

Report of the GEF National Dialogue - Solomon Islands

23 September 2005

Chair: Mr Steve Likaveke, Permanent Secretary, Department of Forests, Environment & Conservation (DFEC), Solomon Islands' GEF Operational Focal Point

GEF Resource Team:

Mr Moctar Toure, head of the Land and Water Division of the GEF secretariat
Mr Robin Broadfield, the World Bank's GEF coordinator for the East Asia & Pacific Region
Mr Miguel Perez Torralba, of the UNDP-GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Unit.

1. Opening

The dialogue was opened with a prayer by Cherry Galo.

2. Minister's remarks

The PS, Department of Forests, Environment & Conservation (DFEC), Mr Steve Likaveke, delivered the Minister's opening address, in the absence of the Minister.

3. GEF Resource Team remarks

Mr Moctar Toure, GEF Secretariat, delivered opening remarks on behalf of the GEF resource team. He emphasised the importance of the Dialogue mechanism for GEF to better understand and service members and constituency. In addition to the dialogue initiative, he indicated that GEF would be provided enhanced support to GEF operational focal points to enhance their capacity and effectiveness.

4. Dialogue objectives

The objectives of the Dialogue were further elaborated by PS DFEC.
Powerpoint presentation available on request.

5. GEF: introduction and overview

Mr Robin Broadfield, head of the World Bank's GEF Asia-Pacific program, presented a broad overview of the purpose, objectives, and operation of the GEF.
There was also general discussion about what kinds of support participants would find most useful.

A substantial part of this discussion focussed on the issue of logging. Ms Hilda Kari (NCW) asked how GEF could help stop land degradation in SI while logging continues unabated. The point was made that GE cannot intervene in national politics, but could provide funding for a project aimed at minimising the adverse impacts of logging (rapporteur's note: this is part of the objective of the Sustainable Land Management project outlined below). The PS DFEC advised that the Department has discontinued its efforts to introduce new forestry legislation during the term of this government and had in the mean time prepared regulations under the existing legislation aimed at improving forestry regulation and management.

PS Provincial Affairs, Mr John Tuhaika also raised the issue of how GEF could assist SI in developing fuel alternatives, especially coconut oil. Robin Broadfield advised that the World Bank has a GEF proposal for promoting alternative fuel sources in SI in the pipeline. Moctar Toure, GEFSec highlighted the importance of country like SI having a cross-sectoral and integrated perspective when looking at natural resources. This required groups to come together and identify actions for that sectors.
Powerpoint presentation hardcopy in folders, electronic copy available on request.

6. Solomon Islands GEF portfolio presentations.

A short overview of each of the following projects was provided:

National Capacity Self Assessment, Nesta Leguvaka, NCSA National Project Coordinator*

National Adaptation Plan of Action, Chanel Iroi, Director of Meteorology*

UNFCCC Second National Communication, Chanel Iroi, Director of Meteorology*

Sustainable Land Management medium sized project proposal, Ellen Iramu, Project Manager, DAL*

National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, Joe Horokou, Acting Director, Div of Env & Conservation

National Biosafety Framework – Paul Roughan, NBF National Project Coordinator*

International Waters Project – Coastal Fisheries, Patrick Mesia, IWP-SI Coordinator*

International Waters Project – Oceanic Fisheries Management, Barbara Hanchard, FFA

* summaries of all projects contained in folders; electronic copies of presentations available for these projects.

During question and discussion, the resource team made the observation that SI's portfolio of projects were very heavily skewed towards "enabling activities" – those that enable SI meet the formal requirements of the conventions (e.g. preparation of plans of action and national communications). There are very few projects that are actually delivered on-the-ground environmental benefits.

Before lunch, the PS Department of National reform and Planning, Jane Wae'tara, made some comments about the dialogue. She raised some concerns regarding the SISDAC proposal, which for the sake of continuity have been included in the discussion of SISDAC in item 8 below.

7. Enhancing GEF Effectiveness – opportunities for partnership

Miguel Perez-Torralba presented an overview of the ways in which NGOs, research institutions and the private sector can participate in GEF projects. He emphasised that very few projects are executed wholly by government. Most have some component that is NGO-executed. In some cases, the entire project is NGO-executed. It was important that proposals come from the communities that the proposals will benefit to ensure that the right approach is taken. Powerpoint presentation hardcopy in folders, electronic copy available on request.

8. Enhancing GEF coordination within Solomon Islands – the Solomon Islands sustainable Development Advisory Council

The PS, Department of Forests, Environment & Conservation (DFEC), Mr Steve Likaveke, delivered the Minister's speech, in the absence of the Minister. He then went on to elaborate the rationale, composition and operation of the SISDAC. The PS emphasised that while Cabinet had approved the formation of SISDAC, there was still considerable scope of enhance its composition and effectiveness, and he invited comments on the proposal.

A very useful discussion of the SISDAC idea then followed. There was general agreement that it would be beneficial to have a standing-group of government and non-government representatives tasked with considering the relationship between various GEF projects and other important issues relating to long-term national planning for sustainability. Concerns were raised about the precise composition and function of SISDAC in its present form. The se coments and concerns included:

- this committee could overlap with a National Development Council that was soon to be established (PS, National Planning). It was suggested that the preferable arrangement would be for the two committees to combine to avoid overlap and to ensure that the proposed Development Council actually mainstreamed environment and sustainability factors, in accordance with the SIG's commitments under MDG 7.
- there are too many government reps on the committee
- women would be inadequately represented
- without serious commitment of members to attend and take their responsibilities seriously, the SISDAC would be a failure like many committees that have gone before it;
- PSs lack the understanding of what is happening on the ground (on this point, attention was drawn to the ToR which expressly allows for PSs to appoint senior delegates to attend on their behalf and report back.)
- Regarding the time pressures on PSs, the co-chair role should also be capable of being performed by a US/delegate, rather than only the PS.
- SISDAC must have provincial representation
- SISDAC should consider how to provide incentives to members to attend. In this regard, he suggested payment of sitting fees to members.
- SISDAC should have representation from culture, as environment and culture are closely linked
- Should SISDAC replace national task forces for each project? These work because the reps have a direct interest/expertise in the subject matter of the project (possible response: each project can still use its own team to provide substantive input, but the over-arching coordination between projects requires common/shared membership and monitoring of budgets and expenditure needs to happen at a more transparent and accountable level. Hence coordinators will still be expected to make regular reports to the SISDAC.)
- Will one day a month be enough time? (possible response: regular reporting every month should reduce the length of individual deliberations for each meeting. In addition, some projects may have very little to report/discuss one month, but a require a longer meeting in another month.)

- Why should the “other functions” of the SISDAC be determined by the PM? Doesn't that make it too political? (possible response: not intended to politicise it but to enhance government ownership of SISDAC. Obviously can consider matters referred to it by others which it considers important. May need to adjust ToR to reflect this.
 - Who does this committee advise? (A: government)
 - What is the scope of SISDAC? Will it monitor and regulate all environment activities? (A: no – SISDAC does not usurp the role of the govt agencies with regulatory responsibility. Its primary task in the short term will be coordination and enhancement of GEF projects. Other functions, including contributing to the development of policy, will evolve over time, but as an advisory body, it will never assume a regulatory role.)
- Powerpoint presentation hardcopy in folders, electronic copy available on request.

9. GEF Small grants programme – potential for SI

Mr Miguel Perez Torralba, UNDP-GEF outlined the objectives and rules of the GEF Small grants Program (SGP).

Provides grants of up to US\$50K (mostly much less than this) to NGOs and CBOs to undertake on-the-ground community environment projects across all GEF focal areas. Often linked with livelihoods activities. Process of implementation leads to poverty reduction and local empowerment.

How can a country join?

SI is NOT currently a participant in the SGP. There is strong political support within GEF to include it, as an LDC/SIDS.

SI must first have govt commitment to support SGP modality.

Must then prepare an application outlining its ability to comply with the GEF SGP requirements:

- Govt commitment to support SGP modality
- ability of country (not just govt) to provide co-financing;
- leadership and willingness to volunteer time to participate on SGP steering committee (multi-sectoral committee with majority of ngo members) – can the country recruit and organise such a group?
- Presence and adequate implementation capacity of local NGOs and CBOs
- Resource mobilization – Govt and UNDP CO willing to co-finance and/or help attract other co-funding sources

Appraisal mission assesses potential of community partners and potential projects, including for cash and in-kind co-financing. Mission planned for several pacific SIDS in April 2006.

How would the written application get done before then?

Questions/comments

- Strong sense that this would be useful and relevant
- Concern about getting the mechanism and steering committee right
- Development Services Exchange (DSE) may be appropriate coordinating body to help organise things from NGO side.
- Who will take the lead on preparing application?

Powerpoint presentation available on request.

10. Summary and Recommendations

Mr Moctar Toure suggested five possible recommendations from the day, which were adopted by consensus:

1. There is overall consensus on need for more effective coordination and the SISDAC concept. Need to work on composition and representativeness of group; and operational modalities & conditions of effectiveness (what would it take to make it operate effective? E.g. incentives, champions, accountability, link to planning and budgeting frameworks and processes)
2. Logging requires further conversations/elaboration: fact that it was first thing to be raised means it is obviously still and urgent and important issue to address. How to take next step – GEF is a window, but the country must be willing to open the window.
3. At present, SI's GEF portfolio is heavily skewed towards enabling activities. While defining scope mandate and functions of SISDAC, there is a strong need to balance enabling activities and on-the-ground activities. This balancing role should be part of SISDAC's mandate.
4. In order to keep debate alive, parties need better access to info and knowledge management. OFP support funds can be used for this purpose.
5. There is strong interest in introducing a SGP. Parties need to consult further to decide how to move forward.
6. It was also recommended that provinces bring staff in to meetings of this sort and that central government and NGOs start to build up network at provincial level.

11. Close

PS DFEC thanked the GEF resource team, all participants and UNDP for their attendance and support in making the dialogue a success.

On behalf of the team, Mr Moctar Toure expressed his appreciation of the enthusiasm and interest of the participants and wished the group well in their on-going discussions.

The meeting closed with a prayer by Mr John Tuhaika.

Participants

Note: if you notice a name missing from this list, please contact Jan McDonald to correct the record

Names	Designation	Organization
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