysis to assess impact for this project cluster. The Evaluation Office developed—and tested through this exercise—a project cluster theory of change based on the ROtI methodology that defines the logical sequence of conditions and factors needed to achieve cluster impact. The selected projects were completed or nearly completed GEF biodiversity projects implemented through the World Bank as a GEF Agency, and were part of the aforementioned Independent Evaluation Group integrated country-level evaluation. The selected projects included livelihood improvement of local communities as an objective.

2.3 Findings and Conclusions

The GEF has been a key contributor to biodiversity conservation in and around Peru's protected areas. The GEF has contributed to the establishment of the long-term financing mechanism for the Peruvian National System of Protected Areas (Sistema Nacional de Áreas Naturales Protegidas por el Estado—SINANPE). The five projects have successfully generated a catalytic effect through participatory models for protected area management, demonstration projects, and livelihood improvement efforts. The evaluation found support for the OPS4 conclusion that full achievement of potential environmental benefits requires that projects be designed "to ensure local ownership, continued government support, and ongoing availability of funding after project closure" (GEF EO 2010, p. 15).

The evaluation concluded that long-term funding for the management of priority protected areas appears likely because of the institutional sustainability of the funding mechanism—the Peruvian Trust Fund for National Parks and Protected Areas (Fondo para Áreas Naturales Protegidas del Perú—PROFONANPE)—but noted that additional funds must be identified because many SINANPE areas lack sustained funding. Also, substantial gaps often exist between actual and optimal funding levels, and only 13 percent of SINANPE's protected areas have established a financial plan. The evaluation pointed out that each protected area should

Table 2.1

Projects Reviewed for the Impact Evaluation of GEF Biodiversity Projects in Peru

Project	Type	GEF support ($)	Cofinancing ($)	Executing agency
National Trust Fund for Protected Areas	Full size	5,000,000	2,861,000	PROFONANPE
Participatory Conservation and Sustainable Development with Indigenous Communities in Vilcabamba	Medium size	727,075	415,000	Conservation International
Indigenous Management of Protected Areas in the Amazon	Full size	10,000,000	14,000,000	National Institute of Natural Resources and Ministry of Social Affairs
Collaborative Management for the Conservation and Sustainable Development of the Northwest Biosphere Reserve	Medium size	728,850	1,346,350	Pro Naturaleza
Participatory Management of Protected Areas	Full size	14,800,000	15,910,000	PROFONANPE

Note: The projects that have been clustered for this analysis do not constitute a program, and the GEF and the World Bank did not approve them as a cluster.

develop a business plan with a diversified funding base (GOP 2007).

The participatory management model for Peru's protected areas is likely to be sustained and replicated, the evaluation found. Long-term use of this model, however, would require institutionalization at the national level within PROFONANPE and the Peruvian Protected Area Authority (Servicio Nacional de Áreas Naturales Protegidas por el Estado—SERNANP), as well as continued collaboration and support from local actors. The participatory management model has benefited from substantial advances made over the last 15 years in Peru's natural resource and protected area legal framework. The country has one of Latin America's most advanced protected area policy systems (GOP 2007). The evaluation also found that management committees and other protected area mechanisms have integrated stakeholder participation into the policy framework and reserve management.

The establishment of Peru's Environment Ministry and the Protected Area Authority in 2008 represented an essential step in the development of national institutional capacity. The ministry arose out of efforts spearheaded by civil society and multilateral institutions. Prior to its establishment, projects had lacked continuity and institutional knowledge, as they were managed in a piecemeal fashion under the Ministry of Agriculture. Project mechanisms and structures were lost once funds ran out.

Although Peru regulates resource exploitation, gaps in current laws constitute an important obstacle to effective protected area management. For instance, SINANPE lacks overall guidelines on control and enforcement for different types of protected areas. Most projects studied involved activities to strengthen control and enforcement, but enforcement remains difficult in many areas due to long distances, rough terrain, and a lack of needed control equipment. Only 65 percent of SINANPE protected areas have park rangers; because most of these rangers are based in only a few protected areas, this also contributes to the overall weakness of control and enforcement (GOP 2007). Finally, although a national monitoring and evaluation system on biodiversity and natural resources was initially established, it was not sustained.

Commitments of various types from the Peruvian government are essential to sustaining recent biodiversity progress, the evaluation found. While Peru has made substantial strides in establishing a legal and institutional framework for protected areas and conservation of biodiversity, these institutions need to be strengthened. The evaluation highlighted the need for further investment in two areas:

- **Enhanced knowledge management**, focused in particular on building knowledge of SINANPE's financing and technical capacity to implement alternative livelihood activities
- A central **monitoring and evaluation system**

The evaluation reiterated the importance of linking development to biodiversity and conservation efforts and of maintaining a commitment to fledgling programs until they are self-sustaining. It also pointed to a need for prioritizing extractive industry regulation, control of natural resource overexploitation, and mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into other sectors.

The GEF projects are partially equipped to sustain improved alternative livelihoods for communities. The evaluation found that the GEF projects' sustainable economic activities model has been replicated at the national level and is likely to be sustained. However, it determined that the model has achieved only partial success at the local level in its replication and long-term sustain-

ability, despite a positive perception on the part of local communities. All those interviewed felt their livelihoods have improved since the last decade, and many believed that physical goods and infrastructure provided by subprojects have contributed to increased income. In addition, many interviewees perceived that alternative livelihood subprojects have contributed to improvements in gender participation, health, education, community relations, and institutional strengthening.

Despite these perceived benefits, the evaluation noted several **project weaknesses**. Most projects failed to adequately address clarification of land titling and tenure; this delayed the implementation of several projects. Many projects also failed to implement measures meant to bridge disagreements between indigenous people and conservation groups. The evaluation concluded too that access to biodiversity markets is unlikely at present for most projects; some sites have not yet generated any marketable environmentally friendly products. In some cases, projects might focus too strictly on establishment of protected areas and ignore rural development and agricultural issues.

While local ownership of biodiversity conservation activities was critical to sustaining results, the evaluation could not conclude that all project sites have achieved local ownership of activities. However, management committees, a tool born of and supported by the project cluster, were found to sustain biodiversity conservation activities by bringing participatory management to local communities. Strengthened commitment to local ownership would require clarification of land tenure, demonstration of benefits (specifically, improved livelihoods), and broad community participation (including by women and children) in alternative economic activities.

There is limited evidence of intended impacts and global environmental benefits. The evaluation found limited evidence of an improvement in Peru's biodiversity status. While national environmental indicators were unavailable, data from two sites indicate that most monitored biodiversity global environmental benefits have been declining. Perceptions on the health of biodiversity vary, but generally indicate a decline. The evaluation also found that natural resource exploitation and degradation are occurring at a faster pace than are conservation activities.

A lack of information on biodiversity status is one of the main challenges to tracking progress toward impact and global environmental benefits. The absence of a national baseline or monitoring and research program prevented the evaluation from finding evidence of national-level improvements in biodiversity or a reduction in threats to biodiversity. This information gap also thwarts efforts to plan and identify priorities for future programs. While 14 different biodiversity monitoring and evaluation projects had been implemented in Peru by 2006, their utility is limited as the systems are uncoordinated and each is designed to meet the specific information needs of its own project.

2.4 Assumptions Challenged by the Evaluation Findings

Given the experience of the five projects evaluated in Peru, the following assumptions of the project proponents may need to be reexamined when developing future projects:

- **Existing environmental policies and their monitoring and enforcement in other sectors are still inappropriate for encouraging biodiversity conservation in Peru.** Yet the establishment of the Environment Ministry suggests otherwise.
- **Local governments are sufficiently strong—politically and financially—that they can**

tackle threats to biodiversity. Several project implementation and completion reports suggest otherwise.

- **Communities are interested in conservation of biodiversity and sustainable use of its elements and are committed to conservation.** Usually, livelihood benefits are associated with conservation activities undertaken as part of the GEF-supported projects. However, in some cases, communities see conservation as limiting their access to natural resources and thus to income.
- **Improved biodiversity reduces threats to livelihoods, and improved livelihoods reduce threats to biodiversity.** In contrast, the evaluation indicated that trade-offs may be necessary in some cases, as conservation can disproportionately affect the poor and hinder poverty reduction efforts. Further, where communities perceive improved livelihoods, threats to biodiversity have not necessarily been diminished.
- **Demographic change (immigration and growth of local populations) occurs at a level that does not negatively affect biodiversity.** Yet some interviewees indicated that the population has increased significantly in some areas and that a higher proportion of the population depends on extraction of biological resources (for example, in mangrove ecosystems).

2.5 Areas for Further Attention

The evaluation identified two additional areas for the GEF's further attention:

- Consider making **capacity development** for national biodiversity monitoring and evaluation systems a strategic priority.
- Consider developing **policies or guidelines on possible trade-offs** that arise from conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity resources (such as with land titling or community-based approaches).

3. Progress on Impact Evaluation of GEF Activities in the South China Sea and Adjacent Areas

The OPS4 assessment of likely impacts in the focal areas was built on reviews of individual projects. This approach turned out to be problematic in the international waters focal area, where projects need to be understood in a broad context. This is because GEF-supported projects aimed at addressing the transboundary environmental concerns of a water body are undertaken as part of a long-term program and need to be examined together, as the eventual impacts are due to the synergistic efforts of a series of projects. OPS4 recommended that an in-depth assessment of progress toward impacts be undertaken in this focal area to address this gap in understanding.

The South China Sea and adjacent areas are known for their rich biodiversity and natural resources. Forty years of rapid economic growth in the region, however, has resulted in growing coastal habitat destruction, increased pollution, and overfishing, and now threatens the sustainability of the social, economic, and ecological services that these water bodies provide. The region also has a long history of territorial disputes. These features make addressing transboundary environmental concerns involving these international waters both important and challenging.

Since 1993, the GEF has allocated over $180 million through 41 projects in the South China Sea and adjacent areas. These projects include 22 regional or national and 8 global initiatives in the international waters focal area and 11 in other focal areas. This project cluster was selected for evaluation because, in addition to the GEF's sizable investment and years of engagement in the region, lessons from this evaluation are likely to apply to other international bodies of water shared by developing countries.

3.1 GEF Approach to International Waters

The GEF helps countries work together to secure a wide range of economic, political, and environmental benefits from shared surface water, groundwater, and marine ecosystems by fostering international cooperation and catalyzing action on priority transboundary water concerns. The GEF normally initiates an international waters effort with **foundational** activities to strengthen the knowledge base, institutional capacities, and regional decision-making processes. As participant countries increase their commitment to addressing priority transboundary concerns, the GEF increases its support through **demonstration** projects that test approaches and technologies and seek to catalyze further action to address problems. GEF support also comes in the form of **investments**, which replicate, up-scale, and/or mainstream approaches to transboundary concerns. Though this sequential approach is the

preferred model, the GEF has also been open to undertaking opportunistic projects that may not follow the foundation-demonstration-investment sequence but may provide significant global environmental benefits on their own.

3.2 Objectives of the Evaluation

The main objective of this evaluation is to analyze the extent to which the processes, knowledge, technologies, and capacities to which the GEF contributes have led or are likely to lead to changes in policies, technology, management practices, and other behaviors that will address the priority transboundary environmental concerns that affect the social, economic, and environmental services of the South China Sea, the Gulf of Thailand, and the adjacent areas. The key questions for the evaluation are as follows:

- To what extent has GEF support been relevant to the transboundary environmental threats in the South China Sea, as well as to the action plans, priorities, and strategies that countries in the area have adopted to solve environmental problems?
- What effects (positive or negative) has GEF support had on country and regional efforts and achievements in addressing transboundary environmental concerns?
- What are the critical factors (internal to the GEF and in the context in which GEF support takes place) that affect the likelihood of GEF support leading to a reduction of transboundary environmental stress and an improvement of environmental and socioeconomic status?
- What can be learned from the successes and failures of GEF-supported interventions that would be applicable in the South China Sea and elsewhere?

3.3 Evaluation Approach, Scope, and Limitations

The GEF Evaluation Office has experimented with several methods and approaches to impact evaluation, including theory of change–based approaches and quasi-experimental approaches. This evaluation will build on the Office's past efforts and experiences. The approach chosen will give special attention to the extent to which interventions are cast at the appropriate scale, the extent to which they take into account the lag between intervention and natural system response, and the ways in which complex socioecological systems affect impact paths. The evaluation will be carried out in three phases.

The **first phase** will consist of the development of the **theory of change** for the cluster of GEF-supported projects in the South China Sea and the surrounding areas. This will help assess progress toward impact.

The **second phase** will consist of data gathering. Using the theory of change developed as a heuristic tool, the evaluation will collect and analyze data along three distinct lines of inquiry:

- **Portfolio analysis** to provide a broad picture of GEF support at the regional, national, and local levels, and to map out GEF interventions and their respective outcomes
- **Examination of the regional dimensions** of GEF support in the area including transboundary environmental trends, the regional institutional context of GEF support, and progress made in the governance architecture (regional, national, and local) to address the South China Sea's transboundary concerns
- **Thematic and country case studie**s to assess the effectiveness of the various GEF approaches to transboundary environmental concerns, as

well as the country factors contributing to or hindering transboundary impact

The **third phase** will consist of **data analysis and synthesis**. It will focus on assessing stress reduction achievements and transboundary significance; the steps needed to ensure the sustainability of the social, economic, and ecological services provided by the South China Sea; and the likelihood of permanent environmental service degradation. It will also identify corrective intermediate steps or actions for the GEF or other actors.

The evaluation is likely to encounter constraints such as gaps in data and scientific knowledge and an inability to establish counterfactuals. The evaluation will use the model of the GEF international waters approach as a framework for organizing and analyzing information pertinent to the various projects under review. The analysis would begin by assessing the actual processes, steps, and results reached by projects and clusters of projects. It will also take into account nonlinear causality and feedback loops in the processes analyzed.

3.4 Products of the Evaluation

The work undertaken for this evaluation will lead to several products, including technical papers, databases, and case studies. Subsequent knowledge products will be further defined during the evaluation with stakeholder input. The main purpose of these products will be to make findings of the evaluation readily available to stakeholders in easy-to-use formats. They will also be posted on the GEF Evaluation Office website.

3.5 Stakeholder Involvement

The evaluation will draw on a technical advisory group, the GEF International Waters Task Force, and a reference group as vehicles for stakeholder input and evaluation support. All these groups have provided comments on the drafts of the approach paper and will do the same for the resulting evaluation report, will provide suggestions on ways in which the evaluation could be more useful to GEF operations, will help the evaluation team establish contact with appropriate project managers and relevant country counterparts, and will help identify and facilitate access to information.

The **technical advisory group** consists of six scientific and technical specialists with expertise in international waters and/or evaluation. The group also provides quality assurance and support on methodological, scientific, and technical issues. The **International Waters Task Force**—composed of international waters focal area coordinators from the 10 GEF Agencies, the GEF Secretariat, and the GEF Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel—will provide input into the selection of knowledge products and facilitate ongoing communication with the GEF Agencies on the evaluation. The **reference group** consists of about 25 people, including representatives from the GEF Secretariat and GEF Agencies, key staff involved in the execution of GEF projects in the South China Sea, and some non-GEF stakeholder institutions. In addition to the responsibilities it shares with the other adviser groups, the reference group will play an important role in following up on the evaluation.

3.6 Progress to Date

A draft approach paper for the evaluation was prepared, incorporating inputs from the technical advisory group and the GEF International Waters Task Force. The paper was shared with the reference group in a meeting held in Bangkok in September 2010. The feedback and comments received during this meeting are now being incorporated into the evaluation approach. The team has started gathering evaluative data in the field. The final evaluation report is expected to be available in April 2012 and will be presented to the GEF Council in the 2012 annual impact report.

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