

REPORT

GEF-NGO CONSULTATION

November 19, 2003
Washington, DC

This is a summary of the discussions and NGO discussions during the GEF-NGO Consultation meeting, that took place on November 19, 2003, in Washington DC. .

The GEF-NGO Consultation meeting was chaired by Ismid Hadad, from KEHATI (Indonesia), representing the NGOs; and Dr. Bonizella Biagini, NGO Coordinator representing the GEF Secretariat.

Mr. Leonard Good, CEO and Chairman of the GEF, opened the meeting, pointing out that he has been in the GEF for four months, learning day by day. Mr. Good stressed that he has always been a supporter of public participation. He hopes for a productive and creative dialogue with NGOs. The Consultation gives a real opportunity to meet and see what happens with NGOs in the South.

On behalf of the NGOs, Yoko Watanabe¹, from World Wildlife Fund (US) made an intervention.

In his response, Len Good expressed his hope for a productive collaboration with NGOs. On the complexity of the project cycle, efforts are being done and the issue is being addressed. The enhancement of the Council's role is also examined, as the Council can play a much more crucial role on strategic issues. For example, as for the National Communications, discussions are underway to have only UNDP taking decisions;

Regarding the Small Grants Programme (SGP), Mr. Good stressed that we are all big supporter of the programme. Smaller projects are more flexible, more visible and very significant. We will see how to increase the 64 participating countries, to some 10 more a year.

On the Country Dialogue Workshops (CDW), Mr. Good said he did not had the chance to participate of any yet. But Hutton Archer returned from one in Eritrea and found valuable what the country had to say. The next series of workshops will be sub-regional dialogues, and after that national again. Mr. Good believes that there should be more dialogue with NGOs regarding public participation.

¹ See Compilation of NGO interventions

As for capacity building, the GEF recognized the importance, and the activities under this area are being extended. The proposal is presented in a document to this Council meeting.

Randy Curtis, from The Nature Conservancy (US), made an intervention regarding protected areas (PA) and the last SBSTTA-9 meeting in Montreal during which a forward looking Program of Work for establishing a global network of PA by 2010 was endorsed for approval at the COP-7 meeting in February 2004. He mentioned the of developing countries with regard to lacking resources and capacity to meet such aggressive and time-bound targets, and to achieve the 2010 Biodiversity goal stated at the WSSD Plan of Implementation. In response, a number of international NGOs have made a pledge to support developing countries in meeting that goal and invite GEF to take a lead role in convening NGOs and donors to mobilize resources in support of a strong Program of Work for PA.

Mr. Good responded that he welcomed close cooperation with NGOs on this matter and was open to meet with them. He also stated that in the long run, protected areas have to take account of the needs in the area. It has been noted that the approach towards protected areas has changed to emphasize more participation. He also stressed that it will be good for the GEF to work in these kind of partnerships. He then asked Southern NGOs how they saw this issue: if the target was only the protected areas or if these partnerships should also include people.

Faizal Parish, from the Global Environment Centre (Malaysia) said that local people are better prepared to deal with protected areas.

Wouter Veening, from the Netherlands Committee of IUCN (The Netherlands), raised the issue of OP12, pointing that in the Business Plan the ceiling for funding this operational program will significantly decrease in the next years.

Me. Good said that he believes that OP12 is really important, but has not received too much importance. When local people see that there is income generation, then they get involved very easily. OPS12 can be used for the conservation. OP12 is about ecosystems and recognizes the fact that all of the conventions have to go together.

Faizal Parish raised the issue of the synergies among the Conventions, as there are some problems at the national level. He expressed the concern that the allocation of funding for OP12 has dropped so dramatically.

Mr. Good said that in the coming months, he wants to explore on more this issue, as well as the issue on adaptation.

Joith Singh, from the Caribbean Conservation Association (Barbados), raised the issue of the GEF-NGO Network., stressing its true value in disseminating information. The CDW do not have follow-up, and the Network could add more value. Also, the Network is under financed as it works on voluntary basis. Is it conflictive for the GEF to support the Network?

In his response, Mr. Good said that there is a problem on how the GEF is understood in developed and developing countries. The IAs have information, but the GEF does not have specific information on NGOs, the private sector, governments, etc. We will have to see how we can improve. Regarding the funding for the Network, Mr. Good said that there is a need to look at that, and committed to look into the budget in detail to see how the GEF can increase its support for the Network.

Andras Krolopp, from the Central and East European Working Group for the Enhancement of Biodiversity (Hungary), asked for clarification on the situation of 10 countries entering the EU in May 2004. Will these countries be considered by the GEF as recipient or donors?

Mr. Good said that the principle is that projects that will start while the countries are eligible shall not stop, otherwise it is a waste of money. The GEF is preparing a paper on eligibility and this issue is included.

Mr. Frank Pinto, in charge of the UNDP-GEF Unit, said that UNDP's criteria on this matter is extended eligibility until December 2005, and for some countries until December 2004.

Ismid Hadad asked about the role of the GEF with regard to the Millennium Development Goals, specially on Goal 7 and 8.

In his response, Mr. Good said that the GEF cannot be as responsive as people want us to be. It is a complex issue, but we can work together.

In his closing remarks, Mr. Good stressed the need to work together with NGOs, on projects, policies, communications, among other issues.

The next item on the agenda was the **GEF Business Plan 05-07**. Ramesh Ramankutty made an introduction explaining the four issues included in this Business Plan:

- How to strengthen country coordination
- Institutional efficiency
- Adaptation –new strategic priority, starting in FY05
- Capacity building

Yoko Watanabe made the intervention on behalf of the NGOs.²

In his response, Ramesh Ramankutty said that regarding allocations for OP12, the GEF has 3 billion dollars for all the focal areas. We can only program resources with what we have. This is different from GEF-2. We will have to wait until the next replenishment in 2007 to re-allocate resources again for OP12, and that is why for FY05 there is no allocation.

Faizal Parish requested some background to understand the paper presented, and more explanations to see what will happen with OP12.

² See Compilation of NGO interventions

Ramesh Ramankutty said that the GEF can allocate resources within the focal areas, as they have flexibility. But in the short term, we cannot give indications on how this is going to happen, as resources have to be programmed.

Wouter Veeing asked about the possibility that the GEF help in presenting or suggesting good OP12 projects to other donors.

Ramesh Ramankutty agreed, saying that the GEF could also support those projects, by presenting them to the Council to decide if those projects can be funded, although the allocation for the OP12 has no more resources.

Yoko Watanabe requested clarifications on the funding trends with projects that are in the pre-pipeline.

Rohit Khanna, from the World Bank-GEF Unit, said that they have estimates, but can not give the information to the public on those projects under negotiation.

Frank Pinto said that UNDP does the same, as they work with projects proponents, discussing the projects, the levels of co-financing, etc.

Faizal Parish said that it would be good to discuss some mechanism to know what projects are in the pre-pipeline to avoid duplications.

Ramesh Ramankutty agreed.

The next item on the agenda was the **Strategic Approach to Enhance Capacity Building**. Avani Vaish introduced the issue, pointing out that the proposed document builds on the Capacity Development Initiative (CDI). The focus is on the synergy between conventions as UNDP is conducting NCSAs.

Joth Singh and Khadija Razavi made the intervention on behalf of the NGOs.³

In his response, Mr. Vaish said the lessons learnt should indeed be a component of the document. Also NGOs capacity building is taken into account but could be expanded. He also mentioned that they are aware of the issue of country-ownership. Regarding the NCSAs, he said that these assessments are a good starting point, but the projects could be based in the long term in other strategies or assessments.

Rajen Awotar, from Maudesco (Mauritius), said that the paper is only targeted to capacity for governments.

Avani Vaish said that Paragraph 36 C of the document addresses the specific needs of groups, including NGOs.

Faizal Parish commented on the need for technical support mechanism.

³ See Compilation of NGO interventions

Mr. Vaish agreed, saying that such a mechanism should be developed, and that it should be done in the short-term.

The issue of **Performance Based Framework for Allocating of GEF Resources** followed, lead by Ramesh Ramankutty. He explained that this issue comes from the negotiations from the last replenishment. The GEF formed a Technical Group in July 2003, which held two meetings, which result is the paper presented to Council. There are two pillars to the proposal: (a) the country potential; and (b) the country performance, which includes the portfolio performance, governance and the environmental laws and institutions.

NGO interventions were presented by Konrad von Ritter⁴, from The Nature Conservancy (US).

Ramesh Ramankutty responded that it is only the Council that takes the decisions. As for preliminary comments, there are 3 groups:

- one that wants to continue with the current system
- one that says that the system could be improved, and
- one group that wants the ex-ante system.

In a sense, IAs have already started implementing this principle. Each one of the institutions has its sets of indicators. Not all can be used for GEF. The paper is only a starting point, and we have to continue working to redefine it. We continue to think what can be used.

The next agenda item was **Country Dialogue Workshops**, presented by Funke Oyewole and Stephen Gold. They explained that the communication for the CDW evaluation were developed through:

- questionnaires to focal points and Council members
- newsletters and
- web site.

The status of the CDW is: 106 requests have been received; and 45 country dialogue workshops (CDW) were conducted. The participants were Governments (53%), Academic, Private sector, NGOs (15%), donors, media.

Concerns related to participation and follow up. The CDWs should not be perceived as a one-time activity otherwise the results would not be used effectively.

There is a need to come up with concrete actions for follow up and hopefully some proposals will be presented during the May 04 meeting.

Two web pages to visit: www.undp.org/gef/workshops/index.htm
www.undp.org/gef/dialogue/index.htm

The new Country Dialogue Initiative will emphasize on the synergy among Conventions.

⁴ See Compilation of NGO interventions

Rachid Bessaoud made an intervention on behalf of the NGOs.⁵

Mr. Delfin Ganapin, Global Manager of the Small Grants Programme (SGP) introduced the following agenda item –**Strategic directions of the Small Grants Programme.**

The SGP objective is to protect global environment and generate local benefits. There are currently 64 countries participating of the SGP, and 10 more are expected to join the Programme this year. Priority is given to sustainable use of environmental resources and livelihoods. 65% of the funds are spent on biodiversity projects, 20% on climate change and 6% on international waters. Many projects are conducted in partnership. In many countries, SGP has become the permanent face of GEF. The National Steering Committees have a majority of NGOs as a requirement.

Five strategic directions have been established for the programme:

1. programmatic and geographic expansion;
2. enhanced management and operational structure;
3. enhanced opportunities for linkages;
4. effective knowledge management; and
5. maximize SGP's programmatic impact.

NGO comments were directed to further clarifications on the plans to: expand the SGP; and change the situation on some countries where NGOs were not the majority in the National Steering Committees.

In his response, Mr. Ganapin mentioned that the recommendation of the evaluation to increase the ceiling of the SGP to \$150,000 will be done in certain cases. As for geographic expansion of the Programme, priority will be given to the Pacific and Eastern African islands regions: 5 new countries will be from SIDS. He also said that before entering the Programme, an appraisal mission visits the country, to see what NGOs will be on the National Steering Committees, so that the NGOs select the projects.

A presentation on the **Operational Programme on Land Degradation** followed. Rajen Awotar presented the results of the consultation held with Kenyan NGOs.

The response by the GEF Secretariat was that OP15 has become a window at GEF thanks to the support of the NGO community. Now the question is how to popularise it. The first action done after approval is the development of an MSP by UNEP to popularise OP15 and help NGOs draft eligible projects. 12 projects are in the pipeline.

Indicators are being developed and difficult issues such as incremental cost are being addressed. Incremental cost in LD is difficult to define and the example of OP12 is being used. The National Action Plans will be supported as part of capacity building within the LD programme.

⁵ See Compilation of NGO interventions

The recommendations of the Kenya consultation will be taken into account when developing guidelines and workshops.

The case study of the **Project San Lorenzo** was presented by Charlotte Elton, from CEASPA (Panama)⁶.

The next agenda item was the **Participation of GEF in work of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD)**.

Rajen Awotar and Hubertus Samargun presented the NGO comments.⁷

Mrs. Song Li, from the GEF Secretariat, stressed that the GEF will expand outreach activities in CSD-12, through workshops and booths. In 2005, consultations will be organized in preparation to CSD-13, as it will be a policy year for the CSD.

The **Status of Local Benefit Study** was the item presented, by Mr. David Todd, of the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit of the GEF Secretariat.

There are three phases identified for this study. The first phase is the desk review of more than 125 GEF projects, plus the review of donors and NGOs experiences of local benefits. The second phase is a review of 30 projects through field-based studies in 12 countries. And the third phase will be of analysis of 150 projects.

Local consultants were hired to develop the country analysis. The Study involves the M&E Unit, the IAAs, and three donors, as well as an Advisory Group and governments.

The study is on schedule so far, and the final report will be available by the end of 2004.

The **Action Plan To Respond to Recommendations for Improving GEF's Performance** followed in the discussions. Specific NGO concerns were focused on the communication strategy presented in the paper.

Mr. Hutton Archer, External Relations officer from the GEF Secretariat, explained that a communications and outreach strategy is being developed in two stages:

1. Electronic outreach: a consultant firm has been hired to see how to improve the webpage, to reach all interested parties.
2. Other consultants were contacted to see what kind of material is most needed.

This exercise will be developed between December 03 and March 04. By the end of March 04, the GEF Secretariat will have the document and proposal ready to be included in the Business Plan to be presented to Council in May 2004.

The next item discussed was the **Terms of Reference and Budget for the Third Study of GEF's Overall Performance (OPS 3)**.

⁶ See Compilation of NGO interventions

⁷ See Compilation of NGO interventions

On behalf of the NGOs, Jesus Cisneros made an intervention.⁸

In his response, Mr. Jarle Harstad, Coordinator of the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit at the GEF Secretariat, said the OPS3 has the same framework than the OPS2. Therefore, five sub-regional workshops are planned, as well as country visits. There will also be special studies on biodiversity, climate change, POPs, and the other focal areas.

The proposal of the document is based on 2 approaches for implementation, favoring that the Council trusts the M&E Unit to conduct the OPS3.

As for the local consultants vs. international consultants, Mr. Harstad explained that a lot of the work will be done by desk reviews in Washington.

The final item of the GEF-NGO Consultation, was the case study presentation of the **Sundarban Project**, by Floris Deodatus an example of the failure of a project funded by ADB / GEF in Bangladesh.

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⁸ See Compilation of NGO interventions