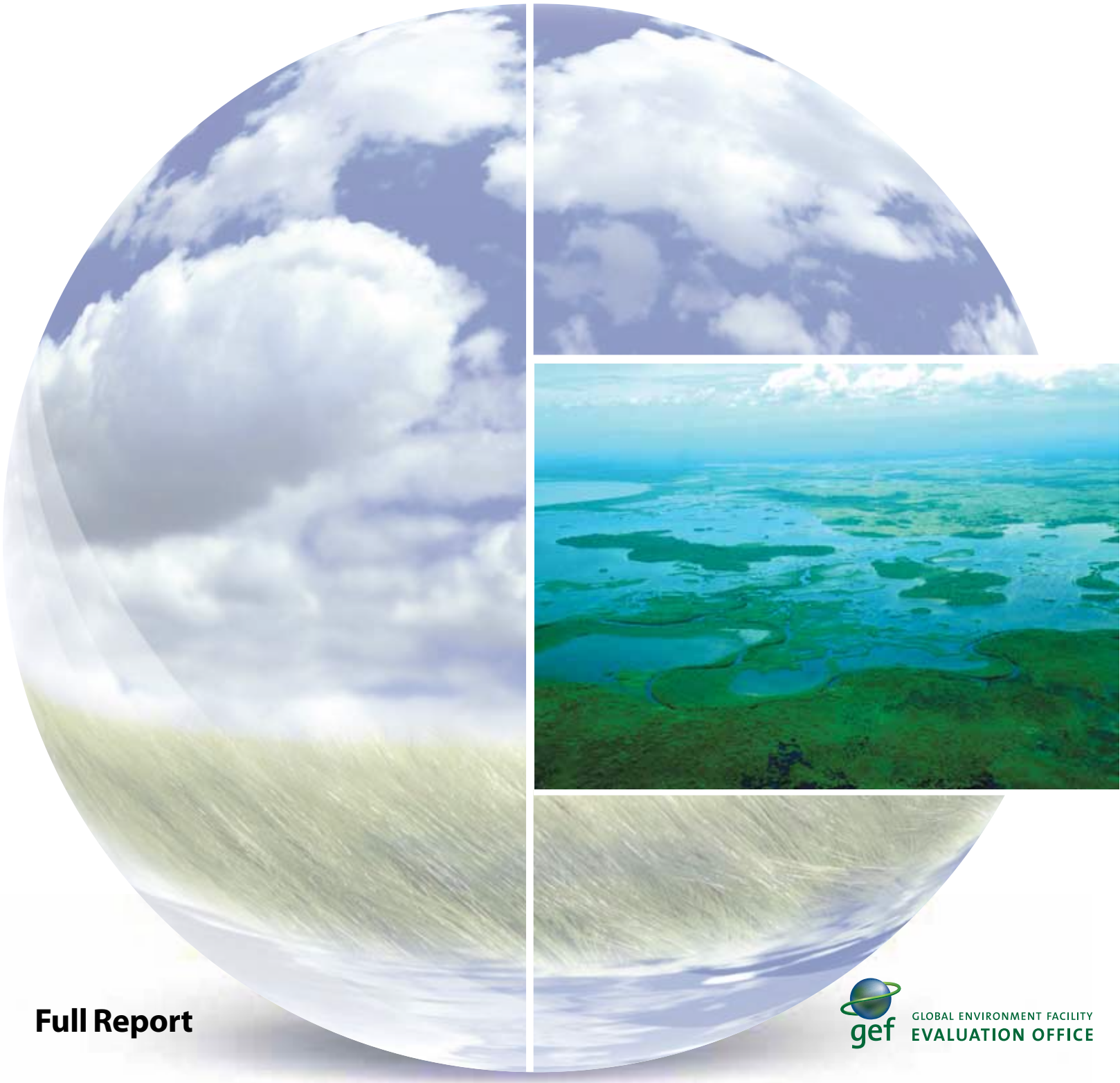
Evaluation of the GEF Strategic Priority for Adaptation

JULY 2011



Full Report

GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY
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Global Environment Facility
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Evaluation of the GEF Strategic Priority for Adaptation

July 2011

(The main conclusions and recommendations of this evaluation were presented to the GEF Council at its November 2010 meeting.)

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1818 H Street, NW
Washington, DC 20433
Internet: **www.gefeo.org**
Email: **gefeo@thegef.org**

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Credits
Director of the GEF Evaluation Office: Robert D. van den Berg
Task Manager: Claudio Volonté, Chief Evaluation Officer, GEF Evaluation Office
Evaluation Team: Sandra Romboli, Task Team Leader, Evaluation Officer, GEF Evaluation Office; Joana Talafré, Senior Consultant; Sara Trab Nielsen, Consultant

Editing and design: Nita Congress
Cover photo: Flooded mangroves in Belize, by Sara Trab Nielsen, Consultant, GEF Evaluation Office

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Foreword

In November 2008 the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Council asked the GEF Evaluation Office to perform an evaluation of the GEF Strategic Priority for Adaptation (SPA) pilot program. This evaluation was conducted fully and independently by the GEF Evaluation Office with support from the GEF Secretariat, GEF Agencies, governments, and civil society organizations.

The evaluation's purpose was to provide lessons and experiences from implementation of the first climate change adaptation strategy supported by the GEF and thereby assist the GEF Council in making further decisions on adaptation. It included several areas of assessment:

- Relevance of the strategy to the GEF mandate and focal areas, as well as to countries' national sustainable development and adaptation agendas
- Effectiveness of the proposed adaptation measures
- Efficiency of project development and management in implementing the strategy
- Results of the strategy and projects thus far as well as their sustainability

The evaluation was carried out from January to September 2010 by a team from the GEF Evaluation Office accompanied by an independent consultant with experience in adaptation, the GEF focal areas, and evaluation. Twenty-six GEF projects under implementation were reviewed using a common project review protocol, and extensive interviews were completed with stakeholders at several stages of the evaluation process. In the field, two projects in Namibia were visited. The evaluation also included a comparative analysis with nine non-SPA GEF projects to assess how these projects addressed, or did not address, climate change and adaptation options. A consultation workshop took place in September 2010 to present the preliminary findings of the evaluation and receive feedback from key stakeholders on possible factual errors and analysis, as well as possible recommendations.

The evaluation was presented at the GEF Council meeting in November 2010. Upon reviewing the document as well as the management response from the GEF Secretariat and GEF Agencies, the Council asked that the Secretariat continue to manage the implementation of the SPA portfolio and to ensure that mainstreaming resilience and adaptation in the GEF focal areas continues as a means of reducing the risks of climate change impacts to the GEF portfolio.

The GEF Evaluation Office would like to thank all who collaborated with the evaluation: its staff and consultants, national coordinators, members of the national steering committees, and the staff from country offices. I would like to thank all those involved for their support and useful criticism.

Rob van den Berg
Director, Evaluation Office

Acknowledgments

This report was prepared by a team managed by Claudio Volonté, Chief Evaluation Officer at the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Evaluation Office. The evaluation team was led by Sandra Romboli, Evaluation Officer, and supported by Joana Talafré, Senior Consultant; Sara Trab Nielsen, Consultant, assisted in the final editing and preparation stages.

The evaluation team wishes to thank the GEF Adaptation Task Force, the GEF Secretariat, and the GEF Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel for their support and advice in preparing the evaluation. We are also grateful for assistance in completing the evaluation provided by the GEF Agencies with Strategic Priority for Adaptation (SPA) projects; we are grateful too to the SPA team members at the GEF Secretariat for their cooperation and assistance in collecting all relevant information.

Members of the projects visited in Namibia provided full cooperation and actively participated in the logistical support; we acknowledge in particular Chris Brown, Namibia Nature Foundation; Irene Nunes, Desert Research Foundation of Namibia, and Juliane Zeidler, Integrated Environment Consultants of Namibia.

The Evaluation Office is fully responsible for the contents of the report.

Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
CEO	chief executive officer
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
LDCF	Least Developed Countries Fund
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
POP	persistent organic pollutant
SCCF	Special Climate Change Fund
SPA	Strategic Priority for Adaptation
STAP	Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

All dollar amounts are U.S. dollars unless otherwise indicated.

1. Conclusions and Recommendations

As a precursor to operationalizing the climate funds created under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)—the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF) and the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF)—the Global Environment Facility (GEF) was mandated to finance pilot projects that would demonstrate the practical and successful use of adaptation planning and assessment. To this end, the GEF established the Strategic Priority for Adaptation (SPA) in 2003, dedicating $50 million under its Trust Fund to finance pilot and demonstration projects aimed at helping countries reduce vulnerability and increase adaptive capacity to the adverse effects of climate change in any or a combination of the GEF focal areas.

The SPA portfolio comprises 26 GEF projects and programs financed by $48.35 million in SPA funding, $79.28 million in GEF focal area support (for 12 projects), and $649.64 million in other cofinancing support, for a total portfolio value of $777.27 million. Within the SPA portfolio, 17 are full-size projects and 9 are medium size. The three primary GEF Agencies—the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)—are responsible for implementing the majority of these projects. The Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) implement a total of four SPA projects, accounting for 16 percent of SPA funding. While all SPA funding was approved in GEF-3 (2003–06), slightly more than half (about 57 percent) of the funding was committed in that replenishment period; the remainder (approximately $20.8 million) was committed under GEF-4 (2006–10). The SPA reached its financial close at the end of GEF-4 in June 2010.

In 2008, the GEF Evaluation Office was asked to carry out an evaluation of the SPA; this was completed by mid-2010. The evaluation was aimed at providing lessons vital to the success of other adaptation funds, and for consideration by the GEF in tackling climate change adaptation in its other activities.

At the time of the evaluation, only 11 projects had passed their midterm mark, and many had not yet commenced implementation. Further, in many cases, the results of adaptation activities are likely to be discernible only after 15 or more years. For these reasons, and because the SPA was a pioneering initiative in the field of adaptation funding, the evaluation was limited to an assessment of the SPA strategy and of the various project design and implementation approaches.

1.1 Conclusions

In its evaluation of the SPA, the GEF Evaluation Office reached the following 10 conclusions.

Conclusion 1: All SPA projects fulfilled the GEF requirement of identifying global environmental benefits, explicitly included climate change impacts on these benefits, and are relevant to the GEF mandate.

All the SPA projects succeeded in identifying global environmental benefits, although some projects contained clearer definitions than others. The types of benefits identified in SPA projects were similar to those identified in regular GEF projects in line with focal area strategies, strategic objectives, and operational programs in force at the time of project design. All SPA projects are well anchored within GEF practice, guidance, and policies.

SPA project documents provide an assessment of the potential impacts of current climate variability and future climate change on global environmental benefits and on development. The level of detail provided varies depending on the availability of information on climate scenarios and vulnerability assessments.

The types of global environmental benefits to be expected from SPA projects are not different from those of typical GEF projects, indicating a potentially strong linkage (and potential operational convergence) between resilience and global environmental benefits.

Most of the SPA projects (21) claim global environmental benefits in the biodiversity area; 14 claim benefits in the land degradation area. Table 1.1 presents a sampling of the global environmental benefits and threat reductions most frequently cited for SPA projects.

Conclusion 2: The $50 million SPA initiative has the potential of providing climate resilience, at varying degrees, to $780 million in project investments.

The SPA components showed clear linkages to the projects' overall objectives. Consequently, the SPA component of each has the potential to provide climate resilience to the rest of the project. And, because capacity building was a cross-cutting element of the projects in the SPA portfolio, this potential could be further realized in these projects. Some replication of SPA lessons is also possible, as several of these projects belong to larger programs.

The set of interventions and major outcomes found in SPA project designs can be classified into three categories and two cross-cutting elements (knowledge management and capacity building).

- **Policy, regulatory, and institutional activities.** These include training, policy revisions, and regulatory activities to ensure that climate change considerations are taken into account in future planning. These activities are targeted at establishing enabling conditions for immediate as well as long-term adaptation.
- **Technical capacity development and assessments.** These include vulnerability assessments, climate models, or climate impact assessments designed to provide technical tools for adaptation. While targeted toward government institutions, these activities are pragmatically focused and usually allow for transition toward on-the-ground measures.
- **On-the-ground pilot adaptation measures.** Most projects in the SPA portfolio contain pilot demonstrations of adaptation measures (practices, technologies, approaches) working on the ground with vulnerable communities and ecosystems. Although these measures tend to be broadly defined in the projects, they usually consist of modifications to natural resource management, ecosystem rehabilitation, and

Table 1.1

Frequently Cited Global Environmental Benefits/Reduction of Threats of SPA Projects by Theme

Theme	Benefit/threat reduction
Biological resources (biodiversity, ecosystem services, and so on)	• Conservation of plant agrobiodiversity • Conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, species conservation in biodiversity hotspots (plants and animals) • Conservation of species available for crop improvement • Maintenance or restoration of habitat integrity • Reduction of losses in coral reefs, sea grass beds and islands • Wetland species conservation • Improved management of protected areas • Ecosystem integrity
Forests (deforestation, carbon sequestration, buffer zones)	• Maintenance of forest resilience • Avoided deforestation • Avoided fragmentation • Avoided fire or fire control and management • Carbon sequestration • Maintenance of ecosystem services such as water retention, filtration, agricultural productivity and habitat • Key ecosystem integrity (forests, coral reefs, mangroves) and services • Maintenance of ecological buffer zones
Water management (water ecosystems, water availability, and so on)	• Watershed integrity • Protection of coral reefs and marine biodiversity
Land management (agriculture, soil management, carbon sequestration, erosions prevention)	• Maintenance of soil fertility • Reduced land degradation • Reduced erosion • Carbon sequestration • Carbon sequestration in biomass • Improved land productivity • Reduced coastal erosion • Carbon stocks in soil and biota

some light infrastructural works. Given the relative weight of the SPA contribution to total project budgets (6 percent overall), the adaptation portions of the SPA projects are quite limited in scope. These pilot demonstrations are thus usually very localized, and the "investment-type" activities limited.

- **Knowledge management.** All the projects in the SPA portfolio contain a plan for gathering and disseminating lessons learned, which corresponds to an objective of the SPA itself as well as to current practice in project development. Knowledge management measures included in project design were either limited to the project itself (a project Web site or an awareness campaign) or extended to regional and global audiences (adaptation learning mechanism, regional forums).
- **Capacity building.** This second cross-cutting element takes various forms depending on whether it is being applied at the policy, technical, or on-the-ground level. Capacity-building project measures include training, policy revisions, local mobilization, and activities designed to strengthen livelihoods for adaptive capacity.

Conclusion 3: The SPA portfolio of projects is diverse with regard to sectors, themes, and focal areas, with an emphasis on biodiversity and land degradation.

Analysis of the 26 projects in the SPA portfolio found that 21 addressed biodiversity, 14 involved land degradation, and 5 addressed international waters. This distribution correlates to the global environmental benefits listed in table 1.1. The persistent organic pollutants (POPs) focal area was not represented in the SPA portfolio, and only a few projects included linkages to climate change mitigation. A further analysis of project objectives reveals that, regardless of the focal area under which projects were formally classified, a number of themes recurred in the portfolio, most often related to land management, biodiversity or species conservation, water management, and agriculture.

All regions are represented in the SPA portfolio, especially Asia. This emphasis is somewhat at odds with the original expectation that most projects would occur in Africa due to its greater vulnerability to climate change; it is most likely due to the state of demand and capacity among countries and regions at the time of the SPA financing cycle.

Conclusion 4: Portfolio projects were developed in accordance with the elements and requirements of the SPA operational guidelines, with some exceptions.

The operational guidelines provide basic definitions of the concepts and issues to be addressed through the SPA, basic requirements for project design and eligibility, review criteria, and indicators (GEF Council 2005). The basic requirements and eligibility criteria for SPA projects were the same as are applied to all GEF Trust Fund projects with regard to global environmental benefits, country ownership, sustainability, replicability, and stakeholder participation.

All 26 projects were found to be consistent with the objectives of the SPA guidelines, in that they all proposed pilot demonstration activities designed to test adaptation options or technologies. In keeping with the spirit of the SPA as a learning program, all projects also include specific plans for learning and replication. The projects also demonstrate a high degree of country ownership, thorough understanding of baseline conditions, and linkages to national policies and priorities.

The projects are also consistent with the objectives of the SPA to **reduce vulnerability and increase adaptive capacity**. The majority of projects referred to available information on vulnerability, such as national communications or national adaptation programs of action. Although most of the project documents indicated that a vulnerability assessment would be conducted during the project's implementation, in most cases, there is no evidence of participatory vulnerability assessment being undertaken as part of project design. The evaluation found that although such assessment could have enriched the portfolio, it would have also entailed much longer project design phases and potential delays in implementing the SPA.

The SPA operational guidelines outline the principle of a **double increment**, whereby the activities designed to produce global environmental benefits would comprise the first increment, and the second increment would arise from the requirement to "ensure the robustness of those global environmental benefits by improving the resilience of the systems concerned" (GEF Council 2005, p. 7). The agreement was that costs associated with the first increment would be funded by the GEF focal areas, and those associated with the second increment would be funded by the SPA pilot.

This element of the SPA guidelines, the articulation of incremental reasoning, proved more dif-

ficult to operationalize. Project contributions to global environmental benefits, although relatively well articulated, are often not readily measurable, and many projects reported difficulties with the design of the double increment requirement. According to many of those who were interviewed during this evaluation, this requirement was a constraint on project design, as well as on the selection of adaptation measures: it appeared to limit the scope of possible activities, and there was limited capacity in the system to deal with adaptation issues. Most projects did make the effort to link adaptation measures to potential global environmental benefits, at least theoretically.

Projects dealt with the double incrementality reasoning in a number of different ways. In some projects, the adaptation measures were applied directly to the activities targeting global environmental benefits (to make the global environmental benefits more resilient). In other cases, the logic of the project required that the adaptation measure focus on increasing local adaptive capacity or on removing a human-induced threat to the global environmental benefits. Some projects included a few adaptation measures that had no link to global environmental benefits (even though, as noted, all projects contained at least a theoretical articulation of global environmental benefits).

Since the creation of the SPA guidelines, practice has moved toward a more flexible interpretation of incremental reasoning. Not surprisingly, in the large majority of cases in the SPA portfolio, the double increment was not calculated, since the activities and components designed to enhance global environmental benefits became mixed with the activities designed as adaptation measures.

The focal area **cofunding expectations**, as spelled out in the SPA guidelines, were not entirely fulfilled. Fourteen projects mobilized funding for adaptation only from the SPA; the remaining dozen projects mobilized funding from other focal areas (some in more than one), reflecting an evolution over time in focal area interest in adaptation and resilience issues.

As with articulation of the double increment guideline, many projects had trouble articulating the corresponding set of **double indicators** specified in the SPA guidelines. In general, the quality and elaboration of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks varied greatly across the SPA portfolio projects. Some frameworks were highly developed and detailed, including information on baseline data, sources of verification, precise indicator measurement, target values and dates, assumptions, and risks; others remained at a high, summary level. There is limited information on what works well in terms of M&E frameworks and indicators, and what poses difficulties during project implementation.

Conclusion 5: Adaptation measures proposed in SPA projects were found to be generally "no-regrets" measures dealing with the management of natural resources.

A large number of the adaptation measures contained in SPA projects could be considered "no-regrets" measures, meaning that they would deliver development or environmental benefits regardless of the manifestation of climate change.

Table 1.2 provides a list of adaptation measures cited in the SPA projects addressing the top four themes (agriculture, land management, coastal zone management, and water management), and classified according to the three general types of interventions (policy, technical, and on-the-ground).

These adaptation measures were found in regular GEF projects as well as in regular development projects, especially those categorized as on-the-ground interventions. Thus, it is primarily

Table 1.2

Most Frequently Cited Adaptation Interventions in the SPA Portfolio by Type

Type	Intervention
Policy, planning, and regulatory	Local development planning, land use planning that integrates CC [climate change], interministerial coordination, awareness raising, local risk management and planning, mainstreaming, policy analysis and review, bottom-up planning processes, ICZM [integrated coastal zone management] planning, land use planning, zoning, coordination.
Technical capacity	Extension services, training, seasonal forecast and climate predictions, seed insurance schemes, climate modeling, inventories (agro-biodiversity), early warning, risk mapping, hazard mapping (droughts and floods), remote sensing, construction guidelines, zoning, manuals and guidelines on adaptation, disaster risk management, awareness raising, mainstreaming, sand extraction bans, flora and fauna inventories, methodology development and vulnerability assessments, modeling, research, protected area management and extension, risk assessment, global ocean observing system and SLR [sea level rise] monitoring, hydrological assessments and models, including groundwater assessments, decision support tools.
On the ground	Water harvesting, improved grazing, improved post harvest management, improved tillage, terracing, stress resistant varieties (crops and livestock), reforestation, afforestation and revegetation, irrigation, crop rotation, watershed management, fuelwood plantation, alternative energies, economic diversification, fire management and alert, invasive species eradication, mangrove restoration, agro-forestry, sand beach restoration, structural protection measures, climate monitoring and analysis, construction guidelines, risk analysis methods, beach nourishment, groynes and revetments, sand dune stabilization through revegetation, soil conservation, mangrove reforestation, waste management, coral reef co-management, integrated water management, irrigation.

Note: This information is extracted from project documents and is reproduced here unedited.

the intent with which a measure is being implemented that differentiates an adaptation measure from other, non-adaptation measures (that is, if it is applied with a climate change perspective or not).

Given the rather general way in which adaptation measures were formulated in the SPA projects, it can be inferred that, at the time of project design, knowledge of such measures was at a theoretical level. The lack of technical precision provided in project documentation at the design stage supports this conclusion when compared to design documents for later adaptation projects outside the SPA.

The adaptation measures were also found to be similar across focal areas and themes—which could be attributed to the fact that projects in the SPA have tended to blend multiple themes together, or it could be the result of a set of underlying assumptions regarding the root causes of vulnerability to climate change. Indeed, most adaptation measures in SPA projects have targeted natural resource uses and management practices at different levels (local, community, and policy), indicating an assumption that an optimal way to reduce vulnerability is by changing human behavior.

Analysis of non-SPA projects reveals that similar approaches appear to have been implemented for other GEF projects where the sole objective was the protection or creation of global environmental benefits. Furthermore, activities with similar components can be found under SPA and non-SPA projects portrayed as "pilot adaptation measures" in one case, but not in the others. This is especially true for on-the-ground adaptation measures.

The most significant difference between SPA and non-SPA projects was that activities in the SPA had to be articulated according to climate change vulnerabilities and impacts. However, very few SPA

projects explicitly demonstrate that this thinking was the basis for the selection of adaptation measures. In this regard, the evaluation found limited evidence to indicate that adaptation options were selected on the basis of dedicated vulnerability assessments or on the basis of broader lists of options from which to choose.

Some adaptation measures in SPA project activities differed from those used in other projects in terms of policy, planning, and regulatory framework and technical capacity categories. For example, activities targeting participatory vulnerability assessments and mapping, climate modeling, and technology applications, as well as the demonstration of specific adaptation mechanisms and the early integration of climate change in planning frameworks, were all specific to SPA projects or to the SPA components within broader projects and programs. This finding indicates that the SPA did provide added value in terms of climate change consideration—albeit at an earlier stage of adaptation than originally expected, and focused on capacity building and enabling environments.

SPA projects presented good opportunities for creating synergies among activities that promote good environmental practices and those that aim at resilience. Thus, with marginal additional investment, SPA projects offer a strong convergence for, and a high potential for "win-win-win" scenarios achieving benefits in, development, environment, and resilience.

Conclusion 6: Results achieved so far have been at the output level; most SPA portfolio projects are either in their early stages of implementation or have not yet started.

More than half of the portfolio is in its early stages. At the beginning of this evaluation, 11 projects had not yet started, 4 were in an early start-up phase, 9 were at their midpoint, and only 2 had been completed. As a young portfolio, the SPA has so far generated limited lessons on the implementation of adaptation measures. Therefore, this evaluation can draw only limited conclusions regarding the achievement of the SPA's objectives.

The majority of project results delivered to date have been output oriented. Key results achieved with regard to **policy, regulatory, and institutional** issues include the development of technical studies and vulnerability assessments, national consultations, awareness raising, and the production of technical guidelines. Projects also reported a number of tangible outputs regarding **technical capacity**, including the deployment of technologies related to climate monitoring and the convening of technical training workshops on specific thematic issues such as climate monitoring, coastal erosion, and health monitoring. Many projects also reported achieving revisions of policy documents to address climate change issues, indicating good progress toward individual projects' mainstreaming goals.

Given the limited amount of detail provided in implementation reports, it was not possible to derive a consistent understanding of progress regarding **on-the-ground adaptation** activities. For the few projects that reported such results, these were focused on the delivery of outputs on the ground. For example, for the Namibia-based project Adapting to Climate Change through the Improvement of Traditional Crops and Livestock Farming (GEF ID 2915), 70 water harvesting tanks were distributed, 11 drip irrigation sites were established, and 100 farmers were trained in conservation agriculture. The documentation for two other projects—Integrated National Adaptation Plan: High Mountain Ecosystems, Colombia's Caribbean Insular Areas and Human Health (GEF ID 2019) and the global Community Based Adaptation Programme (GEF ID 2774)—

referenced the operation of several pilot adaptation activities including two communal systems benefiting 165 people. In some cases, results included progress in delivering some of the physical works envisaged by the projects, such as the dune replanting and stabilization, mangrove rehabilitation, and the dissemination of alternative livelihoods tools and technologies referenced by the Adaptation to Climate Change—Responding to Coastline Change and Its Human Dimensions in West Africa through Integrated Coastal Area Management (GEF ID 2614).

Project implementation documentation and interviews also noted some challenges specific to the SPA initiative—in addition to regular project challenges—such as coordination difficulties, particularly where multiple partners and multiple countries were involved. Some project stakeholders highlighted the fact that, because adaptation was a new area of work for many national institutions, projects needed more intensive capacity building and awareness raising from the start, as compared to regular projects. The lack of localized and applicable climate data and models was seen as an obstacle in many projects.

Conclusion 7: Despite evidence of mainstreaming of adaptation within the GEF at the strategic level and in project design, certain limitations are preventing fully effective integration.

The evaluation found evidence of gradual mainstreaming of adaptation and resilience concepts and measures in the GEF focal area strategies as they evolved from GEF-3 to GEF-5 (2010–14). For example, the biodiversity, international waters, and land degradation focal area strategies all integrate climate change issues in a more explicit manner in GEF-3, GEF-4, and GEF-5. Some of the GEF-4 projects have also begun to integrate adaptation and resilience concepts in their designs. Climate change is increasingly being recognized as a threat to the sustainability of the GEF portfolio, and addressing it is increasingly recognized as an intrinsic part of protecting or creating global environmental benefits.

It is not possible to determine the extent to which this growth in awareness can been attributed to the SPA. However, it is possible to affirm that the SPA has provided some incentive toward this recognition—at least at the strategic level—since it has contributed to building capacity within the GEF, its focal areas, and among its Agencies on adaptation and climate change.

Several factors may prevent the integration or mainstreaming of climate change adaptation and resilience into the GEF's activities from becoming fully effective:

- Tangible mechanisms for operationalization, such as the climate change screening tools, are not yet in place, even though this was decided upon already in GEF-4.
- Gaps exist in the scientific knowledge related to potential climate change impacts and possible adaptation measures in the GEF global environmental benefit areas; there are also capacity gaps in applying available science.
- The GEF system offers few incentives to take climate change impacts and adaptation issues into account, and resources are already limited to deal with demands in each of the focal areas.
- Difficulties exist in determining the incrementality of adaptation and in conceptualizing an operational link between adaptation and global environmental benefits.
- There is limited collaboration and cooperation among the various GEF-managed funds regarding adaptation and the possibilities of cofinancing, for example.

Conclusion 8: The SPA portfolio's youth notwithstanding, some lessons can be extracted for the GEF as a whole.

Funding made available through the SPA provided a financial incentive for project proponents to explicitly consider climate change impacts, assessments, and adaptation options. SPA projects have allowed for the deployment of early adaptation measures, particularly with regard to capacity building and enabling frameworks.

Most SPA projects had not achieved the midterm goals they had set for themselves. Project duration was too short, and in many cases, project strategies were too ambitious given the limited levels of knowledge and capacity. These factors somewhat diminished the opportunities for success. Several SPA projects reported experiencing startup delays for reasons common to other development or GEF projects. However, SPA projects also tended to involve an added degree of complexity—for example, by including activities to support several GEF focal area objectives as well as other activities to improve the current situation.

Clear and coherent M&E frameworks are essential to the determination of objective lessons from a project given the pilot nature of the SPA. Projects that failed to provide a strong M&E system have also reported difficulties in project management.

Conclusion 9: There are weaknesses in the management of the SPA portfolio, but there is still time to correct these.

The expectations for SPA management as set forth in the operational guidelines may have been unrealistic, given the level of available resources within the GEF Secretariat, particularly in the early days of adaptation work. A possible shortcoming may have been introduced by the GEF Secretariat and GEF Council in creating a pilot program without the appropriate level of support to operate according to its guidelines.

Other shortcomings were found with regard to the monitoring of project gaps in the operationalization of M&E frameworks and in the formal approval, selection, and coordination mechanisms within the GEF Secretariat adaptation team.

Regular GEF procedures for project selection, review, and approval were followed for the SPA, as the operational guidelines provided little additional information on these topics from a technical point of view. No institutionalized mechanism for SPA funding distribution across focal areas, regions, or projects was employed; nor were any clear and explicit technical selection criteria and procedures, such as the use of project review committees. Although the funding approach taken appears to have been to allocate funds on a demand-driven, "first-come, first-served" basis, the delays in committing SPA funds (two projects were still in late approval stages at the time of the evaluation) seem to belie the high demand for adaptation funds.

Project review and design appear to have been conducted with varying degrees of technical input, with no explicit process for systematic sharing through the GEF Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP), for example, or for coordination among GEF Secretariat teams. Collaboration was found to be sporadic and was not formalized; this may represent a lost opportunity to promote integration among the focal areas, which is one of the main purposes of the SPA pilot. Coordination was found to occur informally, which may not be sufficient to ensure the necessary integration of adaptation into the focal areas.

As a coordination mechanism for the GEF partnership as a whole, the Climate Change Adaptation Task Force—a group comprised of representatives from the GEF Agencies and chaired by the GEF Secretariat adaptation team—has undertaken an impressive number of functions, although operat-

ing with few resources, especially in the early years. However, the terms of reference for the task force identify numerous management functions that have yet to be fulfilled, such as the development of internal policies to manage the GEF adaptation pipeline and portfolio, and the collection of results from projects. The evaluation found it unrealistic to expect the number of tasks outlined to be actually implemented, in light of the resources available at the time of the task force's establishment.

As a learning pilot, the SPA was expected to generate lessons for future adaptation programming within and outside the GEF. The Adaptation Learning Mechanism: Learning by Doing (GEF ID 2557)—a global project implemented by UNDP—was intended as the key mechanism for achieving this function. However, the program did not specifically focus on SPA projects and lessons as originally intended, effectively leaving the SPA without a dedicated learning mechanism.

Beyond project-level monitoring conducted at the Agency level, no portfolio-level monitoring has been conducted of ongoing or completed projects. There is no effective mechanism whereby Agencies' project-level monitoring can inform the GEF Secretariat's portfolio-level mechanism.

Although no formal process of knowledge sharing was developed, there is evidence of learning and information sharing having occurred as a result of the SPA. For example, GEF Agency and Secretariat personnel all testify to having learned from SPA development and implementation.

Conclusion 10: As a learning pilot within the GEF, the SPA has yet to achieve its full effectiveness.

The SPA has yet to fulfill its potential as a learning pilot within the GEF, mainly because of a lack of dedicated, established learning and coordination mechanisms.

- The Adaptation Learning Mechanism project mentioned above has evolved into a broader initiative than was originally intended.
- There has been no SPA portfolio monitoring inside the GEF.
- Because of resource constraints, the Climate Change Adaptation Task Force has thus far been focused on pipeline management.

Given the relative youth of the SPA portfolio, there is still time and opportunity to begin a process of extracting lessons on how to integrate resilience and adaptation into GEF focal area work.

1.2 Recommendations

Recommendation 1: The GEF should continue to provide explicit incentives to mainstream resilience and adaptation to climate change into the GEF focal areas, as a means of reducing risks to the GEF portfolio.

Resilience to climate change is an intrinsic part of protecting or creating global environmental benefits given the strong convergence of global environmental benefits, development, and adaptation. As a first step in promoting this resilience, the GEF should provide necessary nonfinancial incentives and tools to operationalize the integration of resilience in its programming. These could include screening tools that are applicable at project design and approval, as well as safeguarding methodologies that will help identify multiple benefits and ensure that climate risks to the GEF portfolio are properly managed. These various tools and techniques should be accompanied by additional technical guidance on articulation of the links between resilience, adaptation, and global environmental benefits, with particular attention to the links and synergies among the various adaptation funds and the Trust Fund.

A second step could involve the mobilization of financial incentives. Strategic priorities could be created within focal areas that explicitly deal with climate change impacts, vulnerability assessments, and adaptation options to ensure that the risks and opportunities identified through the above mechanisms are addressed operationally and in synergy with the LDCF and SCCF.

Recommendation 2: To continue to manage implementation of the SPA, the GEF needs to provide sufficient resources to the GEF Secretariat beyond those dedicated to processing a pipeline of projects.

The relative youth of the SPA portfolio indicates that the SPA initiative—although fully committed—still needs to be managed from within the GEF, particularly if it is to deliver its intended learning results. To this end, the GEF should perform the following:

- Develop and implement a full learning framework or strategy to capture lessons, experiences, and progress regarding climate change impacts, vulnerability assessment, and adaptation options to be shared and incorporated into GEF focal areas. This learning framework should include appropriately resourced functions of results-based management, portfolio-level monitoring, and knowledge sharing and dissemination.
- Develop an M&E framework at the portfolio level for the SPA and other funds that facilitates tracking and monitoring of adaptation results throughout the GEF.

Recommendation 3: Given that adaptation measures in SPA projects are still under implementation, further evaluations could provide opportunities to learn from outcomes and progress toward impact.

The GEF Evaluation Office, the STAP, and the GEF Adaptation Task Force should develop guidelines for conducting midterm or final evaluations with a specific emphasis on how to review, select, and improve adaptation measures; how to screen for risks of maladaptation; and how to identify co-benefits between adaptation, development, and environment.

The GEF Evaluation Office should compile information from the final evaluations of SPA projects for its work on the adaptation topic.

1.3 Observation

Despite ongoing work, the 2007 GEF Council decision to elaborate screening tools for climate change has yet to be fulfilled (GEF Council 2007a).

2. Background and Approach

2.1 Background

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was adopted in 1992 as a global treaty aimed at reversing climate change trends through the limitation of anthropogenic sources of greenhouse gas emissions. Through this convention, the developed country (Annex I and II) parties committed themselves to helping those developing country parties that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change in meeting the costs of adapting to these adverse effects.[1]

At the 6th Conference of the UNFCCC Parties in Bonn in 2001, three adaptation funds were created as a means of responding to this need (Schipper 2006):

- The **Special Climate Change Fund** to support adaptation, technology transfer, energy, transport, industry, forestry, and waste management and activities to assist developing country parties in diversifying their economies
- The **Least Developed Countries Fund** to assist the 48 least developed countries in preparing and implementing national adaptation programs of action
- The **Adaptation Fund** to support concrete adaptation projects and programs in developing country parties to the Kyoto Protocol, financed from a share of Clean Development Mechanism projects

At the 7th Conference of the Parties in Marrakech in 2001, the GEF was given the responsibility of managing the first two funds. Before these funds were operationalized, however, the GEF was mandated to finance pilot projects that would demonstrate the practical and successful use of adaptation planning and assessment. In response, the GEF established an adaptation fund under its Trust Fund, Piloting an Operational Approach to Adaptation, funded with an initial allocation of $50 million. The Strategic Priority for Adaptation was approved by the GEF Council in November 2003. A series of draft operational guidance documents for the SPA were subsequently circulated to the Council; these were finalized in March 2005.

The SPA aims at reducing vulnerability and increasing adaptive capacity to the adverse effects of climate change in any or a combination of the GEF focal areas: biological diversity, climate change, international waters, land degradation, ozone layer depletion, and POPs. It does so by supporting pilot and demonstration projects that simultaneously address local adaptation needs and generate global environmental benefits. All SPA projects are funded based on the incremen-

[1] "Funding under the Convention," Decision 7/CP7; see http://unfccc.int/cooperation_and_support/financial_mechanism/special_climate_change_fund/items/3657.php.

tal cost principle and include project preparation grants, project grants, and Agency fees.

While all SPA funding was approved in GEF-3, slightly more than half (about 57 percent) of the funding was committed in that replenishment period; the remainder (approximately $20.8 million) was committed under GEF-4. The SPA pilot reached its financial close in June 2010, at the end of GEF-4; all of its resources are now fully allocated.[2] The lessons that can be extracted from the pilot are critical to the development of other adaptation funds and in further consideration of how the GEF needs to tackle adaptation issues in its other activities. To this end, the GEF Evaluation Office was asked in November 2008 to conduct an independent evaluation of the SPA pilot to be submitted at the November 2010 GEF Council meeting. It was expected that the lessons learned from implementation of the SPA as the first operational adaptation funding mechanism would assist the Council in making further decisions on adaptation.

2.2 Approach

The GEF Evaluation Office prepared an approach paper to guide the SPA evaluation (appendix A).[3] This paper set out the objectives and methods to be used in the evaluation process, and was circulated to key stakeholders for comment and input; it was finalized in March 2010.

The SPA evaluation is guided by an overarching question: **What can be learned from this pilot program in terms of climate change adaptation within the GEF focal areas, the resilience of these projects, and the effectiveness of the adaptation measures that have been applied so far?**

The main objectives of the evaluation were to

- assess the SPA strategy and its implementation,
- assess the SPA projects, and
- identify lessons on how to increase the resilience of adaptation measures in the GEF.

Several key areas of interest regarding future strategy and project development in the GEF are listed under each of these objectives, including the following:

- The relevance of the SPA strategy to the GEF, its focal areas, and mandate; to national sustainable development agendas; and to international financing for adaptation, including via the LDCF, the SCCF, and the Adaptation Fund
- Assessment of incorporation of the adaptation measures in the design of projects and the effectiveness of those that started implementation
- Lessons from project M&E systems
- Dissemination of lessons and learning mechanisms put in place for the SPA portfolio

Because the SPA is a pioneering initiative in the field of on-the-ground adaptation funding, the evaluation focused on gathering lessons, identifying examples of learning, and assessing the design of projects in the SPA portfolio. The data sets used in the evaluation are both qualitative and quantitative in nature. A mixed-method approach was used to strengthen the analysis through triangulation. The SPA evaluation was undertaken in a series of steps as presented in figure 2.1.

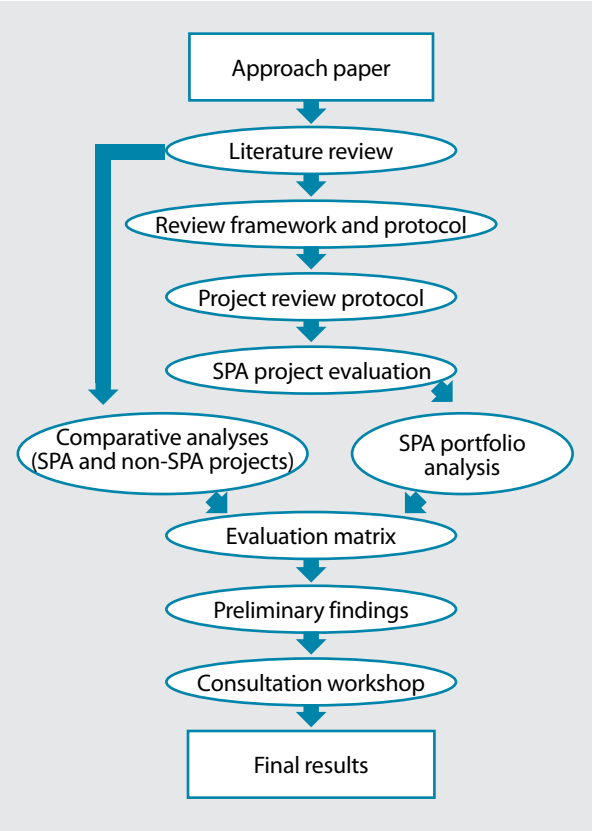
A **literature review** focusing on adaptation measures related to the GEF focal areas and the cur-

[2] The last $2 million is intended for two regional projects being implemented through the ADB in the Coral Triangle, but has not yet been formally allocated.

[3] The appendixes to this report are available on CD-ROM and on the GEF Evaluation Office Web site (www.gefeo.org).

Figure 2.1

Flowchart of the SPA Evaluation Process



rent context of adaptation funding was conducted at the onset of the evaluation process. Scientific methods and best practices were selected from these to construct a robust evaluation methodology and to guide the analysis of adaptation measures. The annotated bibliography resulting from this literature review is presented in appendix B.

An **annotated review framework and protocol** (appendix C) based on the approach paper was designed as a means of structuring and systematizing the evaluation process. It lists the questions and indicators used to review individual projects and to conduct a broader policy analysis. The review of SPA projects addressed their

- technical clarity and conceptual consistency,
- scientific approaches and methodologies,
- learning mechanisms, and
- project- and portfolio-level results and outcomes.

The portfolio was also analyzed to assess the overall relevance and effectiveness of the SPA strategy. This assessment focused on the following:

- **Relevance to the GEF mandate.** This analysis addressed the links between the SPA strategy and the GEF's mandate regarding global environmental benefits, the links between project objectives and the GEF mandate, and the links between the SPA portfolio and the focal area strategies as they have evolved from GEF-3 to GEF-5.
- **Effectiveness of adaptation measures.** This analysis was used to determine whether adaptation measures identified in project design are currently under implementation, and elements of their effectiveness in addressing perceived climate impacts or reducing vulnerability.
- **Effectiveness of monitoring systems.** This analysis included an assessment of the clarity of indicators and targets at the project level, particularly targets related to adaptation components; whether indicators are "SMART" (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound); and indicators' overall relevance in tracking adaptation and global environmental benefits as well as their overall relevance to the SPA and SPA guidance.
- **Efficiency of processing GEF projects, including SPA projects.** Because this analysis had been performed in other evaluations conducted by the GEF Evaluation Office, such as the Joint Evaluation of the GEF Activity Cycle and Modalities, this component was omitted from the present evaluation. Nonetheless,

other issues related to project development were assessed and possible lessons identified by the SPA evaluation team.

- **Extent to which the SPA, as a pilot, helped inform other adaptation policies.** This analysis provided insight into whether SPA projects and processes were instrumental in creating learning among adaptation constituencies at the national and global levels, and in the development of new adaptation approaches, mechanisms, and institutions.

A **project review protocol** (appendix D) was synthesized from the review framework and protocol to provide an objective framework for the analysis of the 26 projects comprising the SPA portfolio (appendix E). The evaluation team conducted its reviews of all projects using a common framework. This framework—which was designed using SurveyMonkey, a customizable Web-based survey tool that facilitates data analysis—consists of 31 short or multiple-choice questions, most allowing space for detailed comments and organized into three sections covering

- project information,
- evaluation of results and outcomes, and
- assessment of the overall relevance and effectiveness of the SPA strategy.

Specific questions addressed project relevance to the GEF mandate, the effectiveness of adaptation measures, the effectiveness of monitoring systems, links to national policies, and basic project data. Descriptive statistics were derived for the multiple-choice answers, and comments were screened for relevant examples and key lessons.

All available **project documentation**—including project identification forms (PIFs), project documents, GEF Chief Executive Officer (CEO) endorsement, project implementation reports, and midterm reviews—was reviewed during the evaluation process; the specific items reviewed are listed in appendix F.

While three **field trips** aimed at validating the contents of the project documents were planned, logistical difficulties in the host countries and an emphasis on evaluating project design led the evaluation team to limit itself to a visit to two SPA projects in Namibia.

A **portfolio analysis** was performed to identify trends among the SPA projects. This was supplemented by an analysis comparing SPA projects with non-SPA projects. This comparative analysis aimed at generating supplementary information on the design of adaptation projects, and paid particular attention to the difference between adaptation and baseline projects. Nine non-SPA projects were selected from the GEF-4 portfolio to create a sample set representative of the general project typology, the focal areas (including at least two projects per focal area), and the thematic issues addressed in the SPA portfolio. The following key elements of project design were compared:

- Type of interventions
- Project components
- Capacity building
- Rationales and assumptions

A detailed description of the non-SPA project analysis, criteria, and a list of projects are provided in appendix G. A summary of the analysis can be found in section 5.3 of this report.

Extensive interviews were conducted at several stages of the evaluation process to cross-check and validate the documentation that was available. These interviews were conducted with a wide range of stakeholders, including members of the Adaptation Task Force and the natural resources task force of the GEF, the STAP, the GEF Secretariat, the GEF Agencies, national gov-

ernments, project implementers, and other GEF stakeholders and beneficiaries. A list of the people consulted is presented in appendix H.

An **evaluation matrix** summarizing the key areas of interest outlined in the approach paper, the review framework and protocol, and the project review protocol was created to consolidate results and ensure that all required data were collected. The matrix, presented in appendix I, synthesizes the following items for each of the key evaluation questions:

- Indicators
- Sources of information/methodology
- Relevance
- Effectiveness
- Efficiency
- Key preliminary findings

A **consultation workshop** was held September 27, 2010, to present the preliminary findings of the evaluation and receive feedback from key stakeholders on possible factual errors in the analysis. Comments were reviewed and incorporated as appropriate into the final report.

The evaluation was conducted by staff from the GEF Evaluation Office and a senior consultant with extensive experience in climate change adaptation.

2.3 Key Terms and Definitions

Key terms and definitions used in this evaluation follow.

- **Adaptation.** Adjustment in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli or their effects that moderates harm or exploits beneficial opportunities. Various types of adaptation can be distinguished, including anticipatory and reactive adaptation, private and public adaptation, and autonomous and planned adaptation (IPCC 2001).
- **Adaptation benefits.** The avoided damage costs or the accrued benefits following the adoption and implementation of adaptation measures (IPCC 2001).
- **Adaptation costs.** Costs of planning, preparing for, facilitating, and implementing adaptation measures, including transition costs (IPCC 2001).
- **Adaptive capacity.** Potential or ability of a system (social, ecological, or economic, or an integrated system such as a region or community) to minimize the effects or impacts of climate change or to maximize the benefits from positive effects of climate change (IPCC 2001).
- **Climate change.** Any change in climate over time, whether due to natural variability or as a result of human activity (IPCC 2001).
- **Climate variability.** Variations in the mean state and other statistics (standard deviations, the occurrence of extremes, and so on) of the climate on all temporal and spatial scales beyond that of individual weather events. Variability may be due to natural internal processes within the climate system (internal variability), or to variations in natural or anthropogenic external forcing (external variability) (IPCC 2001).
- **Incremental costs.** Costs associated with transforming a project with national benefits into one with global environmental benefits. The incremental cost is the difference or "increment" between a less costly, more polluting option and a costlier, more environmentally friendly option.
- **Mainstreaming.** The integration of (adaptation) objectives, strategies, policies, measures, or operations so that they become part of national and regional development policies, processes, and budgets at all levels and stages (World Bank 2010).

- **Maladaptation.** Any change in natural or human systems that inadvertently increases vulnerability to climatic stimuli; an adaptation that does not succeed in reducing vulnerability but instead increases it (IPCC 2001). For the purposes of this evaluation, the term also includes adaptation measures that are not likely to remain viable or be effective under climate change scenarios.
- **Resilience.** Amount of change a system can undergo without changing state (IPCC 2001); the capacity of a system, community, or society potentially exposed to hazards to adapt, by resisting or changing in order to reach and maintain an acceptable level of functioning and structure. This is determined by the degree to which the social system is capable of organizing itself to increase its capacity for learning from past disasters for better future protection and to improve risk-reduction measures (UNISDR 2004).
- **Vulnerability.** The degree to which a system is susceptible to, or unable to cope with, adverse effects of climate change, including climate variability and extremes. Vulnerability is a function of the character, magnitude, and rate of climate variation to which a system is exposed, its sensitivity, and its adaptive capacity. Adaptation would therefore also include any efforts to address these components (IPCC 2001).

2.4 Limitations

This section presents the limitations identified during evaluation preparation as well as during its implementation.

Only 11 projects in the SPA portfolio (43 percent) were past their midterm. Therefore, only a **limited amount of documents describing the implementation experience** of the various projects (project implementation reports, progress reports, final reports, and so on) were available to the evaluation team. The evaluation was necessarily largely limited to an assessment of the SPA strategy and the various project design and implementation approaches. Moreover, as the evaluation progressed, it became clear that most of the 11 older projects in the portfolio still had much progress to make in implementing the actual adaptation measures. It was thus difficult to assess the effectiveness of adaptation options and measures in the SPA portfolio.

The **limited specificity and aspects of technical details** found in many of the design documents compounded the difficulty of assessing other areas, such as the rigor of scientific approaches and vulnerability and adaptation processes.

Although a **small number of project visits** were planned for this evaluation, these were in fact limited to two projects during a single country visit to Namibia. This restricted access to potentially valuable and independent information from stakeholders directly involved in projects on the ground. Although many interviews were conducted with relevant stakeholders during the evaluation process, a decision was made to focus on a documentary approach because it corresponded best to the bulk of the data available to the evaluation team. The primary objective of the field visits was to assess the implementation of adaptation measures. However, a project implementation review by the evaluation team found that only four projects in the portfolio had reached a level of implementation that could have provided experience and lessons from adaptation measures.

The **efficiency of processing SPA projects was not a central focus of this evaluation** since this issue has already been addressed by other evaluations conducted by the GEF Evaluation Office, such as the Joint Evaluation of the GEF Activity Cycle and Modalities.

This evaluation was **not intended as an evaluation of adaptation per se**, although it considers the various adaptation measures implemented in SPA projects. The evaluation focused on the SPA alone, and did not consider or compare it with other actors or mechanisms. In addition, the evaluation's consideration of adaptation mainstreaming limited itself to institutional mechanisms for learning, which were constructed as the SPA's main vehicle for promoting the integration of adaptation into GEF work. The scope of this evaluation did not allow for a full consideration of the impacts of the SPA within the individual GEF Agencies, although this could have provided additional insight on the role of the SPA as a learning pilot.

The evaluation was **conducted in the context of the original SPA operational guidelines**, which were written in 2005, while recognizing that thoughts concerning adaptation and its practice have significantly evolved since then.

3. Analysis of the SPA Portfolio

This chapter presents an overview of the SPA portfolio's composition and evolution, focusing on key statistics in order to derive a more comprehensive understanding of the portfolio as a whole as well as of projects on an individual basis. Table 3.1 summarizes the 26 SPA projects.

3.1 Portfolio Composition and Evolution

The SPA portfolio consists of 26 projects and programs receiving a total of $48.35 million in pilot financing from the GEF. Total project allocations for the portfolio, including financing from the GEF focal areas of $79.28 million (covering 12 projects) and cofinancing from other sources of $649.64 million, amounts to $777.27 million, of which the GEF SPA financing accounts for just 6 percent. The high level of cofinancing reflects the fact that several of these projects are part of very large and well-funded programs or regional initiatives, such as India's Sustainable Land and Ecosystem Management (SLEM) Partnership Program (GEF ID 3268); MENARID (Reducing Risks to Sustainable Management of the North West Sahara Aquifer System); and international waters programs in the Coral Triangle, the Plata Basin, and the Amazon River Basin.

The average per project SPA allocation is approximately $1.7 million. Five projects received less than $1 million, 17 received between $1 and $3 million, and 4 received over $3 million. The largest SPA allocation—$6.17 million—was made to the Integrated National Adaptation Plan: High Mountain Ecosystems, Colombia's Caribbean Insular Areas and Human Health project; the smallest—$220,000—went to the Integrated Land and Ecosystem Management to Combat Land Degradation and Deforestation in Madhya Pradesh project (GEF ID 3472).

The portfolio consists of 17 full-size and 9 medium-size projects. The World Bank, UNDP, and UNEP implement the majority of these projects; ADB, FAO, and IFAD implement a total of four projects.

Seventeen projects were implemented at the national level (table 3.2). The remaining projects have either a global or regional scope. In all, seven GEF regional projects are included in the SPA portfolio. These cut across three regions, with two in Africa, two in Asia, and three in Latin America and the Caribbean. SPA funding was also given to five SLEM subprojects in India; these are accounted for separately in the portfolio.

3.2 Distribution of SPA Financing and Projects by Agency

The World Bank implements 44 percent of GEF SPA financing (figure 3.1) through eight projects (figure 3.2); it also provides approximately 47 per-

Table 3.1

The SPA Portfolio as of June 30, 2010

GEF ID	Project title	GEF Agency	Country	Status[a]	GEF SPA financing (million $)	Cofinancing (million $)
3589	Coastal and Marine Resources Management in the Coral Triangle: Southeast Asia	ADB	Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines	A	1.0	76.0
3591	Coastal and Marine Resources Management in the Coral Triangle of the Pacific	ADB	Papua New Guinea, Solomon islands, Fiji, Timor Leste, Vanuatu	A	1.0	15.2
3882	Reversing Environmental Degradation and Rural Poverty through Adaptation to Climate Change in Drought Stricken Areas in Southern India: A Hydrological Unit Pilot Project Approach	FAO	India	A	1.0	2.9
2753	Participatory Coastal Zone Restoration and Sustainable Management in the Eastern Province of Post-Tsunami Sri Lanka	IFAD	Sri Lanka	I	2.1	7.6
2557	Adaptation Learning Mechanism: Learning by Doing	UNDP	Global	I	7.9	0.7
2614	Adaptation to Climate Change—Responding to Coastline Change and Its Human Dimensions in West Africa through Integrated Coastal Area Management	UNDP	Senegal, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Cape Verde	I	4.4	9.7
2630	Lake Balaton Integrated Vulnerability Assessment, Early Warning and Adaptation Strategies	UNDP	Hungary	C	1.1	3.1
2774	Community Based Adaptation (CBA) Programme	UNDP	Bangladesh, Bolivia, Guatemala, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Morocco, Namibia, Niger, Samoa, Vietnam	I	5.5	4.5
2915	Adapting to Climate Change through the Improvement of Traditional Crops and Livestock Farming	UNDP	Namibia	I	1.1	5.8
3024	Sustainable Participatory Management of Natural Resources to Promote Ecosystem Health and Resilience in the Thar Desert Ecosystem	UNDP	India	A	0.25	14.1
3129	Sustaining Agricultural Biodiversity in the Face of Climate Change	UNDP	Tajikistan	I	1.1	4.0
3134	Implementing Pilot Climate Change Adaptation Measures in Coastal Areas of Uruguay	UNDP	Uruguay	I	1.1	3.0
3415	Identification and Implementation of Adaptation Response Measures in the Drini-Mati River Deltas	UNDP	Albania	I	1.1	1.0
3417	Adaptation to Climate Change Impacts in the Mountain Forest Ecosystems of Armenia	UNDP	Armenia	I	1.0	0.9
3472	Integrated Land and Ecosystem Management to Combat Land Degradation and Deforestation in Madhya Pradesh	UNDP	India	A	0.22	95.5
2095	Sustainable Management of the Water Resources of the la Plata Basin with Respect to the Effects of Climate Variability and Change	UNEP	Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay	A	1.1	51.9
2364	Integrated and Sustainable Management of Transboundary Water Resources in the Amazon River Basin	UNEP	Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Suriname, Venezuela	A	2.2	45.6

GEF ID	Project title	GEF Agency	Country	Status[a]	GEF SPA financing (million $)	Cofinancing (million $)
2752	Integrating Vulnerability and Adaptation to Climate Change into Sustainable Development Policy Planning and Implementation in Southern and Eastern Africa	UNEP	Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania	I	1.1	1.3
2019	Integrated National Adaptation Plan: High Mountain Ecosystems, Colombia's Caribbean Insular Areas and Human Health (INAP)	WB	Colombia	I	6.2	9.5
2543	Kiribati Adaptation Program—Pilot Implementation Phase	WB	Kiribati	C	2.1	4.8
2552	Implementation of Pilot Adaptation Measures in Coastal Areas of Dominica, St. Lucia and St. Vincent & the Grenadines	WB	Dominica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines	I	2.6	3.4
2889	Zambezi Valley Market Led Smallholder Development	WB	Mozambique	I	1.7	21.2
3267	Adaptation to Climate Change Using Agrobiodiversity Resources in the Rain Fed Highlands of Yemen	WB	Yemen	A	4.6	31.8
3470	Sustainable Rural Livelihood Security through Innovations in Land and Ecosystem Management	WB	India	A	3.0	88.0
3471	Sustainable Land, Water and Biodiversity Conservation and Management for Improved Livelihoods in Uttarakhand Watershed Sector	WB	India	A	0.35	90.0
3669	Second Natural Resource Management Project	WB	Tunisia	A	0.7	58.4
Total					**48.4**	**649.6**

Source: GEF Secretariat, June 30, 2010.

Note: BD = biodiversity; CC = climate change; GEB = global environmental benefit; IW = international waters; LD = land degradation; WB = World Bank. Boldfaced projects have identified benefits in GEF focal areas other than climate change. See table 3.4 for details and financing from other focal areas. GEF SPA financing includes project preparation grants, project grants, and Agency fees.

a. A = approved; C = completed; I = under implementation.

Table 3.2

Scope of SPA Projects by Agency

Agency	National	Regional	Global	Total	%
ADB	0	2	0	2	8
FAO	1	0	0	1	4
IFAD	1	0	0	1	4
UNDP	8	1	2	11	42
UNEP	0	3	0	3	12
World Bank	7	1	0	8	31
Total	**17**	**7**	**2**	**26**	100

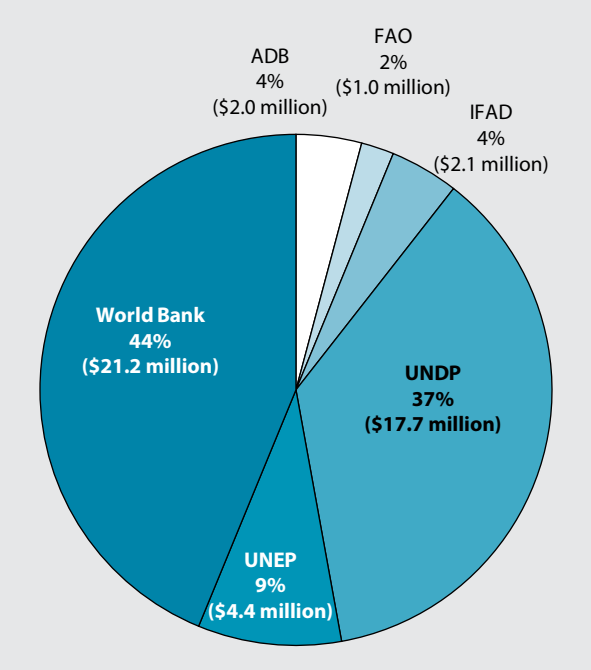
Source: GEF Secretariat, June 30, 2010.

cent of the cofinancing to the SPA portfolio projects. UNDP implements the second largest share of SPA financing (37 percent) and the largest number of SPA projects (11).

As shown in table 3.3, all of the SPA projects implemented by ADB and UNEP are regional in nature; UNDP implements the only two global SPA projects. IFAD and FAO each implement a national SPA project.

Figure 3.1

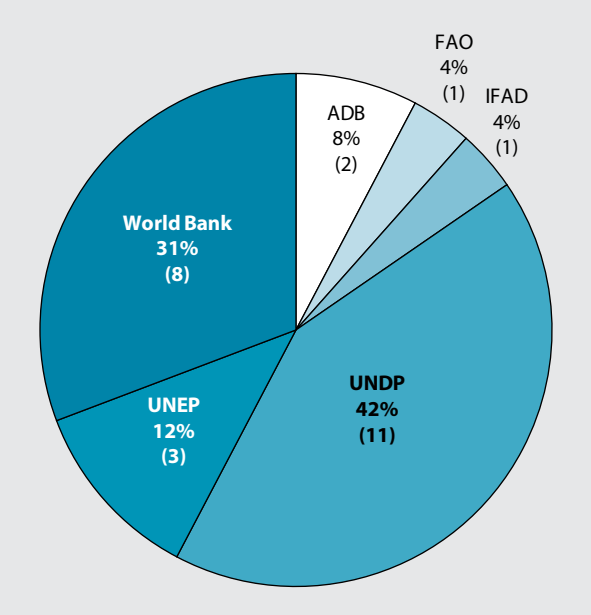
SPA Financing by Agency



Source: GEF Secretariat, June 30, 2010.

Figure 3.2

Number of SPA Projects by Agency



Source: GEF Secretariat, June 30, 2010.

Table 3.3

Overview of SPA Portfolio by GEF Agency as of June 30, 2010

GEF Agency	Number of SPA projects	SPA value (million $)	Other GEF funding (million $)	Cofinancing (million $)	Total project cost (million $)
ADB	2	2.0	19.4	91.1	112.5
FAO	1	1.0	0	2.9	3.9
IFAD	1	2.1	5.8	7.6	15.5
UNDP	11	17.7	8.4	142.2	168.2
UNEP	3	4.4	17.7	98.8	120.8
World Bank	8	21.2	28.1	307.1	356.3
Total	**26**	**48.4**	**79.3**	**649.6**	**777.3**

Source: GEF Secretariat, June 30, 2010.

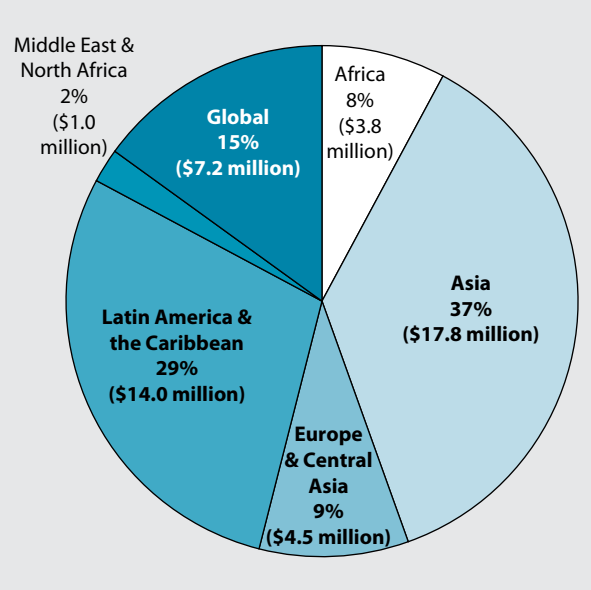
3.3 Distribution of SPA Financing and Projects by Region

Figures 3.3 and 3.4 disaggregate the SPA portfolio by region in terms of funding and number of projects. The data include two projects being implemented on a global basis, with a combined SPA allocation of over $7 million.

As the figures show, the majority of projects in the SPA portfolio are implemented across the **Asian region**, whether measured in terms of funding share ($17.7 million) or number of projects (nine). Five of the nine SPA projects implemented in Asia are located in India, subprojects of the SLEM Partnership Program. Two other proj-

Figure 3.3

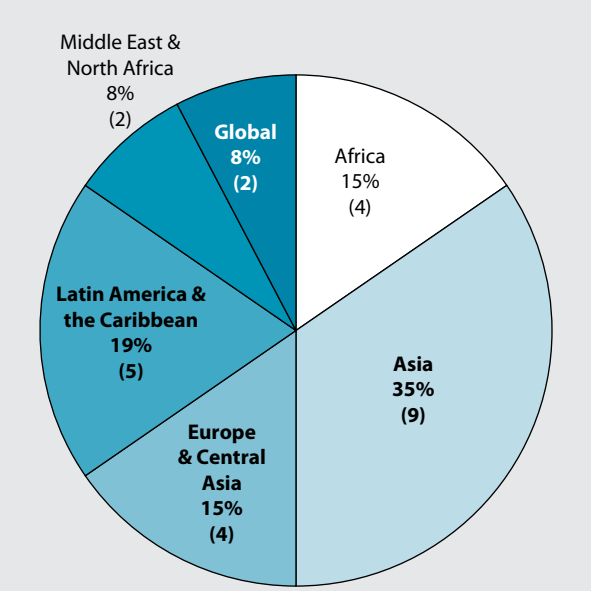
SPA Financing by Region



Source: GEF Secretariat, June 30, 2010.

Figure 3.4

Number of SPA Projects by Region



Source: GEF Secretariat, June 30, 2010.

ects are implemented at the national level in Sri Lanka and Kiribati, respectively. The remaining two Asian projects are regional studies on coastal and marine resources management implemented by ADB. In the **African region**, the portfolio includes two national projects implemented in Namibia and Mozambique, respectively; and two regional projects implemented by, respectively, UNDP and UNEP. The East European and Central Asian region is marked by the exclusive presence of nationally based SPA projects, located in Albania, Armenia, Hungary, and Tajikistan.

3.4 Linkages of SPA Projects to the GEF Focal Areas

Because the underlying intent of the SPA initiative is the integration of adaptation into the GEF focal areas, understanding the linkages between the GEF SPA portfolio and the focal areas is critical. All SPA projects were required to address global environmental benefits in one or more of the GEF focal areas as well as making these "more robust and resilient" through adaptation measures. However, not all projects received cofinancing from the focal areas; only 12 projects within the portfolio were cofinanced by the focal areas.

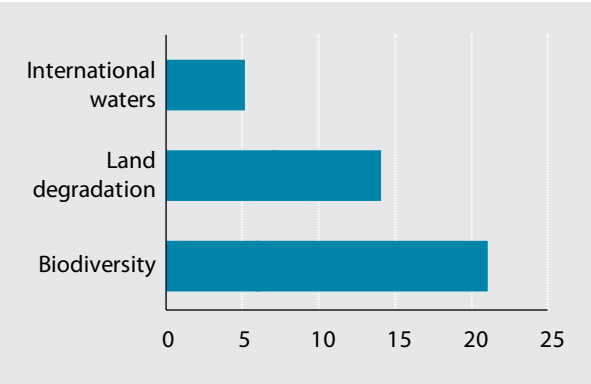
Figure 3.5 shows the distribution of SPA projects by focal area as determined by the evaluation team (see appendix J). This classification is linked to the global environmental benefits listed by the projects (table 3.1). Of the 26 SPA projects, 21 were classified as biodiversity projects, 14 were found to address land degradation, and 5 were concerned with international waters.

First, all SPA projects had to be labeled under the climate change focal area where the SPA funding resided.[1] In addition, the expectation from the SPA guidelines (see chapter 4) was that the costs

[1] During GEF-4, the SPA resided under Climate Change Strategic Objective 8: Adaptation.

Figure 3.5

Distribution of SPA Projects by Focal Area



Source: GEF Secretariat, June 30, 2010.

Note: The figure excludes the two global programs in the SPA portfolio (the Adaptation Learning Mechanism and Community Based Adaptation), as these apply to all focal areas.

required to achieve global environmental benefits would be covered from focal area funding, while the costs of making those global environmental benefits resilient (adaptation measures) would be funded out of the SPA. Thus, projects could be classified under more than one focal area (climate change/SPA and another focal area). As table 3.4 shows, however, not all SPA projects mobilized funding from the focal area in which they were claiming global environmental benefits. Some projects only received funding from the SPA allocation, while others received—in addition to SPA funding—cofinancing from one or more focal area allocations.

Table 3.4 lists the 12 projects that received cofinancing from one or more focal area: namely, biodiversity (6 projects; $21.3 million cofinancing), land degradation (7 projects; $28.2 million) and/or international waters (5 projects; $28.6 million). It is noteworthy that the international waters focal area was the only one that had to cofinance all of its SPA projects. Furthermore, the international waters focal area portfolio consisted of fewer projects than those of other focal areas but disposed of the highest amount of focal area financing.

3.5 Thematic Coverage

To provide a more thorough understanding of the issues addressed by the SPA portfolio than the focal area distribution permits, the projects were classified according to their thematic coverage. The themes used for this analysis are those most typically found in work on adaptation programming as well as the most frequently recurring issues in GEF projects; chief among these themes are the following:

- Agriculture (crop enhancement, livestock enhancement, input management)
- Land management (pasture management, erosion control)
- Water management (harvesting, mobilization, irrigation)
- Natural parks and conservation (marine protected areas, legislation, management planning)
- Biodiversity (species monitoring, habitat conservation, ecosystem rehabilitation, migratory species)
- Health (monitoring, animal and human health, prevention, treatment)
- Coastal zone management (erosion control, sea level rise management, coastal water management, reforestation, infrastructure)

Figure 3.6 illustrates the distribution of these themes across the SPA portfolio, regardless of projects' formal focal area classification. As shown, the themes that occurred most often were related to biodiversity (21 projects), land management (14 projects), water management (13 projects), and agriculture and coastal zone management (11 projects each). Other themes covered by the portfolio include fisheries (three projects), forests (two projects), and energy (two projects).

Table 3.4

Focal Area Financing

GEF ID	Project title	GEF Agency	Country / region	SPA funding	Focal area funding			Undetermined costs by focal area (PDF, PPG)	GEF costs (other focal areas)
					BD	LD	IW		
2095	Sustainable Management of the Water Resources of the la Plata Basin	UNEP	Regional	1.1			11.4		11.4
2364	Integrated and Sustainable Management of Transboundary Water Resources: Amazon	UNEP	Regional	2.2			6.3		6.3
2753	Participatory Coastal Zone Restoration and Sustainable Management: Sri Lanka	IFAD	Sri Lanka	2.1		5.8			5.8
2889	Zambezi Valley Market Led Smallholder Development	WB	Mozambique	1.7		5.5			5.5
3129	Conservation and Sustainable Use of Agro-biodiversity of Tajikistan	UNDP	Tajikistan	1.1	1.1				1.1
3024	Sustainable Participatory Management of Natural Resources in the Thar Desert Ecosystem	UNDP	India	0.3		0.8			0.8
3470	Sustainable Rural Livelihood Security through Innovations in Land and Ecosystem Management	WB	India	3.0	2.4	2.7			5.1
3471	Sustainable Land, Water and Biodiversity Conservation and Management in Uttarakhand	WB	India	0.3	3.4	4.5			7.9
3472	Integrated Land and Ecosystem Management in Madhya Pradesh	UNDP	India	0.2	2.1	4.0		0.3	6.5
3589	Coastal and Marine Resources Management in the Coral Triangle: Southeast Asia	ADB	Regional	1.0	8.3		2.2	0.4	10.9
3591	Coastal and Marine Resources Management in the Coral Triangle of the Pacific	ADB	Regional	1.0	3.9		4.2	0.3	8.5
3669	MENARID - Land and Water Optimization Project	WB	Tunisia	0.7		5.0	4.5		9.5
Total				**21.3**	**14.7**	**28.1**	**28.7**	**1.0**	**79.3**

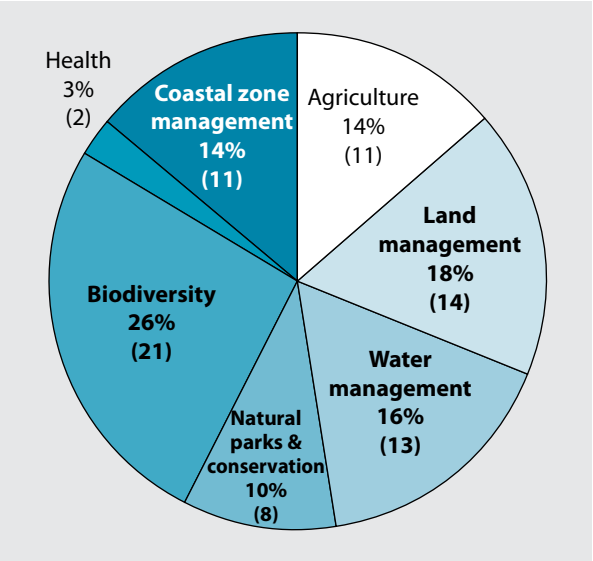
Source: GEF Secretariat, June 30, 2010.

Note: WB = World Bank.

In addition, six projects cover issues related to mountains, six cover issues related to drylands, three cover issues related to islands, and three cover issues related to wetlands. This distribution makes for good representation of various vulnerable ecosystems within the SPA portfolio, permitting the ability to draw interesting lessons from project implementation from an ecosystem perspective.

Figure 3.6

Main Themes Addressed by SPA Projects



Source: GEF Secretariat, June 30, 2010.

3.6 Portfolio Maturity and Project Lengths

More than half of the SPA portfolio is in its early stages, as shown in table 3.5. At the beginning of this evaluation, 11 projects had not yet started, 4 were in an early start-up phase, 9 were at their midpoint, and only 2 had been completed. Consequently, the actual adaptation measures contained in many of projects have still to materialize. As a young portfolio, the SPA has not yet generated lessons on the implementation of adaptation measures to any significant extent.

Figure 3.7 provides a more detailed breakdown of these projects, identifying their start and end dates as well as project duration. As shown, the oldest projects in the SPA portfolio are imple-

Table 3.5

Portfolio Maturity, by Country/Region

Closed (2 projects, 8% of portfolio)	Midway + (9 projects, 35% of portfolio)	Start-up (4 projects, 15% of portfolio)	Not yet started (11 projects, 42% of portfolio)
Kiribati (2543)	Colombia (2019)	Sri Lanka (2753)	Regional (2095)
Hungary (2630)	Regional (2552)	Tajikistan (3129)	Regional (2364)
	Global (2557)	Albania (3415)	Yemen (3267)
	Regional (2614)	Armenia (3417)	Regional (3589)
	Regional (2752)		Regional (3591)
	Global (2557)		Tunisia (3669)
	Mozambique (2889)		India (3024)
	Namibia (2915)		India (3882)
	Uruguay (3134)		India (3470)
			India (3471)
			India (3472)

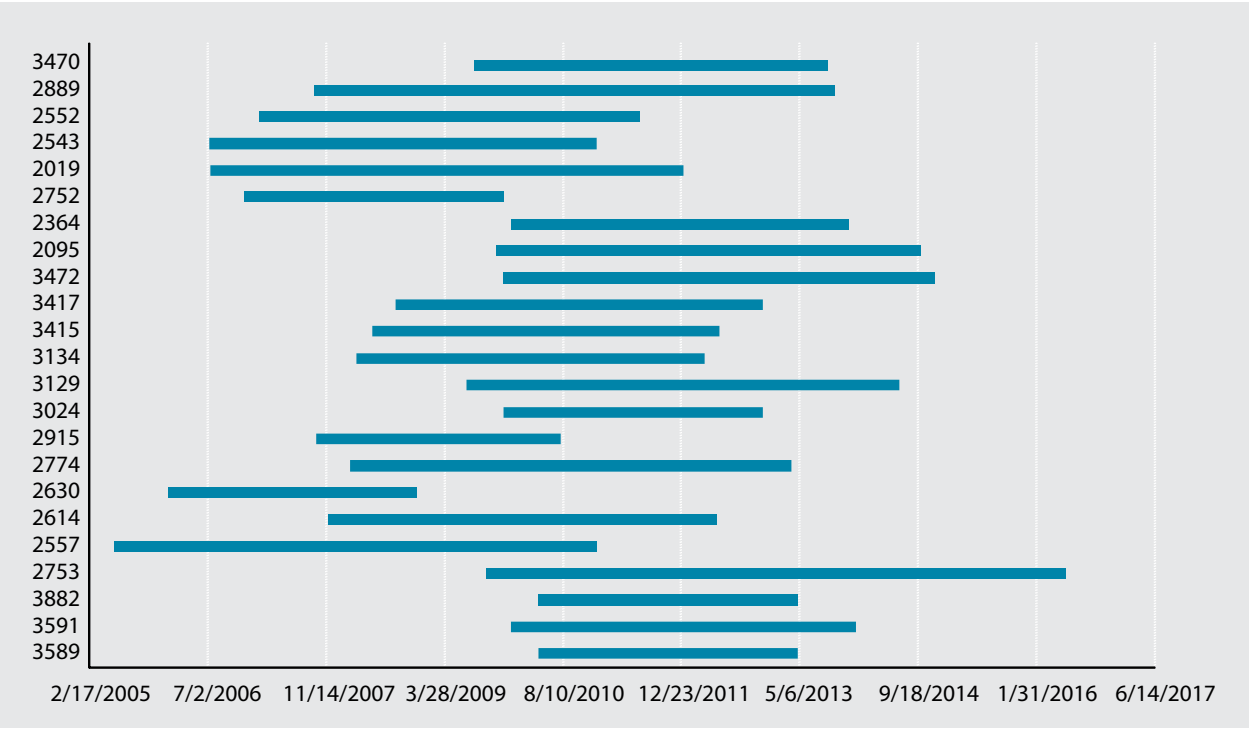
Source: GEF Agencies.

Note: Numbers in parentheses are GEF project IDs.

mented through UNDP and the World Bank; later projects are implemented through ADB, FAO, and IFAD, which were granted Implementing Agency status more recently. The average length of the projects in the SPA portfolio is 3.5 years. The longest SPA project is implemented through IFAD; this project is scheduled to close in 2016.

Figure 3.7

Date of Implementation and Duration of SPA Projects



Sources: GEF Agencies/SPA project documents.

Note: Dates include estimated implementation dates for projects not yet started. Data do not include projects 3267 and 3269.

4. Analysis of SPA Guidance

This chapter provides an analysis of the relevance and effectiveness of the SPA operational guidelines (GEF Council 2005); other aspects of the SPA guidance are assessed in chapter 5 (project design) and chapter 7 (SPA portfolio management).

More specifically, this chapter looks at the relevance of the guidelines in relation to the GEF mandate; their relevance to the SPA portfolio; their effectiveness in terms of the extent to which the SPA has achieved its objectives, including learning; and the extent to which the SPA has contributed to the integration of adaptation into GEF focal area strategies.

4.1 Key Elements of the SPA Operational Guidelines

The operational guidelines provide **basic definitions** of the concepts and issues to be addressed through the SPA, basic requirements for project design and eligibility, and review criteria and indicators. The basic requirements and eligibility criteria for SPA projects are the same as those applied to all GEF Trust Fund projects with regard to global environmental benefits, country ownership, sustainability, replicability, and stakeholder participation.

An overall aim of the SPA pilot was to provide the GEF and its partners with valuable lessons and guidance on how to adapt to the impacts of climate change. The SPA emphasized **opportunities for structural learning**, and the guidelines include a knowledge management support program: the Adaptation Learning Mechanism.

The SPA operational guidelines specify the two **objectives of the SPA**, which are to reduce climate change vulnerability and increase adaptive capacity. In this regard, the guidelines specify that "adaptation measures should be identified in Vulnerability and Adaptation assessments (V&A) and prepared using a rigorous scientific approach" (GEF Council 2005, p. 2).

The guidelines note that the SPA is intended to "support pilot and demonstration projects that address local adaptation needs and generate environmental benefits in the GEF focal areas" (GEF Council 2005, p. 2). They go on to provide a number of examples of the types of activities supported in each of the focal areas.[1] **Global environmental benefits** as defined in the SPA guidelines are the same as those identified in the GEF as a whole, and encompass activities that seek to reduce threats to global environmental benefits as well as activities that seek the enhancement of the status or trend of those benefits.

[1] For example, in biodiversity "the reduced risks of global biodiversity loss." See GEF Council (2005), pp. 3–5.

The guidelines provide advice on the articulation of **incremental reasoning** under the SPA, specifying that the SPA "will fund the incremental cost of the adaptation activities that ensure the delivery or protection of global environmental benefits" (GEF Council 2005, p. 6) and of activities that improve the resilience of the systems involved. This is referred to as a "double increment," wherein the first part of a GEF alternative scenario would be designed to produce global environmental benefits and a second would be designed to make these more resilient and robust. As stated in the guidelines,

> Only those costs associated with the second part of the alternative scenario…will be funded from the SPA. The cost associated with the first part of the alternative scenario…will be funded from the focal area allocations (GEF Council 2005, p. 7).

The guidelines also recognize that

> in practice, it will be sufficient to separate the baseline from the alternative scenario and to make a strong case that…it increases the resilience to climate change and thereby ensures the generation of global environmental benefits in the focal area (GEF Council 2005, p. 7).

4.2 Relevance of the SPA to the GEF Mandate

The relevance of the SPA guidelines to the GEF mandate can be determined by the extent to which the guidelines are linked, explicitly and implicitly, to the objectives pursued by the GEF at the time. It can also be determined from the analysis of the portfolio of projects and of their links to GEF focal area strategies and strategic and operational programs.

The evaluation found that the SPA guidelines were in line with and directly relevant to the GEF mandate (as guided by the global conventions), which is to produce or protect global environmental benefits. This, in itself, stems from the SPA requirement that all SPA projects must contribute to this objective. The SPA guidelines are also in accordance with GEF thinking at the time on incremental reasoning and on the distribution of incremental costs, as outlined above.

Analysis of project objectives reveals a high degree of relevance, with 22 projects providing an explicit link to the GEF mandate regarding global environmental benefits, and 4 providing a somewhat weaker, implicit link. In addition, 20 projects provided explicit links to focal area strategies and objectives.

4.3 Relevance of the Portfolio

The relevance of the SPA portfolio in relation to the SPA guidance can be determined from the extent to which projects (and the portfolio as a whole) were developed in accordance with the spirit and letter of the operational guidelines.

In relation to the first key element of the guidelines, the evaluation found that all projects were consistent with the objectives of the SPA to reduce vulnerability and increase adaptive capacity. The majority of projects refer to available vulnerability assessments, but all recognize that additional assessments would be necessary during the initial stages of implementation because of a lack of context-specific information. The SPA guidelines may have been precipitate in assuming that sufficient information existed to design "stage 2" adaptation projects.

All projects are also in accord with the second key element of the SPA guidelines, in that they all propose pilot demonstration activities designed to test adaptation options or technologies. However, because of the lack of information noted above, these measures are described in a rather broad and general manner in their respective project documents.

The third key element of the SPA guidelines, the articulation of incremental reasoning, may have been more difficult to realize in designing SPA projects. Project contributions to global environmental benefits, although relatively well articulated, are often not readily measurable; and many projects reported difficulties in the design of the "double increment" requirement (see section 5.2 for more detail).

It should also be mentioned that, in keeping with the spirit of the SPA as a learning program, all projects include specific plans for learning and replication.

Finally, although the geographic composition of the portfolio does not reflect the original expectation presented in the SPA guidelines regarding a focus on Africa, the distribution of global environmental benefits among projects (with the majority in biodiversity followed by land degradation) is indeed in line with the expectations highlighted in the guidelines.

Regarding the funding allocations, as described in the previous chapter, fewer than half of the SPA projects (12) followed the requirement in the guidance that the global environmental benefits increment would be paid by focal area funding (as with any other GEF project) and the cost of adaptation measures through SPA funding. Nevertheless, regardless of their funding source (SPA or focal area), all projects demonstrated generation of global environmental benefits (see chapter 5 for further discussion on global environmental benefits).

4.4 Effectiveness

The portfolio's overall relatively early stage of implementation only allows this evaluation to draw limited conclusions regarding the achievement of the SPA's objectives—to reduce climate change vulnerability and increase adaptive capacity on the ground. However, the high degree of convergence between the objectives of the projects and the objectives of the SPA indicates that conditions are in place for achieving these objectives in the long term. Chapter 6 provides some additional information on the effectiveness of the portfolio.

As a learning pilot within the GEF, the SPA has yet to achieve its full effectiveness, both because no portfolio monitoring of its design or implementation has taken place (see chapter 7) and because of the early state of implementation of the overall portfolio (only two projects have closed). Nonetheless, given that most projects will be under implementation for a few more years, there is an opportunity to begin a process of extracting lessons on how to integrate resilience and adaptation into GEF focal area work. As projects become increasingly operational, lessons can be gathered on the integration of global environmental benefits and resilience, on the resilience of adaptation measures themselves, and on elements of success for adaptive capacity building. Capturing these lessons will require the creation of solid and systematic learning mechanisms that will allow for the extraction of key lessons at various stages of SPA implementation and progress. While the Adaptation Learning Mechanism was intended to serve this function, it has evolved into a different initiative serving a broader constituency and mandate. The SPA thus has yet to benefit from a dedicated learning mechanism as set forth in the operational guidelines.

4.5 Adaptation and the GEF Focal Area Strategies

This section provides an overview of how concepts and approaches related to adaptation have

been gradually included in the GEF focal area strategies over time, focusing on policy integration. Adaptation work in the focal areas was not assessed as part of this evaluation.

There is evidence that, over time, concepts and possible measures related to adaptation to climate change have been gradually included in the GEF focal area strategies. With the exclusion of the climate change focal area within which adaptation was hosted until GEF-4 (as Strategic Priority 8), the most notable example can be found in the **biodiversity** focal area strategy. The GEF-3 biodiversity strategic priorities include "support to demonstration projects that generate synergies between biodiversity, climate change, land degradation and international waters." The strategy further specifies "vulnerability and adaptation to global change" as an issue of particular interest for the focal area and GEF financial support (GEF Council 2003, p. 10).

The GEF-4 focal area strategy for biodiversity "identifies capacity building opportunities to help design resilient protected area systems that can continue to achieve their conservation objectives in the face of anticipated climate change" (GEF Council 2003, p. 10). Most notably, Goal 7 aims to "address challenges to biodiversity from climate change and pollution" and Target 7.1 seeks to "maintain and enhance resilience of the components of biodiversity to adapt to climate change" (GEF Council 2003, p. 18). However, the strategy also states that "the GEF will support adaptation components through the climate change focal area in all projects, when needed." The expectation in GEF-4 was that adaptation components would be funded through the SPA. This evaluation found, when reviewing selected non-SPA projects (see section 5.3), that integration has indeed taken place, particularly in projects approved in the later years of GEF-4.

The GEF-5 focal area strategy in biodiversity further integrates adaptation, now quite explicitly, stating that

> developing climate-resilient protected area systems remains a challenge for most protected area managers because the scientific understanding and technical basis for informed decision making on adaptation or resiliency measures is its nascent stages. To help overcome these technical challenges, GEF will support the development and integration of adaptation and resilience management measures as part of protected area management projects (GEF 2009, p. 10).

The strategies for **land degradation** and **international waters** also integrate concepts related to resilience and/or adaptation to climate change. For example, with respect to land degradation, the GEF-4 strategy notes that

> actions will contribute to national programs in the field of natural resources management, including sustainable forest management, adaptation to climate change…to bring mutual benefits to the global environment and local livelihoods (GEF Council 2007b, p. 44).

The international waters GEF-4 strategy states that "where capacity is built to work jointly in transboundary surface and groundwater basins, GEF will support among other things an increased resilience to fluctuating climatic regimes" (GEF Council 2007b, p. 65).

Adaptation was one of the strategic objectives in the **climate change** GEF-4 focal area, and the GEF-4 document states that

> the GEF will demonstrate its impact on adaptation through decreased vulnerability and increased capacity to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change among its program countries. The indicator for this impact will be based upon demonstration of increased resilience to climate change in GEF program countries. For the GEF-4 replenishment period, the overall goal in adaptation is to expand the range of experiences with adaptation in order to improve global understand-

> ing of the challenges brought on by climate change, including variability (GEF Council 2007b, p. 29).

It further states that

> during GEF-4, the GEF will develop screening tools so that all future projects supported by the GEF will mitigate the risks associated with future climate change. In this regard, all GEF-supported projects will be made climate-resilient. Throughout GEF-4 all projects presented for CEO endorsement will be required to consider the impacts of climate change on their results and to modify their design to be more resilient to climate change. All projects are expected to combine technical assistance and capacity building with concrete actions. A premium will be placed on project-based learning opportunities and ensuring balanced coverage of regions and sectors (GEF Council 2007b, p. 29).

During the most recent GEF replenishment process, it was agreed that specific funding for adaptation would not be provided from the GEF Trust Fund. The decision was made that the GEF would provide specific funding for activities related to adaptation from existing and future funds dedicated to this subject, such as the LDCF and the SCCF. Nevertheless, as noted above, the GEF-5 strategies for all focal areas indicate that adaptation and resilience to climate change are issues that need to be integrated in the design of projects financed by the GEF Trust Fund. Adaptation is therefore considered a cross-cutting issue under GEF-5.

This evaluation found evidence that the integration of adaptation or mainstreaming has occurred at a strategic policy level and that some GEF-4 projects have included adaptation concepts in their design. However, a number of factors may prevent mainstreaming from becoming fully effective:

- Tangible mechanisms for operationalizing this integration, such as the adaptation screening tools, are not yet in place, even though this was suggested as early as GEF-4.
- There is still limited capacity regarding adaptation throughout the GEF system, including within the GEF Secretariat, the GEF Agencies, the countries, and other possible project proponents.
- Gaps remain in the scientific knowledge related to potential climate change impacts, and possible adaptation measures in the various GEF global environmental benefit domains.
- The GEF system affords limited incentives to take climate change impacts and adaptation issues into account, particularly given that the resources to deal with the demands of each focal area are already limited.

5. Project Design Analysis

This chapter provides an analysis of the major elements of project design as articulated in the SPA guidelines. The chapter ends with a brief comparative study between the design of SPA projects and similar GEF-4 non-SPA projects from the perspective of climate change resilience.

5.1 Project Composition and Typology

An analysis of project activities reveals that most SPA projects are comprised of similar types of interventions and are constructed in similar ways, regardless of region, focal area, or theme. In general, they also follow a model similar to other GEF projects, as can be seen from the comparative analysis in section 5.3, and as would be expected, since normal GEF project requirements were applied to the SPA portfolio as well. In fact, all SPA projects are GEF Trust Fund projects in their own right.

The set of interventions and major outcomes found in SPA project designs can be classified into three categories (policy, regulatory, and institutional activities; technical capacity development and assessments; and on-the-ground pilot adaptation measures) and two cross-cutting elements (knowledge management and capacity building).

- **Policy, regulatory, and institutional activities.** These include training, policy revisions, and regulatory activities to ensure that climate change considerations are taken into account in future planning. These activities are targeted at establishing enabling conditions for immediate as well as long-term adaptation.
- **Technical capacity development and assessments.** These include vulnerability assessments, climate models, or climate impact assessments designed to provide technical tools for adaptation. While targeted toward government institutions, these activities are pragmatically focused and usually allow for a transition toward on-the-ground measures.
- **On-the-ground pilot adaptation measures.** Most projects in the SPA portfolio contain pilot demonstrations of adaptation measures (practices, technologies, approaches) working on the ground with vulnerable communities and ecosystems. Although these measures tend to be broadly defined in the projects, they usually consist of modifications to natural resource management, ecosystem rehabilitation, and some light infrastructural works. Given the relative weight of the SPA contribution to total project budgets (6 percent overall), the adaptation portions of the SPA projects are quite limited in scope. These pilot demonstrations are thus usually localized, and the investment-type activities limited.
- **Knowledge management.** All the projects in the SPA portfolio contain a plan for gathering

and disseminating lessons learned which corresponds to an objective of the SPA itself as well as to current practice in project development. Knowledge management measures included in project design were either limited to the project itself (a project Web site or an awareness campaign) or extended to regional and global audiences (adaptation learning mechanism, regional forums).

- **Capacity building.** This second cross-cutting element takes various forms depending on whether it is being applied at the policy, technical, or on-the-ground level. Capacity-building project measures include training, policy revisions, local mobilization, and activities designed to strengthen livelihoods for adaptive capacity.

5.2 Assessments of Elements of Project Design

The SPA operational guidelines indicate a series of elements to be included in project design. The first and most important element is that these projects are required to "address local adaptation needs and generate global environmental benefits" (GEF Council 2005, p. 2).

In addition to this fundamental requirement, projects are supposed to "build upon or incorporate a rigorous methodology to assess climate change vulnerability, identify adaptation measures and integrate them into policy planning, as well as generate global environmental benefits" (GEF Council 2005, p. 6). Projects should also be designed to respond to current and future climate risks and variability, and be designed around the best available scientific methodologies and participatory processes. Other normal GEF criteria for project design were also expected to be fulfilled in SPA projects, such as cost-effectiveness and country drivenness.

To be eligible for SPA funding, projects had to demonstrate two key elements as well as meet the normal GEF requirement for generation of global environmental benefits: a climate change and vulnerability rationale for the project, and articulation of adaptation measures.

Generation of Global Environmental Benefits

As shown in table 5.1, the SPA guidelines highlight the types of global environmental benefits to be expected from SPA projects. SPA projects should

Table 5.1

Global Environmental Benefits as Expected in the SPA Guidelines by Focal Area

Focal area	Benefits
Biodiversity	• Reduced risks of global biodiversity loss • Enhanced protection of ecosystems and species • Increased sustainability in the use of biodiversity
Climate change	• Reduction or avoidance of emissions through energy efficiency and renewable sources of energy
International waters	• Global environmental benefits accrue through addressing transboundary concerns, using, for example, habitat restoration, joint basin management, reduction of pollution, integrated water resource management, and integrated coastal zone management
Land degradation	• Preservation, conservation, and restoration of structure and functional integrity of ecosystems • Reduction of carbon dioxide emissions and improved carbon sequestration • Stabilization of sediment storage and release in water bodies
POPs	• Reduction and elimination of releases of POPs

support activities that aim at improving the status or trend of the global environmental benefits specified as well as reduce threats that may affect them.

Most projects in the SPA portfolio succeeded in identifying global environmental benefits, although some definitions were clearer than others. The types of global environmental benefits identified in SPA projects are those that are also usually identified in typical GEF projects, in line with focal area strategies, strategic objectives, and operational programs.

As mentioned earlier, most SPA projects (21) claim global environmental benefits in the biodiversity area, whereas 14 projects claim global environmental benefits in the land degradation area. Table 5.2 presents a sample of the most-cited global environmental benefits in SPA projects.

Based on a review of global environmental benefits in all SPA projects, this evaluation concludes that all SPA projects are well anchored within GEF practice, guidance, and policies. The evaluation also notes that the type of global environmental benefits to be expected from projects that

Table 5.2

Frequently Cited Global Environmental Benefits/Reduction of Threats of SPA Projects by Theme

Theme	Benefit/threat reduction
Biological resources (biodiversity, ecosystem services, and so on)	• Conservation of plant agrobiodiversity • Conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, species conservation in biodiversity hotspots (plants and animals) • Conservation of species available for crop improvement • Maintenance or restoration of habitat integrity • Reduction of losses in coral reefs, sea grass beds and islands • Wetland species conservation • Improved management of protected areas • Ecosystem integrity
Forests (deforestation, carbon sequestration, buffer zones)	• Maintenance of forest resilience • Avoided deforestation • Avoided fragmentation • Avoided fire or fire control and management • Carbon sequestration • Maintenance of ecosystem services such as water retention, filtration, agricultural productivity and habitat • Key ecosystem integrity (forests, coral reefs, mangroves) and services • Maintenance of ecological buffer zones
Water management (water ecosystems, water availability, and so on)	• Watershed integrity • Protection of coral reefs and marine biodiversity
Land management (agriculture, soil management, carbon sequestration, erosions prevention)	• Maintenance of soil fertility • Reduced land degradation • Reduced erosion • Carbon sequestration • Carbon sequestration in biomass • Improved land productivity • Reduced coastal erosion • Carbon stocks in soil and biota

respond to possible climate change are not different from those of generic GEF projects, indicating a potentially strong linkage (and potential operational convergence) between resilience and global environmental benefits.

Climate Change and Vulnerability Rationale

The analysis of SPA projects using the project review protocol developed for this evaluation reveals that, while all the projects do provide a climate change rationale, the degree to which these arguments are developed according to scientific and participatory principles varies greatly.[1] For example, 17 projects provided some evidence of a scientific approach to vulnerability assessment, but 11 projects provided no evidence of participatory processes (for climate assessments or otherwise), and 7 projects had no reference to climate change scenarios.

The project review protocol also examined the extent to which project narratives provided empirical or theoretical evidence of climate risks. Half of the projects provided empirical and theoretical evidence of climate risks, all projects clearly identified future climate risks, and the majority of projects responded to current climate variability (92 percent). Upon further examination, the argumentation of climate threats and vulnerability in the majority of projects remained at a generic level and presented low levels of scientific rigor.

The SPA operational guidelines require that "projects submitted under the SPA must…build upon or incorporate a rigorous methodology to assess climate change vulnerability" and "demonstrate a structured, methodological approach to the identification of climate vulnerability and appropriate response measures in two steps" (GEF Council 2005, p. 6). Eighty-seven percent of the projects referred to national communications or national adaptation programs of action, and most of the project documents indicated that a vulnerability assessment would be conducted during the project's implementation. However, in most cases, there is no evidence that any form of participatory vulnerability assessment was undertaken as part of the project design.

These trends hint at a generalized limitation of information among project developers regarding vulnerability to climate change at the country level at the time the SPA projects were being designed, as opposed to a generally good understanding of the baseline conditions and a sound anchoring of projects in national processes and policies. This varies by focal area, as revealed by a cross-sectoral analysis of the project review protocols. For example, the degree to which empirical evidence of climate change was present in project design was lower in projects classified in the biodiversity or international waters focal area. Box 5.1 provides an example of a sound, empirically based argument that links climate change to global environmental benefits. As mentioned earlier, not all SPA projects provided information to such a degree of detail.

Selection of Adaptation Measures

The limited level of information or understanding of climate change vulnerability and impacts may also have had implications on the selection of adaptation options or measures. In most of the projects (18), it was not possible to say whether the adaptation measures were selected from among a broader menu of options, or if they were selected based on common knowledge. Adaptation practice today indicates that for any given vulnerability, a host of adaptation options can exist, which can be calibrated to the specific context. This knowl-

[1] At least as far as was discernible from the documents used for Council approval, which were the basis for this evaluation.

Box 5.1

An Example of Climate Change Argumentation in SPA Projects

The following extract is taken from the project design document for Implementing Pilot Climate Change Adaptation Measures in Coastal Areas of Uruguay (GEF ID 3134):

> Based on data provided by assessments of climate change and variability impacts in the coastal areas of Uruguay, long-term trends for changes in the coastal climate and environment have already been verified. Some of these changes are a 200 mm increase in annual rainfall in Montevideo since 1883, particularly during the period 1961–1990; an increase of 0.5°C in air temperature and a decrease of 0.5 mm Hg in atmospheric pressure; an increasing trend in mean summer temperatures in the period 1961–1990; a 30 percent increase in the stream flow to the La Plata River during the last decades and a reduction in mean annual salinity along the Uruguayan coast… Predicted climate changes will occur to different degrees in the different areas of this complex marine-estuarine ecosystem and will thus have differential effects on biodiversity… In summary, the projected climate change will exacerbate the impacts of current threats on coastal and marine biodiversity, either by magnifying current sources of stress…or directly by the progressive destruction or impoverishment of habitat and species. Baseline measures to conserve coastal ecosystems, to ameliorate land degradation, enhance the resilience of biodiversity, reduce sedimentation or coastal erosion, and improve livelihoods in the short term, are likely to be undermined by climate change and its impacts in the medium to long term. The result is that the coping range of key coastal ecosystems will be exceeded and considerable losses of coastal assets and globally significant biodiversity can be expected, in particular regarding coastal wetlands and marine biodiversity. Therefore, under projected climate change scenarios, additional action will be required to strengthen the current baseline actions for the protection of coastal and marine biodiversity.

edge may not have existed at the time the first SPA projects were being designed. This deficiency may have been due to a lack of information about specific vulnerabilities and/or about the means by which to design successful adaptation options.

The rationale for selecting adaptation options was not always clearly demonstrated in the project documentation. In many cases, the types of adaptation measures selected were similar to measures that would be applied regardless of climate change (see the comparative analysis of non-SPA projects in appendix G and section 6.3 for further detail). For example, 10 projects provided clear technical evidence to support the selection of the proposed adaptation options, whereas most other projects did not provide a justification. This made it difficult for the evaluation to analyze the adaptation rationales underlying project design.

The project documents for the Albanian SPA project Identification and Implementation of Adaptation Response Measures in the Drini-Mati River Deltas (GEF ID 3415) provides an example of a rationale for the selection of adaptation options in the biodiversity sector:

> The primary goal of adaptation in the biodiversity sector therefore should be to ensure that natural ecosystems are able to respond to climate change to the limits of their capabilities, by reducing or removing existing pressures. It is also possible to adopt policies and practices which directly assist species in adjusting to climate change, for example by designating and protecting migration corridors, strengthening existing management regimes within and outside protected areas to enhance resilience of the ecosystem by focusing on species that are more vulnerable and sensitive to climate change, and monitoring of biodiversity, particularly since plant and animal populations serve as barometers of ecosystem integrity. It is in this sense that existing baseline programming can be enhanced to ensure that pressures are minimized more than they would be in the baseline scenario through additional adaptation response measures.

As seen in this example, the adaptation measures consist of reducing pressures on an ecosystem; however, the measures themselves are identified at a high level (strengthening existing management regimes).

Adaptation Options

One of the key objectives of the present evaluation was to assess the relevance, effectiveness, and results of the adaptation measures in the SPA. Specifically, the evaluation was to provide an assessment of adaptation measures in the design of projects and the effectiveness of those that started implementation.

The evaluation found that it was too early to be able to draw any conclusions regarding the effectiveness of adaptation options on the ground given the status of implementation progress of most measures. Therefore, the evaluation focused on the type, nature, and selection of adaptation options as contained in the project design documentation. The following summarizes this aspect of the evaluation, and also presents a brief discussion of the risks of maladaptation in SPA projects. An examination of adaptation measures being implemented is in chapter 6.

Based on the information available from project design documents, adaptation measures—measures designed to reduce vulnerability and build adaptive capacity and to increase the resilience of global environmental benefits—contained in the SPA projects at the design stage can be categorized into three broad groups:

- **Measures designed to target policy, planning and regulatory frameworks**, for example, to provide an enabling framework for environmental benefits and adaptation or to address natural resource management policies
- **Measures designed to strengthen technical capacity**, for example, measures designed to provide a better understanding of climate impacts and vulnerability, including scientific capacity building
- **Measures designed to implement or pilot on-the-ground applications of adaptation technologies**, including physical works and modified natural resource management practices.

Based on these categories, table 5.3 lists the most frequently cited intervention activities noted in the project design documents. These measures could easily be found in regular GEF projects as well as development projects. It appears, therefore, that it is primarily the intention with which a measure is being implemented that differentiates an adaptation measure from other measures. Similar measures may also be implemented in different manners, depending on whether or not climate resilience is being considered. In and of themselves, these measures can be considered as "no-regrets" measures that are expected to provide development and adaptation benefits regardless of the climate change scenario.

Another conclusion that can be drawn from this analysis is that at the time of project design, knowledge of adaptation measures was theoretical. The lack of technical precision provided in the project documentation at the design stage supports this conclusion when compared to the design documents of later projects (non-SPA), which often contain a higher degree of technical detail. For instance, it is now possible to find GEF and non-GEF projects that specify the species to be used for replanting and therefore justify their resilience, whereas few of the SPA projects provided this level of detail at the design stage.

Another interesting finding is that the adaptation measures are also similar across focal areas and themes. This can be attributed to the fact that projects in the SPA have tended to blend multiple themes together, or it could be the result of a set of underlying assumptions regarding the root causes of vulnerability to climate change. As can be seen above, most adaptation measures target natural resource uses and management practices at different levels (local community level to policy level).

Table 5.3

Most Frequently Cited Adaptation Interventions in the SPA Portfolio by Type

Type	Intervention
Policy, planning, and regulatory	Local development planning, land use planning that integrates CC [climate change], interministerial coordination, awareness raising, local risk management and planning, mainstreaming, policy analysis and review, bottom-up planning processes, ICZM [integrated coastal zone management] planning, land use planning, zoning, coordination.
Technical capacity	Extension services, training, seasonal forecast and climate predictions, seed insurance schemes, climate modeling, inventories (agro-biodiversity), early warning, risk mapping, hazard mapping (droughts and floods), remote sensing, construction guidelines, zoning, manuals and guidelines on adaptation, disaster risk management, awareness raising, mainstreaming, sand extraction bans, flora and fauna inventories, methodology development and vulnerability assessments, modeling, research, protected area management and extension, risk assessment, global ocean observing system and SLR [sea level rise] monitoring, hydrological assessments and models, including groundwater assessments, decision support tools.
On the ground	Water harvesting, improved grazing, improved post harvest management, improved tillage, terracing, stress resistant varieties (crops and livestock), reforestation, afforestation and revegetation, irrigation, crop rotation, watershed management, fuelwood plantation, alternative energies, economic diversification, fire management and alert, invasive species eradication, mangrove restoration, agro-forestry, sand beach restoration, structural protection measures, climate monitoring and analysis, construction guidelines, risk analysis methods, beach nourishment, groynes and revetments, sand dune stabilization through revegetation, soil conservation, mangrove reforestation, waste management, coral reef co-management, integrated water management, irrigation.

Note: This information is extracted from project documents and is reproduced here unedited.

The underlying assumption is that an optimal means to reduce vulnerability is to change human behavior. This may seem obvious; however, ecosystem-based approaches to adaptation that focus on restoring ecosystem services (regardless of human use, but usually inclusively) have begun to emerge and are being piloted and implemented in various places. The ecosystem approach has the same result but a different entry point for adaptive measures.

The evaluation found that there was limited evidence that adaptation measures were selected on the basis of dedicated vulnerability assessments or on the basis of broader lists of options from which to choose. Project documents provided limited technical details on the adaptation options selected, making it difficult to understand their precise nature. For example, an adaptation measure included in a project might have been formulated as "enhanced land management practices" without specifying the aspects of land management involved or the specific type of change sought by the project.

To draw lessons on climate resilience, the evaluation considered how project design dealt with risks, trade-offs, and potential maladaptation. While the limited technical details provided prevented determination of risks of maladaptation in any given project, it can be concluded from this assessment of adaptation measures at the design stage that the measures selected in SPA projects are for the most part "no-regret" measures—meaning that they would provide a benefit (development, environment, or adaptation) regardless of climate change. This indicates that trade-offs among the three benefit areas may not be necessary under the GEF and that "win-win-win" scenarios are highly possible.

Additional details on the specifics of each adaptation measure might help provide better insight into the risks of maladaptation. None of the projects include mechanisms by which the adaptation

measures themselves are examined for resilience. A scientific assessment of implemented adaptation measures under SPA projects, performed at a later stage of implementation, may provide useful information.

For example, where water harvesting is proposed as a solution to current or emerging drought patterns, such an assessment could determine the margin within which the technology will remain viable, and help inform the choice or manner in which the technology is applied. Another example might be that where reforestation is proposed as an adaptation measure, this type of analysis could help inform the choice of species before implementation of the measure.

The Double Increment

The SPA operational guidelines outline the principle of the "double increment" whereby the activities designed to produce or protect global environmental benefits would comprise the first increment, and the second increment would derive from the requirement to "ensure the robustness and resilience" of the global environmental benefits (GEF Council 2005, p. 7). The agreement was that costs associated with the first increment would be funded by the GEF focal areas and those associated with the second increment would be funded by the SPA pilot.

SPA project design seems to have been more complicated than regular GEF project design due to the requirement to articulate the double layer of incremental reasoning—an observation confirmed through interviews during this evaluation. According to many of the interviewees, this requirement was a constraint on project design, as well as on the selection of adaptation measures, because it appeared to limit the scope of possible activities as well as because of limited capacity to deal with adaptation issues. Nonetheless, most projects linked adaptation measures to potential global environmental benefits, at least theoretically.

It should be noted that the definition and analysis of incremental cost evolved in the GEF during the preparation of the SPA projects. Over time, requirements went from a traditional application of incremental cost calculations to a more flexible form of incremental reasoning. For example, in many of the SPA projects, the incremental reasoning was focused on providing a rationale for adaptation funding, without necessarily separating costs as would be expected under the traditional application of the term.

The analysis of the SPA portfolio revealed that project proponents handled the double incrementality reasoning in a number of different ways. In some projects, the adaptation measures were applied directly to the activities targeting global environmental benefits (to make the global environmental benefits more resilient). In other cases, the logic of the project required that the adaptation measure focus on increasing local adaptive capacity or on removing a human-induced threat to the global environmental benefits. In a few cases, some projects included some adaptation measures that bore no link to global environmental benefits (though all projects contained at least a theoretical articulation of global environmental benefits).

For example, the Albanian Identification and Implementation of Adaptation Response Measures in the Drini-Mati River Deltas project proposes expansion of the existing network of protected areas to secure biodiversity global environmental benefits as well as measures designed to remove human-induced threats to those benefits (such as deforestation and uncontrolled land use). These activities are supplemented by adaptation measures designed to make the protected

areas more resilient to climate change: extension of the zones, modifications to the management regimes, as well as some rehabilitation of fragile ecosystems. The adaptation measures are applied directly to the global environmental benefits and to the threats affecting them.

Adaptation to Climate Change—Responding to Coastline Change and Its Human Dimensions in West Africa through Integrated Coastal Area Management provides an example of a project in which adaptation measures are applied to the threats that are affecting global environmental benefits. This regional project includes measures designed to develop alternative livelihoods and energies in order to reduce pressures on forests and mangroves, alongside a set of adaptation measures designed to respond to coastal erosion and sea level rise due to climate change (barrages, beach nourishment, and protection). The measures relating to alternative livelihoods are designed as supportive activities to the adaptation measures, but they also produce global environmental benefits and enhance local adaptive capacity.

An example of an adaptation measure bearing a less evident link to either the enhancement of global environmental benefits or the reduction of threats could be household rainwater harvesting which, on its own, may reduce community vulnerability but has limited links to global environmental benefits. This measure appears in a number of projects (although never in isolation), including two in India (Sustainable Participatory Management of Natural Resources to Promote Ecosystem Health and Resilience in the Thar Desert Ecosystem, GEF ID 3024; and Sustainable Rural Livelihood Security through Innovations in Land and Ecosystem Management, GEF ID 3470), one in Tajikistan (Sustaining Agricultural Biodiversity in the Face of Climate Change, GEF ID 3129), and one in Yemen (Adaptation to Climate Change Using Agrobiodiversity Resources in the Rain Fed Highlands of Yemen, GEF ID 3267).

The examples presented here are illustrative of the type of project design challenges faced by SPA projects and indicate the sometimes artificial nature of the proposed double increment. In very few cases was this double increment actually calculated, since the activities and components designed to enhance the global environmental benefits became mixed with the activities designed as adaptation measures. This is particularly true for projects entailing natural resource management or community development, where many of the activities designed to enhance global environmental benefits also have a positive effect on adaptation to climate change.

These observations were confirmed through interviews with key project stakeholders, who noted that the articulation of the double incrementality concept was a rather intellectual exercise that did not always yield consequences on the ground. As was seen during the field visit, the lines between development, global environmental benefits, and adaptation measures tend to become blurry at the local level. Further, measures that are designed to reduce community vulnerability—even though they may indirectly contribute to reducing pressure on the environment—can easily be confounded with regular development activities. In addition, in most SPA projects, the adaptation measures are not different from regular development measures or from those that would be applied in a normal GEF project (see section 5.3 for a comparative analysis).

Participatory Processes and Capacity Building

An examination of the project documentation at the design stage provides no substantive indica-

tion that significant participatory processes took place during project design. A little less than half of the projects provide clear evidence of participatory vulnerability assessment. In addition, there was clear, explicit evidence of stakeholder participation in project design in half of the projects; others provided only indirect references to consultations and stakeholders. Insufficient evidence thus exists that opportunities for capacity building were provided during project design through participatory processes.

However, many of the projects used national communications or national adaptation programs of action as a basis for the vulnerability assessments that informed the SPA project design.

Finally, all projects ranked high in terms of country ownership and linkage to national policies and priorities, indicating that projects were well articulated to baseline conditions and were based on a good understanding of prevailing conditions.

M&E Systems

The SPA operational guidelines state that project outputs will be monitored by a double set of indicators that measure progress in addressing adaptation and the generation of global environmental benefits. The guidelines also note that monitoring and evaluation "will form a critical component of all SPA initiatives" (GEF Council 2005, p. 8).

An assessment of the indicators of the M&E frameworks for all projects in the SPA portfolio at design was undertaken during this evaluation.[2] Following is a summary of the findings of this analysis. The assessment is limited to the information available in the frameworks at the design stage and does not evaluate how effectively these frameworks have been executed.

Overall, the quality and elaboration of M&E frameworks varied greatly across the SPA portfolio. Some frameworks—such as those for UNDP's Community Based Adaptation Programme and its West African regional Adaptation to Climate Change project, and UNEP's Integrated and Sustainable Management of Transboundary Water Resources in the Amazon River Basin (GEF ID 2364)—were highly developed and detailed, including information on baseline data, sources of verification, precise indicator measurement, target values and dates, assumptions, and risks. Among the more elaborated M&E frameworks, some included good operational protocols including responsibility for data collection, data collection instruments and methods, and data collection frequency. Descriptions of other frameworks were of a more summary nature, spanning just one or two pages. Many of these noted that core indicators would be further developed during the inception phase and instead focused mainly on outcome indicators (for example, the UNDP-implemented project in Tajikistan). Few of these more abbreviated M&E frameworks contained detailed operational protocols.

The evaluation found a good mix of indicators at various levels (output, process, outcomes, impact) in the SPA projects; however, these were not always SMART and could be enhanced in that regard.[3] The combination and complementarity

[2] All 26 projects were included, except the 2 new ADB projects, which had not yet developed M&E frameworks with indicators (Coastal and Marine Resources Management in the Coral Triangle: Southeast Asia, GEF ID 3589; and Coastal and Marine Resources Management in the Coral Triangle of the Pacific, GEF ID 3591).

[3] SMART indicators are specific; measurable; achievable and attributable; relevant and realistic; and time-bound, timely, trackable, and targeted.

of indicators also play an important a role in the M&E system as a whole.

Limited information is currently available from the SPA portfolio as to what works well in terms of M&E frameworks and indicators, and what leads to difficulties during project implementation. A comprehensive M&E assessment is therefore suggested as the SPA portfolio matures.

There was no portfolio monitoring put in place at the time of the creation of the SPA pilot, mainly due to resource constraints. Therefore, there are no standardized indicators to be aggregated from the portfolio, and the M&E frameworks vary greatly in terms of indicators, quality, and coverage. This lack of standardization translates into a difficulty in measuring the GEF's progress in its adaptation work as a whole. While it may be too late for the SPA portfolio, the obvious solution would be to develop an appropriate standardized framework for the remaining Adaptation Funds, namely, the LDCF and the SCCF. Development of such a framework is already under way by the GEF Secretariat, but has yet to be finalized and operational.

5.3 Comparative Project Analysis

An analysis comparing SPA and non-SPA projects was conducted to provide additional insight into project design and development. Below is a summary of the findings of this analysis; the full report and related data can be found in appendix G.

The analysis found that all SPA projects proposed, as part of their adaptive options, a set of enhanced, strengthened, or new natural resource management approaches. Based on the analyzed sample of non-SPA projects, similar approaches appear to have been implemented for other GEF projects where the single objective was the protection or creation of global environmental benefits. This indicates that addressing the human-induced causes of environmental degradation is a necessary element of any GEF project, regardless of whether the project's primary intention is addressing climate change or global environmental benefits.

Furthermore, similar activities can be found in both SPA and non-SPA projects; these are called pilot adaptation measures when specified in the former. For example, the provision of non-biomass energy sources to reduce deforestation appears in at least four SPA projects as a pilot demonstration activity for adaptation; it is featured at a larger scale in non-SPA projects.

Climate-specific enabling interventions integrated in SPA projects include vulnerability assessments and mapping, climate modeling, and down-scaling. These would not normally be part of other GEF projects unless they sought to integrate climate change. For example, the non-SPA UNEP project SPWA—Evolution of PA Systems with Regard to Climatic, Institutional, Social and Economic Conditions in the West Africa Region includes climate threats in its diagnostic and therefore includes the measures mentioned above.

Activities used for capacity building are also similar in both SPA and non-SPA projects. Training, the development of methodologies, and technical assistance for planning processes are all included in most GEF projects, SPA or not. However, in SPA projects, adaptive capacity at the local level is often understood as a factor of economic diversification, or the ability to withstand climate shocks. Such a concept is absent from non-SPA projects, where diversification is seen mostly as a means to reduce pressures on fragile ecosystems.

The most significant difference between SPA and non-SPA projects is that, for the former, activities had to be justified according to climate change

scenarios, vulnerabilities, and impacts. Adaptation measures in SPA projects should have—at least in theory—been selected not only because they help diversify local livelihoods and reduce pressures, but also because they demonstrate a long-term viability (resilience) in the face of new climate conditions. Non-SPA projects would not be required to do so, except in cases where climate change poses a significant immediate and identifiable risk to the project. Very few SPA projects actually demonstrate that this thinking was explicitly part of the selection of adaptation measures. Few of the SPA projects actually selected their adaptation options from a broader menu, and few were in a position to provide sufficient technical detail to determine the long-term resilience of the selected measures.

This comparative analysis of SPA and non-SPA projects indicates that there are in fact very few real differences between the two groups, despite the need to articulate different rationales. It appears also that the types of activities promoted for adaptation are similar to those that would be promoted for normal GEF projects. This indicates that there is a strong convergence among practices that represent good sustainable development activities, good environmental activities, and good adaptation activities, reinforcing the point made above regarding the possibility of achieving "win-win-win" scenarios with marginal additional investment.

6. Results

This chapter presents an overview of key results achieved by the SPA projects as well as a synthesis of lessons learned at the portfolio level from SPA project implementation thus far.

6.1 Overview of Key Results Achieved

This section summarizes the key results (outputs and outcomes) and reported difficulties (challenges) for the SPA projects that have passed midterm. The discussion is organized in terms of the three intervention categories (policy, planning, and regulatory; technical capacity; and on the ground) identified during the assessment of adaptation options. The results were extracted from the latest available implementation reports, midterm reviews, and final evaluations as well as from interviews with staff from both the project teams and the GEF Implementing Agency. A more comprehensive listing of the results achieved by the SPA projects can be found in appendix K.

As of this writing, 11 projects had reached or passed their midpoint, at least according to their planned duration. Many of these projects reported experiencing delays, mostly due to long inception phases, recruitment and procurement delays, and other typical project challenges. Hence, many projects had only just begun their implementation of concrete activities.

Policy, Planning, and Regulatory Results

The majority of project results delivered by the 11 projects considered in this assessment were at the output level, and included assessments, training, toolkits, and policy interventions. For the most part, these outputs were considered fundamental milestones and prerequisites to the implementation of on-the-ground activities. There was little information on medium-term outcomes in available project implementation documents due to the relative youth of the portfolio.

Reported results achieved included the development of technical studies and vulnerability assessments, national consultations (reported, for example, by the Kiribati Adaptation Program, GEF ID 2543), awareness raising, and the production of technical guidelines (reported, for example, by the West African regional Adaptation to Climate Change project). Many projects, such as the following examples, reported achieving outcomes such as revision of policy documents to include climate change issues:

- Under the regional project Integrating Vulnerability and Adaptation to Climate Change into Sustainable Development Policy Planning and Implementation in Southern and Eastern Africa (GEF ID 2752), Kenya's National Disaster Management Policy was completed using climate change information derived from the project.

- In Namibia, local governments and ministries have begun to replicate technologies and approaches demonstrated by the Adapting to Climate Change through the Improvement of Traditional Crops and Livestock Farming project by integrating them in their own programming and planning.

Project implementation documentation and interviews also noted some challenges in this area, such as coordination difficulties, particularly where multiple partners and countries were involved. Some project stakeholders highlighted the fact that because adaptation was a new area of work for many national institutions, projects required more intensive capacity building and awareness raising at the start as compared to regular projects. This was reported to have caused delays in the Implementation of Pilot Adaptation Measures in Coastal Areas of Dominica, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines project (GEF ID 2552) and the Zambezi Valley Market Led Smallholder Development project (GEF ID 2889), among others.

Technical Capacity Results

The technical capacity area also appears to have generated some successes, as these measures were often among the first to be implemented. Activities included the deployment of technologies related to climate monitoring (for example, a geographic information system in Kiribati), and the convening of technical training workshops on specific thematic issues including climate monitoring, coastal erosion, and health monitoring.

Among the key challenges mentioned in the project documentation and interviews, the lack of localized and applicable climate data and models has been perceived as an obstacle in many projects. Consequently, several projects are including climate modeling, impact modeling, and downscaling as key foundational activities upon which the preparation and implementation of the adaptation measures depend.

On-the-Ground Results

Five projects reported achieving concrete results on the ground. However, in many of these cases—such as in the Zambezi Valley project in Mozambique—the project documentation notes that activities have been implemented without specifying which activities or the extent to which they were successful. Based on the reporting available, it is thus difficult to derive a set of consistent results across projects.

Many project reports note the delivery of outputs. The Namibia project, for example, notes that 70 water harvesting tanks were distributed, 11 drip irrigation sites were established, and 100 farmers were trained in conservation agriculture. For other projects, including Colombia's Integrated National Adaptation Plan and the global Community Based Adaptation Programme, the results reported are less precise. For example, the Colombia project reported that "several pilot adaptation activities are running including 2 communal systems benefitting 165 people." In some cases, the results reported progress in delivering physical works envisaged by the projects—such as, for the West African regional Adaptation to Climate Change project, "dune replanting and stabilization, mangrove rehabilitation, construction"—and the dissemination of alternative livelihood tools and technologies.

The scarcity of precise information regarding on-the-ground results is related to the point made earlier regarding the appropriateness and quality of M&E frameworks in adaptation projects. This issue, and the need to harmonize and strengthen these frameworks, was also mentioned in interviews with project teams and in project implementation documents.

6.2 Lessons from SPA implementation to Date

Despite the relative youth of the SPA portfolio, several lessons are emerging from the various implementation and midterm reports of the most advanced projects. These trends are of notable importance to other adaptation funds because they suggest various changes that could be made to both the funding mechanism and project design to improve a project's ability to achieve concrete results. The key lessons identified by the project teams and through an analysis of the project implementation reports, including midterm and final evaluations, can be grouped into four categories: local knowledge base, project timescale, project design and implementation, and M&E.

Local Knowledge Base

It appears that projects that completed climate change adaptation and risk management capacity-building activities were more successful in achieving both policy planning and on-the-ground activities. Most countries are not sufficiently prepared to conduct comprehensive vulnerability assessments, choose appropriate adaptation measures, and implement them at project onset. In fact, various SPA implementation reports identified a lack of scientific data, including climate models, to support adaptation planning and a limited understanding of climate change adaptation by policy makers and local communities alike.

The evaluation found that the SPA projects' M&E frameworks—as potential learning mechanisms—were not designed to allow for any testing of the effectiveness of adaptation measures in the medium or long term.

Project Timescale

Most SPA projects had not achieved the midterm goals they had set for themselves. In several instances, projects were reported to be critically behind schedule. They required both additional project management training and supervision from an evaluation team in order to achieve substantial outputs by the end of the project's term. While this difficulty might result from a combination of country- and project-specific limitations, even some of the best-organized projects—such as the completed Lake Balaton Vulnerability Assessments, Early Warning and Adaptation Strategies project implemented in Hungary (GEF ID 2630)—noted in their final evaluation that the duration of the project was too short, thereby limiting opportunities for success (Bellamy 2010).

Several other SPA projects reported that the lifespan of their projects was too short, and that they experienced start-up delays for reasons that are also common in other development or GEF projects.

As a new field of work, adaptation was reported by project teams to require novel inputs and the involvement of new types of stakeholders, thereby potentially creating delays for SPA projects. Future adaptation projects could benefit from longer implementation time spans than were allocated by the SPA. This period could be defined at the onset of a project in accordance with a country's predisposition, project objectives, and planned adaptation activities.

Project Design and Implementation

Several project stakeholders, including team leaders and coordinators interviewed during this evaluation, expressed concern over the divide that existed between a project's initial ambitious plans at project design and what could realistically be achieved on the ground. SPA projects tend to involve several GEF focal areas with complementary indicative activities that need be implemented simultaneously at multiple organizational levels

and scales. Some projects would have benefitted from clarifying and simplifying their work plans.[1] Others needed to focus on activities that proved more effective rather than on those that proved to be too difficult to implement.

The Community Based Adaptation Programme is unique in the SPA portfolio because its objective is to enhance the capacity of communities to adapt to climate change. Its extensive reach—consisting of 58 approved small grants projects—has generated some novel lessons concerning the participation of communities in adaptation efforts. For instance, the project coordinator reports that volunteer work is crucial to a project's implementation and useful in getting its approval by the community (Nyandiga 2010). Similarly, the expected outcome indicators of a project need to be properly understood by communities. Nonetheless, the generation of knowledge products such as assessments and toolkits is slow when dealing with communities. Community-based adaptation activities need to be scaled up using other adaptation-related programs. This may also correspond to the demonstration pilots planned in several SPA projects and hints at a potential limitation in the impact of these activities if replication efforts are not pursued beyond a project's time span.

[1] See, for example, ALM (2010), which describes Namibia's experience.

Monitoring and Evaluation

A clear and coherent M&E framework is essential to the determination of objective lessons from a project, given the pilot nature of the SPA. Furthermore, those projects that failed to provide a strong M&E system have also had significant difficulties with regard to project management. SMART and objective outcome indicators[2] should be established at the onset of each project so as to simplify the evaluation of a project's evolution and provide adequate support when necessary. It is essential that projects clearly demonstrate how outputs contribute to the achievement of an outcome. This is particularly important with regard to such on-the-ground outputs as "10 families provided with high-productivity cows" or "324 bags of fish feed distributed to 54 farmers" which are context-specific and thus do not seem to correspond to clear adaptation benefits.

[2] SMART indicators are specific; measurable; achievable and attributable; relevant and realistic; and time-bound, timely, trackable, and targeted.

7. Management of the SPA Portfolio

A number of management practices were included in the SPA guidelines that were designed to make the SPA a learning pilot. This chapter focuses on a few of these, specifically, the selection and review of SPA projects, elements related to coordination within and outside the GEF, as well as portfolio monitoring and learning. It builds on the analysis of the relevance and effectiveness of the SPA strategy presented in chapter 4.

7.1 Selection and Review of SPA Projects

The SPA guidelines provide limited information on the criteria for selecting and the process for approving SPA projects. Normal GEF procedures for selection, review, and approval were expected to be followed for the SPA. Beyond this understanding, there did not appear to be any institutionalized mechanism for SPA funding allocation and distribution, nor any clear and explicit selection criteria. Therefore, the SPA portfolio developed on the basis of collaboration and on the supply of projects from the GEF Agencies and from GEF focal areas over time. It may have been difficult to have clear selection criteria and to approve projects according to strict criteria at the time when the SPA was developed because adaptation integration was still a fairly new concept in practice.

Project review appears to have been conducted with varying degrees of technical input. For example, STAP reviews do not appear to have been requested systematically for SPA projects, although they were performed for at least 14 projects. Similarly, some projects (those with focal area financing) appear to have been circulated to GEF technical staff in focal area teams, while others (those without focal area financing) do not seem to have benefited from this input (see section 7.2).

7.2 Coordination

An underlying idea for the creation of the SPA was to promote the integration of climate change impacts and adaptation measures into the focal area strategies and work (GEF Council 2005, p. 2). The expectation was that "lessons from the SPA pilot were to be mainstreamed into GEF focal area work" (GEF Council 2005, p. 7). Therefore, the SPA guidelines create the expectation that some form of coordination and mainstreaming mechanism would be established.

In the early days of the SPA, in 2005, an internal working group for issues related to adaptation was formed. An internal working group of the GEF Secretariat, it was composed of representatives from each of the GEF focal areas, and its purpose was to identify the major areas of work in each focal area that had synergies with adaptation. The agreed areas of work were integrated into the SPA operational guidelines, and the working group was dissolved in 2005.

Another coordination mechanism, the Climate Change Adaptation Task Force was established in early 2006 as a mechanism for coordination among the GEF partners. According to its establishing terms of reference, its purpose was "to facilitate inter-agency collaboration to develop and fine-tune policies and operational guidelines in response to evolving UNFCCC guidance on adaptation to climate change." Its work was to be initially focused on the SPA, the LDCF, and the SCCF. The task force also developed and agreed on terms of reference to formalize its structure, functions, and mode of operation.

The Climate Change Adaptation Task Force is currently comprised of representatives from each GEF Agency and staff from the GEF Secretariat who work on adaptation to climate change. It is open to other interested staff and observers (for example, staff from the GEF Evaluation Office and STAP participates). There is no systematic representation from the GEF Secretariat focal area teams or the Adaptation Fund Secretariat, which is hosted by the GEF Secretariat.

The task force, chaired by the GEF Secretariat Adaptation team, has achieved an impressive number of tasks, although operating with limited resources, especially in its early years. Meetings occur on a regular basis every three to four weeks, bringing together all GEF Agencies for discussions on adaptation-related issues. Among the key functions highlighted in its terms of reference, the task force has, on an ongoing basis

- discussed the "definition of operational guidelines, modalities, and priority areas of intervention for the SPA, the LDCF, and the SCCF consistent with climate convention guidance to the GEF on adaptation";
- discussed the "operationalization of COP [conference of the parties] guidance" and of "emerging issues in climate change adaptation";
- sought to enhance "program management through discussion of policy issues, pipeline coordination, and project development and implementation issues";
- discussed "policies to manage the GEF adaptation pipeline and portfolio";
- coordinated "activities related to development of [the] adaptation portfolio"; and
- served "as a coordinating mechanism for GEF Portfolio development on adaptation."

The terms of reference also identify a number of management functions that have yet to be fulfilled, such as the development of internal policies to manage the GEF adaptation pipeline and portfolio, and the collection of results from projects. This last includes the development of targets and indicators for each adaptation-related fund at the portfolio level, and the monitoring of projects under the SPA, the LDCF, and the SCCF at the portfolio level. It should be noted that the LDCF and the SCCF are moving forward with this last item, through the development of a results-based management framework that is now well advanced. The evaluation found that when taking into consideration the resources available at the time of the establishment of the Climate Change Adaptation Task Force, it was unrealistic to expect that all the tasks outlined above would be implemented.

Another mechanism for information sharing is collaboration between the GEF adaptation teams and the GEF focal area teams. However, the evaluation found that this collaboration was sporadic and not formalized, including at the time of project development and review where it should have been encouraged—and even in cases where SPA projects were not mobilizing other focal area funds, since they claimed global environmental benefits in those areas. Interviews with GEF Sec-

retariat and GEF Agency staff as well as reviews of relevant documentation (GEF Secretariat project tracking sheets) indicate that in the beginning of the SPA portfolio development, most SPA projects were developed without other GEF focal area funding and with limited involvement of GEF focal area staff. For example, about half of the SPA projects (12) have other GEF focal area funding, and all of them were approved after 2009. A sample review of the GEF Secretariat project tracking sheets for project clearance and approval show that the SPA projects with focal area funding from the GEF Trust Fund had indeed been cleared by appropriate staff in the focal area teams, whereas the ones with only SPA funding were cleared by the adaptation team only.[1] This was a lost opportunity to promote integration among the focal areas, which had been one of the SPA pilots' main purposes. Although coordination occurred informally, this may not have been sufficient to ensure the necessary integration of adaptation into the focal areas.

7.3 Portfolio Monitoring and Learning

As a learning pilot, the SPA was expected to generate lessons for future adaptation programming in and outside the GEF. Consequently, mechanisms were put in place in the SPA guidelines to promote this learning. As mentioned earlier, all projects, on an individual basis, contained learning and information-sharing components.

No portfolio-level monitoring has been conducted of ongoing or completed projects, nor has any knowledge-generation or sharing of SPA project activities been conducted. There are no portfolio-level results, and tracking tools are still under development. Similarly, the GEF Council did not request updates on the SPA other than a financial one, perhaps missing an important opportunity for learning and accountability. The first time the Council considered the SPA portfolio was when it requested that the GEF Evaluation Office conduct this evaluation, in November 2008.

The evaluation noted that project progress reports and implementation reports have not been systematically transmitted to the GEF Secretariat; when they were, they were not analyzed as a program. This deficiency could be explained by the limited resources in the GEF unit in charge of the SPA, particularly at its beginning. The recent LDCF evaluation found a similar issue regarding limited resources allocated to monitoring and knowledge management of the adaptation funds, and the recent Fourth Overall Performance Study found similar issues throughout the GEF.

Since most of the SPA projects are still under implementation, an opportunity remains to accomplish specific learning functions by giving more attention to experiences and lessons coming from projects dealing with climate change impacts and adaptation. Interviews conducted during the course of this evaluation similarly recommended that learning and information-sharing mechanisms, such as regional meetings or gatherings among SPA project stakeholders, be organized and supported by the GEF Secretariat. IW: Learn (International Waters Learning Exchange and Resource Network)—a network of practitioners in the international waters area focused around a Web-based platform—is considered a good practice in this regard. A similar program may be proposed for adaptation issues.

The SPA operational guidelines explicitly identify the Adaptation Learning Mechanism as the initiative's learning and dissemination arm. However, the Adaptation Learning Mechanism has evolved

[1] As well as by other appropriate team leaders and the GEF Chief Executive Officer.

from its original concept and is now implemented as a distinct project with a broader scope as approved by the GEF Council. A legitimate and useful initiative in itself, and one that promotes learning on adaptation, the Adaptation Learning Mechanism did not focus on SPA projects and lessons specifically, as was originally intended. While this may have been cost-efficient, it means that the SPA has been left without a dedicated learning mechanism.

Although no formal process of knowledge sharing has been developed, there is evidence of learning and information sharing as a result of the SPA. For example, GEF Agency and GEF Secretariat personnel testify to having learned from SPA development and implementation.

References

The GEF publications and Council documents (the latter indicated with the designation "GEF.C.xx") cited here are available on the GEF Web site, www.thegef.org, under the Documents & Publications tab. GEF Evaluation Office documents can be found on the GEF Evaluation Office Web site, www.gefeo.org, under Evaluations & Studies and in the online documents database ASK ME. All Web links cited here were accessed March 2011, unless otherwise indicated.

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GEF Evaluation Office Publications

Number	Title	Year
Evaluation Reports		
60	GEF Country Portfolio Evaluation: Turkey (1992–2009)	2011
59	GEF Country Portfolio Evaluation: Moldova (1994–2009)	2011
58	GEF Annual Country Portfolio Evaluation Report 2010	2010
57	GEF Annual Performance Report 2009	2010
56	GEF Impact Evaluation of the Phaseout of Ozone-Depleting Substances in Countries with Economies in Transition, Volumes 1 and 2	2010
55	GEF Annual Impact Report 2009	2010
54	OPS4: Progress Toward Impact—Fourth Overall Performance Study of the GEF, Full Report	2010
53	OPS4: Progress Toward Impact—Fourth Overall Performance Study of the GEF, Executive Version	2010
52	GEF Country Portfolio Evaluation: Syria (1994–2008)	2009
51	GEF Country Portfolio Evaluation: Egypt (1991–2008)	2009
50	GEF Annual Country Portfolio Evaluation Report 2009	2009
49	GEF Annual Performance Report 2008	2009
48	GEF Annual Impact Report 2008	2009
47	Midterm Review of the Resource Allocation Framework	2009
46	GEF Annual Report on Impact 2007	2009
45	GEF Country Portfolio Evaluation: Cameroon (1992–2007)	2009
44	GEF Annual Country Portfolio Evaluation Report 2008	2008
43	GEF Country Portfolio Evaluation: South Africa (1994–2007)	2008
42	GEF Country Portfolio Evaluation: Madagascar (1994–2007)	2008
41	GEF Country Portfolio Evaluation: Benin (1991–2007)	2008
40	GEF Annual Performance Report 2007	2008
39	Joint Evaluation of the GEF Small Grants Programme	2008
38	GEF Annual Performance Report 2006	2008
37	GEF Country Portfolio Evaluation: Samoa (1992–2007)	2008
36	GEF Country Portfolio Evaluation: The Philippines (1992–2007)	2008
35	Evaluation of the Experience of Executing Agencies under Expanded Opportunities in the GEF	2007
34	Evaluation of Incremental Cost Assessment	2007
33	Joint Evaluation of the GEF Activity Cycle and Modalities	2007
32	GEF Country Portfolio Evaluation: Costa Rica (1992–2005)	2007
31	GEF Annual Performance Report 2005	2006
30	The Role of Local Benefits in Global Environmental Programs	2006
29	GEF Annual Performance Report 2004	2005
28	Evaluation of GEF Support for Biosafety	2006
	Third Overall Performance Study	2005
	GEF Integrated Ecosystem Management Program Study	2005
	Biodiversity Program Study	2004
	Climate Change Program Study	2004
	International Waters Program Study	2004
Evaluation Documents		
ED-4	The GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy 2010	
ED-3	Guidelines for GEF Agencies in Conducting Terminal Evaluations	2008
ED-2	GEF Evaluation Office Ethical Guidelines	2008
ED-1	The GEF Evaluation and Monitoring Policy	2006

Global Environment Facility
Evaluation Office
1818 H Street, NW
Washington, DC 20433
USA

www.gefeo.org