

GEF Country Portfolio Study: Jamaica (1994–2010)



In 2011, the Evaluation Office of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) conducted a country portfolio study of GEF support to Jamaica for the period 1994–2010. Country portfolio studies are a new modality for the Evaluation Office; they are intended to complement the country portfolio evaluations that are one of the Office's main evaluation streams of work. Specifically, country portfolio studies provide additional regional coverage of country portfolios, but with a reduced focus and scope. They are undertaken where opportunities exist to collaborate with independent evaluation offices of GEF partners as they undertake country evaluations. They thus enable the Office to study a country's GEF portfolio with a relatively lower investment of cost and effort; this also reduces the evaluation burden on the country, while insights and understanding are gained through information exchange and collaboration.

The Jamaica initiative was undertaken in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP's) assessment of development results for the country (2002–10). Since 1994, the GEF has invested about \$11.86 million in Jamaica; a further \$42.09 million has been provided in cofinancing.

Findings

Results and Effectiveness

GEF support in all focal areas has helped Jamaica develop good capacity in environmental management and link to international best practices. However, the country lacks the resources to scale up from these initial benefits, and the GEF portfolio is not sufficiently well known among Jamaica's other international development partners to maximize collaboration and follow-up.

GEF biodiversity activities focused on management of watersheds, conservation of areas important for bird life,

coastal zone management, and measures to address invasive alien species; these have helped enable Jamaica to meet its obligations under global environmental conventions. International waters projects have enhanced country capacity and regional collaboration, and have delivered successful pilot and demonstration activities. In the climate change focal area, GEF support has helped Jamaica substantially increase its capacity in fields such as renewable energy, energy efficiency, adaptation, and energy sector planning and management.

Most GEF assistance in Jamaica has been in the form of enabling activities that have supported capacity development and piloting. Real challenges will be posed in sustaining and scaling up this initial progress. Given the limited resources available to the Jamaican government, effective collaboration and pooled efforts by the GEF Agencies and other international development partners are critical. The prospects for such collaboration, however, are limited by the GEF's low profile among many of these stakeholders.

The process of developing and managing the GEF portfolio has strengthened networking among national agencies engaged in environmental management.

In several cases, national agencies have expanded their partner networks through GEF projects. For example, the Integrated Water and Coastal Area Management project has helped the National Environment and Planning Agency develop a new approach to working with government agencies, local government, and community organizations.

It would be more appropriate to talk of “national adoption” than of “national ownership” of the GEF portfolio.

The portfolio has been mainly designed by the GEF Agencies, but it is relevant to Jamaica's national priorities. The government and other stakeholders have committed to activities at various stages of design and implementation, but have not led the process. Although national stakeholders are involved in evaluations, there is little coherence to

GEF monitoring and evaluation processes, which are primarily driven by Agency systems.

Relevance

GEF support in Jamaica has been relevant to the country's national environmental goals and priorities, as well as to its efforts to fulfill its obligations under the international agreements to which it is a signatory. This support has covered the range of GEF focal areas for which the country is eligible, either through national projects or through the Jamaican components of regional and global projects. Since the mid-1990s, a significant amount of support has focused on international waters, often as part of regional initiatives. Work on biodiversity, conducted in close collaboration with the National Environmental Protection Agency, has grown significantly since 2003. There has also been investment in climate change initiatives and, most recently, land degradation.

Efficiency

All three GEF Agencies active in Jamaica—UNDP, the United Nations Environment Programme, and the World Bank—have had difficulty in keeping projects within their intended time limits. The latter two Agencies have experienced substantial delays in their regional projects. Many UNDP projects have had some form of delay as well, which frustrates partners and may reduce effectiveness, since projects often have to take shortcuts to try to get back on schedule. Many delays are the result of inflexible recruitment and procurement procedures that have not been tailored to small island developing states in general or

to the Caribbean in particular. Such rules often require competitive bidding, which is difficult in Jamaica given that there are so few environmental specialists or supply companies available.

Lessons

- The Jamaica portfolio gives rise to concerns about the potential for sustainable progress in environmental management.
- Many GEF Agency procedures are not appropriate for small countries in regions with limited resources; this is seriously hampering the efficiency of GEF implementation in Jamaica and elsewhere.
 - Some possible procedural changes to improve efficiency have been suggested by evaluations and reviews of GEF activities by its Agencies. For UNDP, it has been suggested that changes to consultant procurement rules, use of consultant rosters and referrals, budgeting of additional time for project start-up, and use of inception phases to expedite contracting arrangements and implementation would be useful.
 - For the World Bank, it has been suggested that more conservative scheduling, cost contingencies, and improved assessment of project risks and implementation capacity needs should be considered.

Photo: Solar panels, Mafoota, St. Jamies, Jamaica, photo courtesy GEF Small Grants Programme, Jamaica.

The GEF Evaluation Office is an independent entity reporting directly to the GEF Council, mandated to evaluate the focal area programs and priorities of the GEF.

The full version of *GEF Country Portfolio Study: Jamaica (1994–2010)* (Evaluation Report No. 66, 2012) is available on the GEF Evaluation Office website, www.gefeo.org. Also available on the website is *GEF Annual Country Portfolio Evaluation 2011* (Evaluation Report No. 64, 2012), which presents a synthesis of the two country portfolio studies (in Jamaica and El Salvador) undertaken in 2010–11. For more information, please contact the GEF Evaluation Office at gefevaluation@thegef.org.