

GEF  
THEMATIC  
EVALUATION

# Evaluation of GEF National Capacity Self-Assessments

## Evaluation Report





**Global Environment Facility  
Evaluation Office**

# **Evaluation of GEF National Capacity Self-Assessments**

**April 2012**

*(The main conclusions and recommendations of this evaluation were presented to the GEF Council at its November 2011 meeting.)*

Evaluation Report No. 70

© 2012 Global Environment Facility Evaluation Office  
1818 H Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20433  
Internet: [www.gefeo.org](http://www.gefeo.org)  
Email: [gefeo@thegef.org](mailto:gefeo@thegef.org)

All rights reserved.

The findings, interpretations, and conclusions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the GEF Council or the governments they represent.

The GEF Evaluation Office does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this work. The boundaries, colors, denominations, and other information shown on any map in this work do not imply any judgment on the part of the GEF concerning the legal status of any territory or the endorsement or acceptance of such boundaries.

### **Rights and Permissions**

The material in this work is copyrighted. Copying and/or transmitting portions or all of this work without permission may be a violation of applicable law. The GEF encourages dissemination of its work and will normally grant permission promptly.

ISBN-10: 1-933992-55-7

ISBN-13: 978-1-933992-55-6

### **Credits**

*Director of the GEF Evaluation Office:* Robert D. van den Berg

*Team Leader:* Claudio Volonté (until September 2011), Anna Viggh (after September 2011)

*Editing:* Carollyne Hutter and Nita Congress

*Design:* Nita Congress

*Cover photo:* Seeds of the Panama tree (*Sterculia apetala*), Nicaragua, by Anna Viggh, GEF Evaluation Office

Evaluation Report No. 70

A FREE PUBLICATION

# Contents

<b>Foreword</b> .....	<b>vii</b>
<b>Acknowledgments</b> .....	<b>ix</b>
<b>Abbreviations</b> .....	<b>x</b>
<b>1. Conclusions and Recommendations</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background .....	1
1.2 Conclusions.....	3
1.3 Recommendations to the GEF Council.....	10
<b>2. Evaluation Framework</b> .....	<b>11</b>
2.1 Background .....	11
2.2 Objectives and Scope .....	11
2.3 Methodology and Evaluation Process.....	12
2.4 Evaluation Limitations .....	14
<b>3. NCSA Overview</b> .....	<b>16</b>
3.1 Context.....	16
3.2 NCSA Principles .....	16
3.3 NCSA Approach .....	17
3.4 Key Definitions.....	20
3.5 NCSA Project Portfolio.....	20
3.6 Overview of Follow-up Projects .....	21
<b>4. NCSA Relevance</b> .....	<b>25</b>
4.1 Relevance to Implementation of the Rio Conventions .....	25
4.2 Relevance to the GEF Mandate .....	27
4.3 Relevance to GEF Agencies .....	28
4.4 Relevance to Recipient Countries.....	29
<b>5. NCSA Efficiency</b> .....	<b>32</b>
5.1 Management Approach.....	32
5.2 Stakeholder Involvement .....	36

<b>6. NCSA Results .....</b>	<b>37</b>
6.1 Policy Impacts.....	38
6.2 Summary of Assessments .....	40
6.3 Focal Area Assessment.....	41
6.4 Cross-Cutting Assessment .....	45
6.5 Long-Term Sustainability of Results .....	50
6.6 Follow-up Activities .....	52
<b>Annexes</b>	
A. Terms of Reference.....	55
B. Evaluation Matrix .....	64
C. Interviewees .....	68
D. Key Attributes of the NCSA Database.....	71
E. GEF Projects and Programs Reviewed .....	73
<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>Boxes</b>	
3.1 Synergies Embedded in the NCSA Process: Example from Latvia.....	17
4.1 Selected Observations from Country Visits on NCSA Relevance to GEF Mandate.....	28
4.2 Selected E-Survey Comments on NCSA Relevance to the Recipient Country .....	30
4.3 Selected E-Survey Comments on the Catalytic Role of NCSAs.....	30
5.1 NCSA Efficiency: Stakeholder Comments and Summary Based on Review of NCSA Final Reports and Action Plans .....	34
5.2 Summary of the Global Support Programme’s Final Evaluation.....	35
6.1 Selected Comments from Country Visits on NCSA Results .....	38
6.2 Selected E-Survey Comments on NCSA Achievements.....	38
6.3 Selected Stakeholder Comments on NCSA Sustainability.....	53
<b>Figures</b>	
3.1 The Five Steps to Conduct an NCSA.....	18
5.1 Implementation Time and Quality of Completed NCSAs .....	33
6.1 Number of Countries Identifying Each Thematic Area as a Priority Environmental Issue ...	42
6.2 Countries Identifying Priority Issues and Capacity Development Actions in Biodiversity ....	43
6.3 Countries Identifying Priority Issues and Capacity Development Actions in Climate Change.....	43
6.4 Countries Identifying Priority Issues and Capacity Development Actions in Water Resources.....	44
6.5 Countries Identifying Priority Issues and Capacity Development Actions in Land Degradation.....	45
6.6 Number of Countries Identifying Each Capacity Area as a Constraint.....	46
6.7 Countries’ Assessment of Constraints and Capacity Development Actions in Stakeholder Engagement.....	47
6.8 Countries’ Assessment of Constraints and Capacity Development Actions in Information Management and Knowledge .....	48
6.9 Countries’ Assessment of Constraints and Capacity Development Actions in Organizational Capacity.....	49

6.10	Countries' Assessment of Constraints and Capacity Development Actions in Environmental Governance .....	49
6.11	Countries' Assessment of Constraints and Capacity Development Actions in Monitoring and Evaluation.....	50
6.12	Summary of Cross-Cutting Capacity Development Actions .....	50
6.13	Capacity Area Constraints by Country Type .....	51
6.14	Capacity Area Development Actions by Country Type .....	51

## Tables

2.1	Key Evaluation Questions.....	12
3.1	GSP Regional and Subregional Workshops.....	19
3.2	CB2 Projects by Country and Status .....	22
4.1	NCSA Alignment with Convention Obligations Related to Capacity Development.....	26
6.1	E-survey Respondent Rankings of NCSA Effectiveness and Results.....	40





At the request of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Council, the GEF Evaluation Office conducted an evaluation of GEF support to national capacity self-assessments (NCSAs). The GEF Evaluation Office implemented the evaluation in full independence, with support from the GEF Secretariat, GEF Agencies, governments, and nongovernmental organizations. The evaluation provides evaluative evidence on progress toward NCSA objectives, as well as main achievements and lessons learned from the implementation of NCSAs one decade after they were established. The evaluation offers recommendations as input for developing a new GEF strategy on capacity development.

Since its inception in 1991, the GEF has supported capacity development in its programs and projects through targeted capacity development activities as well as enabling activities. The GEF provides support to capacity development in response to guidance from the Rio conventions. It recognizes that improving capacity is critical to meeting global environmental objectives. Under the Capacity Development Initiative, the GEF—in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Environment Programme—developed its strategic capacity development framework based on capacity development needs at the systemic, organizational, and individual levels. NCSAs represent one

component of this broader capacity development framework.

In May 2001, the GEF Council approved funding for all GEF-eligible countries to initiate a self-assessment of their capacity needs to address global environmental issues and to prepare a national capacity action plan. As of the end of 2010, the GEF had provided \$28.7 million for NCSAs in 153 of 165 eligible countries. To date, 119 countries have completed their NCSAs, and 23 have received about \$12 million in GEF support for follow-up cross-cutting capacity development projects aimed at implementing priority activities and measures identified in their respective NCSAs.

The team that conducted the NCSA evaluation was composed of GEF Evaluation Office staff and two consultants. It included assessments of NCSAs in three areas: relevance, efficiency, and results and their sustainability. The team collected corresponding data through stakeholder interviews, an e-survey, desk reviews of NCSAs and follow-up cross-cutting capacity development projects as well as regular GEF projects, and a meta-evaluation of previous evaluative evidence. Also, in-depth country visits were made to Croatia, Ecuador, India, Montenegro, Paraguay, Senegal, and Thailand.

The evaluation identified NCSAs as a central part of the GEF strategic framework for capacity development and as the first assessment of environmental capacity needs and capacity development priorities at the national level with a global reach. The evaluation found NCSAs to be highly relevant to national sustainable development agendas and to the capacity development strategies of GEF Agencies and multilateral environmental agreements. The evaluation identified room for improvement regarding the NCSA’s “one-size-fits-all” approach and the inclusiveness of participatory processes, as well as the incorporation of NCSA results in GEF and convention programming and strategies. Based on these conclusions, the evaluation recommends the integration of NCSA experiences and lessons learned in a new GEF strategic framework for capacity development, as well as the further use and dissemination of NCSA knowledge products.

The evaluation was carried out from February to October 2011; it was presented to the GEF Council in November 2011. On reviewing the

document and the management response from the GEF Secretariat and the GEF Agencies, the Council asked the GEF Secretariat to incorporate NCSA experiences and lessons learned in the programming approach for GEF-6 and to make NCSA knowledge products—including toolkits on how to conduct them—available to Agencies, GEF workshops such as National Dialogue Initiatives, and the GEF focal points.

The GEF Evaluation Office would like to thank all who collaborated with the evaluation: its staff and consultants, GEF and convention focal points, members of the national project teams, and GEF Agency staff. I would like to thank all those involved for their support and useful criticism. Final responsibility for this report remains firmly with this Office.



Rob D. van den Berg  
Director, GEF Evaluation Office

## Acknowledgments

This report was prepared by a team initially managed by Claudio Volonté, Chief Evaluation Officer at the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Evaluation Office, and later by Anna Viggh, Senior Evaluation Officer, when she took over as team leader for GEF Evaluation Office thematic evaluations. The evaluation team consisted of Jean-Joseph Belamy, Senior Consultant; Michael Murphy, Consultant; and Björn Conrad, Evaluation Analyst, GEF Evaluation Office. The Office thanks members of the GEF Secretariat and representatives of the GEF Agencies for their input and support, as well as national staff of the countries visited for their cooperation and assistance in collecting all relevant information.

National ministerial staff, GEF and convention focal points, GEF Agency staff, and members of the national teams that prepared and implemented national capacity self-assessments provided full cooperation and crucial logistical and organizational support during the country visits.

In particular, the Office acknowledges the following: Anja Amidzic, adviser at the Department for International Cooperation and Climate Change, Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism (Montenegro); Pablo Drouet, Ministry of Environment, GEF Operational Focal Point (Ecuador); Hem Kumar Pande, Ministry of Environment and Forests, GEF Operational Focal Point (India); Gordana Ruclic, Ministry of Environmental Protection, GEF Operational Focal Point (Croatia); Ndiaye Cheikh Sylla, Ministry of Environment, GEF Operational and Political Focal Point (Senegal); Gilda Torres, Secretariat of Environment and GEF Operational Focal Point (Paraguay); and Chote Trachu, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, GEF Operational Focal Point (Thailand).

A draft report of the evaluation was presented at a workshop on September 21, 2011, to stakeholders. The feedback received was highly constructive, and comments have been incorporated into this evaluation report.

## Abbreviations

---

CB2	Cross-Cutting Capacity Development Projects	NGO	nongovernmental organization
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity	NPFE	national portfolio formulation exercise
CCCD	cross-cutting capacity development	POP	persistent organic pollutant
CDI	Capacity Development Initiative	SIDS	small island developing states
CEO	chief executive officer	TOR	terms of reference
COP	conference of the parties	UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
GEF	Global Environment Facility	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
GSP	Global Support Programme	UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
LDC	least developed country	UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
MEA	multilateral environmental agreement		
NCSA	national capacity self-assessment		

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

# 1. Conclusions and Recommendations

## 1.1 Background

Since its inception in 1991, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) has supported capacity development in regular GEF programs and projects—both targeted capacity development activities and enabling activities. The GEF provides support to capacity development in response to guidance from the three Rio conventions. It recognizes that improving capacity is critical to meeting global environmental objectives. Under the Capacity Development Initiative (CDI), the GEF—in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)—developed its strategic capacity development framework. This resulted in the GEF Council’s adoption of two major policy documents to guide a more focused approach to capacity development:<sup>1</sup>

- “Elements of Strategic Collaboration and a Framework for GEF Action for Capacity Building for the Global Environment” (GEF Council 2001)
- “Strategic Approach to Enhance Capacity Building” (GEF Council 2003)

---

<sup>1</sup> The term “capacity development” is used throughout this document in the sense of capacity building, which was the term initially used to describe the development of capacity.

In a May 2001 decision, the Council made the National Capacity Self-Assessment (NCSA) initiative available to all GEF-eligible countries. The NCSA is part of the GEF’s broader capacity development framework, which includes four pathways:

- Pathway #1 focuses on a self-assessment of capacity needs.
- Pathway #2 is the program of critical capacity development activities for least developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing states (SIDS).
- Pathway #3 concerns targeted capacity development projects.
- Pathway #4 entails enhanced attention to capacity development components in regular projects.

The innovative NCSA approach allowed a GEF recipient country to assess its own capacity needs to implement the Rio conventions and develop an overarching action plan to maximize synergies and address global environmental issues.

In May 2010, the GEF Council approved the “Summary of Negotiations—Fifth Replenishment of the GEF Trust Fund” (GEF Secretariat and World Bank 2010). The Council decision includes a request that NCSAs implemented under GEF-4

(2006–10) be evaluated in order to prepare a new capacity development strategy for discussion at the GEF Council meeting in 2011. The GEF Secretariat, in consultation with the GEF Agencies, was tasked to prepare this new strategy, which would include results and recommendations of the evaluation.

## Evaluation Approach

A team composed of Evaluation Office staff, a senior consultant, and two research assistants conducted the evaluation between February and October 2011. The main findings and recommendations were presented to the GEF Council at its November 2011 meeting.

This evaluation aims to provide the GEF Council and other GEF stakeholders with lessons, experiences, and recommendations based on NCSA implementation. The evaluation focused on NCSA relevance, efficiency, and results and their sustainability. The key issues addressed include the following:

- NCSA relevance to the GEF mandate, multinational and regional environmental agreements, Rio conventions working with the GEF, and national sustainable development and environmental priorities
- NCSA efficiency during implementation and preparation of the final report and action plan
- NCSA achievements, both individually and at aggregate levels

The evaluation included an assessment of all approved NCSAs, the Global Support Programme (GSP), and follow-up capacity development projects. It took into account the level of project implementation and existing assessments, as well as the reviews and evaluations conducted on any of the modalities. Key resources included the findings

and recommendations of the *National Capacity Self-Assessments: Results and Lessons Learned for Global Environmental Sustainability* (Bellamy and Hill 2010b) and the recently completed GSP evaluation (Baastel 2010).

The GEF evaluation established the context of NCSAs within the GEF through a review of capacity development in GEF-supported projects and programs. National capacity development projects not supported by GEF funding, such as enabling activities and others reporting to the Rio conventions, were also taken into account. Activities included a meta-evaluation of GEF Evaluation Office evaluations and relevant documents from the GEF Agency evaluation offices on capacity development in general and NCSAs in particular.

The evaluation team collected data and information from the following: stakeholder interviews; an online survey (e-survey); a review of NCSA final reports and action plans, and follow-up capacity development projects; teleconferences with GEF focal points, convention focal points, and NCSA country teams; and visits to seven countries. The team conducted interviews at several stages of the evaluation process to cross-check and validate available documentation and triangulate the initial findings.

Preliminary findings were presented at a consultation workshop in September 2011, with key stakeholders providing feedback on possible factual errors and analysis. The comments were reviewed and incorporated in the final report as appropriate.

This chapter presents the main conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation. The following chapters and annexes provide the evaluative evidence to support these conclusions and recommendations.

## Evaluation Limitations

The evaluation team encountered a number of limitations during evaluation preparation and implementation:

- Loss of institutional memory in countries that completed their NCSA at the program's outset
- Narrow time frame to meet all information-gathering objectives
- Low response rate to e-survey due to stakeholder availability
- Lack of a clear follow-up strategy affecting the availability and continuity of engaged stakeholders

## NCSA Portfolio Description

A NCSA's primary objective is to identify country-level priorities and the capacities needed to address global environmental issues (with a focus on biodiversity, climate change, and land degradation). Since 2002, the GEF has provided \$28.7 million for 153 NCSAs. Each country has received a \$0.2 million grant to conduct its own self-assessment.

The GEF Council approved operational guidelines and guiding principles for NCSA implementation. The guidelines specified that NCSAs must be country driven, led by national institutions and national experts to the extent feasible, and respond to national situations and priorities. The GEF provided NCSA country teams with the set of guiding principles.

The GSP was launched in early 2005 to provide technical assistance to countries undertaking an NCSA. GSP services included development and dissemination of assessment tools, guidance documents, and resource materials; regional training workshops on assessment approaches and tools;

information and knowledge management through outreach, websites, databases, and electronic listservs; and reviews and analyses of NCSA outputs, particularly action plans and final reports.

The GSP disseminated an NCSA resource kit (GEF GSP 2005), which outlined the basic steps to be followed by each NCSA country team and documented in separate reports. The steps included inception, stocktaking, thematic assessments, cross-cutting analysis, and the preparation of a final report and a capacity development action plan.

As of June 30, 2011, 133 NCSAs had been completed, 13 were still under implementation or in the final stages, 6 had been canceled, and 1 had not been approved. Of the 146 completed and nearly completed NCSAs, 76 percent were implemented through UNDP, 23 percent through UNEP, and less than 1 percent through the World Bank.

## 1.2 Conclusions

### Relevance

**Conclusion 1: The NCSA initiative was a central part of the GEF strategic framework for capacity development.**

Following a GEF Council decision of May 2001, NCSAs were made available to GEF-eligible countries "to initiate processes so that the self assessment of capacity building needs and priorities (Pathway A1) [later Pathway #1] and targeted capacity building projects (Pathway A3) [later Pathway #3] can begin immediately in countries that request assistance for them" (GEF Council 2001). The decision extended the strategic partnership between the GEF Secretariat and UNDP under the CDI to better define methodologies and delivery modalities for capacity development through all four pathways. At the time, NCSAs



represented an innovative approach for GEF recipient countries to assess their capacity development needs with regard to their obligations under the Rio conventions and to prepare a corresponding capacity development assistance program to maximize synergies.

After reviewing the “Strategic Approach to Enhance Capacity Building,” the GEF Council approved a consolidated approach for capacity development and requested that the GEF Secretariat, in collaboration with the Agencies and the GEF Evaluation Office (then the GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Unit), fully operationalize this approach. This included development of the following:

- Indicators and targets to measure the results and impacts of capacity development activities
- Operational modalities and project criteria, including the enhancement of capacity development components within GEF projects and country capacity development programs for LDCs and SIDS
- Proposals for a technical support program, such as the GSP, for Council consideration

The NCSA initiative has been relevant since its inception. It has been a keystone for implementation of the GEF strategic framework for capacity development and provided resources to recipient countries to conduct self-assessments. NCSA results and lessons learned have provided direct feedback for the development of the GEF-5 (2010–14) Cross-Cutting Capacity Development (CCCD) Strategy and its objectives. However, NCSA relevance to GEF activities is diminishing. NCSAs were not followed up with adequate investments to address capacity development priorities, nor have NCSA outcomes been taken into account in developing GEF focal area projects.

## **Conclusion 2: The NCSA initiative was highly relevant to national sustainable development agendas and the capacity development strategies of the GEF Agencies and multilateral environmental agreements.**

---

NCSA’s cross-cutting and self-assessment guidance, combined with the search for synergies in implementation of the Rio conventions, provided a new and unique framework that responded to stakeholder needs. In many countries, the NCSA process resulted in a broad range of stakeholders meeting together for the first time, priorities determined through participatory processes, and discussions focused on improving national coordination. However, the uptake of results varied from country to country and depended on the timing of the self-assessments. In India, the NCSA process was carried out after developing national strategies; as a result, the findings were of limited use. In Belize and Paraguay, on the other hand, more relevant timing enabled stakeholders to use NCSA results to establish strategies and programs.

A review of 23 follow-up cross-cutting capacity development projects (CB2) conducted in 2010 confirmed NCSA relevance to the sustainable development agendas of recipient countries. The NCSA process identified institutional bottlenecks to synergistic implementation of the Rio conventions. As follow-ups to NCSAs, the CB2 projects provided resources for reducing, if not eliminating, these bottlenecks.

NCSAs have been relevant to UNDP and UNEP. Both Agencies were involved in the CDI as part of their respective strategies to produce a comprehensive capacity development approach to help developing countries meet the challenges of global environmental action.

UNDP emphasizes an integrated approach in its operation and invested a significant amount of



time in NCSAs. It increasingly focused on cross-sectoral approaches such as the recently developed UNDP effort to support governments in developing low-emission climate-resilient development strategies. This approach was designed to build upon existing strategies and development plans, including country-driven integrated assessments that use an approach similar to the NCSA methodology.

For UNEP, the NCSA initiative was a practical response to the development of national capacities related to implementation of the Rio conventions. Its timing corresponded to the development of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building. This plan, which was approved by the UNEP Governing Council in 2005, aimed to strengthen the environmental management capacity of developing countries and economies in transition.

The GEF evaluation indicates that NCSAs were well aligned with capacity development obligations to the conventions as reflected in the implementation guidance approved by the parties to the conventions. The conferences of the parties (COPs) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) have asked the GEF to provide funding for country-driven capacity development activities, in particular for LDCs and SIDS. Both the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) highlight the need for capacity development to help countries meet their commitments under the respective conventions. However, only the UNCCD's strategic plan recognizes NCSAs and encourages their use whenever possible.

NCSAs have not been used to their full potential, despite obvious potential synergies with conven-

tion processes. They contain relevant information for the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), particularly regarding synergies and cross-cutting analyses, but the conventions have not requested them. As a result, there has been little uptake of NCSA results through convention implementation.

### NCSA Efficiency

**Conclusion 3: A “one-size-fits-all” approach is not the most efficient way to assess global environmental capacity needs at the national level.**

All recipient countries requesting an NCSA received an approximately equal amount of \$0.2 million to conduct the self-assessment. Providing an equal-sized grant to all countries may not have been the best approach. Among the countries reviewed, smaller countries such as Belize and the Seychelles were the most successful in using the NCSA grant effectively. Larger countries such as India had more difficulty in applying the comparably small grant effectively.

The one-size-fits-all approach did not take into account the wide range of abilities to implement and benefit from such a program. Differences in size, population, political context, legislation, policies, economy, timing, level of development, and global environmental significance affected the effectiveness and efficiency with which countries used their NCSA grant. In addition, smaller grants tend to have relatively higher transaction costs, which make them less attractive to some countries.

The average duration for NCSA projects was about 32 months from the date of GEF Agency approval to the date the final report was released, with an implementation period ranging from 6 to 83 months. On average, the GEF Chief Executive Officer (CEO) approved the NCSA projects eight

months before the Agency approval date.<sup>2</sup> NCSAs implemented through UNDP took an average of 31 months; those implemented through UNEP averaged 37 months. No correlation exists between the quality of final reports and the length of project implementation (Bellamy and Hill 2010b). Data analysis indicates that most NCSAs take between 20 and 40 months to complete, with a resultant quality score ranging from 2 to 5, with 5 being the highest.

Three GEF Agencies implemented the NCSAs: UNDP (76.0 percent), UNEP (23.3 percent), and the World Bank (0.7 percent). Recipient countries executed NCSAs through UNDP's nationally executed modality and UNEP's direct legal agreements. Both modalities followed United Nations rules and regulations. GEF focal point offices—mostly ministries of environment—executed more than 60 percent of NCSA projects.

#### **Conclusion 4: The Global Support Programme improved NCSA implementation.**

In 2004, the GEF Council approved the GSP and established it in 2005 as a joint facility of UNDP and UNEP. Initially intended as a three-year program, the GSP was extended to five years. The final program evaluation for the GSP found that it was clearly needed and relevant. The GSP was effective in providing technical support and guidance materials for NCSA implementation, backstopping NCSA country teams, analyzing lessons learned, and developing programming frameworks for the systematic implementation of cross-cutting capacity development priorities.

However, stakeholders indicated that the NCSA resource kit (GEF GSP 2005) provided too many

---

<sup>2</sup> This date is also referred to as the “project document date.”

options and could have been more “prescriptive.” The final evaluation also found that the demand for technical guidance has continued. It remains to be seen whether countries will be able to implement their NCSA recommendations and action plans without technical support, such as the GSP provided.

#### **Conclusion 5: A broad range of stakeholders participated in the NCSA process, but the participatory process could have been more inclusive.**

A key NCSA principle was to “ensure multistakeholder participation, consultation, and decision-making” (GEF GSP 2005). Stakeholder engagement was recognized as one of four strategies for conducting a successful NCSA. The resource kit provided extensive guidance, including stakeholder involvement tools; it defined a stakeholder as “anyone who is affected by, has an interest in, and/or should be involved in an initiative” (GEF GSP 2005).

Most NCSAs succeeded in engaging a broad array of stakeholders. In many countries, the consultation process allowed stakeholders to meet for the first time. Often, those meetings provided an opportunity to recognize the need for national cross-sectoral coordination of efforts to implement the Rio conventions. These aspects were highlighted during country visits, teleconferences, and interviews.

However, some stakeholders interviewed apparently did not see the value of the process and were skeptical of the lack of any clear follow-up to NCSA action plans. Results from the e-survey also indicate a sharp contrast between the involvement of government representatives, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and community-based organizations. When asked to rate stakeholder

participation, 76 percent of government representatives were either satisfied or highly satisfied, but only 34 percent of NGOs and community-based organizations indicated similar levels of satisfaction: two-thirds of the representatives of NGOs and community-based organizations said that the participatory process could have been more inclusive. The findings indicate that more was needed to engage civil society, especially given that stakeholder engagement was recognized as critical to NCSA success.

## NCSA Results

### **Conclusion 6: The NCSA initiative is the first assessment of national environmental capacity needs and priorities with a global reach.**

The NCSA initiative primarily sought to identify and help countries prioritize the national capacities necessary to meet broader environmental goals. The process helped countries understand what needs to be done to improve their environmental management frameworks.

The NCSA process was the first assessment of national environmental capacity needs and priorities made available to all GEF recipient countries. It was a logical follow-up to regional and global assessments conducted under the CDI. Participating countries undertook two distinct assessments: an assessment by focal area of strengths and constraints regarding national implementation of the Rio conventions; and a cross-cutting assessment of strengths and capacity gaps at the individual, organizational, and systemic levels in meeting focal area objectives.

Based on guidelines in the NCSA resource kit, each country provided the following:

- A stocktaking report identifying all national activities and documents relevant to the con-

vention themes, as well as core national environmental priorities

- Three thematic assessments summarizing the country's obligations and opportunities in the context of each MEA, and the country's performance and achievements
- An analysis summarizing capacity issues, needs, opportunities, and prioritized needs cutting across the conventions
- A final report and action plan for developing capacities to meet global and national environmental objectives

To assess the NCSA results globally, the evaluation team reviewed an initial analysis conducted in 2010 (Bellamy and Hill 2010b) and updated the data set to include recently completed NCSAs. Although there were slight changes in averages and percentages, no major differences were identified between the two analyses. The data trends were similar, and the key results are presented in the following conclusions.

### **Conclusion 7: Globally, the top cross-cutting capacity development needs are public awareness and environmental education; information collection, management, and exchange; and the development and enforcement of policy, legal, and regulatory frameworks.**

The cross-cutting analyses conducted by the Office assessed capacity issues, needs, and opportunities across the conventions and identified possible synergies that could be achieved by addressing two or more themes. These analyses also identified capacity needs common to both national and global environmental management, including possible synergies. The result was a list of priority capacity needs and actions.

A review of these cross-cutting assessments was conducted using a typology of 17 capacity areas

grouped into five main types. Following are highlights of the review:

- Forty-six countries identified stakeholder engagement as a constraint because of limited capacity, skills, and motivation to involve stakeholders in policy and program formulation and implementation.
- Sixty-nine countries cited information and knowledge management as a constraint. The greatest challenges were collecting, managing, and exchanging information, as well as raising public awareness and providing environmental education.
- Fifty-three countries identified the capacity of environmental organizations as a constraint. Economic instruments, sustainable financing mechanisms, and organizational mandates were listed as top challenges.
- Sixty-one countries flagged capacity for environmental governance as a top priority. The need to develop and enforce policy and legislative frameworks as well as the lack of cross-sectoral coordination were identified as top constraints.
- Sixty-two countries identified monitoring and evaluation limitations as a constraint.
- Fewer than 30 countries identified COP negotiations, international project management, and integrated ecosystem management as constraints.
- On average, only six countries identified any of the 17 capacity areas as a strength.
- Eighteen countries identified the capacity to incorporate convention obligations into national frameworks as a strength.

Even though some did not identify a specific area as a constraint, many countries still indicated a need for capacity development under their action plans. For example, 56 countries identified stakeholder engagement as a capacity development

action, even though only 46 countries identified it as a constraint. Similarly, 111 countries recommended capacity development in public awareness and environmental education, yet only 74 identified it as a constraint.

### **Conclusion 8: Globally, the top thematic capacity development need is in the biodiversity focal area.**

---

NCSA thematic assessments analyzed a country's obligations and opportunities with regard to each MEA, and listed their corresponding performance and achievements to date. The result was an overall assessment of each country's status vis-à-vis the MEAs, including their environmental priorities, capacity development needs, and action plans.

A review of these thematic assessments was conducted using four focal areas—biodiversity, climate change, freshwater-coastal ecosystems, and land degradation—subdivided into 23 thematic areas. The following are the results when the data are reviewed by focal area:

- Biodiversity conservation was identified as the highest priority by 103 countries, 99 listed it as having the most capacity development needs, and 81 indicated that capacity development actions were required.
- Eighty countries ranked climate change vulnerability as their top priority.
- Seventy-four countries cited land use and deforestation as their most important issues.
- Relatively few countries flagged wetlands conservation, rangeland management, soil contamination, unsustainable fisheries, and sea-level rise as key issues.
- Most issues identified as high priority were also recommended for capacity development actions.

### **Conclusion 9: Twenty-three follow-up projects are addressing capacity development constraints identified by NCSAs.**

---

Of the 133 NCSAs completed since 2002, 23 have each received a \$0.5 million follow-up grant during GEF-4 to implement priorities identified in the action plans.<sup>3</sup> Most of these CB2 projects are expected to be completed in 2012.

CB2 projects provide resources for reducing or eliminating bottlenecks that hamper synergistic implementation of the Rio conventions. The expected outcomes include strengthening multi-sectoral processes that promote policy harmonization, achieving cost efficiencies, and enhancing the operational effectiveness of convention implementation. CB2 projects focus on environmental governance and the mainstreaming of global environmental issues in national development programs. A typology of these CB2 projects indicates interventions in four programmatic areas:

- Developing institutional and individual capacity (nine projects)
- Mainstreaming global environmental priorities into national policies and programs (eight projects)
- Strengthening policy and program formulation (three projects)
- Strengthening financial and economic instruments (three projects)

Under GEF-5, a new CCCD strategy was developed and has received an allocation of \$44 million. To access these funds, countries must select a multifocal priority based on the NCSA prioritization process and key objectives. In cases where an

---

<sup>3</sup> An additional two capacity development projects were recently approved in Moldova and Montenegro.

NCSA was not conducted or the proposed CCCD project addresses other priorities, countries must justify the proposed projects.

### **Conclusion 10: The GEF and the Rio conventions did not take full advantage of the information and methodology produced by the NCSA initiative.**

---

The GEF evaluation indicates that GEF programming and focal area strategies have not taken full advantage of the information and knowledge generated by NCSAs. A similar assessment was made for the MEAs. For instance, CBD COP 10 asked the GEF to provide support to eligible parties to revise their national biodiversity strategy and action plans. Guidance to revise these plans calls for the development of capacity development plans. However, NCSA's thematic assessments, cross-cutting analyses, and final reports are not mentioned, even though they are highly relevant, and capacity development is a recurring theme in GEF-supported projects, as well as in COP decisions.

NCSA long-term impacts will be measured by whether these assessments and action plans are used to support larger strategies and programs, particularly at the country level. The lack of linkages with other initiatives limits the use of NCSA information. An NCSA is not required by any COP guidance or by GEF focal area projects. At the operational level, NCSAs are not included in the guidelines to develop a project information form or project document. Moreover, NCSAs are not part of focal area tracking tools, and capacity development is not included in project approval reviews.

However, NCSAs have recently been added to the guidelines for developing a national portfolio formulation exercise (NPFE) and are now systematically reviewed in country portfolio evaluations where available. A review of the first 15 NPFEs



submitted for GEF funding found that only one explicitly referred to NCSAs, even though most of the documents discussed the need to develop capacity as a foundation for the long-term sustainability of GEF-funded activities.

At the country level, NCSA methods, toolkits, and information have at times been replicated or scaled up. The evaluation found that several countries went further in developing stakeholder engagement strategies, adopting national coordination mechanisms, and making final NCSA reports part of high-level national environmental priorities. However, the evaluation found little indication that NCSA information was used to implement MEAs, including the formulation of national communications or the development of national action plans and national adaptation programs of action.

### 1.3 Recommendations to the GEF Council

Although the GEF Council approved, and the GEF is now implementing, the CCCD, funding pledges for the CCCD have come under increasing pressure as a result of the financial crisis. Most GEF-eligible countries have completed their NCSAs and identified their capacity development priorities. A number of these priorities are being addressed through follow-up projects or other activities funded by the GEF, other donors, and the recipient countries themselves. However, given its \$28.7 million investment in NCSAs, the GEF is seeking to ensure a broader use of NCSA tools, methodologies, and knowledge.

**Recommendation 1: As GEF-5 strategies were approved and are now under implementation, NCSA experiences and lessons learned should be incorporated in a new GEF strategic framework for capacity development for GEF-6.**

The “Second Progress Report on the Implementation of the GEF Strategic Approach to Capacity Development” (GEF Council 2008) confirms that progress in capacity development has been significant. The majority of GEF-eligible countries have completed self-assessments. The GEF-5 replenishment agreement indicates that other pathways are also progressing. However, given the shifting global context and evolving national priorities, the strategic approach for GEF-6 (2014–18) needs to be reviewed and updated. The goal is to ensure that future GEF-funded capacity development interventions build on past efforts and accurately reflect the current needs of recipient countries and the convention secretariats.

**Recommendation 2: NCSA knowledge products should be made available to the GEF Agencies and disseminated at GEF workshops, such as the National Dialogue Initiatives.**

The information resulting from the NCSA initiative is already being used for targeted cross-cutting capacity development projects. It is recommended that the GEF Secretariat and the GEF Evaluation Office disseminate this knowledge more broadly through the new GEF knowledge management strategy.

Knowledge platforms and communities of practice can create an interface that matches demand and supply. This approach uses interactive websites and electronic forums to create demand-oriented flows of information and knowledge, rather than a top-down system in which tools and knowledge products are provided to Agencies and countries. The Evaluation Office is available to explore this strategy in collaboration with the GEF Secretariat. The GEF Council will be apprised of progress as part of the report on implementation of the knowledge management strategy.

## 2. Evaluation Framework

### 2.1 Background

The GEF has supported capacity development since its inception at all levels, within regular GEF programs and projects, through specific activities targeted specifically at capacity development and enabling activities. The driving factors for GEF support of capacity development include guidance from conventions requesting this support and a recognition that improving capacities is critical to meeting global environmental objectives. As part of these efforts, the GEF Council approved the CDI as a strategic partnership between the GEF Secretariat and UNDP in 1999. The CDI focuses on a comprehensive approach to developing country capacities to meet the challenges of global environmental action. It provides the necessary consultative and substantive foundation for developing strategic collaboration and a specific framework for GEF activities to respond to the Rio conventions' growing attention to capacity development.

Based on preliminary NCSA findings during GEF-4, the GEF Secretariat and the GEF Agencies finalized a CCCD strategy, whose objectives include

- enhancing stakeholder engagement throughout consultative processes;<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Note that this objective does not pertain to NCSA follow-up, but rather to national multistakeholder dia-

- generating, accessing, and using information and knowledge;
- strengthening capacity to develop policy and legislative frameworks;
- strengthening capacity to implement and manage global convention guidelines; and
- enhancing capacity to monitor and evaluate environmental impacts and trends

Countries are required to complete an NCSA before becoming eligible to submit a CCCD proposal for GEF funding. When no NCSA has been conducted or a CCCD project addresses priorities outside the NCSA action plan, countries must prejustify project approval.

### 2.2 Objectives and Scope

The evaluation's objective was to provide the GEF Council and other GEF stakeholders with lessons, experiences, and recommendations drawn from NCSA implementation experiences. The evaluation focused on NCSA relevance, efficiency, and results and their sustainability (table 2.1). The evaluation framework was based on the theory and key principles underpinning the development

logues formerly conducted under the National Dialogue Initiative and now being implemented by the GEF Secretariat and the GEF Small Grants Programme.

**Table 2.1**

**Key Evaluation Questions**

Relevance	Efficiency	Results and sustainability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Were NCSA processes relevant to the conventions?</li> <li>• What was the NCSA's relevance to GEF and Agency mandates?</li> <li>• What was its relevance to national sustainability agendas?</li> <li>• Did synergies exist between convention focal points?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was the overall NCSA process efficient?</li> <li>• Was the preparation of the final NCSA report efficient?</li> <li>• Was NCSA support channeled efficiently?</li> <li>• Did NCSAs use GSP support and tools?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Were NCSA action plans approved at the national level?</li> <li>• What follow-up activities were developed?</li> <li>• Have there been additional proposals to the GEF to finance capacity development activities?</li> <li>• Have NCSAs contributed to developing national capacities to meet Rio convention responsibilities?</li> <li>• Have NCSAs played a catalytic role?</li> <li>• Are there synergies between NCSAs and other GEF projects?</li> <li>• What are the long-term results and sustainability of NCSAs?</li> </ul>

of the NCSA initiative, as well as its objectives and expected results. An evaluation matrix was developed at the outset and is part of the terms of reference (TOR) for the evaluation (see annexes A and B).

In addition to assessing all approved and completed NCSAs, the evaluation included assessments of the prevalence of capacity development in previous GEF evaluations and across all GEF projects and follow-up projects. The evaluation took into account available project information, existing assessments, and reviews and evaluations conducted on these modalities. Both the NCSA synthesis report—*National Capacity Self-Assessments: Results and Lessons Learned for Global Environmental Sustainability* (Bellamy and Hill 2010b)—and the findings and recommendations of the GSP final evaluation (Baastel 2010) were key resources. The evaluation also conducted a partial assessment of the relevance and efficiency of those NCSAs still under implementation, and a limited assessment of the relevance of follow-up projects.

The evaluation used the term “NCSA” to refer to the grant and project implementation processes

leading to formulation of the final reports as well as to the final reports and action plans themselves. The NCSA approach was structured to include a consultative process for in-depth assessments of capacity challenges to meet Rio convention objectives.

**2.3 Methodology and Evaluation Process**

A team consisting of GEF Evaluation Office staff, a senior consultant, and two research assistants conducted the evaluation, which took place between February and October 2011. The team presented the main findings and recommendations to the GEF Council as part of the Annual Thematic Evaluation Report in November 2011. The methodology is available in annex A; the Annual Thematic Evaluation Report is available on the GEF Evaluation Office website.

The evaluation conducted several tasks:

- **Evaluation design.** The design included consultant selection, consultations with key stakeholders on issues to be included in the evaluation, the TOR, updating of the project



databases, and development of protocols for project and document reviews, as well as interviews.

- **Evaluation context.** The evaluation team established the NCSA context through reviews of capacity development activities across GEF projects, country-level capacity development activities, and needs assessments related to the Rio conventions and a meta-evaluation of GEF evaluations, as well as evaluations from GEF Agencies. In addition, the team reviewed the NCSA synthesis report (Bellamy and Hill 2010b).
- **Data collection.** Data were collected using a diverse set of tools.
  - The team conducted interviews with 35 stakeholders directly involved in NCSA design and implementation at the global (GEF Secretariat, UNDP, and UNEP) and country levels (national teams that prepared and implemented NCSAs). A list of interviewees is available in annex C.
  - The team sent e-surveys to approximately 1,300 email addresses between July and September 2011. About 105 respondents (10 percent) completed the questionnaire; another 135 submitted partial responses. Seventy-nine percent of the completed surveys were in English. By respondent group, 43 percent were from NGOs, community-based organizations, and indigenous groups; 20 percent were from GEF and convention focal points; 18 percent were from the GEF Agencies; and 11 percent were from other entities. The respondents' comments provided valuable and concrete data, suggestions, and recommendations regarding NCSA outcomes.
  - Building on the NCSA synthesis report, the team conducted desk reviews of selected

NCSAs to supplement the previous reviews of 119 NCSAs that were completed before July 2010. The reviews of the 14 additional NCSAs used UNDP methodology to collect information on relevance, efficiency, results, and sustainability. The reviews focused on whether the NCSAs generated information on key focal areas; negotiation and stakeholder engagement capacities; individual stakeholder skills and motivation; mainstreaming efforts; monitoring and evaluation; technology development and transfer; economic instruments; financing mechanisms; and information, policy, and legal frameworks. Each final report was rated according to the following criteria: clear identification of environmental issues and objectives, clarification of priority issues for each focal area and across focal areas, adequate analysis of identified and underlying capacity constraints, clear and succinct action plans, and connections between environmental objectives and actions.

- CB2 project reviews included an analysis of project objectives, updated financial data, and a time frame for each of the follow-up projects funded by GEF-4.

The team selected countries for country-level analysis on the basis of their completed, ongoing, and newly launched NCSAs, as well as synergies with visits by Evaluation Office staff. Also taken into account were country portfolio evaluations or other staff assessments over the past five years; the role of the GEF Agencies; and regional, social, and economic diversity.

Data collection at the country level was carried out using the following methods:

- **Meta-evaluation.** A desk review examined approximately 22 GEF evaluations, including

country portfolio evaluations, the *GEF Annual Performance Review 2007*, country case studies, process evaluations, and *OPS4: Progress Toward Impact—Fourth Overall Performance Study of the GEF*. The evaluation team summarized the analysis and overview of the collected information in an internal report.

- **NCSA database.** Information specific to each NCSA project was tracked across all countries, and the database was continually updated based on 15 key attributes. Details are available in annex D.
- **GEF project review.** The review assessed how capacity development was integrated into 60 focal area projects in 17 countries during NCSA implementation. The exercise provided insights into how project documents and focal area projects referenced capacity development, as well as the uses of NCSA results. Annex E lists the projects reviewed.
- **Teleconferences with GEF focal points and NCSA teams.** The evaluation selected approximately 10 countries in which to conduct interviews with country representatives involved in NCSA preparation and implementation.
- **Country visits.** Visits to Croatia, Ecuador, India, Montenegro, Paraguay, Senegal, and Thailand included extensive meetings with stakeholders and potential beneficiaries to collect data and verify expected outcomes and results. The country selection methodology began with a determination of appropriate criteria and the creation of a criteria matrix,<sup>2</sup> partially

---

<sup>2</sup> The initial criteria matrix included a row for each NCSA country and columns for relevant criteria, such as number of projects implemented through UNDP and UNEP, percentage of CB2 and/or CCCD projects, present involvement in the NPFE process, LDC/SIDS status, and System for Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR) allocations.

independent selections by senior and research consultants, collaboration and revisions of the two lists, country proposals to the GEF CEO, further modifications to include approximately 20 countries, concluding discussions, and final country selection. Because of travel logistics and scheduling difficulties, the evaluation team held teleconferences with countries in the Pacific region. Overall, country selection was representative across most regions, with the exception of the Caribbean and the Pacific.

- **Analysis.** The team analyzed and triangulated the data to identify common themes, trends, lessons, findings, and conclusions. In September 2011, an initial draft of the final evaluation report was discussed at a consultation workshop.

## 2.4 Evaluation Limitations

A number of limitations were encountered:

- **Loss of institutional memory.** In countries that completed their NCSA at the program's outset, many of the original participants had moved to other positions or could not be contacted. Thus, the evaluation team targeted countries in which stakeholders could be identified and country visits or interviews organized. For example, in Belize (which completed its NCSA in 2005), a key person was identified who, in turn, provided contact information for other participants.
- **Narrow time frame.** The original goals included visits to 8–10 countries and teleconferences with an additional 12 countries. Because of logistical challenges, the evaluation team was only able to visit seven countries, and just five responded to requests for a teleconference.
- **Low e-survey response.** The e-survey was particularly challenging because the bulk of the

evaluation work was done during the summer when many people were on leave. To address this challenge, the e-survey deadline was extended an additional month, and bimonthly reminders were sent to survey recipients who had not responded or who had only partially completed the survey. These additional steps increased the number of total responses.

- **Lack of follow-up.** Because there was no NCSA follow-up in many countries, stakeholders moved on or transitioned to other roles. This affected the rate at which stakeholders could be identified and interviews arranged.
- **Limited scope.** The evaluation's scope limited the ability to determine how extensively NCSAs are being used at the country level.

## 3. NCSA Overview

### 3.1 Context

In the late 1990s, the global conventions, the GEF, and the international community established capacity development as a priority. The World Summit on Sustainable Development and the Second GEF Assembly reaffirmed the importance of building the capacity of developing countries. In response, the GEF Secretariat, in consultation with the GEF Agencies, began developing a strategic framework to emphasize capacity development.

In May 1999, the GEF Council approved the CDI, an 18-month consultative process designed to prepare a comprehensive strategy and multiyear operational action plan. The CDI process included an assessment of a country's capacity development, a comprehensive strategy to meet identified needs, and an action plan for GEF-financed activities to contribute to this strategy.

In addition, the CDI distilled lessons learned from GEF-financed activities and the efforts of other multilateral and bilateral agencies. The GEF Agencies assessed their own portfolios, using a common approach, format, and parameters to facilitate statistical analysis. The review concluded that 94 percent of all GEF-supported projects included at least one capacity development component.

The CDI provided a platform to formulate a conceptual framework that identified capacity development needs at systemic, organizational, and individual levels. In 2000–01, a joint team of GEF Secretariat and UNDP staff, in consultation with the CDI Steering Committee, held a series of regional meetings and consultations with government officials. This process led to the drafting of the “Elements of Strategic Collaboration and a Framework for GEF Action for Capacity Building for the Global Environment” (GEF Council 2001), which the Council approved during its May 2001 session. The Council asked the GEF Secretariat to collaborate with the Agencies to initiate processes whereby countries could receive CEO approval of assistance to begin their NCSAs immediately. NCSA implementation began in 2001 and continues to this day. In 2003, the GEF Council approved a strategic framework for capacity development (GEF Council 2003), establishing the four pathways described in section 1.1.

### 3.2 NCSA Principles

Operational guidelines developed in 2001 specify that NCSAs must be country driven, undertaken by national institutions and national or regional experts to the extent feasible, and respond to national situations and priorities. Each country has considerable flexibility to choose specific

approaches, tasks, and tools. Based on these guidelines, the NCSA resource kit suggested countries undertake the following measures (GEF GSP 2005):

- Ensure that NCSAs are nationally owned and led, with high political commitment
- Use existing structures and mechanisms, such as national committees involved with MEAs or national environmental plans
- Build on past capacity development efforts, including GEF-supported enabling activities, national convention reports, and non-GEF initiatives
- Pay due attention to the provisions and decisions of the Rio conventions, especially regarding capacity development
- Ensure multistakeholder participation, consultation, and decision making
- Adopt a holistic approach that addresses capacity needs at the systemic, institutional, and individual levels, and integrates capacity development into wider sustainable development efforts
- Adopt a long-term approach as part of national and global sustainable development initiatives, including MEAs, Millennium Development Goals, and national development priorities, such as poverty alleviation, economic transition, and sectoral strategies
- Focus on cross-cutting issues, with the aim of strengthening synergies in implementing the conventions (box 3.1)
- Highlight capacity needs at the systemic level, which initiatives that focus on individual and institutional or organizational capacity often neglect

### Box 3.1

#### **Synergies Embedded in the NCSA Process: Example from Latvia**

NCSAs looked at different capacity constraints in relation to implementing the Rio conventions. In the case of the Latvian NCSA, this included an assessment of the responsibility of different ministries and agencies and the correlation between different themes of environmental and natural resource protection—which was not common in Latvia. While the three conventions to which Latvia is a signatory cover separate sectors of the environment, the NCSA was designed to maximize the cross-cutting aspects of capacity development and create synergies through the strategic use of limited resources. This resulted in the identification of overlapping tasks performed for the three conventions, which could then be consolidated to satisfy the respective requirements. Addressing issues that cut across more than one area was also a focus. For this reason, it is useful to consider the entire environmental and natural protection field in Latvian projects.

**Source:** Government of Latvia 2005.

## 3.3 NCSA Approach

NCSAs aim to identify country-level priorities and capacities, focusing on biological diversity, climate change, land degradation, and cross-cutting capacity development needs. They are intended to catalyze domestic or externally assisted action to meet those needs in a coordinated manner. NCSAs also explore linkages with broader environmental management and sustainable development concerns, such as POPs and biosafety (Bellamy and Hill 2010b).

In 2004, the GEF Council approved the GSP, a three-year facility funded with \$1.9 million from the GEF and \$1 million from other sources with the objective of providing technical assistance, monitor the progress of individual NCSAs, review

the results produced, and draw and disseminate lessons learned.<sup>1</sup> For this purpose, the GSP provided assessment tools, guidance and resource materials, training workshops, information and knowledge management, and review and analysis. The GSP's NCSA resource kit outlined the basic steps each NCSA country team was to follow; these steps are illustrated in figure 3.1.

The GSP convened 13 regional and subregional workshops between 2004 and 2009 to facilitate the sharing of experiences and catalyze the work of the NCSA country teams (table 3.1). The work-

<sup>1</sup> The GSP's cost-effective implementation allowed for a no-cost extension to mid-2011. This extension allowed countries that had not completed their NCSA to continue receiving technical support, including the organization of two additional subregional NCSA workshops in Nairobi, Kenya, and Nadi, Fiji, in late 2009.

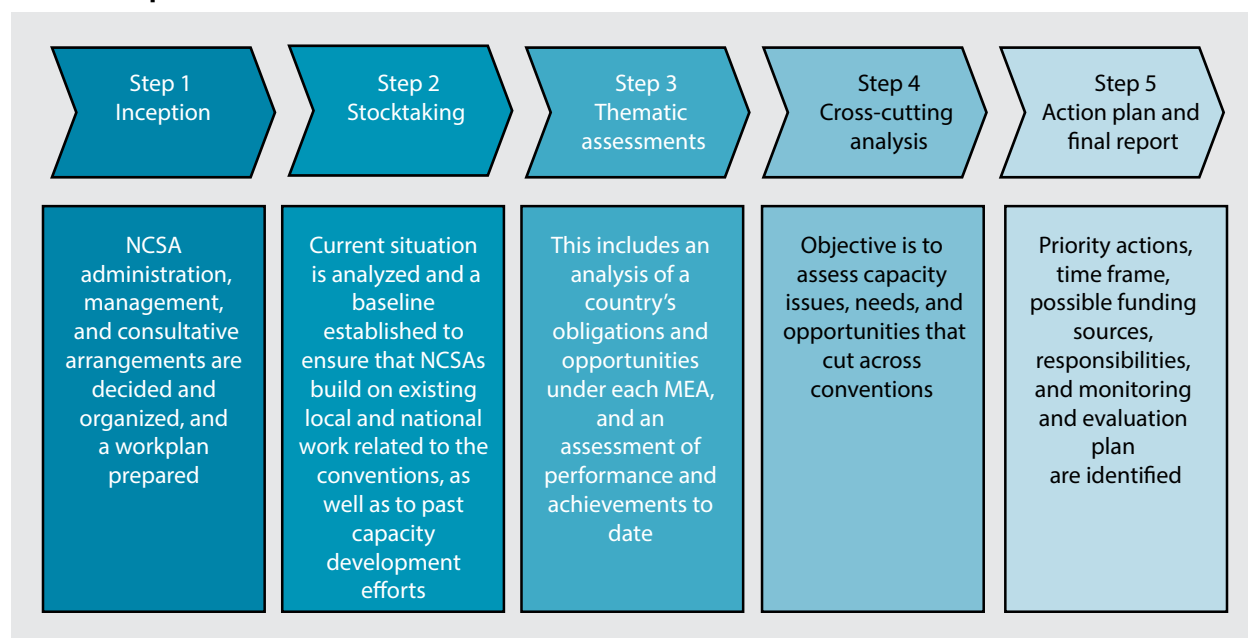
shops helped clarify the broader development context and demonstrate linkages with other capacity development initiatives, such as the joint European Commission–UNEP program for the strategic implementation of MEAs in Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific.

Each country preparing a NCSA produced six reports:

- **A stocktaking report.** This report identifies all national activities and documents relevant to the conventions, as well as core national environmental priorities, including laws, policies, plans, strategies, programs, project documents, past capacity assessments, and assessments of strengths and weaknesses identified in previous capacity development efforts.
- **Three thematic assessments.** These assessments summarize the analyses of the country's obligations and opportunities under each MEA,

**Figure 3.1**

**The Five Steps to Conduct an NCSA**



Source: Adapted from GEF GSP 2005.



**Table 3.1**

**GSP Regional and Subregional Workshops**

Location	Region/subregion	Date	No. of participants/ countries
Bratislava, Slovakia	Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States	September 14–15, 2004	—
Tunis, Tunisia	Middle East and North Africa	June 17–19, 2005	37/10
Kingston, Jamaica	Latin America and the Caribbean	June 28–July 1, 2005	—
Hanoi, Vietnam	Asia	October 26–28, 2005	36/8
Colombo, Sri Lanka	Asia	November 8–10, 2005	31/7
Nairobi, Kenya	East and Southern Africa	December 6–9, 2005	35/17
Dakar, Senegal	Central and West Africa	April 19–22, 2006	—
Apia, Samoa	Pacific	May 2–5, 2006	—
Rabat, Morocco	Middle East and North Africa	June 7–10, 2006	—
Santiago, Chile	Latin America and the Caribbean	September 26–29, 2006	—
Bangkok, Thailand	Asia	November 20–23, 2006	60/9
Nairobi, Kenya	Africa	November 4–6, 2009	20/14
Nadi, Fiji	Pacific	November 16–18, 2009	19/9

**Note:** — = not available.

and its performance and achievements to date, including country strengths and constraints in implementing the conventions as well as priority capacity needs.

- **An analysis report.** This report summarizes capacity issues, needs, opportunities, and priorities that cut across the conventions and are common to both global and national levels.
- **A final report and action plan.** This report outlines a strategy for developing capacities to meet global and national environmental objectives.

Additionally, the following elements were considered critical to carry out NCSAs effectively and ensure sustainable, longer term, and holistic capacity development to tackle environmental priority setting within the guidance of the conventions and a country’s own sustainable development frameworks:

- **National ownership and leadership.** In line with the Paris Declaration’s principle of country ownership, the process of preparing and implementing NCSA plans of action should ensure national ownership and leadership.
- **Convention decisions.** NCSAs should take into account the provisions and decisions from the CBD, the UNCCD, and the UNFCCC as they relate to capacity development.
- **Holistic approach.** NCSAs should adopt a holistic approach that addresses capacity needs at the systemic, institutional, and individual levels while integrating capacity development into wider sustainable development efforts.
- **Long-term approach.** NCSAs should adopt a long-term approach to capacity development, within the broader context of sustainable development.

### 3.4 Key Definitions

NCSAs are unique in their focus on cross-cutting capacity issues—that is, issues that cut across or are common to multiple conventions. Moreover, they identify ways to promote linkages among convention thematic areas and synergies in implementing the conventions. To clarify the meaning of related key terms, the NCSA resource kit provides the following definitions (GEF GSP 2005).

- **Linkages.** Linkages (sometimes also called interlinkages) across thematic areas form an important nexus and are addressed under multiple MEAs. For example, forest management and agriculture practices have implications for climate change, biodiversity, and land degradation. In addition, formal and informal mechanisms to coordinate integrated programs and activities are being conducted under several MEAs—for example, through convention reporting, research, and information bases.
- **Synergies.** Synergies result from coordinating or linking the implementation of two or more MEAs. They amplify the positive impacts and can generate multiple benefits to more than one convention from a single program or action.
- **Cross-cutting.** Cross-cutting issues are common to more than one convention. They may include capacity strengths, constraints, needs, and opportunities. In addition, if a cross-cutting capacity need is addressed, more than one convention will benefit.

Additional definitions used in the evaluation are found in Bellamy and Hill (2010a), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s Development Assistance Committee, UNDP, and UNEP:

- **Capacity.** “[T]he ability of people, organizations, and society as a whole to manage their

affairs successfully” (OECD/DAC 2006). Capacity can refer to individual abilities, attributes, or competencies that contribute to the performance of the overall system, as well as to the collective attributes, skills, abilities, and expertise of organizations and larger systems.

- **Capacity development.** “[T]he process whereby people, organizations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain capacity over time” (OECD/DAC 2006). UNDP defines capacity development as “the process through which individuals, organizations and societies obtain, strengthen and maintain the capabilities to set and achieve their own development objectives over time” (UNDP 2009). UNEP defines capacity development as “a holistic enterprise, encompassing a multitude of activities that include building abilities, relationships and values that will enable organizations, groups and individuals to improve their performance and achieve their development objectives” (UNEP 2002). These definitions acknowledge that capacity development to improve system performance includes the acquisition of individual skills and knowledge, strengthened enabling environments, and improved institutional structures, mechanisms, and procedures.

### 3.5 NCSA Project Portfolio

Nearly 93 percent of GEF-eligible countries received grants to implement NCSAs; 7 percent of GEF-eligible countries did not request NCSA funding. As of June 30, 2011,

- 133 NCSAs (87.0 percent) were completed and all reports received,
- 10 (6.5 percent) are being implemented,
- 3 (2.0 percent) are in draft stage,
- 6 (4.0 percent) were canceled, and
- 1 (0.7 percent) was not approved.



Data from the GEF Project Management Information System show that the time between Agency approval and final report completion averaged 32 months. The shortest duration was 6 months, and the longest was 83 months. On average, NCSAs implemented through UNDP took 31 months, and those implemented through UNEP took 37 months. One was implemented through the World Bank; it took 25 months.

Agencies and ministries identified as GEF focal points executed 63 percent of NCSAs. The other 37 percent were executed by other ministries and agencies, such as ministries of land development, planning, or housing.

### 3.6 Overview of Follow-up Projects

The GEF has provided \$12 million for follow-up CB2 (and two CCCD) projects in 23 countries aimed at implementing priorities identified by the NCSAs (table 3.2). The desk review of CB2 projects focused on their relevance to NCSA recommendations and action plans, and the efficiency with which they were processed. These projects seek to reduce or eliminate institutional bottlenecks hampering synergistic convention implementation. The expected outcomes include strengthening multisectoral processes that promote policy harmonization, cost-efficiency, and operational effectiveness in meeting convention obligations. The CB2 projects are organized under four programmatic frameworks (Bellamy and Hill 2010b):

- Strengthening policy, legislative, and regulatory frameworks and their enforcement

- Mainstreaming global environmental priorities into national policies and programs
- Improving national institutional structures and mechanisms to support the conventions
- Strengthening financial and economic instruments

The CCCD strategy is based on the results and lessons learned from the NCSA experience; it focuses on the environmental governance system and the mainstreaming of global environmental issues into national development programs. Its key objectives include the following:

- Enhancing stakeholder capacity to engage throughout the consultative process
- Generating, accessing, and using information and knowledge
- Strengthening capacity to develop policy and legislative frameworks
- Strengthening capacity to implement and manage convention guidelines
- Enhancing capacity to monitor and evaluate environmental impacts and trends

Under this strategy, a country selects a capacity development priority and uses the CCCD programming framework to develop a medium-size project. The strategy faces many obstacles. Its foundational document has not been updated since 2003, financing is limited, and no specific projects are planned to address Pathway #2 and Pathway #4. Additionally, GEF focal areas have not developed capacity development guidelines, even though all focal area projects include capacity development.

Table 3.2

## CB2 Projects by Country and Status

Country	CB2 project title and key objective	Category	Status	GEF funding (million \$)	Cofinancing (million \$)
Armenia	<b>Capacity development for optimization of information and monitoring systems:</b> The project will strengthen the national capacity for environmental information management in the country in order to improve the reporting process to the conventions as well as ensure national sustainable development through improved monitoring and information management for better environmental policy development.	A	Expected completion: 12/2011	0.500	0.130
Belize	<b>Strengthening institutional capacities for coordinating multisectoral environmental policies and programs:</b> This project will contribute to the implementation of Pathway #3 and responds to GEF strategic priorities with regard to stand-alone cross-cutting capacity development.	A	Expected completion: 9/2011	0.498	0.152
Bhutan	<b>Enhancing global environmental management in local governance systems</b>	A	Expected completion: 12/2011	0.500	0.222
Bulgaria	<b>Integrating global environmental issues into Bulgaria's regional development process:</b> The project strategy is to promote mainstreaming of global environmental issues into the very process of regional and local development, as well as spatial planning.	EM	Completed 4/2010	0.546	2.129
Egypt	<b>Mainstreaming global environment in national plans and policies:</b> Strengthen more effective monitoring activities to improve data management (including acquisition, processing, exchange, and utilization); to delineate the monitoring and reporting roles and responsibilities of different concerned entities; and to ensure financial sustainability for environmental monitoring, evaluation, and reporting.	A	Expected completion: 12/2011	0.500	0.812
Croatia	<b>Using common data flow system and indicators to enhance integrated management of global environmental issues</b>	EM	Expected completion: 12/2011	0.477	0.477
Gambia, the	<b>Adoption of ecosystems approach for integrated implementation of MEAs at national and divisional levels:</b> Strengthen the capacity to implement MEAs through the establishment of an institutional framework for global environmental management that integrates national and divisional responsibilities, and uses the ecosystem approach as the core principle of integration and capacity development.	EM	Completed 6/2010	0.493	0.168
Ghana	<b>Establishing an effective and sustainable structure for implementing multilateral environment agreements</b>	A	Completed 6/2011	0.430	0.080

*(continued)*

Table 3.2

**CB2 Projects by Country and Status** (continued)

Country	CB2 project title and key objective	Category	Status	GEF funding (million \$)	Cofinancing (million \$)
Jamaica	<b>Piloting natural resource valuation within environmental impact assessments:</b> This project will strengthen the implementation of environmental impact assessments, as well as contribute to the implementation of strategic environmental assessments, through the development and application of natural resource valuation tools.	FEI	Completed 6/2011	0.500	0.132
Jordan	<b>Bridging research and policy making:</b> The project is in line with the CB2 programming framework related to strengthening policy, legislative, and regulatory frameworks, including enforcement.	PF	Expected completion: 5/2013	0.500	0.500
Kenya	<b>Using enhanced regulatory and information systems for integrated implementation of MEAs:</b> The overall goal is to enhance Kenya's abilities to address global environmental issues related to land degradation, climate change, biodiversity conservation, and chemical management through effective, coordinated, and integrated implementation of the respective MEAs.	PF	Expected completion: 6/2012	0.488	0.277
Kyrgyzstan	<b>Capacity development for improved national financing of global environment:</b> This project contributes to the GEF's strategic priority to enhance capacity for global environmental management by leveraging financial and technical resources to address country needs for capacity to better manage global environmental issues.	FEI	Expected completion: 12/2011	0.445	0.220
Lao PDR	<b>Meeting the primary obligations of the Rio conventions through strengthened capacity to implement natural resource legislation:</b> Increase coordination and implementation of all MEAs.	PF	Expected completion: 7/2012	0.500	0.550
Morocco	<b>Mainstreaming global environment in Morocco's National Human Development Initiative:</b> The project's objective is to integrate the country's global environmental objectives into the National Human Development Initiative and local strategic development planning, budgeting, and monitoring processes.	EM	Expected completion: 4/2013	0.500	0.200
Moldova	<b>Strengthening environmental fiscal reform for national and global environment management</b>	FEI	Expected completion: 9/2013	0.500	0.475
Montenegro	<b>Capacity development for integration of global environment commitments in investment/development decisions</b>	EM	Expected completion: 6/2014	0.525	0.590
Namibia	<b>Developing capacities to implement the MEAs:</b> The goal of the project is to integrate global environmental objectives in national development programs and projects.	A	Expected completion: 11/2011	0.500	0.260

(continued)

Table 3.2

**CB2 Projects by Country and Status** (continued)

Country	CB2 project title and key objective	Category	Status	GEF funding (million \$)	Cofinancing (million \$)
Nicaragua	<b>Mainstreaming multilateral environmental agreements in environmental legislation:</b> Increase local and national capacities to enforce environmental legislation, in particular the Special Law on Crimes against the environment and natural resources in support of the Rio conventions.	EM	Expected completion: 2/2012	0.500	0.134
Philippines	<b>Strengthening coordination for effective environmental management:</b> The project will address waste, loss of synergy, loss of economies of scale, and duplication through an interconnected package of activities at the national and local levels.	A	Expected completion: 9/2012	0.500	0.515
Romania	<b>Strengthening capacity to integrate environment and natural resource management for global environmental benefits:</b> This project contributes to the GEF strategic priority by leveraging financial and technical resources to address Romania's priorities for capacity development to better contribute toward global environmental benefits.	EM	Expected completion: 1/2012	0.500	0.730
Seychelles	<b>Implementing capacity development for improved national and international environmental management:</b> This project contributes to the GEF's strategic priority to enhance capacity for global environmental management by strengthening the national institutional framework, technical skills, and related capacities to manage commitments under the global environmental conventions in conjunction with national objectives.	A	Completed 8/2011	0.425	0.100
Tajikistan	<b>Implementing community learning and institutional capacity development for global environmental management:</b> Aims to expand Tajikistan's capacity to generate global environmental benefits through educating and involving diverse stakeholders in addressing Rio convention themes at national and local levels. The project will build capacity to use two key environmental management tools to implement the Rio conventions and to reduce poverty.	EM	Expected completion: 1/2012	0.500	0.470
Uzbekistan	<b>Strengthening national capacity in Rio convention implementation through targeted institutional strengthening and professional development:</b> This project seeks to improve the national environment governance system by creating adequate national capacity to accommodate global environmental concerns into the national development and environmental management plans.	A	Expected completion: 9/2011	0.500	0.165

**Note:** A = organizational and individual capacity development (9 projects); EM = environmental mainstreaming (8 projects); FEI = finance and economic instruments (3 projects); PF = policy and program formulation (3 projects).

## 4. NCSA Relevance

### 4.1 Relevance to Implementation of the Rio Conventions

NCSAs were developed outside of direct convention guidance, although they are potentially relevant to MEA implementation, particularly at the country level. As a result, there has been little NCSA uptake through the implementation process of the conventions.

Developing capacity is a key element in convention guidance. Interviews indicate that NCSA objectives were aligned with convention obligations related to capacity development (table 4.1). The CBD and UNFCCC COPs have asked the GEF to provide funding for country-driven capacity development activities, particularly for LDCs and SIDS. Both the UNCCD and the Stockholm Convention on POPs highlight the need to emphasize capacity development. However, each convention has its own implementation process and guidance. Only the UNCCD's strategic plan recognizes NCSAs and encourages their use wherever possible.

Under the UNFCCC, the Marrakesh Accords agreed to at COP 7 in November 2001 represent a key milestone. These accords reaffirmed that capacity development was essential to enable developing countries to fully participate and effectively implement their convention commitments. Furthermore, the accords included the adoption

of a framework and a request to the GEF, as an operating entity of the UNFCCC financial mechanism, to report to the COP on its progress in supporting implementation of this framework.

The 34th session of the UNFCCC Subsidiary Body for Implementation in June 2011 reported on capacity development under the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol. The comprehensive review (UNFCCC 2011) confirmed that the Marrakesh Accord framework is still relevant and should continue to guide implementation of capacity development activities in developing countries. It also acknowledged that capacity development is a country-driven and learning-by-doing process that responds to specific country needs and priorities. The review recommended improvements in the framework at the systemic, institutional, and individual levels. It also requested that the GEF continue or increase financial support for capacity development activities in accordance with Decisions 2/CP.7 and 4/CP.9. The comprehensive review and a draft decision were presented to the UNFCCC COP 17 in November 2011.

CBD COP 10 asked the GEF to provide expeditious support to eligible parties to revise national biodiversity strategies and action plans in line with the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–20. Guidance on the revision of national biodiversity strategy and action plans included a national

**Table 4.1**

**NCSA Alignment with Convention Obligations Related to Capacity Development**

Type of capacity	CBD	UNCCD	UNFCCC
Stakeholder engagement	Article 10 Article 13	Article 5 Article 9 Article 10 Article 19	Article 4 Article 6
Information management and knowledge	Article 12 Article 14 Article 17 Article 26	Article 9 Article 10 Article 16	Article 4 Article 5
Organizational capacities	Article 8 Article 9 Article 11 Article 16 Article 20 Article 21	Article 4 Article 5 Article 12 Article 13 Article 18 Article 20 Article 21	Article 4
Environmental governance	Article 6 Article 14 Article 19 Article 22	Article 4 Article 5 Article 8 Article 9 Article 10	Article 4
Monitoring and evaluation	Article 7		

**Source:** Bellamy and Hill 2010b.

environmental management capacity development plan and a national biodiversity assessment, which can draw largely from the country’s fourth national report. No mention was made of NCSA thematic assessments and related reports.

In September 2007, UNCCD COP 8 unanimously adopted a 10-year strategic plan and framework. The strategy’s fourth operational objective is to identify and address capacity development needs to prevent and reverse desertification/land degradation and mitigate the effects of drought. Under this objective, two expected outcomes are related to NCSAs:

- **Outcome 4.1.** Countries that have carried out NCSAs should implement the resulting action

plans to develop the necessary capacity at the individual, institutional, and systemic levels to tackle desertification/land degradation and drought issues.

- **Outcome 4.2.** Countries that have not previously undertaken NCSAs should engage in relevant assessments to identify capacity needs for tackling desertification/land degradation and drought at the national and local levels. The convention recognized the NCSA process and integrated it into its strategic plan.

The evaluation found that all conventions involve thematic assessments, including self-assessments conducted under NCSAs. Despite obvious potential synergies, each process is driven by its respective convention. Even though NCSAs contain

information relevant to MEA implementation, including cross-cutting analyses, they were not part of any convention guidance and are not being used to their full potential.

## 4.2 Relevance to the GEF Mandate

NCSAs were made available in the context of GEF Council decisions and the Paris Declaration, but the GEF strategic framework on capacity development has not been updated since 2003. The Council decision of May 2001 directed the GEF Secretariat to fund NCSAs and initiate the process. Under GEF-4, an envelope was allocated to fund CB2 projects. Under GEF-5, the CCCD strategy was developed and approved through the replenishment process. No other Council decisions were made to fund programs and projects to further develop capacities identified as priorities through the NCSAs. In particular, no specific actions have been programmed to strengthen capacity development in GEF projects and address the needs of LDCs and SIDS.

The GEF has missed opportunities to use the outputs from the NCSA process and reports. For example, the GEF guidelines for developing NPFEs under GEF-5 reference NCSAs as potential sources of information to assess country status and identify priorities for GEF programming.<sup>1</sup> A review of the first 15 NPFEs submitted to the GEF found that 13 discuss the need to develop capacity and acknowledge that capacity development is the foundation of long-term sustainability of GEF-funded activities. However, the planning

---

<sup>1</sup> All GEF recipient countries can access up to \$30,000 in GEF resources to voluntarily undertake an NPFE. The NPFE serves as a priority-setting tool for countries and as a guide for GEF Agencies as they assist recipient countries. Undertaking an NPFE is not a requirement or prerequisite for requesting GEF grants.

documents do not reference NCSAs, and only the Bahamas's NPFE refers to NCSA findings in the planning of projects to be funded under its System for Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR) allocation.

In addition, the review of 60 GEF-4 project documents found that all projects featured some degree of capacity development embedded in their design, expected objectives, and outcomes. Almost all projects included strong and explicit components of capacity development in line with a recent GEF-UNDP-UNEP publication on monitoring guidelines for GEF projects (Bellamy and Hill 2010a). These guidelines state that to achieve environmental sustainability, five types of measurable capacities need to be developed.

- **Capacities for engagement:** Capacities of relevant individuals and organizations (resource users, owners, consumers, community and political leaders, and private and public sector managers and experts) to engage proactively and constructively with one another to manage a global environmental issue
- **Capacities to generate, access, and use information and knowledge:** Capacities of individuals and organizations to research, acquire, communicate, educate, and otherwise make use of pertinent information so as to be able to diagnose and understand global environmental problems and formulate potential solutions
- **Capacities for policy and legislation development:** Capacities of individuals and organizations to use informed decision-making processes for global environmental management in order to plan and develop effective environmental policy and legislation, related strategies, and plans
- **Capacities for management and implementation:** Capacities of individuals and organiza-



tions to enact environmental policies and/or regulatory decisions, as well as plan and execute relevant sustainable global environmental management actions and solutions

- **Capacities to monitor and evaluate:** Capacities of individuals and organizations to effectively monitor and evaluate project/program achievements against expected results, and to provide feedback for learning and adaptive management to sustain global environmental outcomes

The GEF review found that the 60 projects examined included capacity for developing policies and legislation, and for the generation, access, and use of knowledge and information. Most projects also addressed capacity development at the individual, organizational, and systemic levels. Fifty-two projects addressed organizational issues, 14 systemic issues, and all but 1 project capacity at the individual level. Twelve of the 60 projects referenced NCSAs in project documents, and 9 of these—all implemented through UNDP—explicitly used NCSA results in their project designs.

NCSAs also provided direct feedback on the development of the CCCD strategy. CCCD objectives were developed on the basis of lessons learned through NCSAs and from the UNDP-UNEP study of completed NCSAs (Bellamy and Hill 2010b). Box 4.1 offers selected comments made by stakeholders regarding NCSAs in country visit interviews.

In conclusion, the NCSA initiative has been part of the programming framework for capacity development initiated under the CDI in the early 2000s. It was relevant to the GEF mandate, as presented in the GEF 2001 and 2003 strategies, and as reflected in the GEF-5 capacity development strategy. Moreover, it was a critical element for assessing existing capacities and identify-

#### Box 4.1

##### Selected Observations from Country Visits on NCSA Relevance to GEF Mandate

- **Croatia.** Strong overlap between the three conventions and the GEF mandate leads to stronger relevance
- **Ecuador.** The NCSA provided workshops and increased capacities in several provinces.
- **India.** The NCSA was not used in GEF-5 planning for the following reasons: India has moved beyond the NCSA; the NCSA is assumed to be outdated; and confidence in the final product was low.
- **Montenegro.** GEF-4 projects specifically refer to the NCSA as a basis for the design of a project's capacity development components.
- **Thailand.** The linkage of NCSAs to the NFPE was a result of GEF-4 projects.

ing capacity development needs and priorities. However, these assessments were not followed up by adequate investments in identified capacity development priorities, nor were they taken into account when developing GEF projects, especially focal area projects. As a result, the NCSA's relevance to the GEF is diminishing.

### 4.3 Relevance to GEF Agencies

NCSAs are aligned with the capacity development strategies of UNDP and UNEP.

UNDP, which played a key role in the design of the NCSA, emphasizes an integrated approach in its operations; 76 percent of the NCSAs undertaken were implemented through this Agency. Through the CDI, UNDP learned that the main challenge was to develop synergies between national strategies and MEA implementation. Moreover, UNDP found that environmental management capacity could not be developed from the outside. Developing environmental management capacity requires



an in-country process driven by leading entities. NCSAs addressed these challenges and lessons early on, emphasizing in-country self-assessments and broad stakeholder participation.

Following NCSA implementation, UNDP confirmed the importance of synergies and the need to strengthen and create financial modalities for environmental management. UNDP also recognized the need to expand environmental legislation and regulations. As a result, UNDP is more focused on cross-sectoral approaches—a focus that is reflected in recent UNDP GEF multifocal projects. This approach is also illustrated in the recently developed UNDP strategy to support governments in developing low-emission climate-resilient development strategies that are designed to build on existing strategies and plans. The preparation of these will include country-driven integrated assessments using approaches similar to the NCSA methodology.

For UNEP, the timing of the NCSA initiative was excellent. In the late 1990s, UNEP Governing Council discussions focused on how best to support the development of capacities related to convention implementation. This debate culminated in the adoption of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building. The Bali plan set UNEP's capacity development agenda through broad objectives that included strengthening the environmental management capacity of both developing countries and transitional economies.

Within the context of this strategic plan and its mandate to coordinate the development of consensus on environmental policies, UNEP cooperated with UNDP and the GEF Secretariat on the final implementation of the CDI and the design of the NCSA. UNEP implemented 23 percent of all NCSAs, which became a useful response to the Bali strategic plan.

NCSAs have been both relevant and useful to UNEP. Across the Agency, the NCSA approach is recognized as a comprehensive methodology to assess critical capacity constraints. NCSAs have been used for a comparative study of MEA projects in the Pacific, including an analysis of Samoa's and Niue's national adaptation programs of action and national biodiversity strategy and action plans to identify overlaps and divergence. NCSA results were used in two regional workshops in East and West Africa to compare constraints and capacity development needs in the respective regions. NCSA results were also used in a comparative study of Lebanon's and Yemen's national adaptation programs of action and national biodiversity strategy and action plans to assess the cohesiveness and synergies of convention implementation.

#### 4.4 Relevance to Recipient Countries

NCSAs focused on assessing environmental management frameworks to support the sustainable development agendas of recipient countries. Although the NCSA process was relevant, NCSAs did not emphasize links between environmental priorities and other economic sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, water, forestry, and mining. Both the results and timing of NCSAs varied depending on the individual country. In India, the NCSA process was carried out after developing national strategies; as a result, the findings were of limited use. In Belize and Paraguay, on the other hand, the timing of the NCSA project was advantageous, in that it allowed NCSA results to be used to establish national strategies and programs.

In response to the question posed in the e-survey, "How relevant was the NCSA to your country's environmental strategies and plans?" almost 80 percent of the respondents said they were either moderately satisfied, satisfied, or highly satisfied.

A number of the comments illustrate the utility and uniqueness of the NCSA process (box 4.2).

Fifty percent of respondents recognized the relevance and catalytic role of the NCSA initiative. The cross-cutting and self-assessment guidance and the search for synergies provided a new and unique framework that responded to stakeholder needs. The NCSA process provided an environment whereby a broad range of stakeholders came together for the first time, set priorities through a participatory process, reviewed national coordination, and discussed how to improve that coordination (box 4.3).

In Senegal, the government has been attempting to establish a national coordination mechanism to effectively implement the conventions. A national committee, COMNAC (Comité national sur les changements climatiques) is coordinat-

#### Box 4.2

##### Selected E-Survey Comments on NCSA Relevance to the Recipient Country

- “Yes, you can teach and train, but you may not raise capacity.”
- “Given the limited resources and the changing GEF context, UNDP played a strategic role to ensure that momentum was kept, a follow-up capacity development project was supported, and the mainstreaming aspects of environmental management were incorporated in the national development planning process.”
- “The UNDP Country Office assigned its staff to oversee the management and implementation of the project. The support from UNDP was helpful and well appreciated by the government.”
- “Donors have been asking for greater clarity on what ‘capacity development’ actually means in the context of the conventions and have been promoting synergies.”

#### Box 4.3

##### Selected E-Survey Comments on the Catalytic Role of NCSAs

- “During the NCSA problem analysis and prioritization process, capacity development emerged as one of the underpinning (root) causes of environmental and natural resource degradation.”
- “If properly administered, NCSA is a strong tool for guiding coordination and also a platform for donor coordination.”
- “The NCSA process confirms the GEF’s catalytic role, the need for synergies between conventions, and the consideration in national planning including through donor support.”
- “It has for the first time provided a concerted effort on priorities.”

ing the country’s climate change agenda,<sup>2</sup> but no similar arrangements exist for biodiversity and sustainable land management. The NCSA process provided an opportunity to explore the possibilities for improving national coordination, such as compartmentalizing current approaches and integrating environmental management into sectoral strategies and programs. Since the country does not have a framework for an intersectoral dialogue, setting up a national coordination mechanism to oversee convention implementation was a priority. Key stakeholders discussed a reorganization of the National Committee on Sustainable Development.

In Paraguay, the government has been planning a major restructuring, including the creation of a Ministry of Water, Environment, and Energy. The

<sup>2</sup> COMNAC was supported by the Canadian International Development Agency and the Netherlands in the context of their respective climate change programs in Senegal and through ENDA, an international NGO based in Dakar.

recently completed NCSA provided relevant and helpful information to decision makers and was used in national reports.

The review of the CB2 projects (Bellamy and Hill 2010b) illustrates NCSA's relevance to the agendas of recipient countries. As follow-up projects to NCSAs, CB2 projects provided resources for reducing, if not eliminating, the institutional bottlenecks hindering synergistic implementation of the Rio conventions. The review confirmed that CB2 projects focused on environmental governance systems and the mainstreaming of global

environmental issues into national development programs. This is reflected in the four primary areas of CB2 interventions:

- Strengthening policy, legislative, and regulatory frameworks and their enforcement
- Mainstreaming global environmental priorities into national policies and programs
- Improving national convention institutional structures and mechanisms
- Strengthening financial and economic instruments in support of the global environment

## 5. NCSA Efficiency

### 5.1 Management Approach

#### NCSA Implementation

The GEF CEO approved each NCSA an average of eight months before the Agency approval/project document date—nine months for UNDP, and seven months for UNEP. The average implementation time for NCSA projects was 32 months, with a minimum duration of 6 months and a maximum of 83 months. When the data are disaggregated by GEF Agency, the average implementation time for NCSAs is 31 months for UNDP and 37 months for UNEP. These durations are based on the date on which the final report was released; obviously, there may have been a lag between the time implementation activities ceased and the report was issued. Similarly, NCSA-related activities may have continued beyond release of the final report.

The quality rating results developed by Bellamy and Hill (2010b) do not indicate any correlation between the time required to implement NCSAs and the quality of the final reports and action plans. Figure 5.1 shows that most NCSAs take between 20 and 40 months to complete, with a resultant quality score ranging from 2 to 5, with 5 being the highest.

The lack of follow-up plans adversely affected the efficiency of NCSA implementation and lowered the initiative's priority level, particularly within the

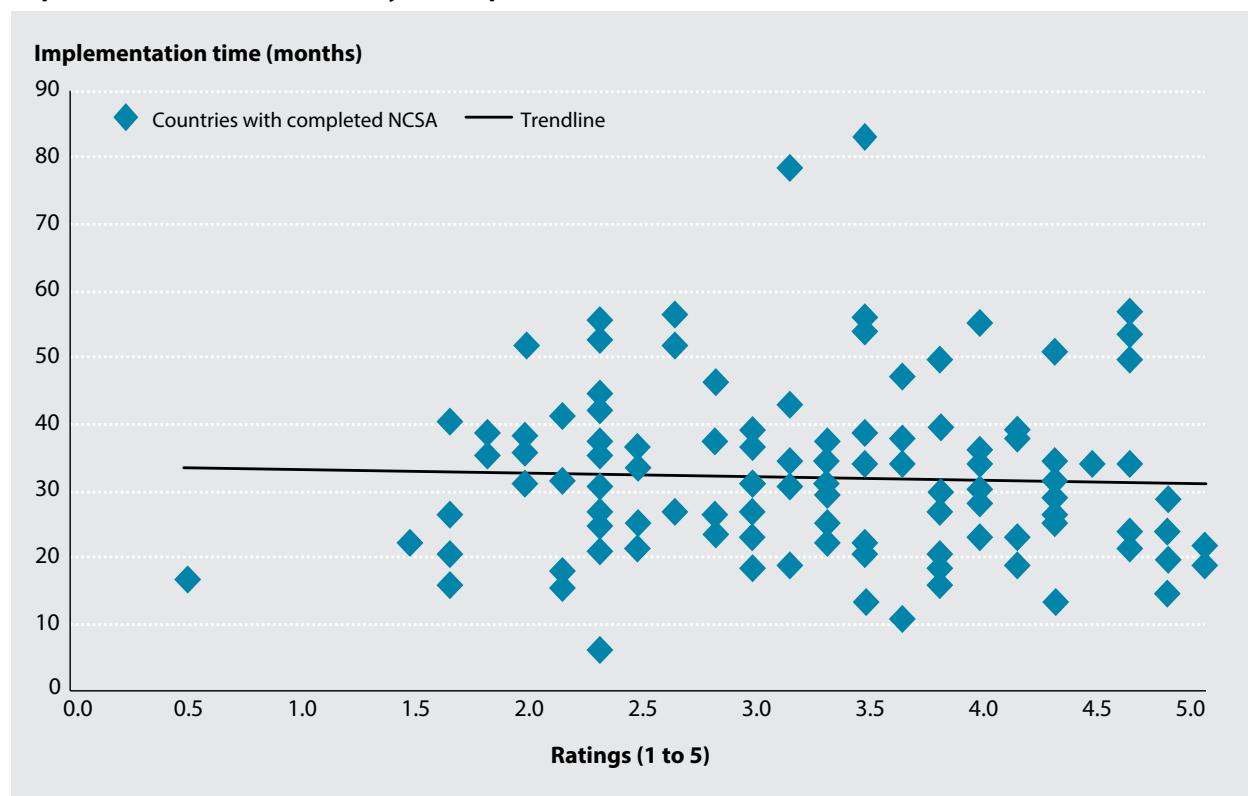
GEF Secretariat. The low priority level and lack of clear deadlines also contributed to the long duration of some NCSAs. Stakeholders commented that there was initial confusion about the process and that guidance was minimal. Additional stakeholder comments indicate that other factors contributed to inefficiencies—for example, changes within the government and a low level of political commitment (box 5.1). Often, GEF Agencies had to repeatedly explain the program and rebuild consensus as new governments took office in order to keep the project moving forward. High staff turnover also led to delays in project delivery and completion.

NCSA projects were implemented through UNDP's nationally executed modalities and UNEP's direct legal agreements. In both cases, United Nations rules and regulations applied. The efficiency of these modalities depended on the individual country's capacity to implement projects, as well as the capacity of the UNDP Country Office and UNEP headquarters.

In 63 percent of NCSA projects, GEF focal points handled the execution. In countries where the ministry of environment was not the GEF focal point, responsibility for NCSA execution was often delegated to another ministry. Other ministries, such as the ministry of foreign affairs and the ministry of natural sciences, executed the remaining 37 percent of NCSAs.

Figure 5.1

### Implementation Time and Quality of Completed NCSAs



### Financial Management

Countries varied in their ability to implement and benefit from NCSAs, illustrating the limitations of the NCSA's one-size-fits-all approach whereby all countries received a grant of \$0.2 million for NCSA implementation. Generally speaking, the grant was not sufficient to support the process in larger countries. While Belize and the Seychelles, for example, were highly successful in managing their respective grants to maximum benefit, India was not able to use its grant as efficiently. Additionally, the high transaction costs of project implementation demonstrated a need for larger grants to carry out self-assessments and prepare follow-up action plans.

Roughly 48 percent of the respondents to the e-survey rated the use of NCSA financial resources as satisfactory or highly satisfactory. A country's

size and level of political challenges played a role in this regard. For example, one respondent noted that the NCSA process did not take into account countries with a large land mass and diverse ecological regions where a centralized executing partner could not properly prioritize the small amount of capital. The opposite was true for small countries—one respondent from a small country commented that resources were efficiently used across all focal areas. Additionally, many other respondents indicated that funds were efficiently used throughout the NCSA process.

### GSP Technical Assistance

The GEF Council approved the GSP modality in 2004 and the program was launched the next year to assist in conducting policy analysis and provide

### Box 5.1

#### NCSA Efficiency: Stakeholder Comments and Summary Based on Review of NCSA Final Reports and Action Plans

- **Croatia:** Stakeholders generally agree that the process was smoothly implemented and well organized. However, it did not sufficiently accommodate an exchange between working groups, thus limiting results on interconvention synergies.
- **Ecuador:** There may have been “workshop fatigue” after a while, particularly within the provinces, where only a limited number of people were involved.
- **India:** NCSA was not efficient because there was no deadline. When the results finally came out, the information was old. Financial management issues were not adequately addressed throughout the project, and financial institutions were not brought in.
- **Montenegro:** Close integration of the UNDP and ministry teams secured smooth implementation, with international consultants helping to fill some capacity gaps. No problems with financial management were reported. The UNDP NCSA resource kit was used for guidance.
- **Paraguay:** There were problems with efficiency. It took too long, due primarily to changes in government. UNDP had to explain NCSA to new ministers and in some ways represented the institutional memory. There were no reported issues regarding financial management.
- **Senegal:** Projects of \$200,000 are too small and cannot be efficiently implemented from a “value for the money” point of view, since transaction costs are too high. Regarding the use of technical assistance, the project activities were completely carried out by nationals, and this was a strong aspect of the initiative.
- **Thailand:** The process was too long, but stocktaking turned out to be most efficient. Lack of financial support from the conventions to implement financial mechanisms was an inhibiting factor. Guidance was lacking from the multilateral agencies. Guidance in establishing a methodology for the project was needed from the beginning.

The review of NCSA final reports and action plans found that a significant number of countries experienced difficulties in implementing their NCSAs. Anecdotally, these implementation difficulties can be summarized into three main categories:

- Guidance was too broad, limiting the ability of NCSA country teams to focus on specifics. The results were broad statements about issues, constraints, and capacity development needs and actions.
- Guidance was too product oriented and did not provide assistance with methodological approaches. NCSA country teams wanted more guidance on the “how to” of planning various self-assessment steps.
- Guidance on structuring the various reports was insufficient, particularly with regard to the final report.

technical assistance to countries. The GSP directly addressed the four pathways to capacity development including NCSAs. It was jointly managed by UNDP and UNEP in partnership with other relevant international and regional institutions. The GSP ceased operations in December 2010. A terminal evaluation of the GSP was conducted; this is summarized in box 5.2.

A key product of the GSP was the NCSA resource kit, which aimed to do the following:

- Help countries strengthen their management of national and global environmental issues in the context of sustainable development
- Introduce approaches and tools that can be used by NCSA teams to conduct effective and efficient capacity assessment and planning exercises tailored to national needs and circumstances
- Provide guidance on GEF requirements, including principles and outputs

## Box 5.2

### Summary of the Global Support Programme's Final Evaluation

The terminal evaluation of the GSP conducted in 2010 by the Baastel consulting firm looked at five key questions:

- To what extent is there still a demand for the technical services provided by the GSP?
- Was the use of the GSP the best strategy for the delivery of technical support?
- To what extent has the GSP been effective in providing technical support for NCSA implementation?
- What are the impacts of NCSAs?
- To what extent has the GSP been effective in providing sustainable support and results for NCSA implementation?

#### **Findings**

- The establishment of the GSP was clearly needed and relevant, and countries still need and demand technical support for capacity development. However, the GSP and its specific mandate are not relevant beyond the NCSA process and, thus, beyond Pathway #1.
- The GSP was an appropriate modality for the delivery of technical services. Project teams and stakeholders who have used the GSP held the delivery of its technical expertise in high esteem. The GSP was intended to engage regional stakeholders in the assistance of technical support for the implementation of NCSA recommendations. Unfortunately, this did not materialize, because most organizations lacked the necessary human resources, knowledge, and capacity. Only one organization has a staff member dedicated to capacity development.
- The GSP has been effective in providing technical support for NCSA implementation. It developed guidance materials and provided technical backstopping to NCSA country teams, analyzed lessons learned, and developed programming frameworks for the systematic implementation of CCCD priorities. Its overall effectiveness was affected by staff changes, redefined global priorities, and stakeholder involvement that slowed GSP and NCSA momentum.
- GSP support allowed countries to take on the NCSA initiative without relying solely on external consultants. As such, countries have a better sense of their capacities and needs. However, ownership varies in each country, with some countries requiring continued support to engage stakeholders and implement their NCSA recommendations.
- It remains to be seen whether countries will be able to implement their NCSA recommendations and action plans without GSP support, given that there is still a great need and demand for technical guidance. The GSP has contributed to ensuring the sustainability of its results through the development of indicators. The UNDP and UNEP websites also disseminate GSP work.

#### **Recommendations**

- Countries would still benefit from GSP support for implementing their NCSA recommendations and action plans, especially with regard to Pathway #4.
- As part of GEF enabling activities, a program similar to the GSP would help countries prepare quality assessments and reports, as well as provide access to technical experts, workshops, materials, and tools.
- Regional organizations should increase their capacity to provide technical expertise. Countries would benefit from having more regional resources that promote greater country ownership and stakeholder engagement. This is especially true for LDCs.



Feedback from interviews, country visits, and the e-survey underscored the importance and value of the resource kit. A number of constructive criticisms were also noted. The resource kit was seen as offering too many options and could have been more prescriptive. In addition, while the kit was well received, many countries did not take advantage of its resources because they had implemented their NCSAs before the GSP was established.

## 5.2 Stakeholder Involvement

Ensuring multistakeholder participation, consultation, and decision making was a guiding principle of the NCSA initiative, and the GSP resource kit recognized stakeholder engagement as a key strategy.

Through the use of participatory approaches, NCSAs engaged a broad array of stakeholders and provided an opportunity for national cross-sectoral coordination. Approximately 55 percent of the e-survey respondents rated stakeholder participation as satisfactory or highly satisfactory and confirmed NCSA value in integrating strategic capacity development needs.

Interviews indicated that some stakeholders were skeptical, owing in large part to the lack of clear follow-up to NCSA action plans. Further, the perceptions of government representatives sharply contrasted with those of NGOs and community-

based organizations. When asked how they would rate stakeholder participation, 76 percent of government representatives said they were either satisfied or highly satisfied, while only 34 percent of NGOs and community-based organizations expressed similar views. The review found that more engagement is needed to better connect with civil society.

Other factors, such as varying levels of buy-in from those managing the NCSA process and from Agency representatives, may have hindered the stakeholder involvement process. Stakeholders' limited understanding of environmental issues also decreased NCSA effectiveness, even though in most cases the appropriate stakeholders were involved. At the grassroots level, many stakeholders were unable to participate because they lacked access to computers or proximity to the consultations.

In countries in which such key stakeholders as convention focal points were involved on an ongoing basis, there was evidence of a higher level of NCSA ownership and increased opportunities to realize identified actions. Furthermore, greater involvement improved the dissemination of results and advocacy within ministries. In general, participating institutions and steering committees disseminated project outcomes through informal feedback or other mechanisms. Many of those interviewed identified the need for a comprehensive dissemination strategy.

## 6. NCSA Results

The primary objective of NCSAs is to assess foundational capacities to meet and sustain global environmental objectives. NCSAs explore synergies among thematic areas, as well as linkages with wider issues of environmental management and sustainable development, such as POPs and bio-safety. NCSAs were not intended to be definitive or final, as the identification of needs and priorities is a dynamic process. Accordingly, the identification of capacity development needs was envisaged as an ongoing process to be taken up within national consultative structures and mechanisms designed to identify and program future GEF support. Additionally, NCSAs were neither seen as a precondition for GEF assistance through regular projects and enabling activities, nor as a necessary first step prior to launching capacity development activities in particular sectors.

The long-term impact of NCSAs will vary from country to country (box 6.1). However, the fact that NCSAs were not part of larger strategies and programs—including MEA implementation—may limit their long-term usefulness, particularly in countries where they were produced after other assessments had been conducted. The lack of a comprehensive follow-up strategy will inhibit the long-term impacts of NCSA results to varying degrees. The NCSA concept is difficult for stakeholders to embrace when there is no clear follow-

up, as a single stand-alone assessment is not sufficient to ensure sustainable capacity development gains.

The interviews, e-survey, and reviews found several examples of NCSAs being used in follow-up activities funded by the GEF, other donors, or the countries themselves. However, no systematic use of NCSAs was observed, and the examples are anecdotal. A more in-depth analysis at the country level would be needed to ascertain countries' full use of NCSAs; such analysis is beyond the scope of the present evaluation, as noted in section 2.4. Additionally, over time, NCSA results are becoming less relevant. Some countries, such as India and Mozambique, have already addressed priority capacity needs in existing nationally funded projects.

The NCSA process, however, has helped countries understand what needs to be done to improve their environmental management frameworks and achieve broader environmental goals. In large part, results and achievements have been made at the national level. It is hoped that these achievements (box 6.2) will influence implementation of GEF-5 strategies and priorities. However, since NCSAs are not required for GEF-5 focal area funding, there is a risk that their relevance will diminish as time passes.

### Box 6.1

#### Selected Comments from Country Visits on NCSA Results

- **Croatia:** “The NCSA has been used as a basis for policy initiatives, a source of structured information, and a framework for targeted action. Central findings of the NCSA were formulated as a national action plan for each of the conventions.”
- **Ecuador:** “The NCSA planted a seed for establishing synergies between conventions, which has been maintained. The NCSA provided the support to identify and address gaps in institutional capacity.”
- **India:** “The stakeholder process proved to be the most positive outcome of the NCSA project. Cross-sector thinking was also at a very high level.”
- **Montenegro:** “The results are facilitating capacity development in Montenegro. However, the impact is felt at the basic level of policy development. Consultation with other ministries could have been more extensive throughout the NCSA process.”
- **Paraguay:** “The process helped the government study the relationships between the conventions. The NCSA has helped improve awareness of the GEF and the work of convention focal points.”
- **Senegal:** “One of the main findings was the country’s lack of appropriation of the conventions. These conventions were signed, but the awareness of related stakeholders is limited and more awareness activities are needed, particularly targeting civil society, communities, and the private sector.”
- **Thailand:** “Interactions and information exchanges were good, but these achievements did not occur on a regular basis. NCSA adopted a holistic approach to capacity development with respect to communication, education, and public awareness.”

## 6.1 Policy Impacts

The evaluation found that, in most cases, country NCSAs had policy impacts and contributed to better convention implementation at the country level. NCSAs provided a starting point to develop environmental policies, helped to establish guidelines for prioritizing capacity development

### Box 6.2

#### Selected E-Survey Comments on NCSA Achievements

- “Most commonly prioritized capacity needs and gaps have now been filled by many development programs, although the implementation plan was not followed as stipulated in the action plan. Despite the fact that the Rio convention unit of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism is not yet fully capacitated, it managed to utilize the follow-up capacity development project to implement most of the recommended actions. The slow process to finalize the regulations for the Environmental Management Agency proved to be a major stumbling block to follow-up actions.”
- “Coordination and synergies between conventions were identified as key issues and were addressed as part of the action plan.”
- “The five-year action plan was developed for implementation of the cross-cutting issues of the conventions. The action plan was adopted by governmental decree.”
- “Before undertaking this project, there was no single assessment and prioritization of capacity needs at the national level. The NCSA project really assisted the focal point of each convention. Until now, there was no action plan that could be related to the implementation of the Rio conventions, for there is neither sufficient commitment nor resources to undertake the action plan.”
- “The outputs were satisfactory at the time. However, the world has moved on, and concrete measures for synergies across conventions have become a strong agenda item for many conventions. The NCSA, therefore, while anticipating this from a policy angle, was probably not as revolutionary as the world later became. On the second objective, many action plans contained very concrete project concepts that could be implemented quickly if sufficient funding had been set aside by the GEF.”

needs, created a framework for better convergence across the conventions, focused on cross-cutting capacity gaps and needs, and highlighted the need to mainstream global environmental

goals in national environmental management frameworks. Overall, NCSAs became catalysts for developing related environmental capacities. The NCSA methodology and focus on improving capacity at three levels—enabling environment, institutional, and stakeholder—are helping make a difference in MEA implementation.

At the country level, several examples of NCSA policy impacts were identified and communicated to the GEF (GEF Council 2008):

- **Antigua and Barbuda.** The NCSA action plan, which is closely linked to the country's National Environmental Management Strategy and Action Plan, is intended to outline capacity needs for effective implementation.
- **Egypt.** The NCSA process had been integrated in the national institutional framework for sustainable development and was specifically charged by the Ministry of State for Environmental Affairs to help develop the capacity of the newly established National Sustainable Development Committee.
- **The Gambia.** The National Environment Agency managed the NCSA project with technical guidance from its Agriculture and Natural Resources Working Group. A coordination committee of representatives from the Departments of Finance, Natural Resources and Environment; the Office of the President; Personnel Management; and the MEA focal point secretariats provided a high-level progress review, procedural oversight, and policy guidance. The use of existing bodies and mechanisms (including a well-established participatory planning process) helped ensure continuity, efficacy, and strong connections between the NCSA, enabling activities, and action plans, and the country's overall Environment Action Plan.
- **Lithuania.** The NCSA cross-cutting analysis and recommendations were integrated in the National Long-Term Development and National Sustainable Development Strategies. NCSA outcomes were also used to support other relevant strategies, such as the Public Environmental Education Strategy.
- **Mauritius.** The NCSA is strongly linked to the country's environmental priorities. For biodiversity and land degradation, the thematic reviews presented a clear picture of prevailing substantive issues, whereas the section on climate change identified capacity needs. The final report summarized biodiversity and land degradation issues, as well as climate change capacity needs. It also presented a useful priorities matrix that specified high priorities, potential outcomes, and performance indicators.
- **The Seychelles.** The NCSA assessment process and action plan were integrated in the development and implementation of the country's Environmental Management Plan (2000–10), with the same vision, guiding principles, and time frame for implementation, monitoring, and review. A 40-member steering committee and an NCSA Review Committee, which included the convention focal points and the permanent secretary from the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, conducted the oversight.
- **Slovakia.** The NCSA initiated and facilitated the development of a national action plan to combat desertification. Since the plan had not been prepared prior to the NCSA process, the NCSA thematic assessment on land degradation was extended to provide a solid base for the plan's formulation.

E-survey results confirmed NCSA effectiveness in systematically assessing and prioritizing capacity needs (table 6.1). Seventy-six percent of GEF focal

**Table 6.1**

**E-survey Respondent Rankings of NCSA Effectiveness and Results**

*percentage*

NCSA objective	Highly satisfactory	Satisfactory	Moderately satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Systematically assessing and prioritizing capacity needs required for the implementation of the conventions	33	43	24	0
Preparing national environmental capacity development action plans related to the implementation of the conventions	29	38	29	4

points and other government representatives rated NCSA effectiveness as highly satisfactory or satisfactory, and 24 percent rated it as moderately satisfactory. When asked about NCSA’s effectiveness in preparing national environmental capacity development action plans, 67 percent of respondents said it was either highly satisfactory or satisfactory; 29 percent said it was moderately satisfactory.

**6.2 Summary of Assessments**

Summarizing the achievements of the NCSAs implemented in over 150 countries is a difficult task, given the variations in country size, environmental conditions, socioeconomic environments, political contexts, and other factors. Through NCSAs, participants expanded their skills and knowledge, with some 150 project managers and 450 consultants involved in the cross-cutting development committees formed to explore potential synergies for convention implementation. Also, even though the NCSA initiative was the largest capacity development program of its type to be implemented on a global basis, individual projects were relatively small (GEF Council 2001).

Recipient countries conducted their self-assessments and documented the NCSA process in a series of specific reports. As a result of this approach, NCSAs contain two main assessments that are synthesized in this report: (1) a focal area

assessment, whereby each country conducted thematic assessments of strengths and constraints in implementing the Rio conventions, and (2) a cross-cutting SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) assessment and gap analysis of individual, organizational, and systemic capacities to meet focal area objectives under the conventions.

The initial results of these two assessments were already synthesized by Bellamy and Hill (2010b). The evaluation team reviewed this analysis and added 14 NCSAs to the database, bringing the total to 133 completed NCSAs. The evaluation team’s results differed slightly from those in the 2010 synthesis report, but no major differences were identified, and the data trends are similar.

Each NCSA report was reviewed according to the following methodology and criteria:

- **Focal area assessment.** The review used four focal areas—biodiversity, land degradation, climate change, and freshwater-coastal ecosystems—which were subdivided into 23 thematic areas. The analysis then focused on whether, from the country’s perspective, each thematic area was a priority environmental issue, priority capacity development need, or recommended capacity development action.
- **Cross-cutting assessment.** The assessment subdivided five types of capacity—stakeholder

engagement, information management and knowledge, organizational capacity, environmental governance, and monitoring and evaluation—into 17 capacity areas. Each NCSA was analyzed to determine if each capacity area was identified as a strength, constraint, capacity development need, or recommended capacity development action.

### 6.3 Focal Area Assessment

The focal area assessment analyzed country obligations and opportunities with regard to each MEA, and the corresponding performance and achievements to date. It provided a snapshot of country strengths and constraints in meeting convention obligations and identified priority thematic areas in each country. It found that the top thematic areas across a diverse group of countries were biodiversity conservation, identified as a priority by 103 countries, vulnerability to climate change (80 countries), land use (74 countries), and deforestation (74 countries). Existing capacity development needs relating to these issues can therefore be expected to have high relevance for a majority of countries.

Conversely, comparatively limited importance was given to sea-level rise, unsustainable fisheries, rangeland management, soil contamination, wetlands conservation, and coastal erosion. These issues are often closely connected to specific geophysical conditions and thus are not relevant to a majority of countries. However, the few countries that consider sea-level rise a priority, for example, are likely to be intensely affected and place a particularly high priority on related capacity development needs.

Figure 6.1 provides an overview of the frequency with which each of the 23 thematic areas was identified as a priority environmental issue by countries that completed an NCSA.

### Biodiversity

Environmental issues related to biodiversity were categorized into nine thematic areas. Figure 6.2 shows that the most frequently prioritized biodiversity issues are in the areas of biodiversity conservation (cited by 77 percent of the countries), deforestation (56 percent), and sustainable use (49 percent). Only 28 percent of the countries cited agrobiodiversity as a priority; 16 percent did not identify any priority issues in biodiversity.

The recommendations for capacity development actions as expressed by the NCSAs largely follow the identification of priorities, meaning that issues of high priority are also frequently recommended for capacity development actions. However, issues are recommended less frequently for capacity development actions than they are identified as priority issues. For example, although 103 countries cited biodiversity conservation as a priority environmental issue, only 81 cited it as a recommended capacity development action (figure 6.2). This may indicate that some countries may consider existing capacity adequate to handle the priority issues.

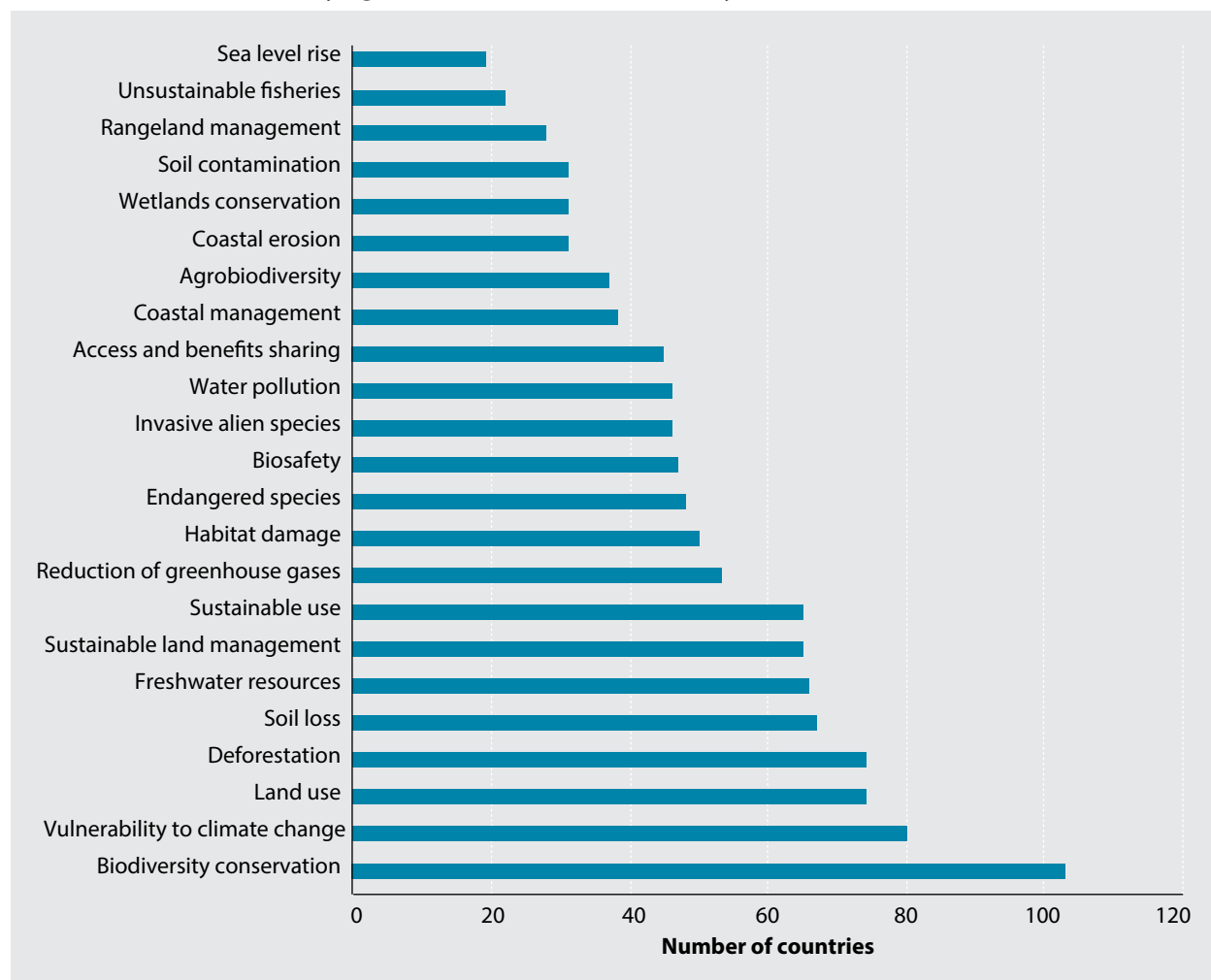
A notable exception is the area of access and benefits sharing. Virtually all countries that identified access and benefits sharing as a priority issue also recommended it as an area for capacity development action. Countries may see a particular need for capacity development in this field because it is a relatively new area of activity. There was a similar correlation between the ranking of agrobiodiversity as a priority issue and its identification for capacity development actions.

In contrast, habitat damage was often identified as a priority issue, but relatively few countries recommended it as an area for capacity development action. This may imply a comparatively high level of existing capacity at the time of the NCSA.



Figure 6.1

Number of Countries Identifying Each Thematic Area as a Priority Environmental Issue



### Climate Change

As shown in figure 6.3, the priority environmental issues related to climate change were vulnerability (cited by 60 percent of the countries) and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (40 percent).

About one-third of the countries did not identify any priority environmental issues in the climate change focal area. While this seems to contradict the unequivocally global reach of the climate change challenge, it may reflect the differences across countries in terms of climate change vulner-

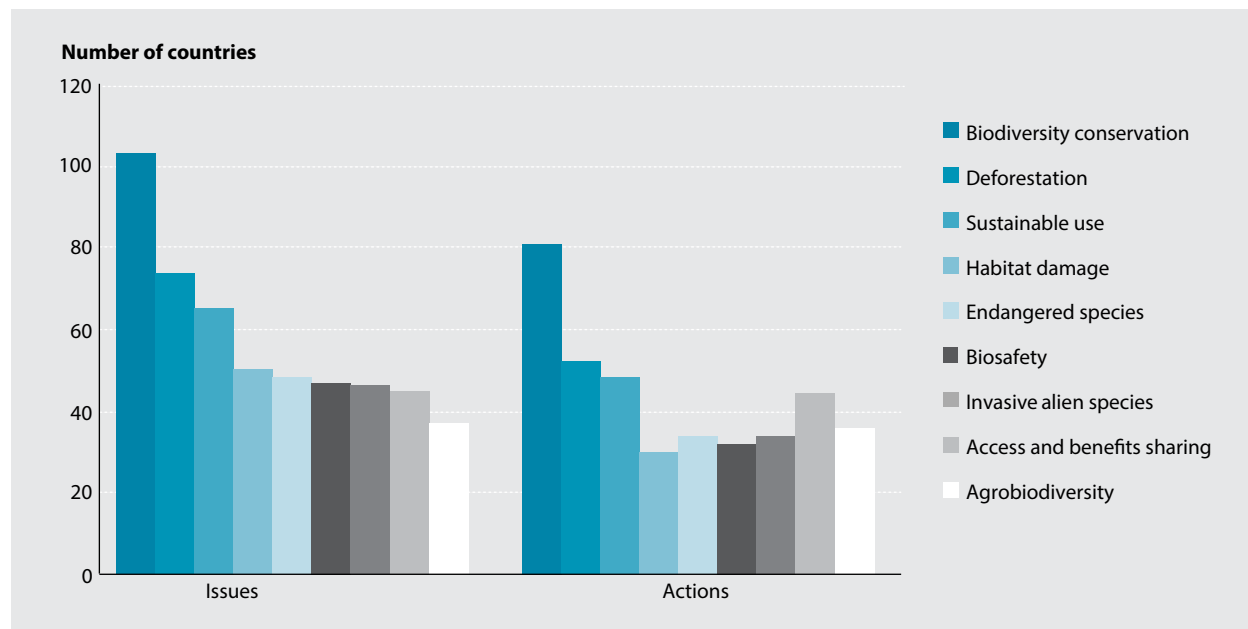
ability. In addition, the comparatively large number of countries that do not identify climate change as a priority might point to the long time horizon of climate change effects, which could lead to its not being perceived as an immediate threat.

Particularly unexpected are the NCSA data on climate change from SIDS. The overall number of countries that identified sea-level rise as a priority climate change concern is relatively low, accounting for 14 percent of the NCSA countries; this is reasonable, since only a few countries are highly



Figure 6.2

Countries Identifying Priority Issues and Capacity Development Actions in Biodiversity



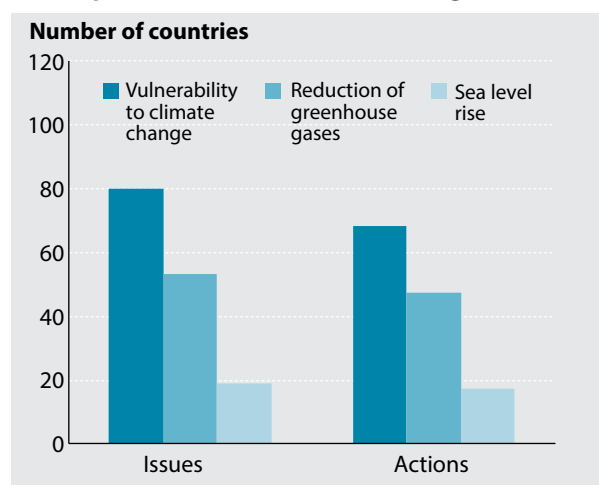
vulnerable to rising sea levels in the medium-term future. However, among SIDS, which would be expected to perceive sea-level rise as a direct threat, only 30 percent identified it as a priority issue.

One possible explanation is that sea-level rise is not yet a reality for many SIDS. For example, the following is the only reference to sea-level rise in Belize’s NCSA:

Belize conducted marine ecosystems research during the pilot phase of the Caribbean Planning for Adaptation to Climate Change (CPACC) Project. The objectives of the CPACC project were capacity building within the SIDS in the areas of monitoring and analyzing climate change and sea-level dynamics...

Figure 6.3

Countries Identifying Priority Issues and Capacity Development Actions in Climate Change



This indicates that, at the time of its NCSA (2005), Belize was only at the stage of analyzing potential scenarios but not yet actually facing the issue. Similarly, the NCSA for Antigua and Barbados did not cite sea-level rise as a constraint but as part of a recommended action to “establish a monitoring program for ecosystems and issues related to climate change.” In contrast, the NCSA for the Cook Islands clearly states that “increased erosion due to sea-level rise” is an environmental issue.

Countries identifying climate change issues as a priority tended for the most part to recognize the need for capacity development action. As with biodiversity, there is a gap between the frequency with which thematic areas are identified as priority issues and their citation as being recommended for capacity development action, but the difference between the two categories is notably smaller (figure 6.3). A possible explanation is that countries judge their existing climate change capacity to be comparatively low.

### Freshwater and Coastal Ecosystems, Including Fisheries and Wetlands

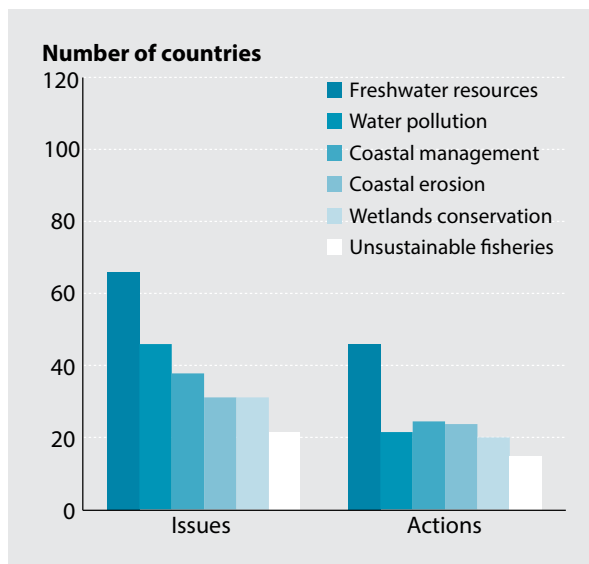
Fifty percent of the NCSAs cited freshwater resources as a top environmental priority, while 26 percent did not identify any water issues as priorities (figure 6.4). In addition, 46 percent did not cite any need for capacity development actions in this area. A possible explanation is that not all countries have extensive freshwater and coastal ecosystems.

The results for SIDS differ from the global-level response. Fifty percent of SIDS cited coastal management and coastal erosion as priorities, compared to 23 and 28 percent, respectively, globally. Thirty percent of SIDS identified unsustainable fisheries as a priority, compared to 16 percent globally. Overall, SIDS placed a higher priority on water-related issues.

When observing the consistency of recommending capacity development actions for priority issues, The differences for this set of thematic areas between identified priority issues and recommended capacity development actions are greater than for the other focal areas. Only 48 percent of the countries that identified water pollution as a priority environmental issue cited the need for capacity development action in this area.

Figure 6.4

### Countries Identifying Priority Issues and Capacity Development Actions in Water Resources



Similarly, 65 to 70 percent of the countries that cited wetlands conservation, unsustainable fisheries, freshwater resources, and coastal management as priority issues recommended capacity development actions.

### Land Degradation

Figure 6.5 shows that between 50 and 55 percent of countries cited poor land use, sustainable land management, and soil loss as priority environmental issues. Under a quarter of the countries cited soil contamination (23 percent) or rangeland management (21 percent) as priority issues. Only 20 percent of countries did not identify any issues in the land degradation area.

Calls for capacity development action appeared to be closely aligned with priorities, with the exception of soil contamination and soil loss—these latter were cited for capacity development action by 38 percent and 13 percent, respectively. This disparity may indicate comparably high levels of

existing capacity in these areas or, alternatively, the existence of strong barriers that dissuade countries from recommending capacity development action.

The discrepancy could also mean that countries do not consider direct responses—such as recommending specific capacity development actions to address soil contamination issues—as preferable, but would rather focus on addressing root causes of these problems that are often related to cross-cutting capacity issues. For example, Burundi’s NCSA identified land degradation as a priority, but concluded that the root causes of land degradation primarily involved cross-cutting capacity issues such as limited capacity to implement policies on family planning, limited capacity to rationalize land ownership, weak capacity to educate and make the population aware about this issues, etc. As a result, the Burundi assessment recommended cross-cutting capacity development.

Land degradation is an important issue in countries with large populations dependent on natural resources. In Mongolia, for example, overgrazing

is a major concern, because livestock herds surpass the carrying capacity of grazing land. The land and the limited water resources are under further stress because of transhumant herders that move their livestock between winter and summer pastures.

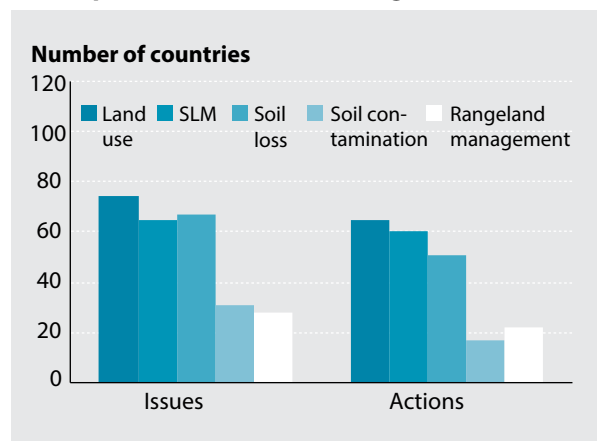
### Other Environmental Priorities

Initial guidance for conducting NCSAs focused on a thematic assessment for each of the three ratified Rio conventions (the CBD, the UNCCD, and the UNFCCC). As the NCSA process evolved, countries were encouraged to look at other environmental focal areas, particularly those related to the global environmental agenda, as well.

A number of countries considered national environmental issues to be of equal, if not greater, importance than similar issues on the global level. In these cases, countries felt that global environmental commitments could not be met without addressing the more visible and near-term priorities of issues such as health and sanitation. Other key environmental priorities highlighted in NCSAs included POPs, urban air quality and pollution, toxic wastes and hazardous chemicals, food security, and disaster preparedness.

**Figure 6.5**

#### Countries Identifying Priority Issues and Capacity Development Actions in Land Degradation



**Note:** SLM = sustainable land management.

### 6.4 Cross-Cutting Assessment

The cross-cutting analysis aimed to assess capacity issues, needs, and opportunities common to more than one convention. It included identifying possible synergies that could be achieved by addressing requirements across two or more themes; and those capacity needs common to both national and global environmental management, including any possible synergies between them. The result was a list of priority national capacity development actions that were developed in the action plans.

Identifying the capacity areas that are constraints to fulfilling convention obligations has important implications for capacity development actions, providing an overview of bottleneck issues that need to be alleviated. The issues most frequently identified as constraints entailed the following (figure 6.6).

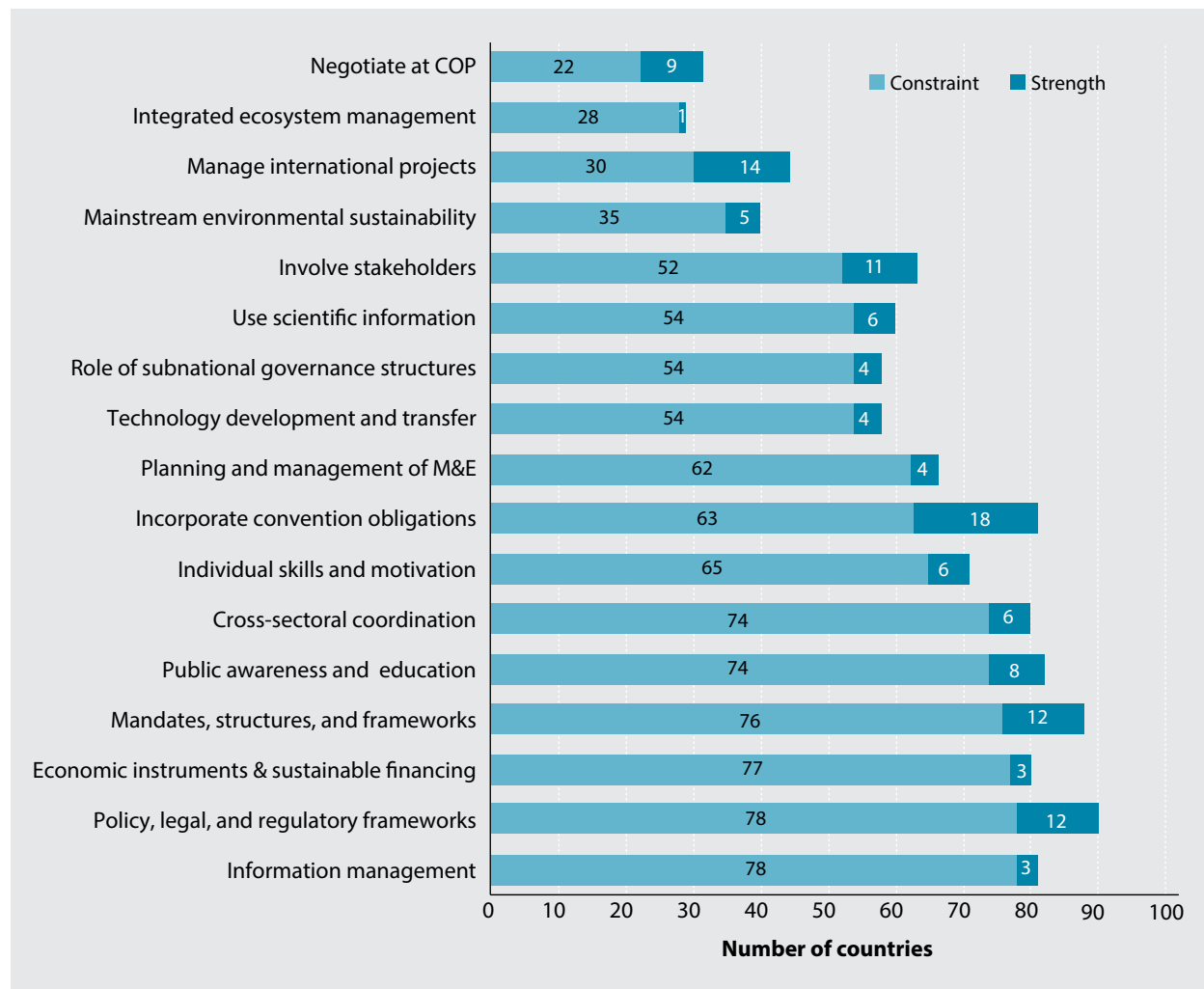
- Information access and dissemination (public awareness; environmental education; and information collection, management, and exchange)

- Requisite overarching frameworks and structures (policy development and enforcement, legal and regulatory frameworks, institutional and organizational mandates and structures, and economic instruments and sustainable financing mechanisms)

Capacities that are more specialized and narrowly defined—such as the capacity to negotiate at COP, manage international projects, and integrated ecosystem management—are cross-cutting capacity areas; a relatively small number of coun-

**Figure 6.6**

**Number of Countries Identifying Each Capacity Area as a Constraint**



tries (only about 20 percent) recognized these as constraints.

The analysis also looked at country perceptions of their strengths. Few countries identified their capacity strengths, as shown in figure 6.6. Not surprisingly, two of the three capacity areas least frequently cited as constraints were seen as strengths by a relatively large number of countries. These included the capacity to negotiate at COP (cited as a strength by 9 countries) and the capacity to manage international projects (14 countries). Moreover, a relatively large number of countries (18) identified the capacity to incorporate convention obligations into national frameworks as a strength.

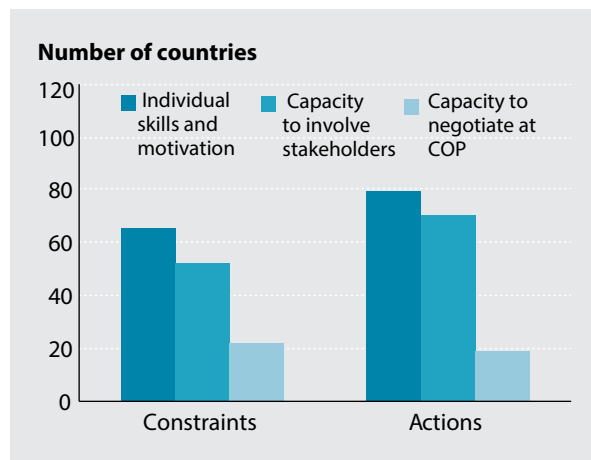
## Stakeholder Engagement

The capacity to engage with stakeholders was analyzed in terms of three capacity areas: individual skills and motivation, capacity to involve stakeholders in addressing global environmental issues, and capacity to negotiate at COP. Eighty-two countries (61 percent) identified one or more of these capacity areas as a constraint. Sixty-five countries (49 percent) identified individual skills and motivation as a constraint, while 52 (39 percent) cited stakeholder involvement as a weakness (figure 6.7).

In contrast to the overall focal area assessment findings, more countries recommended capacity development actions for stakeholder engagement than perceived it as a constraint (figure 6.7). For example, 79 countries recommended capacity development actions regarding individual skills and motivation, as did 70 countries regarding capacity to involve stakeholders. On the other hand, although 22 countries found their capacity for COP negotiation to be a constraint, only 19 recommended capacity development actions in this area.

Figure 6.7

### Countries' Assessment of Constraints and Capacity Development Actions in Stakeholder Engagement



## Information Management and Knowledge

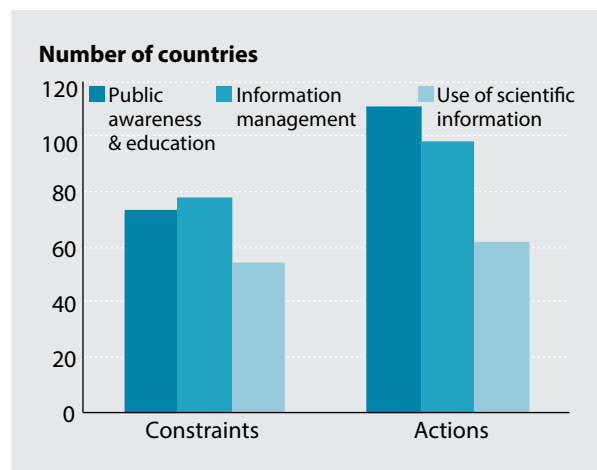
The capacity for information management and knowledge was assessed in terms of the following three capacity areas: capacity to raise public awareness and environmental education; capacity to collect, manage, and exchange environmental information; and capacity to use scientific information in policy, planning, and management. A total of 92 countries (69 percent) identified one or more of these capacity areas as a constraint.

Seventy-eight countries (58 percent) cited information management as a constraint, while 74 countries (55 percent) cited public awareness and environmental education as a constraint (figure 6.8).

As with stakeholder engagement, the recommendations for capacity development actions regarding information management and knowledge are more frequent than its identification as a constraint. A recommendation to develop capacity for public awareness and environmental education was cited by 111 countries (83 percent); 98 countries (73 percent) cited the need for

Figure 6.8

### Countries' Assessment of Constraints and Capacity Development Actions in Information Management and Knowledge



greater capacity to collect, manage, and exchange environmental information; and 62 countries (46 percent) recommended developing capacity to use scientific information in policy, planning, and management.

### Organizational Capacity

Organizational capacity was analyzed in terms of five capacity areas: institutional and organizational mandates, structures, and frameworks; economic instruments and sustainable financing mechanisms; technology development and transfer; capacity to manage international projects; and integrated ecosystem management.

More than 70 percent of countries identified the capacity of environmental organizations as a constraint, with 57 percent citing economic instruments and sustainable financing mechanisms, and organizational mandates and structures as the top constraints. Only 22 percent listed managing international projects and integrated ecosystem management as major constraints (figure 6.9).

More countries recommended capacity development actions to improve the capacity of environmental organizations than cited it as a constraint. A minor exception exists with regard to the capacity to manage international projects; the same number of countries cited this area as a constraint as recommended it for capacity development action.

### Environmental Governance

Environmental governance was assessed in terms of five sets of capacity: capacity to develop and enforce policy, legal, and regulatory frameworks; cross-sectoral coordination; capacity to incorporate convention objectives into national policy, legislation, and institutions; the role of subnational and local governance structures in environmental management; and mainstreaming of environmental sustainability principles into the development sector.

About 70 percent of countries (96) identified at least one capacity constraint regarding environmental governance (figure 6.10). The capacity to develop and enforce policy, legal, and regulatory frameworks was identified as the top constraint by 59 percent of countries, while 56 percent cited cross-sectoral coordination as a capacity constraint.

More countries recommended capacity development actions than identified that area of environmental governance as a constraint. Important cross-cutting capacity development recommendations in this area include the following:

- 75 percent (100 countries) recommended action to develop capacity to develop and enforce policy, legal, and regulatory frameworks
- 62 percent (83 countries) cited the need to develop capacity to incorporate convention

Figure 6.9

Countries' Assessment of Constraints and Capacity Development Actions in Organizational Capacity

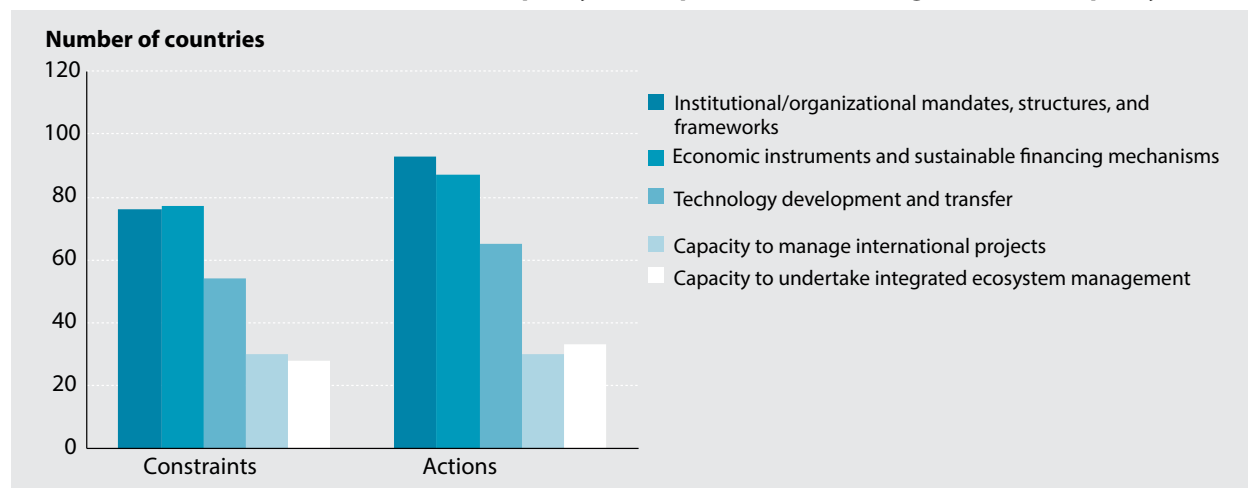
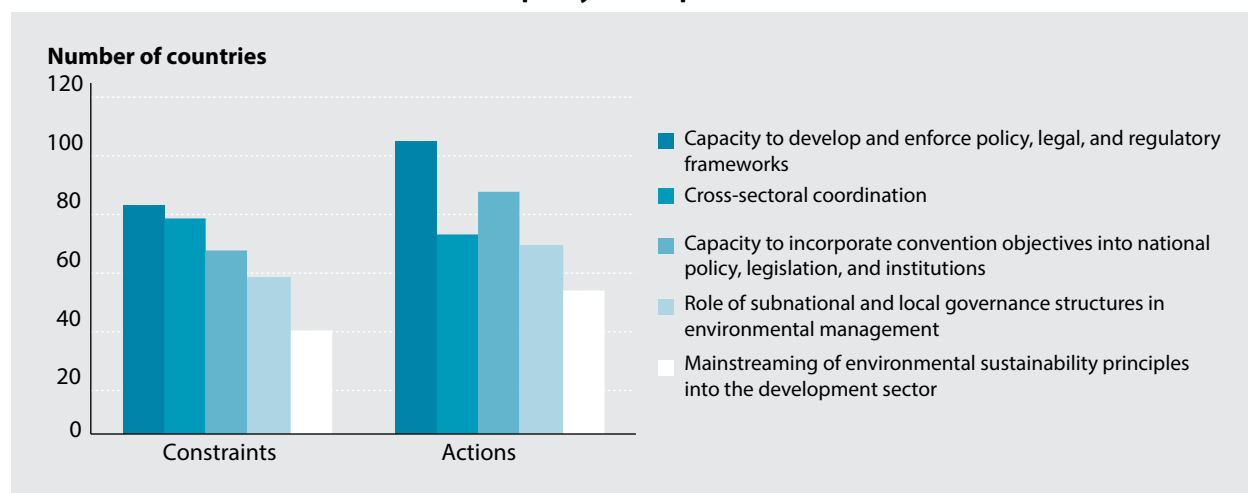


Figure 6.10

Countries' Assessment of Constraints and Capacity Development Actions in Environmental Governance



obligations into national legislation, policies, and institutions

- 51 percent (68 countries) noted the need to develop capacity for cross-sectoral coordination
- 49 percent (65 countries) flagged the need to strengthen the roles of regional and local governance structures to meet global environmental commitments

Although only 35 countries identified mainstreaming environmental sustainability as a constraint, 49 identified it as a priority capacity development action. It is also interesting to note that 18 countries reported a strong capacity to incorporate convention obligations into national legislation, policies, and institutions, while 12 cited their capacity to develop and enforce policy, legal, and regulatory frameworks as being strong.

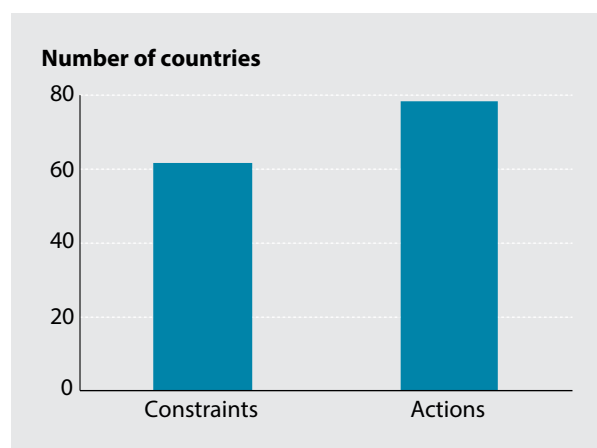


## Monitoring and Evaluation

Forty-six percent (62 countries) identified the capacity to plan, manage, monitor, and evaluate processes as a constraint (figure 6.11). However, 60 percent identified capacity development action in this area. Only four countries indicated that strong capacity in terms of monitoring and evaluation.

**Figure 6.11**

### Countries' Assessment of Constraints and Capacity Development Actions in Monitoring and Evaluation



### Summary

These self-assessments indicate a strong need for capacity development actions in the five main categories discussed. At least 110 countries (83 percent) cited the need to improve some capacities in the areas of stakeholder engagement, information management and knowledge, organizational capacities, and environmental governance. Eighty countries (60 percent) recommended capacity development actions to improve monitoring and evaluation (figure 6.12).

When the data are disaggregated by country type, differences in capacity constraints emerge for SIDS and LDCs as compared to the overall set of countries (figure 6.13). SIDS are similar to all countries

**Figure 6.12**

### Summary of Cross-Cutting Capacity Development Actions



for most capacity types, except that slightly lower percentages of SIDS cited constraints in the areas of information management and knowledge and monitoring and evaluation. Capacity constraints for LCDs are 20 percent higher than the average for each capacity type.

As figure 6.14 shows, the need for capacity development actions is very similar for all country types. For instance, 83 percent of all countries, 80 percent of SIDS, and 91 percent of LDCs cited the need to improve capacity in stakeholder engagement. Ninety-four percent of all countries, 97 percent of SIDS, and 94 percent of LDCs identified the need to improve environmental governance.

## 6.5 Long-Term Sustainability of Results

The sustainability of NCSAs can only be measured in terms of how the assessments conducted under the NCSAs are and will be used. To date, the GEF has not taken advantage of existing NCSA knowledge in its focal area programming, and in only a few cases have donors considered NCSA results in their programming.

Figure 6.13

Capacity Area Constraints by Country Type

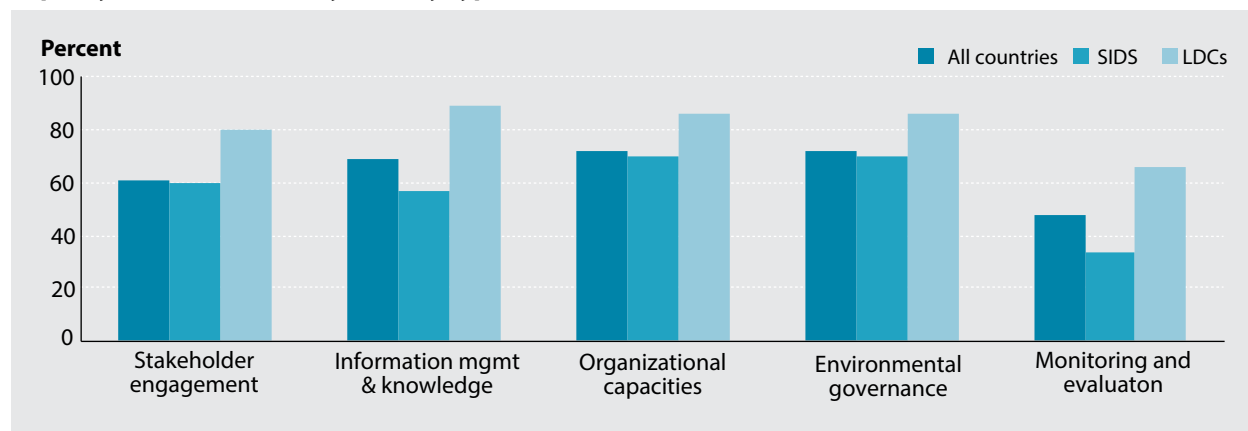
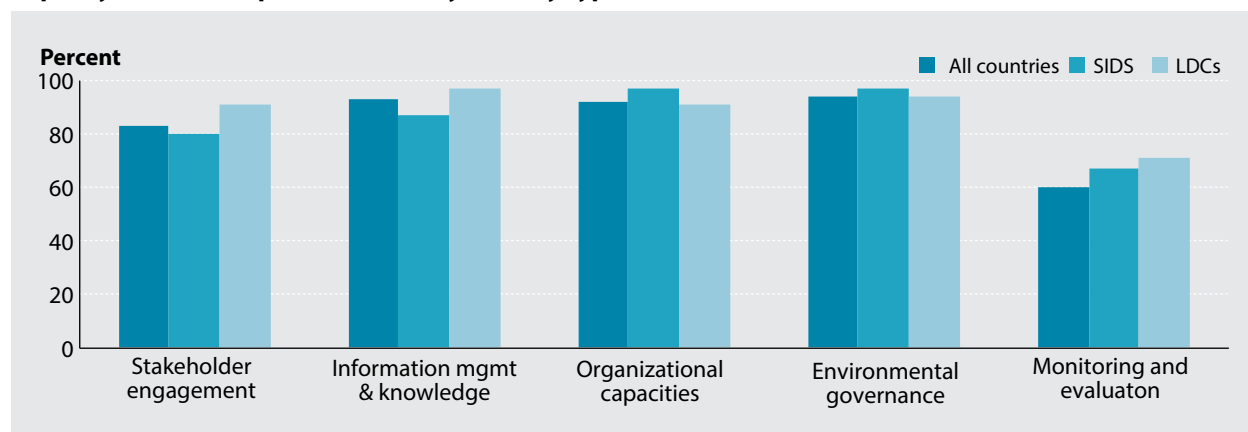


Figure 6.14

Capacity Area Development Actions by Country Type



The long-term sustainability of country NCSAs will be diminished if they are not updated or included in larger strategies and programs. In particular, NCSAs are not linked with MEA implementation at the country level. NCSA sustainability depends on how effectively each country builds on the areas identified for improvement and needed action. For example, countries currently undertaking NFPEs do not, in most cases, incorporate NCSA findings. The absence of linkages to the conventions also reduces the sustainability of NCSA results.

At the country level, NCSA methods and toolkits have not been replicated or scaled up. It is also not clear whether any countries have instituted a follow-up of the NCSA on their own while applying the methodology developed by NCSA. Some countries may have adopted NCSA methodologies and processes and may be in the process of allocating funds to replicate the relatively low-cost NCSA as needed. However, the evaluation found that countries are looking to implement their action plans, rather than conduct more assessments.

E-survey comments highlight the need for better national coordination and integration across the conventions. In many cases, the coordination that was achieved has not been sustained, which affects the level of sustainability gains. However, half of the respondents to the e-survey feel that the NCSA contributed to improved national coordination in matters related to the GEF and convention implementation. For example, capacity development is embedded in projects across the GEF focal areas, thus contributing to national coordination. The GEF also works with local agencies to ensure that plans exist to embed capacity development within institutions to sustain gains made by NCSAs.

The catalytic role of NCSAs is difficult to measure because, apart from CCD projects, the linkages to current capacity development activities within the GEF are not strong. About half of the e-survey respondents stated that the NCSA played a catalytic role in developing new capacity development activities. Respondents particularly noted improvements in capacity development at the individual and systemic levels. They observed less capacity development at the institutional level. This lack was due in large part to stakeholders not always understanding how to implement new skills into the daily work of the institution. In addition, many of those who received training have moved to positions in other organizations. This outcome indicates the importance of holding regional and national training programs, rather than having project consultants conduct one-off training sessions. Box 6.3 provides selected stakeholder comments on NCSA sustainability.

A positive catalytic outcome of the NCSAs is the review of legal frameworks for implementing cross-cutting issues under the conventions.

In some cases, the NCSA report is being used to address capacity needs, and NCSA action plans are being adopted as national planning tools.

Overall, the NCSA process has provided countries with their first concerted effort to identify and act on priorities. For example, Fiji and Kiribati have seen increased cooperation among government agencies. The European Union is using the NCSA to address the capacity needs of the UNFCCC and GEF climate change focal points. According to UNEP, the European Union is also funding projects based on NCSA results on its own accord, without a mandate to do so. The limits of this evaluation prevented an assessment of the extent of NCSA uptake in all countries.

## 6.6 Follow-up Activities

To date, 23 countries have begun implementing CB2 follow-up activities. However, many country-level stakeholders indicated that they were not aware of CB2 opportunities during NCSA implementation. They noted the need for the GEF to ensure further funding for follow-up priorities such as CB2 projects.

Section 3.6 provides an overview of countries currently undertaking a CB2 follow-up project. Other examples of NCSA follow-up include the following:

- Several countries are implementing medium-size projects based on NCSA outcomes.
- NCSAs are being used to draft national strategies for various focal areas.
- UNDP is continuing NCSA work through joint projects with ministries funded with UNDP resources.

### Box 6.3

#### Selected Stakeholder Comments on NCSA Sustainability

- **Croatia:** “NCSA results have overall been a significant positive experience, creating tangible positive effects with regard to national and global environmental issues. NCSA recommendations have found their way into a number of important subsequent policy documents that continue to shape Croatia’s environmental policies. The NCSA has contributed to capacity development on all levels and has played a catalyzing role in mainstreaming capacity development in policy making.”
- **Ecuador:** “Relevant issues of capacity development identified in the NCSA will most likely also influence the development of the GEF-5 national strategy and priorities, thus improving long-term impact. Creating the Climate Change Coordination Committee has improved institutional sustainability. This committee includes representatives from all focal areas and cross-sector participation of other ministries.”
- **India:** “Long-term interest and sustainability of results will be a challenge to the NCSA. The potential for long-term impact is low, and Indian officials point out that they have moved beyond the assessed capacity development results of the NCSA. The successful stakeholder involvement process will have a positive impact on future projects. The NCSA strengthened cross-cutting themes, and continued growth in this area is expected.”
- **Montenegro:** “Results have been extremely influential in the further development of Montenegro’s environmental policy development. Sustainability of NCSA results in Montenegro seems to be particularly high and promising as well. Integration of NCSA results into the environmental policy-making process is also strong.”
- **Paraguay:** “Long-term results of the NCSA are expected, but the report has only recently been completed. Creating a coordination committee has resulted in synergies at the institutional level for the three conventions. Most of the long-term results have been important in strengthening the executing agencies’ national capacity in general. To date, no GEF projects have been agreed to for GEF-5, but it is expected that the NCSA will feed into them. There is also a plan to prepare a CB2 project to implement recommendations in the action plan.”
- **Senegal:** “A result of the NCSA is awareness raising and training of the media, which highlighted the need for more community sensitivity to the global environmental agenda. The NCSA process allowed greater communication and understanding between technical services and communities. There is a need to integrate a more holistic approach into sectoral policies through demonstration projects.”
- **Thailand:** “There is now more focus on fulfilling commitments to the COPs, a higher level of political commitment, and a greater potential for work between the conventions. Lessons learned in creating networks will have a lasting influence. However, the NCSA may have been too broad to ensure sustainability.”



## Annex A. Terms of Reference

*This annex presents the TOR for the Evaluation of GEF National Capacity Self-Assessments. Minor editorial changes have been made.*

### A.1 Background on GEF and Capacity Development

Since its inception, the GEF has supported capacity development at all levels. This includes regular GEF programs and projects, as well as specifically targeted capacity development and enabling activities. GEF support responds to convention decisions<sup>1</sup> and the recognition that improving capacity is critical to meeting development objectives. The GEF has adopted two major policy documents that have been discussed with the GEF Council and provide GEF guidance: “Elements of Strategic Collaboration and a Framework for GEF Action for Capacity Building for the Global Environment” (GEF Council 2001) and “Strategic Approach to Enhance Capacity Building” (GEF Council 2003).

<sup>1</sup> Guidance from the UNFCCC and CBD COPs has requested the GEF provide funding for country-driven capacity development activities, in particular to LDCs and SIDS. Both the UNCCD and the Stockholm POPs Convention highlight the need to emphasize capacity development to assist countries in meeting their commitments under the respective conventions.

Capacity development has also been included in all GEF replenishment negotiations, including GEF-5, which requests that capacity development be made a central part of regular GEF projects and programs. In addition, the GEF has agreed that cross-cutting capacity development will be addressed through stand-alone projects (the GEF-5 capacity development strategy). In the context of the GEF, capacity development refers to the capabilities needed to strengthen and sustain functional environmental management systems at the global level, recognizing that these systems must build upon national governance and management systems. Furthermore, capacity development is required to improve individual, institutional, and/or enabling environment performance to promote progress toward global environmental gains.

In May 1999, the GEF Council approved CDI as a strategic partnership between the GEF Secretariat and UNDP to develop the capacities needed at the country level to meet the challenges of global environmental action. The initiative provided the necessary consultative and substantive foundation for developing elements of a strategic collaboration and a specific framework for GEF action to respond to the growing convention attention to capacity development. The assessment recommended that the GEF subscribe to the following

operational principles to achieve effective capacity development:

- Ensure national ownership and leadership
- Ensure multistakeholder consultations and decision making
- Base capacity development efforts in self-needs assessments
- Adopt a holistic approach
- Integrate capacity development in wider sustainable development efforts
- Promote partnerships
- Accommodate the dynamic nature of capacity development
- Adopt a learning-by-doing approach
- Combine programmatic, process, and project-based approaches
- Promote regional approaches.

The “Strategic Approach to Enhance Capacity Building” (GEF Council 2003) has guided GEF actions on capacity development through the GEF-3 and GEF-4 phases. This approach focused attention on four pathways:

- National capacity self-assessments
- Strengthening the capacity development components of GEF projects
- Targeting capacity development projects both within and across focal areas
- Country capacity development programs in LDCs and SIDS

The Evaluation Office has conducted several assessments of capacity development. In 2007, the Office conducted an evaluation using country case studies of the Philippines and Vietnam and a review of project terminal evaluations received

by the Evaluation Office during 2007. The country case studies examined the nature and results of national, regional, and global interventions and their relationship to capacity development targets at the policy, institutional, and individual levels in each country.<sup>2</sup> The review of 41 terminal evaluation reports assessed the extent to which capacity development activities in GEF projects were relevant, effective, and efficient. The review also looked at the sustainability of the results of these activities based on evidence provided in the reports. Nevertheless, there has not been an overall evaluation of the capacity development support provided by the GEF.

In 2010, the GEF Secretariat and the World Bank (as GEF Trustee) prepared “Summary of Negotiations—Fifth Replenishment of the GEF Trust Fund,” which was submitted to the GEF Council in May 2010. The programming document requested that the NCSAs implemented under GEF-4 be evaluated in order to prepare a new strategy for discussion by the GEF Council in 2011. This new strategy is to be prepared in consultation with the Agencies and will be based on the results and recommendations of the evaluation.

## **A.2 National Capacity Self-Assessment, Global Support Programme, and Follow-up Projects**

In May 2001, the GEF Council approved technical support for countries to initiate a self-assessment of their capacity needs to address global environmental issues and prepare a national capacity action plan. This decision was taken as one of the approaches that the GEF proposed to implement CDI recommendations. The purpose of the

---

<sup>2</sup> These case studies are published on the GEF Evaluation Office website ([www.gefeo.org](http://www.gefeo.org)).



NCSA initiative was to enable countries to do the following:

- Review the global environmental issues that require priority attention particularly, but not exclusively, with regard to issues covered by the conventions
- Determine what kind of capacity development is needed to strengthen management of these issues
- Prepare a national plan of capacity development actions

The decision requested that financial assistance be provided to countries that wish to undertake NCSAs. Proposals for up to \$200,000 were to be processed under expedited procedures and apart from the regular GEF project cycle. The purpose of these assessments was to support a country-driven consultative process of analysis and planning that would determine national priorities and needs for capacity development to protect the global environment and implement the CBD, the UNCCD, and the UNFCCC.

The primary NCSA objective was to identify country-level priorities and capacity development needs, with a focus on biodiversity, climate change, and land degradation.<sup>3</sup> The NCSA initiative would seek to explore the synergies among focal areas, as well as the linkages with wider environmental management and sustainable development concerns. NCSAs were not intended to be definitive or final, recognizing the dynamic nature of capacity development. They were also not a

---

<sup>3</sup> GEF resources were allocated separately to address initial capacity development needs in the areas of POPs and biosafety, but with the expectation that, where linkages and synergies with these sectors are desirable or obvious, NCSAs should cover them in keeping with country perceptions and priorities.

precondition to receive assistance through regular GEF projects and enabling activities, nor were they a necessary first step to launching capacity development activities in a particular sector. The final NCSA report and action plan would be the main output, but it was expected that the GEF grant would support the process of consultation and report preparation. Both the process and final report were considered useful and relevant frameworks for domestic action and external assistance for capacity development. A key principle was that NCSAs would be entirely country driven, undertaken by national institutions and experts, and responsive to national situations and priorities.

The following elements were considered critical to effectively carry out NCSAs and ensure sustainable, longer term, and holistic capacity development that would enable countries to tackle environmental priority setting within the guidance of the conventions and their own sustainable development frameworks:

- *National ownership and leadership.* The process of preparing and implementing an NCSA action plan should ensure national ownership and leadership. It was assumed that this could be accomplished by using national or regional experts and existing coordinating structures and mechanisms; ensuring multistakeholder participation, consultation, and decision making; and building on work relevant to NCSAs, such as GEF-supported enabling activities and national reports to the conventions.
- *Convention decisions.* NCSAs should take into account convention provisions and decisions as they relate to capacity development.
- *Holistic approach.* NCSAs should adopt a holistic approach to capacity development that addresses capacity needs at the systemic, institutional, and individual levels, while integrating

such capacity development into wider sustainable development efforts.

- *Long-term approach.* NCSAs should also adopt a long-term approach to capacity development within the broader context of sustainable development.

According to a recent study conducted by UNDP and UNEP (Bellamy and Hill 2010b), the GEF has provided \$28.7 million for 153 NCSAs since 2002, when the first NCSA was approved. The GEF did not require cofinancing, with most countries contributing in-kind support. Seven NCSA projects were canceled due to nondelivery of NCSA products, with the remaining 146 projects implemented or under implementation. UNDP implemented 76 percent, UNEP 23 percent, and the World Bank 0.7 percent. At the end of 2010, of the 119 countries that have completed their NCSAs, 23 received \$12 million in follow-up support from the GEF to implement NCSA priorities. On average, the GEF provides \$500,000 per CB2 project.

In addition to the national NCSAs, the GEF approved the GSP as a support mechanism for the NCSAs and capacity development under the GEF. The GSP was a three-year facility of the GEF Agencies, UNDP, and UNEP. It was designed to provide technical assistance to countries engaged in the GEF, monitor the progress of individual NCSAs, and review the process followed and results produced. The GSP was also charged with drawing and disseminating lessons learned to participating countries and GEF Agencies. The program was funded by \$1.9 million from the GEF and \$1 million from other sources.

GSP services to NCSA teams included the following: development and dissemination of assessment tools, guidance, and resource materials; training on assessment approaches and tools through a series of workshops; information and knowledge

management through outreach, website, database, and electronic listservs; and a review and analysis of NCSA outputs, particularly action plans and final reports. The GSP closed at the end of December 2010, and a final evaluation is available (Baastel 2010).

### A.3 Scope of the Evaluation

The scope of the evaluation will include an assessment of all approved NCSAs, the GSP, and the follow-up projects. The evaluation will build upon the level of implementation of each of these projects and existing assessments, as well as reviews and evaluations conducted on any of the modalities. A key resource to be considered will be the NCSA results and lessons assessment (Bellamy and Hill 2010b). The evaluation team will review the recently completed GSP evaluation and build on its findings and recommendations. In particular, the evaluation will conduct a full assessment (basically covering all focus areas) of completed NCSAs, a partial assessment (primarily for relevance and efficiency) of NCSAs under implementation, and a limited assessment (questions regarding relevance) for follow-up projects.

In this evaluation, the term “NCSA” includes the grant, project implementation, final report and action plan, and the process for report preparation. This assumes that the NCSA was set as a consultative process for an in-depth assessment of capacity challenges in meeting convention objectives.

### A.4 Focus Areas and Key Questions

The evaluation will focus on relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and results (and their sustainability). Each area will be developed through a series of key questions and subquestions presented in table A.1 and in the evaluation matrix in annex B.

**Table A.1**

**Criteria for Effective NCSA Implementation**

Focus area	National ownership and leadership	Convention decisions	Holistic approach	Long-term approach
Relevance of NCSAs to the GEF mandate, the multinational and regional environmental agreements, conventions working with the GEF, and national sustainable development and environmental priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent have NCSAs been relevant to the needs and priorities of recipient countries within the context of national sustainable development agendas?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is the relevance of NCSAs to the implementation of multinational and regional environmental agreements and conventions?</li> <li>To what extent have NCSAs been relevant to the GEF mandate?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do NCSAs adequately take into account the sustainable development objectives of recipient countries and their related needs and priorities?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do NCSAs support GEF strategic priorities, including the strategy to enhance environmental management capacity in countries?</li> </ul>
Efficiency of NCSA implementation processes and final report and action plan preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Was the support to NCSAs channeled in an efficient way?</li> <li>How efficient was stakeholder involvement and partnership, as well as the arrangements for designing and implementing NCSAs and preparing final reports and action plans?</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Were NCSAs built on ongoing and existing work, such as GEF and other projects, enabling activities, national communications, and activities supporting capacity development?</li> </ul>	
Effectiveness: What are NCSA main achievements, individually and at aggregate levels?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Were capacity needs and action plans endorsed/ approved nationally and how?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Was convention guidance taken into account and implemented?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What were the synergies between NCSAs and GEF-supported activities?</li> <li>What were NCSA achievements at the aggregate level, based on individual achievements?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What types of CCCD (CB2) projects were developed following NCSAs?</li> </ul>
Results: What are the long-term results of NCSAs at country (individual grants) and global levels (aggregated)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What degree of local ownership is there of NCSAs, their capacity needs, and the required actions?</li> <li>Do NCSAs have a catalytic role in recipient countries?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have NCSAs contributed to the development of country capacity to meet MEA responsibilities?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How were NCSA recommendations integrated into wider national sustainable development and environmental agendas?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will NCSA achievements be sustainable over the long term?</li> <li>Were there any synergies between NCSAs and the planning of GEF activities, including the NPFE?</li> </ul>

This framework is based on the key NCSA principles and the expected purpose, objectives, and results of these modalities. Table A.1 provides the framework for the evaluation.

## A.5 Evaluation Design, Methods, and Time Frame

The evaluation will take place between mid-February and early November, with the main findings and recommendations presented to the GEF Council in November 2011 as part of the Annual Thematic Evaluation Report. The full evaluation report will be available at [www.thegefeo.org](http://www.thegefeo.org). The evaluation will be conducted by a team comprised of GEF Evaluation Office staff, a senior consultant, and research assistants.

### Evaluation Design

The first set of tasks includes hiring consultants for the evaluation team, conducting stakeholder consultations on key issues that should be included in the evaluation, finalizing the evaluation TOR, updating project databases, and developing protocols for project and document reviews and interviews.

- *Selection and hiring of consultants (consultant contracts should start on or about March 15).* A request of interest was created for a senior consultant and research assistants in mid-January. This was followed by interviews, selection, and contracting. Each consultancy will have a separate TOR.
- *Preparation of TORs for evaluation and approval by the GEF Evaluation Office Director by mid-April.* These TORs have been prepared after consultations with key stakeholders, particularly GEF Evaluation Office, GEF Secretariat, UNDP, and UNEP representatives who have been engaged with NCSAs as well

as with broader capacity development issues. Several GEF focal points were also consulted in the finalization of the TORs, through consultations during the GEF-supported Extended Consultation Workshops for countries in central Africa, the Caribbean, and Eastern Europe. In addition to the TORs, an updated database of all NCSA and second-phase projects will be prepared, including basic project information, such as project cycle dates, financial information, implementing and executing agencies, and key expected outcomes.

- *Development of protocols for conducting interviews with key stakeholders, NCSA reviews, and capacity development activities in the GEF portfolio (March–April).* These protocols will provide the framework to conduct reviews and interviews in a standardized format.

### Evaluation Context

The evaluation will begin by establishing the NCSA context through a review of capacity development in GEF-supported projects and programs; a review of other types of capacity development conducted at the national level but not supported by GEF funding, in particular those described in enabling activities and other reports to the conventions; and a meta-evaluation of Evaluation Office documents, as well as documents from the evaluation offices of the GEF Agencies regarding capacity development and lessons, findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

- *Review of capacity development in GEF projects and programs approved in GEF-3 and GEF-4 since the approval of the first NCSA (March–May).* A project review protocol will be developed for capacity development activities supported through regular GEF projects and programs. This will provide a context in which NCSAs are prepared and implemented

as well as help respond to the questions of relevance and synergies with other GEF-supported activities. In addition, this review will produce an inventory of the types and amounts of GEF funding for capacity development in the last two GEF phases. Since this will be a review of inputs (at project and program approval), no attempt will be made to assess the results or effectiveness of supported activities.

- *Review of capacity development activities and needs assessments at the country level as well as the relationship with the global environmental conventions and supporting sources other than the GEF (March–May).* This overview of other activities supporting capacity development will be conducted at the global and regional levels to place the GEF in context. Activities will be identified by using the websites of the conventions and other relevant institutions. In addition, each country visit will include a brief overview of capacity development activities at the national level, using NCSAs and other enabling activities that have an inventory of capacity development activities in the country.
- *Meta-evaluation of evaluations by the GEF and GEF Agencies to extract evidence regarding capacity development (March–April).* The GEF Evaluation Office has not conducted a systemwide evaluation of capacity development, but several evaluations have included components dealing with this subject. The 2007 study included a review of capacity development lessons and achievements from a series of completed projects and case studies in the Philippines and Vietnam. This study will be incorporated in the meta-evaluation. Furthermore, evaluative evidence from the GEF Agencies will be considered. In particular, the recently completed independent evaluation of the GSP will be incorporated in the meta-evaluation and synthesized in the final report.

Furthermore, the UNDP Evaluation Office has agreed to incorporate some of the key questions in its Annual Development Results Evaluations (evaluations of UNDP support at the country level) that will be conducted during 2011 (15 country-level evaluations are expected to take place).

## Data Collection

Initially, data will be collected from interviews with key stakeholders, in particular representatives from the GEF Secretariat, GEF Agencies, and GEF focal points. In addition, an online survey of stakeholders, such as convention focal points, NGOs, and other representatives of GEF Agencies, will be conducted. All NCSA reports will be assessed using a special protocol that covers the focus areas and builds on the NCSA results and lessons report (Bellamy and Hill 2010b). To respond to issues of effectiveness, relevance, and results, all follow-up projects will be reviewed using a separate protocol. Data collection at the country level will be through a meta-evaluation, teleconferences with GEF focal points and NCSA teams, and in-depth assessments during country visits. Selected countries will represent different implementation situations and stages. For example, countries that receive preference will include those that have completed their NCSAs and follow-up projects, as well as countries that chose not to conduct an NCSA.

- *Interviews (March–September).* Interviews will be conducted throughout the entire evaluation period. Stakeholders who participated in NCSA development and implementation will be given priority. In particular, priority will be given to GEF Secretariat, UNDP, and UNEP representatives who were involved in the development of the 2003 GEF Capacity Development Strategy, as well as in NCSA preparation and implementation.



- *E-survey (May–June)*. The e-survey of key stakeholders will focus on NCSA relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and results. The survey will be available in English, French, Spanish, Russian, Chinese, and Arabic. If response rates are sufficient, the results will provide another data source for triangulating the analysis. Analysis will be conducted according to categories of respondents.
- *NCSA reviews (April–May)*. Building on the NCSA synthesis report (Bellamy and Hill 2010b) and the work conducted for this report, all approved NCSAs will undergo a desk review based on the protocol developed to collect information on relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, and results. The status of individual NCSAs (completed, under implementation, or starting up) will determine the focus of the review, which will be complemented by stakeholder interviews and visits to selected countries.
- *Follow-up project reviews (April–May)*. Each approved follow-up capacity development project will undergo a desk review using the review protocol developed earlier. The review will focus on relevance to NCSA recommendations and action plans, and processing. When appropriate, the project reviews will also provide data for the analysis of the sustainability of NCSA results.
- *Country-level information*. The information will be collected through the following:
  - A meta-evaluation to generate country-level data
  - Protocols to review capacity development activities in GEF-3 and GEF-4 projects

- Teleconferences with GEF focal points and NCSA teams in selected countries
- Visits to selected countries to collect data from all key areas of the evaluation, including verification of expected outcomes and results, and to prepare country reports<sup>4</sup>

Countries will be selected on the basis of synergies with other Evaluation Office visits, their NCSA status, and whether they have had country portfolio evaluations or other Evaluation Office visits over the past five years. GEF Agencies, country types, and regional diversity will also be taken into consideration.

## Analysis

Analysis will be based on proper quality controls. Trends, lessons, main findings, and conclusions will be extracted for a draft report to be discussed at a consultation workshop with key stakeholders.

- *Data analysis (July–September)*. Data quality will be assessed, corrections made when necessary, and analyzed.
- *Draft report (September 7)*. In addition to the key focus areas, the draft report will include a description of the actual methodology and any

---

<sup>4</sup> The visits will include extensive meetings and interviews with stakeholders familiar with NCSAs and those expected to benefit. In addition, visits will be made to several GEF projects that emphasize capacity. Each country visit is expected to last about two days. The evaluation will also benefit from GEF country portfolio evaluations and the UNDP Evaluation Office's Assessment of Development Reports.

limitations or challenges, as well as how they were resolved.

- *Consultation workshop (September 15)*. The workshop will discuss key findings and conclusions as well as possible recommendations to the GEF Council. This follows standard Evaluation Office practice. Participants will receive the draft report one week before the workshop and be encouraged to send comments prior to the consultation. Relevant and appropriate workshop outcomes will be incorporated in the final report.

## A.6 Report and Presentation to the GEF Council

The final report will be synthesized, and the main findings and recommendations included in the Annual Thematic Evaluation Report to be presented to the GEF Council at its November session. The full report will be available at [www.gefeo.org](http://www.gefeo.org). Since Annual Thematic Evaluation Reports should be uploaded to the GEF Council website by October 11, the final NCSA evaluation report should be completed by October 1. The Council meeting will take place on November 16, 2011.

**Table A.2**

**Evaluation Tasks and Time Table Months in 2011 (calendar)**

Task	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Evaluation design												
Consultants' selection and contracting	■	■										
Consultation with key stakeholders	■	■	■									
Terms of reference approved		■	■	■								
Database			■	■								
Protocols development			■	■								
Evaluation context												
Review of capacity development in GEF projects				■	■	■						
Review of capacity development from other sources				■	■							
Meta-evaluation of existing evaluations				■	■							
Data collection												
Interviews			■	■	■	■	■	■	■			
Online survey					■	■						
Review of NCSAs				■	■							
Review of follow-up capacity development activities				■	■							
Teleconference with NCSA teams					■	■	■					
Country visits					■	■	■					
Analysis												
Data analysis							■	■	■			
Draft report									■			
Consultation workshop									■			
Report and presentation to Council												
Final document										■		
Presentation to Council											■	



## Annex B. Evaluation Matrix

Evaluated component	Subquestion	Indicators	Sources	Data collection method
<b>Evaluation criteria: Relevance of NCSAs to the GEF mandate, multinational and regional environmental agreements, conventions working with the GEF, and recipient countries' sustainable development and environmental agendas</b>				
What is the relevance of NCSAs to the implementation of multinational and regional environmental agreements and conventions working with the GEF?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How did the NCSA process and reports relate to national convention implementation?</li> <li>• Was convention guidance taken into account when implementing NCSAs and producing the reports?</li> <li>• Were lessons and experiences from NCSA implementation fed into convention processes related to capacity development?</li> <li>• What is the relevance of the NCSAs to other capacity development activities supporting convention implementation?</li> </ul>	Level of coherence between NCSA objectives and those of the MEAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convention documents</li> <li>• GEF and convention websites</li> <li>• NCSA reports and action plans</li> <li>• GEF EO (2010c)</li> <li>• Key informants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document analyses</li> <li>• Website reviews</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• E-survey</li> </ul>
To what extent have NCSAs been relevant to the GEF mandate?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do NCSAs support the strategic priorities of the GEF, including the strategy to enhance environmental management capacity in countries?</li> <li>• What were the links between NCSAs, GEF projects and programs, and other capacity development activities supported by the GEF?</li> <li>• Were there any synergies between NCSAs and the planning of GEF activities, including the NPFE?</li> </ul>	Level of coherence between NCSA objectives/priorities and those of the GEF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NCSA reports and action plans</li> <li>• GEF strategic priorities</li> <li>• GEF EO (2010c)</li> <li>• Key informants</li> <li>• GEF websites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document analyses</li> <li>• Website reviews</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• E-survey</li> </ul>

Evaluated component	Subquestion	Indicators	Sources	Data collection method
To what extent have NCSAs been relevant to recipient country needs and priorities, within the context of national sustainable development agendas?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do NCSAs adequately take into account the sustainable development objectives of recipient countries and their related needs and priorities?</li> <li>Have NCSAs remained relevant in terms of scope and process? Any examples?</li> <li>What were the links between NCSAs and governance structures and mechanisms dealing with environmental management, capacity development, and national sustainable development?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Degree to which NCSAs supported national environmental objectives and priorities</li> <li>Environmental status in recipient countries</li> <li>Examples of linkages between NCSAs and national environmental management frameworks</li> <li>Appreciation from national stakeholders regarding the adequacy of NCSA design and implementation for national realities and existing capacities</li> <li>Level of involvement of government officials and other NCSA partners</li> <li>Coherence between needs expressed by national stakeholders and GEF policies and strategies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Related country strategies, policies, and programs</li> <li>NCSA reports and action plans</li> <li>GEF EO (2010c)</li> <li>Needs assessment studies</li> <li>GEF focal points, key government officials, and other partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document analyses</li> <li>Website reviews</li> <li>Interviews</li> <li>E-survey</li> </ul>

**Evaluation criteria: Effectiveness—What are the main achievements of NCSAs at country and global levels?**

How were the NCSAs effective in achieving their expected outcomes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What have been the achievements of NCSAs at the aggregate level, based on individual achievements?</li> <li>How do NCSAs relate to NCSA principles?</li> <li>Were capacity needs and action plans endorsed and approved nationally?</li> <li>What types of CB2 projects were developed following NCSAs?</li> <li>Was convention guidance taken into account, and is it implemented?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Systematic assessment of priority needs</li> <li>Preparation of national capacity development plans, which should contain objectives and actions to improve the ability of individuals, institutions, and systems to make and implement decisions and perform functions in an effective, efficient, and sustainable manner</li> <li>Approved national environmental priorities</li> <li>Degree of national acceptance and endorsement of NCSA reports, including action plans</li> <li>Examples of NCSA contributions to strengthen functions necessary to meet MEA responsibilities</li> <li>Examples of synergies between NCSAs and other GEF-supported activities</li> <li>Quality of NCSA reports</li> <li>Examples of significant capacity gains</li> <li>Type of follow-up activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NCSA reports and action plans</li> <li>GEF focal points</li> <li>Key stakeholders</li> <li>Related national strategies and programs</li> <li>NCSA management teams</li> <li>Key informants from GEF and GEF Agencies</li> <li>NCSA management committee meeting minutes</li> <li>CCCD project documents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document analyses</li> <li>Meetings</li> <li>Interviews</li> <li>E-survey</li> <li>Country visits</li> </ul>
--	---	---	---	---

Evaluated component	Subquestion	Indicators	Sources	Data collection method
<b>Evaluation criteria: Efficiency in the processes to implement NCSAs and prepare final reports and action plans</b>				
Was support to the NCSAs channeled in an efficient way?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did NCSAs use the guidance received from the GSP, including the NCSA resource kit?</li> <li>• Were NCSAs built on ongoing and existing work, such as GEF and non-GEF projects, enabling activities, national communications, and other activities supporting capacity development?</li> <li>• Was there a direct and strong link between expected results of NCSAs and their design (in terms of project components, choice of partners, structure, delivery mechanism, scope, budget, or use of resources)?</li> <li>• How long did it take to prepare and implement NCSAs?</li> <li>• Did NCSAs take into account local capacity in project design and implementation? Any limitations?</li> <li>• Did NCSA implementation and preparation face challenges?</li> <li>• Was adaptive management used? How well were risks and assumptions managed?</li> <li>• Did institutionalized or informal feedback or dissemination mechanisms ensure that findings, lessons learned, and recommendations were shared among stakeholders?</li> <li>• Did NCSAs mainstream gender considerations into their implementation?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidance included in the resource kit</li> <li>• Inception reports—including workplans—and any changes made to them that were used as management tools during implementation</li> <li>• Availability and quality of progress and financial reports</li> <li>• Timeliness and adequacy of reporting</li> <li>• Level of discrepancy between planned and utilized financial expenditures</li> <li>• Planned versus actual funds leveraged</li> <li>• Adequacy of project choices in view of existing context, infrastructure, and cost</li> <li>• Proportion of total utilized expertise from recipient countries</li> <li>• Level of project progress review done by the NCSA management committees</li> <li>• Occurrence of change in design/implementation approach (e.g., restructuring) when needed to improve project efficiency</li> <li>• Existence, quality, and use of monitoring and evaluation feedback and the dissemination mechanism to share findings, lessons learned, and action plans</li> <li>• Gender-disaggregated data in project documents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NCSA resource kit</li> <li>• NCSA reports and action plans, including inception reports and project implementation reviews</li> <li>• NCSA management teams</li> <li>• Key informants</li> <li>• NCSA management committee meeting minutes</li> <li>• GEF focal points</li> <li>• NCSA (self) evaluation reports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document analyses</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• E-survey</li> <li>• Meetings with NCSA management teams</li> </ul>
How efficient was stakeholder and partner involvement in NCSA design and implementation and in the preparation of final reports and action plans?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How country-driven were NCSA processes? Who conducted NCSAs?</li> <li>• Were all relevant and appropriate country stakeholders involved? What were their roles and responsibilities?</li> <li>• What were the challenges in implementing national project steering committees? Were other collaborative arrangements established or used?</li> <li>• Which collaboration methods were successful and, if not, why?</li> <li>• How efficient was the cooperation and collaboration between stakeholders, GEF focal points, and Agencies?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Degree of involvement and inclusiveness of stakeholders in NCSA implementation</li> <li>• Specific activities conducted to support the development of cooperative arrangements between partners</li> <li>• Examples of supported partnerships</li> <li>• Evidence that particular partnerships or linkages will be sustained</li> <li>• Types/quality of partnership cooperation methods utilized</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NCSA reports and action plans</li> <li>• NCSA management teams</li> <li>• Key informants</li> <li>• GEF focal points</li> <li>• NCSA (self) evaluation reports</li> <li>• NCSA management committee meeting minutes</li> <li>• Key stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document analysis</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Meetings</li> <li>• Survey</li> </ul>

Evaluated component	Subquestion	Indicators	Sources	Data collection method
<b>Evaluation criteria: Results—What are the long-term results of NCSAs at country (each individual grant) and global levels (aggregated)?</b>				
What are the long-term results of NCSAs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have NCSAs had a catalytic role in recipient countries?</li> <li>• At what level were NCSA results achieved: individual, institutional, and/or systemic?</li> <li>• Have NCSAs contributed to the development of country capacity to meet MEA responsibilities?</li> <li>• How did participants and their organizations assimilate results of efforts made during the implementation of NCSAs?</li> <li>• What degree is there of local ownership of NCSAs, their capacity needs, and the required actions?</li> <li>• Were there any synergies between NCSAs and the planning of GEF activities, including the NPFE?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examples of NCSA achievements</li> <li>• Examples of synergies in projects and programs among the GEF focal areas and convention issues that can be traced back to NCSAs</li> <li>• Examples of integration of global environmental issues into national strategies that are related to NCSAs</li> <li>• Examples of commitments or actions on biodiversity, climate change, international waters, land degradation, or POPs that are related to NCSAs</li> <li>• Examples of NCSA catalytic roles</li> <li>• Changes related to the mainstreaming of GEF activities in national planning frameworks</li> <li>• Strategies/programs/practices related to global environmental agenda</li> <li>• Capacity for knowledge acquisition and sharing</li> <li>• Capacity for awareness raising, stakeholder involvement, and government awareness</li> <li>• Stakeholder behavior</li> <li>• Policy making and planning capacity to mainstream GEF activities in national planning frameworks</li> <li>• Capacity to mobilize resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NCSA final reports and action plans</li> <li>• GEF focal points</li> <li>• Key stakeholders</li> <li>• NCSA (self) evaluation reports</li> <li>• NCSA management teams</li> <li>• Key informants</li> <li>• NCSA management committee meeting minutes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document analyses</li> <li>• Meetings</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• E-survey</li> </ul>
Will NCSA achievements be sustainable over the long term?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How were NCSA recommendations integrated into the wider national sustainable development and environmental agendas?</li> <li>• Was sustainability integrated into NCSA design and implementation?</li> <li>• Did NCSAs adequately address financial and economic sustainability issues?</li> <li>• What is the level of political commitment to build on NCSA results?</li> <li>• What is the sustainability of collaborative mechanisms established or strengthened through the NCSA process?</li> <li>• Were any NCSAs replicated and/or scaled up in supported countries and others?</li> <li>• What are the main challenges that may hinder sustainability? What can be done about these?</li> <li>• Are there clear strategies for risk mitigation related to long-term NCSA sustainability?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence/quality of the strategy and steps taken to address sustainability</li> <li>• Type of NCSA follow-up activities</li> <li>• Level and source of future financial support to be provided for follow-up activities in recipient countries</li> <li>• Evidence of political commitment through speeches, strategies, programs, and resource allocation to priorities established by the NCSA action plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NCSA final reports and action plans</li> <li>• GEF focal points</li> <li>• Key stakeholders</li> <li>• NCSA (self) evaluation reports</li> <li>• NCSA management teams</li> <li>• Key informants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Meetings</li> <li>• E-survey</li> <li>• Document analyses</li> </ul>

## Annex C. Interviewees

### C.1 GEF and GEF Agencies

Monique Barbut, CEO, GEF; July 26, 2011

Heather Baser, OECD DAC Consultant; August 8, 2011

Adamou Bouhari, UNEP, Task Manager Gambia NCSA and CB2; June 29, 2011

Carlo Carugi, Senior Evaluation Officer, GEF Evaluation Office; April 20, 2011

David Cooper, Senior Program Officer, CBD; June 28, 2011

Robert Dixon, Climate Change Team Leader, GEF Secretariat; April 18, 2011

David Duthie, CBD Montreal; September 8, 2011

Gustavo Alberto Fonseca, Natural Resources Team Leader, GEF Secretariat; April 19, 2011

Alan Fox, UNDP Evaluation Office; June 20, 2011

Yannick Glemarec, UNDP/GEF Executive Coordinator, UNDP; June 30, 2011

Kevin Hill, UNDP; June 16, 2011

John Hough, UNDP; August 3, 2011

Alain Lafontaine, Baastel Senior Consultant; August 30, 2011

Rawleston Moore, Adaptation and Country Relations Officer; April 19, 2011

Maryam Niamir-Fuller, Director, GEF Coordination Office, UNEP; July 22, 2011

Danielius Pivoriunas, Senior Operations Officer, GEF Secretariat; April 18, 2011

Annie Madeleine Bonnin Roncerel, Consultant and previously, UNITAR; July 22, 2011

Ravi Sharma, Principal Officer, CBD; June 28, 2011

Prabhjot Sodhi, India National Coordinator, UNDP Small Grants Programme; May 24, 2011

Joanna Talafre, Consultant, UNEP; June 27, 2011

Tom Twining-Ward, UNDP; June 16, 2011

Robert van den Berg, Director, GEF Evaluation Office; April 19, 2011

Yolando Velasco, UNFCCC; May 26, 2011

Anna Viggh, Senior Evaluation Officer, GEF Evaluation Office; April 20, 2011

### C.2 Teleconferences

#### Guinea Bissau, June 30, 2011

Alexandre Cabral, UNFCCC Focal Point

Seco Cassamá, National Coordinator, NCSA Project

Kaoussou Diombera, UNCCD Focal Point

Matilde da Conceição Gomes, CBD Focal Point

João Raimundo Lopes, GEF Operational Focal Point

Alfredo Simão da Silva, Director, Institute of Biodiversity and Protected Areas

#### Barbados, July 27, 2011

Travis Sinckler, Senior Environmental Officer, Ministry of Environment

#### Belize, August 16, 2011

Martin Alegria, GEF Focal Point, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment

## C.3 Country Visits

### Croatia

Jasna Butuci, EPA Assistant Director

Visnja Grgasovic, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Physical Planning, UNFCCC Focal Point

Ivana Jelenic, CBD Focal Point, Ministry of Culture

Zelka Medven, EPA Project Coordinator, CB2

Mensur Mulabdic, Director, Leta Ltd., Zagreb

Gordana Ruclic, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Physical Planning, GEF Operational Focal Point

Marija Vihovanec, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Physical Planning, UNCCD Focal Point

Sandra Vlastic, UNDP representative

### Ecuador

Diego Escorza, Director, Planning and Investments, Ministry of Environment

Lorena Falconi, GEF Operational Focal Point

Angela Onofa, Focal Point, SBSTTA, UNFCCC

Teresa Palacios, Focal Point, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and Clean Development Mechanism Coordination

Pablo Drouet Torres, GEF Operational Focal Point

Ricardo Valdivieso, GEF Operational Focal Point

Karla Susana Markley Vergara, Desertification Focal Point

### India

B. C. Behra, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development

A. Damodaran, Professor, Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore

Aditi Dass, Climate Group

Srinivasan Iyer, Assistant Country Director and Head of UNDP Energy/Environment

Gladwin Joseph, Director, Ashoka Trust for Research and Environment

Hem Pande, Ministry of Environment and Forests

Naynnika Singh, Ministry of Environment and Forests

Preeti Soni, Adviser, UNDP Climate Change Program

### Montenegro

Anja Amidzic, Adviser, Department for International Cooperation and Climate Change, Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism

Andro Drecun, GEF Focal Point and Deputy Minister

Milena Kapa, Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism, CBD Focal Point

Borko Vulikic, UNDP Representative

Djordje Vulikic, Department for International Cooperation and Climate Change, Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism, acting on behalf of UNFCCC Focal Point

### Paraguay

Frederick Bant

Isabel Besualdo

David Job Giordina

Dario Mandelburger

Mirta Medina, Biodiversity Focal Point

Graciela Miret, Representative, Land Degradation Focal Point

Lusi Molinas, previous NCSA Coordinator

Rodrigo Mussi, NCSA Coordinator, Climate Change Focal Point

Patricia Orrego

Gilda Torres

### Senegal

Aliou Ba, Member, Comité national changements climatiques (COMNAC)

Babacar Diouf, Direction de l'Environnement et des Etablissements Classés, INTAC Project Coordinator; Member, NCSA PSC

Birane Diouf, Member, Conseil national des ONG pour l'appui du développement (CONGAD)

Moussa Diouf, Coordinator, Programme de Gestion Intégrée des Ecosystèmes du Sénégal

Djité, Assistant Deputy Director, Protected Areas

Baba Dramé, Technical Advisor to the Director, Environment and Protected Areas, Representative of the GEF Focal Point, Secretariat to the Sustainable Development Commission

Arona Fall, UNDP Environment and Energy Focal Point

Sangare Mamadou, NCSA Project Coordinator, Environment and Protected Areas

Mandiaye Ndaiye, Deputy Director, Protected Areas, and Biosafety Focal Point

Amsatou Niang, DEPN

Ndiaye Cheikh Sylla, Director, Environment and Protected Areas and GEF Focal Point

## **Thailand**

Pattama Domrongphol, Representative of the CBD Focal Point

Sutharin Koonphol, Program Officer, UNDP Thailand Environment Unit

Asdaporn Krairapanond, Director, International Cooperation, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment

Nirawan Pipitsombat, UNFCCC Focal Point Representative

Wilailak Suraphruck, International Cooperation, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment

Worapong Waramit, Focal Point from Office of Thailand to UNCCD Land Development Department

## **C.4 Consultation Workshop Participants**

Jean-Joseph Bellamy, Evaluation Team

Adamou Bouhari, UNEP, Task Manager Gambia NCSA and CB2

Michael Murphy, Evaluation Team

Maryam Niamir-Fuller, Director, GEF Coordination Office, UNEP

Danielius Pivoriunas, Senior Operations Officer, GEF Secretariat

Dima Shocair Reda, Senior Results Management Coordinator, GEF Secretariat

Ignacio Tourino Soto, African Development Bank

Joanna Talafre, Consultant, UNEP

Kseniya Temnenko, Knowledge Management Officer, GEF Evaluation Office

Tom Twining-Ward, UNDP

Robert van den Berg, Director, GEF Evaluation Office

Anna Vigg, Senior Evaluation Officer, GEF Evaluation Office

Claudio Volonté, Chief Evaluation Officer, GEF Evaluation Office



## Annex D. Key Attributes of the NCSA Database

The evaluation recorded the key attributes of all countries applying for NCSA grant funding:

- *Country and region.* Each country that received funding was recorded and categorized in one of eight regions (Central and West Africa, East and South Africa, Middle East and North Africa, Asia, Caribbean, Latin America, Pacific, Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States).
- *GEF Agency.* Every country was categorized according to GEF Agency: UNDP, UNEP, and the World Bank.
- *Executing agency.* In most countries, the ministry of environment was the GEF focal point. This was recorded to determine if the GEF focal point was the lead in executing the NCSA.
- *GEF operational focal point.* For reasons cited above, the evaluation team recorded institutions that served as GEF focal points.
- *Executed by GEF operational focal points (yes/no).* Based on the two attributes above, the evaluation team was able to establish if the GEF focal point was the executing agency for the NCSA.
- *Project development facility (PDF) project document date.* The dates of preparation were logged to help determine process time. Many NCSAs did not have a project development facility project document date, so there was not a focus on this criterion.
- *CEO approval date.* This date was used to designate the beginning of NCSA preparation and was compared against the Agency approval date explained below. All dates were retrieved from the GEF Project Management Information System database.
- *Agency approval date.* This date was used to designate the completion of preparation and was compared against the CEO approval date explained above. This date also indicates the beginning of implementation. All dates were retrieved from the GEF database.
- *Time between CEO approval and Agency approval (days).* The evaluation team calculated the time between CEO and Agency approval and then divided by 30.416 (the average days per month, 365/12). The data were used to calculate the average approval time for all projects and were also calculated separately for UNDP and UNEP.
- *Completion date (date of final report).* Completion dates were recorded in each country's final report. In cases where the month was not given in the report, the month of June was used to account for reports completed before and after June.

- *Implementation period (months)*. This was calculated by subtracting the Agency approval date from the completion date and then dividing by 30.416 (365/12) to calculate the total number of months for NCSA implementation. These data were used to calculate the average implementation time for all projects and were calculated separately for UNDP and UNEP.
- *Status*. Each NCSA was categorized as “complete,” “under implementation,” “drafting final report,” “canceled,” or “not approved.”
- *CB2*. CB2 projects are follow-up efforts to NCSAs, and funding is capped at \$0.5 million. There are currently 23 CB2 follow-up projects.
- *Have final report (yes/no?)*. All completed NCSAs are required to submit a final report and action plan. The evaluation team maintained an inventory of final reports received for each country.
- *Status and miscellaneous information*. Any outstanding NCSA information and unique situations were logged.

## Annex E. GEF Projects and Programs Reviewed

The review looked at capacity development activities across GEF projects and programs approved in GEF-4, corresponding to the main NCSA implementation period. A project review protocol was developed to assess how capacity development was integrated into regular GEF projects

and if the NCSA was referred to in project documents. This exercise provided insights into how GEF focal area projects are dealing with capacity development and whether NCSA results were used in project designs. Sixty projects in 17 countries were reviewed.

Country	Project/program name
Belize	LDC/SIDS Portfolio Project: Mainstreaming and Capacity Building for Sustainable Land Management in Belize
Bolivia	Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity and Land in Andean Vertical Ecosystems
Croatia	Agricultural Pollution Control Project—under the Strategic Partnership Investment Fund for Nutrient Reduction in the Danube River and Black Sea Coastal Cities Pollution Control (APL 2)
Ecuador	BS Implementation of the National Bio-safety Framework Management of Chimborazo’s Natural Resources Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Conservation SFM Sustainable Management of Biodiversity and Water Resources in the Ibarra-San Lorenzo Corridor Sustainable Financing of Ecuador’s National System of Protected Areas (SNAP) and Associated Private and Community-managed PA Subsystems
Gambia, The	SIP-Participatory Integrated Watershed Management Project (PIWAMP) SPWA-The Gambia Biodiversity Management and Institutional Strengthening Project
India	Achieving Reduction in GHG Emissions through Advanced Energy Efficiency Technology in Electric Motors Chiller Energy Efficiency Project—under the Programmatic Framework for Energy Energy Conservation in Small Sector Tea Processing Units in South India Energy Efficiency Improvements in the Indian Brick Industry Environmentally Sound Management and Final Disposal of PCBs in India Financing Energy Efficiency at Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) BD Mainstreaming Coastal and Marine Biodiversity Conservation into Production Sectors in the Godavari River Estuary in Andhra Pradesh State Improving Energy Efficiency in the Indian Railway System—under the Programmatic Framework for Energy Efficiency Energy Efficiency Improvements in Commercial Buildings—under the Programmatic Framework for Energy Efficiency Low Carbon Campaign for Commonwealth Games 2010 Delhi

Country	Project/program name
India	Promoting Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy in Selected Micro SME Clusters in India —under the Programmatic Framework for Energy Efficiency
	SLEM - Sustainable Land Water and Biodiversity Conservation and Management for Improved Livelihoods in Uttarakhand Watershed Sector
	SLEM - Sustainable Participatory Management of Natural Resources to Promote Ecosystem Health and Resilience in the Thar Desert Ecosystem
	SLEM/CPP - Institutional Coordination, Policy Outreach and M & E Project under Sustainable Land and Ecosystem Management Partnership Program
	SLEM/CPP - Integrated Land Use Management to Combat Land Degradation in Madja Pradesh
	SLEM/CPP - Sustainable Land Management in Shifting Cultivation Areas of Nagaland for Ecological and Livelihood Security
	SLEM/CPP - Sustainable Rural Livelihood Security through Innovations in Land and Ecosystem Management Strengthening the Implementation of the Biological Diversity Act and Rules with Focus on its Access and Benefit Sharing Provisions Sustainable Urban Transport Project
Kyrgyzstan	CACILM: Southern Agriculture Area Development Project—under CACILM Partnership Framework, Phase 1 Demonstrating Sustainable Mountain Pasture Management in Susamyr in Kyrgyzstan—under CACILM Partnership Framework Phase I Improving Energy Efficiency in Buildings Small Hydro Power Development
	Sustainable Management of Endemic Ichtho-fauna of the Issyk-Kul Lake Basin BS Support the Implementation of the National Bio-safety Framework of LAO PDR Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Agricultural and Land Management Policies, Plans and Programs Rural Electrification Phase II
	Catalyzing Financial Sustainability of the PA System Montenegro Institutional Development and Agriculture Strengthening (MIDAS) Power Sector Policy Reform to Promote Small Hydropower Development in the Republic of Montenegro Strengthening the Sustainability of the Protected Areas System of the Republic of Montenegro
Morocco	Mainstreaming Biodiversity into Score Chains for Mediterranean Medicinal and Aromatic Plants MENARID Participatory Control of Desertification and Poverty Reduction in the Arid and Semi-Arid High Plateau Ecosystems of Eastern Morocco Safe Management and Disposal of PCBs, Pillar I Safe PCB Management Program in Morocco, Pillar II
	Concentrating Solar Power Technology Transfer for Electricity Generation in Namibia (NAM CSP TT) CPP Namibia: Enhancing Institutional and Human Resource Capacity Through Local Level Coordination of Integrated Rangeland Management and Support (CALLC) Namibia Protected Landscape Conservation Areas Initiative Namibia Energy Efficiency Program (NEEP) In Buildings
	Kathmandu Sustainable Urban Transport (SUT) Project
Paraguay	SFM Improving the Conservation of Biodiversity in Atlantic Forest of Eastern Paraguay
Senegal	Groundnut Basin Soil Management and Regeneration SIP-Sustainable Land Management in Senegal
	LDC/SIDS Portfolio Project: Capacity Building for Sustainable Land Management in the Solomon Islands
Thailand	Catalyzing Sustainability of Thailand's Protected Area System CF: Industrial Energy Efficiency Promoting Renewable Energy in Mae Hong Son Province Sustainable Management of Biodiversity in Thailand's Production Landscape
	LDC/SIDS Portfolio Project: Capacity Building and Mainstreaming for Sustainable Land Management in Vanuatu

## Bibliography

*The GEF publications and Council documents (the latter indicated with the designation "GEFC.xx") cited here are available on the GEF website, [www.thegef.org](http://www.thegef.org), under the Documents & Publications tab. GEF Evaluation Office documents can be found on the GEF Evaluation Office website, [www.gefeo.org](http://www.gefeo.org), under Evaluations & Studies and in the online documents database ASK ME. All Web links cited here were accessed March 2011, unless otherwise indicated.*

- Baastel. 2010. "Final Evaluation of the Global Support Programme to the National Capacity Self-Assessments: Final Evaluation Report."
- Bellamy, Jean-Joseph, and Kevin Hill. 2010a. *Monitoring Guidelines of Capacity Development in Global Environment Facility Projects*. New York: Global Support Programme, Bureau for Development Policy, United Nations Development Programme. <http://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/publication/Monitoring%20Guidelines%20Report-final.pdf>.
- Bellamy, Jean-Joseph, and Kevin Hill. 2010b. *National Capacity Self-Assessments: Results and Lessons Learned for Global Environmental Sustainability*. New York: Global Support Programme, Bureau for Development Policy, United Nations Development Programme. <http://thegef.org/gef/pubs/NCSA>.
- GEF Council (Global Environment Facility Council). 2001. "Elements of Strategic Collaboration and a Framework for GEF Action for Capacity Building for the Global Environment." GEF/C.17/06/Rev.1.
- . 2003. "Strategic Approach to Enhance Capacity Building." GEF/C.22.8.
- . 2008. "Second Progress Report on the Implementation of the GEF Strategic Approach to Capacity Development." GEF/C.33/Inf.5.
- GEF EO (GEF Evaluation Office). 2007. "Annual Performance Review."
- . 2007a. "Country Portfolio Evaluation: Costa Rica (1992–2005)."
- . 2007b. "Joint Evaluation of the GEF Activity Cycle and Modalities."
- . 2007c. "Philippines Country Case Study."
- . 2007d. "Progress Report of the Evaluation Director."
- . 2007e. "Vietnam Country Case Study."
- . 2008a. "Country Portfolio Evaluation: Benin (1991–2007)."
- . 2008b. "Country Portfolio Evaluation: Madagascar (1994–2007)."
- . 2008c. "Country Portfolio Evaluation: The Philippines (1992–2007)."
- . 2008d. "Country Portfolio Evaluation: Samoa (1992–2007)."
- . 2008e. "Country Portfolio Evaluation: South Africa (1994–2007)."
- . 2009a. "Country Portfolio Evaluation: Cameroon (1992–2007)."
- . 2009b. "Country Portfolio Evaluation: Egypt (1991–2008)."
- . 2009c. "Country Portfolio Evaluation: Syria (1994–2008)."

- . 2009d. “Midterm Review of the Resource Allocation Framework.”
- . 2010a. “Country Portfolio Evaluation: Moldova (1994–2009).” Volumes 1 and 2.
- . 2010b. “Country Portfolio Evaluation: Turkey (1992–2009).” Volumes 1 and 2.
- . 2010c. *OPSA: Progress Toward Impact—Fourth Overall Performance Study of the GEF*.
- . 2011a. “Country Portfolio Study: El Salvador.”
- . 2011b. “Country Portfolio Study: Jamaica.”
- GEF GSP (Global Environment Facility Global Support Programme). 2005. *National Capacity Self-Assessment Resource Kit*. New York: United Nations Development Programme. <http://www.unpei.org/PDF/institutioncapacity/National-Capacity-Self-Assessment-Resource-Kit.pdf>.
- GEF Secretariat and World Bank (Global Environment Facility Secretariat and World Bank). 2010. “Summary of Negotiations—Fifth Replenishment of the GEF Trust Fund.” GEF/A.4/7.
- Government of Latvia. 2005. “Capacity Evaluation of Latvia in Fields of Biological Diversity, Climate Change and Land Degradation—Final NCSA Report.”
- OECD/DAC (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee). 2006. *The Challenge of Capacity Development. Working towards Good Practice*. Paris.
- UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). 2009. *Supporting Capacity Development: UNDP Approach*. Capacity Development Group, Bureau for Development Policy, UNDP.
- UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme). 2002. *Capacity Building for Sustainable Development: An Overview of UNEP Environmental Capacity Development Initiatives*. [http://www.unep.org/Pdf/Capacity\\_building.pdf](http://www.unep.org/Pdf/Capacity_building.pdf).
- UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change). 2011. “Report of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation on its Thirty-fourth Session.” Bonn, Germany: UNFCCC. FCCC/SBI/2011/7.

In addition, GEF NPFE reports were reviewed for the following countries: Armenia, the Bahamas, Cameroon, Chile, Colombia, the Republic of Congo, India, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Mali, Mexico, Nigeria, the Solomon Islands, Thailand, Uruguay, and Vietnam.

# Recent GEF Evaluation Office Publications

## Evaluation Reports

69	Annual Thematic Evaluation Report 2011	2012
68	GEF Annual Impact Report 2011	2012
67	Estudio de la cartera de proyectos del FMAM en El Salvador (1994–2010), Volumens 1 y 2	2012
66	GEF Country Portfolio Study: Jamaica (1994–2010), Volumes 1 and 2	2012
65	GEF Annual Performance Report 2010	2011
64	GEF Annual Country Portfolio Evaluation Report 2011	2011
63	GEF Annual Impact Report 2010	2011
62	Review of the Global Environment Facility Earth Fund	2011
61	Evaluation of the GEF Strategic Priority for Adaptation	2011
60	GEF Country Portfolio Evaluation: Turkey (1992–2009)	2011
59	GEF Country Portfolio Evaluation: Moldova (1994–2009)	2011
58	GEF Annual Country Portfolio Evaluation Report 2010	2010
57	GEF Annual Performance Report 2009	2010
56	GEF Impact Evaluation of the Phaseout of Ozone-Depleting Substances in Countries with Economies in Transition, Volumes 1 and 2	2010
55	GEF Annual Impact Report 2009	2010
54	OPS4: Progress Toward Impact—Fourth Overall Performance Study of the GEF, Full Report	2010
53	OPS4: Progress Toward Impact—Fourth Overall Performance Study of the GEF, Executive Version	2010
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

## Evaluation Documents

ED-4	The GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy 2010	2010
ED-3	Guidelines for GEF Agencies in Conducting Terminal Evaluations	2008
ED-2	GEF Evaluation Office Ethical Guidelines	2008

## Learning Products

LP-3	The Journey to Rio+20: Gathering Evidence on Expectations for the GEF	2012
LP-2	Climate Change and the GEF	2010
LP-1	Biodiversity and the GEF	2010

To see all GEF Evaluation Office publications, please visit our webpage: [www.thegef.org/gef/EO%20Publications](http://www.thegef.org/gef/EO%20Publications).





Global Environment Facility  
Evaluation Office  
1818 H Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20433  
USA

[www.gefeo.org](http://www.gefeo.org)