



GEF

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**OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR EXPEDITED FUNDING OF
NATIONAL SELF ASSESSMENTS OF CAPACITY BUILDING NEEDS**

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I. BACKGROUND

1. In May, 1999 the GEF Council, recognizing the increasing importance of assisting capacity building efforts in developing countries and countries with economies in transition to address global environmental issues, approved a 'Capacity Development Initiative' (CDI) as a strategic partnership between the GEF Secretariat and UNDP.¹ The CDI was an 18 month consultative process which made a broad assessment of capacity building needs, particularly in the areas of biodiversity, climate change and land degradation, the extent and nature of bilateral and multilateral efforts to assist in meeting those needs, and a strategy and GEF specific action plan for enhancing those efforts. The results of the CDI were presented to the GEF Council for consideration in May, 2001, in the document 'Elements of strategic collaboration and a framework for GEF action for capacity building for the global environment.'²

2. The GEF Council decided that while further consultations should be held on the elements of strategic collaboration and the framework with the Parties to the three Conventions, and with relevant intergovernmental and non – governmental organizations, processes should be initiated so that one of the proposed actions, the self-assessments of country level capacity building needs, can begin immediately. The present operational guidelines are intended to assist countries to access GEF resources to undertake these 'national capacity needs self assessments' (NCSAs).

II. OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF NATIONAL CAPACITY NEEDS SELF ASSESSMENTS (NCSAs)

3. The primary objective of NCSAs is to identify country level priorities and needs for capacity building to address global environmental issues, in particular biological diversity, climate change, and land degradation, with the aim of catalyzing domestic and/ or externally assisted action to meet those needs in a coordinated and planned manner. While these three thematic areas are central to the exercise, it is fully recognized that NCSAs will need to explore the synergies among them, as well as linkages with wider concerns of environmental management and sustainable development. GEF resources are separately available for addressing initial capacity building needs in the areas of Persistent Organic Polluting Substances (POPS)³ and biosafety,⁴ but where linkages and synergies with these sectors are desirable or obvious, NCSAs should cover them in keeping with country perceptions and priorities.

4. It also needs to be borne in mind that these initial NCSAs are not intended to be definitive and final, and that the identification of needs and priorities is a dynamic process which depends on a number of factors including emerging scientific and technological information, collective decisions through global environmental Conventions, and the development of national policy frameworks. It is envisaged that the

¹ The Government of Finland later provided substantial co-funding for the CDI.

² Document GEF/ C.17/ 6/ Rev.1

³ Document GEF/ C. 17/ 4

⁴ GEF/ UNEP project on development of national biosafety frameworks.

identification of capacity building needs will remain an ongoing process, beyond the initial NCSA. Countries are encouraged to determine the scope and coverage of the NCSA in this light.

5. NCSA outputs can be a useful and relevant framework for domestic action and external assistance for capacity building. However, NCSAs are not seen either as a precondition for GEF assistance through regular projects and enabling activities, or as a necessary first step before launching capacity building activities in particular sectors. Countries where earlier work has identified capacity building needs may not feel the need to undertake NCSAs at all.

III. METHODOLOGY AND CONTENT OF NCSAS

6. A key principle of NCSAs is that they must be entirely country driven, undertaken by national institutions and experts to the extent feasible, responding to national situations and priorities. No single methodology can obviously be agreed that can cover the wide variety of institutional arrangement in countries, the availability of human and institutional expertise, or the extent of prior and ongoing work. Each country must choose its own methodological approach taking all these factors into account.

Key principles

7. For any methodology to carry out NCSAs to be effective, the following elements are of critical importance :

- a) ensuring national ownership and leadership, and the use of national or regional experts,
- b) using existing coordinating structures and mechanisms,
- c) paying due attention to provisions and decisions of the three Conventions, as they relate to capacity building,
- d) ensuring multi - stakeholder participation, consultation and decision making, through appropriate institutional arrangements,
- e) building on ongoing/ existing work relevant to NCSAs, for instance through GEF supported enabling activities, and national reports to the Conventions,
- f) adopting a holistic approach to capacity building that addresses capacity needs at the systemic, institutional and individual levels while integrating such capacity building into wider sustainable development efforts, to the extent possible and appropriate, and
- g) adopting a long - term approach to capacity building within the broader context of sustainable development.

Methodological guide (for use at discretion)

8. To respond to the need some countries expressed during the assessment phase of the CDI, the GEF in collaboration with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) has prepared a 'Guide for Self-Assessment of Country Capacity Needs for Global Environmental Management' (hereafter referred to as the 'guide') which suggest methodologies for assessing capacity building needs and is based on both national and international experiences on the subject. The 'guide' provides various options for the manner in which different activities might be undertaken, including key institutional arrangements, and describes the advantages and disadvantages of different courses of action. The 'guide' can be accessed from GEF's website, and will be made available to countries by the Implementing Agencies (see paragraph 12 below).

9. The 'guide' is not prescriptive in any sense, either for the preparation of proposals for GEF funding of NCSAs, or for undertaking the NCSAs themselves. Countries may use it to the extent they consider feasible or choose other methodologies better suited to their national situations and preferences.

NCSA outputs

10. The main output of each NCSA should include :

- a) a stocktaking of previous and ongoing activities related to capacity building (such as enabling activities),
- b) an account of the process by which the NCSA was prepared , including stakeholder participation,
- c) a description/ inventory of capacity building needs in the three sectors with prioritization to the extent possible, and other related capacity needs,
- d) an identification of cross cutting issues and synergies, and
- e) (at the country's discretion) a plan of action to meet prioritized needs and a mechanism for monitoring and evaluating progress made in meeting those needs.

Timeframe

11. It is anticipated that the average duration of a NCSA project will be 12 to 18 months, though clearly each country will decide for itself based on its own perceptions and institutional capabilities.

IV. PREPARATION OF PROPOSALS FOR GEF SUPPORT

12. GEF assistance for the undertaking NCSAs will be offered in the form of enabling activities. Countries seeking support for NCSAs may choose any one of the three GEF Implementing Agencies (UNDP, UNEP or the World Bank) for assistance to prepare a proposal. Together with the Implementing Agency (IA), the county may decide if it will use any of the elements suggested in the ‘guide’ (see paragraph 8 above) or other methodologies it deems more appropriate. Project preparation should be a consultative exercise, involving as a minimum the GEF focal point and the national focal points of the three Conventions.⁵

13. Proposals will be submitted by the IA to the GEF Secretariat in the format contained in Annex I of these guidelines. GEF support for the preparation of NCSAs will be on a full agreed cost basis, as is applicable to enabling activities. It will be seen that no budget ranges are suggested in Annex I for individual line items, allowing countries full flexibility to allocate resources in accordance with their priorities and extent of work needed for each sector or for cross-sectoral issues.

Focal point endorsement

14. As is usual in GEF projects, an endorsement from the country’s GEF operational focal point will be required in order to authenticate country ownership of the proposal. It is critical for the success of an NCSA, however, that effective cross sectoral consultation be held in preparing the proposal. The focal point endorsement will, therefore, also be required to state that “the focal point and the Implementing Agency have satisfied themselves that the country’s climate change, biodiversity and land degradation/desertification focal points have been fully consulted and their views taken into account in the formulation of this proposal.”

LDCs and SIDS

15. Recognizing the special situation and needs of least developed countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), funds up to \$25,000 per country will be available for preparing a proposal for GEF funding.⁶ IAs will make these funds available on request.

V. REVIEW AND EXPEDITED APPROVAL OF PROPOSALS

16. Proposals for assistance to undertake NCSAs will be reviewed by the GEF Secretariat in accordance with expedited approval procedures for enabling activities, summarized in Annex 2 of these operational guidelines. Proposals that do not exceed \$200,000 may be approved by the Chief Executive Officer of the GEF using these expedited procedures. Individual country proposals that

⁵ The Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention to Combat Desertification, and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

⁶ In the form of a ‘PDF A.’

exceed \$200,000 will be considered regular GEF projects and processed for submission to the GEF Council.

17. Regional projects for undertaking NCSAs may be appropriate in some cases, but only if they have full national ownership in the participant countries. Such projects will be reviewed and processed for expedited approval if the total project cost does not exceed the total of individual country limits under expedited procedures.⁷

18. The GEF Secretariat would be happy to provide any clarifications that may be needed about these operational guidelines. Please direct your query by e-mail to secretariatofgef@worldbank.org or contact a field office of one of the Implementing Agencies.

⁷ For instance, if the project involves 10 countries the total GEF funding should not exceed \$2,000,000 for expedited procedures to apply.

ANNEX A

PROPOSAL FOR GEF FUNDING

National Capacity Needs Self-Assessment for Global Environmental Management

Country name:

Project Title:

GEF Implementing Agency:

GEF Operational Focal Point:

National Executing Agency:

Country Eligibility:

Convention participation:

Convention	Date of Ratification / Accession	National Focal Point
UNCBD		
UNFCCC		
UNCCD		
Other global environmental conventions		

GEF Financing:

Government Contribution:

Estimated Total Budget:

Estimated Starting Date:

Duration:

Background, Context and Related Work

Summarize:

- the institutional setting for activities related to global environmental management and the global environmental conventions including the mandate and powers of key ministries, agencies, and other institutions
- the status of previous related activities such as NEAP's, NEMP's, NSSD's, NAP's (CCD), NBSAP's (CBD), GEF funded EA's in Climate Change, Biodiversity, Biosafety, POP's, etc
- the status of related ongoing activities such as reports and preparation for WSSD, GEF funded capacity assessments in biodiversity, etc.

Objectives, and linkages to ongoing activities

Briefly state the objectives of the project. Describe how it will build on previous work and how it will be linked to other relevant ongoing activities, analyses, reports and processes.

Project activities

Provide brief descriptions of the activities to be carried out in support of these objectives. In particular summarize how each of the following, plus any additional key activities, will be carried out:

- initiating the planning process
- establishing high-level coordination and supervision
- stocktaking and gap identification
- formulating and undertaking thematic assessments
- identifying synergies and cross-cutting analyses
- (optional) – developing an action plan to meet and/ or monitor progress in meeting the capacity building needs identified.

Institutional framework and project implementation

Explain the institutional arrangements for implementation including:

- high level political oversight and coordination
- project management and operational coordination
- implementation of the various activities, including mechanisms for stakeholder involvement and consultation.

Timetable

Provide a month by month time line sequencing the various activities described.

Budget (US \$)

Activity	Stocktaking	PROCESS: (Assessments, Consultations, Workshops, etc)	PRODUCT : Assessment reports/ strategy and action plan	TOTAL (US\$)
Thematic Assessments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Biodiversity ▪ Climate Change ▪ Land Degradation ▪ other (list) 				
Thematic Assessments sub-total				
Analysis of cross-cutting issues and synergies				
Strategy and action plan development (optional)				
Coordination, management and monitoring and evaluation				
Total				0 – 200, 000

ANNEX B

REVIEW AND APPROVAL PROCEDURES FOR EXPEDITED ENABLING ACTIVITIES (FOR THE PREPARATION OF NATIONAL CAPACITY NEEDS SELF ASSESSMENTS)

1. Prior to their submission to the Chief Executive Officer of the GEF for approval, project proposals for enabling activities will be sent for review by the thematic specialists from the Implementing Agencies and the GEF Secretariat, representatives from the secretariat of the relevant convention and STAP.
2. A scientific and technical review by an expert from the STAP roster will not be required for enabling activities proposals considered under expedited procedures.
3. Proposals to be considered will be circulated to all listed in paragraph 1 above by the Implementing Agency proposing an enabling activity. Reviewers will have 7 working days to comment and/or raise any objection he/she may have with the Secretariat. The Secretariat will consider any objections raised with the Implementing Agency concerned. On the basis of the comments received and any consultations with the Implementing Agency, the project proposal will be submitted to the CEO for approval. The CEO would consider the recommended proposals within 48 hours and inform the Implementing Agency if he approves the project proposal. Up to 15% of the total budget would be immediately available for preparatory assistance at the country level.
4. If the project proposal deviates significantly from the agreed operational guidelines, or exceeds \$200,000 for a country, it will be reviewed and approved in accordance with standard procedures of the GEF project cycle, including the requirement that the proposal be reviewed by an expert from the STAP roster.
5. Once the CEO has approved the enabling activity project proposal, the Implementing Agency will immediately inform the recipient country and immediately start working with that country to finalize the project document and supporting terms of reference with a view to ensuring early implementation of the enabling activity. This will include the immediate release of up to 15% of the budget for preparatory assistance.
6. Once the final project document is approved by the Implementing Agency and the recipient country, accountability for project implementation rests with the executing agency in the country. The Implementing Agencies will be available throughout project preparation and implementation to promptly provide any assistance requested by the recipient country. A copy of the final project document will be submitted to the Secretariat for its information and for purposes of reporting to the Council
7. The Council will be informed, at each of its regular meetings, of the enabling activity projects approved in accordance with these procedures in the period since its previous meeting.