OPS4

PROGRESS TOWARD IMPACT

FOURTH OVERALL PERFORMANCE STUDY OF THE GEF

APPROACH TO THE OPS4 SUBSTUDY ON LEARNING AND SCIENCE IN THE GEF

METHODOLOGICAL PAPER #10

Fourth Overall Performance Study (OPS4) of the GEF

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Approach to the OPS4 Substudy on Learning and Science in the GEF

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The Global Environment Facility (GEF) is a financial mechanism set up as a partnership that provides grant and concessional funding to projects and activities to protect the global environment in developing countries and countries with economies in transition. Guidance is provided by the GEF Council and the Conference of Parties of the global environmental conventions dealing with climate change, biodiversity, international waters, land degradation, and persistent organic pollutants. The GEF Secretariat supports the GEF Council and ensures that Council decisions are implemented. Projects financed by the GEF are implemented by 10 agencies: UNDP, UNEP, World Bank, UNIDO, FAO, IFAD, IADB, EBRD, AfDB, and ADB. The GEF Evaluation Office (GEF EO) has a central role of ensuring the evaluation function within the GEF, of setting minimum requirements for monitoring and evaluation, of ensuring oversight of the quality of M&E systems at the program and project level and of sharing evaluative evidence within the GEF partnership. The GEF EO is administered by the World Bank such that all contracts with the Office are World Bank contracts.

The GEF Evaluation Office will prepare and undertake the Fourth Overall Performance Study of the GEF (OSP4) in the period April 2008 – September 2009. One of the substudies to be undertaken for OPS4 is on **the extent to which the GEF learns as an organization and the extent to which the GEF supports the generation and sharing of scientific knowledge that is relevant to the objectives of the GEF**. This substudy will address the question in the Terms of Reference of the OPS4 that asks "*How successful has the GEF been as a learning organization, including state of the art science and technology?*" and states, "*Knowledge sharing and feedback mechanisms will be reviewed to see to what extent the GEF is a learning organization which ensures that its future builds on past experiences. Special attention will be paid to how the GEF has learned from best practices, including science and technology, as well as the role of the STAP in improving the GEF's strategies and interventions*". This substudy will be composed of three sections.

Learning by Projects within the Portfolio

A learning approach is manifested in an overlapping fashion, incorporating guidance from the GEF, learning by the implementing agencies (Agencies), agency and institutions responses to recommendations and findings of evaluations, and growing shared understandings of reasons for achievement or lack of achievement of impacts by previous projects. Lessons learned also have to do with specific outcomes, achievement of intermediate stages, linkages to global environmental benefits (GEBs), and means to scale up and out of intermediate stage impacts to GEBs.

The first major question is:

1. To what extent has project design and preparation incorporated lessons of previous projects and state of the art scientific knowledge?

Basically, how do projects incorporate a learning approach by building on lessons learned from previous related GEF projects and from other relevant experiences.

Methods. A sample of 130 project documents will be examined to determine the extent to which projects have:

- Incorporated recommendations or lessons learned from previous similar GEF projects,

- Built upon from previous similar non-GEF projects,

- Responded to inputs from the STAP, and

- Incorporated changes and the evolution of science and technology.

Learning at the GEF System Level

Knowledge sharing is a function distributed among the various GEF Agencies and Institutions. The STAP strives to ensure that projects and strategies are informed by advances in scientific knowledge, scientific methods and technology. The GEF Secretariat has the responsibility of quality control and overall guidance of project design. The agencies have developed approaches that have evolved over time and sometimes identify and share lessons among projects. Evaluations provide recommendations meant to identify strengths and weaknesses in the system and to provide recommendations to improve performance.

This part of the evaluation will address three questions regarding the extent to which the GEF is a learning organization:

2. How do the STAP, the Secretariat, the Agencies, and the Focal areas identify lessons learned and use those to increase their own efficiency and effectiveness?

3. How do the STAP, the Secretariat, the Agencies, and the Focal areas identify lessons learned and apply those to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the GEF and its portfolio of projects?

4. To what extent have GEF Agencies and Institutions addressed evaluation findings and recommendations?

Methods. STAP, the Secretariat, FA leaders, and selected representatives of the Agencies will be interviewed. This evaluation will also review how and to what extent the findings and recommendations of the four program studies carried out in preparation for OPS3, the Management Action Record (MAR), and the Annual Performance Report (APR) were addressed by the GEF Agencies and institutions.

5. To what extent have the lessons learned and new scientific knowledge been incorporated by the GEF (in its operations and in its implicit Theories of Change)? Has there been a change across the GEF-phases in the extent to which such knowledge is incorporated?

Methods. The previous Overall Performance Studies (1, 2, and 3) will be examined to identify changes over time in approaches and queries, and responses to previous conclusions and recommendations. Evaluated will be changes in orientation among Operational Policies and Program Strategic Objectives.

6. How and to what extent has the project cycle or process been modified in the face of learning in order to increase speed and effectiveness?

This section will provide a summary of the changes that have taken place to address the problems identified by the Joint Evaluation of the Project Cycle. This section will also assess the extent to which project cycle performance has improved. The content of this section will be derived largely from the analysis carried out by the team revisiting the project cycle.

Projects Designed to Generate Knowledge as a Global Public Good

Some GEF projects seek to generate or facilitate the sharing knowledge among intended users in ways that go beyond the utility specific to the project—i.e., they generate knowledge as a public good. The following will be asked of projects that sought to generate knowledge as a global public good:

7. How effective and efficient are GEF projects in to generating and facilitating the use of knowledge as a public good and intended knowledge uses?

This query will determine the extent to which GEF projects seek to generate or facilitate knowledge sharing and will seek to calculate the extent of the GEF

investment in knowledge generation. This review will distinguish among three types of projects:

- Projects that have as their main objective to produce or facilitate the sharing of knowledge as a public good;

- Projects that address generation or sharing of knowledge the level of one of their outcomes at a high outputs level or has a key component that addresses knowledge as a public good; and

- Projects in which knowledge outcomes are more *ad hoc*.

Methods. A sample of GEF projects will be selected for examination as to the extent to which projects of the GEF portfolio aim at knowledge generation as a public good. The sample will be drawn following a stratified random sampling procedure: GEF phases will be treated as separate strata. A sub sample of 80 projects (including MSPs and FSPs but excluding Enabling Activities) will be drawn from each of the GEF phases (excluding the pilot phase). Thus, the total sample size will be 320 projects. The screening of this sample will allow determination of projects that specifically aim at generation of knowledge as public good.

The outcomes of such projects in facilitating learning will be assessed in greater detail: Specialists in each focal area will review projects identified as intending to produce or share knowledge as a public good (first and second bullets above) to assess:

- The scientific value of knowledge,

- The relevance of knowledge to the objectives of the GEF, and

- The extent to which knowledge is used and applied.

Key stakeholders will then be interviewed regarding use and application of such knowledge.

A subsample will be selected from the larger sample of 320 projects to assess the extent to which projects are drawing on lessons from other GEF projects, non GEF project, incorporating advice from STAP and GEF Secretariat, and incorporating newer developments in science. The sub sample will comprise of 30 projects each from GEF1, GEF2 and GEF3, and 60 projects from GEF4. Thus, the total size of the smaller sample will be 150 projects.

Methods. A simple assessment and scoring sheet has been developed to be used in project proposal review.

Summary of Procedures/Steps

1. Samples of 80 projects from each of GEF1, 2, 3, and 4 will be selected and classified in terms of knowledge generation, a total number of 320 projects. (by December 4)

2. Subsamples for each focal area totaling 150 projects will be evaluated in terms of building on past related projects. (November 12 to January 8)

3. The proposals and TERs of a subsample of knowledge generation projects will be evaluated in terms of knowledge generated and used or applied. (December 4 to 8)

4. Theories of Change for GEF1, 2, 3, and 4 will be inferred from the examination OPS 1, 2 and 3 and the examination of GEF Operational Programs and Strategic Priorities. (December 8 to January 9)

5. Key informants will be interviewed regarding questions 2, 3, and 5. (January 15 to February 13)

Resources

Task	Inputs
Characterization of sample of 320 projects and organization of documents	Research Assistant………………..20 days
Review of 150 projects for the extent to which there is mention to lessons of other projects and scientific information to support proposal.	Note: it is uncertain how long this analysis will take. The sample will be adjusted to allow the study to draw reliable conclusions but with a level of effort that is realistic. This sample thus might be adjusted on the basis of the first projects that are examined.
Review of 30 (estimated projects) that seek to produce knowledge as a public good. Specialized consultants	CIAT Specialist…………………...20 days
Interviews with STAP, Secretariat, and Agencies	CIAT Specialist…………….5 days (+ staff)
Drafting of report	Staff + Sr. Consultant…………..5 days