GEF Evaluation Office

UNDP Evaluation Office

Joint Evaluation of the GEF Small Grants Programme

Country Program Case Study: Ghana

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Foreword

In accordance with the 2006 Monitoring and Evaluation Policy of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), one of the overarching objectives of the GEF with respect to monitoring and evaluation is to promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing on results and lessons learned among the GEF and its partners as a basis for decision making on policies, strategies, program management, and projects; and to improve knowledge and performance. In this context, the GEF Evaluation Office is pleased to present nine country program case studies that were part of the data collected for the Joint Evaluation of the Small Grants Programme (SGP).

In June 2006, the GEF Council requested the GEF Evaluation Office undertake an independent evaluation of the SGP. The GEF Evaluation Office invited the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Evaluation Office to participate in this initiative. The purpose of the joint evaluation was to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and cost effectiveness of SGP objectives in relation to the overall GEF mandate. In addition the evaluation assessed the results of the SGP, the factors affecting these results, and the monitoring and evaluation systems of the program as implemented. It also traced the evolution of the SGP, the changes that have taken place in the program, and the drivers of these changes. Country case studies were prepared as part of the evaluation. Although the studies are unique and particular to each country, the analytical framework used was that provided by the evaluation's approach paper.

The case studies were undertaken under the direction of the GEF and UNDP evaluation officers with relevant regional experience. National consultants were hired to carry out the majority of the project site visits. Staff from the GEF and UNDP Evaluation Offices provided methodological guidance to the local consultants, participated in the initial site visits, and supervised the drafting of the case studies to ensure consistency within and among the country studies.

The contents of this report are based on the findings of the evaluation team and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of GEF or UNDP.

The GEF Evaluation Office would like to thank all who collaborated with the evaluation: its staff and consultants, national coordinators, members of the national steering committees, and the staff from the country offices. In addition, we would like to acknowledge and thank the main authors of the reports.

Abbreviations

CBO	community-based organization
CSP	country strategy paper
CREMA	community resource management area
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency (Ghana)
FSP	full-size project
GDP	gross domestic product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GPRS	Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy
GSBA	globally significant biodiversity area
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MSP	medium-size project
NAP	National Action Plan
NGO	nongovernmental organization
NRMP	Natural Resource Management Project
NSC	National Steering Committee
OP	operational program
POP	persistent organic pollutant
RAF	Resource Allocation Framework
RESPRO	Renewable Energy-Based Electricity for Rural, Social, and Economic Development in Ghana
SGP	Small Grants Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services


GHANA
Bawku
Tumu
Navrongo
Upper East
Bolgatanga
Upper West
Wulugu
Wa
Northern
Tamale
Yendi
Sawla
Bole
Daka
Otti
Bimbila
Salaga
Yeji
Bambei
Kintampo
Dumbai
Brong-Ahafo
Kwadjokrom
Kantankufri
Wenchi
Techiman
Berekum
Lake Volta
Volta
Sunyani
Ejura
Hohoe
Afram
Kpandu
Mampong
Ashanti
Goaso
Kumasi
Konongo
Ho
Nkawkaw
Bibiani
Bekwai
Awaso
Obuasi
Kade
Eastern
Koforidua
Dunkwa
Oda
Nsawam
Greater Accra
Keta
Western
Tema
Teshi
Accra
Central
Swedru
Prestea
Tarkwa
Winneba
Cape Coast
Sekondi
Axim
Takoradi
Gulf of Guinea

1 Background

This report forms part of the fourth independent evaluation of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Programme (SGP). This overall evaluation focuses on assessing the relevance, effectiveness (results), and efficiency of the objectives of the SGP, as well as concepts and processes used by the SGP to further its objectives. Ten countries were visited to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and cost effectiveness of the country SGP. Although feeding into the overall evaluation, the Ghana report is also addressed to the stakeholders in the country and concerned SGP staff.

1.1 Development Context and Institutional Framework

Key Environmental and Socioeconomic Issues

Ecosystems

Ghana lies along the Gulf of Guinea in West Africa, within longitudes $3^0$5′W and $1^0$10′E and latitudes $4^0$35′N and 11^0N. It covers an area of 239,000 square kilometers. Ghana is located only a few degrees north of the Equator. Half of the country lies less than 152 meters above sea level, and the highest point is 883 meters (see figure 1.1). The 537-kilometer coastline is mostly a low, sandy shore backed by plains and scrub and intersected by several rivers and streams, most of which are navigable only by canoe.

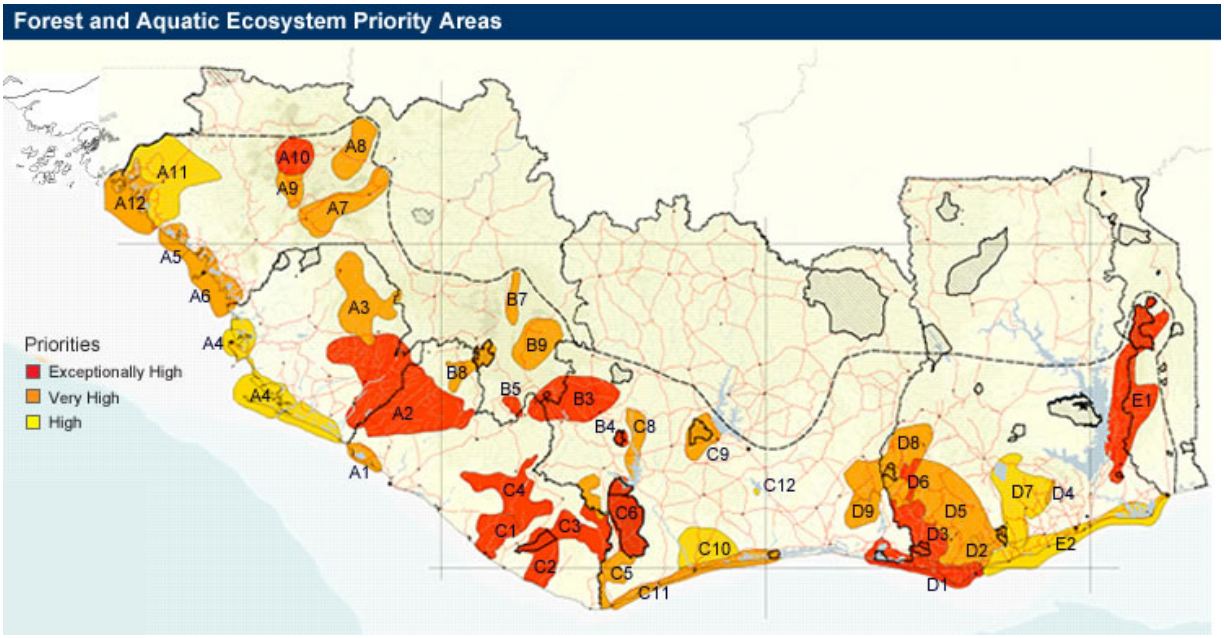
The two major biomes represented in Ghana are tropical high forest (consisting of many ecological associations) and savannahs. The tropical rain forest belt, broken by heavily forested hills and many streams and rivers, extends northward from the western shore near the Côte d'Ivoire frontier and covers about a third of the country. About two-thirds of the country is covered by savannah vegetation, of which two major types are predominant—the Guinea or tall-grass savannah and the Sudan or short-grass savannah. Along the eastern coast a coastal savannah vegetation formation dominates and is usually referred to as the Accra-Winneba Plains.

The climate is tropical. The eastern coastal belt is warm and comparatively dry; the southwest corner, hot and humid; and the north, hot and dry. The two distinct rainy seasons are in the south in May–June and August–September; in the north, the rainy seasons tend to merge. A dry northeasterly wind, the Harmattan, blows in January and February. Annual rainfall in the coastal zone averages 83 centimeters.

Ghana has areas of high biodiversity referred to as "biological hotspots" (see figure 1.2).

Figure 1.1: Ghana Ecosystems

Figure 1.2: Biological Hotspots



Economic Growth and Environmental Degradation

Ghana's economy, which is largely agriculture based, has in the past been characterized by high rates of inflation, continuous depreciation of the cedi, dwindling foreign reserves, an excessive public debt burden, and fluctuating growth. Extensive implementation of liberalization and adjustment policies in the 1980s produced some growth in services and mining, but did little to induce and sustain growth in agriculture and manufacturing. Both growth and incomes remained stagnant, resulting in deepening poverty.

During the 1990s, the levels of public expenditure on social development programs for *poverty reduction*, such as health and education were at 2.0 percent and 2.8 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) respectively. These levels of spending were much lower than what prevailed in other African countries, constraining poverty reduction and effective social change and development. Although general poverty levels decreased in the 1990s, certain areas of Ghana experienced a growing and deepening incidence of poverty, with evidence of intensification of vulnerability and exclusion among certain social groups. This was particularly noticeable in the savannah and transitional zones in northern Ghana and in some coastal areas in the Central and Greater Accra Regions. In the country as a whole, some large occupational groups, such as small-scale food farmers, especially women, remained stuck below the poverty line, and the chances of survival of many children and youth remained precarious.

With high economic growth rates and macroeconomic stability, however, Ghana is currently one of the few countries in sub-Saharan Africa that has a chance of halving extreme *poverty* by 2015. GDP growth increased from 4.5 percent in 2002 to 5.2 percent in 2003 and to a current rate of 6.2 percent (Government of Ghana 2007 budget statement). A robust performance in cocoa and gold exports as well as increases in private remittances have led this stronger growth.

The sustainability of the growth is based primarily on natural resources, which at the current rate of *environmental degradation*, are threatened. The country environmental assessment (a study conducted by the World Bank in 2006) notes that "Ghana's natural resources, on which so much of the country's economic activity and the population's livelihood depend, are being depleted at an alarming rate. More than 50 percent of the original forest area has been converted to agricultural land by slash-and-burn clearing practices. Despite cocoa land expansion, productivity has declined because of rampant soil erosion. Fish, timber, and nontimber forest product stocks are decreasing. Coastal towns are facing severe water shortages during the dry season, hydropower capacity is dropping, and bilharzias have spread around the Volta Lake region. Wildlife populations and biodiversity are in serious decline, and many species face extinction. Health-related pollution issues—both indoor and outdoor—air pollution, water, and sanitation have serious implications for the well-being of the majority of the population and in the long run may affect their contribution to economic growth."

The study further notes, "all of these consequences might lower Ghana's GDP growth in the near future. From a broader view a measure of Ghana's productive base in terms of wealth must include—not simply growth in GDP—but also incorporate human, natural, and social capital.

Ghana's recent economic growth achievements look much less impressive and much less sustainable."

The study assesses the cost of natural resource depletion to the growth in Ghana's economy (see box 1.1) and concludes that

> with a demographic growth rate of more than 3 percent, future streams of depletion costs are likely to increase over time if nothing is done. Meanwhile, flows of benefits are going to decrease, and natural resources will be exhausted. Consequently, the government would be taking an extremely large risk if it does not shift policy to include natural resource depletion costs and by extension improve the rate of wealth accumulation.

Furthermore,

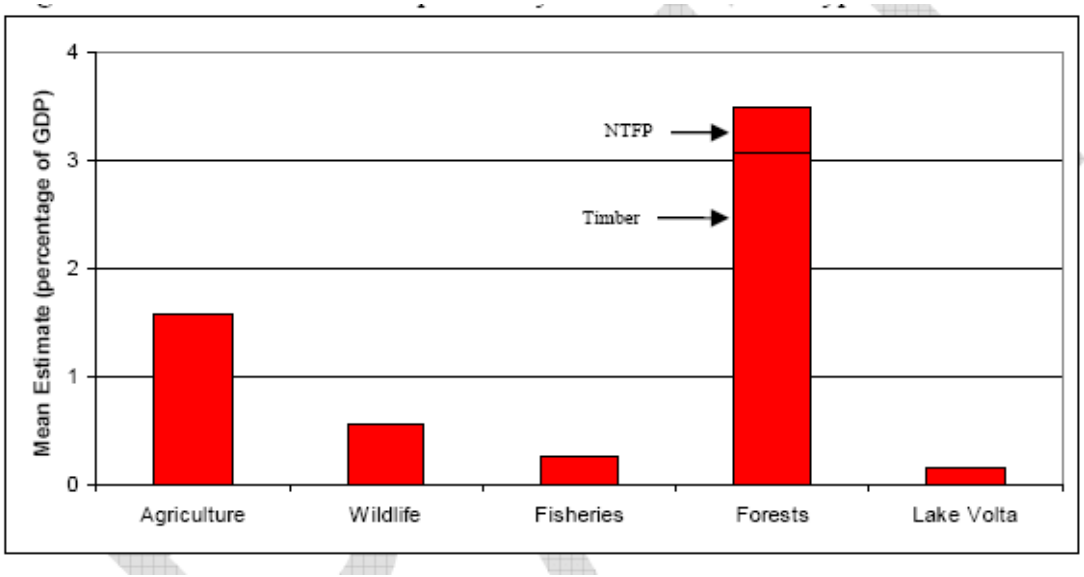
> there is an urgent need on the part of policy makers in Ghana to take action to stem this trend…Better management of key natural resources can significantly contribute to future growth. In fact, our estimates suggest that natural resources in Ghana contribute twice as much to current social welfare as produced capital. This could only be achieved if policies, regulations, institutions, and incentives across sectors are aligned to ensure sustainable development or "positive" genuine savings rate.

Box 1.1: Cost of Natural Resource Depletion

The degradation of only five types of natural assets (agricultural soils, forests and savannah woodlands, coastal fisheries, wildlife resources, and Lake Volta's environment) costs at least $520 million annually (6.0 percent of Ghana's annual GDP). If depletion is reversed and productivity restored, a minute portion of this cost might actually contribute new productivity to the economy each year; however, the vast majority of this cost results from the unsustainable overexploitation of natural resources. The forestry sector in particular has contributed the most to this degradation cost, and this trend is highly unsustainable.

The cost of environmental degradation to GDP represents one-third of Ghana's $1.5 billion annual overseas development assistance. This figure is a low estimate for several reasons. Not only did insufficient data exist on some assets, but several factors were also not included: the services provided by the different ecosystems, health impacts from indoor and outdoor air pollution and water-related diseases, and environmental and health costs arising from the industrial and artisanal mining sectors. The cost of environmental degradation is comparable to those determined for many North African countries (such as Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, and Tunisia) where the World Bank conducted a similar exercise in 2004.

As shown in the figure below, the large majority of the estimated costs of environmental degradation come from in- and off-reserve forests (63 percent) and, to a lesser extent, soil nutrient depletion (20 percent); together they represent 5 percent of GDP. The cost of depletion for the three other assets represents 17 percent of the total cost of depletion or 1 percent of GDP.



In this new calculation, the magnitude of depletion is almost twice the level calculated in the National Environmental Action Plan 10 years ago. In addition, the majority of the cost, 3.5 percent of GDP, is now caused by forest depletion. Ironically, much of the forest depletion has occurred inside reserves that were established for preservation purposes 50 years ago.

Poor forest management and soil degradation result in huge economic losses, the overexploitation of fish and wildlife threatens rural livelihoods, and degradation of Lake Volta's environment increases the costs and reduces the quality of both water and power supplies to urban populations.

The depletion of these various natural assets is interrelated and self-perpetuating. For example, a scarcity of fish stocks usually results in increased pressure on wildlife. Similarly, the loss of soil fertility often leads farmers to clear forests and savannah woodlands in search of productive land. A growing population can further exacerbate the ongoing depletion of natural resources and the associated economic losses.

Key Country Policies and Institutional Framework

This section outlines key elements of the policy, legislative, and institutional framework. The framework for environmental management in Ghana is determined by a hierarchy of objectives influenced by international conventions and agreements, the national constitution, Acts of Parliament, the country's strategic focus and development agenda, as well as various natural resource sector policy directives and the legislative instruments emanating from them, local government by-laws and, to a lesser extent, customary laws and practices.

The 1992 constitution of Ghana contains some important provisions on the environment that provide a general framework for conservation of biological resources. Under the Directive

Principles of State Policy, Article 36 (a) enjoins the state to "take appropriate measures needed to protect and safeguard the national environment for posterity and seek cooperation with other states and bodies for purposes of protecting the wider international environment for mankind." By this mandate, the state is expected to concern itself with issues relating to the following, among others:

- *Water resource management*—access to potable water and water supply for agriculture
- *Land resource management*—access to land for economic activity, security of tenure, as well as land degradation
- *Biodiversity management*—conservation of biodiversity
- *Forest threats*—loss of forest cover
- *Waste management*—pollution of water supply and ecosystem degradation

In addition, the constitution places responsibility for conservation and sustenance of environmental quality on the citizens, stating in article 41 (a) that, "it is the duty of every citizen to protect and safeguard the environment." With the intent of ensuring that all segments of Ghanaian society benefit from the conservation efforts, the constitution indicates proportions of benefit-sharing arrangements from the exploitation of natural resources.

International Conventions and Policy Frameworks

Ghana has been party to many international conventions and ratified several agreements with various emphases on the focal areas of the GEF. Box 1.2 provides a chronology of the conventions and agreements.

Box 1.2: Some Conventions and Agreements Relating to Biodiversity Signed by Ghana

International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution of the Sea by Oil (1962)

Convention on the African Migratory Locust (1962)

Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water (1963)

International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (1966)

African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (1968)

International Convention on Civil Liability for Oil Pollution Damage (1969)

International Convention Relating to Intervention on High Seas in Cases of Oil Pollution Casualties (1969)

Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, Especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar) (1971)

Treaty on the Prohibition of the Emplacement of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction on the Seabed and Ocean Floor and in the Subsoil Thereof (1971)

International Convention on the Establishment of an International Fund for Compensation for Oil Pollution Damage (1971)

Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and Their Destruction (1972)

Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972)

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (1973)

Convention Concerning Prevention and Control of Occupational Hazards Caused by Carcinogenic Substances and Agents (1974)

Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques (1976)

Convention Concerning the Protection of Workers against Occupational Hazards in the Working Environment Due to Air Pollution, Noise, and Vibration (1977)

Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) (1979)

United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (1982)

International Tropical Timber Agreement (1983)

Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (1987)

Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer (1989)

United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (1992)

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (1992)

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992)

Adapted from: National Biodiversity Strategy for Ghana (2002).

United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity. This convention, to which Ghana has been a signatory since 1992, has influenced Ghana's policy framework on biodiversity. Thus, the main policy framework for environmental management and biodiversity conservation, such as the Forest and Wildlife Policy (1994) as well as other policies on land, mining, and so on, contain sections that emphasize the conservation of biodiversity, sustainable utilization of biological resources, participation of local and indigenous people in conservation, and equity in sharing benefits from the use of genetic resources—all of which are principles of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity.

The issues emphasized in the convention are given consideration in the elaboration of national policies, for example:

- Biological diversity conservation addresses the natural characteristics of the area, traditional conservation practices, research and dissemination activities, stakeholder involvement, and monitoring and evaluation.

- Sustainable utilization encourages research, draws attention to traditional exploitation methods, and highlights the use of new technologies that are more sustainable, establishing limits of exploitation.

Benefit-sharing arrangements include the formulation of agreements, evaluation, and institution of various sharing mechanisms.

Regarding benefit sharing, the national constitution has specific provisions on how revenue from natural resource utilization should be shared among various stakeholders. The merit of this provision in the constitution is a subject of debate, yet it demonstrates a situation in which the national laws align with this specific convention. The additional focus of this convention on nontimber forest resources and endangered species of fauna and flora provides further opportunities for biodiversity conservation.

On the whole, the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity and its guidelines for the development of national biodiversity strategy and action plans provide the platform for fashioning a national biodiversity policy that covers all the ecological zones of a country. Ghana developed a National Biodiversity Strategy in 2002. Its stated policy aim is "to conserve the country's biological resources while ensuring that the biological resources provide lasting social, economic, and environmental benefits to the population through their efficient and equitable use."

Until now, however, the accompanying action plan that would guide the implementation of the strategy has not been produced, and no single organization is charged with coordinating and overseeing the implementation of the strategy. Existing institutions have inadequate capacity for environmental and biodiversity management, and there is a huge dearth of current scientific data on the nation's biological resources. Without adequate and up-to-date data on the resources, it is difficult to manage biodiversity effectively and maximize the potential for natural resource–based industries.

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. Ghana signed the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in December 1996. Even though Ghana has no areas that are entirely desert, 35 percent of the total land area is prone to desertification. To be able to meet the challenges of spreading desertification, Ghana produced a National Action Plan (NAP) on combating drought and desertification in 2002. Representing the most comprehensive policy-related discussion of the northern savannahs, this plan entails an elaborate inventory of the benefits of natural resources in natural forests.[1] The development of the NAP involved extensive

[1] This includes soil and watershed protection; soil fertility enhancement; soil conservation and regeneration of ecosystems; conservation of flora and fauna; provision of materials/varieties for genetic breeding and biotechnology;

review of existing environmental dryland management practices and policies, as well as strategies to harmonize actions. The process included extensive consultations in affected areas, including district assemblies and traditional authorities. District and regional sensitization and validation workshops were held in 49 districts in the country's regions. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of Ghana, which is responsible for NAP coordination and implementation, led these efforts. Ghana's Cabinet adopted the NAP in 2004.

The approved NAP currently includes many areas of support. Some of the NAP programs are not clearly focused on desertification and appear to be more general rural development initiatives. It is important for the Government of Ghana to take the existing NAP and make it more operational. This will include mainstreaming the NAP into national and district-level development planning, setting priorities, developing work plans based on available resources, acknowledging areas in which institution strengthening is needed, and clearly identifying the lead and collaborating ministries, departments, and agencies.

Climate change and energy. Ghana is a party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The GEF and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Climate Change Capacity Building Project (RAF/GHA/93) undertook a country study of greenhouse gas inventories from 1990 to 1996 covering energy, industrial processes, agriculture, land use change and forestry, and waste. The major greenhouse gases reported are carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide, in accordance with the guidelines annex to decision 10 of the Second Conference of the Parties for developing countries.

This inventory of greenhouse gas emissions indicates that, as of 1996, Ghana was a net greenhouse gas sink with a per capita capacity for greenhouse gas removal of –2.3x10 gigagrams carbon dioxide equivalents. It further states that, from 1990 to 1996, the overall capacity to serve as a carbon sink decreased by 49 percent. These changes have been attributed to the following factors:

- Increase in greenhouse gas emissions from all sectors
- Seasonal biomass clearings annually for farming, grazing lands, and settlements
- Increased use of charcoal and fuelwood
- Minimal restoration of deforested lands
- High population growth leading to shortened fallow periods
- Decreased stocking levels of timber in the high forest area

conservation of genetic resources; provision of habitat for wildlife; acting as a sink for carbon dioxide (carbon sequestration); supply of timber, fuelwood, and nonwood products; and creation of avenues for recreation and tourism.

The initial national communication on climate change (December 2000) refers to the importance of education and awareness raising and the role of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) in this regard. However, the report does not contain priorities as such, but rather various options and their costs as well as related policies and ongoing projects. For example, section 5.9.3 on strategies to integrate climate change into the national development framework states, "another area for possible action consists of efforts to reduce GHG emission" and lists "main elements worth considering."[2] Given the lack of clear and definite priorities and strategies in the communication, it would be and has been difficult for development partners to develop consistent strategies and programs. This is reflected in the SGP strategy, as well as in the limited projects for climate change nationwide.

Ninety-one percent of methane stems from biomass burned for energy and agriculture. About 90 percent of charcoal and fuelwood resources come from natural forest (only 10 percent from wood waste). The transition zones and savannah provide most of the supply (Kintampo, Nkoranza, Wenchi, Afram Plains, Damongo Districts), contributing to a deforestation rate of 3 percent a year. Nationally, 50 percent of households use charcoal for cooking, while 76 percent of rural households and 19 percent of urban households use wood).

The national communication identified the energy sector as the largest source of carbon dioxide emissions (49 percent and growing), followed by agriculture (42 percent). Although Ghana has considerable natural hydro resources and the Volta Dam, current electricity supply is insufficient for the growing economy and industrialization, and the country has recently experienced power shortages. The current energy supply situation in Ghana is 60 percent from hydro and 40 percent from oil-based thermal plants in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire.

Furthermore, the Accra population is about 3 million (35 percent of the national urban population), but growing at above the national average (3 percent compared with less than 2 percent). The International Energy Agency therefore estimates that the transport of carbon dioxide emissions from vehicles is projected to increase by a factor of 2.4, from about 4.6 gigatonnes in 2000 to 11.2 gigatonnes in 2050. The GEF has recently approved a full-size project to address urban transport, to be implemented by the World Bank.

Protection of oceans and coastal areas. Due to the dynamic nature of ecological and anthropogenic activity in Ghana's marine and coastal ecosystems, the zone is relatively fragile. The coastal ecosystem continues to be degraded as population density increases, urbanization expands, and economic activity grows. Nonetheless, no specific framework document for coastal and marine ecosystem management guides the implementation of programs relating to international waters management; guidance is gleaned from directives scattered in various conventions such as the International Convention Relating to Intervention on High Seas in Cases

[2] Twelve elements, including technical improvements in agriculture and animal husbandry to reduce methane emissions, as well as promotion of alternative energy sources.

of Oil Pollution Casualties, the Ramsar convention, and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, most of whose clauses are nonbinding.

Government and Sectoral Policies

After independence, successive governments in Ghana have developed various documents purported to direct the socioeconomic development path of Ghana. From the seven-year development plan of Nkrumah, five-year development plan of Busia, Acheampong's Charter of Redemption to Rawlings, Vision 2020, and the current Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS), a common strand has characterized these documents: they identify the natural resource base of the country as its greatest development asset, apart from its human resources. Yet, these documents do not emphasize the conservation of natural resources to ensure sustainability, and subsequent allocation of resources in that direction is largely inadequate.

Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS I, 2003–06, and GPRS II, 2006–09). Poverty reduction strategies have become the most important mechanism for driving the national development agenda as well as coordinating national budgets. A common characteristic of most of these strategies is that, in general, the natural resource sector usually has a low profile, largely because the contribution of natural resources to the national economy and to rural and urban livelihoods is not sufficiently understood. The GPRS is no exception.

Gadzekpo and Waldman (2005) assessed environmental considerations in the GPRS, producing a wide-ranging critique of environmental policy development processes, policy content, and policy implementation that pointed to weaknesses and a lack of coherence in national environmental development policy. They noted that, even though the strategy includes narrative on the interconnected nature of problems related to the environment, the issues are compartmentalized to satisfy political and powerful interests. Thus, for instance, deforestation (timber) is discussed as an environmental issue, mining is discussed as a means of increasing revenue, and land reform is considered as a conversion of plural systems of land ownership into commercial interests.

Regarding participation in the GPRS process, Gadzekpo and Waldman also noted, "most rural consultations focused on informing people about the GPRS, rather than soliciting their inputs." Furthermore, "the participation of environmental actors in the drafting of the GPRS has not led to incorporation of environmental issues as a cross-cutting theme." They conclude that the prominence of environmental issues in the current policy-making agenda is mainly through donor-initiated or -funded projects and that, notwithstanding the conventional narratives about environmental problems, many stakeholders "are marginalized during crucial processes such as budgetary decision making."

However, the trend now is toward more awareness and incorporation of the environment into national processes so that, in the current poverty reduction strategy (GPRS II), all the thematic areas that monitor and coordinate their concomitant action plans at the district levels have been subjected to strategic environmental assessment. Indeed all district assemblies have formed district environmental management committees to monitor and coordinate environmental protection and improvement activities.

National Environmental Policy. After the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, Ghana developed its National Environmental Action Plan on which the National Environmental Policy was based. The policy seeks to ensure reconciliation between economic development and natural resource conservation and make high environmental quality a key element supporting the country's economic and social development.

The specific objectives of the policy include maintaining ecosystems and ecological processes essential for the functioning of the biosphere, ensuring sound management of natural resources and the environment, and adequately protecting humans, animals, plants, and biological communities and habitats against harmful impacts and destructive practices, thereby preserving biodiversity.

The policy is fashioned to provide a framework for the Environmental Protection Agency to enable it to coordinate the activities of all other institutions and organizations involved in the formulation and implementation of environmental policy and programs in Ghana.

Forest and Wildlife Policy. Resource protection, sustainable production of natural resources, and involvement of local people are the main policy thrusts of the 1994 Forest and Wildlife Policy. The policy "aims at conservation and sustainable development of the nation's forest and wildlife resources for maintenance of environmental quality and perpetual flow of optimum benefits to all segments of society." The involvement of local people is mostly mentioned in terms of forest-fringing communities as part of forest and wildlife management, as well as communities living within reserves.

The policy recommends the development of a master plan, which details concrete issues on forests, wildlife, and biodiversity. This plan was developed in 1996, and in 1997 an overarching program framework to implement the Forest and Wildlife Policy, called the Natural Resource Management Project (NRMP), was formulated. The NRMP provided a basis for achieving sustainable utilization and development of forest and wildlife resources in an integrated manner. The program's many components include a savannah resource management component, which focused on the northern savannahs and on high forest biodiversity conservation, both of which were supported by the GEF and Danish International Development Assistance.

The master plan has been overshadowed by issues of commercialization, export interests, and the primary role of timber in the local and international economy, rather than an environmental focus.

An offshoot of the Forest and Wildlife Policy has emerged with the development of the Wildlife Resource Management Policy (2000), which is the most recent policy that tries to come to terms with sustained biodiversity enhancement through a comprehensive community-based approach. The policy also recognizes that, rather than policing people and/or imposing bans, peoples' attitudes need to be changed. It sees poverty, social conflicts, and lack of incentives as unfavorable to sustainable management, recognizes different ecological zones in the country that engender different natural resource management systems, and link this with livelihood

development. Roles are identified for traditional authorities, community stakeholders, and district assemblies. The policy underpins the development of community resource management areas (CREMAs), through which communities manage wildlife resources as part of their land use systems with the support of the Wildlife Division. The SGP has supported several CREMAs in accordance with this policy.

National Land Policy. Ghana's National Land Policy, launched in June 1999, captures aspects of both forests and coastal wetland management. This policy recognizes the use of wetlands for farming, grazing, fishing, timber, and salt winning in terms of encouragement of ecosystem and biodiversity conservation and sustainable productivity of wetlands. It prescribes conformation of mining, mechanized agriculture, cattle ranching, forest timber harvesting, soil erosion control, and tree planting to environmental conservation principles.

However, no distinction is made for northern savannah ecosystems that have special needs because of their fragility and the connection between poverty and land degradation that characterizes these areas. The policy refers to many environmental principles and laws without pointers on enhancing biodiversity conservation. The policy statement on biodiversity talks about protected area development for ecosystem maintenance of biodiversity conservation, scenic beauty preservation, and collaborative management with communities.

National Renewable Energy Policy. The objective of the relatively recent (2005) National Renewable Energy Policy is to "accelerate the development and utilization of renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies so as to achieve 10 percent penetration of electricity and petroleum demand mix by 2020." The GEF has been in the forefront of implementing these policy objectives, albeit mostly on a pilot basis in northern Ghana. Strategic interventions identified for implementation of the policy include the following:

- Promote solar, medium hydros, wind biomass, and municipal solid wastes as supplementary energy sources for domestic and light industrial use
- Supplement petroleum supplies from biodiesel on mostly biofuel configuration
- Reduce average fuelwood energy intensity per urban household by 50 percent and per rural household by 10 percent by 2020

Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy 2002. Agriculture, as it is done now in Ghana, has contributed greatly to the threat to biodiversity. The current policy framework for agricultural development in Ghana is directed by the Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy. Asuming-Brempong and Ashley (2004) assessed the effectiveness of this agricultural sector policy and concluded that its emphasis on modernization of agriculture, enterprise development, and commercial agriculture is unrealistic and not sufficiently targeted to be achievable. It is significant that the policy of promoting commercialization and modernization of agriculture is silent on the implications of these strategies for the environment and the means to address a potentially negative impact.

The National Wildfire Management Policy. Under the Wildfire Management Project supported by the Government of the Netherlands, the Ministry of Lands, Forestry, and Mines has developed a national wildfire policy, which the Cabinet approved on August 25, 2005. However, the policy is yet to be officially launched.

The policy describes problems related to the dual relationship between people and fire, and discusses the limitations of existing legislation. It concludes that the current centralized approach to wildfire management is not adequate in addressing the wildfire menace and that a community-based approach adopting optimal measures at the local level is the most prudent way to reduce the incidence and negative impacts of wildfires. The policy suggests the required institutional setup, organizational arrangements, tasks, research, and financial mechanisms. The establishment of financial mechanisms, such as a wildfire fund, to realize incentives for effective management and sustainable funding of the system is a key element of the policy.

Legislative Framework

The effective implementation of sector policies requires supportive legislation that could promote the enforcement of policy provisions; however, environmental legislation has not been aligned with policy development trends, so in many cases, policy intentions are not backed by any legislative instruments. Furthermore, the nature of environmental legislation has been oriented more toward use regulation than resource development. For example, the legal framework for community involvement in resource management does not exist, whereas laws provide elaborate prohibitions on what can and cannot be used.

In the Ghanaian legal system, the national constitution is the supreme law, followed by enactments by parliament and regulations stemming from them in order of importance. Local government by-laws are also recognized by the state in regulating public life. Customary law is also recognized by the constitution as operative in the legal system (especially when they do not conflict with the codified laws).

A number of laws govern development, management, and conservation of specific natural resources, but most of this legislation tends to be sector based, sometimes conflicting, obsolete, deficient, and unenforceable. No single comprehensive legislation deals with all of environmental management in general. (See box 1.3 for a partial list of legislation relevant to environmental management).

Box 1.3: A Partial List of Environmental Management–Related Laws in Ghana

The Concessions Ordinance, 1927 (Cap 136)
The Forests Ordinance (Cap 157)
Wild Animals Preservation Act, 1961 (Act 43)
Concessions Act, 1962 (Act 124)
State Lands Act, 1962 (Act 125)
Timber Leases and Licenses Regulations, 1962 (L.I. 229)
Timber Leases and Licenses (Amendment) Regulations, 1963 (L.I. 282)

Forest Protection Decree, 1974 (NRCD 243)
Trees and Timber Decree, 1974 (NRCD 273)
Timber Leases and Licenses (Amendment) Regulations, 1979 (L.I. 1215)
Control of Bushfire Law, 1983 (PNDCL 46)
Forest Protection (Amendment) Law, 1986 (PNDCL 142)
Control and Prevention of Bushfires Law, 1990 (PNDCL 229)
Local Government Act, 1993 (Act 423)
The Environmental Protection Agency Act, 1994 (Act 490)
The Ghana National Fire Service Act, 1997 (Act 537)
The Timber Resource Management Act, 1997 (Act 547)
The Timber Resource Management Regulation, 1998 (L.I. 1649)
Environmental Assessment Regulation, 1999 (L.I. 1652)
The Forestry Commission Act, 1999 (Act 571)
Traditional Medicine Practices Act, 2000 (Act 575)
Forest Development Fund Act, 2000 (Act 583)
Timber Resources Management Act (Amendment) Act, 2002 (Act 617)
The Forest Plantation Development Fund (Amendment) Act, 2002 (Act 623)
The Forest Protection (Amendment) Act, 2002 (Act 624)
Timber Resources Management (Amendment) Regulations, 2003 (L.I. 1721)

Within this general framework, specific enactments and regulations lend themselves to providing the basis for enhancing environmental management, a few of which are discussed below. It should be emphasized that despite the existence of various laws, enforcement of this legislation leaves much to be desired for effective conservation and management of the country's biological resources.

Wild Animals Preservation Act, 1961. Laws relating to biodiversity are dominated by forest and timber. The most relevant laws relating to the northern savannah are those dealing with wildlife conservation and wildfire management. The Wild Animals Preservation Act of 1961 regulates the use and exploitation of wildlife in Ghana and establishes the government's right to establish protected areas. Detailed management organization is provided for in both the Wildlife Reserves Regulations (1971, L.I. 710) and the Wildlife Conservation Regulations (1971, L.I. 685). Stakeholders perceive some of the laws as being at odds with local values or difficult to implement. New legislation is currently being drafted with technical assistance from IUCN that will enable (1) recognition of the common property issues associated with managing the off-reserve wildlife estate and (2) devolution of authority to an appropriate level for management.

Control and Prevention of Bushfires Law, 1990. The year 1983 represents a landmark in the environmental history of Ghana. It was a year in which uncontrolled fires swept as never before through the whole country (and indeed the West African subregion), causing immeasurable loss of livelihood and destruction of environment. Cocoa production was reduced by as much as an estimated 40 percent in 1983 and another 50 percent in 1984, because of the devastating effect of

the 1983 fires. Those fires led to a rise in awareness levels throughout the country, but not sufficient attitudinal change. Since then, bushfires have become an annual ritual, ravaging the entire country, except the wettest forests in the southwestern corner. As the vegetation becomes more vulnerable following each fire, reoccurrence is inevitable and triggered more easily.

The Government of Ghana initially responded to these events by establishing entities such as the National Mobilization Committee, which together with the then Environmental Protection Council (now the EPA), the Ghana National Fire Service, the police, NGOs, and others formed the National Anti-Bush Fire Committee. The committee advises the government on matters relating to the prevention and control of bushfires and facilitates the formation of anti-bushfire committees at the regional, district, and community levels.

Furthermore, the Control of Bushfires Law, 1983 (PNDC Law 46, later repealed by Control and Prevention of Bushfires Law, 1990, PNDC Law 229) was enacted to prohibit the setting of bushfires for any purpose other than certain agricultural, forestry, and wildlife management purposes. The law provided a legal basis for the formation, training, and involvement of volunteer fire squads in the prevention and control of bushfires.

Traditional Medicine Practices Act 2000 (Act 575). Medicinal plants and practices related to herbal medicines that are part of biodiversity management have long been part of traditional community life. The 2000 act legitimizes and regulates traditional medicine, practitioners, and healers. This policy supports the Northern Savanna Biodiversity Conservation Project in its work with biodiversity and sustainability of healer activities. Elements of in situ and ex situ conservation practices, herbal garden creation, and controlled harvesting of plant and animal species have received attention.

The framework for community management and control of actions in this respect resulting in biodiversity enhancement is yet to be developed. Value-added and marketing linkages that could motivate sustainable harvesting and use of plant and animal species, as is done in some countries within the subregion, have yet to receive policy attention.

Institutional Arrangements

Several governmental institutions are involved in implementing activities related to the management of the environment in Ghana. These include the Ministry of Environment and Science (which was recently split in two and made adjuncts of the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development and Ministry of Education and Sports, respectively); Ministry of Food and Agriculture; Ministry of Lands, Forestry, and Mining; Environmental Protection Agency; Lands Commission; Land Title Registry; Deeds Registry; Land Valuation Board; Office of the Administrator of the Stool Lands; Survey Department; Forestry Commission; Water Resource Commission; and Department of Cooperatives.

The Environmental Protection Agency Act, 1994 (Act 490), transformed the Environmental Protection Council into an agency having regulatory and enforcement roles, among others. The

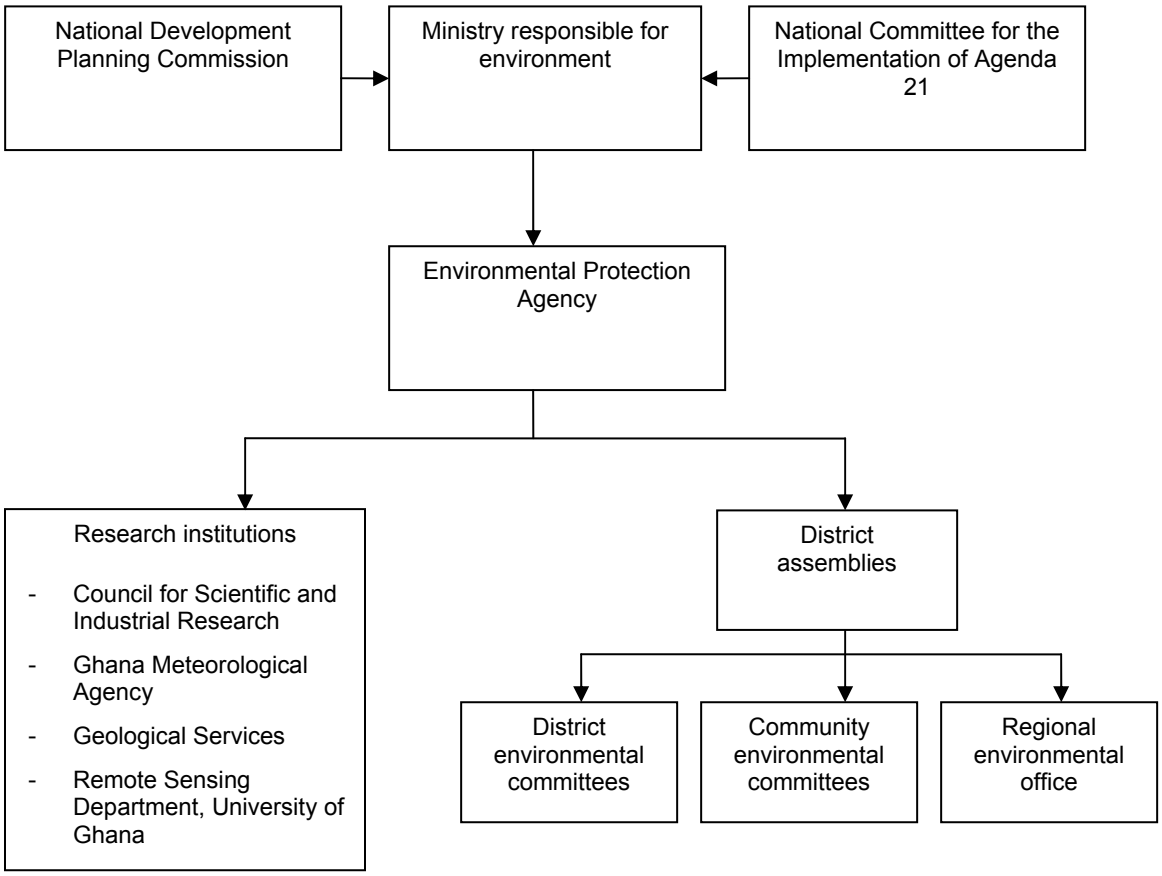
EPA is given full mandate and responsibilities for regulating the environment and ensuring the implementation of related government policies. The law instructs the EPA to

- ensure that the implementation of environmental policy and planning is integrated and consistent with the country's desire for effective, long-term maintenance of environmental quality;
- provide technical assistance to the district assemblies to enable them to meet their responsibilities for managing the local environment, working in partnership with other stakeholders;
- guide development with the aim of preventing, reducing, and as far as possible eliminating pollution and nuisances;
- initiate and pursue formal and nonformal environmental programs for the public;
- collect, collate, and disseminate information and promote and support research programs needed to ensure sound environmental management and use of natural resources;
- apply legal processes in a fair, equitable, and efficient manner to ensure responsible environmental behavior in the country.

Subsequent legislation such as the Environmental Assessment Regulation (L.I. 1652 of 1999) provides regulatory mechanisms for the implementation of the EPA's mandate. In spite of these elaborate provisions, the law does not give the EPA any prosecution powers, so its capacity to enforce compliance is limited.

However, the EPA has neither the capacity nor the institutional authority to carry out this mandate. Figure 1.3 depicts the structure for environmental management related to the EPA in the country.

Figure 1.3: Organization Chart for Environmental Policy Making, Advising, and Implementing in Ghana



The role of district assemblies in environmental management is defined both in the Local Government Act, 1993 (Act 423) and the Environmental Protection Agency Act, 1994 (Act 490) as follows: "District Assemblies will be the organ through which national policies and programs on environment will be translated into action at the local and district levels…their action programs will serve as vehicles for creating awareness at the grassroots level…"

Yet, the district assemblies are handicapped by a lack of personnel and resources to carry out this mandate. For instance, the EPA has representation at the regional, but not the district, level; the Forestry Commission, which under the Local Government Act was supposed to be a decentralized department of the district assembly, is now an autonomous public sector organization not necessarily represented in every administrative district.

The existing institutional setup is characterized by the following:

- *Neglect of the role of traditional institutions in the management of natural resources.* It is apparent that the local institutions' role is subsumed within the community environmental committees. These committees are externally introduced organizations that do not

command the same respect or have the same ability to mobilize as do the tested traditional organizations, such as the taboos and chieftaincy.

- *Duplication of roles and responsibilities without clear direction for biodiversity conservation.* Sometimes the mandates of these institutions conflict. For example, in one instance a farmer who had illegally cultivated parts of a wildlife reserve and was in a running tussle with the Wildlife Division of the Forestry Commission was awarded the title of best farmer for the district and the farm in question is used as a demonstration site by the Ministry of Food and Agriculture.

- *Weak coordination, especially at the national level.* Opportunities and forums for strategic dialogue among the Ministry of Environment and Science; Ministry of Lands, Forestry, and Mining; and Ministry of Food and Agriculture are limited. Neither the EPA nor the ministry under which it falls seems to have the resources or the political weight to play a coordinator role in the environment and natural resource management sector. There is a provision that each line ministry establish an "environmental desk," which would enhance cross-sectoral coordination; however, the Ministry of Food and Agriculture is the only ministry that at the moment has established such desk. An interministerial technical committee was established, but a lack of resources prevents it from functioning. A National Desertification Committee was also established in the framework of the NAP, but it has been dormant so far. Weak intersectoral coordination, particularly for a cross-cutting issue as land degradation, makes policy harmonization and coherence more difficult and reduces information flow, thus leading to uncoordinated interventions and inefficient or suboptimal allocation of resources.

Overseas Development Assistance and Environmental Management

Overseas development assistance for the environment in Ghana is now mostly provided by bilateral donors as budget support. The first GPRS in February 2002 led nine development partners to start the multidonor budget support program.[3] This program currently represents 40 percent of total aid to Ghana, around 10 percent of the government's budget, and 4 percent of GDP. Between 2003 and 2004, total disbursements of the program increased from $278.9 million to $309 million.[4] The two largest contributing donors are the World Bank (roughly 45 percent) and the Department for International Development (United Kingdom) (25 percent).

The pattern of investment by development partners in the environment sector has recently seen a downward trend with reduced direct investment in the sector. The focus of development assistance has shifted toward development policy lending concentrating on governance

[3] Donors include the African Development Bank, Canada, Denmark, European Commission, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and the World Bank. France joined this program in 2004. Japan, the United States, UNDP, and UNICEF presently enjoy observer status.

[4] All dollar amounts are U.S. dollars unless otherwise noted.

structures, systems and processes, institutional regulatory framework, institutional capacity building, and public expenditure management. An environment component, which was considered about a year ago as part of the poverty reduction strategy paper, did not materialize because of difficulties in the allocation of funds, as well as insufficient funds.

In the last United Nations common country assessment (2004), environment priorities are identified as those set down in the constitution. Recent development and major development priorities include combating deforestation and desertification, conservation of biodiversity and protection of oceans and coastal areas, and management of hazardous wastes. Because the 1992 constitution does not mention climate change, the common country assessment also does not mention it. The assessment also points out that the policy framework for environmental management has improved, but this arrangement has not resulted in effective local control of environmental resources. The baseline extent of forests is stated as 2.1 million hectares of closed forest and 1.6 million hectares of savannah forest. Average annual deforestation between 1990 and 1995 was 1,172 square kilometers (3.2 percent).

The United Nations Development Assistance Framework for Ghana for 2006–10 (April 2005) indicates as one of six outcomes "increased productive capacity for sustainable livelihoods especially in the most deprived districts," under which good environmental management figures as one of five areas. Activities for support include regulatory frameworks for sustainable use of natural resources; local natural resource management plans (CREMAs); and community training on technologies, including renewable energy, with the United Nations Environment Programme, UNDP, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. The SGP is not referred to as a partner. Furthermore, the environment is not covered in the analysis of context with problems to address. The UNDP Country Programme Document (2006–10), which is derived from the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, reflects three priorities, including "vulnerability reduction and environmental sustainability" (the prior country cooperation framework has environment and energy as a priority). The activities focus on upstream policy advice. The UNDP country office stated in interviews that the shift intends to reinforce the environment and the main difference is the addition of disaster management. UNDP projects include Promoting Sustainable Use of Natural Resources and Good Environmental Management in Ghana, Household Energy Programme for Cooking, Improving Supply Chain for LPG access in the Tamale Metropolis of Northern Ghana, and the Programme to Strengthen Disaster Risk Reduction in Ghana.

The World Bank country assistance strategy (fiscal 2004–07) was reviewed in May 2006. Its focus is on sustainable accelerated growth; whereas, the environment is not an explicit focus.[5] Nevertheless, the strategy is expected to influence outcomes of sustainable natural resource management and enhanced compliance with natural resource management policies. In this regard, the strategy goal was the GPRS Plantation Development Strategy target of expanding

[5] The GEF fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30.

forest cover from 20,000 hectares to 80,000 hectares by 2007 (in May 2006, 58,000 hectares had been planted). The portfolio overview mentions the GEF northern savannah and forests biodiversity projects, but not progress in the areas covered. Future World Bank support is also concerned with the energy sector and continued problems with pricing, efficiency, and service delivery.

Nevertheless, within the environment and natural resource management sector working group,[6] which brings together development partners and focal points of the various environmental conventions, there is an indication of increasing re-engagement in the sector; many bilateral donors, such as France, Switzerland, United Kingdom (Department for International Development), European Union, and the Netherlands, are supporting more sectorwide projects. The World Bank is playing a catalytic role in this revived interest in the sector with sectorwide budget support lending to a new project called the Natural Resource and Environment Governance Programme. The Bank has already pledged $40 million toward the project.

1.2 Overview of GEF and SGP Portfolio in Ghana

Evolution

The GEF Small Grants Programme represents the start of GEF involvement in Ghana in 1992. The SGP in Ghana has gone through four operational stages, not of equal duration:

- Pilot phase (1992–95): 23 projects approved
- Operational phase 1 (1996–98): 15 projects approved
- Operational phase 2 (1999–2004): 36 projects approved
- Operational phase 3 (2005–2008): 36 projects approved

During the pilot phase (1992–95), the main challenge was to launch the program and build a portfolio. The first national coordinator started as a part-time consultant (until 1996). The initial consultations revealed a focus among stakeholders on tree planting, and the national coordinator worked with project proponents to expand the scope. Mirroring experimentation in the GEF overall, the period was marked by a lack of knowledge of GEF focus, roles, and responsibilities among the communities, the NGOs, as well as the National Steering Committee (NSC) and the UNDP office. Compounding the challenges was the limited NGO community dealing with environment issues in Ghana at that time. More proposals were received by CBOs that had long existed in the rural environment, but with less capacity for formulation and implementation.

[6] Includes Canadian International Development Agency (lead agency), the Netherlands, France, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit, World Bank, Department for International Development (United Kingdom), and UNDP.

For 1996–98, a new country-specific program strategy was enunciated within the framework of the GEF Operational Strategy (1995). Operational phase 1 was formulated to guide program planning, implementation, and learning in the GEF operational programs by developing a long-term integrated and strategic approach to program planning. Although this phase was short and limited in grants, it yielded useful lessons on a decentralized NSC, using sustainable livelihoods as an entry point for environmental awareness, and participatory planning. The introduction of the planning grant helped develop better projects, and field visits, and monitoring increased.

Operational phase 2 was designed to learn from and build on the pilot and first phase experiences and, more important, develop a long-term integrated and more strategic approach to program planning and implementation. Its objective was to develop a more sustainable country program that would achieve greater impacts on the local and global environment. The strategy paper initially covered 1999 to 2000 only and was later expanded. Reformulated objectives (in 2003 after a workshop in late 2001) were to (1) enhance the capacity of selected households and communities to improve their livelihood through the sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity, renewable energy and energy efficiency, and protection of water resources, (2) expand the impact of successful community-level initiatives through scale-up, replication, networking, and promotion of supportive policies, and (3) ensure the long-term institutional and financial sustainability of the program.

The goal of the current operational phase 3 in Ghana is to consolidate and extend proven community-based systems and technologies that ensure judicious use of resources in the GEF focal areas to derive social, cultural, economic, and environmental benefits for the global environment and poverty reduction. The intended outcomes are

- strengthened local capacity for effective and efficient operations in the priority GEF SGP focal areas;
- scaled up, replicated, networked, and promoted best practices of community-level initiatives to support development efforts in biodiversity conservation, reduction of climate change threats, mitigation of land degradation and desertification control, reduction or elimination of releases of persistent organic pollutants (POPs), and reduction of pollution into international waters;
- enhanced long-term institutional and financial sustainability of the GEF SGP in Ghana to support poverty reduction strategies and enhanced sound environmental management.

The SGP is organized as per standard administrative arrangements for country programs, with a national coordinator, supported by an assistant and driver, and a national steering committee (see section 4.1).

Portfolio Overview and Evolution

Of the 110 approved projects (by end January 2007, SGP global database), 56 had closed satisfactorily and four had been terminated. One had yet to start, and 48 were under

implementation. Table 1.1 illustrates the focal area distribution across phases. The evaluation visited 12 projects.

Table 1.1: Focal Area Distribution per Operational Phase

Phase	Biodiversity	Climate change	Multifocal	Int'l waters	Land degradation	POPs	Total
Pilot	13	4	5	-	-	-	22
1	7	4	5	-	-	-	16
2	16	9	7	1	1	1	35
3	16	3	2	1	12	3	37
Total	52	20	19	2	14	4	110
Proportion	47%	18%	17%	2%	13%	3%	100%

In the pilot phase (duration of three years), the 22 projects approved include seven implemented by CBOs. The grants ranged from a minimum of $1,344 (Protection of Medicinal Trees and Shrubs—GHA/93/006) to $50,000 (Reviving the Biodiversity in the Sango Lagoon and Adjacent Wetlands—GHA/93/009), both visited by this evaluation. The first approved project was the Refrigeration and the Environment (GHA/93/001) (in the ozone depletion focal area), which started in March 1993. Other climate change projects focused on energy-efficient stoves and rehabilitation of a biogas plant. The consistently largest focal area, biodiversity, included two monkey sanctuary projects, two sacred grove projects, and many afforestation and agroforestry projects. The total grant disbursement in this phase amounted to $347,484.

In phase 1 (duration of two years), the portfolio was meant to implement the experiences of the pilot phase. During the period, 16 grants were approved in the last year of the phase. The total grant amount was $290,255. Grants ranged from $1,202 (The Forest and Our Destiny, a Video Animation—GHA/98/035) to $49,840 (Conservation and Cultivation of Endangered Medicinal Plants—GHA/98/037), with an average of $18,140 per grant. The first full-size projects (FSPs) also started during this period. In the biodiversity area, the SGP started the focus on conservation and cultivation of endangered medicinal plants (two grants) and the support to conservation in East Mamprusi (three grants, on elephants). In climate change, the first projects (two) on production and use of Ahibenso improved coal pots and cook stoves started. Grants were also given on capacity building on climate change issues.

The total grant disbursement of phase 2 (duration of five years) was $759,628, with $1,411,893 mobilized in cash and in kind from donors and stakeholders. Of this, 48 percent was for biodiversity (compared with 60 percent of funds in phase 1). The average grant amount was $21,703; the smallest grant was $3,000 (Eco-Fest 2001: Celebrating International Ecotourism in Ghana—GHA/01/048). Three projects obtained the maximum allocation of $50,000 (Conservation of Elephants and Their Habitats along the Red Volta River—GHA/00/040, Capacity-Building Workshop on GEF Thematic Areas and Operational Programmes—GHA/00/056, and Bioprospecting of *Thaumatococcus Danielli*, a Natural Sweetener, and Other

Nontimber Forest Products for the Conservation of Tropical Forests—GHA/00/044). In biodiversity, this period saw the emergence of projects aiming for sustainable management of natural resources with community involvement. Four projects on ecotourism were also launched. In climate change, some high-profile and innovative projects were launched: on biofuel from physic nuts through the production of Jatropha oil. The multifocal area continued to reflect capacity building and advocacy, including on GEF focal arrears and on specific themes such as fuelwood management. The first exploration into the POPs focal area was launched: a planning grant of $1,980 for Effective Use of Pesticides/Agro-Chemicals at Weija Irrigation Site (GHA/04/060).

During the current phase 3, the capacities and systems developed have allowed a considerable expansion in approvals. The total grant allocation so far is $826,900. Grants range from $12,000 (Sustainable Land Management and Regeneration of Degraded Natural Resources in Karigbunto Area of the Gonjaland, and Awareness Creation on the Effects of POPs and Promotion of Integrated Pest Management in Vegetable Cultivation in Kobreso Area) to $40,000 (Integrated Biodiversity Conservation for Ecotourism Development on the Dornokitcherkope Island in the Songor Wetland), with an average of $22,350 per grant. With the formal acceptance of land degradation as a GEF focal area, the number of grants for this purpose grew considerably in phase 3. These grants focus on degraded land restoration and watershed management. In parallel, the demand for climate change grants has dropped to only two projects: one on solar lanterns (a planning grant) and another on biogas from coconut waste. In biodiversity, the focus continued on sustainable management of natural resources with community involvement and on ecotourism.

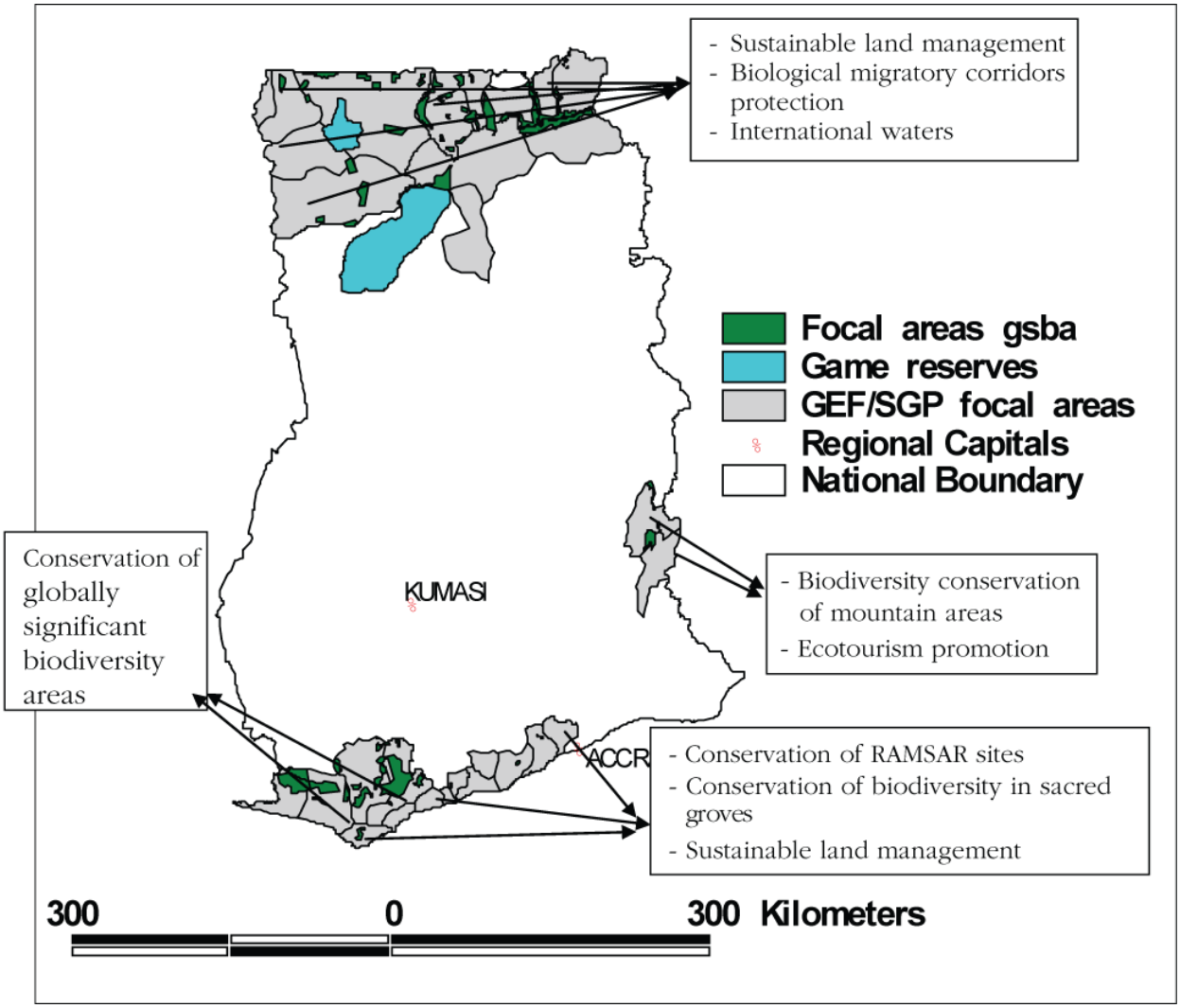
The SGP is present in all 10 of Ghana's regions. From the outset, however, the program has focused on the arid northern savannah regions, where environmental land degradation is most noted and where poverty is also widespread. This has arguably raised additional challenges in terms of distance, weak local capacity, extensive needs for support, and sustainability concerns. Phase 2 continued the focus on the Northern and Upper West Regions.

In addition to the biological migratory corridors of the northern savannah woodlands ecosystem and degraded lands within the Sudan savannah and Sahelian region, the SGP biogeographic focal areas include the globally significant biodiversity areas (GSBAs) within the tropical high rain forests, Ramsar sites, wetlands within coastal marginal forests, and mountainous areas within the middle belt. The program has so far not focused on the transition zone and the middle of the country, that is, the Ashanti and Central Regions (see figure 1.4). Greater Accra was fourth among regions during phase 2.

The identification of *beneficiaries* has been driven by the focus on GEF focal areas and the environmentally most challenged areas in terms of biodiversity and land degradation. From the outset, the program strategy has therefore focused on (1) nongovernmental and CBOs in the southern marginal and northern savannah ecosystems of Ghana, (2) communities in protected areas and their buffer zones, (3) conservation in productive landscapes, and (4) community

protected areas within the biological hotspots outside the gazetted forest reserves. Many grants have also targeted women's associations.

Figure 1.4: Geographic Focus of SGP in Ghana



Source: GEF Operational Program on forest ecosystems (OP3) review

A profile of poverty distribution in Ghana reveals that the poorest regions roughly coincide with the areas with the most fragile ecosystems in terms of forest cover and threat of desertification (see figures 1.5a and 1.5b). Thus, the northern regions of Ghana, where forest cover is very minimal and annual bushfires have become an annual ritual, have the poorest populations in the country. The northern savannah has been an SGP concentration area since 1992.

Figure 1.5a: District Headcount Ratio (1998/99)

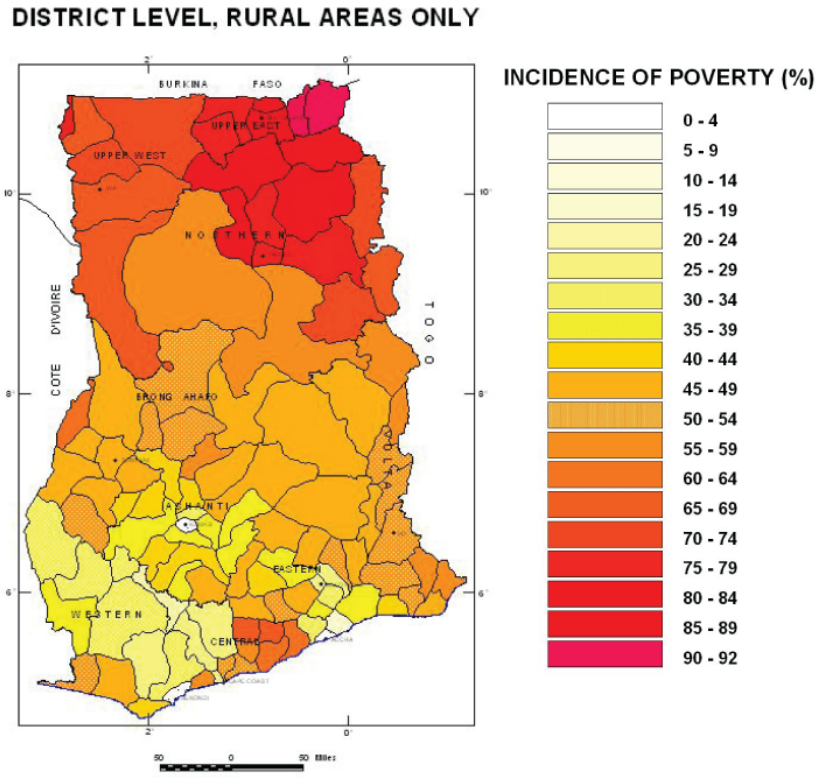
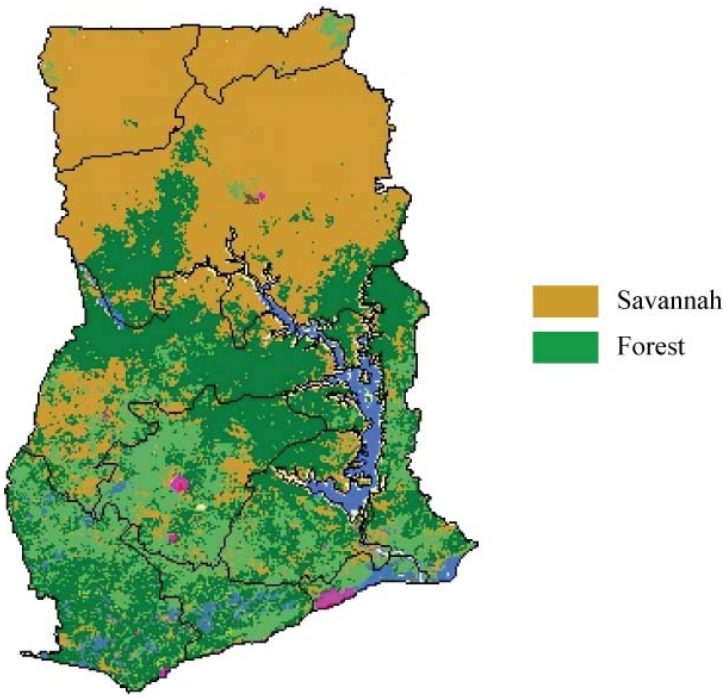


Figure 1.5b: Vegetation Cover



Cooperation with other partners has grown steadily as the program has expanded and now covers all types of stakeholders. Cooperation is especially good with the NGO and civil society organization community. Bilateral and multilateral donors contribute funds and are represented on the NSC. Academia and universities provide human resources and expertise. The government and convention focal points are fully involved in the NSC.

The SGP faces some future challenges, including the introduction of the GEF Resource Allocation Framework (RAF). Countries such as Ghana that will receive group allocations from the RAF for climate change and biodiversity have preferential access to SGP core funding. The allocation cap is $400,000 a year. The country strategy paper (CSP) envisages resource mobilization from the country RAF allocation; however, since then the GEF has decided that the RAF group allocations cannot be drawn on to make additional contributions to the SGP.

The GEF has decided that, beginning in 2007, any country that has benefited from the SGP for more than eight years will be required to present a plan to graduate from GEF funding (core and RAF resources on completion of the GEF-4 (2006–10) cycle. Ghana falls in this category. Because this decision is relatively recent, no discussion has yet taken place at the country level on the graduation strategy.

2 Relevance

The GEF Small Grants Programme in Ghana, launched in 1992, has gone through four operational stages. As a global funding mechanism, the GEF SGP in Ghana supports community-level initiatives that promote sustainable economic growth and social development within GEF focal areas. The focus of the national SGP is basically the same as the GEF focal areas, namely

- conserving biodiversity,
- mitigating threats to global climate change,
- phasing out ozone depletion substances,
- protecting international waters from pollution,
- minimizing the release of persistent organic pollutants,
- ensuring sustainable land management (primarily control of desertification).

From the outset, the GEF program has been firmly anchored in the *GEF mission and focal areas.* The current country program strategy reflects strategies and contents directly drawn from the operational programs (OPs). All of the six GEF focal areas are covered and, within these, most of the operational programs. As such, the strategy can be considered to respond directly to the conventions embedded in the GEF Operational Strategy (1995).

However, it is not certain that this relevance to the GEF Operational Strategy helps the SGP in its pursuit of focus and impact. The great spread of environmental focal areas can easily lead to dispersion of small grants. Because beneficiaries express more demand for some focal interventions than others; there is a trade-off to consider in SGP pushing for more projects in the "underrepresented" areas (international waters, POPs, ozone, and partly climate change). This requires considerable efforts by the national coordinator and NSC. Even an FSP portfolio, which has more resources, does not aim to cover all focal areas, but is based on an assumption of prioritization.

2.1 SGP and Links to GEF and National Priorities

Many SGP grants respond directly to the numerous national *policies* related to the environment, especially within natural resource management, the wildfire policy, and forest conservation in the National Environment Action Plan, as well as the GPRS. Given the broad range of policies and priorities, it would indeed be difficult to find ones that do not fit with one or more of them. The analysis shows that, although derived from the conventions that Ghana has signed, most of its national plans do not contain explicit commitments by the government. For example, the national communication on climate change merely presents a number of options. A number of projects have reduced ozone, for which a commitment for phaseout by 2020 exists. A lack of

commitment, clear priorities, or implementation frameworks would make it difficult for any partners to address relevance. In fact, where national implementation is inconsistent or incomplete, the SGP has in some cases served to complement government efforts, rather than as an extension or in synchronization with them.

The biogeographic focal areas of the program in Ghana are the GSBAs within the tropical high rain forests, Ramsar sites, and wetlands within the coastal marginal forests, mountainous areas within the semideciduous middle belt, and biological migratory corridors of the northern savannah woodlands ecosystem and degraded lands within the Sudan savannah and Sahelian region (see figure 1.4 in section 1.2).

The program integrates poverty reduction as a critical entry point in environmental management and human development. It operates on the belief that global environmental problems can best be addressed if the local people affected by the problems are involved and there are direct benefits from and ownership of the process. In terms of the *national-level* priority links, although no single policy document outlines the specific environmental priorities of the country, various policies point out the main thrusts of Ghana's environmental management objectives. On all of these fronts, the SGP in Ghana has been active, and its activities not only fit with the aims of these policies, but make major contributions to the achievements of the

- sustainable management of the natural environment (Forest and Wildlife Policy, 1994; National Biodiversity Strategy for Ghana, 2002),
- utilization of the natural environment for sustained livelihood support (Forest and Wildlife Policy, 1994),
- fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from sustainable management of the resources,
- reduction in environmental factors that lead to vulnerability and exclusion (GPRS II).

Furthermore, the SGP participated in initiation and drafting of the National Wetland Policy, National Strategic Energy Plan, National Wildfire Management Policy, National Woodfuel Policy, and the draft National Policy on Traditional Knowledge for Agriculture and Health.

To ensure that the SGP remains relevant to the implementation of the strategies relating to the various international conventions, many of the focal persons of the conventions are members of the National Steering Committee of the SGP. The participation by representatives of GEF Agencies on this committee—World Bank, UNDP, and the GEF focal point and ministry responsible for the environment—also ensures that the SGP remains focused on the GEF focal areas.

2.2 SGP and Relevance to Beneficiaries

The program has focused thematically on supporting community efforts at sustainable management and utilization of natural resources with an emphasis on

- mainstreaming GEF focal area activities into community-level development through the establishment and management of technology and systems demonstration and learning centers to train local beneficiaries,
- sustainable small business enterprise development, including processing of nontimber forest products, community-based ecotourism development, and promotion of traditional medicines,
- policy and legislation on poverty alleviation, gender equity, and empowerment.

At the local level, the intended *beneficiaries* of the SGP—including poor, vulnerable groups in communities; locally based CBOs and NGOs; and traditional authorities and community leaders—have a high regard and appreciation for the operations of the SGP. Indeed, in several communities visited, the intervention of the SGP represents the most significant life-changing project in recent times. For instance, at Duasidan (Self-Initiated Community Wildlife Management for Ecotourism Promotion and Restoration of Degraded Lands in Duasidan Community—GHA/05/082), the community indicated that, since the intervention of the SGP, the community has started replanting cocoa (a major cash crop in the past), because of the reduction in the incidence of bushfires.

The Ghana SGP has been effective in navigating tensions and *potential conflicts* among local, national, and global priorities. In most cases, projects integrate environment and livelihood work; awareness of environmental issues was high in projects visited. Win-win situations have been pursued as a key strategy, because incentives for environment-friendly behavior give alternatives to old practices. Even in cases in which local income-generating schemes were not very pronounced, the projects demonstrated that protecting the environment could provide savings or is worth pursuing on its own merit. Although exceptions exist, the SGP and NGOs appear to have managed expectations of communities, in that these grants are primarily for the environment.

Any trade-offs between the environment and local needs seem to take place on the level of the overall program, rather than at the grant level. To address the range of GEF focal areas, the SGP has been obliged primarily to push some types of projects more than others and, consequently, has not been able to address demand in other areas. This implies a trade-off between national priorities (or within national priorities) and local community or NGO demand. Another trade-off can be seen in the timing of pursuit of global environmental benefits, in that the SGP focused on capacity building of the NGO community first to pursue such benefits subsequently. This is reasonable, considering that it would not be realistic to expect excellent projects for these benefits immediately without the requisite understanding and knowledge of appropriate design.

The SGP enjoys an excellent *reputation* both at the community level and within the NGO community, but also beyond these immediate beneficiaries. The evaluation team consistently heard positive feedback on SGP relevance and performance, as expressed by the government, donors, international NGOs, and other partners. Aspects of this perceived reputation of the Ghana SGP include the following:

- The SGP has a unique mandate and scope, and no comparable mechanism exists.
- The SGP is the only mechanism that covers a broad range of environmental issues or is purely dedicated to the environment.
- The SGP is the only mechanism that covers the entire country more or less nationwide.
- The SGP is the only mechanism that directly addresses the NGO and CBO community and channels funds through them.
- The SGP is independent and not subject to undue influence, hidden agendas, or political concerns; as such its allocation process is seen as fair.
- The SGP is seen as effective in generating results, especially in key areas in biodiversity, through innovation and local community participation and complements government or large donor approaches.
- The SGP is seen as flexible and not bureaucratic in its approach, with some exceptions on monitoring and evaluation (M&E) issues and reluctance to fund repeated requests.
- The SGP is perceived as driven by partnership and ownership, in that it works with the community in developing projects and provides support.
- The SGP is well known and has good visibility and image as the face of the GEF (other GEF projects or activities are not equally known).

This reputation has led to the following effects that benefit the SGP: It has allowed the SGP to be used as a replication model and source of advice and authority in community approaches. It has also benefited others; for example, the SGP is seen as key in building government, community, and donor trust in the NGO and CBO community in Ghana. It has also indirectly helped the image of UNDP as having expertise in NGO outreach and community work and as a source of funds. Although the GEF is consistently featured in publicity and perceptions as the GEF SGP, the evaluation team found it difficult to discern what stakeholders see as "the GEF," as it is not an agency or program with a presence in Ghana. Reputational benefits have led to partnerships for the SGP, but not immediately to cost sharing, for which availability of resources depends on more than a program's excellence.

Relation of the SGP to the GEF FSP and MSP Country Portfolio

The operational phase 3 SGP country strategy aims to "mainstream the SGP methodology and experience in other UNDP programs and in the GEF system" as a key goal. The strategy envisages increasing links with other UNDP programs, such as Renewable Energy–Based Electricity for Rural, Social, and Economic Development in Ghana (RESPRO), Africa 2000 Network, and those involved in poverty alleviation, community development, gender issues, and indigenous peoples. The country program would join forces with GEF projects and programs in the country, especially the biodiversity project in the savannah and high rain forest zones to achieve a greater impact in the GEF focal areas. The country program strategy also mentions that successful GEF SGP projects can be replicated and expanded using the GEF medium-size project (MSP) mechanism. It notes the need to coordinate efforts with GEF projects, including providing support for successful community-based components to explore funding from medium- and full-size GEF projects.

However, the Ghana FSP and MSP portfolio has been relatively limited so far. The FSP was approved in August 1997 (RESPRO) by UNDP and the second in October 1998 (the Natural Resource Management Project) by the World Bank. The first enabling activity, Preparation of the Initial National Communication for the Implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, was approved in July 1997. Four projects have closed, and three are currently ongoing. A number of regional and global projects involve Ghana.[7]

There have been considerable cooperation and operational links between the SGP and the larger FSP portfolio, consisting of the following:

- SGP has provided *input* into recent GEF FSP and MSP design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation, in particular, on lessons learned on community development and involvement. The Northern Savanna Biodiversity Conservation Project funded by the GEF FSP through the World Bank was designed with strong inputs from the SGP, for example, on project surveys, activity planning, and so on. The national coordinator participated in project design, inception, and implementation.

- Some SGP grants have provided a basis for support by an FSP by laying the *foundations* for scale-up. Notably, the Northern Savanna Biodiversity Conservation Project has continued two projects in the north for elephant corridors (Conservation of Elephants and Their Habitats along the Red Volta River—GHA/00/040, and Preliminary Activities towards Reducing the Threats to Wildlife in the Kayaro Area (in Ghana) and the Nazinga Game Ranch (Burkina Faso)—GHA/00/041). The FSP is expanding the elephant corridors as well as local medicinal plant development.

[7] The regional and global projects are not addressed in this report, given the unrealistic linkages between small grants and such higher-level initiatives.

- A few NGOs that have received SGP grants and capacity building have been able to undertake and implement FSP components. The NGO New Energy was able to undertake activities for the FSP RESPRO. The NGO Center for African Survival and Livelihood Development is currently implementing the UNDP Household Energy Programme in northern Ghana. The UNDP country office is also pursuing possibilities of such NGOs implementing regular UNDP projects.

- The geographical focus of the different projects has overlapped some, which allows for *synergies* in response (especially in the northern savannah) and in monitoring and support to beneficiaries. In particular, complementary and mutually reinforcing activities were devised; RESPRO provided photovoltaic systems and battery operating centers, while the SGP ensured training and M&E. The SGP capacity-building workshops have benefited the staff of the northern savannah based in the Upper West Region.

- In some cases, the FSP has been able to support the *sustainability* of SGP grants. The Community Investment Fund of the NRMP, which came late into operation, has been able to fund some earlier SGP grantees for expansion of their activities to commercial levels (cocoa and seedlings in the Tarkwa District).

- In addition, a high *level of interaction* exists between the national coordinator and various GEF-financed full-size or medium-size programs. For example, The World Bank task manager of GEF-financed full-size projects in the country serves on the GEF SGP National Steering Committee and, therefore, interacts frequently with the national coordinator. The national coordinator also has a good working relationship with the GEF-financed FSP and MSP coordinators for both biodiversity conservation and climate change. UNDP has an environment forum at which representatives of all GEF-funded projects under UNDP meet every quarter to deliberate on common issues; the SGP is part of that forum.

Closed Projects

The closed FSPs and MSPs include the following:

- The NRMP (World Bank) started in 1999 and closed in June 2006 after a one-year extension of $8.7 million.[8]

- Renewable Energy–Based Electricity for Rural, Social, and Economic Development in Ghana (UNDP) started in 1998 and closed in 2001.

- Coastal Wetlands Management (World Bank) started in 1993 and closed in 1999.

[8] Per the project management information system. In reality, the GEF component is not closed. The GEF does not seem to have been informed of its continued operation.

- Biodiversity Conservation of Lake Bosumtwe Basin (UNDP) MSP started in 2001.

The NRMP implementation completion report (undertaken a year before the project ended) rated the project outcomes moderately satisfactory (the GEF Evaluation Office assessment in the terminal evaluation review rated the same moderately unsatisfactory). The project's overall development objective was to protect, rehabilitate, and sustainably manage national land, forest, savannah woodlands, and wildlife resources and to increase the income of rural communities who own these resources on a sustainable basis. It formed part of a 10-year sector investment program to secure sufficient resources to implement the Forestry Development Master Plan (Ministry of Lands and Forestry 2001), originally planned for three phases. Conditional on the successful implementation of the NRMP, the second phase (NRMP II) would support the initial implementation of the collaborative resource management programs, focusing on selected sites considered priorities from environmental, economic, or social points of view. The second and third phases were never undertaken.

A case study under the GEF Evaluation Office local benefits study found that conditions of the forests have improved as a consequence of the sustainable management regimes and enforcement of forest protection and resource conservation rules and regulations in the forest communities. The purpose, strategies, and geographical focus have commonalities with the SGP. Key outputs include the identification of 29 forest reserves and their exclusion from timber harvesting on the merit of their high significance as biodiversity-rich areas.[9] The environmental impacts were (1) afforestation and rainfall patterns improved, (2) illegal tree felling and group hunting reduced, (3) seasonal reduction of volumes of water bodies subsided, and (4) use of poisonous chemicals in fishing ended.

The World Bank loan component was closed and terminated June 30, 2003, for which the implementation completion report was undertaken in January 2003. This was a year before the estimated project end of the GEF component; the implementation completion report does not therefore reflect the actual state of closing. In the report, the expected closing for the GEF component called the High Forest Biodiversity Project was September 30, 2004. The report also stated that "the GEF grant-supporting activities under this component is still ongoing and it will therefore be evaluated under a separate review" and "While there has been significant progress in identifying GSBAs, the demarcation and gazetting process is still incomplete. In addition, the livelihood revolving fund, envisioned to reduce encroachment into GSBAs, has not yet been established."

The project did not succeed in establishing its community investment fund until the last year of the project; this fact threatens the survival of the community biodiversity advisory groups and adversely affects the conservation of the GSBAs. In August 2004 the Government of Ghana

[9] These form the core of the GSBAs in the Ghana High Forest Zone. Five of these forest reserves are wholly protected, whereas 18 are partially covered. The remaining six are southern dry forests.

requested an 18-month extension of the High Forest Biodiversity Project grant closing date from September 2004 to June 20, 2006, to complete all outstanding activities. In May 2006 the World Bank requested internal approval to extend the closing date of the GEF component from June 20, 2006, to June 20, 2007. Remaining tasks included "those activities related to formulation and roll-out of management plans, management of buffer zone and off-reserve landscapes, and provision of alternative income-generating opportunities to participating communities." Thus, the implementation of the Alternative Livelihood Investment Facility started in September 2005 and reached full disbursement of $2.5 million between July 2005 and February 2006.

The project has noted a few pockets of discontentment, likely resulting from miscommunication and impatience on the part of community members who have not yet had their turns in accessing the fund. Some issues include

- delays in establishing a harmonized set of operating procedures of the participating rural banks in implementing the Alternative Livelihood Investment Facility;
- in a few cases, groups accessing funds that were only shared equally among the group members or disbursed in bulk to beneficiaries, rather than in tranches;
- groups that have not yet accessed their approved funds;
- problems with identification of group members;
- after taking the credits as a group, members undertaking activities as individuals.

Supervision has stressed the need for more systematic monitoring, a beneficiary assessment of the impact of the project on participating stakeholder groups, and guarding against the possibility of elite capture of the Community Investment Fund. Weaknesses identified include areas in which the SGP is found to exhibit strengths. In that sense, the NRMP could be said to have missed out on opportunities for cooperation with the SGP.

The RESPRO (UNDP) was in line with the government policy of extending electricity to the rural areas. In 1989 the government initiated national electrification, for which one of four objectives was to supply power to rural communities through the national Self-Help Electrification Project. The project helped establish the Renewable Energy Services Project Unit and demonstrated suitability for providing light for remote rural communities with 2,000 solar home systems and the technical feasibility of using solar energy for water supply, education, security, and health facilities. The GEF Evaluation Office local benefits study case study report on this project found that the different local impacts regarding livelihoods were positive, but that the contribution of the project to global environmental change was insignificant, because rural solar photovoltaic power addresses lighting and other needs, but does not address the problem of fuelwood for cooking. The continuation has been jeopardized by a change in policy to extend the electricity grid to remote communities.

Although the terminal evaluation does not contain enough information to rate performance, it does recommend that "RESPRO should take on board one of its initially envisioned roles, that is, leading the way in promoting productive uses of electricity for rural transformation. Through arrangements with NGOs, microfinance institutions and other entities, information on technology options and costs could be provided to assist and accelerate the process of rural entrepreneurs and small-scale enterprises taking advantage of business development opportunities created by solar photovoltaic."

There were synergies through the local NGO New Energy, which was supported by the SGP for Conservation of Biodiversity in East Mamprusi (GHA/98/025), which was approved in May 1998. The NGO also worked with the RESPRO project and a two-year program supported by Danish International Development Assistance to provide solar lanterns to households and solar home systems in various parts of the Northern Region. New Energy introduced private sector participation in the provision of solar energy by supporting five individuals in establishing commercial shops that deal in solar appliances, installations, and maintenance for individuals, institutions, and NGOs. The relationship between New Energy and these private enterprises is mutual in nature; New Energy sometimes utilizes their services in its energy programs.

Ongoing Projects

The Northern Savanna Biodiversity Conservation Project (World Bank) also follows similar approaches to the SGP. It contains the NGO Green Awards to increase knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions on biodiversity conservation. The contract for this activity commenced in December 2006 with a coalition of NGOs led by the Rural Media Network, a Tamale-based NGO that has also signed memoranda of understanding with eight other locally based CBOs and NGOs and begun awareness-creating activities in four biodiversity conservation thematic areas. Awareness-creating materials and messages have also been developed for use by both CBOs and NGOs and Implementing Agencies. The project also pursues income generation, such as 300 acres of community mango plantations, beekeeping in 30 communities, national park ecotourism management, and community-based enterprise development. A consultant (Tree Aid International) began work only in March 2007. Because some of the enterprises are seasonal, a minimum of a year is required for implementation, that is, training and production of business plans. All these activities require more time to mature and to generate optimum benefits. For the NGO Fian grantee, the Northern Savanna Biodiversity Conservation Project provided training to project implementers and provided a communications expert. The project is in the process of being extended, likely to December 2008.

In the case of the Community-Based Integrated Natural Resource Management Project in Okyeman ($848,000 MSP, World Bank), the 2006 project implementation review report stated that nothing was accomplished for the first 10 months of implementation. This was due to conflicts between the Okyeman Environmental Foundation and the company that was to manage the project on its behalf. Actual implementation only started in February 2005, and since then, awareness campaigns and training have taken place at the community level and the communities have been engaged in producing management plans for the selected forests and sacred groves. A

livelihood specialist was hired to work with the communities on their microenterprises, and by-laws have been enacted to protect forested areas. The task team requested an extension of one year, until February 2008, given the time lost at the beginning of project implementation; the most important remaining activities include the setup of the alternative livelihood fund for communities.

The GEF-funded MSP Sustainable Land Management for Mitigating Land Degradation, Enhancing Agricultural Biodiversity, and Reducing Poverty (UNDP) started in March 2005. This four-year project aims to contribute to sustainable, ecosystem-based, integrated land management in globally, nationally, and locally significant land resources in agricultural areas under threat of land degradation in the north. Implementation, mainly for experimentation and training of farmers, has been given to academia—the University of Development Studies—which is a consortium of scientists and institutes backstopped by UNDP with the Government of Ghana as the executing agency. The project builds on its predecessor, the mainly GEF-funded United Nations University project, entitled People, Land Management, and Environmental Change. The final evaluation found that "PLEC's role in helping to constitute or strengthen farmers associations is likely to be one of the more important and sustainable outcomes of the project, as these associations provide an effective platform for future developments." However, the terminal evaluation review found that "In other countries, such as Ghana, PLEC should have worked closely with the government agencies and local authorities to develop policies consistent with the project objectives."[10] The UNDP country office stated that it had not involved the SGP and could not provide reasons, except that this was a follow-up to an earlier project (non-GEF) with the geology department of the same institution.[11] The evaluation considered the Agency to have missed a great opportunity for building on lessons learned from the SGP, which has worked directly with the issues of land degradation of concern in the northern regions for the past 10 years, as well as on similar outcomes.[12] So far, the "implementation is lagging behind schedule, making achievement of all its major objectives unlikely" (project implementation review, 2006). The baseline is not complete after more than one year.

With the exception of the African Development Bank, the linkages between the SGP and the activities of the GEF Executing Agencies have not been strong, also reflecting the recent entry of

[10] However, the terminal evaluation review rated the terminal evaluation as moderately unsatisfactory, in that it provides insufficient information to enable an assessment of whether the project fully achieved the objectives and expected outcomes; lessons and recommendations from the projects are not presented in an explicit form that can be used by other projects.

[11] The proposal was only shared at the last minute with the SGP for comments, too late to integrate lessons learned meaningfully.

[12] The expected outcomes from the Sustainable Land Management for Mitigating Land Degradation, Enhancing Agricultural Biodiversity, and Reducing Poverty Project are (1) a participatory methodological framework for identifying and prioritizing threatened lands, (2) sustainable land management practices applied to recover degraded lands, and (3) a capacity and enabling environment for mitigating land degradation.

these Agencies into the GEF partnership. The Food and Agriculture Organization has both a local and a regional office (covering 15 countries) in Ghana. Common areas of interest are the organization's Technical Cooperation Program projects in forestry, community development, and elephant conservation and regional projects on transboundary international waters. Furthermore, the International Fund for Agricultural Development has a program with other partners on microenterprise credit in some regions common to the SGP, such as Enchi, for which the GEF grantees are exploring cooperation.

The United Nations Industrial Development Organization manages a component of the programmatic approach in the GEF international waters project Gulf of Guinea Large Marine Ecosystem project (covering 10 countries in phase 2) with its regional coordination unit in Accra. The Food and Agriculture Organization also undertakes components on biodiversity and fisheries. The purpose is to encourage the protection of coastal ecosystems in addressing land-based domestic waste and sea-based pollution (oil spill, ballast, invasive species, and so on). Within the area of integrated coastal area management, the project wants to work with communities through NGOs and has a number of regional capacity-building workshops for the NGO community and media, mainly held in Ghana. This FSP has relied on the governments to submit names of NGOs. A review of invitees for the next workshop revealed that this approach had not yielded the appropriate NGO participation (mainly government departments or NGOs that are not focused on waters, while other key NGO actors were missing). The SGP national coordinator agreed to work with the regional coordination unit to ensure appropriate participation. Following the evaluation mission, the Executing Agency partners agreed to continue discussions with the SGP to strengthen collaboration. These Agencies further suggested the usefulness of decentralized regional training on GEF matters in which they could take part.

The government is leading the process of deciding the *pipeline*. Four NGOs and all concerned ministries are involved in a team providing advice. The Ghana Urban Transport was endorsed by chief executive officer on May 15, 2007. No specific SGP input was available or noted; however, the UNDP projects under formulation (Conserving Globally Significant Biodiversity in Cocoa Production Landscapes in West Africa—PDF-B—which aims to help interplant forests with cocoa production, conserve wildlife, and train farmers) is taking into account lessons learned from the SGP.

3 Effectiveness

In the 15 years that the Ghana SGP has been in operation, it has generated a number of results at different levels, including global environmental benefits and other environmental change, policy change, capacity development, local benefits, and poverty alleviation. Grants generate immediate results, but many effects materialize only with time. As the evaluation was not able to aggregate results after the fact from more than 110 grants, the following summarizes some key achievements.

3.1 Results

Direct Global Environmental Benefits Generated

From the review, it was observed that the SGP investments in biodiversity have resulted in the protection of first schedule species of Ghana's wholly protected species (endangered species) (see box 3.1). Specific contributions to the global environmental benefits in the operational areas of GEF are described in the sections below.

Box 3.1: Protected Species

- Fauna. Senegal galago, tree pangolin, white-breasted guinea fowl (Agelastes meleagrides), Diana monkey (Cercopithecus diana rolloway), red colobus (Colobus badius waldroni), black and white colobus (Colobus polykomos), chimpanzee (Pan troglodytes), olive colobus (Colobus verus), Nile monitor, Nile crocodile (Crocodylus niloticus), and pygmy hippopotamus (Choeropsis liberiensis).
- Flora. Black star species, such as Chrysophyllum azaguieanum, Gilbertiodendron bilineatum, and Pierreodendron kerstingii, are protected, as are neo-endemic species, such as Dalbergia setifera and Turraea ghanensis in the southern marginal coastal forests.

Operational program 1: arid and semiarid ecosystems. The GEF SGP project has promoted the conservation and sustainable use of endemic biodiversity in Guinea and Sudan savannah regions of the Upper West, Upper East, and Northern Regions of Ghana, where biodiversity is threatened by increased pressure from intensified land use, drought, and desertification. Under the program 220,000 hectares of arid and semiarid ecosystems have been put under sustainable management governed by traditional rules, norms, and regulations. Important medicinal plants and animals, such as elephants and hippos, have been protected. The SGP has also worked across borders. The Conservation of Elephants and Their Habitats along the Red Volta River (GHA/00/040) is one of several grants that created migratory corridors between Burkina Faso and Ghana. The corridor linked seven chiefdoms to address the balance between elephants and human populations; the Rapid Response Team trained patrols in 10 villages, which resulted in reduced elephant crop raiding. Awareness of the environment and peer education by community members have reduced illegal mining (*galamasey*), which was prevalent in the area, and soil fertility improvement techniques controlled the level of pollution going into the Red and White Volta River systems.

Operational program 2: coastal, marine, and freshwater ecosystems. The program has promoted the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in coastal, wetland, mangrove, estuarine, marine, and freshwater ecosystems, especially in the Gomoa and Ekumfi Districts of the Central Region, the town of Ada in the Greater Accra Region, and South Tongu District in the Volta Region. Through community efforts, the program has supported the conservation of 500 hectares of coastal wetlands adjoining Ramsar sites and rehabilitation of 210 hectares of community-protected land (see box 3.2). The areas have been surveyed, mapped, pillared, and restocked with indigenous species. Community agreements have been developed to secure the future of these resources.

Box 3.2: Conservation of Sacred Groves

A unique forest feature in Ghana is the sacred grove, an area of forest that has a strong religious significance to villagers. In most communities, sacred groves have been regulated by traditional practice to prevent entry from the local populations and have thus become small sanctuaries for wildlife, soil protection, water supplies, and local climate.

The sacred groves, with shrines, are traditional burial grounds for village chiefs. As such, they have been managed by certain groups of villagers, a responsibility that has been passed down from generation to generation. These guards, called "executioners," were once responsible for traditional burial rituals that called for human sacrifice along with the deceased chief. The groves were entered on the occasion of burials and by periodic control visits by the executioners only. These forests are therefore associated with an element of fear that prevents exploitation of land or hunting and entry by others. However, the sacred groves are under increasing threat from farming encroachment, illegal logging, hunting, and bushfires, as well as eroding traditional beliefs.

The SGP has spearheaded attention and support to the protection and revival of sacred groves in an unusual merging of traditional and state law. These grants are particularly challenging, because they must address biodiversity and land pressures, while safeguarding cultural values and overcoming sensitive cultural barriers.

For example, the Enchi Sacred Grove Conservation Project (GHA/05/078), close to the border of Côte d'Ivoire, has conserved 100 hectares of virgin forest and established 50 hectares of new forest. The survey report revealed that the grove falls under a forest condition rating of between 2 and 3, indicating a very good canopy closure. A total of 159 species belonging to 50 families was recorded, and the genetic "heat index" of the grove was found to be 209.629, signifying a biological "hotspot."

A Community Biodiversity Conservation Management Committee was established to steer the affairs of the Enchi Sacred Grove Conservation Project at the local level, thus providing transparency and participation. A long-term participatory forest management plan for the grove has been developed, which includes education campaigns on the biodiversity of the grove. The villagers have also been trained in sustainable agroforestry technologies and alternative livelihoods.

Nine men were nominated as sacred grove guards to carry out operational activities for the Enchi Sacred Grove. Membership was drawn solely from the Adum family, because custom demands that only Adum men (executioners) have the power to issue permits and to enter the grove for patrols and ritual purposes. Flora and fauna survey experts trained the grove executioners in basic inventory techniques. Although the project has succeeded in lifting taboos related to the sacred groves, challenges remain in integrating the concerns of both villagers and the executioners.

Operational program 3: forest ecosystems. The program has supported sustainable, community-based activities in forest conservation areas, including protected areas, and those that demonstrate and apply sustainable use methods in forestry as part of integrated land management in agricultural and forest landscapes, focusing primarily on high forest ecosystem areas at risk. The high forests of the Western, Central, and Eastern Regions of Ghana, as well as tropical semideciduous forests of the Central, Volta, Eastern, and Brong Ahafo Regions have been priority areas of the program intervention. The program has supported the creation and maintenance of the 15,700-hectare CREMA (Amokwazuaso, Abeadze, Weto, Okyereko, Kwasu, and Pebase) in the tropical high forest and rehabilitation of 22,000 hectares of six forest reserves (Afram Headwaters, Esuboni, Asubima, Worobong, Yaya Forest, and Yaya Headwaters) CREMAs. For example, the Fian Community Biodiversity Conservation and Utilization Project (GHA/05/077) created awareness of the effects of wildfire by forming a 13-member biodiversity conservation committee and 11-member watchdog and security committee from the 13 communities under the Fian traditional area. The committee meets every month to plan and execute activities on the environment. The project has created a 550-hectare community forest reserve at Fian, which has induced the people of Bussie, Pulba, and Wogu to establish natural regeneration areas and no longer burn such areas. By-laws for sustainable management of the natural resources have been documented and enforced. The Conservation of Biodiversity in East Mamprusi District (GHA/98/025) project has reduced fuelwood consumption by more than 50 percent in target communities. It has also improved incomes in 22 communities fringing the White Volta River Forest Reserve, which can be observed through more permanent housing with zinc roofing.

The SGP is also covering Ghana's protected areas: Bui National Park (The Hippopotamus Conservation Project in Ghana—GHA/01/045), Mole National Park (Biodiversity Conservation Education around Bui and Mole National Parks—GHA/01/046), and Ankasa Conservation Area (Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Amokwaw Community Resource Management Area—GHA/04/073).

The SGP is also present in the GSBAs: Abasumba (Community Sustainable Management of Ayensu Wetlands and Traditionally Protected Lands for Biodiversity Conservation in Agona Kwanyako—GHA/04/069), Neung North (Capacity Strengthening for Biodiversity Conservation and Enhanced Livelihood Security at Pebaseman Community Resource Management Area—GHA/04/061), and Obotumfo (Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of

Traditionally Protected Lands in the Coastal Savannah Ecosystems of Mfantsemen and Gomoa Districts of Central Region—GHA/00/065).[13]

Operational program 4: mountain ecosystems. The Weto Mountain ecosystem of the Volta Region is gradually being put under conservation and sustainable management of mountain ecosystems. The ecotourism potential of the area is being harnessed to support a tourism development program in Ghana.

Operational programs 5 and 6: energy efficiency and renewable energy. The program has helped remove barriers to energy conservation and energy efficiency by promoting the adoption of technologies, practices, and systems that will ensure large energy savings. By promoting biodiesel as an alternative to fossil fuel, the program has provided low-cost alternative energy sources. The Ahibenso coal pot, improved fuelwood stoves, and introduction of solar photovoltaics in rural areas have ensured low application, implementation, and dissemination of technologies that are energy efficient at the least economic cost. These have reduced the risks to climate change because greenhouse gas emissions have been avoided.

Operational program 14: persistent organic pollutants. The program has generated direct global environmental benefits by creating awareness of the harmful effects of persistent organic pollutants and introducing integrated pest management systems, which has reduced the release of POPs into the atmosphere. Although only four projects have been approved so far**,** the program has mapped out POP sources in the country and conducted laboratory analysis of POPs in vegetables sold in local markets. Based on this outcome, a series of awareness and technical workshops on POPs have been conducted for 150 farmers and 25 environmental journalists and the government is reconsidering the policy aspects.

Operational program 15: sustainable land management. Projects have developed local capacity for mainstreaming sustainable land management in community-level activities. In addition, innovative technologies have been developed to reduce erosion and improve soil fertility, and these are reducing threats from land degradation. Grants on wildfire management have in particular addressed land degradation, for example, the Community-Based Integrated Wildfire Management and Livelihood Development Enterprises for Six Vulnerable and High Fire-Prone Communities in the Afram Plains (GHA/06/105). Implementation of the project has reduced the incidence of bushfires, thus also reducing greenhouse gases through sinks and removing cultural, institutional, technical, and economic barriers throughout the Afram Plains, which are a key source of charcoal for Accra.

Operational programs 8 and 9: international waters protection. The SGP is working in three Ramsar sites (of six, nationally)—Songor, Densu Delta, and Muni-Pomadze—through four

[13] In 2004 Ghana's government redesignated portions of 29 existing forest reserves into GSBAs. Covering some 117,332 hectares, these areas are known to house numerous rare plant species, although the data on animal species are relatively poor. Remaining forests are fragmented and face pressure from logging.

projects.[14] Several projects in the portfolio are addressing the lagoons along the coast, which are very challenging. The project at Teshie (Reviving the Biodiversity in the Sango Lagoon and Adjacent Wetlands—GHA/93/009) led to protection of international waters through delisting; abatement of contaminants such as nutrients, biological contaminants, or sediments that endanger species or threaten ecosystems; prevention and control of ecological degradation of wetlands that sustain biodiversity; management of unsustainable use of marine resources from overfishing; and protection of marine turtles. Wetlands and lagoons in emerging tourist areas are under particular pressure to reclaim land for sale to hotel tourism developers. The project Community-Based Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Mamdowodindo and Nana Busua Wetlands/Lagoons in the Ahanta West District (GHA/04/067) by Ricerca Cooperazione has replanted 15 hectares of mangroves and introduced latrines.

National, Local, and Sectoral Policy and Institutional Framework

In terms of the national-level priority links, although no single policy document outlines the specific environmental priorities of the country, various policies point out the main thrusts of Ghana's environmental management objectives. On all of these fronts, the SGP in Ghana has been active, and its activities not only fit, but make major contributions to their achievements. The SGP participated in initiation and drafting of the National Wetland Policy, National Strategic Energy Plan, National Wildfire Policy, National Woodfuel Policy, and the draft National Policy on Traditional Knowledge for Agriculture and Health.

Community- and Local-Level Approaches

Community actions to conserve biodiversity. The program has placed 250,000 hectares of land outside the gazetted protected forests under effective community management. These areas include GBSAs, important bird areas, biological corridors, and traditional protected areas. This result has been achieved through the following:

- Establishment of 10 CREMAs with an average size of 1,000 hectares, within the tropical high and marginal forests and in the northern savannah.

- Creation of *community-based ecotourism sites*, including Bole Hippopotamus Conservation Sanctuary, Zawse Crocodile Conservation Area, Duasidan Community Monkey Sanctuary, Dornokitcherkope Monkey Island and Python Sanctuary Project, Eguafo Dumpow and Abosom Aya Ecotourism Project, Tafi Atome Monkey Sanctuary, Zukpuri Integrated Wildlife Project, Dupare Integrated Wildlife Projects. These sites are helping in the conservation of endangered species in Ghana.

[14] Integrated Biodiversity Conservation for Ecotourism Development on the Dornokitcherkope Island in the Songor Wetlands (GHA-05-079), Integrated Community-Based Biodiversity Conservation Reforestation of Degraded Lands, and Sustainable Fisheries Development in Fievie Community and along the Volta in Songor (GHA/06/107), Awareness Creation on the Effects of Persistent Organic Pollutants and Promotion of Integrated Pest Management in Vegetable Cultivation in the Accra Metropolis (GHA/06/094), and Restoration of Degraded Traditionally Protected Forests and Sustainable Management of Community Natural Resource Areas (GHA/05/089).

- Restocking of six *protected areas* (average of 2,175 hectares each) in the tropical high forest and transitional zone with indigenous species, rehabilitation of 24 sacred groves (average of 30 hectares each), and establishment of 20 community natural regeneration areas (average of 100 hectares each) to support conservation of areas of global biological significance.

Community response to climate change. The program has introduced the improved Ahibenso coal pot and other fuel-efficient fuelwood mud stoves for domestic and commercial use. These fuel-efficient energy stoves emit less smoke and save up to about 60 percent of the volume of wood otherwise consumed as fuelwood in commercial operations in the project areas. In addition, the program has introduced alternative energy sources, including solar lights and driers, biogas, and biodiesel obtained from *Jatropha carcus*.

Community response to land degradation. In degraded areas of the northern savannah ecosystem, the GEF SGP has promoted techniques on sustainable land management, water conservation, and soil fertility improvement in about 20 communities. These have improved farm yields by more than 60 percent and contributed to food security in these areas.

Local Benefits and the Environment

The SGP has contributed to global environmental benefits in ways that have addressed local needs and national sustainable development priorities. Virtually all the projects implemented under the program incorporate income-generating activities to provide support for diversification of sources of rural income and interlinked development of farm, natural resource–based, and nonfarm activities that can reduce rural poverty. These interventions are aimed at developing rural entrepreneurs and creating wealth for the rapid transformation of the rural economies through natural resource exploitation.

Program contribution to poverty reduction. Through the alternative livelihood component, about 68 different income-generating activities have been supported so far and a total of $350,000 has been expended directly to 2,250 beneficiaries (mostly rural women). The beneficiaries engage in apiculture, grass cutter rearing, snail farming, beekeeping, trading in biodiversity products, establishing fruit orchards, rearing small ruminants, and processing of agricultural products, such as shea butter and *Moringa oleifera.* These activities have generated about 8,000 off-farm jobs in less endowed and environmentally fragile areas of the country. The targets are natural resource collectors, processors, traders, wood carvers, traditional medical practitioners, wildlife traders and breeders, tree crop growers, and rural ecotourism operators.

The program interventions support efficiency in the production, processing, and marketing of these livelihood activities. They also support technologies that combine, for instance, low-input agriculture and forestry (including wildlife and fuelwood production) and innovative rotations to improve food security, increase rural income, and reduce poverty. Table 3.1 shows some of the enterprises supported under the program.

Table 3.1: Example of Biodiversity-Based Enterprises Supported by the GEF SGP under Operational Program 3

Activity category	Nature of enterprise promoted
Women's products	Crafts (zana mats, crafts, pottery, and baskets)
	Personal care and health products (soaps, essential oils, and food supplements)
	Processing of shea butter and *dawadawa*
	Improved charcoal production
	Processing of essential oils and medicinal plants
Indigenous and traditional products	Packaging of nontimber forest products, including medicinal plants
	Cane, rattan, and bamboo processing
Small farmers and sustainable agricultural products	Cultivation and processing of nontimber forest products such as, *Moringa oleifera* *Thaumatococcus danielli* (*εgoo*); *Aframomum melegueta* (*efom wisa*); *Piper guineense* (*εsoro* and *εfom wisa*); *Raphia hookeri* (*adoka*); *Allanblackia floribunda* (*sonkyi*), *Garcinia afzelii* (*nsoko*), and *Garcinia kola* (*tweapia*)
	Small ruminant rearing, fish and crab farming, apiculture, guinea fowl and poultry farming, and pig production
	Wild animal domestication (grass cutter farming and crocodile ranching)
Organic products	Ecological farming
Climate-friendly products	Solar driers
	Solar lanterns
Ecotourism products	Community-based ecotourism
	Rural arts and crafts festival
	Rural tourism infrastructural development
	Documentation of indigenous management practices and film production

The projected profit and loss analysis of the livelihood enterprises supported indicated a loss or marginal profits in the first year of operation, but profits thereafter. At the end of the third year, the annual profits range from ¢32 million for small ruminants to ¢105 million for beehives, assuming a total investment of ¢60 million. The project's viability as shown by financial internal rates of return is 15–18 percent, which is above the cost of capital, and the cost-benefit ratios are between 3 and 4, which show that the projects are profitable.

Capacity Development

Capacity building of CBOs and NGOs. The SGP undertakes national capacity-building workshops twice a year targeted at CBOs in vulnerable areas, environmental NGOs, district-level public service providers, assembly members, and policy makers. The courses are mostly residential and last four to five days each. At least 30 participants attend, including project coordinators, directors, and chairpersons of CBOs, NGOs, government service providers, local governments, and traditional authorities.

To mainstream and anchor capacity-building activities at community levels, the program supports the establishment of ecological or technology and systems demonstration centers at strategic locations to offer on-site training to the poor and marginalized. From the inception of

the program, these centers have trained about 1,870 individuals, families, and groups in various proven technologies.[15]

Several projects have been instrumental in building a core country capacity for environmental management with a view to sustainability. The Capacity Development and Training Organization for Effective and Efficient Operation in GEF SGP Focal Areas and Poverty Reduction (GHA/06/100) project is improving governance in the nongovernmental sector through improved participation, transparency, and accountability. It has introduced an innovative approach for monitoring and support by establishing a network of "regional or zonal coordinators" for the SGP to visit and monitor projects, coordinate NGOs in the region, work on resource mobilization, and improve relations with government service providers for the SGP portfolio in the zone.

Local capacity building for operations in GEF focal area activities. The SGP undertakes national capacity-building workshops twice a year targeting CBOs in vulnerable and environmentally sensitive areas, environmental NGOs, district-level public service providers, assembly members, and policy makers. Three grant projects have been implemented for training in various technologies.

Awareness Creation on the Global Environment

The program has created awareness among local communities, public institutions and organizations, policy makers, parliamentarians, and the general populace on the need to protect and conserve biodiversity, reduce the risks of climate change, protect the ozone layer, combat land degradation, and phase out toxic organic pollutants in Ghana. In most of the projects, the SGP promotes exchange visits in the country and to Burkina Faso to share information.

Awareness has been pursued through regular grants by the national coordinator and NSC and by specific grants for that purpose. The Rainforest for Health: A Traveling Exhibition (GHA/98/028) project developed and used customized techniques to raise awareness of people on sustainable protection and management of identified biodiversity values. At the national level, the President of the Republic attended the exhibition, agreeing to serve as the chief patron. At various exhibition points, ministers of state, top chiefs, politicians, top civil servants, ambassadors, and UNDP resident representatives attended the program with extensive media coverage. The exhibition highlighted the importance of medicinal plants and supported their utilization leading to the emergence of herbal clinics and shops selling traditional medicines. The project exhibited pictures in seven regions.

[15] These include nursery development; silvicultural training in natural regeneration, coppice management, enrichment planting, species inventory, and mapping; agroforestry, apiculture, and commercial rearing of wildlife in captivity; medicinal plant harvesting, preparation, and packaging; improved carbonization; construction of improved fuelwood stoves; and organic farming technologies.

The SGP Ghana has led to the formation of social organizations, especially for weak and marginalized communities. The program focuses on support tailored to the organizational capacities of the groups in grassroots service delivery. More disadvantaged people are now decision makers, and the social groups formed now have a "voice" in effecting changes. Project experiences, lessons, and good cases are systematically collected and shared at the community, district, and national levels through the SGP network and its partners via its bimonthly publications. The evaluation team learned of several examples of such empowerment; cases in which local communities had brought poachers to justice or curtailed unauthorized commercial logging by bringing exploiters of their local resources to the district assembly and by seeking compensation.

3.2 Factors Influencing Results

Knowledge Sharing and Lesson Learning

The review of operational program 2 acknowledged, "lessons learned, innovations, and other SGP project successes have not been well documented and disseminated more systematically with a view to increasing the influence on mainstream programmes." However, considerable progress had been made in developing communication materials for nontechnical audiences. The SGP has stepped up its efforts to publicize its lessons learned. A number of interesting products are under development, including the comprehensive "Community Responses to Global Environmental Challenges: Implementing GEF Projects by NGOs/CBOs in Ghana." The SGP promotes sharing of information on best practices through the publication of bimonthly magazines, booklets, and manuals.

UNDP stated that the SGP has been effective in providing lessons learned on working with communities in the field. The SGP has also played a unique role in working with the NGO and CBO communities. This, in turn, has helped feed into discussion of policies with the government, for example, participation in natural resource management on how to structure communities to have ownership over natural resources; the policy on shifting conservation of trees to natural resource management for communities to prevent encroachment, which has been made into law; and the lead role of SGP in the National Woodfuel Policy.

Notwithstanding involvement of GEF FSP and MSP implementers in steering the SGP, lesson sharing and scale-up from the SGP into the bigger GEF projects is limited. According to a World Bank official, "whereas the outcomes at the local level are very positive, higher-level impacts are insignificant, because the SGP projects operate in silos and are not scaled up." This fact cannot be ascribed mainly to SGP efforts; the evaluation noted several cases in which the FSPs or related agencies had not consulted broadly outside customary stakeholders or searched for alternative approaches. The FSPs in Ghana have not been rated particularly successful in assessments. Large-scale operations may tend to disregard "smaller" mechanisms as less relevant.

The UNDP country office could not be very specific on how lessons learned from the SGP had been integrated into their GEF or environment programming. The UNDP Programme to

Strengthen Disaster Risk Reduction in Ghana will support the National Disaster Management Organization started last year in the north. This project is intended to prepare a long-term National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy and Programme and strengthen institutional structures; however, it also has a field component to fight bushfires, viewed as a key problem in land degradation, by training disaster volunteers in communities and providing seedlings for nurseries. The UNDP country office did not see much difference in working with a governmental disaster organization, compared with NGOs that have worked for a long time with the SGP in community organization, reforestation, and bushfire control. The evaluation found that, although in theory the SGP was to implement the project with the National Disaster Management Organization, in practice this did not take place for reasons that were not clear.

Catalytic Role, Scale-Up, and Replication

The Ghana SGP has adopted a strategic approach to replicating, scaling up, and mainstreaming SGP projects. This includes wide diffusion of GEF activities, capacity building, knowledge documentation and distribution, and best practices in GEF SGP projects, and especially aggressive identification of possibilities for income generation, commercialization, and sustainable livelihoods.

Some examples of successful catalytic results include market expansion by the private sector. After the grant Solar Energy Power for Socioeconomic Advancement of Women in Selected Communities in the Northern Region (GHA/04/062), the Japan International Cooperation Agency assisted women's groups with new technologies for producing shea butter soap (virgin soap) for the Japanese market. SMARTEX has adopted the project Bioprospecting of *Thaumatococcus Danielli,* a Natural Sweetener, and Other Nontimber Forest Products for the Conservation of Tropical Forests (GHA/00/044) and transformed it into a processing company producing sweeteners for pharmaceutical companies, with funding from a private bank in Germany. Based on the project Capacity Strengthening for Biodiversity Conservation and Enhance Livelihood Security at Pebaseman Community Resource Management Area (GHA/04/061), UNILEVER Ghana is assisting the involved NGO in producing *Allanblackia floribunda* (*sonkyi*) on a commercial basis.

Other grants are picked up by the government, for example, the Sustainable Environmental Resource Management and Livelihood Technology and Systems Demonstration/Learning Centre for Rural Women in the Akuapem North District (GHA/05/080). Under the national employment generation program, the Government of Ghana has adopted the demonstration center as a training ground for youth in the district. The center is therefore offering skill training for school dropouts and unemployed junior school graduates in carving, ceramics, and production of *gari* fortified with soya beans, all funded through the district assembly.

Some activities even expand *across borders*. A set of concerted efforts in the Upper East Region are related to wildlife migration, especially elephants. The IUCN and Netherlands have followed up the SGP Preliminary Activities towards Reducing the Threats to Wildlife in the Kayoro Area (in Ghana) and the Nazinga Game Ranch (Burkina Faso) (GHA/00/041) by expanding into more

communities and helping demarcate the sanctuary for wildlife infringing on the Nazinga Game Park. Also, the GEF FSP Northern Savanna Biodiversity Conservation Project is supporting communities with a capacity-building program training them in wildlife management. Corresponding projects exist on the Burkinabé side of the border.

Input from the SGP into *policy* and other programs has also had a catalytic effect. This is often the case when the SGP through one or more grants was the first to address a problem in an innovative manner with good results. The study confirming the existence of POPs in vegetables prompted the government to look at the issue again. Rather than replicating one grant, lessons learned or issues raised by projects have been mainstreamed or have received national attention. Examples include the bushfire campaign, integration of community participation and environment in policy, acceptance of medicinal plants in production and sale, and importance of protecting sacred groves. The CREMA concept has been expanded under the government and many donors (such as the French GEF). The French GEF promotes CREMA through the *Gestion communautaire de la biodiversité autour des aires protégées de la région ouest du Ghana* (1.2 million euros). Although the SGP has not been the only one to promote this approach, it was among the first to do so on a large scale and therefore provide enough experience that the concept works.

Causal Chain between Results

The GEF does not have a standard or defined causal chain between results at the local and national levels and global environmental benefits. The review finds that the hypotheses on triggers of change are the same or similar to those that might be observed in GEF FSPs and MSPs, although the scale may vary some among focal areas.

A number of potential local-global links exist, including local participation in natural resource management. As with changes in institutional environment, such changes are mainly observed at the local level for small grants. Empowerment of community stakeholders can be effective in generating local ownership in natural resources, thereby encouraging their protection. With increasing decentralization in Ghana, this aspect is gaining in importance. Income-generating activities are related to global environmental benefits, either by changing practices of sustainable exploitation of resources, promoting their use, or compensating for changes in practices that imply loss of income from those resources.

Two cases in Ghana appear to determine links between small grants and larger effects at the national and hence global levels. First, the volume of experience of several or a series of smaller grants has generated publicity and confidence that this approach works in different settings and can be replicated (such as CREMAs and sacred grove protection). This requires that the SGP has the resources and long-term vision to invest in a cluster of similar projects, especially where the situation calls for a change in community group behavior. Second, one grant had a specific high-profile, highly relevant nature that attracted attention to itself and changed policy and market conditions, such as the project study on POPs; pickup by the private sector of some of the commercially oriented demonstration projects; and a highly visible event raising the profile of a

project (for example, the Travelling Expedition, opened by the president of Ghana, put medicinal plants on the agenda). The latter are, as can be expected, the exception; however, even smaller grants that did *not* have a large effect can be useful in providing lessons on risky experimentation that is rarely pursued in larger investments.

Although the Ghana SGP is fully in line with GEF focal areas in terms of strategies, scope, and intended results, it may be argued that a looser frame for links would be appropriate for smaller grants. The risk exists that in an effort to conform to accepted strategies to promote global environmental benefits, one may jeopardize the very nature that distinguishes locally based small grants that have a large impact at the community level.

Sustainability Issues

The SGP has generated direct global environmental benefits, and their impacts are generally sustained by designing innovative approaches for scaling up, replicating, and mainstreaming; strengthening capacity at all levels; focusing on policy advocacy; demonstrating how to implement a national implementation plan; and targeting capacity building. At community levels, the projects are sustained through livelihood support activities, marketing of products, and forging partnerships and networking with relevant stakeholders. For example, the project for rural women in the Akuapem North District (GHA/05/080) mentioned above has been adopted by the Government of Ghana as a training center for the Youth Employment Programme. Twenty permanent jobs have been created in the field of constructing improved stoves, wood carving, processing of soya *gari* for the export market, and ceramic works. About 100 youth have been trained in various livelihood support enterprises and are capable of earning $100 every month.

The CSP addresses strategies to promote sustainability of activities at the program level, which include aggressive marketing to leverage cofinancing, documentation of impacts, closer liaison with GEF FSPs and MSPs, and seeking partnerships with banking and nonbanking financial institutions in implementing GEF focal area activities. In particular, it is becoming more important to embed projects in decentralized government departments and district assemblies for monitoring, replication, and continued support.

Results show a relatively high level of sustainability. This emerges from the field visits of sample projects and from independently conducted studies after the fact and monitoring of reports. In particular, awareness of environment and related behavior change were observed after the project ended in infrastructure and biodiversity. Market-based mechanisms have contributed to continuation of activities after the project ended. For the Sustainable Agroforestry and Woodfuel Usage (GHA/93/010) project, the mission observed impressive forest plantation maintained almost 10 years after the project was closed prematurely.[16]

[16] The project closed before its last tranche when it was discovered that the NGO director had received funds from the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit for similar purposes without reporting (he since

This does necessarily not mean that each grant has a formal "exit strategy." Most of the projects under operational phases 2 and 3 had exit plans that were well formulated; however, fewer than 60 percent of the plans were actually executed because of financial constraints. At the project level, sustainability is mainly promoted by ensuring that results are effectively produced, that is, the project strategy inherently addresses sustainability issues by promoting income-generating activities, establishing effective management structures, and so on. The national coordinator has also noted the importance to local communities of a "formal" closing and of working on approaches for appropriate hand-over ceremonies, project certificates, and so on. The effect of continued visits by SGP management to closed grants has been essential in promoting sustainability; the perception is that once part of the SGP family, one will always be.

As always, risks may undermine sustainability; these are mainly sociological. Unless changed practices are completely independent of income, the need for financial support will remain. It may take longer than one to two years of the grant to develop profitability of income schemes. In some cases, such as climate change and photovoltaics, projects worldwide have not been able to ensure sustainability, because the costs of renewable energy remain higher than traditional energy. In other cases, such as the Reviving the Biodiversity in the Sango Lagoon and Adjacent Wetlands (GHA/93/009) project, immediate results were excellent, but environmental encroachment and silting resumed. The lesson learned is that some areas are too ambitious for small grants and can only be assumed by continuous government involvement.

The GEF and SGP corporate policy discouraging repeat funding or follow-on projects tends to underestimate continued support to communities. Perhaps more important than finance is continued accompaniment, facilitation, and advice from the NGOs to the local communities for project activities. It cannot be assumed that NGOs have separate incomes that would allow them to ensure their continued presence. Even when a project has been very successful, replication of practices normally requires some funds. In Ghana, funds for the environment are not easily available.

Thus, *funding fatigue* is one of the key risks that may compromise sustainability of SGP outcomes and project levels. With decreasing funding from the donor communities, it is likely that most communities are going to see the SGP as the most reliable donor. Other risks include technological advancement, that is, communities are unable to sustain high-level technologies in dealing with certain problems. Also important is the inability to formulate national laws to sustain certain actions. For example, the benefits under the Sango Lagoon project, mentioned above, could not be sustained because the community could not formulate and enforce a law prohibiting dumping of refuse along the beaches outside their area of jurisdiction. Through tidal waves and rainfall, pollutants from other areas filled the desilted lagoons to bring back the problems that were earlier addressed.

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disappeared). This management crisis led to a change of name from Friends of Nature to Companions on Nature, although the new name has not been registered. The evaluation established that no GEF funds were misused.

4 Efficiency and Cost Effectiveness

The efficiency and cost effectiveness of the SGP has been positive; key strengths are low overall administrative costs when compared with total grants and cofinancing and their results, a high level of activities and outputs, and a streamlined grant cycle. This section discusses efficiency elements.

4.1 Country Administrative Structure of the SGP

Administrative Structure

The SGP is organized per standard administrative arrangements for country programs. The national coordinator manages the SGP secretariat with support from an assistant and a driver. He is responsible for raising awareness of the GEF SGP's objectives and procedures, assisting NGOs and CBOs in formulating proposals, prescreening project proposals before NSC review, facilitating the NSC's work, facilitating CBO and NGO access to technical support services, and ensuring sound monitoring and evaluation of projects. The current national coordinator took office in July 2003 and immediately faced challenges in regaining momentum of SGP development in the middle of operational phase 2. The previous national coordinator had left in May 2002, and the one-year gap had implications for pipeline buildup and NSC organization and for program monitoring. The new national coordinator developed an inception report and strategic planning paper, which were approved by the United Nations Office of Program Services (UNOPS) and served as a basis for the 2004 budget. The SGP office is located on the premises of the Africa 2000 and the United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS and not at the UNDP country office; this is seen as an advantage in terms of access by beneficiaries and the NGO community.

The National Steering Committee works on a voluntary basis and meets every other month to deliberate on policy issues relating to GEF SGP operations and review and approve projects that the national coordinator has screened and submitted. Its composition currently reflects a good mix of different and complementary expertise and interest. The 13 NSC members were drawn from several constituencies representing the following:

- *Operational focal point* for the GEF (POP and chemical expert) from the Ministry of Environment
- *Government*—one member from the Ministry of Land and Forestry (wildlife specialist, international waters, and CREMA adviser) and one from the Ministry of Energy (climate change renewable energy technology development and policy expert)
- *NGO sector platforms*—three members, including representatives from the NGO umbrella organization and civil society organization, and an agriculturalist and grassroots development specialist responsible for POP issues

- *Gender and civil society organizations*—women in civil society (expert on gender and microfinance) and the Africa 2000 Network (expert on gender issues in environment)
- *Donors*—UNDP and World Bank country office staff covering environment
- *Scientific and research institutions* from the Department of Botany, University of Ghana

The current NSC has been operational since 2004, after the current national coordinator took office. The national coordinator has helped motivate and organize the committee, which is now very dynamic and engaged. Most members integrate SGP work within their regular organizations, while ensuring the main SGP work is completed in their spare time. All are committed to 10 days a year for monitoring visits (in addition to reporting), virtually full-day meetings every two months, and off-hour review of proposals. Many also provide additional support to grantees and visit SGP grants in the course of personal field visits.

Given a two-year assignment, the NSC's composition will shortly be reviewed. Staggered composition will ensure some continuity. The newly composed NSC will receive training in GEF focal areas and priorities from an SGP project (Capacity Development and Training for Local Organizations for Effective and Efficient Operations in GEF SGP Focal Areas and Poverty Reduction—GHA/06/100). The UNDP resident representative decides the overall constituency composition in talks with the national coordinator. The identified organizations are then invited to nominate persons to serve on the committee. The time invested, free of charge to SGP, is considerable.

Each member provides specific contributions to the SGP. The main work of the NSC during operational phase 3 is to prioritize, select, and approve projects that

- provide for community participation in their design, implementation, and evaluation,
- involve local organizations (NGO representatives provide a bridge between the NSC and the civil society organization grantees),
- pay attention to the needs of women and/or indigenous people and practices (members from the gender networks provide advice on women's issues),
- draw on local scientific and technical resources (ministry experts and technical NGO experts provide focal area–specific support and other expertise, such as financial),
- include provision for capacity development (SGP experience provides feedback on NGO needs and performance to the NGO umbrella network members of the NSC),
- are in line with national development strategy (particularly assured by the government representatives; the GEF focal point representative uses the SGP experience to direct requests for assistance and ensure interplay with the FSP and MSP portfolio).

The UNDP country office provides overall management of the GEF SGP on technical and administrative levels. On a technical level, the country office has ensured that the national coordinator can present experiences to the donor natural resource management group. The resident representative formally signs a memorandum of understanding with each grantee on behalf of UNOPS and reviews the performance of the national coordinator. The national coordinator meets monthly with the natural resource management program officer to discuss issues and monitor progress. On the administrative level, the country office supports grantees with purchases, parking for the SGP vehicle overnight in the United Nations compound, and travel authorizations. The main problem has been delays in disbursement to grantees, mainly by transfer into grantee bank accounts after the memorandum of understanding and periodic tranches. Because one person in the country office can manage ATLAS (the UNDP financial information technology system), it can take several weeks to release disbursements and the national coordinator must follow up. The country office appears to interact with the SGP Central Programme Management Team mainly on performance review of SGP staff, recruitment of new staff, and comments on national coordinator reports to headquarters (for example, on portfolio geographical spread).

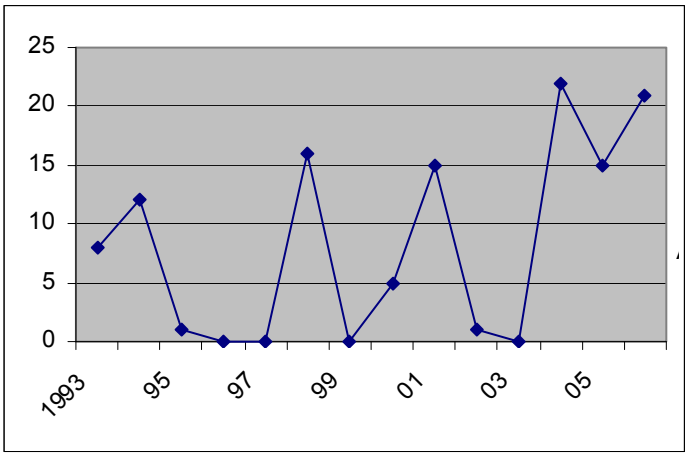
The SGP has also discussed with the country office hosting of the Ghana SGP Web site (now on a temporary commercial site); this has not materialized. The SGP national coordinator has provided support to the country office by training other project coordinators on design and providing a model matrix to track implementation status.

Project execution is the responsibility of UNOPS in New York City. The support is seen as satisfactory. In response to past delays in disbursement of grants through the UNDP country office, UNOPS has now authorized the national coordinator to raise the purchase order, which is authorized by UNOPS for disbursement by UNDP. This has been effective in reducing delays. The UNDP SGP coordination team in New York City provides information on SGP direction and guidance instructions and coordinates annual meetings and training of the national coordinators, which are seen as very useful.

Time and Process Management

The grant process is now very efficient and has become cyclical. Once funds are released from headquarters in March each year, the projects in the pipeline are approved. If funds are left, additional promising proposals, often just received, can be approved in June to exhaust the funds. New ideas received after that time are subject to appraisal and the active support of the national coordinator and NSC members in developing good proposals for the following March; hence, March to June is spent on approvals and closings (most projects last two years, and they all close in April to June), and July to February is spent on monitoring ongoing projects and helping to develop new proposals and their appraisal. If funds are not sufficient or ideas not deemed viable, the proponents are informed by the end of the year. In 2006 the national coordinator issued about 40 letters declining assistance. Figure 4.1 illustrates fluctuations in project approvals per calendar year since the SGP started. When the current national coordinator took office, a large backlog of proposals existed and funding of $300,000 was approved for that first year (2004).

Figure 4.1: Fluctuations in Number of Project Approvals per Calendar Year 1993–2007



Depending on timing of receipt and quality, therefore, a project can take anything from one month to a maximum of one year for approval. The NGOs interviewed expressed satisfaction with this process; it allows time to work on project quality and a clear expected timeline for response. They indicated that the national coordinator had kept them aware of progress and issues. They were generally aware of the complexities and delays of the project cycle for FSPs and MSPs for both government and NGOs.

To assess the quality of proposals, the national coordinator obtains a two-page concept, based on which he ensures the validity of the proposal and its proponent through a field visit (combined with monitoring missions). If the concept and NGO are found to hold promise, the promoter is requested to submit a proposal to the NSC. This has helped weed out unsuitable proposals without foundation for support. If the pipeline is too big for available resources, the national coordinator and NSC prioritize the proposals, mainly based on cofinancing provided and commitment from the NGO and communities. As of early March 2007, 32 projects were in the pipeline. Normal aggregate allocations are $250,000 a year in a rolling budget.

Projects start with a memorandum of understanding signed between the NGO or CBO and the UNDP resident representative as the UNOPS representative. During implementation, funds are released to the NGO or CBO bank account in three tranches based on milestones or triggers and receipts. The national coordinator also ensures that NGOs in dry areas receive the funds first to ensure that project activities fit as well as possible with the seasonal work of communities.

Advantages of the SGP project cycle mentioned by interviewees include the following:

- *Limited bureaucracy.* Project proponents who go to the ministry or other donors for support can wait a long time for response or actual support to materialize.
- *No conditionality.* NGOs indicated that some bilateral donors insist that they enter into partnership with or apply through an NGO from the donor country.

- *A rolling budget.*

- *The support provided during the process.* Other agencies may reject proposals right away, but the SGP (national coordinator and NSC) works in partnership with the NGO to develop a good proposal if potential exists. Some NGOs have tried for 10 years or more to obtain funding for environmental projects without success. The SGP process is seen as a big improvement.

- *The training offered to potential grantees.* The capacity-building workshops offered have helped the proponents in design by explaining the focal areas, in managing during implementation, and in M&E.

- *The close follow-up.* The national coordinator and NSC follow up closely through monitoring and visits.

Disadvantages include:

- Although the GEF criteria for grants are clear, they are too numerous. It takes too much time to address all the criteria, which makes for a big project document paper. This is not warranted by the size of allocations.

- The limit of $50,000 has remained fixed since 1992 without taking rising costs into account. Now that NGO capacity and experience has increased, the demand for larger projects is growing.

- The inability to exceed the $50,000 limit in several projects for an NGO means that expansion to other areas is also limited, even if the project was very successful and demand exists. Even if the NGO obtains other funds—although little chance exists for this—interruption of activities can create a gap. The dollar ceiling often presents the proponent with a choice to work either in a few communities for longer—which helps immediately, but narrows impact and sustainability—or in more communities for shorter periods. Replication would be better served with the ability to work in more communities longer.

- The inability to include any NGO staff costs could allow for more human resources for project management and monitoring. With few full-time staff on the projects, workload can be very stressful.

- Some delays in the actual release of funds to the NGO and some cumbersome procedures for triggers for new funds exist.

- The allowed period of two years can be too short in which to conduct all activities and ensure sustainability.

- Local committees have gaps in their understanding of the GEF, and difficulties exist in translating the GEF mandate to a local context, both in terms of language and complexity of the subject.

- Difficulties exist in using experience gained in strategic projects to access GEF MSP grants.

The advantages listed above, along with the SGP governance structure, provide an effective and transparent decision-making process for priority setting and funds allocation. The following factors contribute to the efficiency and transparency of the process:

- Criteria for eligibility are clear, and a clear country strategy is firmly embedded in GEF priorities.

- Broad NSC representation in all focal areas allows assessment of proposals based on the comparative advantage and authority of each person.

- Transparency exists in assessment; the national coordinator and NSC visit to appraise the proposal and provide support to improve concepts.

- A policy exists of spreading grant benefits within the NGO community in a noncompetitive manner. The NGO umbrella network expressed satisfaction, because most serious NGOs will be supported.

- The approach to review and approvals and rejections is constructive. Rejection is limited (if the NGO is not credible or has a capacity problem, or the concept is not eligible); limitations in funding proposals are prioritized in the pipeline. This means that the NGO that has not received support is confident that it will have a chance in the future.

However, more could be done to use printed or electronic materials regarding the grant cycle, and list of projects and grantees. Although a newsletter is published, the Ghana SGP Web site situation is not satisfactory, as it is temporarily hosted on a commercial site and requests for the UNDP country office to host a page on its Web site have not succeeded.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation at the level of the country program strategy can now be considered effective. The field study established that ongoing projects are consistently and frequently visited; follow-up and monitoring of past projects is regular after the fact. Field visits are also undertaken for proposed grants, which helps to identify problems to address and baseline conditions. Reports reviewed and interviews with grantees revealed that visits are effective in identifying challenges to implementation, if any, and proposing solutions for improvement. Some grantees even indicated that monitoring visits and follow-up tend to be too frequent. All grants in GEF's operational program on coastal, marine, and freshwater ecosystems (OP2) were also visited.

Monitoring is undertaken through a number of tools and activities, including country semiannual reports; biennial or annual reporting from the grantees; regular visits from the national coordinator and the NSC members, both official and unofficial (for example, visiting projects when on mission for other purposes); program meetings; and ad hoc studies and frequent participatory workshops. Given the distances in the country, follow-up is also undertaken by telephone; introduction of cellular services allows the national coordinator to be virtually permanently on call.

The detailed monitoring plan for each grant is not detailed in the country program strategy, as at that time, the grants had not yet been agreed on; however, the national coordinator has established a comprehensive spreadsheet for planning and follow-up of grants and their results. This includes data, cumulative with baseline and yearly progress, on indicators for each grant.

The national coordinator himself mainly undertakes country monitoring. It is encouraging that NSC members have become increasingly involved in monitoring the SGP portfolio and have found this rewarding. Their terms of reference envisage two field visits a year of five days each; several members seem to do more. The field visits also allow them to apply their technical expertise in advising the projects. Other partners have also taken part in field visits (for example, district assemblies and government service providers, such as the Forestry Commission, Environmental Protection Agency, NGOs, and so on). The government is also involved; the GEF focal point in the EPA meets with the national coordinator at least twice a year, in addition to involvement of EPA staff and some of the NSC.

Monitoring by the SGP *GEF Agency* (UNDP and UNOPS) is not undertaken in the same manner. UNOPS provides administrative services, and receives and provides financial reports without undertaking actual field visits. The national coordinator is subject to performance evaluation (performance and review assessment) by headquarters. These arrangements seem to function well and to the satisfaction of the local staff. The national coordinator reports periodically to the SGP Central Programme Management Team in New York City; the evaluation team could not find that the national coordinator had received feedback on such reports. Ghana has not been visited by a headquarters representative since 1999. At the local level, the national coordinator meets with the UNDP program manager responsible for environment in the country office on a weekly basis to discuss progress and other issues. The UNDP program manager is also represented on the NSC and takes part in visits and meetings in that capacity. He has not undertaken separate monitoring visits on behalf of the Implementing Agency. For a time, a junior professional officer was assigned to cover the SGP and reportedly took active part in monitoring and technical advice, but she has since left.

A new and innovative approach for monitoring and support is the establishment of a network of "regional or zonal coordinators" for the SGP through the extensive capacity building on GEF concerns supported by the grant of the grassroots organization. These coordinators have been established on a voluntary basis for four zones in the three biospheres—northern savannah, high forests, and coastal savannah. The coordinators will help visit and monitor projects, coordinate

NGOs in the region, work on resource mobilization, and improve relations with government service providers for the SGP portfolio in the zone.

The NGO or CBO involved supervises the grant in question; the approaches vary depending on context, complexity, local needs, infrastructure, staffing, and so on. For example, projects working with many villages often schedule the visits on a rolling basis, such as the one for rural women in the Akuapem North District (GHA/05/080), which involves visits to 10 villages. Some communities may have more difficulties than others and may require more active follow-up. The beneficiaries and communities interviewed consistently indicated satisfaction with the NGO presence, partnership, and monitoring.

Monitoring also depends on whether the NGO has local offices in the region. Although locally based NGOs implement many grants, the complexity of the GEF mandate and lack of environmental knowledge has presented a constant challenge in Ghana. A large part of the NGO community is based in the Accra region and does not have funding for satellite offices. Other NGOs have mobilized representatives in the communities who help with monitoring. Some NGOs indicated that the SGP prohibition against using GEF funds for staff can impede excellent monitoring; the possibility of recruiting additional staff for a grant would increase the attention to monitoring.

Not every grant lends itself to "traditional" monitoring. For example, the grant Capacity Development and Training for Local Organizations for Effective and Efficient Operations in GEF SGP Focal Areas and Poverty Reduction (GHA/06/100) involves no field activities per se, and monitoring is undertaken through participation by the national coordinator and the NSC in the training workshops and through personal contacts. Some grants, especially in the past, were too small in size to merit an M&E plan, and others have been event based.

All grants are now subject to a *terminal evaluation* at closing and discussed at an end-of-project workshop, mostly with an exit plan. About 10–12 projects end every year. The NGOs appreciate being able to do an evaluative self-assessment. This was not a normal practice or requirement earlier, although periodic and final reports have been standard. To formalize the closing among the communities, the SGP is developing a certificate and closing ceremony.

The Government of Ghana also stressed the difficulty of *aggregating indicators* for global environmental benefits; the need for more case studies was mentioned as a tool. The project documents (and CSP) contain a number of indicators and specified global environmental benefits at the impact level and as immediate results. The national coordinator has recorded these, showing a baseline and annual progress, in an impressive Excel sheet for all the grants; however, although commendable, this is not easily accessible or usable on a regular basis and burdens the national coordinator with yet another task. The evaluation also found that having too many indicators (for grants and CSP) is often not practicable for follow-up or baseline work. In fact, baseline data are not as easily accessible for all grants or indicators. Consequently, reporting is not systematic by all the NGOs in each progress report.

No country budget exists for M&E per se; it is covered by the travel budget of the national coordinator. This amounted to $10,877 (2005) and, so far, $9,559 for 2006–07, compared with a total grant disbursement of $419,235 (2005) and $476,316 (2006–07), that is, 2.6 percent and 2 percent, respectively, for M&E. This is not much, especially considering the considerable distances that must be covered by car in Ghana and the relatively higher need for support for small-scale grants.

On the other hand, no budget exists for independent evaluation either. The biennial reviews, although not formally an evaluation, are very participatory, and this review team found them frank and sufficiently critical. Headquarters constraints govern their purpose; GEF's operational program on coastal, marine, and freshwater ecosystems (OP2) lasted six years—a long period to review—GEF's operational program on forest ecosystems (OP3) lasted three years, so the mid-term review ended up as the final review. The Central Programme Management Team commissioned an independent evaluation of four Ghana grants in 2005, after the fact, and selected the projects to be reviewed centrally. This field study involved visits to some of the same grants and found that the evaluation reports were comprehensive and accurate. The local stakeholders had found them useful. It is not clear how headquarters used the reports. Given the number of small grants in several focal areas and geographical regions, the cost effectiveness of a comprehensive evaluation should be carefully considered, as this evaluation has shown.

Costs and Resources

The cost of operating the SGP in Ghana is relatively limited. The local operational expenses for 2005 amounted to $25,477 (6 percent of grant disbursements) and for 2006–07 amounted to $44,533 (5.3 percent of grant disbursements). This does not include the cost of staff (the national coordinator, one assistant, and one driver), which is paid from the global fund SGP project. The main elements of the expenditures are M&E and supervision reporting, capacity building such as workshops, and outreach. This work covers the following, among other things:

- Oversight and monitoring of a grant portfolio of more than 110 projects, ongoing and closed
- Review and appraisal of proposed projects, with support to proponents and verification of baseline conditions, of about 80–100 proposals (and rising) received yearly
- Operation of the NSC mechanism, with meetings every two months
- Organization of periodic workshops and participatory mechanisms at least yearly
- Networking, partnering, and resource mobilization efforts with a large range of partners (government, NGOs, donors, and so on)
- Periodic reporting to headquarters and mission reports, and maintenance of the headquarters SGP database for Ghana and a separate database on indicators and M&E and on financial data for grants

The work needed can only be accomplished through long working hours by the SGP staff, weekend overtime (most of which is not covered by overtime compensation), and voluntary efforts. The national coordinator plays a unique leadership role and has no backup or replacement for holidays or sick leave. The risk of burnout of any national coordinator exists, given the extensive workload and continuous responsibilities of the post. The work of NSC members in strategic direction, review of proposals, technical advice, and oversight is all voluntary and represents considerable investments in time.

In addition, the Ghana SGP has been able to secure support in the form of volunteers to support the office from the government, drawn from the National Service Secretariat. The SGP secretariat has also worked with final-year students from the universities and polytechnics on attachment to help build a good relationship between the SGP and the tertiary institutions. These staff members have provided technical backstopping and have also monitored the performance of grantees.

Leveraging Resources

Another success factor is the ability to mobilize and *leverage additional resources* in support of the program. The Ghana SGP has been particularly successful in securing voluntary support, in-kind and cash contributions from beneficiaries and the NGO community, partnerships for in-kind support to grants in the form of technical advice and monitoring, and some high-profile deals for cash contributions to the program. Achievements are particularly impressive when considering the limited attention to environment in the country and the donor policy of budget support, which does not favor direct project support.

It has proven more difficult to obtain cash contributions to SGP program management and untied cash contributions to the overall program, as well as securing additional financial support from the government, the Implementing Agency, and the GEF.

For GEF's operational program on coastal, marine, and freshwater ecosystems (OP2), SGP expenditures amounted to $614,366 with resources mobilized of $1,411,893 in cash and in kind (a ratio of 1:3). For the current period, the SGP has developed a framework for cooperation with the African Development Bank Community Forest Management Project that will provide funds of up to $2.63 million, whereas the GEF SGP will provide a matching fund of up to $400,000 for two years, March 2006–February 2008, in the four regions of the high forest zone. The SGP has also developed a memorandum of understanding with the SNV Netherlands Development Organization for technical assistance in project implementation countrywide. France has supported the CREMA concept and provides funding to some SGP CREMA grants.

The target for resource mobilization for GEF's operational program on forest ecosystems (OP3) is based on the assumption that the project portfolio will increase from 36 during operational phase 2 to 120 during operational phase 3. The indicative estimates are $1,810,750 expected from the GEF SGP global fund, $3,350,000 in cash to be mobilized from local sources, and $4,349,623 in in-kind contributions from NGOs and communities (for a total $9.5 million). It

had been possible that the program might also get additional funds from Ghana's RAF allocation of $150,000 every year for the next three years; this has not materialized.

The *strategy* for mobilizing additional funding for the country program covers the following sources of funding: matching funds from grantees, especially from the central government and district assemblies; government service providers' technical expertise; in-kind contributions from applicants and others of no less than 30 percent of the total project cost; sustainable livelihood and income generation components; UNDP and other United Nations agencies; and dovetailing into GEF macro- and medium-size grants and bilateral and multilateral donors, and private sector institutions.

UNDP confirmed that the SGP has done well in external *resource mobilization*. The UNDP country office has expressed to the national coordinator and reiterated to the evaluation team that it would like funds mobilized from outside to go through UNDP as cost sharing and not directly to the SGP. According to the office staff, the advantage of this arrangement is that it would allow the office to monitor and audit donor funds jointly. Office staff would charge between 3.5 to 7 percent of the cofinancing contributions in cost-sharing fees for channeling the funds through its accounts. The office does receive a part of the GEF fees as extrabudgetary resources for having the SGP in the country, but could not inform the evaluation of the exact amount. The evaluation found no evidence that accounting to donors by the SGP is currently a problem, especially because country office monitoring of the SGP has been intermittent, and sees no advantages to the GEF SGP for such an arrangement.

UNDP indicated that their prospects for future resource mobilization are not encouraging. Donors have not provided cofinancing directly in the environmental field, and given financial cutbacks, UNDP may not be able to justify keeping the environment unit in the office. The RAF has negatively affected the UNDP pipeline, both in terms of reduced funds and a changed policy of access. The possibility of SGP graduation would exacerbate the situation considerably for the environment.

4.2 Comparable Experiences in Ghana

Relatively few programs and donors in Ghana have activities similar or comparable to the SGP. The differences include the following:

- Many donors now provide aid to Ghana through *budget support*, pooled resources, or focus on institutional development and advocacy. For example, the Farmer-Based Organizations Development Fund, a $1.5 million contribution to a larger multidonor fund, managed by the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, provides grants to farmer-based organizations to support their development.

- Donors with small-grants operations often cover other *sectors* (especially small business private sector development, gender development, water and sanitation, health, and HIV/AIDS). Grants in environment are rare. For example, the African Development Foundation is providing up to $50 million in expansion capital to 200 small- and

medium-size business enterprises in five years. The French (ADF) Social Development Fund also supports local development in rural environments through the Community-Based Rural Development Project (cofinanced by the World Bank), which mainly provides finance for infrastructure for healthcare, education, hydraulic works, and agricultural production.

- Other programs tend to cover a limited *geographical area*, or sector or target group. The SGP has a unique coverage of countrywide support. For example, the French (ADF) Social Development Fund targets groups identified on a national scale as being particularly vulnerable: women and children. Twenty projects were completed in 2005 for sustained exchange among source communities.

- Other programs provide a limited *number of grants*; the volume and range of the SGP portfolio is unique. The Ramsar Small Grants Fund for Wetland Conservation and Wise Use has a similar purpose as the SGP, but has only provided two grants to Ramsar sites in Ghana in the past 10 years: The Regeneration, Sustainable Use and Management of Mangrove in the Keta Lagoon (2005, 39,862 CHF) and the Rehabilitation and Community Management of Mangroves and Coastal Wetlands in the Lower Volta Delta (1998, 40,000 SFR). Both were intended to restore degraded coastal wetlands and will be managed by planting mangroves, fruit trees and woodlots, and the local communities will be involved in the protection and wise use of these resources for the conservation of biodiversity and provision of alternative sources of income.

- The *financial size* of the SGP grants differs. For example, the African Women's Development Fund provides *small grants* to support small women's groups in six thematic areas (not including the environment), but the grants range from $1,000 to $3,500.

- Other donors specializing in the environment may have a different *focus*, such as Conservation International, which has a facilitation role within a biodiversity landscape approach.

- Other programs are rarely provided through the *channels* of the NGO and civil society organization community; some are linked to a project or government institution.[17] For example, the Canadian International Development Agency's Ghana Environmental Management Project helps strengthen Ghanaian institutions and rural communities to enable them to reverse land degradation and desertification trends in three regions of northern Ghana. The expected outcomes include coordinated activities to combat desertification, enhanced institutional capacity, and priority projects of the NAP and district development plans in northern districts to address objectives intended to combat

[17] For programs that provide a small grant or credit scheme *within* a larger program to support broader objectives of poverty alleviation, detailed information on grants is not easily available.

desertification. Another Canadian International Development Agency project on food security ($12 million) in the north works with NGOs and funds initiatives identified by communities, including agricultural production, small business, and off-farm income generation, as well as health and nutrition education.

Several GEF MSPs and FSPs have had grant or livelihood components. The evaluation does not find that these have been particularly successful, nor represent a model for the SGP. All have suffered delays, some significant, in fund establishment and management and also in implementation and monitoring. It is uncertain to what extent problems could have been avoided, had lessons learned or expertise from the SGP been made better use of, or to what extent implementation problems are due to other causes. In some cases, the amounts are larger than that of the SGP and the scale presents additional challenges, especially when the project is of limited duration and the fund mechanisms are not permanent. They often use other delivery mechanisms (than NGOs)—government or banks—which present new challenges. Another weakness is the need for accompanying support and monitoring, which are indispensable for small grants; it seems less effective to establish new structures (or making structures that are not traditionally involved in local communities take on such support) than use existing locally based ones (such as NGOs).

In the case of the Enchi sacred grove, the SGP and the government proponent learned a number of lessons from the FSP NRMP on what not to do. One example is obtaining grass cutters (animals) for rearing from the NRMP, which got them from the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit, which got them from Benin. Other lessons include the importance of a credit line, difficulty of grass-cutter rearing, avoiding fish farming in droughts, the need to repeat training, group approaches being better than individual support, and so on. In this case, the FSP actually hindered the SGP grant in that it belatedly (at project end) disbursed its credit line with more funds than SGP could provide for similar activities. This has frustrated villagers who cannot understand why the same donor would provide them with fewer funds. The banks have also preferred to work with the larger credit lines. Although collaboration at the local level between the SGP and the NRMP Alternative Livelihood Investment Facility is good, evidence is insufficient on whether the project overall took lessons learned on small grants into account for either grants or community involvement.

In sum, as corroborated by stakeholders, the SGP compares favorably in efficiency and effectiveness to other approaches, both in reaching NGOs, CBOs, and local populations and in cost effectiveness of small grant delivery on a national scale.

5 Key Findings

Finding 1: The Ghana GEF SGP has been—and remains—highly relevant to the GEF mandate and focal areas and to beneficiaries' needs. It is also relevant to the environment conventions and national priorities.

From the outset, the GEF program in Ghana has been firmly anchored in the GEF focal areas. The current country program strategy reflects strategies and contents directly drawn from the operational programs. As such, it can be considered to respond directly to the conventions embedded in the GEF Operational Strategy.

Many SGP grants also respond directly to the numerous national policies related to the environment, especially within natural resource management, the wildfire policy, and forest conservation in the National Environment Action Plan, as well as the GPRS. Given the broad range of policies and priorities, it would indeed be difficult to find areas that do not fit with them. The analysis shows that, although derived from the conventions, most national plans do not contain explicit commitments from Ghana. For example, Ghana's National Communication on Climate Change (2004) merely presents a number of options. A few projects have reduced ozone, which Ghana has committed to phasing out by 2020. A lack of commitment, clear priorities, or implementation frameworks would make it difficult for any partners to address relevance. In fact, where national implementation of policies is inconsistent or incomplete, the SGP has in some cases served to complement government efforts, rather than be an extension or synchronization with them.

All projects visited and persons interviewed stated that the SGP has been sensitive to and, at the same time, has been addressing the needs of local communities, the NGO networks, and beneficiaries. Project documentation shows awareness of their concerns, and needs surveys for baselines are regularly conducted.

However, it can be argued that remaining relevant to the above content does not necessarily help the SGP in its pursuit of focus and impact. The great spread of focal areas and national policies in environment can easily lead to dispersion of small grants. It is also obvious that beneficiaries express more demand for some focal interventions than others do; thus, a tradeoff exists in considering whether the SGP should push for more projects in those areas (international waters, POPs, ozone, and in part, climate change). This tradeoff should be resolved, in part by overall policies of the GEF SGP, not just for Ghana.

Finding 2: The Ghana GEF SGP has developed considerable and acceptable global environmental benefits for its limited investment, especially in forest flora, fauna, and carbon sequestration. Results in the areas of international waters, POPs, land degradation, and ozone are also noted.

The results in global environmental benefits are satisfactory. Areas have been put under protection, forest and vegetation cover has been expanded, and buffer zones created around protected areas. The pervasive problems of bushfire and firewood harvesting have been curtained in project areas. These and other projects have secured protection and at times expansion of

species such as hippos, monkeys, elephants, and turtles. The interventions in afforestation, land management, and protected areas also help climate change by carbon sequestration. The results in climate change reflect the more limited and to some extent dispersed portfolio. Although the grants represent aggregated results in avoidance of greenhouse gas emissions, it is difficult to achieve greater impact in market change for renewable energy, which remains more expansive than traditional energy. These challenges are also noted for the overall GEF FSP and MSP portfolio, as noted in the climate change program study and the Ghana local benefits case study.

Finding 3: The Ghana GEF SGP has contributed significantly to environmental awareness and capacities in Ghana. The capacities in NGO, CBO, and local communities for protection of the global environment can largely be attributed to its efforts. The program has also contributed to national policy and local benefits.

The effects of SGP capacity building and awareness raising are excellent. The unique and consistent focus of the SGP on capacity development has resulted in countrywide understanding of GEF global environment matters in the expanding NGO and CBO community, along with capacities in project design, implementation, monitoring, as well as a range of technical skills. The local communities exhibited remarkable internalized knowledge of complex global environmental issues, such as climate change. The evaluation observed changes in environment-unfriendly practices in all projects visited; many, but not all, had been sustained with time. Government staff have also gained new skills in working with communities as well as technical capacities.

Increased awareness of the environment and especially global issues were part of these capacity gains. In part, the GEF SGP seems to have been "a lone advocacy voice" in the need to protect our global assets. The changes in the policy framework, whether national or decentralized, or traditional laws are showing preliminary effects and should show more when implemented. The range of policy influence is broad, ranging from CREMAs to biogas, sacred groves, firewood, bushfires, and NGO and community participation.

The SGP has provided livelihoods and income-generating opportunities as well. Most of these have been introduced not in their own right, but as linked to the environment.

Finding 4: After initial periods establishing structures and capacities, the Ghana GEF SGP is now operating very efficiently in management structures. Some room for improvement exists in M&E, knowledge sharing, partnering, and corporate support.

The overhead cost of SGP management is estimated to be low. Based on 2005 program accounts, the overall operational costs amounted to 6 percent of project grants, including 2.6 percent for monitoring and evaluation; the rest (2.4 percent) covered outreach, maintenance, and miscellaneous), taking into account that SGP coordination staff were paid under a separate UNOPS managed budget. The efficiency and cost effectiveness of the SGP has therefore been

positive. Key strengths include volunteerism, low overall administrative costs compared with total grant and cofinancing and results, and a streamlined grant cycle.[18]

The roles and responsibilities are clear, resulting in a cost-effective and transparent grant process. In particular, the process benefits from especially strong commitment from the active national coordinator, the NSC, and the NGO community. The structures process a large number of requests and implement a large portfolio. To the credit of the SGP, this has been accomplished with relatively limited support from corporate GEF, Central Programme Management Team, or Implementing Agency sources.

Initially weak, monitoring and evaluation have increased in frequency and quality. The same applies to knowledge management, integration of lessons learned, and publicity of SGP results. Such knowledge sharing would naturally increase with time as a sufficient body of experience is developed. In the past operational phase and the present, the SGP regularly holds radio and television discussions, hosts annual fairs, organizes capacity-building workshops, and publishes newsletters every quarter and lessons learned every year. It appears to have a consistently high level of knowledge sharing, also compared with other programs of donors and government. This takes place despite the immense workload of the management of the SGP program and the lack of additional funds at the country level to undertake such activities. Although the work could be—and is—to some extent shared by the NSC and NGO community, many of these tasks invariably fall on the national coordinator who has an overall view of the program.

The evaluation finds that the SGP has been very proactive and constructive in seeking partnerships, offering advice, sharing lessons and experiences, and building networks. The partnering of the SGP has been good and its reputation is excellent, and the SGP has developed a large network through the NSC, NGOs, grants, and partners.

However, challenges are manifold in knowledge sharing. Despite SGP efforts to document achievements and lessons learned, SGP partners and stakeholders are not always receptive to applying such knowledge. In Ghana, as in much of the region, personal contacts and networks are often the most effective. The SGP has recognized that the low literacy level of beneficiaries, coupled with the rural nature of the project sites, also means that knowledge gained is documented orally and not written.

Nonetheless, many national development or policy processes are government oriented or influenced by large donors, including the GEF Agencies. The evaluation team saw many missed opportunities on the part of these stakeholders to make use of SGP experience when provided. Especially disconcerting were some of the examples of underperforming MSPs and FSPs and GEF Agencies that could have benefited from offered SGP expertise. The notion of the SGP as a

[18] It was not possible to quantify cost effectiveness in terms of costs versus value of outcomes or global environmental benefits; however, as a proxy, the high level of activities, grants processed, and outputs are encouraging.

"corporate" GEF program is not as yet applied. The Implementing Agency has not made full use of the possibility of integration of the SGP into its own program or work, which raises the question of whether the GEF SGP is seen as a real partner or merely an additional funding source and a parallel structure.

The evaluation also finds that greater efficiency could be gained by simplifying some of the corporate processes and requirements. The planning and reporting demand—for formulation processes and documents—is not always justified by the size of the portfolio. The country program strategy is good, but represents a large effort for programming relatively little money. The all-inclusive coverage (of focal areas, operational programs, and indicators) represents a high workload, not always in line with absorptive capacity.

Finding 5: The Ghana GEF SGP continues to operate in a context in which environment is not high on the agenda and its role and voice in Ghana remains essential.

Despite Ghana's achievements and progress in other socioeconomic areas, such as poverty alleviation, economic growth, and good governance, the issue of environmental sustainability is not high on the national development agenda. Given the current structure and volume of development aid, the estimated targets for cofinancing to the SGP may be optimistic. At the same time, Ghana has developed considerable capacity among the NGO community, and efforts of decentralization and local empowerment are under way. Nevertheless, the communities continue to need support, both for new grants and afterward, whereas the NGO community has limited funds to ensure continued presence and support.

The SGP thus remains a key pillar in the environment sector. If the perception were given that the SGP would graduate and end its support in a few years, the SGP and its funders risk losing credibility at the national and donor levels. A huge amount of advocacy would be needed to address such a negative image.

Although Ghana is intended for graduation after GEF-4 (2006–10), no guidance has been received on how the graduation process will go and the stakeholders are still awaiting direction to enable them to strategize in the document for operational phase 4. This guidance is becoming urgent. Meanwhile, several actions that the SGP has already taken would in time help sustainability and possible graduation. For example, the efforts to broaden monitoring of SGP and regional support to the NGO networks are excellent. Nevertheless, functioning of such a system depends on a central core. Although the NSC is voluntary, it is so based on the volume and exposure of the SGP that a different or more limited fund may not enjoy the same support. The SGP is fully dependent on a dynamic national coordinator and team. No institutions in Ghana may play the same role.

Partnering and good results would not be sufficient in themselves to ensure continued funding, as there is little environmental focus in Ghana and limited resources available. The UNDP country office does not appear active for resource mobilization on the SGP's behalf; this work is left to the national coordinator.

6 Lessons and Recommendations

6.1 Lessons Learned

Program and Procedures

- A dynamic and permanent national coordinator is essential. Disruption of national coordinator staffing has a very negative effect on programming and should be avoided.

- Capacity building and training among NGOs and other stakeholders is an integral strategy to ensuring a quality portfolio. It is especially relevant for GEF focal areas and concerns design and M&E. Not only is this useful in building a new program, but training is a continuous need in order to reflect changes in the NGO community and target groups. The capacity-building workshops offered have helped the proponents in design by explaining the focal areas in management during implementation, and in M&E.

- Although rarely a problem, it is still useful to verify the legal basis of the NGO by verifying NGO statutes or the national registry to ensure that the NGO has broadly based management support in its community and among promoters. In implementation, it is important to interact with the NGO management, not just its director.

M&E and Implementation

- The self-assessment report by the NGO is a useful means through which the NGOs can learn. Participatory monitoring involving the communities is also effective.

- It is important to local communities that there be a "formal" closing and opening with appropriate handover ceremonies and project certificates. This helps manage expectations in a realistic manner and promote sustainability.

- It seems premature to expect an "exit strategy" at design stage, when promoters are seeking approval. It is useful to formalize the need for an exit strategy in the last year of operations. Such strategies should pay more attention to financial constraints in continued work.

- Flexibility in duration is important to reflect absorption capacity in local communities and the NGO. In some cases, grants, although small in size, should be implemented during more than two years.

6.2 Recommendations

Given that this review was limited in duration and scope compared with the very extensive country program, the following recommendations should be considered tentative in nature, that is, as ideas for the SGP and stakeholders to consider.

Recommendation 1: In preparation for a possible graduation, SGP Ghana should consider revisiting priorities and pursuing high-impact projects, backed by corporate support.

- In a situation with secure funding and a long-term vision, it is easier to facilitate innovation, exploration of new focal areas, and broadening of the portfolio. This has allowed a push for new and innovative projects in an approval-oriented manner. If, at the end of GEF-4 (2006–10), Ghana loses the SGP financing, there must be a shift away from business as usual.

- It should be recognized that not all GEF focal areas are of equal relevance in Africa or for small grants. Efforts to encourage new focal areas (international waters, POPs, and to some degree, climate change) are noble, but the risk exists that part of the portfolio will be too fragmented by the end of GEF-4 to meet the challenges of graduation.

- On a corporate level, GEF should provide guidance on tradeoffs between current priorities and practice and a long-term presence and vision that other donors find of interest. This may involve a tradeoff among a focus on a consolidated portfolio, comparative advantage, and issues of increasing grant monetary size. Furthermore, if sufficient time for developing and implementing a graduation strategy is to be available, other alternatives for alleviating the regular workload of the national coordinator are needed. A corporate strategy for providing such support would be useful.

- Continued success of the SGP, in whatever form, would depend on national stakeholders recognizing the importance of the national and global environment. The government has a particular role to play in supporting the SGP. In the pursuit of high-impact projects, the possibility of a stronger linkage to policy and national processes could be explored, especially by the government, donors, agency projects, and NSC members.

Recommendation 2: The SGP should further emphasize monitoring and evaluation and broader knowledge sharing.

- The SGP should continue to document successes and lessons learned better. The efforts underway to use the NGO networks more fully are promising: knowledge sharing should not depend on the national coordinator consolidating reports on achievements or on a database of impacts.

- The design of a grant proposal could be further strengthened with good articulation of expected end-of-project changes, with associated indicators. The CSP and grants should focus on a few, but relevant, indicators (rather than many) and consider baseline development, which is currently a weak point.

- Monitoring and terminal reports traditionally tend to focus on activities undertaken; it is important to go beyond that and pursue to which changes the activities have led. The NGO community is well placed to assess behavior changes in its areas of involvement; consequently, monitoring of such impacts should facilitate aggregation by the national coordinator.

- At a corporate level, the GEF partnership and Implementing Agencies should make efforts to ensure that cooperation between the SGP, on the one hand, and corporate initiatives and larger projects, on the other, is equal and mutual. The national coordinator has experienced a disproportionate burden in building partnerships, which has not always been reciprocated. An unfortunate tendency may exist for large-scale operations to disregard "smaller" mechanisms as less relevant; the FSPs and MSPs and some agencies in Ghana have missed opportunities for community involvement. The possible involvement of the GEF Executing Agencies is an opportunity for both the SGP and these Agencies to take part in this corporate program.

Recommendation 3: There is room for simplification, integration, and increased efficiency.

- Greater efficiency could be gained by simplifying some of the corporate processes and requirements. The planning and reporting demand—for formulation processes and documents—is not always justified by the size of the portfolio. The CSP, while good and encompassing, is required to contain so much information on various subjects that it can limit its effectiveness as a tool for prioritization and vision.

- The Ghana SGP functions very smoothly, virtually as a separate entity or fund. Although this is a strength and should remain so, lack of integration may also pose challenges in meeting future graduation requirements. More support is needed from the Implementing Agency, without implying physical or funding integration, both in terms of facilitating operations (payments, Web site, and so on), supporting and promoting achievements, integrating lessons learned with its own activities, and mobilizing resources.

Annex A: Projects Visited

Project number	Year approved	Project name	Recipient name	Focal area	Grant amount
Completed projects					
GHA/93/009	1994	Reviving the Biodiversity in the Sango Lagoon and Adjacent Wetlands	Popular Teshie 1964 School Leaver's Union	MF	$50,000.00
GHA/93/010	1994	Sustainable Agroforestry and Woodfuel Usage	Friends of Nature	BD	$12,208.00
GHA/98/025	1998	Conservation of Biodiversity in East Mamprusi ("elephant")	New Energy	MF	$34,721.00
GHA/98/027	1998	Propagation of Rare Medicinal Plants	Taimako Herbal Research Centre	BD	$6,037.00
GHA/98/028	1998	Rainforest for Health: A Travelling Expedition	Centre for Scientific Research into Plant Medicine	BD	$15,000.00
GHA/00/040	2000	Conservation of Elephants and their Habitats along the Red Volta River	Garu Presbyterian Agricultural Station	MF	$51,000.00
Projects under implementation:					
GHA/05/077	2005	Fian Community Biodiversity Conservation and Utilization Project	St. Jude Herbal Clinic	BD	$36,600.00
GHA/05/078	2005	Enchi Sacred Grove Conservation Project	Ghana Association for the Conservation of Nature	BD	$31,100.00
GHA/05/080	2005	Sustainable Environmental Resource Management and Livelihood Technology and Systems Demonstration/Learning Centre for Rural Women in the Akuapem North District	Supportive Women Organisation	BD	$36,800.00
GHA/05/082	2005	Self-Initiated Community Wildlife Management for Ecotourism Promotion and Restoration of Degraded Lands in Duasidan Community	Motivators Development And Initiative Centre	BD	$22,200.00
GHA/06/100	2006	Capacity Development and Training for Local Organizations for Effective and Efficient Operations in GEF SGP Focal Areas and Poverty Reduction	Grassroots Organization for Sustainable Development	MF	$25,000.00
GHA/06/105	2006	Community-Based Integrated Wildfire Management and Livelihood Development Enterprises for Six Vulnerable and High Fire-Prone Communities in the Afram Plains	Atidev Initiatives	LD	$22,650.00

Note: BD = biodiversity, LD = land degradation; MF = multifocal.

Annex B:
Country Program Coherence with National GEF Portfolio and Government Priorities

Government policy	Relevant strategies	GEF-SGP contribution to attainment of policy objectives
National Renewable Energy Policy *Objective*: Accelerate the development and utilization of renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies to achieve 10 percent penetration of electricity and petroleum demand mix by 2020	Promote solar, medium hydros, wind biomass, and municipal solid wastes	SGP has targeted productive use of solar energy in rural areas off-grid. Projects GHA/05/077 and GHA/05/080 have provided solar energy to rural areas for lighting and heating in processing of agricultural products.
	Supplement petroleum supplies from biodiesel on mostly biofuel configuration	Under GHA/98/025 and GHA/02/059, Ghana piloted the production and utilization of biofuel. Based on previous experience, a pipeline project will support the manufacture of biofuel lanterns and stoves to use locally produced Jatropha oil. SGP participated in and contributed to the formulation of national biofuel policy
	Reduce the average fuelwood energy intensity per urban household by 50 percent and per rural household by 10 percent by 2020	GHA/00/040 and GHA/05/080 introduced improved charcoal and fuelwood stoves for domestic, commercial, and industrial usage that saved energy consumption by 30 percent. GEF's operational program on forest ecosystems (OP3) pipeline project will replicate and scale up the use of these improved devices in the major urban centers
Millennium Development Goals	Ensure environmental sustainability	All GEF SGP projects implemented are intended to contribute to achieving environmental sustainability, promoting gender equality, empowering women, and contributing to the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger.
National Biodiversity Conservation Strategy and Action Plan 2002	Creation and strengthening of the management of protected area systems Permanent protected forests (forest reserves) Globally significant biodiversity areas Important bird areas Biological corridors Wildlife reserves Community management areas	The establishment of CREMAs under projects, such as GHA/05/078 and GHA/05/082, which involve conservation of natural wildlife habitats and restocking of community forest reserves, are promoting community involvement in conservation of natural resources, particularly in areas of globally significant biodiversity.
National Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS 2)	Improving governance in the public sector such as participation, transparency, and accountability.	The Forestry Commission has signed a new tenancy agreement with the farmers, which has made them shareholders in plantation establishments within the forest reserves.
	Deal with the effect of climate change, especially drought and desertification	GHA/06/015 is creating awareness among the people on the consequences of wildfire on the environment and people's properties and is building capacity in wildfire prevention and management.
	Improving community voice through creation of a forestry forums network	The formation of the GEF and NGO network provides a unique opportunity for environmental

Government policy	Relevant strategies	GEF-SGP contribution to attainment of policy objectives
	across the country to provide a space for interaction and give communities a voice; multistakeholder involvement in management planning; and establishment of customer service centers in all the districts to improve service delivery	NGOs to interact and exchange technical expertise. GHA/06/100 is supporting the process. The program has fostered the development of networks and collaboration among different types of NGOs with the capacity to provide various kinds of training and technical expertise. Environmental knowledge and a variety of technical skills have been acquired by a number of NGOs, CBOs, and community grantees. Grantees have increased their credibility within their own communities and, even more impressive, have developed more constructive links with their governments, donor communities, and international agencies. GHA/05/077, GHA/05/088, GHA/05/080, GHA/06/095, and GHA/06/091 have established technology and system demonstration and training centers, which offer varied training to farmers in forestry and wildlife activities.
Ghana's National Action Programme to Combat Drought and Desertification	Strengthening capacities and incentives for community-based action by district assemblies and traditional authorities to address desertification Development and dissemination of land and water management technologies and integrated watershed management Promotion of dryland forestry, agroforestry, and community fuelwood plantations Bush burning control, modifications and alternatives, and community support and sanctions Development and dissemination of soil fertility enhancement measures and integrated nutrient management	Under the sustainable land management component, the program has supported projects such as GHA/00/040, GHA/05/078, and GHA/06/100, which are located in the dry savannah and transitional zones. These projects promoted and supported the following: • Sustainable agriculture by adopting improved tillage measures that do not adversely impact the stability of soil structure; establishing windbreaks, buffer strips, and filter strips to reduce water and wind erosion; and improving management of agricultural wastes to improve soil and water retention • Sustainable forest and woodland management to restore and protect degraded ecologically sensitive areas, riparian forest and wetlands, and groundwater • Interventions to improve both livelihood and economic well-being of local people to preserve and restore ecosystem stability, functions, and services through sustainable land management • Build capacity of local communities in fire prevention and fire fighting.

Annex C: Documents Reviewed

The GEF Small Grants Programme

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"Country Assistance Strategy Progress Report for Ghana, for the Period FY04–07." 2006.

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"Implementation Completion Report (ICR) on a Loan/Credit/Grant to the Republic of Ghana for a Natural Resource Management Project, Phase 1." Report No. 27231. 2003.

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"Report from the Ghana Consultative Group Annual Partnership Meeting, June 21, 2006."

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Northern Savanna Biodiversity Conservation Project: project identification document, aide-memoires, implementation supervision reports, and memoranda.

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