

**Global Environment Facility**

**Focal Point Handbook**  
**An Introduction to the GEF**



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## **Acknowledgements**

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## **Feedback and suggestions**

The handbook is a living document and will be regularly revised and updated according to Focal Point needs and requests. Your comments and suggestions are welcome for future editions. Please send feedback to: [focalpoints@theGEF.org](mailto:focalpoints@theGEF.org).

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## **Foreword by CEO and Chairperson**

The roles and responsibilities of GEF National Focal Points have evolved considerably in recent years as GEF activities have been increasingly incorporated in longer-term strategic programming approaches. Accurate, timely information and a clear understanding of processes and procedures are essential now, more than ever.

I am pleased to provide you with this GEF Focal Point Handbook, which is one of a series of tools and methodologies being developed by the GEF Country Support Program that are specifically designed to respond to the information needs of Focal Points. The Handbook contains basic information that Focal Points will find useful in carrying out their GEF responsibilities, and also provides overviews of GEF policies and processes. By using a modular approach, the Handbook allows readers to access material in summary form, as well as to seek more detailed knowledge online through hyperlinks. I sincerely hope that the Handbook will enhance and strengthen country participation and involvement in the GEF.

As is the case with any Handbook, this is a “living document” and it will be updated from time to time to ensure that all new GEF policies and processes are readily accessible to Focal Points. I invite you to go through the contents, evaluate it in light of your own experiences, and provide us with your valuable feedback so that we can improve future editions.

It is intended that GEF National Focal Points and, ultimately, the entire spectrum of GEF stakeholders will benefit from the material contained in this Handbook, and thereby strengthen our collective efforts to protect the global environment.

Monique Barbut  
CEO and Chairperson  
Global Environment Facility

## Acronyms and abbreviations

This list includes acronyms and abbreviations used in this handbook, as well as many others that Focal Points may encounter in the course of their work.

ADB.....	Asian Development Bank
ABS.....	Access and Benefit Sharing
AfDB.....	African Development Bank
AOSIS.....	Alliance of Small Island States
APR.....	Annual Performance Review
AU.....	African Union [formerly Organization of African Unity (OAU)]
BPS.....	Biodiversity Program Study
CAS.....	Country Assistance Strategy (World Bank)
CBD.....	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBO.....	Community-Based Organization
CCA.....	Common Country Assessment
CCPS.....	Climate Change Program Study
CCS.....	Climate Change Supplement
CDM.....	Clean Development Mechanism
CDW.....	Country Dialogue Workshop
CEIT.....	Countries with economies in transition
CEO.....	Chief Executive Officer
CFC.....	Chlorofluorocarbon
CIS.....	Commonwealth of Independent States
CITES.....	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora
CO <sub>2</sub> .....	Carbon dioxide
COP.....	Conference of the Parties
CPAP.....	Country Programme Action Plan (UNDP)
CSD.....	Commission on Sustainable Development (also known as the Brundtland Commission)
CSP.....	Country Support Program
CTE.....	Committee on Trade and Environment (of the World Trade Organization)
EA.....	Executing Agency
EBRD.....	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EIA.....	Environmental Impact Assessment
EC.....	European Community
ECE.....	Economic Commission for Europe (UN)
ECLAC.....	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UN)
ENGO.....	Environmental non-governmental organization
EU.....	European Union
FAO.....	Food and Agriculture Organization (UN)
FCCC.....	Framework Convention on Climate Change (usually written UNFCCC)
FSP.....	Full-size project
G-7.....	Group of Seven
G-77.....	Group of Seventy-seven
GATT.....	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GDP.....	Gross domestic product
GEF.....	Global Environment Facility
GEFOP.....	GEF Operations Committee
GEFM&E.....	GEF Monitoring & Evaluation Unit (now GEF Evaluation Office)
GEFSEC.....	The GEF Secretariat
GET.....	Global Environment Trust Fund
GHG.....	Greenhouse gas
GIS.....	Geographical Information System
GNP.....	Gross National Product
HCFC.....	Hydrochlorofluorocarbon

HFC.....Hydrofluorocarbon  
 IA.....Implementing Agency  
 IBRD .....International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank)  
 IADB.....Inter-American Development Bank  
 IEA .....International Energy Agency  
 IFC.....International Finance Corporation  
 IFAD.....International Fund for Agricultural Development  
 IMF.....International Monetary Fund  
 IMO .....International Maritime Organization (UN)  
 IPCC .....Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change  
 IUCN .....World Conservation Union [formerly International Union for the Conservation of Nature and  
                   Natural Resources]  
 IW:LEARN.....International Waters Learning Exchange and Resource Network  
 IWPS.....International Waters Program Study  
 IWTF.....International Waters Task Force (GEF)  
 JI.....Joint Implementation  
 KM.....Knowledge management  
 KRA.....Key Results Area (IUCN)  
 LDC.....Least developed country  
 LME.....Large marine ecosystem  
 M&E.....Monitoring and evaluation  
 MARPOL .....International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships  
 MDB.....Multilateral development bank  
 MEA.....Millennium Ecosystem Assessment  
                   .....Multilateral Environmental Agreement  
 MIS.....Management Information System  
 MLF.....Multilateral Fund [also called The Montreal Protocol MLF]  
 MOP.....Meeting of the Parties  
 MOU.....Memorandum of Understanding  
 MSP.....Medium-sized project  
 MT.....Metric ton(s)  
 NAI.....Non-Annex I (countries)  
 NAP.....National Action Programme  
 NAPA.....National Adaptation Programme of Action  
 NC.....National Communication  
 NCS .....National Conservation Strategy  
 NCSA.....National Capacity Self-Assessment  
 NDI.....National Dialogue Initiative  
 NEMP.....National Environment Management Plan  
 NEP .....National Environment Programme  
 NFAP.....National Forestry Action Plan  
 NGO .....Non-Governmental Organization  
 NIP.....National Implementation Plan (under POPs)  
 NSDS.....National Sustainable Development Strategy  
 OAS .....Organization of American States  
 OAU .....Organization of African Unity [now African Union (AU)]  
 ODA .....Official development assistance  
 ODP.....Ozone-depleting potential  
 ODS .....Ozone-depleting substance(s)  
 OECD .....Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development  
 OME.....Office of Monitoring and Evaluation (GEF), now GEF Evaluation Office  
 OP.....Operational Program  
 OPEC.....Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries  
 OPS.....Overall Performance Study (GEF) [e.g. OPS-1, OPS-2]  
 OS .....Operational Strategy  
 PACD .....Plan of Action to Combat Desertification

PDF.....Project Development Facility  
 PIC.....Prior informed consent  
 PIR.....Project Implementation Review  
 PMIS.....Project Management Information System  
 POPs.....Persistent organic pollutants  
 PPP.....Polluter Pays Principle  
 PPR.....Project Performance Report  
 PRSP.....Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper  
 PV.....Photovoltaic(s)  
 R&D.....Research and development  
 RAF.....Resource Allocation Framework  
 SAP.....Strategic Action Programme  
 SCCF.....Special Climate Change Fund  
 SGP.....Small Grants Programme  
 SIDS.....Small Island Developing States  
 SP.....Strategic Priority  
 STAP.....Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel  
 TDA.....Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis  
 TEAP.....Technology and Economic Assessment Panel  
 TER.....Terminal Evaluation Review  
 TFAP.....Tropical Forestry Action Programme  
 TORs.....Terms of Reference  
 UN.....United Nations  
 UNAIDS.....The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS  
 UNCCD.....United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification  
 UNCED.....United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio Summit)  
 UNCLOS.....United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea  
 UNDAF.....United Nations Development Assistance Framework  
 UNDP.....United Nations Development Programme  
 UNEP.....United Nations Environment Programme  
 UNESCO.....United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization  
 UNFCCC.....United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change  
 UNFPA.....United Nations Population Fund (formerly United Nations Fund for Population Activities)  
 UNGA.....United Nations General Assembly  
 UNICEF.....United Nations Children’s Fund (formerly United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund)  
 UNIDO.....United Nations Industrial Development Organization  
 UNSO.....United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office (UNDP)  
 UPP.....User Pays Principle  
 WB.....World Bank  
 WCED.....World Commission on Environment and Development  
 WCMC.....World Conservation Monitoring Centre  
 WCS.....World Conservation Strategy  
 WHO.....World Health Organization  
 WMO.....World Meteorological Organization (UN)  
 WTO.....World Trade Organization

## Introduction

This handbook has been developed in response to national [GEF Focal Point](#) requests for readily accessible guidance. The information and material in this handbook are provided as both a reference and a guide for GEF Focal Points. The handbook may also be useful for [GEF Council Members](#), [GEF NGO Regional Focal Points](#), Convention Focal Points and [GEF Secretariat](#) and [Implementing Agency](#) (IA) and [Executing Agency](#) (EA) staff members.

The handbook provides information on Focal Point roles and responsibilities as well as on the strategic coordination and integration processes that Focal Points facilitate at country level. This material is presented in as clear and accessible manner as possible so that users can retrieve information easily. The handbook is a living document and will be regularly revised and updated according to Focal Point needs and requests.

### Organization of the handbook

This handbook is organized in chapters on the following broad topics:

- The Global Environment Facility
- GEF structure and governance
- GEF constituency coordination
- GEF Focal Points
- GEF country coordination
- Sources of support for Focal Points

### Availability of the handbook

This handbook is primarily an online tool that will be available through the GEF [Country Support Program](#) (CSP) knowledge management framework website (to be operational in January 2007), but it is also available in print and will be translated into French and Spanish. The handbook will be regularly updated online, and the print version may be kept current by inserting updated pages obtained from the website. In addition to the concise information in the handbook itself, more detailed and in-depth information is available through the CSP knowledge management framework and via the [hyperlinks indicated in blue letters](#) in the electronic version which turn into [plum underlined](#) when clicked.

### Feedback and suggestions

This handbook remains a work in progress and your comments and suggestions are welcome for future editions. Please send feedback to: [focalpoints@theGEF.org](mailto:focalpoints@theGEF.org).

## The Global Environment Facility (GEF)

### The purpose of the GEF

The GEF was created in 1991 to promote global environmental protection and sustainable development by providing funding to developing countries and economies in transition to address global environmental problems. The GEF works with countries to produce global environmental benefits in a manner that is country-driven and based on national priorities for sustainable development.

The GEF is a designated financial mechanism for a number of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) or conventions; as such the GEF assists countries in meeting their obligations under the conventions that they have signed and ratified. These conventions and MEAs provide guidance to the governing bodies of the GEF—the GEF Council and the GEF Assembly.

- [Convention on Biological Diversity \(CBD\)](#)
- [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change \(UNFCCC\)](#)
- [Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants \(POPs\)](#)
- [UN Convention to Combat Desertification \(UNCCD\)](#)

The GEF is also associated with many global and regional MEAs that deal with [international waters or transboundary water systems](#). The GEF is not a financial mechanism for the [Montreal Protocol on Ozone-Depleting Substances](#); however, its activities complement and enhance the work of the Montreal Protocol.

### GEF focal areas for project funding

The GEF provides project co-financing in six [focal areas](#) that correspond to the major global environmental challenges:

- [Biological Diversity](#)  
In the biodiversity focal area the strategic focus is on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, particularly in protected area systems and production landscapes and seascapes; capacity building for the implementation of the CBD [Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety](#) (which deals with the safe handling, transfer, and use of genetically modified organisms); and producing and sharing good practices related to biodiversity conservation and management.
- [Climate Change](#)  
In the climate change focal area projects assist countries to mitigate climate change by reducing or avoiding greenhouse gas emissions through renewable energy, energy efficiency, and sustainable transport, and to adapt to climate change by increasing the resilience of vulnerable communities, sectors, and countries.

*If you would like to know more . . .*

*[Biosafety and the Environment: An introduction to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety](#) (also available in French and Spanish)*

- [International Waters](#)  
In the international waters focal area the emphasis is on bringing together multiple countries to develop and implement joint programmes for the sustainable management and protection of transboundary water systems, and to deal with transboundary water issues such as pollution, shrinking groundwater supplies, unsustainable exploitation of fisheries and marine ecosystems, invasive species, and competing uses of aquatic resources. International waters projects tend to involve both more than one country as well as multiple sectors.
- [Ozone-Layer Depletion](#)  
In the ozone-layer depletion focal area the objective is specifically to enable the Russian Federation and countries in transition in eastern Europe and central Asia to phase out their use of ozone-destroying chemicals.
- [Land Degradation](#)  
In the land degradation focal area projects aim to integrate sustainable land management into national development priorities, promoting needed policy and regulatory reforms, strengthen capacities for integrated natural resources management at different levels, and implement innovative sustainable land management practices, with an emphasis on [Small Island Developing States](#) (SIDS) and [Least Developed Countries](#) (LDCs).
- [Persistent Organic Pollutants](#)  
In the POPs focal area support is provided to develop capacities and enabling environments in countries for the implementation of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants and towards the eventual elimination of the production and use of POPs.

The six GEF focal areas are explained in greater detail on the [GEF website](#). The focal areas are organized in [operational programs](#) and [strategic priorities](#) through which funding is channeled.

Since its inception fifteen years ago, the GEF has funded over \$6 billion in grants to some 1,800 projects in 155 developing countries and transition economies. The biodiversity and climate change focal areas have together commanded nearly 70% of GEF funding.

### **Global benefits and local benefits**

The global and inter-connected nature of the environmental issues of concern to the GEF means that they cannot be adequately treated in an isolated and piecemeal manner by countries and committed and coordinated responses by the international community are required. The GEF aims to produce global benefits, defined as directly or indirectly contributing to mitigating climate change, conserving biodiversity, protecting international waters, preventing ozone depletion, eliminating persistent organic pollutants, or preventing land degradation. Therefore, the GEF funds the agreed additional or [incremental costs](#) of projects that produce global benefits in the six focal areas. Local or national benefits should be covered by countries or other donors. The GEF is, strictly speaking, a co-funder of projects.

Yet local benefits are often essential for producing and sustaining global benefits. In a recent [GEF Evaluation Office study](#), local benefits are defined as direct or indirect contributions to the sustainable livelihoods of communities and to the integrity of ecosystems within or adjacent to project areas. The study noted that as activities involving biodiversity production landscapes, land degradation, and adaptation to climate change become major components of the GEF portfolio, the connections between local and global dimensions will become increasingly important.

### GEF project cycle

The most up-to-date information on the GEF project cycle is contained in a [paper](#) prepared for the November 2003 GEF Council. It is generally agreed that the GEF project cycle needs to be streamlined and shortened given that the average length of time to take a full-sized project from identification to approval is in excess of 33 months. The GEF project cycle is currently being jointly reviewed by the [GEF Evaluation Office](#) and the IA/EA evaluation offices with the objective of making it simpler and more effective.

### *Types of GEF projects*

GEF supports the pursuit of global benefits through a menu of [project options](#):

- [Full-Sized Projects](#) (FSPs) (over US \$1 million)  
Project concepts may be developed by governments, non-governmental organizations, communities, the private sector, or other civil society entities, but must respond to both national priorities and GEF criteria. Project proponents work closely with national GEF Focal Points (who formally endorse project concepts) and IAs/EAs to develop concepts and move through the project cycle. An average of three years has been required for a full-sized project to be prepared through approval by the GEF Council.
- [Medium-Sized Projects](#) (MSPs) (up to US \$1 million)  
MSPs are intended to follow expedited procedures and allow for more diverse participation by NGOs and other civil society organizations in project development and implementation. Project preparation grants of up to \$50,000 are available for developing MSPs. At least one year normally elapses between identification and approval by GEF CEO.
- [Enabling Activities](#)  
GEF grants of up to \$350,000 for the biodiversity and climate change focal areas, up to \$500,000 for persistent organic pollutants (POPs), and up to \$200,000 for land degradation, among others, to help countries prepare national inventories, strategies, action plans, and reports under these conventions. Enabling activities follow an expedited procedure, and an average of one year is needed to reach approval by GEF CEO.

Further reading on the GEF and global benefits: *Globalizing benefits* – Leif E. Christoffersen “examines the GEF’s mission, evaluates its success in achieving it, and suggest areas for improvement.”

Further reading on the GEF and local benefits: *The Role of Local Benefits in Global Environmental Programs (2006)*. The study found that in the sites of many GEF projects, local and global benefits are strongly connected, and recommended that: “Where local benefits are an essential means to achieve and sustain global benefits, the GEF portfolio should integrate them more strongly into its programming.”

- [Project Development Facility \(PDF\)](#)

Three types or “blocks” of preparatory funding are available to develop a GEF co-financed FSP:

- \* PDF Block A grants (up to \$25,000 for FSPs and \$50,000 for MSPs) support the early stages of project identification and are approved by the IAs.
- \* PDF Block B grants (up to \$350,000 for single country and up to \$700,000 for multi-country projects) support the information gathering activities and stakeholder consultations which are necessary to complete FSP proposals, and are approved by the GEF CEO.
- \* PDF Block C grants (up to \$1 million) provide additional financing for large, complex projects to complete technical design and feasibility work, and are approved by the GEF CEO, normally after the project proposal has been approved by the GEF Council.

[Templates and guidelines](#) for the preparation of GEF FSPs, MSPs, EAs, and PDFs are available on the GEF website, as well as a [table](#) that lays out the grant ceiling and approving authority for every project option.

### *Small Grants Programme*

The GEF [Small Grants Programme \(SGP\)](#) was launched in 1992 as a funding window designed specifically for NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs). SGP is implemented by UNDP on behalf of the three GEF implementing agencies (UNDP, UNEP, and World Bank), and executed by UNOPS. SGP is currently operational in 95 countries, through 81 country and four regional offices. SGP is managed by a National Coordinator (NC) and given strategic direction by a voluntary National Steering Committee (NSC) in each participating country. SGP supports activities undertaken by NGOs and CBOs that are congruent with national priorities and the GEF focal areas of biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation, international waters protection, prevention of land degradation, and elimination of persistent organic pollutants.

*If you would like to know more...*

The GEF SGP and the GEF NGO Network have recently produced a set of case studies of NGO and CBO projects supported by the GEF:

[\*The Reaffirmation of Thinking Globally, Acting Locally: Experiences from NGOs and CBOs implementing GEF projects\*](#)

Since its inception, SGP has confronted very real challenges in working with communities to reconcile global environmental priorities with local community needs and concerns—challenges that have been met in different ways across the globe depending on particular economic, cultural, political and environmental conditions. In the process, SGP has become “the people’s GEF.” To date, SGP has awarded over 7000 grants worldwide to civil society organizations, with a ceiling of \$50,000 per grant and averaging around \$20,000.

## *Development Marketplace*

The [Development Marketplace](#) (DM) is a competitive funding program, implemented by the World Bank, that will provide expedited GEF grant support for innovative, grassroots projects under a new partnership. Since its inception in 1998, DM has awarded about US\$35 million to more than 800 projects in over 60 developing countries through global and country-level DMs. The DM accepts proposals from a wide variety of organizations for projects to be implemented in developing countries, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs), multilateral and bilateral development agencies, private foundations, universities and schools, private sector groups, individuals, and local and municipal governments.

## *GEF project databases and write-ups*

For more information on GEF projects, please consult the databases maintained by the [GEF Secretariat](#) and by the Implementing Agencies – [UNDP](#), [UNEP](#), and the [World Bank](#).

A number of GEF project write-ups are also available from the [UNDP GEF](#), [World Bank GEF](#), and [UNEP GEF](#), as well as the comprehensive overview of the status of GEF projects in the [Operational Report on GEF Programs](#) published annually by the GEF Secretariat.

## **Resource Allocation Framework**

The GEF [Resource Allocation Framework](#) (RAF) is a new system to allocate GEF resources to countries based on global environmental priorities and country level performance. The idea of the RAF was endorsed by the GEF Council in October 2002, negotiated and formulated over three years, adopted in September 2005, and became effective with the GEF 4 replenishment. RAF allocations are determined based on two measures: the GEF Benefits Index (GBI) and the GEF Performance Index (GPI). In GEF 4, the RAF will only cover the biodiversity and climate change focal areas. However, it is expected that by 2010, the RAF will also apply to the other focal areas.

[Indicative allocations](#) for biodiversity and climate change to individual countries and to the group of countries without individual allocations for GEF 4 are publicly available on the GEF website.

- The total resource envelopes of \$1 billion for biodiversity and \$1 billion for climate change in GEF 4 are apportioned in the following manner:
  - ⇒ 5% for global and regional projects
  - ⇒ 5% for SGP and cross-cutting capacity building projects
  - ⇒ 90% to individual countries and group of countries (of which at least 75% to individual countries and the remainder to group)
- The allocations for each country are based on a formula that combines the GEF Benefits Index and the GEF Performance Index subject to adjustments for a ceiling and a minimum allocation.

- RAF allocations are not entitlements, but rather constitute the maximum amount of GEF resources available to the country for projects in the focal area. Projects must continue to comply with GEF operational programs and strategic priorities.
- A country can use no more than 50% of its initial allocation in the first two years. At the end of the first two years, there will be a re-allocation based on the re-application of the RAF formula using updated GBI and GPI. Countries whose relative performance remains unchanged can expect that the reallocated amounts will not differ significantly from the initial amount.

The RAF will be reviewed by the [GEF Evaluation Office](#) after two years in 2008, and after four years in conjunction with the GEF [Overall Performance Study 4](#).

## GEF structure and governance

### *GEF Member Countries*

Any member country of the United Nations may become a participant in the GEF. As of this writing, there are 177 [member countries](#) in the GEF which as a group form the governing GEF Assembly. GEF member countries are usually signatories to one or more of the multilateral environmental agreements and conventions for which the GEF serves as a financial mechanism.

GEF member countries may be divided into the two broad categories of donor countries and recipient countries. Donor countries contribute to funding the GEF while recipient countries, with the assistance of the Implementing and Executing Agencies (see below), develop and implement GEF projects. To be eligible to receive GEF funding a country must be eligible to borrow from the World Bank or receive technical assistance from the UNDP. There are a handful of countries that both contribute to the GEF and receive funding support.

Member countries participate in designing GEF policies and programs and in monitoring implementation, and are represented in the GEF by their Political Focal Points and Council members (see following sections).

### *GEF Instrument*

The [Instrument for the Establishment of the Restructured Global Environment Facility](#) is the document which established the GEF after an initial pilot phase. It was accepted by the member countries and adopted by the Implementing Agencies in 1994. The Instrument may be considered the statutes and by-laws of the GEF, and contains provisions for the governance, participation, replenishment, and fiduciary and administrative operations of the GEF. It also lays out the roles and responsibilities of different actors in the GEF.

### *GEF Trust Fund and Trustee*

The GEF was established with the GEF Trust Fund which consists of the contributions received from participating countries. The World Bank serves as the trustee of the GEF Trust Fund in a fiduciary and administrative capacity and is accountable to the GEF Council. The trustee administers the GEF Trust Fund in accordance with the provision of the GEF Instrument and the decisions of the GEF Council.

### *GEF Replenishment*

The [GEF replenishment](#) is the process by which donor countries contribute money to the GEF Trust Fund at four-yearly intervals. In 1994, the first GEF replenishment of \$2 billion was contributed by 34 countries; in 1998, the second GEF replenishment of \$2.75 billion by 36 countries; in 2002, the third GEF replenishment of \$3 billion by 32 countries. Most recently, the [fourth GEF replenishment](#) of \$3.13 billion by 32 countries was confirmed in August 2006 and will fund

projects over the next four years. Replenishment cycles define phases of the GEF, hence the current phase is called GEF 4.

### *GEF Assembly*

The [GEF Assembly](#) is comprised of the 177 member governments and meets every four years. Each member country may appoint a representative and alternate to the Assembly. The Assembly's mandate is to review and evaluate GEF policies, operations, and membership. The Assembly also considers and approves proposed amendments to the GEF Instrument. The GEF Assembly has met three times in the history of the GEF, most recently the [Third GEF Assembly](#) took place in Cape Town, South Africa in August 2006. Previously, the [Second GEF Assembly](#) was held in October 2002 in Beijing, China, and the [First GEF Assembly](#) in New Delhi, India in April 1998.

### *GEF Council*

The [GEF Council](#) is the main governing body of the GEF and functions as an independent board of directors, with primary responsibility for developing, guiding, and evaluating GEF programs. Council members represent the 32 constituencies into which the member countries are divided (see following section on constituencies). GEF Council [meetings](#) are held generally twice yearly; each meeting lasts three days, and all decisions are by consensus. The Council also conducts business by mail.

### *GEF Secretariat*

The [GEF Secretariat](#) (GEFSec), headed by CEO and Chairperson Monique Barbut, reports directly to the GEF Council and Assembly and carries out their decisions. The Secretariat oversees the formulation and implementation of the work programs and ensures that the GEF operational strategy and policies are followed.

#### *If you would like to know more . . .*

For more on the roles and responsibilities of different elements of the GEF structure, as well as those of the Implementing Agencies, see Articles 11-24 of the [Instrument for the Establishment of the Restructured Global Environment Facility](#).

### *Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel*

The [Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel](#) (STAP) provides expert scientific and technical advice to the GEF on its operational strategies, priorities, and programs. STAP has fifteen members who are internationally recognized experts in the GEF's key areas of work: biodiversity, biosafety, climate change, coastal and fresh water management, sustainable land management, persistent organic pollutants, and integrated ecosystem management.

### *GEF Evaluation Office*

Monitoring and evaluation have been separated in the GEF, with the [GEF Evaluation Office](#) responsible for evaluation and the GEFSec and the Agencies for monitoring. The purpose of

*If you would like to know more...*

The GEF Evaluation Office has recently produced the [GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy](#).

monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in the GEF is to promote accountability and learning, and thereby to improve project and program effectiveness and results. Monitoring and evaluation feedback allows the GEF to track progress in producing global environmental benefits in the six focal areas. M&E results and assessments, including the periodic [Overall Performance Study](#) (OPS) of the GEF, are reported to the GEF Council, in support of decision-making, policy-formulation, and accountability by the GEF and its partners at all levels.

### *Implementing Agencies*

Although the GEF is an independent financial entity, from its inception it has avoided creating a large bureaucracy by implementing its projects and programs through the [United Nations Development Programme](#) (UNDP), the [United Nations Environment Programme](#) (UNEP) and the [World Bank](#), known as the GEF [Implementing Agencies](#) (IAs).

Implementing agencies assist eligible governments and non-governmental organizations in the development, implementation, and management of GEF projects. The IAs are the channel between countries and the GEF for the process of approval of projects, and participate in the GEF governance and in the development of GEF policies and programs.

### *Executing Agencies*

Seven additional organizations – four regional development banks and three UN specialized agencies – have been designated [Executing Agencies](#) (EAs) under the GEF “[expanded opportunities](#)” policy:

- [Asian Development Bank](#) (ADB)
- [African Development Bank](#) (AfDB)
- [European Development Bank](#) (EDB)
- [Inter-American Development Bank](#) (IADB)
- [Food and Agriculture Organization](#) (FAO)
- [International Fund for Agricultural Development](#) (IFAD)
- [United Nations Industrial Development Organization](#) (UNIDO)

Executing agencies also assist eligible countries and organizations to develop and implement GEF projects in their regions and/or areas of focus.

### *GEF NGO Network and focal points*

[Non-governmental organizations](#) (NGOs) interested in the work of the GEF have established a GEF NGO network to facilitate communication among themselves and with the GEF. NGOs are organized into eight regions, each with a [regional NGO focal point](#) who is selected at the regional level. All NGOs in a region that are [accredited by the GEF](#) are eligible to nominate candidates and vote in the election to choose the regional focal point. The regional focal points inform NGOs in their regions about GEF matters and convey NGO concerns from the regions to

***If you would like to know more...***

An NGO guide is available in [Arabic](#), [French](#), [Russian](#), [Spanish](#) to help NGOs understand how the GEF operates, how to access to its funds, and how to influence its policies. It was developed by NGOs for NGOs:

*The A-Z of the GEF: An NGO Guide to Participation in the GEF* (2005)

the GEF. The regional focal points coordinate the selection of recipients of GEF funding to attend Council meetings. A [central NGO focal point](#) serves as the main liaison with the GEF. NGOs actively participate in GEF activities and projects. The NGO consultations that precede Council meetings provide NGOs a forum to express their views on GEF matters and to exchange perspectives with other GEF actors. The most recent [GEF NGO Consultation](#) took place in June 2006. NGOs also participate as proponents, implementers and/or evaluators of GEF projects. NGOs and CBOs are key actors in the [GEF Small Grants Programme](#), a dedicated channel of GEF funding to civil society organizations engaged in simultaneously coping with global environmental challenges and local sustainable development concerns.

*The private sector*

The GEF's engagement with [the private sector](#) has been concentrated mainly in three focal areas: biodiversity, climate change, and international waters. The GEF is now developing potentially more effective approaches to work with the private sector including a stronger knowledge base, a private sector fund, and non-grant instruments. Project endorsement by Operational Focal Points will continue to be required under any new private-sector strategy.

Further reading on the GEF and the private sector:

*GEF Strategy to Enhance Engagement with the Private Sector*

*Additional Information to Support to the GEF Strategy to Enhance Engagement with the Private Sector*

## GEF Constituency Coordination

To facilitate the effective representation and participation in decision-making of the 177 member countries in the GEF, the [GEF Instrument](#) calls for grouping participating countries into 32 [constituencies](#) which are represented in the GEF Council. Following consultations among countries, constituencies were formed based on geographic regions and interests. Eighteen of the constituencies are made up of recipient country members and 14 are composed of donor country members, although some contain both, such as the constituency containing Switzerland and several countries in transition. A number of the principal donors to the GEF are single-member constituencies, but there are single-member recipient constituencies as well. Each constituency selects on a rotational basis a Council member and an alternate member for a maximum three-year term.

*If you would like to know more . . .*

To learn more about how constituencies are established, go to Article 16 and Annex E of the [Instrument for the Establishment of the Restructured Global Environment Facility](#).

The table on the following page indicates the composition of the 32 GEF constituencies and the countries which are currently representing the constituencies on the GEF Council.

Council members represent constituency positions and concerns on items before the Council. At the same time, Council members need to work closely with Political and Operational Focal Points and relevant stakeholders in their constituencies in order to keep countries informed and involved in the governance of the GEF. Since only one country in a multi-country constituency sits on the GEF Council at any given moment, it is crucial that Council members maintain communications within constituencies and with Focal Points. The primary vehicle for enabling communications between Council members and Focal Points are periodic constituency meetings.

### Constituency meetings

The primary responsibility for coordination within the constituency lies with the Council member. Constituency meetings are an important tool in this regard, providing a useful forum in which to discuss Council issues as they relate to the constituency, and an opportunity for sharing knowledge and brainstorming

Through the [Country Support Program](#), the GEF provides [funding](#) to hold two constituency meetings each year to discuss coordination and integration issues and to consider government policy on GEF Council issues. Funds are also available for Focal Points to travel to two constituency meetings per year.

*Constituency composition and representation*

<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Council Member/Alternate Member</b>
China	China
Japan	Japan
Cook Islands, Fiji, Indonesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu	Papua New Guinea/Philippines
Australia, New Zealand, Republic of Korea	Australia/Republic of Korea
Cambodia, Korea DPR, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam	Thailand/Vietnam
Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka	India/Bangladesh
Afghanistan, Jordan, Lebanon, Pakistan, Syria, Yemen	Pakistan/Jordan
Iran	Iran
Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan	Switzerland/Switzerland
Armenia, Belarus, Russian Federation	Russian Federation/Armenia
Estonia, Finland, Sweden	Finland/Sweden
Denmark, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway	Norway/Denmark
Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Georgia, Macedonia, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Ukraine	Bulgaria/Moldova
Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Hungary, Luxembourg, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Turkey	Austria/Luxembourg
Italy	Italy
France	France
Germany	Germany
The Netherlands	The Netherlands
United Kingdom	United Kingdom
Greece, Ireland, Portugal, Spain	Spain/Portugal
Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia	Tunisia/Egypt
Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda	Djibouti/Eritrea
Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia, Zimbabwe	Malawi/Mozambique
Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo, Congo DR	Central African Republic/Congo
Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Togo	Benin/Ghana
Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Chad, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, The Gambia	Cape Verde/Gambia
Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay	Argentina/Peru
Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador	Ecuador/Brazil
Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Venezuela	Mexico/Panama
Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago	Guyana/Bahamas
United States	United States
Canada	Canada

Note: The constituencies for a number of new member countries are yet to be determined (Bosnia Herzegovina, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Israel, Liberia, Libya, Malta, Montenegro, Sao Tome and Principe, Serbia, and Timor-Leste (DR)).

### *Making constituency meetings more effective*

To enhance the effectiveness of constituency meetings, Council members can take the following steps:

- Maintain timely and regular communication with constituency members before and after each Council meeting, and disseminate information to constituents on a regular basis.
- Establish and manage a database of contact information on constituency members.

Every constituency member can play a proactive role in ensuring that regular and productive constituency meetings and consultations are held by:

- Communicating interest in such meetings to the Council member and to fellow Focal Points.
- Obtaining GEF [funding](#) through the CSP to support participation in constituency meetings.
- Making constituency meetings successful through preparation and participation.
- Sharing information and imparting skills obtained through constituency meetings and communications to stakeholders in both government and civil society.

## GEF Focal Points

GEF projects are intended to be country-driven. This means that they should be based on national or regional priorities and “owned” by the country or countries concerned rather than responding to external factors. National governments and stakeholders are therefore instrumental in project development, implementation, and monitoring. In this context, [GEF Focal Points](#) play a critical coordination role regarding GEF matters at country level as well as serving as the liaison with the GEF Secretariat and Implementing Agencies and representing their constituencies on the GEF Council.

The two types of GEF Focal Points, Political and Operational, have different functions, although the exact specifications of the two designations may vary from country to country. All GEF member countries have Political Focal Points, while only recipient member countries eligible for GEF project assistance have Operational Focal Points.

### Political Focal Points

Political Focal Points are concerned primarily with issues related to GEF governance, including policies and decisions, and with relations between member countries and the GEF Council and Assembly.

#### *Specific responsibilities of Political Focal Points*

- Stay abreast of GEF governance matters, informing interested parties, including convention focal points, about GEF policies, governance issues, and related activities.
- Facilitate in-country consultations on GEF governance matters.
- Serve as liaisons on GEF governance matters within their countries, with the GEF constituencies to which their countries belong, and with the GEF Council members representing their respective constituencies.
- Through their GEF Council members, communicate their governments’ views, comments and suggestions on GEF’s existing or proposed policies to the GEF Secretariat.

#### *Key resources for Political Focal Points*

- The GEF, the *Instrument for the Establishment of the Restructured Global Environment Facility and the Rules of Procedure of the GEF Council*, its structure and governance, and any emerging policy, governance and programming issues.
- The country’s signature and ratification of the various environment conventions, and the obligations to which the country has consented to be bound.
- The country’s environmental profile and its environmental policies and strategies, especially in reference to global environmental benefits.
- The countries in the GEF constituency.
- The constituency’s system for the rotation of Council membership.

### *Fundamental Political Focal Point tasks*

- Seek country's views and positions on proposed GEF policies and procedures.
- Express the country's views on proposed GEF policies and procedures to the Council member and alternate member, so these views could be represented at meetings of the GEF Council and other GEF fora.
- Communicate all relevant GEF policies and decisions to relevant stakeholders in country.
- Participate in constituency meetings.
- Maintain regular communication with the GEF [Operational Focal Point](#), the [Council member and alternate member](#), and the convention focal points; key country stakeholders, including those in government, academia, civil society and the private sector; other GEF constituency members; relevant officials at the GEF Secretariat, especially those in [Corporate Affairs](#), with regard to Council and Assembly meetings, emerging policy issues, other matters related to governance in the GEF, and the resources available to Political Focal Points and Council members.
- Attend a new Focal Point familiarization seminar in Washington, DC.

## Operational Focal Points

Only recipient member countries eligible for GEF funding have Operational Focal Points. As the name implies, Operational Focal Points are concerned with the operational aspects of GEF activities, such as endorsing project proposals to affirm that they are consistent with national plans and priorities.

### *Specific responsibilities of Operational Focal Points*

- Provide guidance to national stakeholders on programming GEF resources.
- Discuss initial project ideas with project proponents.
- Serve as the liaison for IAs and EAs.
- Endorse project proposals to certify that they are consistent with country programs and priorities and with commitments under global environment conventions. Projects without this endorsement cannot enter the GEF pipeline.
- Facilitate and coordinate consultations on GEF operational matters.
- Provide key stakeholders with feedback on GEF activities in country, including project implementation, project results and impacts, mainstreaming of GEF objectives in national policy frameworks.
- Provide information as needed to the GEFSec and IAs/EAs concerning country contacts, country project information, etc.

### *Integrating global environmental issues with national environmental and sustainable development planning*

Operational Focal Points have a unique opportunity to become facilitators of strategic GEF planning and stakeholder engagement processes as they relate to existing national plans, strategies, and decision-making mechanisms, and to promote the integration of the GEF with national and sectoral priorities.

These national planning frameworks include:

- [Common Country Assessment \(CCA\)](#) is the instrument of the United Nations system for analyzing a country's development situation to identify key development issues, taking into account national priorities as well as the [Millennium Development Goals \(MDGs\)](#) and other international commitments and conventions.
- [United Nations Development Assistance Framework \(UNDAF\)](#) emerges from the CCA and provides an integrated United Nations system response to national needs and priorities within the framework of the MDGs.
- [Country Assistance Strategy \(CAS\)](#) is the World Bank's business plan for an individual country, prepared in consultation with governments, civil society organizations, development partners, and other stakeholders.

- [Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers \(PRSPs\)](#) is prepared by most developing countries through a participatory process that engages both domestic and external development partners, resulting in a comprehensive, long-term perspective for poverty reduction.
- National and sectoral development plans.

Focal points can seek opportunities to ensure that the global environmental dimension – for example as expressed through the multiple reports and strategies produced by GEF enabling activities and other convention-related exercises – is taken into account in national and sectoral strategic approaches and plans. These GEF-related processes and documents include:

*If you would like to know more . . .*

For examples of successful mainstreaming resulting from activities supported by the GEF and other donors, see [Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Development: Case Studies from South Africa](#) (World Bank, 2002).

See also [Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Production Landscapes](#) (GEF Working Paper, October 2005): “the objective of mainstreaming biodiversity is...to internalize the goals of biodiversity conservation and the sustainable use of biological resources into economic sectors and development models, policies and programmes, and therefore into all human behaviour.”

- [National Climate Change Communications \(NCCCs\)](#) are the periodic reports made by countries on implementation of the [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change \(UNFCCC\)](#).
- [National Adaptation Programmes of Action \(NAPAs\)](#) allow [Least Developed Countries \(LDCs\)](#) to identify priority activities that respond to urgent climate change adaptation needs.
- [National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans \(BSAP\)](#) are based on broad consultations and constitute national biodiversity assessments and conservation targets and strategic plans to implement the [Convention on Biological Diversity \(CBD\)](#).

- [National Action Programmes \(NAPs\)](#) are the result of participatory planning to implement the [United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification \(UNCCD\)](#).
- [National Implementation Plans \(NIPs\)](#) represent country-based instruments and plans for the implementation of the [Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants \(POPs\)](#).
- [National Capacity Self Assessments \(NCSAs\)](#) help countries to identify priority capacity-building needs to more effectively address global environmental issues.

*Ways to incorporate global environmental issues into national plans and strategies*

- Promote the incorporation of relevant environmental issues into governmental sectoral planning and policy, for example:
  - ✓ the impact of land degradation on agricultural productivity and food security

- ✓ the effect of excessive fertilizer and pesticide use on water pollution and toxicity
- ✓ biodiversity conservation and tourism development
- Encourage dialogue on national and global environmental issues among agencies involved in the determination of national development plans and policies.
- Promote the involvement in environmental matters of the Ministry of Foreign (or External) Affairs and other agencies engaged in the management of the country's bilateral and multilateral relations.
- Realize the potential for the replication and mainstreaming of ideas, concepts and lessons from environmental activities to secure larger national and international benefits.
- Taking the dialogue beyond the confines of government into the NGO and private sectors and into the academic and research communities.

#### *Ways to realize the strategic role of GEF Operational Focal Points*

- Create and update an inventory of the agencies involved in environment planning at the local, sectoral, and national levels.
- Identify mechanisms to more systematically incorporate decisions on environment and development into national project development frameworks and to bring additional, new information into national strategies.
- Seek ways to make contributions—and to encourage stakeholders to make them—to development planning and policy in order to ensure that the global environmental aspects are adequately and appropriately addressed.
- Identify aspects of national and sectoral development plans that indicate needs and opportunities for environmental action and encourage the formulation of appropriate policies, programs and projects.
- In particular, ensure that local and global environmental concerns are taken into account in such strategic initiatives as CCA/UNDAF, CAS and PRSPs and in strategic instruments promoted by bilateral aid agencies.
- Establish partnerships with the GEF, in particular with the country offices of GEF IAs and EAs.

#### *Operational Focal Points and the RAF*

Under the RAF, OFP endorsement of a project concept means that a project concept both responds to national priorities and convention commitments *and* falls within the country's allocation for the biodiversity and climate change focal areas. Hence the emphasis on the enhanced role of the OFP in GEF 4, with national priority-setting and endorsement of concepts gaining new significance. It is likely that OFPs will be engaged in intensive stakeholder consultation and consensus-building processes towards selecting the national priorities that will define the national GEF portfolio.

## GEF Country Coordination

As discussed in the previous section, GEF approaches and objectives will optimally be integrated with national plans and priorities. It is important not to consider a national GEF portfolio in isolation from the array of environment and development plans and initiatives in a country. Such mainstreaming or integration can be enabled by creating partnerships and coordination mechanisms. Typically, GEF projects involve the participation of various stakeholders including national governments, NGOs, IAs and EAs, communities, the private sector, and the research and academic communities: Partnerships are thus an integral aspect of the way GEF operates and signal the need for coordination and facilitation by national GEF focal points. Coordination by Focal Points will be even more necessary for the implementation of the RAF.

### Benefits of GEF national coordination

Studies and consultations carried out by the GEF National Dialogue Initiative, in particular the *GEF National Coordination—Lessons Learned (Bolivia, China, Colombia, Poland, Uganda)* report, have identified a number of benefits or productive processes that accrue to national coordination. Among them are:

- Facilitating the endorsement of projects by Focal Points.
- Increasing awareness of and appreciation for the GEF and its mandates and activities.
- Improving the flow of information among stakeholders and the quality of the decisions made on global environmental matters.
- Encouraging greater local, sectoral, and national involvement in GEF programs and projects.
- Locating the national GEF portfolio in relation to related government and donor activities and projects, and seeking commonalities and synergies.
- Promoting participation in the monitoring of GEF projects.
- Encouraging and sustaining the involvement of nationals in the global dialogue on the environment.
- Fostering a shared commitment to the goals of the GEF.

#### *Elements of a successful national coordinating mechanism*

The *Lessons Learned* study identified the following attributes of a successful coordinating committee:

- Committed leadership of well-informed, dynamic, and committed individuals.
- Broad participation by national stakeholders, including civil society.
- Careful consideration of what role, if any, IAs play (whether as regular members of the committee, as observers, or as resources persons).
- Regular, well-planned meetings to review and discuss project proposals before endorsement letters are issued.
- Opportunities to increase the knowledge of members about global environmental issues and GEF policies and programs, with help from GEFSec and IAs.
- An emphasis on promoting GEF priorities and activities.
- Effective links with the convention focal points and with activities relating to the conventions.
- The adoption of an appropriate role in the strategic-level monitoring of GEF projects and of the overall national GEF portfolio.
- Growth and evolution of the committee over time.

### *Coordination committees and other national coordination mechanisms*

The principal tasks carried out by GEF national coordination committees, by whatever name called, also vary from country to country. However, based on the study of national coordination, the tasks of a national committee could include some of the following:

- The provision of guidance to the Operational Focal Point on project endorsement.
- Reviewing individual GEF projects and/or the national GEF portfolio based on GEF M&E and other material.
- The identification of new project opportunities.
- Coordination with conventions through convention focal points.
- The joint analysis and broad dissemination of lessons learned.
- Policy dialogues on global environmental issues, and local and global benefits.
- The promotion of the GEF within the government and in the wider society.
- Support for the work of the GEF Council Member, whether he or she is from that country or from another country within the constituency.
- Cooperation with and support for GEF and IA missions to the country.

#### *Concrete examples of coordination innovations*

- In Bolivia, governmental and non-governmental participants have almost equal representation on the coordinating committee. The committee has been described as very sound and effective and enjoys the advantage of having its recommendations respected by the state, although at times the committee's size and diversity have a tendency to overwhelm the benefits of broad representation.
- Since the launching of Uganda's National GEF Steering Committee in 2001, the Committee has been monitoring GEF activities in the country through annual GEF portfolio reviews. These reviews include visits to project sites by Committee members and technical briefings from the UNDP GEF Regional Coordinator.
- The work of Poland's GEF coordination committee helped elevate the national environmental discourse to include global issues at a time when the country's negotiations to enter the European Union seemed to overshadow these larger environmental concerns.
- Colombia's GEF Committee and the GEF portfolio and activities have been integrated with the institutions and initiatives that make up the National Environmental System, of which the Operational Focal Point, located in the Ministry of Environment, plays a coordinating role.

### **Outreach to convention focal points**

The potential for productive synergy between GEF and convention focal points is significant and through this interaction, GEF Focal Points can keep abreast of issues of concern to the parties to the conventions while convention focal points are informed about how the GEF is dealing with these matters.

Synergies can be created between the two sets of focal points by:

- Appointing convention focal points to the national GEF coordinating mechanism, and to any sub-committees dealing with their respective areas of competence.
- Strengthening the links between national plans and programs to implement the conventions and applications for GEF funding.
- Consulting the appropriate convention focal points before endorsing project proposals.

*Roles of Political, Operational, and convention focal points*

<b>Political Focal Points</b>	<b>Operational Focal Points</b>	<b>Convention Focal Points</b>
Overall policy consistency	GEF project activities consistent with national policies	Participate in convention-related meetings and stay abreast with developing convention guidance
GEF policies consistent with national policies	Assess and communicate project concepts in line with national priorities	Documents and national policies consistent with conventions
Communicate government views to GEF	In-country facilitator of consultations with national partners and stakeholders	Communicate government views to conventions
Report on GEF Council meetings	Report on projects	Report on conventions
In-country government contact point	In-country contact point for stakeholder consultations	In-country contact point for consultations
Distribution of GEF documents within the government and to key partners	Disseminate information about GEF projects and activities	Distribution of convention-related materials and information to in country partners

Instances of cooperation between GEF and convention focal points may be found in the *Lessons Learned* study. For example, in Uganda links with key conventions are facilitated by including them in the national GEF coordination committee, and each of these focal points heads a subcommittee with the responsibility for submitting potential GEF project concepts to the full committee. In Colombia a priority is strengthening the links between national plans and programs for the implementation of the conventions and Colombia's applications for GEF funding.

## Sources of Support for Focal Points

In GEF 4 there are at least three sources of support for Focal Points: the GEF [National Dialogue Initiative](#), the GEF [Country Support Program \(CSP\)](#), and the [Council Member Support Program](#) which provides funds to Council members to hold constituency meetings. These resources are summarized in the table below and detailed in subsequent sections.

<b>Program/Project</b>	<b>What is available to each country</b>	<b>Contact information</b>
<b>Country Support Program for Focal Points (CSP)</b>	Up to \$8,000 direct support per year based upon guidelines and agreed upon workplan	Mehrunnisa Bashir GEF Secretariat Mbashir@thegef.org  Ms. Daya Bragante UNEP/GEF Daya.Bragante@unep.org
<b>Country Support Program for Focal Points (CSP)</b>	Funds to participate in up to 2 constituency meetings per year	Mehrunnisa Bashir GEF Secretariat Mbashir@thegef.org  Ms. Daya Bragante UNEP/GEF Daya.Bragante@unep.org
<b>Country Support Program for Focal Points (CSP)</b>	Knowledge Management Framework containing guidance, informational and training documents; networking and information exchange forums <i>beginning in 2007</i>	Mr. Stephen Gold National Dialogue Initiative/ Country Support Program stephen.gold@undp.org
<b>Country Support Program for Focal Points (CSP)</b>	Sub-regional exchange/training workshops – all GEF Focal Points can participate in 1 per year <i>beginning in 2007</i>	Mr. Stephen Gold National Dialogue Initiative/ Country Support Program stephen.gold@undp.org
<b>Country Support Program for Focal Points (CSP)</b>	Limited funds for new GEF Focal Points to participate in a GEF Familiarization Seminar held at the GEF Secretariat <i>beginning in 2007</i>	Ms. Daya Bragante UNEP/GEF Daya.Bragante@unep.org  Mehrunnisa Bashir GEF Secretariat Mbashir@thegef.org
<b>GEF National Dialogue Initiative</b>	Funds for 12-15 countries per year to host National Multi-stakeholder Dialogues on the GEF – countries must apply to host by writing to the Chairperson and CEO of the GEF Secretariat	Mr. Stephen Gold National Dialogue Initiative/ Country Support Program stephen.gold@undp.org
<b>Council Member Support Program</b>	Funds for Council Members to host constituency meetings	Mehrunnisa Bashir GEF Secretariat Mbashir@thegef.org

## National Dialogue Initiative

The GEF [National Dialogue Initiative](#) (NDI) is a four-year program designed to facilitate a series of country level dialogues on GEF related issues and themes. National Dialogues aim to raise awareness about the GEF, strengthen country level coordination and ownership, and clarify and address country GEF needs and priorities linked to national development strategies.

National Dialogues provide a forum for consultations on global environmental management and national sustainable development issues in GEF recipient countries. They provide an opportunity for GEF partners to dialogue with key stakeholders representing a wide range of national and local interests and areas of expertise. At the country level, each National Dialogue is managed as a collaborative effort involving the national GEF Focal Points, the GEF Secretariat, and the Implementing Agencies.

The main objectives of the GEF NDI are to assist participating countries by:

- Promoting in-depth understanding of the GEF's strategic directions, policies and procedures;
- Strengthening country coordination and ownership in GEF operations and sharing lessons learned from project implementation; and
- Achieving greater mainstreaming of GEF activities into national planning frameworks and coordination and synergies amongst the GEF focal areas and convention issues at the national level.

### *Requesting and organizing a Dialogue*

*At the global level:* The NDI responds to [written country requests](#) to host national dialogues sent to the GEF CEO. The Inter-Agency Advisory Committee of the NDI prioritizes country requests based on agreed upon criteria and recommends a country selection shortlist for final approval by the CEO.

*At the national level:* The design and objectives of each multi-stakeholder country level consultation are based on individual country circumstances and focus primarily on GEF policy-related issues in relation to national policies and strategies.

- Objectives defined by GEF Focal Points, agenda and appropriate methodologies for achieving objectives developed by program in consultation with GEF Focal Points with contributions by GEFSec and the IAs/EAs
- An initial list of participants is defined by GEF Focal Points; which is reviewed by program with input from GEFSec and local offices of IAs.
- Materials are prepared by the program with input from GEFSec and Agencies as needed.
- Agenda and list of participants is sent to GEF NGO Network in advance for information.
- Opening statements are provided at each Dialogue by government, GEFSec, heads of national IA offices.
- Chairing and facilitation is provided by GEF Focal Points and other designated national representatives. GEFSec and IA representatives participate in presentations, during plenary discussions and smaller working group discussions as required.

- Dialogue closure and conclusions are presented by GEF NFP or national representative. Follow-up actions are agreed among participants, including [report](#) and designation of responsibilities.

A detailed updated “Guide to Conducting a GEF National Dialogue” will be made available shortly to Focal Points.

## **Country Support Program**

The GEF [Country Support Program](#) (CSP) complements the National Dialogue Initiative. The four-year program (2006-2009) was approved by the GEF Council in November 2005 and is jointly implemented by UNDP and UNEP under the strategic guidance of an inter-agency advisory committee composed of the GEF Secretariat and the Implementing Agencies (IAs).

The principal objective of the CSP is to strengthen the capacity of national GEF Focal Points to support and coordinate GEF activities in their countries and constituencies. Specifically, the CSP provides:

- Direct support to Focal Points
- Knowledge management framework in the form of an online GEF Focal Point portal
- Targeted Focal Point capacity building through sub-regional exchange and training workshops

### *Direct support*

The CSP provides:

- Up to \$8,000/year in direct support to countries and Focal Points for four years.
- Funds for travel to two constituency meetings per year per constituency.
- Funds for participation of new Focal Points in GEF familiarization seminars.

New GEF Focal Points can apply for funding to attend the GEF familiarization seminar in Washington, D.C. Focal points will be chosen based on geographic diversity and need.

To access funds, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) must be signed between the countries and the program. Focal points must develop an indicative annual workplan and budget that will form the basis for requesting direct support for the year. These documents must be submitted to GEFSec for approval. Once the workplan and the MOU are in place and the necessary request is made and approved, funds for the year will be transferred to an agreed country bank account. Focal points must also submit an annual financial and activity report. These reports must be approved before the next tranche can be released.

For further guidance, please see the [Toolkit to Access Financial Resources under the Country Support Program for Focal Points](#).

GEF direct support can be used to develop and implement activities that help:

- increase awareness of the GEF strategic priorities, policies and programs;
- create institutional memory of GEF policies and programs in the appropriate government ministry;
- increase coordination among national agencies with a view to ensuring greater country ownership and a cohesive approach by the government to global environmental issues and to support from the GEF;
- develop a database to keep track of the GEF portfolio of projects and concepts in the country;
- promote the mainstreaming of global environmental issues into national sustainable development strategies; and
- strengthen stakeholder involvement in global environmental programs.

Examples of eligible activities that meet these criteria are:

- the translation, printing and dissemination of relevant GEF documents;
- the creation of a GEF website for the country;
- the creation of a GEF project database;
- the creation of a reference library of relevant information and publications on the GEF;
- the organization of meetings for country-level coordination;
- the establishment of an inter-agency GEF committee;
- workshops, training courses and field visits;
- participation in GEF constituency meetings convened in the region by the Council member.

Funding will not be provided for these ineligible activities:

- International travel (ticket and daily subsistence allowance), except to facilitate a Focal Point's participation in up to two constituency meetings per year convened within the region by the Council member.
- Procurement of computer hardware and other equipment, except an internet modem (up to \$250).
- Support to GEF Council members, for whom funds have been allocated separately.

A series of eight sub-regional consultations were held in April – August 2006 to elicit an assessment of Focal Point needs and requests that would inform the design of the knowledge management framework and the sub-regional exchange and training workshops, both of which will become operational in 2007.

#### *Knowledge management framework*

This online GEF Focal Point portal is expected to be operational by January 2007, and will encompass the following broad areas:

- Roles of national GEF Focal Points
- Support available for Focal Points

- GEF coordination at the national level
- GEF coordination at the constituency level
- General GEF Topics
- Key partners and contacts

The GEF Focal Point knowledge management framework will also provide a mechanism for Focal Points to share their information, knowledge and experiences through the creation of email exchange forums at the constituency, sub-regional and thematic levels.

*Sub-regional training and exchange workshops*

The CSP provides funding to hold targeted sub-regional exchange and training workshops for GEF Focal Points based on their expressed needs. Up to eight sub-regional workshops will be held each year beginning in March/April 2007.

Drawing on the initial Focal Point needs assessment from the 2006 sub-regional consultations, a number of potential sub-regional training and exchange workshop topics/modules have been identified:

- Establishing national GEF coordination mechanisms.
- Developing national GEF strategies and setting priorities.
- Tracking national GEF portfolios and assessing results.
- Integrating GEF into national plans and programs.
- Improving communications and outreach to key stakeholders.
- Managing stakeholder conflicts and building consensus.
- Creating tools and methodologies to support institutional memory.
- Developing regional strategies and projects.

Brief questionnaires will be sent periodically to Focal Points to identify their evolving needs and requests for continued support to be provide - 35 -d through the Country Support Program.