

GEF Country Portfolio Evaluation: Cuba (1992–2011)



The Independent Evaluation Office of the Global Environment Facility (IEO) conducted a country portfolio evaluation of GEF support to Cuba for the period 1992–2011. Cuba was selected based on its large and mature portfolio including several completed projects in all GEF focal areas with an emphasis on biodiversity. Since 1992, the GEF has invested about \$44 million (with approximately \$240 million in cofinancing) through 19 national projects in Cuba. Additionally, the evaluation covered three regional (one under implementation and two completed), and two global projects in which Cuba participates. These were selected because they had significant in-country activities/components, stakeholder input, and available information.

Findings

Results

- GEF support has achieved important results in the focal areas of biodiversity (including biosafety), land degradation, climate change, international waters, and POPs.
- Results of GEF support to Cuba built on lessons from previous projects thanks to a continuity of policies, institutions, staff, and people involved in implementation.
- GEF projects have indirectly supported South-South cooperation, which has been facilitated by the high priority accorded the Cuban government to such cooperation.
- The sustainability of results in Cuba is ensured through the government's programmatic approach to support subsequent projects funded by it, the GEF, and other donors.

Relevance

- GEF support has been relevant to the establishment of environmental priorities and strategies, the international environmental conventions (the CBD, the UNFCCC, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, and the Stockholm Convention on POPs) and to the GEF mandate and strategies.
- The Cuban government plays an important role in GEF-supported projects.

Efficiency

- The approval process for medium- and full-size projects is on average shorter in Cuba than in other Latin American and Caribbean countries where country portfolio evaluations have been conducted. Project preparation costs are lower when compared to the overall GEF portfolio.
- Overall, institutional arrangements for the design and implementation of GEF-supported projects in Cuba are efficient.
- Project-level monitoring and evaluation occurs for adaptive management and compilation of monitoring information. However, monitoring data access for decision-making poses challenges.
- The Cuban economic and geographic context adversely affects GEF-supported project implementation and outcomes.

Recommendations

- The GEF should put more effort into mainstreaming adaptation in project design and implementation in all focal areas, and provide additional support and guid-

ance to countries in the design and implementation of multifocal projects that include adaptation.

- In countries with contexts like Cuba's, the GEF should be more pragmatic concerning administrative procedures in order to obtain global environmental benefits.
- The GEF should strengthen South-South cooperation in project and program design and implementation in all focal areas, especially through regional projects and programs.
- Develop an information management strategy to strengthen knowledge sharing from GEF projects and programs at the national level and better achieve global environmental benefits.

Follow-Up

The findings of this evaluation were presented to the GEF Council in June 2012 as an input to the *GEF Annual Country Portfolio Evaluation Report 2012*. The main conclusions and recommendations of the Cuba country portfolio evaluation were then presented to the GEF Council in June 2013 as an information document.

The GEF Independent Evaluation Office is an independent entity reporting directly to the GEF Council, mandated to evaluate the focal area programs and priorities of the GEF. The full version of *Evaluación de la Cartera de Proyectos del FMAM en el País: Cuba (1992–2011)* (Evaluation Report No. 82; in Spanish, with conclusions and lessons learned in English) is available on the GEF Independent Evaluation Office website, www.gefeo.org. For more information, please contact the Office at gefevaluation@thegef.org.