



46TH GEF COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS:

MONDAY, 26 MAY 2014

On Monday morning, participants convened in plenary to consider the Work Program, report of the Chairperson of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel, the Work Program and budget of the GEF Independent Evaluation office and the report of the second professional peer review of the GEF evaluation function and management response. In the afternoon, participants addressed the GEF business plan and FY15 corporate budget, the GEF Small Grants Programme's: implementation arrangements for GEF-6, relations with the conventions and other international institutions and an update on the Nagoya Protocol Implementation Fund.



Participants at the 46th meeting of the GEF Council

WORK PROGRAM

Gustavo Fonseca and Robert Dixon, GEF Secretariat, introduced the agenda item (GEF/C.46/06), *Work Program*,



Gustavo Fonseca, GEF Secretariat

noting the program includes the last set of full-sized project concepts and a programmatic approach bringing to a conclusion the work of GEF-5.

Several Council members indicated they would provide technical comments on specific projects. Others noted the importance for governments, in particular economic ministries, to be involved early in the project review cycle and called for GEF to achieve higher visibility in relation to projects. An upper middle-income Council member noted its increased GEF contribution and called for stronger engagement with financial markets.

Ishii welcomed the comments and noted all partners should work to increase GEF's visibility. The Council adopted the draft decision subject to minor amendments to reflect the discussion.

REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL ADVISORY PANEL

Rosina Bierbaum, Chair, Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP), introduced the agenda item (GEF/STAP/C.46/Inf.01), *Report of the Chairperson of the Scientific and Advisory Panel*. She highlighted the STAP's recent work, including several publications, and outlined STAP's forward agenda. She noted STAP would focus on: improving knowledge flows to and from the STAP; enhancing scientific contributions to the GEF's work,



Rosina Bierbaum, Chair, STAP

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Mohamed Yahya Lafdal (left), Mauritania



Francisco Gaetani, Brazil

including the social sciences' analysis of relevant sustainable development issues; and prioritizing where STAP's efforts should be targeted, given workloads are increasing. She also suggested STAP can assist GEF with implementing its 2020 strategic direction, including integrated approaches and enhancing climate resilience, and offered to work with the Secretariat to establish criteria for future STAP work agendas.

In the ensuing discussion, Council members welcomed the prospect of STAP contributing to GEF's strategic direction and particularly its potential involvement in integrated approach programs. Some members said GEF should take a cautious approach to streamlining project assessment work, noting the very diverse nature of GEF projects would make that difficult. Other members suggested more resources be provided for STAP to enable it to manage an increasing workload. Some members welcomed STAP potentially working on sustainable development dimensions but others warned that GEF's focus on environmental issues needed to remain paramount.

Bierbaum responded to comments, including by noting that environment was central to their proposed work on sustainable development.

Ishii undertook to retain the critical connection between the GEF's work and scientific analysis. She committed the Secretariat to coordinating closely with STAP and the Council on how STAP could most effectively prioritize its work program.

WORK PROGRAM AND BUDGET OF THE GEF INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OFFICE (IEO)

Van den Berg introduced the item (GEF/ME/C.46/01/Rev.01), *Work Program and Budget of the GEF Independent Evaluation Office (IEO)*. He highlighted required activities, including the need to: appoint a new director for the 2015 fiscal year; update monitoring and evaluation policies for the GEF-6 period; prepare a four-year work program and budget for GEF-6; and arrange a follow up to the overall performance study (OPS5).

He explained that initially the OPS focused on operational and performance issues but had evolved into comprehensive evaluations that range from impact evidence to performance and organizational issues. He outlined a proposal to continue numbering the OPS but change the name. From the OPS5 the GEF would proceed to the Sixth Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF (CEG6). He said lower costs for OPS5 had been realized by integrating evidence from regular evaluations into OPS5.

One Council member expressed appreciation for van den Berg's work. Another Council member proposed suspending approval of the budget until discussion on the following peer review had been concluded.

REPORT OF THE SECOND PROFESSIONAL PEER REVIEW OF THE GEF EVALUATION FUNCTION AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

Mary Chinery-Hesse, Ghana, presented the item (GEF/ME/C.46/06), *Second GEF Evaluation Office Peer Review*, observing that the IEO had performed very well over the past ten years. She identified several areas requiring attention, including the need for the IEO to bring the learning dimension of evaluations up to par with the accountability dimension. She said the GEF Secretariat and GEF Agencies had benefited less in terms of learning and pointed out that there is still work to be done to enhance evaluation's utility.

Chinery-Hesse identified stakeholder engagement as an area of weakness. She highlighted the need to align IEO activities to the needs and priorities of stakeholders. Going forward, she underscored "relevance" and "timeliness" as key words for the future and recommended that the IEO engage more meaningfully with the GEF Secretariat and GEF agencies to ensure final products are timely and owned by the GEF network. She said the GEF council should hold more strategic discussions on the IEO work program.

Van den Berg presented *The Management Response to the Report of the Second Professional Peer Review of the GEF Evaluation Function*, thanking the IEO team for their work. He acknowledged that the issue of utility was difficult to address but



Mary Chinery-Hesse, Ghana



Godwin Fishani Gondwe, Zambia



L-R: Jozef Buys, Belgium, in consultations with William Ehlers, GEF Secretariat

partners had been successfully engaged with learning coalitions and looked forward to working with the GEF Secretariat on country portfolio studies.

In the ensuing discussion, one Council member called for developing IT solutions to enhance the evaluation of annual performance reports in order to reduce time pressures. On closing the learning loop, another Council member noted that evaluations are only valuable if the lessons are absorbed by the institution. Another Council member added that the GEF Council and the GEF Secretariat should be engaged in priority-setting noting that the GEF Secretariat tended to view evaluations as something that “had to be done” and not something that they wanted to do. The GEF Council adopted decisions on the work program and budget for the GEF IEO and the peer review of the GEF evaluation function.

GEF BUSINESS PLAN AND FY15 CORPORATE BUDGET

Peter Lallas, GEF Secretariat, introduced the item (GEF/C.46/08/Rev.01), *GEF Business Plan and FY15 Corporate Budget*. He provided an overview of budget allocation for the fiscal year of 2015 (FY15), the first year of the GEF sixth replenishment (GEF-6) period corresponding to July 2014 – June 2018.

During the discussion, several Council members expressed satisfaction with the future work plan and welcomed the increased funds for STAP. Some requested clarification on the



Peter Lallas, GEF Secretariat

intended use of increased resources at the Secretariat, while others inquired about the functioning of integrated approaches under GEF-6. Peter Lallas responded that new resources will be used mainly for staff capacity-building, recruitments, and for improving knowledge management and communication activities.

The GEF Secretariat, noted that decisions on integrated approaches will be brought to the Council for future deliberation. Council members adopted the decision on the GEF Business Plan and FY15 Corporate Budget, which takes note of the business plan and approves a FY15 corporate budget from the GEF Trust Fund of \$24.668 million. In addition, the Council approved a total FY15 administrative budget for the Nagoya Protocol Implementation Fund (NPIF) of \$49,600.

GEF SMALL GRANTS PROGRAMME: IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS FOR GEF-6

William Ehlers, GEF Secretariat, introduced the item (GEF/C.46/13) *Implementation Arrangements for GEF-6, Small Grants Programme (SGP)*. He noted that, for GEF-6, SGP country programmes will be able to select from a set of four multi-focal strategic initiatives, including: Community Landscape and Seascape Conservation, Climate Smart Innovative Agro-ecology, Low Carbon Energy Access Co-benefits and Local to Global Chemical Management Coalitions.

During discussions, many Council members expressed satisfaction with the results of SGP, notably in the improvement of livelihoods. Another highlighted the importance of SGPs



Anton Hilber, Switzerland



L-R: Gustavo Fonseca, GEF Secretariat; Robert Dixon, GEF Secretariat; Co-Chair Juha Pyykkö, Finland; Naoko Ishii, GEF CEO and Chairperson; and William Ehlers, GEF Secretariat

in post-conflict countries, while cautioning against the risks of mandatory co-financing rates in vulnerable countries. A Council member requested more information on how SGPs could be further channelled to LDCs and SIDS. Noting some cases of “unhealthy competition” for resources during GEF-5, the Secretariat highlighted that countries that have up to \$15 million have no obligation to designate SGPs allocation and it is the better resourced countries under the STAR that will contribute to the SGPs. CSO-Network acknowledged the effectiveness of the SGP in building CSO capacity, but raised concerns about a potential paradox between the GEF2020 strategic goals regarding CSOs the reduced resources for this purpose compared to GEF-5. The Council adopted document (GEF/C.46/13) GEF Small Grants Programme: Implementation Arrangements for GEF-6, which approves the proposed implementation arrangements for country programs of the Small Grants Programme.

RELATIONS WITH THE CONVENTIONS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

On (GEF/C.46/03), *Relations with the Conventions and Other International Institutions*, Kerstin Stendahl, Executive Secretary, *ad interim* of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, emphasized that cooperation and coordination among the relevant Conventions and the GEF is vital for efficiently addressing the growing complexity of sustainable development issues.

One Council member requested further information on the status of the Stockholm and Minamata Conventions with respect to the Joint Development Plan. Another Council member suggested that future reports on this issue could focus, for example, on how GEF is planning to coordinate activities with each of the relevant Conventions in the future, as well as on key GEF-related issues during the Conference of the Parties (COPs). Some members noted the importance of “being in tune with the future,” raising concerns over the relationship between the GEF and the recently created UNFCCC Green Climate



Kerstin Stendahl, Executive Secretary, *ad interim* of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions

Fund with respect to the changing spectrum of climate finance. Ishii acknowledged growing competition on climate finance and underscored that the GEF2020 tries to foster complementarities among global sustainable development mechanisms. The Council adopted the decision, which welcomes the Secretariat’s report and requests the GEF network to continue supporting recipient countries to implement the guidance and national priorities in their GEF programming and activities.

UPDATE ON THE NAGOYA PROTOCOL IMPLEMENTATION FUND

Gustavo Fonseca, GEF Secretariat, introduced the item (GEF/C.46/12), *Update on the Nagoya Protocol Implementation Fund (NPIF)*. He explained that the NPIF was established to promote the early entry into force and effective implementation of the Nagoya Protocol. He said no new activities under the NPIF would be approved beyond 30 June 2014, as such activities would be funded by the GEF Trust Fund under GEF-6.

One Council member supported by others, noted that the decision was loosely drafted and ventured beyond what was required. She proposed alternative language taking note of good progress made by the GEF Secretariat in managing the NPIF and deciding that currently funded NPIF activities should be able to continue while funding lasted but no later than December 31, 2020. The Council agreed to this proposed approach.



The Exhibition, a collection of profiles of current GEF projects, is giving participating countries, agencies, NGOs and the private sector an opportunity to highlight successful cases, projects and programs.