

Terms of Reference

GEF Cross-Cutting Capacity Development Study

Introduction

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) is a multilateral financial mechanism created in 1991 to provide grant and concessional funds to recipient countries for projects and programs that address biodiversity loss, climate change, the protection of international waters, the degradation of land and international waters, ozone depletion, and persistent organic pollutants. GEF is a designated financial mechanism for international environmental conventions: the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification.

The GEF is open to universal membership, and currently 181 countries are members. It is governed by a Council comprising 32 Members appointed by constituencies of GEF member countries. The GEF network is managed by the GEF Secretariat, which is construed for administrative purposes as a vice presidential unit within the World Bank. The GEF Secretariat is not responsible for directly implementing or managing projects.

Purpose

1. The purpose of this study is to assess the extent to which the GEF Cross-Cutting Capacity Development portfolio has catalyzed the work of the GEF to helping countries meet and sustain global environmental outcomes. To this end, the study will assess the portfolio's range of strategic approaches, showcase successes, lessons learned, best practices, and opportunities to create capacity development synergies with countries' broader GEF focal area portfolios.

Background on GEF and Capacity Development

2. The GEF has supported capacity development since its inception at all levels, within regular GEF programs and projects, through specific activities targeted specifically at capacity development and enabling activities. Guidance from the Conventions' Conference of the Parties, and consistent demand from countries' for tangible capacity development actions, has emphasized the importance of developing countries' capacities, and has called for the GEF to provide targeted funding for country-driven capacity development activities to developing countries. The GEF adopted two major policy documents discussed with the GEF Council regarding capacity development that have guided the GEF work in this area: the Capacity Development Initiative (GEF/C.13/9 and GEF/C.17/6/Rev.1, April 2001) and the Strategic Approach to Enhance Capacity Building (GEF/C.22.8, April 2003). The topic of capacity development is also included in all GEF replenishment negotiations, including in the most recent replenishment (GEF-5, May 2010). GEF Council members at GEF-5 reaffirmed that capacity development through regular projects and programs remain the core of the GEF's approach to capacity development. The GEF also agreed that cross-cutting capacity development is to be addressed through stand-alone projects within the framework of the GEF-5 capacity development strategy.

3. In the context of the GEF, capacity development comprises that set of capabilities needed to sustain and strengthen functional environmental management systems at the global level, recognizing that these systems must build upon national governance and management systems. Thus, capacity development includes the strengthening of the enabling environment as well as human and institutional performance in ways that catalyze sustained global environmental outcomes. For example, the integration of global environmental priorities within national development policies, programs and plans, complemented by training on new tools and methods to effectively implement them.

4. In May 1999, the GEF Council approved the Capacity Development Initiative (CDI) as a strategic partnership between the GEF Secretariat and UNDP, for the preparation of a comprehensive approach for developing the capacities needed at the country level to meet the challenges of global environmental action. The Initiative provided the necessary consultative and substantive foundation for developing elements of a strategic collaboration and a specific framework for GEF action to respond to the growing attention from the Conventions to capacity development. The assessment recommended that the GEF subscribed to the following operational principles to achieve effective capacity development:

- Ensure national ownership and leadership
- Ensure multi-stakeholder consultations and decision-making
- Base capacity building efforts in self-needs assessment
- Adopt a holistic approach to capacity building
- Integrate capacity building in wider sustainable development efforts
- Promote partnerships
- Accommodate the dynamic nature of capacity building
- Adopt a learning-by-doing approach
- Combine programmatic and project-based approaches
- Combine process as well as product-based approaches
- Promote regional approaches

5. In 2003, Council approved the Strategic Approach to Enhance Capacity Building (GEF/C.22.8, April 2003), which guided the GEF actions on capacity development through GEF-3 and GEF-4 phases. This approach focused attention on cross-cutting capacity through four pathways:

- 1) National Capacity Self-Assessments
- 2) Strengthening capacity building components of GEF projects
- 3) Targeted capacity building projects both within and across focal areas
- 4) Country capacity development programs in LDCs and SIDSs

6. In 2007, the GEF Evaluation Office (GEF EO) conducted an evaluation on capacity development using two methods: country case studies of the Philippines and Vietnam and a review of projects' terminal evaluations received by the GEF EO during the GEF 2007 fiscal year. The country case studies examined the nature and results of national, regional and global interventions and related these to capacity development targets at the policy, institutional and individual levels in each country. The review of 41 terminal evaluations reports assessed the extent to which capacity development activities in GEF projects were relevant, effective and

efficient, and looked at the results and their sustainability on the basis of evidence provided in the reports.

National Capacity Self-Assessment (NCSA)

7. In May 2001 the GEF Council approved funding for countries to undertake a self-assessment of the challenges and opportunities to meet Rio Convention obligations and recommend priority capacity building actions to address them. Countries received US\$ 200,000 to carry out their National Capacity Self-Assessments (NCSAs).

8. The NCSA defines a country's capacity as the ability of individuals, groups, organizations, and institutions to address the priority environmental issues of global environmental Conventions as part of efforts to achieve sustainable development. The broad range of NCSA outputs identified capacity needs at individual, institutional, and systemic levels. In order to meet multilateral environmental agreements (MEA) responsibilities, countries will need the capacity to manage functions that are fundamentally important by mobilizing information and knowledge; build consultative partnerships among stakeholders in different sectors of the economy; formulate policies, legislation, and programs to implement conventions; and monitor, evaluate, and learn.

9. Following the NCSAs processes, 23 Medium-size Projects were approved in GEF-4 to address national capacity constraints. These projects primarily focused on strengthening environmental governance, environmental management information systems, and on the mainstreaming of environmental issues in the national development agendas.

10. In order to delve into an assessment of the capacities to meet and sustain global environmental objectives, NCSAs were to explore the synergies among the three conventions' commitments, as well as the linkages with wider concerns of environmental management and sustainable development of national importance. NCSAs were neither intended to be definitive or final (recognizing the dynamic nature of capacity development), nor were they considered as a precondition for GEF assistance through regular projects and enabling activities, nor a necessary first step before launching capacity development activities in a particular sector. While the NCSA Final Report and Action Plan is the main output of the NCSA, the main outcome of the NCSA was to engage a national consultative process to legitimize among all stakeholders the priority capacity development needs to meet shared national and global environmental priorities. Both the process and final report were to be considered a useful and relevant framework for domestic action and external assistance for capacity development. A key principle of NCSAs was that they were to be entirely country-driven, undertaken by national institutions and experts, and respond to national situations and priorities.

11. According to a recent study conducted by UNDP and UNEP¹ on NCSAs, the GEF provided about US\$ 28.7 million for 153 NCSAs since 2002 (out of 165 eligible countries). GEF did not require co-financing, with most countries contributing in-kind support. Seven NCSA projects

¹ UNDP, UNEP, GEF (2010), "National Capacity Self-Assessments: Results and Lessons Learned for Global Environmental Sustainability," Global Support Programme, Bureau for Development Policy, United Nations Development Programme, New York, USA.

were cancelled due to non-delivery of NCSA products for a total of 146 implemented projects. UNDP implemented 76% of these NCSA projects and 24% were implemented by UNEP. As of March 2013, from the 133 countries that have completed their NCSAs, 18 have received a second phase support from the GEF to implement priorities identified in their NCSAs, valued at about US\$ 12 million from the GEF (on average the GEF provided US\$ 500,000 per project, CDs or CB2 projects, as they are commonly known). The NCSA reports are available at: <http://www.thegef.org/gef/ncsa>.

12. In 2004, the GEF approved the Global Support Programme for the NCSA (GSP) as a support mechanism for the NCSAs and capacity development under the GEF. A three-year facility of the GEF partner agencies of UNDP and UNEP, the GSP was designed to provide technical assistance to countries engaged in NCSA implementation and to draw and disseminate lessons learned and good practices. The GSP was funded by US\$ 1.9 million from GEF and US\$ 1 million from other sources. The GSP closed in December 2012 and a final evaluation is available.²

Targeted Cross-Cutting Capacity Development

13. Periodic reviews and assessments of the NCSAs were carried out by the GSP, complemented by a total of 11 sub-regional workshops where countries exchanged experiences, challenges and opportunities to carry out the NCSAs and strategize priority cross-cutting capacity development. This empirical data and information informed the strategic programming of cross-cutting capacity development projects (CB2s) during GEF-4 and GEF-5.

14. The GEF-5 Cross-Cutting Capacity Development Strategy frames the programming of GEF-funded projects to reduce, if not eliminate, the institutional bottlenecks (e.g., barriers to data gathering) to the synergistic implementation of the Rio Conventions. The five program frameworks are structured around five main objectives:

- 1) To enhance the capacities of stakeholders to engage throughout the consultative process
- 2) To generate, access and use information and knowledge
- 3) To strengthen capacities to develop policy and legislative frameworks
- 4) To strengthen capacities to implement and manage global convention guidelines
- 5) To enhance capacities to monitor and evaluate environmental impacts and trend

15. The first programming framework is being implemented through the separate GEF Country Support Programme and the National Dialogue Initiative as part of a long-standing program of support to recipient countries. The remaining four programming frameworks will be implemented by medium-size projects ranging from US\$ 500,000 to about US\$ 1 million of GEF resources and a few Full-Sized projects. They are strategically identified and prioritized through the NCSA process, and targeted to specific components of the environmental governance system. This is intended to allow for a more practicable approach towards meeting Rio Convention objectives (as well as other multilateral and regional environmental agreements) and achieving environmental sustainability. These projects are expected to leverage financial resources to

² Baastel, November 2010. Final Evaluation of the Global Support Programme to the National Capacity Self-Assessments. Final Evaluation Reports.

develop capacities in the national interest and upon which global environmental objectives depend.

16. The CB2 projects are intended to focus on the environmental governance system and mainstreaming global environmental issues into national development programs, while targeting specific capacity development needs. The expected outcomes of these projects are to strengthen multi-sectoral processes that promote policy harmonization, realize cost-efficiency, and enhance operational effectiveness in Rio Convention obligations. For example, a CB2 project would focus on piloting environmental fiscal reform for improved global environmental management, or developing natural resource valuation for improved decision-making on the global environment, or perhaps strengthening inter-ministerial consultative processes for improved decision-making for the global environment.

17. Capacity development activities are targeted to social actors, either as individuals or as organizations. The enabling environment, however, does not have its own particular type of social actor. Instead, the development of capacities at this level comes about by developing the environmental policy framework that builds on societal values and norms. Thus, by developing these five types of capacities in individuals and organizations, capacities are also being developed at the systemic level. This requires that certain important assumptions be made, e.g., that the strengthening of individuals and organizations to plan and develop effective environmental policy and legislation will actually result in effective environmental policy and legislation.

Scope and Criteria

18. This study will focus on an assessment of all the CB2 projects, taking into account their differential stages of implementation and their countries' respective NCSA Final Report and Action Plan. Taking into account the strategic rationale of the projects, the study will focus on the contribution of the CB2 projects towards institutionalizing targeted national capacities to meet and sustain global environmental objectives and impacts.

19. A unique feature of the NCSAs had been the creation of multidisciplinary teams for many countries at decision-makers and stakeholders to agree on shared (and sometimes mutually exclusive) capacity development objectives. This broad consultative and management approach process (adaptive collaborative management) was to have been institutionalized within national levels structures, catalyzing CB2 implementation and strengthening the legitimacy of CB2 outputs. One measure of success is the extent to which desired project outcomes have been embedded within national governance structures and mechanisms as well as other national environmental management and development systems.

Key Issues and Questions

20. The study will be a home-based exercise that will take place between April and June of 2013.

21. The key issues of this study are:

- 1) Country ownership and involvement of national institutions and stakeholders. The project should be based on a national prioritization process, typically the NCSA but possibly other similar exercises;
- 2) Relevance of GEF projects to country policies and needs: how have the projects supported the mainstreaming into national policies and plans;
- 3) The results achieved in developing required environmental management capacities;
- 4) The effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of GEF-supported efforts for capacity development

22. The study proposes to have four areas of focus: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and results (and their sustainability). Each of these areas will be developed through a series of key questions and sub-questions presented below:

Relevance

- 1) To what extent have GEF funded capacity development activities been relevant to country needs and priorities as identified in the NCSAs
- 2) To what extent have GEF funded capacity development activities been relevant to the GEF mandate?
- 3) How have GEF funded capacity development activities been integrated into wider national sustainable development sectoral plans and activities?
- 4) To what extent have the implementation of GEF funded capacity development activities promoted partnerships and coordination with other sectors and stakeholders?
- 5) How do GEF-funded capacity development activities support the strategic priorities of the GEF; including the strategy to enhance environmental management capacity in countries?

Efficiency

- 1) To what extent have GEF funded capacity development activities been cost-efficient in that economies of scale are achieved by targeting cross-cutting capacities?
- 2) What level (individual, institutional, systemic) of GEF funded capacity development activities provides the most cost-efficient global environmental benefits?
- 3) How efficient were stakeholders' involvement and partnership arrangements for designing and implementing the GEF funded capacity development activities?
- 4) What factors influence capacity development funding decisions in the country?

Effectiveness

- 1) What are the main achievements of the GEF funded capacity development activities, individually and at aggregate levels?

- 2) What were the synergies between GEF funded capacity development activities and other GEF funded projects? And other related capacity development initiatives?

Results and Sustainability

- 1) What are the long-term results of GEF funded capacity development activities, at country (each individual grant) and global levels (aggregated)?
- 2) What degree is there of local ownership of the GEF funded capacity development activities?
- 3) How were the GEF funded capacity development activities integrated into the wider national sustainable development and environmental agendas?
- 4) Will GEF funded capacity development activities achievements be sustainable over the long-term?
- 5) Were there any synergies between GEF funded capacity development activities and the planning of GEF activities; including the National Portfolio Formulation Exercises?

Methods

23. The study will be conducted by one senior consultant. The first task would be to collect the full set of project documentation. This includes the relevant NCSAs, project documents, progress reports, financial reports, independent evaluations, and copies of key communications. The documentation would also include national information relevant to the project, as well as evaluations on focal area projects, focusing on capacity development objectives.

24. The study will also use semi-structured interviews with GEF Secretariat, Implementing and Executing Agencies, and in-country stakeholders and beneficiaries. These interviews will be important in providing overview of capacity development actions and modalities, and also on specific case studies to provide insights into capacity development effectiveness and relevance to individuals and institutions. Project stakeholders will be identified for each project, ensuring a balanced representative of views and interests, and interviewed via telephone using an interview protocol to be developed by the consultants with the GEF Secretariat. A minimum of 50 project respondents will be interviewed, not including GEF or implementing agency representatives.

Timeframe

Activities	Timeframe
Selection of consultants	15-22 April
Finalization of Terms of Reference	22- 25 April

Collect and organize background documentation	25- 30 April
Prepare annotated outline and interview protocol	25April- 5 May
<i>Submit outline for review and receive comments</i>	<i>5- 10 May</i>
Prepare first substantial draft	11 - 13 May
Conduct interviews	13 - 20 May
<i>Submit first draft for review and receive comments</i>	<i>20 - 30 May</i>
Finalize study	30 May- 30 June

Selection Criteria

The successful candidate for this position will need to meet the following criteria:

- Demonstrated 7 year work experience relating to capacity building, public institutional strengthening, or other related fields.
- Good knowledge of environmental conventions and multilateral environmental agreements.
- Ability to communicate fluently, both in writing and orally, in English.
- Excellent drafting skills, strong operational and analytical skills, and an ability to work as a member of a team.
- An advanced university degree related to political, environmental or economic sciences,

Candidates interested in this consultancy should submit a CV and cover letter via email to Pilar Barrera (pbarrera@thegef.org) by April 10, 2013.