Approach to GEF IW SCS
Impact Evaluation

Aaron Zazueta
Reference Group Meeting
Bangkok, Thailand
September 27, 2010
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South China Sea Background

• Known for its rich biodiversity and natural resources, the South China Sea (SCS) provides food to 250 million people and directly provides a livelihood for over 100 million people.

• 40 years of rapid economic growth have had results that threaten the sustainability of the social, economic, and ecological services that the SCS provides
  – Growing coastal habitat destruction
  – Increased pollution
  – Increased overfishing

• Management of the SCS’s rich marine resources is complicated by outstanding territorial disputes.
GEF support in the SCS+

- Since 1993, the GEF has allocated over $180mn USD to projects related to the SCS and surrounding areas
GEF Approach to International Waters

• The GEF helps countries work together to secure environmental benefits from shared surface water, ground water, and marine ecosystems by fostering international cooperation and catalyzing action on priority transboundary water issues.

• The GEF has developed an International Waters approach that involves:

  • Foundational Activities:
    Build trust and confidence among countries, strengthen knowledge base on root causes, improve national capacity, and strengthen regional coordination mechanisms

  • Demonstration Activities
    Develop, test, and adapt approaches and technologies; catalyze further action to address problems

  • Investments
    Replicate, upscale, and/or mainstream technologies and approaches that work
**GEF Model to International Waters**

**Foundation**
- Build individual, organizational and institutional capacities of decision makers
- Countries establish national inter-ministerial committees to address IW transboundary concerns
- Identify transboundary concerns and root causes
- Countries establish interim mechanisms for cooperation
- Mechanisms for knowledge sharing and facilitating public participation

**Demonstration**
- Regional and national institutions and mechanisms coordinate IW policy and monitoring efforts
- Private sector engagement
- Multi-county agreement on commitments to regional mechanism and national actions through a Strategic Action Program
- Demonstration and piloting of approaches with involvement of appropriate stakeholders to address priority transboundary IW concerns

**Investment/Mainstreaming/Upscaling**
- Actions taken at the appropriate scale and w/ involvement of relevant stakeholders (various government levels and sectors, private sector and public) to address priority concerns
- Replication, knowledge sharing, and upscaling of demonstrations to the appropriate scales and by the relevant stakeholders to change behavior
- Mechanisms in place that provide timely and reliable information to monitor stress and status of the water body and provide a better understanding of the water body’s evolving challenges

**Impact:**
- Reduced stress on international waters
- Water/environment/socioeconomic status eventually improved
In practice

• The application of the model is shaped by context

• The sequence of interventions may vary

• A limitation: The does not fully capture opportunistic investments that might be undertaken by following the model.
Assumptions behind GEF IW Approach

• A strategic, programmatic approach of investments and countries’ coordinated action will lead to improvements in water/environment/socioeconomic status.

• The promoted measures and solutions are well aligned with both the regional priorities and the national priorities of the participating countries.

• The “architecture” promoted will enable adaptive management processes that will lead to the policy changes and investments needed to reduce environmental stress and improve environmental status.

• Improvement of environmental and socioeconomic status will take place over time as long as countries and other actors take follow up actions and investments to address the transboundary IW concerns.

• Water body impacts depend on level of effort in stress reduction and may be appropriate only for larger, programmatic approaches.
Objectives of the Evaluation

• Main objective: Assess the extent to which processes, knowledge, technologies, and capacities to which GEF contributes promote changes in policies, technology, management practices, and other behaviors that will address the priority transboundary environmental concerns that affect the social, economic, and environmental services of the SCS.

• Evaluation will answer four main questions:
  - Has support been relevant to SCS environmental threats and priorities?
  - What are the effects of GEF support (positive or negative, intended or unintended) on country efforts and environmental problems?
  - What are the critical factors that affect likelihood that support will catalyze actions that will reduce environmental stress and improve environmental and socioeconomic status?
  - What lessons can be learned from the interventions’ successes and failures that apply to the SCS and elsewhere?
Impact Evaluation Approach

• Impact:
  “positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.”
  (OECD Development Assistance Committee, 2002)

• The ROtI (Review of Outcomes to Impacts) methodology assesses progress of projects’ outcomes toward impact, and the likelihood of achieving the ultimate goals of reducing environmental stress and improving environmental and socio-economic status.
Approach Considerations

- Select illustrative interventions
- Assess how key actors responded to interventions,
  - Assuming that response to the same intervention will vary from actor to actor, time to time; thus the same intervention will have different impact in different places.
- Assess extent to which there is movement to intermediate stages
- Assess contextual factors affecting decisions
Introduction to Theory of Change Approach

- Evaluation will use the Theory of Change approach: a tool to assess GEF support’s contribution to impact
  - Assumes there are multiple paths toward impact

- Three characteristics of complex socio-ecological systems merit special attention in impact evaluations (E. Ostrom):
  - **Polycentric**: independent units interact with one another
  - **Multi-scalar**: institutions and processes are linked at multiple levels and system boundaries vary
  - **Multi-temporal**: diverse temporal lags and inherent delays exist between actions and (natural and other) systems’ response.
Approach: Theory-based Approach

• Programmes and projects are built on assumptions on how and why they are supposed to achieve their objectives

• In project proposal documents, some assumptions are explicit, others are not

• Assumptions about how and why impacts will be achieved must be made explicit before they can be evaluated

• When causal mechanisms behind assumptions and project contextual factors are known, indicators can be identified for progress towards impact
**Impact Evaluation Framework**

- **Project Logframe Analysis**: Outputs → Outcome → State/condition → Assumption
- **Outcomes-Impacts TOC Analysis**: Assumption → State/condition
- **Assumption**: Reduced Threats to GEB → Enhanced status of GEB

**Assess direct effects of the project** → **Assess how these effects are leading to impacts** → **Assess whether impacts have actually occurred**

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Complex Socio-Ecological System

Regional Factors

Country Factors

Country Decisions

Project Intervention

Boundary Disputes

Markets
Thank you.

• For more information on this evaluation, please contact Aaron Zazueta, azazueta@thegef.org