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Joint Evaluation of the GEF Small Grants Programme

Country Program Case Study: Egypt

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Contents

Foreword

In accordance with the 2006 Monitoring and Evaluation Policy of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), one of the overarching objectives of the GEF with respect to monitoring and evaluation is to promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing on results and lessons learned among the GEF and its partners as a basis for decision making on policies, strategies, program management, and projects; and to improve knowledge and performance. In this context, the GEF Evaluation Office is pleased to present nine country program case studies that were part of the data collected for the Joint Evaluation of the Small Grants Programme (SGP).

In June 2006, the GEF Council requested the GEF Evaluation Office undertake an independent evaluation of the SGP. The GEF Evaluation Office invited the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Evaluation Office to participate in this initiative. The purpose of the joint evaluation was to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and cost effectiveness of SGP objectives in relation to the overall GEF mandate. In addition the evaluation assessed the results of the SGP, the factors affecting these results, and the monitoring and evaluation systems of the program as implemented. It also traced the evolution of the SGP, the changes that have taken place in the program, and the drivers of these changes. Country case studies were prepared as part of the evaluation. Although the studies are unique and particular to each country, the analytical framework used was that provided by the evaluation's approach paper.

The case studies were undertaken under the direction of the GEF and UNDP evaluation officers with relevant regional experience. National consultants were hired to carry out the majority of the project site visits. Staff from the GEF and UNDP Evaluation Offices provided methodological guidance to the local consultants, participated in the initial site visits, and supervised the drafting of the case studies to ensure consistency within and among the country studies.

The contents of this report are based on the findings of the evaluation team and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of GEF or UNDP.

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 the country offices. In addition, we would like to acknowledge and thank the main authors of the reports.

Abbreviations

CBO	community-based organization
FSP	full-size project
GEF	Global Environment Facility
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MSP	medium-size project
NGO	nongovernmental organization
NSC	national steering committee
POP	persistent organic pollutant
SGP	Small Grants Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

Executive Summary

Since its inception in 1992, the Small Grants Programme (SGP) has occupied a strategic niche within the national environmental management capacity by supporting community-based initiatives that respond to the Global Environment Facility (GEF) criteria and fulfill local community needs. The SGP has supported more than 150 nongovernmental organizations that have implemented 183 projects. These projects complied with GEF criteria while addressing local environmental issues, reaching marginal populations and creating job opportunities.

There is a consensus among national stakeholders that the SGP is a successful and visible program with positive reputational benefits. Its activities and projects complement national efforts addressing priority environmental issues and help Egypt meets its international obligations. Alignment with country-level environmental priorities was achieved through a competent and knowledgeable national steering committee, on which national authorities are adequately represented. Country program strategies were also developed through a comprehensive consultation process.

The SGP governance structure ensured an objective, transparent, and solid decision-making process for priority setting and funds allocation. The SGP has been efficient in terms of project processing; the average processing time for a project from conceptualization to implementation is about six months. There is a consensus among stakeholders that the SGP is an efficient program characterized by a dynamic governance structure that is responsive and nonbureaucratic.

The cost of administering the SGP, calculated as a ratio of administrative costs per year to total funds disbursed per year, averaged 15.6 percent of country program funding over the past five years. However, these administrative expenditures included the costs of activities critical to the achievement of the SGP's overall objectives, such as awareness and capacity-building activities and events. When only purely administrative expenditures are taken into account, the cost efficiency of the SGP ranges between 7 and 12 percent.

The SGP projects were, to a reasonable degree, sustainable. An element of sustainability in a large number of projects stemmed from the income generated and/or the financial savings achieved by the project activities. The SGP should conduct a cost-benefit analysis for such projects, which would help strengthen their sustainability and facilitate replication efforts.

Replication and scaling up are crucial for achieving global benefits as well as any significant local benefits. The resources available and corresponding efforts expended to fulfill such a requirement are not sufficient. The SGP should be provided with resources dedicated to promotion and dissemination activities leading to wide-scale replication and scaling up.

A monitoring and evaluation system has been set up and is functioning, but it needs improvement and upgrading. More coaching would be needed by the SGP to render its monitoring and evaluation system more effective. In addition, more field follow-up and hands-on

technical assistance to the projects during their various stages would help minimize risks and preempt obstacles.

Finally, a national-level exit strategy has not been devised. Graduation from the SGP would be best achieved through a phased withdrawal over a relatively long time frame. It would also necessitate establishing a national institution as a replacement, with initial funding from the GEF.

Based on the findings of the evaluation, the reviewer rating of the SGP in Egypt is as follows:

Relevance	Effectiveness	Efficiency
Highly satisfactory	Satisfactory	Highly satisfactory

1 Background

The primary objective of the GEF is to help secure global environment benefits in the areas of: biodiversity, climate change, ozone depletion, land degradation, international waters, and persistent organic pollutants (POPS). The principle objectives of the Small Grants Programme (SGP) are to

- demonstrate community-level strategies and technologies that could reduce threats to the global environment if they are replicated over time;
- draw lessons from community-level experience and support the spread of successful community-level strategies and innovations among nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), host governments, development aid agencies, the GEF, and others working on a larger scale;
- build partnerships and networks of local stakeholders to support and strengthen community and NGO capacity to address environmental problems and promote sustainable development.

The SGP's starting point in terms of global benefit is to ensure that each project concept/proposal fits the GEF criteria and that each proposal clearly articulates how project objectives and activities would have an impact in the GEF focal areas. According to SGP Third Operational Phase Strategic Framework, SGP projects should also address community needs and interests. The SGP approach is to promote sustainable livelihoods as an entry point, thus allowing communities and households to achieve both global and local benefits while improving their economic condition.

1.1 Evaluation Aims and Objectives

This evaluation case study assesses the relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency of the SGP objectives in relation to the overall mandate of the GEF, which is to finance activities that address global environmental issues and generate global environmental benefits. In so doing, the case study adopts several lines of inquiry:

- The evaluation looks at the relationships between the SGP and other GEF operations and the contributions of the SGP to the GEF mandate and its focal area strategic priorities and targets.
- The evaluation assesses the local livelihood and global environmental results generated with GEF funds.
- The evaluation examines the extent to which the SGP has reached its intended beneficiaries—communities and marginalized groups.

The evaluation of the Egypt SGP is 1 of 11 **primary case studies.** These case studies entail the assessment of 12 sampled projects[1] through field verification in combination with desk studies. A general portfolio review was also undertaken, alongside consultation/interview with the Egypt SGP national coordinator, National Steering Committee (NSC), and other stakeholders to gather information on the overall performance of the Egypt SGP. This on the ground data collection was supplemented through desk reviews of the projects and other program literature.

1.2 Brief Description of the SGP in Egypt

This section provides a brief account of the Egypt SGP's main features and history, and a delineation of the program's trends over its three operational phases.

Tables 1.1 and 1.2, respectively, present the total grants funding of the Egypt SGP and cofinancing (in kind and cash) per phase.2 Table 1.3 shows the focal area distribution of Egypt SGP projects.

Table 1.1: SGP Grant Total by Phase

Phase	Grant total ($)
Pilot	400,000
1	400,000
2	2,000,000
3	1,060,000
Total	3,760,000

Table 1.2: SGP Cofinancing by Phase

Phase	Cash ($)	In-kind ($)
Pilot	0	70,171
1	15,917	98,731
2	689,100	385,837
3	880,277	267,738
Total	1,585,294	822,477

[1] Part of the global sample of 264 projects, which is statistically representative of the 7,500 SGP projects that have been completed or are under implementation.

[2] All dollar amounts are U.S. dollars unless otherwise indicated.

Table 1.3: SGP Projects by Focal Area

Project focal area and type	Number of projects	Geographic distribution (governorates)	Total funding ($)
Biodiversity	26	Alexandria, Qena, North Sinai, Red Sea, Kafr El Shikh, New Valley, Giza	498,088
Climate change	128		2,192,968
Agriculture waste recycling	41	Dakhalia, Sharkia, Behira, Minia, Kalioubya, Beni Swif	295,366
Biogas	8	Minia, New Valley, Asuit	184,267
Developed barns	2	Mina, Behira, Beni Swif,	32,904
Wind turbines	3	South Sinai, Red Sea	60,065
Charcoal kiln	2	Asuyt, Cairo	47,870
Dissemination of nonmotorized transport culture	12	Sharkia, Dakhalia, Sohag, Minia, Beni Swif, Cairo, Giza	246,738
Dissemination of solar energy technology	28	Kalioubiay, Mnia, Beni Swif, Giza, Behira, Sohag, Aswan	651,836
Improvements of energy-efficiency projects	18	Kalioubya, Cairo, Dakahlia, Gharbiya, Minia, Fayoum, Behira, Ismailya	377,487
Dev. ovens	9	Minia, Sohag, Cairo, Qenaqena	189,241
Reducing greenhouse gas emissions	5	Kalioubiya, Cairo, Giza, Beni Swif	107,194
International waters	15	Behira, Gharbia, Beni Swif, Minia, Asiut	307,397
POPs	3	Greater Cairo, Alexandria	68,835
Multifocal/other	17		406,901

Pilot Phase

The Egypt SGP started in 1992. During the pilot phase (1992–96), the program granted $400,000 in support of 15 projects implemented by 21 NGOs from different geographic locations in Egypt., Capacity building for the NGO community was a strategic target for the program during the pilot phase.

During this phase, the program focused on climate change and, to a much lesser extent, biodiversity and international waters. The majority of projects fell under the climate change focal area. Such a distribution was attributed to (1) a lack of awareness of biodiversity and international waters issues; and (2) limited capacities of the NGOs to write proposals in these areas that were not yet clearly understood.

Most of the climate change projects addressed greening activities, and almost all of these projects included greening and tree-planting activities. Little attention was paid to other measures that could mitigate against climate change, such as energy conservation.

Previous evaluation exercises indicated that the pilot phase projects were, to an extent, lacking adequate plans for sustainability beyond the lifetime of the projects. Nevertheless, there were

success stories during this phase. The project for Surveying, Recording, Planting and Preserving Medicinal Plants in North Sinai is one of the successful experiences of the pilot phase. The project aimed at conserving biodiversity by protecting flora, including medicinal plants, from overgrazing and other forms of exploitative use. Medicinal plants were reintroduced in the region, and flora of the region at large were protected by growing pastures. Furthermore, the project raised the awareness of local communities and changed their behavior toward environmental resources. The project succeeded in achieving its targets, which led to identifying new varieties of medicinal plants as well as growing plants of economic value. The experience has been documented in a published book recording more than 115 previously known medicinal plants and 25 unknown varieties. In addition, the plants were preserved in a herbarium for research reference.

First Operational Phase

In the program's first operational phase (1997–98), a new country program strategy was developed based on the experience gained and lessons learned during the pilot phase. The strategy was prepared in a participatory manner with the key stakeholders, including: the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) country office, national and international NGOs, community-based organizations (CBOs), government representatives from relevant ministries, academia, and the media. During this phase, 15 projects were funded—8 related to climate change, 5 addressing biodiversity, and 2 multifocal. No NGOs submitted proposals for protecting international waters. Projects that addressed issues related to climate change, energy conservation, and global warming received a large percentage of the funding for this phase.

Planting trees and establishing green areas represented the dominant initiative of this phase, constituting almost 50 percent of the climate change projects funded. The remaining 50 percent comprised new project ideas that introduced renewable energy and environmentally friendly technologies to local communities. These included the utilization of biogas and solar energy for heating water and cooking purposes.

According to previous evaluations, the first operational phase witnessed many success stories, including Local Technological Units for Energy Appropriate for the Environment, which aimed to expand the utilization of solar energy. It also generated employment opportunities for youth in assembling and maintaining the solar heaters.

Conservation of Elements of Biodiversity in the Rangelands of the North Western Coast was another successful experience in this phase. The project was designed to identify methodologies and means to achieve sustainable uses of the elements of biodiversity in the area. The NGO implemented the project in collaboration with local administration and in close coordination with the natives (Bedouins). The project idea was to convey and mainstream the importance of conserving biodiversity to the community and local economy. The implementing NGO assisted some of the natives in establishing their own greenhouses and nurseries to regenerate endangered flora species. The project's success inspired the local administration unit to allocate land for

replicating the experience at other locations. The project also obtained support from the Academy of Scientific Research in cooperation with the World Conservation Union (IUCN).

Second Operational Phase

During the second operational phase (1999–2004), the SGP was better focused on achieving an improved fit with the GEF strategic framework and defined operational programs. The SGP was also focused on achieving the principle objectives set in the report of the second independent evaluation, namely: (1) revision and implementation of the strategic framework and operational guidelines at the global and country levels to ensure congruence with the GEF operational strategy and programs; (2) selection and implementation of community projects; (3) establishment of functional links with medium- and full-size GEF projects, and other UNDP programs, government agencies, and national environmental funds (mainstreaming); (4) establishment of a sound program for capacity building of key stakeholders; (5) elaboration and implementation of global country strategies for the sharing of GEF-SGP experiences and demonstration of global benefits, (6) establishment of resource mobilization strategies at global, country, and project levels to ensure project and program sustainability; and (7) operation of a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system to track and assess global benefits. The degree of success in achieving these objectives varied.

Between 1999 and 2004, the program financed 96 projects, the majority of which (more than 80) were in the climate change focal area. Eight projects were funded for conserving biological diversity, and one was a multifocal project. In this phase, no NGOs submitted proposals related to international waters.

The second operational phase has been the largest thus far, both in terms of number of projects funded and amount of funds disbursed. In this phase, new project ideas emerged to mitigate against climate change such as energy-conserving lighting and the use of wind turbines, solar cookers, and solar heaters.

Previous evaluations concluded that most of the projects implemented during this phase were successful. They concluded as well that the degree of success of energy-saving/renewable energy projects was a function of geographic location. As an example, the evaluations asserted that projects related to solar water heaters were more successful in Upper Egypt compared to the Delta region. This was attributed mainly to the variation in climatic conditions.

Examples of successful projects in this phase include Technological Units Appropriate for the Environment, which was implemented in El-Taiaba Village. The project aimed at utilizing available natural resources to rationalize electricity consumption, thus reducing air pollution caused by thermal power stations. Raising inhabitants' awareness of the importance of improving indoor air quality was another target for the project. The project planned to introduce improved ovens, reduce indoor air pollution, and protect the health of women and children. To this end, the implementing NGO planned to install 56 solar water heaters and 20 ovens in El-Taiaba. The NGO trained individuals on maintenance and repair to ensure the project's

sustainability and generate job opportunities within the community. The project succeeded in installing the water heaters and in introducing improved ovens in the village.

Third Operational Phase

The third operational phase started in March 2005 and was expected to be concluded by the end of June 2007. To date, 62 projects have been, or are being, implemented. The distribution of these projects is as follows:

- 47 climate change projects
- 1 biodiversity project
- 12 international waters projects
- 2 POPs projects

During this phase, the program increased the number of projects dealing with international waters, but the majority remains within the climate change area.

The program established a partnership with CARE International and continued its collaboration with a GEF full-size project (FSP) on energy efficiency. It is too soon to make judgments or draw conclusions concerning most of these phase 3 projects.

2 Scope and Methodology

The key questions pertinent to this evaluation include the following:

- **Relevance:** To what extent is the SGP relevant to the GEF mandate and operations and to country sustainable development and environmental priorities?
- **Effectiveness:** To what extent has the SGP contributed to the generation of global environmental benefits?
- **Efficiency/cost effectiveness:** To what extent is the SGP an efficient and cost-effective instrument for linking the GEF with community groups and NGOs/CBOs working with the poor and marginalized populations?

The evaluation methodology primarily used a mixed methods approach based on qualitative and quantitative data collection. The qualitative methods used involved

- interviews with key stakeholders (including the national coordinator and project grantees);
- focus groups (including the NSC and project grantees);
- direct observation of projects through field verification visits;
- desk reviews of project and program literature.

The following quantitative methods were used in the evaluation:

- Completion of standardized questionnaire forms
- Country program strategy assessment tool
- Project assessment tool
- Project M&E tool
- Country program M&E tool

The methods were not employed in isolation; rather, where possible, information was triangulated from multiple sources. For example, interview data informed the assessment of country program strategy, projects, and M&E and vice versa.

The main limitation of the methodology at the country level was time and resource constraints which prevented a broader assessment of projects both in terms of coverage and depth. At the project level, the completed (and therefore older projects) lacked baseline and monitoring data from which to quantify results; hence, the majority of the field visits focused on reconstructing a

qualitative baseline through interviews and contrasting it with the present situation. Furthermore, the visits to the 12 sampled project were insufficient to provide the necessary overview and certitude for an overall country program performance rating.

3 Relevance

This section provides findings regarding the relevance of the SGP in Egypt. In assessing relevance, the evaluation addressed the key question, To what extent is the SGP relevant to the GEF mandate and operations and to country sustainable development and environmental priorities?, as well as a number of subquestions, as outlined in this section.

3.1 Alignment with GEF Focal Areas and Operational Programs

The vast majority of the Egypt SGP projects fulfilled GEF focal area criteria while addressing community needs and interests. Climate change has been the most strongly supported focal area, followed by biodiversity and multifocal. The emphasis on climate change has mostly concentrated on renewable energy and energy efficiency in support of government policy and priorities and other GEF projects. This was achieved through a mix of tools and mechanisms, the most important of which are highlighted below.

Capacity Building and Educational Efforts

Capacity building for SGP partners and key stakeholders was addressed by several means:

- Workshops were held to promote the SGP within the NGO community and to explain GEF criteria, operational programs, and procedures.
- The SGP has funded projects aimed at raising the capacity of NGOs to implement sustainable projects that fit within GEF objectives. These included the projects Preparing the Environmental NGO Community for Operational Phase II of GEF Small Grants and Hands-on Capacity Building for NGOs Participating in the GEF/SGP. These and similar projects organized workshops to build the capacity and raise the awareness of NGOs with respect to GEF focal area activities, projects, and systems.
- A series of workshops were held for capacity building of NGOs in each of the GEF focal areas.

Awareness Raising

The SGP raised the awareness of various target groups concerning the SGP mission, operational programs, and procedures. Awareness-raising activities included, but were not limited to, the following:

- Documents prepared in Arabic to help NGOs better understand the SGP and its operational programs
- A brochure printed for the SGP in Egypt
- A multimedia package presenting the SGP and the projects it has funded, complemented with photos

Review of Proposals and Technical Assistance by Specialized Subcommittees

The NSC includes among its members competent and knowledgeable specialists and officials. The committee is divided into subcommittees, each specialized in, and concerned with, one of the GEF thematic areas. Each subcommittee is responsible for reviewing the projects that fall within its scope of work, providing comments, and—if necessary—requiring beneficiaries to rework and revise project design. Projects that comply with GEF criteria are recommended to the NSC for approval.

In some instances, NGOs that submitted potentially acceptable proposals were invited to a workshop and assisted in modifying and/or upgrading their project proposals.

3.2 Alignment with National Environmental Priorities

Egypt does not have a fully functional national environmental action plan, even though it produced such a document in 2002 with UNDP support. This document, while useful, does not go so far as to establish a plan of action, projects, and programs to be implemented within a set budget and time frame. Such a plan could have helped the SGP, and other programs, sharply focus their efforts.

Egypt has produced national strategies and policies regarding the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, and POPs.

There is a consensus among national stakeholders that the SGP complements their efforts to address priority environmental issues and meet international obligations. Alignment with country-level environmental priorities was achieved through the following.

- **Competent and knowledgeable NSC and national coordinator.** The NSC is made of individuals who are conversant in and knowledgeable about the GEF thematic areas. In addition, the national coordinator is an experienced and well-connected environmentalist. The competence of the national coordinator and NSC members helps in achieving a sound fit between the SGP and national strategies.

- **Country program strategy developed through a comprehensive consultation process.** Egypt's country program strategy was arrived at through a comprehensive consultation process with wide participation of stakeholders. Although it was reported to have been a tedious and lengthy process to reach consensus on the strategy, the effort guaranteed that the strategy addresses national priorities.

- **Representation of national authorities in the NSC.** Key national authorities, such as the Ministry of Public Works and Water Resources and the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency, are represented in the NSC. Their discussion and approval of the country program strategy guarantee the alignment of the SGP with country-level environmental priorities and programs.

Since its inception, the SGP has taken a proactive approach toward mobilizing community-level efforts. Often, the program initiates activities to raise the awareness and activate the interest of NGOs to address priority national and/or regional environmental problems that have global impact. The SGP, if needed, also builds the capacity of NGOs to prepare and implement projects dealing with such problems. An example that best demonstrates this proactive approach addresses the "black cloud" phenomenon associated with air pollution episodes over Greater Cairo and other cities (see box 3.1). This problem has significant global environmental impact, since it entails the open burning of millions of tons of agricultural waste every year**.**

Box 3.1: Black Cloud Problem in Cairo

The burning of agricultural wastes, especially rice straw, has been causing severe air pollution problems over Greater Cairo and other cities in the Delta. This serious environmental problem became a top national priority and a real challenge for government, which took the position of banning open burning of agricultural waste. This ban, however, left farmers with no other option for clearing the land of waste.

The SGP recruited specialists to investigate the problem and propose solutions that took into account the interests of the farmers. The SGP organized conferences to present and discuss the solutions, and mobilize and activate NGOs to address the problem. The conferences were attended by some 100 NGOs as well as by national and local authorities.

Based on these preparatory and mobilization activities, the SGP received more than 50 applications from NGOs to implement agricultural waste management projects. Training events were organized for these NGOs, and ultimately 45 agricultural waste management projects were implemented in several Delta governorates. Technical assistance was provided to the NGOs and to the farmers during project implementation.

SGP activities have also helped address a weakness in national environmental management policies; namely the involvement of local communities in nature conservation efforts that have an impact on the global environment. This contribution is demonstrated by the involvement of the SGP with the regional GEF project MedWetCoast—Conservation of Wetlands and Coastal Ecosystems in the Mediterranean Region (see box 3.2)

Box 3.2: GEF MeDWeT and SGP involvement

Lake Burullus is a Mediterranean wetland where a regional MedWet project has been implemented. Widespread reed and illegal fishing presented two serious threats to the wetland ecosystem, as well as to the local fishing community. To deal with these problems, MedWet cooperated with the SGP and local NGOs in implementing two initiatives: the cropping of superfluous reed in the lake and the supply of legal fishing nets:

Cropping of superfluous reed. Studies conducted by the MedWet project determined the lake's surface area that should be cleared from reeds in order to restore the lake ecosystem. The SGP collaborated with MedWet in implementing projects executed by local NGOs and fishermen cooperatives to clear the lake surface. The SGP provided 50 percent of the project budget. The effort resulted in

- improved water circulation in the lake
- reappearance of fish species that had disappeared from the lake
- restoration of a Mediterranean wetland ecosystem
- resumption of fishing activities
- restoration of hundreds of job opportunities and a contribution to poverty alleviation
- capacity building for local NGOs and fishermen cooperatives
- environmental awareness concerning local and global issues

Supply of legal fishing nets. The use of illegal fishing nets represented a serious threat to the lake's biodiversity and to the sustainable income of the fishermen. The SGP collaborated with MedWet in implementing projects that provided fishermen with legal fishing nets at low prices and facilitated payment conditions. The initiative led to

- increased local community awareness of local and global environmental issues
- establishment of a more sustainable fishing practice
- protection of the wetland ecosystem

3.3 Linkages with Other GEF and Donor Projects and Programs

The SGP has carried out activities to link its projects to GEF full- and medium-size projects (MSPs), the most notable of which are as follows:

- The NGO that implemented the SGP project Conservation of Biodiversity in Rangelands of North Western Coastal Zone contributed to the preparatory activities leading to an FSP on medicinal plants in Saint Catherine.

- The NGO that implemented the SGP project Design and Manufacture of Small-Scale Wind Turbines for Water Pumping and Electrification submitted an application for an MSP which was a scaled-up replication of the SGP project.

- The SGP, together with UNDP, proactively approached several FSPs in the area to identify possible means of cooperation. This projects approached included The Energy Efficiency Improvement and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Project, the Lake Manzala Engineered Wetland Project, and MedWet. Meetings with the FSP project directors were held to introduce the activities of the SGP and discuss potential synergies. In some cases, seminars were organized to present the FSPs to NGOs, with a view of identifying areas of possible contribution.

These efforts resulted in at least two cases of successful and beneficial cooperation with FSPs, described below. In both cases, the SGP played an important role in involving and mobilizing local communities and civil society as well as in demonstrating the link between global and local benefits.

Cooperation with MedWet

As described earlier, the SGP supported the regional MedWet FSP in alleviating pressures on the ecosystem of Lake Burullus. The MedWet project helped NGOs write proposals to the SGP, supervised the technical work, conducted the financial auditing, and helped the NGOs produce the reports required by the SGP. For its part, the SGP financed 50 percent of all project costs, conducted mid- and long-term auditing and supervision, presented advice as needed, and facilitated implementation and links to authorities. The head of the Nature Conservation Sector of the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency, who is also the focal point for the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, acknowledged the role of the SGP in mobilizing the local community to conserve the wetland.

Cooperation with the Energy Efficiency Improvement and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Project

To initiate cooperation between this initiative and relevant NGOs, a workshop was jointly organized by the FSP and the SGP to discuss ideas for projects in the field of energy conservation and environmental protection that could be implemented by NGOs and funded by the SGP with technical support from the FSP. The heads of more than 30 NGOs actively participated in the workshop. Subsequently, the FSP assisted the NGOs in the preparation of project documents to be submitted to the SGP for implementation of energy-efficiency projects.

Initially, nine NGOs received grants; their success encouraged other NGOs to submit proposals as well. These covered numerous cities across Egypt and addressed, among other items,

- training and capacity building for technicians in the field of efficient lighting;
- the conduct of public awareness seminars and workshops on the local and global benefits of energy efficiency;
- implementation o fenergy-efficiency projects using revolving funds;
- establishment of showrooms for energy-efficient lighting in NGO headquarters.

Cooperation with the Nile Basin Initiative

The SGP is currently partnering with the GEF Nile Basin Initiative project, which is jointly implemented by UNDP and the World Bank. In particular, the SGP has strongly influenced the design of the Nile Transboundary Environmental Action Project small grants program:

- The program has adopted the SGP model for a small grants program as opposed to designing a new or similar delivery mechanism.

- Program grants are geographically focused south of Luxor to the border with Sudan; grants made north of Luxor are made through the SGP.
- Both grants-making programs focus on wastewater control and treatment to reduce pollution in the Nile Basin.
- The SGP is providing operational and supervisory advice to the program, and there is regular coordination between the two.

Cooperation with CARE International

The SGP has recently developed a program with CARE International to address poverty reduction and international water/local water and sanitation issues in and around Beni-Seif. In this partnership, the SGP is contributing $90,000 in project grants to CARE's $450,000. CARE will focus on water supply and potable drinking water, while the SGP will replicate successful approaches to wastewater treatment and sewage processing in urban and semirural areas

3.4 Focus on Communities and Marginalized Groups

The direct beneficiaries of the SGP have included all categories of nonprofit organizations, including environment and development NGOs, CBOs, associations, scientific societies, and cooperatives. The SGP supported more than 150 NGOs, enabling them to implement projects that protected the environment and, in the majority of cases, served the community. It reached marginal communities in 24 of the 27 governorates of Egypt. The projects that were implemented complied with GEF criteria and, in most cases,

- addressed local environmental and/or sustainable development issues;
- met the needs of marginal populations and poorer communities;
- created job opportunities and/or generated incomes;
- protected natural resources from exploitive use and pollution.

Since its inception in 1992, the SGP has paid adequate attention to marginalized populations including women and indigenous peoples. It considers women among its key stakeholders and has encouraged gender-oriented NGOs to prepare and implement projects. Eight women-headed and -oriented NGOs received SGP support and implemented SGP projects; these included the Association for Women's Rights in Al Arish, which implemented a project for Developing and Tree Planting the District of Masaed. Similarly, the Women's Development Association in Quanater, an exclusively female organization with a membership of about 180, implemented a project on Mitigation of Climate Change by Using Solar Heaters. The target beneficiaries of the project were also mainly women.

A large number of SGP projects target indigenous populations, including fishermen, Bedouins, farmers, Nubians, and desert tribes. In this regard, note that SGP project selection criteria aim at empowering women and indigenous populations, and meeting their needs.

Indirect beneficiaries of the SGP include the technical staff of national and local authorities working with the NGOs who, by being involved in SGP project implementation, develop their environmental management capacities. Other indirect beneficiaries include members of the small private sector. However, their involvement is still insufficient and needs to be enhanced.

Table 3.1 summarizes the beneficiaries and benefits of the sampled Egypt SGP projects.

Table 3.1: Beneficiaries and Benefits of Sampled SGP Projects

Project number and name	Grantee	Main beneficiary	Benefits
EG-PP-03: A Pilot Demonstration for Sustainable Desert Development	Friends of Environment and Development Association	Not applicable	Not applicable
EG-PP-05: Introducing Neem Trees in Maadi Area and in Old Cairo	Tree Lovers Association	Families living in overcrowded, poorer districts, especially children	Provision of a green park as an outdoor recreational area, especially for children
EG-PP-07: Community Tree Planting in El Shorouk City, East Cairo	Association for Conservation of Nature's Beauty	Low-income families living in the district of El Shorouk.	Provision of a green park as an outdoor recreational area, especially for children
EGY-00-20: Sustainable Use of Renewable Energy	Family & Environment Development Association in Qena	• Poor village communities • Unemployed youth in village communities	• Provision of hot water for poor village communities • Job opportunities in installation and maintenance of solar heaters
EGY-01-12: Global Environment in Egypt	International Center for Environment and Development	Technical staff of national and local authorities working with NGOs	Development of environmental management capacities
EGY-01-32: The Improvement of Energy Efficiency	Friends of Nature	Young graduates and technicians	Employment and Income-generating activities from trade in energy-saving lighting and devices
EGY-02-64: Solar Energy-Friendly Energy for Environment	Central Association for Development and Environment Technology Improvement	• Youth centers that serve low-income communities • Unemployed youth	• Provision of hot water for children and youth in low-income districts • Job opportunities in the field of installation and maintenance of solar heaters.
EGY-03-114: Protecting International Water	The New Vision Community	Residents of two poor villages in upper Egypt, especially women and children	Health benefits through provision of sanitation
EGY-04-148: Recycling Agricultural Wastes in	Islamic Mercy Association in	• Farmers in villages	• Reducing cost of

Project number and name	Grantee	Main beneficiary	Benefits
Sharkia (6)	Ghanimia	• Unemployed youth in villages	fertilizers • Generating income through sale of compost • Seasonal employment opportunities
EGY-05-171: Recycling the Agricultural Wastes	Local Community Development in Meet-Khamies	• Farmers in villages • Unemployed youth in villages	• Reducing cost of fertilizers • Generating income through sale of compost • Seasonal employment opportunities
EGY-05-232: Mitigation of Climate Change by Using the Technology of Solar Heater	Women's Development Association i	• Community service establishments serving poorer communities (health units, youth centers, churches, mosques, and so on) • Unemployed youth in poor communities	• Community service units providing better services (hot water) for poorer communities • Job opportunities in installation and maintenance of solar heaters
EGY-05-252: Energy Conservation for Mitigating Climate Change	Egyptian Association for Development and Institutional Support	Small private sector entities working in the field of electrical supplies (lamps)	Facilitating initial involvement of small private sector entities with energy-saving lamps

3.5 Contribution to GEF Visibility and Reputation

There is a consensus among national authorities and national stakeholders in general that the SGP is a successful program characterized by

- activities that support and complement national efforts to meet global environmental commitments;
- the addressing of environmental and development gaps at the local level;
- implementation of projects and activities that are more visible than FSPs/MSPs;
- a relatively wide geographic range of coverage.

The SGP lends positive reputational benefits to the GEF by virtue of its transparency and responsiveness, production of tangible results, and continuous operation since 1992.

4 Effectiveness

This section evaluates the extent to which the SGP has contributed to the generation of global environmental benefits.

4.1 Direct Global Environmental Results

It is difficult to assess the extent to which the SGP has contributed to the generation of global environmental benefits. However, there is consensus among GEF and SGP stakeholders that some direct global benefits have likely been generated. The judgment on the magnitude and significance of these anticipated benefits would require dedicated research over an extended time frame. Indicators that support this assumption include the following:

- All approved project proposals adhered to GEF criteria and addressed one or more GEF focal areas: This was ensured through (1) systematic review of the project proposals by specialized NSC subcommittees, (2) building NGO capacities to address global environmental issues, and (3) raising awareness and activation/mobilization of efforts to address national problems with global impact.

- The majority of projects achieved local objectives and generated local benefits with varying degrees of success: Little global benefit would be expected as a result of individual projects, regardless of degree of success. However, replication, scaling-up, and mainstreaming are expected to result in tangible global benefits. This has been, or is expected to be, the case for a number of initiatives. Composting of agricultural waste, as opposed to burning it, is one initiative that has been replicated—to date, more than 40 times, and is expected to be further replicated. Promotion of energy-efficient lighting is now being commercialized and is moving toward being a mainstream commercial activity.

- Awareness of global environmental issues on the part of a wide spectrum of national stakeholders has been raised: The Egypt SGP was successful in raising the awareness of different target groups concerning global environmental issues. This was accomplished through various media channels including conferences and seminars; printed material such as brochures, stickers, and leaflets; multimedia packages; and coverage in major newspapers as well as on the radio and television. Although awareness per se is not a direct global environmental benefit, it is a key tool for achieving such benefits.

4.2 Capacity Development of NGOs/CBOs

Capacity building has always been a primary SGP objectives, and has been addressed by various means:

- Workshops were held to promote the SGP within the NGO community and to explain GEF criteria, operational programs, and procedures. These included general periodic

workshops as well as a series of capacity-building workshops in each of the GEF focal areas.

- Technical assistance was provided to NGOs/CBOs in developing and/or modifying project proposals to better fit GEF SGP criteria.
- Field visits were conducted to ongoing projects, either by specialized members of the subcommittees or by recruited experts.
- SGP projects were implemented that were specifically aimed at building the capacity of NGOs/CBOs to realize sustainable projects that meet GEF requirements.

As mentioned earlier, the SGP has built the capacity of more than 150 NGOs implementing approximately 180 projects in most of the governorates of Egypt, including such extremely remote areas as Gebel Elba on the southern border. The SGP has also contributed significantly to capacity building in areas where NGOs had no previous expertise, such as in biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation. The capacity of national institutions in involving local communities in conservation activities was also enhanced. The head of the Nature Conservation of the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency, who is also the focal point for the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, has acknowledged the important role the SGP has played in integrating and harmonizing conservation and development efforts.

4.3 Contributions to Environmental Conventions

It is difficult to assess the contribution of the SGP in helping Egypt meet its international obligations to global environmental conventions falling under the GEF's jurisdiction. However, the perception of Egypt's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which is the authority charged with fulfilling the country's international obligations, is a legitimate indicator in this regard. the ministry views the SGP as a successful program that is helping Egypt meet its international obligations, and it is systematically referred to in Egypt's communications to the conventions.

Other relevant national authorities, such as the Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation and the Ministry of Environment, view the SGP as

- helping Egypt meet its international obligations;
- addressing local environmental and development needs;
- mostly targeting the marginalized, poorer, and indigenous populations;
- creating job opportunities and generating incomes.

4.4 Sustainability

Sustainability at the project level has been achieved to a reasonable degree. During the evaluation, the consultants visited 16 projects that variously originated during all phases of the SGP. In all cases, evidence of sustainability was identified (see table 4.1).

Table 4.1: Evidence of Sustainability of Sampled Projects

Project number and name	Grantee	Aspects of sustainability
EG-PP-03: A Pilot Demonstration for Sustainable Desert Development	Friends of Environment and Development Association	After a relatively long period of time, all elements of the project are in place and functioning, though not utilized as originally planned.
EG-PP-05: Introducing Neem Trees in Maadi Area and in Old Cairo	Tree Lovers Association	Green areas and trees planted (the park) are well preserved, in good condition, and serving a pressing social need.
EG-PP-07: Community Tree Planting in El Shorouk City, East Cairo	Association for Conservation of Nature's Beauty	Residents are maintaining the project. Most of the trees planted and the green areas are in good condition.
EGY-00-20: Sustainable Use of Renewable Energy	Family & Environment Development Association in Qena	Solar heaters are functioning well, and families are satisfied with their performance.
EGY-01-12: Global Environment in Egypt	International Center for Environment and Development	Not applicable.
EGY-01-32: The Improvement of Energy Efficiency	Friends of Nature	Energy-efficient/-saving lighting has been commercialized and has almost become a mainstream activity.
EGY-02-64: Solar Energy-Friendly Energy for Environment	Central Association for Development and Environment Technology Improvement	Solar heaters are functioning efficiently and are well maintained, and youth centers are satisfied with their performance.
EGY-03-114: Protecting International Water	The New Vision Community	No sustainability concerns since the project is providing low-cost sanitation.
EGY-04-148: Recycling Agricultural Wastes in Sharkia (6)	Islamic Mercy Association in Ghanimia	Elements of sustainability include: savings in the cost of fertilizers and/or generating income from sale of compost.
EGY-05-171: Recycling the Agricultural Wastes	Local Community Development in Meet-Khamies	Elements of sustainability include: savings in the cost of fertilizers and/or generating income from sale of compost.
EGY-05-232: Mitigation of Climate Change by Using the Technology of Solar Heater	Women's Development Association i	• Solar heaters are functioning well, and families are satisfied with their performance. • A small-scale manufacturing industry for solar heaters has been initiated.
EGY-05-252: Energy Conservation for Mitigating Climate Change	Egyptian Association for Development and Institutional Support	Energy-efficient/-saving lighting has been commercialized and has almost become a mainstream activity.

Replication, scaling up, and mainstreaming were achieved to a certain degree. Some SGP projects and activities, such as those involving energy-efficient lighting, have been replicated, commercialized and are now almost mainstream activities. Environmental authorities have acknowledged the positive experience of SGP projects in involving local communities in conservation efforts. It has been reported by high-level environment officials that this successful experience has had a positive impact at the policy level and will be adopted and replicated.

Replication and scaling up require dedicated efforts and resources. A limited number of workshops and narrow media coverage are not sufficient to ensure success. To achieve tangible global environmental benefits, widespread replication and scaling up is necessary, and the SGP would need to prepare propagation strategies and implement major dissemination programs and activities over an extended time frame. These should target a broad spectrum of audiences, to include decision makers, officials, opinion leaders, public figures, and businesspeople. Such major and professional dissemination efforts would require additional dedicated resources.

This is not being done at present, and there are insufficient budget resources to do so. The Egyptian NSC decided early on to have as many NGOs and communities as possible benefit from the SGP. This decision has prevented NGOs from participating more than once in the program, especially for a follow-up project that would allow the NGO to refine the results of its original project. This decision has stood, regardless of the fact that the budgets of almost all projects have been about 50 percent of the $50,000 ceiling. This self-imposed constraint limits the potential for wide-scale replication and scaling up.

As mentioned earlier, the SGP projects were, to a reasonable degree, sustainable. An element of sustainability in a large number of projects stems from the income generated and/or the financial savings achieved by the project activities. Although all beneficiaries of these types of projects, were aware of the benefits realized, the majority were unaware of the particulars of these financial benefits. For example, farmers participating in projects in which they produced compost from agricultural waste held widely varying estimates of the savings they realized on the cost of fertilizers per acre. The SGP should help conduct such cost-benefit analyses for projects and project participants. This would help strengthen project sustainability and facilitate replication.

At the national level, an exit strategy or graduation plan has not been devised. When the issue of graduation from the SGP was raised during interviews with the stakeholders, their reactions revolved around the following issues:

- Graduating would necessitate establishing, as a replacement, a national institution with initial funding.
- Phased withdrawal of the SGP over a relatively long time frame would be needed.

- Despite the fact that there have been major capacity-building efforts conducted over the past 15 years, Egypt is not ready yet for graduation. A large number of NGOs still need support, and a national substitute for the SGP does not exist.

- Graduation from the SGP should be simultaneous with graduation from GEF MSP/FSP funding.

4.5 Monitoring and Evaluation

During the pilot and first operational phases, the M&E activities that were conducted to track and assess the SGP projects that were being implemented mainly entailed the following:

- NGOs prepared and submitted periodic progress reports.

- Field visits were made to projects under implementation with the aim of monitoring and assessing progress, and identifying potential problems or obstacles facing project implementation. Adjustments and adaptations in project design and implementation were made as needed.

Starting in the second operational phase, NGOs were asked to prepare (with SGP assistance, as needed) a project monitoring plan to include indicators and time frames for each activity to be implemented. Projects were also to include a line item for evaluation in their budgets. The following conclusions regarding M&E systems can be drawn from the evaluation's review of project documentation:

- Most project proposals included M&E plans. However, the quality of those plans varied.

- Indicators were specified in most of the M&E plans. However, the relevancy of the indicators to the projects and their usefulness were sometimes questionable.

- In most cases, baseline information was provided, yet these often were not useful for M&E purposes.

- The costs of implementing M&E plans were not always made explicit in the project proposals. In certain cases, these were implied under different budget items such as: "experts," "reporting," and so on.

- Anticipated risks were not always identified in project proposals.

- Project progress reports were usually presented periodically.

- Projects were visited by the national coordinator, specialized members of the NSC, or experts. Projects were usually visited more than once during their lifetime.

- In most cases, progress reports and other communications served the purpose of identifying and tracking the key risks to projects.

- The national coordinator and members of the NSC usually followed up to determine that agreed remedial actions had taken place.

In conclusion, an M&E system has been set up and is functioning, but needs improvement and upgrading. Given the fact that a large percentage of the recipient NGOs represent marginalized communities, their knowledge of evaluation and indicators are minimal. More coaching would be needed by the SGP to render the M&E system more effective. In addition, more field follow-up and hands-on technical assistance to the projects during the different stages would minimize risks and preempt obstacles.

4.6 Effectiveness of Governance Structure

The NSC, which is responsible for providing overall guidance to the country program and for project selection, consists of representatives from governmental organizations, NGOs, the private sector, donor agencies, and the SGP Implementing Agencies; academics; and national experts. The steering committee is divided into subcommittees, each concerned with one of the thematic areas of the GEF. Each subcommittee is responsible for reviewing the projects that fall within its scope of work, providing comments and modifications, and recommending projects that comply with GEF criteria to the NSC for approval. On average, each subcommittee meets about six or seven times during the year; this is in addition to the six or seven annual NSC meetings.

There is a consensus among all national stakeholders—upheld by the evaluation's findings—that the governance structure of the SGP ensures an objective, transparent, and solid decision-making process for priority setting and funds allocation.

5 Efficiency and Cost Effectiveness

This section examines the extent to which the SGP is an efficient and effective instrument for linking the GEF with community groups and NGOs working with the poor and marginalized populations.

5.1 Efficiency of Country Administrative Structure

The SGP has been efficient in terms of project processing. The average processing time for a project from conceptualization to implementation is about six months. There have been a number of exceptions, however, were project approvals were delayed. Nonetheless, during interviews, there was a consensus among stakeholders that the SGP is an efficient program with the following main features:

- Efficient and dynamic governance structure
- Complementary of relevant national and international efforts
- Responsive and nonbureaucratic

Table 5.1 presents the costs of administering the SGP in Egypt for the past five years and gives an indication of its cost effectiveness. The program's "efficiency" is calculated as a ratio of its administrative costs per year to the total funds disbursed plus administrative costs per year.[3]

Table 5.1: Cost and Cost Effectiveness of Egypt SGP

Description	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Administrative costs	$64,000	$65,000	$72,000	$78,000	$120,000
Total funds disbursed	$300,000	$350,000	$450,000	$530,000	$530,000
Efficiency	17.5%	15.6%	13.7%	12.8%	18.4%

In 2006, administrative costs were higher than for any previous year because the national coordinator became a full-time employee of the program

The administrative costs shown in table 5.1 are divided among three main categories of expenditure:

- 10 to 15 percent for rental of office space
- 30 to 60 percent for salaries of the national coordinator and technical and administrative assistance of the national host institute

[3] The point was raised during the interviews that the cost of administering the SGP should be viewed in relation to the number of projects being implemented, rather than the sum of their monetary values.

- 35 to 60 percent covering all awareness, educational, capacity-building/training and promotional activities of the SGP; as well as official travel expenses for the national coordinator and NSC members

As shown in table 5.1, the efficiency of the SGP in Egypt ranges between 13.0 and 18.5 percent.

Technically, this last category of expenditure (awareness and capacity building) should not be calculated as an administrative cost. These expenditures are crucial to achieving the overall goal of the SGP, and are therefore not an "overhead" item. When these costs are not included with other administrative costs, SGP efficiency improves to between 7 and 12 percent.

With a view to mainstreaming the SGP with national activities, strong links with governmental institutions were created. This was achieved through the representation of key governmental institutions on the NSC, such as the Ministry of State for Environmental Affairs, the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency, the Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation, the Organization for Energy Conservation and Planning, the Ministry of Social Affairs, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. These national authorities are also always involved in various SGP events. Accordingly, program activities and achievements are well known to the government authorities, are strongly linked with national initiatives, and have likely affected national policies.

The efficiency and effectiveness of the SGP in Egypt was enhanced by its being hosted by an active NGO that has served for some time as the secretariat of the Egyptian Environmental NGO Federation, which is the umbrella organization for all registered environmental NGOs in the country. The SGP has supported more than 150 NGOs implementing more than 180 projects in 24 governorates.

The SGP administrative structure in Egypt is perceived by the national stakeholders, and by other donor programs active in the same field, as being efficient and effective, and its mode of operations has served as a model for other programs.

- The Egyptian Environmental Initiatives Fund is an environmental project funded by the Canadian International Development Agency. During the preparation phase of the project, development agency representatives held several meetings with the national coordinator to learn about the experience of the SGP in Egypt, including the governance structure, mechanism, country strategy, and lessons learned. SGP proposal formats were utilized. When the project was launched and the Ismalia governorate was selected as a target area, NGOs implementing SGP projects in Ismalia were invited to apply to the project. The SGP national coordinator was also selected to be a member of the project's steering committee.

- The SGP cooperated with the Local Initiative for Urban Environment, a UNDP program. Activities implemented by either of the two programs benefit the other. This particularly applied to capacity-building activities for NGOs as well as promotional activities.

- The experience of the SGP was made use of in other small grants programs implemented in Egypt, such as the small grants programs of the National Council for Women, the American University in Cairo, and the Program for Appropriate Technology in Health. The SGP project proposal form, project progress reports, selection criteria, and country strategy were utilized or adapted by these programs.

5.2 Resource Mobilization and Cofinancing

The SGP has been successful in leveraging resources, collaborating with other donor organizations, and mobilizing local resources, as shown in the following examples.

- In cooperation with the Social Fund for Development, the SGP organized a capacity-building workshop for some 40 NGOs from all over the country. The NGOs were trained in developing project proposals to be funded jointly by the two programs. Funding was handled in such a way that the SGP supports the global benefit component of the project, while the Social Fund for Development supports the community development component.

- Also in cooperation with the Social Fund for Development, the SGP jointly implemented a workshop on Activating the Role of the Private Sector and NGOs in the Field of Promoting the Use of Clean and Renewable Energy. The objectives of the event were to link NGOs with the private and governmental sectors; discuss the use of clean and renewable energy, in particular solar energy, in Egypt; identify and exchange information on solar heater technologies; and encourage NGOs to implement projects related to the use of clean and renewable energy.

- The SGP has encouraged community contribution to support the cost of the services they receive. This was achieved in solar water heater projects, in which the beneficiaries paid the equivalent cost of a traditional water heater, while the SGP supported the difference in cost for a solar water heater.

- An agreement was concluded with a large Egyptian manufacturing company to support utilization of wind energy. According to the agreement, the company assisted in and provided the labor, technical assistance, and equipment for production of efficient wind turbines to be used for the project Design and Manufacturing of Wind Turbines for Electricity Generation.

- A memorandum of understanding was signed between the SGP and EMPOWERS, a four-year, three-country regional project of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership for Water, to implement projects jointly. These projects aim at involving the poor and marginalized in water resource management; the first three are currently being implemented in three villages in Beni-Suef. The SGP contributed $90,000, while EMPOWERS contributed €300,000 (approximately $400,000).

same as table 1.2; is that ok? clearly demonstrates the success of the SGP in leveraging resources from national and international sources:

Table 5.2: SGP Cofinancing by Phase

Phase	Cash ($)	In-kind ($)
Pilot	0	70,171
1	15,917	98,731
2	689,100	385,837
3	880,277	267,738
Total	1,585,294	822,477

6 Findings and Recommendations

6.1 Key Findings

Since its inception in 1992, the SGP has occupied a strategic niche within the national environmental management capacity by supporting community-based initiatives that respond to the GEF criteria and fulfill local community needs. The SGP has promoted outreach and awareness regarding global environmental concerns; built capacities of communities and NGOs to address these concerns; and provided a mechanism for demonstrating and disseminating community-level solutions to local environmental problems that have global impacts. In this sense, the SGP offers the GEF system—and the environment and development sector as whole—field-tested approaches that, when replicated and expanded, will benefit the global environment. The following presents a summary of the evaluation's findings.

- Participation, democracy, transparency, and flexibility have been key features of SGP governance in Egypt.
- The SGP has supported more than 150 NGOs that have implemented 183 projects. These projects complied with GEF criteria while addressing local environmental and/or sustainable development issues, reaching marginal populations and poorer communities, and creating job opportunities and generating income.
- Marginalized, poorer, and indigenous populations were the target groups for a large percentage of SGP projects that fulfilled GEF criteria, addressed local problems, created job opportunities, and generated income.
- There is a consensus among national authorities that the SGP is a successful program, with projects that support and complement their efforts and fill environmental and development gaps at the local level.
- There is also a consensus among national stakeholders that SGP projects and activities are more visible than FSPs and MSPs, cover a relatively wide geographic area, and have had positive reputational benefits.
- The majority of projects achieved local objectives and generated local benefits with varying degrees of success.
- Some direct global benefits are likely to have been generated. Determination of the magnitude and significance of global benefits would require dedicated research over an extended time frame.
- Links, cooperation, and synergies with a number of GEF FSPs have been established. In these cases, the SGP has helped to involve and mobilize local communities and civil society, and establish the link between global and local-level benefits.

- There are indicators that the SGP has helped Egypt meet its international obligations.
- Sustainability at the project level has been achieved to a reasonable extent. Projects from the pilot phase are still running, while some SGP activities/approaches have been almost mainstreamed.
- Replication and scaling up requires more dedicated efforts and resources.
- An exit strategy at the national level has not been devised.
- The M&E system has been established, but needs to be improved. The quality of its reporting tools needs to be upgraded.
- More field follow-up and technical assistance to projects is needed at the various stages of the project cycle.
- The SGP is efficient in terms of project processing time, with an average of about six months from conceptualization to implementation.
- The SGP has been quite successful in collaborating with other donor organizations and mobilizing local and international resources.

6.2 Country Program Rating

Based on the above key findings, the evaluation rates the SGP in Egypt as follows:

Relevance	Effectiveness	Efficiency
Highly satisfactory	Satisfactory	Highly satisfactory

6.3 Lessons and Recommendations

1. The SGP should play a major role in

   - paving the way and preparing for MSPs and FSPs;
   - following up on, and utilizing the products and results of, MSPs and FSPs.

   In this way, a strong link between the GEF FSPs/MSPs and the SGP will be established. More importantly, GEF activities at large would be more effective and more sustainable. It is worth mentioning that this has already been happening but on a very limited scale.

2. Replication and scaling up are crucial for achieving global benefits, as well as any significant local benefits. The resources available and corresponding efforts expended to fulfill such a requirement are not sufficient. The SGP needs to be provided with resources dedicated to promotion and dissemination activities leading to replication and scaling up.

3. Some of the approaches, initiatives, and technologies that have been tested in SGP projects are potentially successful. For these to achieve any significant local or global benefits, relatively long-term involvement and support would be needed to adapt and improve them.

4. With a view toward addressing the above two recommendations, projects would need to be better analyzed and documented. More funds would thus need to be dedicated for ex post evaluations.

5. The SGP in Egypt needs to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its M&E system. It also needs to upgrade the quality of its reporting tools.

6. Technical assistance and field follow-up activities to projects at their different stages needs to be improved. In addition, more analysis is needed to identify the long-term sustainability of projects.

7. It is recommended that an exit strategy and a program for its implementation be prepared. This entails establishing a national body as a continuation of and gradual replacement for the SGP. This replacement should occur in a phased manner (perhaps over five years) with initial support from the GEF (and other sources).

8. The SGP needs to explore partnerships with the private sector, particularly through corporate social responsibility. It is recommended to consider increasing the number of private sector representatives on the NSC.

Annex:
List of Projects Visited

EG-PP-03 A Pilot Demonstration for Sustainable Desert Development

EG-PP-05 Introducing Neem Trees in Maadi Area and in Old Cairo

EG-PP-07 Community Tree Planting in El Shorouk City, East Cairo

EGY-00-20 Sustainable Use of Renewable Energy

EGY-01-12 Global Environment in Egypt

EGY-01-32 The Improvement of Energy Efficiency

EGY-02-64 Solar Energy-Friendly Energy for Environment

EGY-03-114 Protecting International Water

EGY-04-148 Recycling Agricultural Wastes in Sharkia

EGY-05-171 Recycling the Agricultural Wastes

EGY-05-232 Mitigation of Climate Change by Using the Technology of Solar Heater

EGY-05-252 Energy Conservation for Mitigating Climate Change