



Global Environment Facility

GEF/C.35/ME/2
May 27, 2009

GEF Council
June 22-24, 2009

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE ANNUAL COUNTRY PORTFOLIO EVALUATION REPORT - 2009

(Prepared by the GEF Secretariat)

1. We have taken note of the Annual Country Portfolio Evaluation Report – 2009. It was prepared by the Evaluation Office on the basis of Country Portfolio Evaluations (CPEs) conducted in three countries: Cameroon, Egypt and Syria.
2. We welcome the principal conclusions of the evaluation, in particular the GEF's contribution toward solving global and national environmental issues and improving capacities. We concur with the conclusion that GEF support to biodiversity conservation and sustainable use has been of strategic importance and has generated significant impacts. In both Syria and Egypt foundational support has contributed to raising awareness on biodiversity issues and raised their profile on the political agenda and leveraged resources.
3. In the Climate Change focal area, we note the conclusion of the difficulty in directly quantifying GHG emission or avoidance of emissions. However in the case of Egypt it was estimated that through energy efficiency the GEF contributed to the cumulative reduction of 16.9 million tons of CO₂ equivalent. We are also pleased that improved capacity, public awareness and the enabling environment across focal areas was achieved, and that the GEF has influenced market transformations in the energy efficient sector.
4. While the evaluation concludes that the results in the other focal areas have been limited to setting up foundational capacity and enhancing national capacity, we confirm the appropriateness of these results for IW and POPS projects. We welcome the conclusion that GEF support is relevant to national environmental priorities and the conventions. These findings confirm the relevance of the GEF's mandate and contribution to achieving national environmental priorities.
5. Thus we find the comment regarding land degradation to be slightly contradictory. Underfunding is an issue that applies across the whole GEF portfolio, and we note that land degradation is not the only area where a higher resource level would help countries to better meet their environmental priorities.
5. bis We are committed to working with countries to increase country ownership across the GEF portfolio. The GEF funded Country Support Programme (CSP) is just one step to provide support to focal points. In addition, sub-regional workshops and constituency meetings are organized, where focal points receive updated information about the evolution of the GEF and its procedures from GEF Secretariat and Agency resource persons. Another important measure was noted by the Evaluation - the establishment of the GEF Unit and a National Steering Committee in Egypt. We will continue to work with countries to ensure familiarization with GEF processes and to foster learning and exchange.
6. We note the findings that improvements in the GEF project cycle and the overall impact of the Council-approved reforms have not yet percolated to the local level. As a concrete measure to narrow this gap, we support and are already acting on recommendation 2 to proactively engage with countries to arrive at more flexible country-based approaches.

7. The GEF Secretariat launched a new PMIS after undertaking a thorough clean-up of the database. However, reconciliation with the Trustee on project data is still underway, and the lack of a direct connection between Trustee and GEF Sec leads to continuing difficulties to Balance the budgets. Current efforts will ensure more reliable data in the PMIS, but it should be realized that the inconsistencies of data among PMIS, Agencies and focal points are multi-fold, including among other things: the timing of the data entry to the record, the definition of fund utilization and the unused remaining funds. The GEF Secretariat has provided definition of key financial terms to all Agencies, however full adoption of unified definitions is still in progress. We will continue to work with all stakeholders to ensure full consistency and use of key financial terms. We feel that these efforts will eliminate a major source of discrepancies in the data for all stakeholders.

8. The new GEF project cycle introduced a streamlining of the approval process, as well as shortening the project cycle. However, the achievement of the streamlining effort is takes time and requires the efforts of all parties involved. The multiplicity of rounds of project reviews stemmed from lack of clarity either from the project reviewer or from the respondent to the issues raised. While the project cycle provided the structural change for efficiency, its strategic and careful implementation should be strictly enforced in order to achieve the objectives of the streamlining efforts.