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Joint Evaluation of the GEF Small Grants Programme

Country Program Case Study: Pakistan

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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 to 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.

While the findings and conclusions are the responsibility of the authors, 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

ASB	Anjuman Samaji Behbood
BACIP	Building and Construction Improvement Program
CBO	community-based organization
CPMT	Central Programme Management Team
CPS	country program strategy
FSP	full-size project
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GHG	greenhouse gas
GOP	Government of Pakistan
IPM	integrated pest management
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
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
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature (also known as World Wildlife Fund)

Executive Summary

Environment and Development in Pakistan

Pakistan's economy has been growing steadily in the past few years, but poverty remains widespread, and development indicators for health, education, literacy, water, sanitation, and gender empowerment are poor. There are sharp disparities between urban and rural areas: access to and quality of rural services and infrastructure are far below those available in urban areas. Since 2000, the government has pursued an agenda of rapid economic growth, but the burden of rising poverty levels, population growth, industrialization, and urbanization pose serious threats to the environment. Major causes of environmental degradation are lack of political commitment and weak governance, a weak policy framework, weak institutional capacity (administrative and socioeconomic), and weak fiscal management and resource mobilization; however, the government has made progress in responding to environmental challenges, and substantial progress has been made in enacting policy and creating an institutional framework.

The Global Environment Facility

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) has been in operation since 1991, when it was first established as a three-year pilot program with the objective of helping developing countries protect the global environment. The GEF essentially operates as a financing mechanism in collaboration and partnership with three Implementing Agencies—the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme, and the World Bank. The GEF provides new and additional grants and concessional funding to achieve global environmental benefits in the GEF focal areas of biodiversity, climate change, international waters, and ozone layer depletion. Land degradation (desertification and deforestation) and persistent organic pollutants were added as new GEF global focal areas in October 2002, but the Pakistan Small Grants Programme (SGP) had started projects under these focal areas prior to 2002 (see below).

Small Grants Programme in Pakistan

The SGP is funded by the GEF as a corporate program. In Pakistan, the SGP is implemented by UNDP on behalf of the GEF partnership and is executed by the United Nations Office for Project Services. The GEF SGP in Pakistan was launched as a pilot (1993–95) with the purpose of supporting small-scale community initiatives to address global environmental problems. SGP program objectives are (1) development, implementation, and replication of community-level strategies and technologies, (2) gathering and sharing of community-level strategies and innovations, (3) building partnerships and networks of stakeholders to support capacities to address global environmental problems, and (4) ensuring that conservation and sustainable development strategies and projects are understood and practiced by communities.

Early SGP Country Program Strategies

The Pakistan SGP formulated its first-ever country program strategy (CPS) for the period 1996–98. Its second strategy was formulated in 1999–2001 and was revised in both 2000 and 2001. A

key feature of the 1999 CPS and of the subsequent strategies was the building of long-term partnerships with communities, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and the government. An integrated livelihoods approach was also emphasized. The strategies focused on the need for the SGP portfolio to be better aligned with GEF global priority areas. The CPS for 2004–09 endorsed the strategic principles and guidelines set by the earlier strategies, with additional emphasis on providing for the gender orientation of the program and its projects.

Current SGP Strategy

An updated CPS for 2006–09 calls for a geographic focus for the SGP in the Indus Delta, Sindh. It is geared toward consolidating past learning, partnership building, knowledge management, and policy advocacy with the aim of creating impact through large-scale replication. These goals are viewed as positive developments and steps in the right direction.

Consistent with GEF global guidelines, the implementation of the SGP in Pakistan is highly decentralized and demand driven. The Pakistan SGP has retained a "lean and mean" structure from its inception to date. A locally recruited national coordinator appointed to carry out day-to-day management of the program also serves as secretary to the National Steering Committee (NSC). The SGP awards grants to NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs) for a maximum of $50,000, paid in three installments.[1] Grants are awarded directly to NGOs and CBOs, and project duration ranges from one to three years. A broadly based NSC serves as the main advisory body for steering program development and implementation. The SGP works with a diverse range of partners and grant recipients—CBOs, NGOs, and intermediary organizations.

Since 1994 the SGP has disbursed $4,253,575 for a total of 171 projects. The SGP in Pakistan has evolved and expanded gradually, with a thematically and geographically diverse portfolio of projects. The SGP portfolio is currently skewed toward biodiversity conservation and climate change and has moved toward a strong geographic focus in the Sindh delta region in the past year.

The design of the SGP is based on the premise that communities suffer because of environmental degradation and that the provision of small grants could halt and even reverse, the process of degradation. The experience of the Pakistan SGP is that this assumption is broadly correct. However, grants alone are not necessarily sufficient; instead, grant money needs to be complemented by a support system to provide technical and social guidance to communities.

Relevance

The core objectives of the SGP and the GEF are highly relevant to Pakistan and to key sustainable development and environmental priorities, commitments, policies, and programs of its government. Overall relevance of the SGP to national sustainable development priorities and commitments is high, as evidenced by the endorsement by the government of the conventions

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

and other instruments as they relate to the GEF. Pakistan has ratified the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification; it endorses GEF SGP guidelines and has taken a number of steps in recent years that illustrate its commitment to addressing some of the key GEF priorities. Pakistan is also committed to the phaseout of ozone-depleting substances. It signed the Stockholm Convention in 2001, and the government has launched a project on management and phaseout of persistent organic pollutants.

Of the 14 core areas identified in Pakistan's National Conservation Strategy, 12 are subsumed within the GEF focal areas of biodiversity conservation, climate change, and international waters. GEF SGP relevance is further confirmed by the strategy's broad focus on air pollution, water resource management, and the management of wetlands, rangelands, and national parks. An updated National Environmental Action Plan also focuses on targets consistent with the GEF and the SGP.

The Pakistan SGP has gradually enhanced the global environmental benefits in the GEF's focal areas through community-based approaches that generate local benefits, while also directly or indirectly achieving global benefits. The Pakistan SGP portfolio in the past 13 years reflects a narrowing of focus onto GEF focal areas as well as a steady improvement in the quality of project proposals, which exhibit greater awareness of and capacities for addressing GEF focal areas. Similar to the GEF global portfolio, the Pakistan SGP country portfolio is skewed toward biodiversity conservation and climate change.

Links between the SGP and the GEF in Pakistan

Overall, operational links between management of the SGP and the rest of the GEF country portfolio are not strong. One reason for this fact is that there is no permanent designated government counterpart for the GEF in the country. The focal point for biodiversity conservation and desertification noted that the SGP has offered much to communities that were otherwise bypassed in terms of promoting conservation and livelihood restoration activities, and has raised awareness levels and reduced pressure on natural resources. The SGP has also made efforts to promote awareness of GEF objectives as well as their links with local organizations.

Links with GEF Medium- and Full-Size Projects

Several SGP projects have good linkages with larger GEF projects, as well as with previous SGP projects. Such projects include Conservation of the Indus Dolphin through Ecotourism, the Indus Dolphin Rescue Unit, and the Deosai Brown Bear Project. There are also other examples in which SGP ideas, approaches, and project areas have been subsumed within larger GEF medium- and full-size projects (MSPs and FSPs). The SGP is reported to have focused on testing innovations, developing community capacities, and filling in gaps until an MSP and FSP has taken over. In several cases, an SGP grant has been recognized for its contribution in paving the way for a GEF MSP and FSP (for example, the Torghar Conservation Project). Other SGP initiatives are viewed as ready for scale-up and offer great potential for replication.

The reputational benefits that the SGP has generated for the GEF can be summarized as the SGP's reputation for (1) a unique and flexible approach toward meeting local and global objectives, (2) responsiveness to community needs, and (3) downward accountability at the grassroots level. The SGP has identified, promoted, and supported community-level and community-led initiatives. It has increased outreach to remote communities and increased the awareness and capacities of communities to recognize and respond to environmental problems. It has resulted in a network of community-level mechanisms for addressing local concerns affecting the environment. The SGP has succeeded to a great extent in terms of reaching beneficiaries in marginalized and isolated communities. It has not fared as well in its targeting of women, although the current SGP strategy calls for greater effort to engage women-based organizations.

Effectiveness

The program's effectiveness is demonstrated and documented in projects focused on energy-efficient stoves, which have resulted in reducing annual biomass (fuel) use and carbon dioxide emissions. SGP projects have installed energy-efficient housing products and technologies that have reduced annual carbon dioxide emissions. Similarly, through the promotion of alternative sources of fuel, SGP projects have resulted in significant savings of kerosene and biomass fuels. In the area of biodiversity conservation, SGP projects have resulted in the establishment of community game reserves, national parks, and protection of various species of animals of global significance, including endangered bird and mammal species. Many SGP projects have also successfully established a link between income generation and biodiversity conservation. Important results and outcomes are also visible in agricultural biodiversity.

Other program impacts include extensive outreach, innovative and cost-effective projects, improved knowledge management, institutional development of partner organizations, and creation of new community institutions at the grassroots level. There are a number of other examples in which SGP contribution to achieving direct global environmental benefits is not possible to assess as yet, either because of the relatively short time span or because replication and/or scale-up has not yet occurred, but great potential exists for it in future.

The local benefits within GEF focal areas are more visible and more fully documented. The SGP's greatest success lies in the creation of local institutions and building their capacities for identification, planning, implementation, costing, service delivery, and imparting of new skills. A major achievement is that many of the institutions supported by the SGP have become viable and self-sustaining. Some of these institutions have mobilized resources at larger scales.

Despite some problems in earlier years, the SGP has managed to find good partners and today can boast of many successes. Several of the NGO and CBO partners visited at the project level, as well as national partners, confirmed that the SGP has made important contributions to developing capacities of civil society organizations. The core focus of the SGP has been institution building at the local level, identification of cost-effective innovations, and advocacy

for government ownership. As to its influence on policy, the SGP is cited as a "success of the Pakistan National Conservation Strategy."

The SGP's monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system has evolved over the years. Program-level M&E consists of project-level monitoring visits and maintenance of an M&E sheet developed for each project. Several factors have constrained the SGP from developing and maintaining an updated M&E system; these factors include lack of time to visit a large number of small projects scattered across the country, limited budget and human resources, and the often changing and sometimes complex requirements of the global GEF that limit the SGP's ability to carry out M&E effectively.

The NSC is a voluntary body that provides a major substantive contribution to and oversight of the program, reviews proposals, gives guidelines for program development, and interprets guidance received from the SGP Secretariat. The Pakistan NSC is adequate in its composition and balanced in terms of institutional and individual representation, gender mix, geographical focus, and technical expertise regarding the GEF focal areas. The NSC has played an important role in providing technical input and advice for improving the quality and consistency of the proposals in accordance with GEF priorities. However, its participation in monitoring has remained minimal, mostly due to lack of funds for travel.

The work the SGP is perhaps best characterized by is its focus on promoting innovations. Despite some initial failures, the SGP seems to have established a reputation for trusting new ideas and individuals, taking risks, and trying to apply new and cost-effective ways to address problems and opportunities. This sometimes involves new institutional or technological approaches and sometimes new and innovative partnerships. SGP projects have tested new technologies, techniques, and methodologies. Many have demonstrated a potential for and an interest in scaling up. The Small Grants Programme to Promote Tropical Forestry funded by the European Union has been mentored and guided by Pakistan's GEF SGP.

National Threats to Sustainability

Pakistan's growth-driven economic strategy does not include the environment (or any GEF focal areas) among its top priorities. A distinct lack of political will and high-level commitment in support of environmental issues is well documented. At a broader level, the key risks affecting the SGP are mainly those associated with high poverty levels (especially in rural areas), a high population growth rate, rapid urbanization and industrialization, escalating prices and an increase in the market value of resources, the deteriorating law-and-order situation, and a breakdown in governance structures. Of particular concern is the lack of available technical competencies and limited success in advocacy for highly successful initiatives. These and other risks affect SGP outcomes, including reduction in greenhouse gases, enhanced protection of biodiversity, and improved land management and reversal of desertification. (GEF focal areas relating to persistent organic pollutants and international waters are not considered because of the small number of projects and limited data available.)

Local Threats to Sustainability

The problems confronting different projects are many and diverse in nature. These relate mostly to lack of resources, policy and legislative gaps or loopholes, lack of access to technical institutions and experts, human-induced threats to natural resources, local power structures that control and exploit natural resources, limited capacity and/or commitment of concerned government line departments, widespread poverty and lack of livelihood opportunities, and low awareness levels regarding the environment. The SGP is cognizant of these and other potential risks.

Sustainability of the Current CPS

The current CPS does not contain explicit statements or plans in terms of its sustainability, but the SGP has already entered into dialogue with a number of private sector companies and has successfully mobilized resources from British Petroleum. One of the key strengths for the SGP regarding its new geographic focus on the Indus Delta is that it already enjoys a strong partnership base in the Sindh region; some of these are existing SGP partners from earlier phases, and a few are new partners with which the SGP is proposing to work in the future. Collectively, these partner organizations are looked on as a key strength for the SGP's successful implementation of its new strategy and in enhancing its sustainability.

Efficiency

Faced with a weak database, the evaluation made a subjective assessment of SGP efficiency based on a number of factors that influence efficiency. Efficiency of the overall program has increased over the years; higher overheads in the early years were the result of a large and scattered program with small projects and initiatives, often in remote and far-flung areas. Pressures to find and fund new partners, combined with the mentoring that the SGP was expected to provide, proved costly and time intensive. The lack of geographic or thematic focus increased management costs and M&E liabilities. Recent changes in the program's strategic thrust have positively affected its efficiency. The current SGP CPS (2006–09), with its geographic focus, good partner base, and cofinancing, allows for more long-term capacity development and will improve future prospects for program efficiency.

The SGP is considered a quick and efficient mechanism for grant financing as compared with other larger projects and programs. It is reported that current administrative overhead is 8 percent. The effectiveness and efficiency of the SGP as an instrument linking the GEF with marginalized and poor communities, NGOs, and CBOs is reflected in a broad, geographically and thematically diverse portfolio and the number of SGP projects in this portfolio that have been scaled up or replicated. Efficiency has improved with the selection of good partners and mainstreaming of operational procedures.

The SGP recently mobilized $2 million, which will fully cover the program's administrative costs. No GEF MSPs and FSPs in Pakistan have components similar to the SGP, but others in Pakistan, including the government of Pakistan have emulated the GEF SGP model.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Key conclusions and recommendations relate mostly to future design considerations for SGP projects, improvement and consolidation of the program, refining and sharpening the role of the NSC, exploring synergies and opportunities for resource mobilization, information exchanges and learning, collaboration with other larger donor initiatives and organizations, addressing problems related to staffing capacity and size, consolidating impact, and replication. The SGP also needs to narrow and sharpen its focus on innovations that are feasible, affordable, and replicable, as well as improve gender mainstreaming in design and implementation, introduce a poverty focus in program implementation and monitoring, and access greater support from the Central Programme Management Team.

1 Background

This chapter provides a brief overview of the evaluation methodology, Pakistan's socioeconomic status, the state of Pakistan's environment, major challenges and causes of environmental degradation, and the country's key environmental strategies, policies, and programs. In addition, this chapter outlines the background of the Global Environment Facility's (GEF's) Small Grants Programme (SGP) in Pakistan, its history and evolution, as well as the structure and operations of the Pakistan SGP.

1.1 Methodology

This review of the Pakistan SGP was part of a larger evaluation of the SGP globally. There are now SGP operations in more than 90 countries around the world. Pakistan was one of 10 SGP country programs chosen at random for systematic review, according to common terms of reference and using a shared set of evaluation tools to facilitate the collation of evaluation data at the global scale.

The evaluation team in Pakistan consisted of Mahe Nau Haider, a consultant based in Islamabad, and Howard Stewart, an evaluation adviser from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in New York. From mid-March to mid-April 2007, the team reviewed the SGP database and other relevant literature (annex A lists the documents reviewed); devised a preliminary evaluation plan; met extensively with the SGP's current and former national coordinators, National Steering Committee (NSC), and a wide range of public and private sector and nongovernmental organization (NGO) stakeholders in Islamabad; visited half the sample projects, including projects in North West Frontier and Sindh Provinces; and finalized a detailed evaluation plan. From mid-April through early June, Mahe Nau Haider completed the evaluation, visited all remaining sample projects (annex B provides a list of the projects visited), completed SGP program and project document review, prepared a draft evaluation report for review with the SGP and key stakeholders, and finalized the draft report in collaboration with Howard Stewart.

The results of this evaluation are presented here. The rest of this chapter summarizes Pakistan's current situation and environmental policies and outlines the Pakistan programs of the GEF in general and the SGP in particular. Chapter 2 presents the evaluation's findings on the relevance of the Pakistan SGP in relation to the GEF's global objectives and to Pakistan's national priorities. Chapter 3 summarizes the evaluation findings regarding the effectiveness of the SGP in Pakistan; evaluation questions related to the program's results and sustainability are also discussed. Chapter 4 contains findings regarding the efficiency of the program; chapter 5 presents a concise set of conclusions and recommendations.

1.2 Overview of the Country Situation

Country Overview

The past five years have witnessed wide-ranging macroeconomic reforms; against this backdrop, Pakistan's economy has been growing steadily. With a growth rate of 6.6 percent in 2005–06, the current per capita income is $850. The percentage of the population living below the poverty line declined from 39.3 percent in 2000–01 to 28.1 percent in 2004–05. But despite progress on many fronts, social and development indicators, such as health, education, literacy, water, and sanitation, remain weak; country performance is divided by income inequality and geographic disparities. Moreover, poverty is widespread, with sharp differentiation between urban and rural areas. In 2000–01, rural and urban poverty was estimated at 38.9 percent and 22.7 percent, respectively. In addition, access to and quality of rural services and infrastructure are far below those available in urban areas. Access to social services, such as health, education, water supply, and sanitation, is extremely limited in a large majority of rural areas.

Pakistan's track record on gender equality has also been poor. This inequality is reflected in low female literacy rates as well as in most spheres of social and economic life. The adverse effects on women of poverty, low participation in economic activity, and inequitable access to productive resources are well documented. The situation of rural women is substantially worse than that of their urban counterparts.

State of the Environment in Pakistan

With an economy dependent on natural resources, Pakistan faces the daunting challenge of a growing imbalance between an increasing population and the availability of natural resources to meet the basic needs of the people. The country's limited financial, technical, and administrative capacity in solving environmental problems is a major constraint in tackling the issue. The burden of a rise in poverty levels and high population growth, rapid industrialization, and unplanned urbanization poses serious threats to the environment. It is estimated that approximately 3 to 4 percent of the country's gross domestic product is lost annually due to environmental degradation. Environmental degradation is also recognized as a key factor contributing to poverty in Pakistan.

Since 2000 the government has pursued an agenda of achieving rapid economic growth aimed at poverty reduction, income generation, and job creation. As in other countries, poverty increases the vulnerability of the poor to environmental degradation. Many policies, plans, programs, and projects have been initiated for environmental protection and conservation in such areas as water and air pollution control, land use, forestry management, energy efficiency, biodiversity conservation, and waste management.

1.2 Government Strategy, Policies, and Major Programs

The environmental and development challenges Pakistan is facing have perhaps become more severe in recent years. Hansen and others (2000) note that "the extent of environment and sustainability neglect, and continued poor performance of environmental institutions is attributed

to four major constraints, namely: lack of political commitment and weak governance; weak policy framework; weak institutional capacity; and weak fiscal management and resource mobilization."

The country's *Medium Term Development Framework 2005–10* (GOP 2005) attributes the present degraded environmental situation to the population growth rate, a low level of public awareness and education, irrational management of natural resources, and unplanned urban and industrial expansions. An environment sector review (Miles 2000) notes a rapid decline in the productivity of fresh water ("water availability has declined from 5,300 cubic meters per capita in 1951 to a borderline 1,200 today [barely above 1000 m^3 per capita, the indicator of water scarcity])"; loss in forest cover and woody biomass; reduced productivity of marine and inshore fisheries due to overfishing and polluted waters; the precarious condition of mangroves in the coastal zone; and "the even more precarious status of certain aquatic wildlife, such as the Indus freshwater dolphin." All of these activities are contributing to the destruction of habitats and, more generally, a loss of biodiversity. High energy transmission losses, inefficient energy use, and the inability of the poor to access commercial fuels are key problems.

The Government of Pakistan (GOP) has made progress in recognizing and responding to environmental challenges during the past two decades. Substantial progress has been made in enacting policy and in creating an institutional framework. Significant strides have been made as well in forwarding the environmental agenda from being a stand-alone topic to one seen as an integral element of national mainstream development with the medium-term development framework. The poverty-environment nexus has been of particular interest in recent years, as poverty in Pakistan—as in many other middle-income countries—plays an important role in increasing the vulnerability of the poor to pollution and environmental degradation.

1.3 The GEF in Pakistan

The Global Environment Facility was established in 1991, initially as a three-year pilot program with the objective of helping developing countries protect the global environment. The GEF essentially operates as a financing mechanism in collaboration and partnership with three Implementing Agencies: UNDP, the United Nations Environment Programme, and the World Bank. The GEF operates as a financial mechanism for international cooperation for the purpose of providing new and additional grants and concessional funding to achieve global environmental benefits in its focal areas of biodiversity, climate change, international waters, and ozone layer depletion. Land degradation (desertification and deforestation) and persistent organic pollutants (POPs) were designated as additional GEF focal areas in October 2002.

1.4 The Small Grants Programme

SGP Origins, Design, and History

The SGP is funded by the GEF as a corporate program. In Pakistan, the SGP is implemented by UNDP on behalf of the GEF partnership and is executed by the United Nations Office for Project Services.

The GEF SGP in Pakistan was launched as a pilot in 1992 for the purpose of supporting small-scale community initiatives to address global environmental problems. Historically, the SGP in the country has supported community-based activities and interventions intended to reduce or mitigate environmental problems falling under the GEF focal areas, building capacities of community-based organizations (CBOs) and NGOs, as well as supporting information exchange and advocacy efforts.

The program objectives of the SGP are (1) the development, implementation, and replication of community-level strategies and technologies, (2) gathering and sharing of community-level strategies and innovations, (3) building of partnerships and networks of stakeholders to support capacities to address global environmental problems, and (4) ensuring that conservation and sustainable development strategies and projects are understood and practiced by communities.

The SGP is rooted in the belief that global environmental problems are best solved by the involvement of local people and that small amounts of funding can enable communities to undertake activities that will make a significant difference in their lives and environments, while achieving global benefits. The eligibility criteria for small grants give preference to projects with a demonstration effect and those based on the principles of community participation in all steps of the project cycle. Attention is also given to those initiatives that seek to involve local institutions as key implementers and partners. SGP projects draw and build on indigenous resources, knowledge, and practices as well as local scientific and technical resources and are geared toward linking environmental conservation with crosscutting livelihood and poverty reduction objectives.

By providing financial and technical support to projects in developing countries that conserve and restore the natural world, while enhancing well-being and livelihoods, the SGP tries to demonstrate that community action can maintain the fine balance between human needs and the environment. Grants are made directly to NGOs and CBOs in recognition of the key role they play as a resource and constituency for environment and development concerns. The program operates on the premise that people will be empowered to protect their environment when they are organized to take action, have a measure of control over access to the natural resource base, have the necessary information and knowledge, and believe that their social and economic well-being depends on sound long-term resource management.

The Evolution of the Pakistan SGP Strategy

The Pakistan SGP devised its first-ever country program strategy (CPS) for 1996–98. The second strategy was formulated for 1999–2001. This strategy was subsequently revised in 2000 and 2001. These strategies mostly emphasized the importance of building long-term partnerships with all key stakeholders and providing continuity to national initiatives. The key thrusts of these early strategies were clustering partners in five specific geographic zones and the development of an ecoregional approach for developing synergies; this was done, for example, when four SGP projects were implemented in the salt range of Punjab.

An important feature of these first two CPSs was their focus on building long-term partnerships with communities, NGOs, and government within the context of an integrated livelihoods approach. These early strategies noted that it had become important for the SGP to renew its focus on advocacy and resource mobilization, developing new partnerships, and identifying champions for promoting SGP best practices and improved knowledge management. A particular focus of the early strategies was the need to align the SGP portfolio better to reflect GEF global priority areas. Additional emphasis was therefore placed on promoting community protected areas for conservation of biodiversity and natural resource management to protect agro-biodiversity. Key elements in the portfolio were promoting biodiversity conservation and protection of critically threatened species in water bodies, working in five geographic areas with intermediary NGOs providing technical expertise and guidance.

The elements of a geographic (salt range of Punjab, mangroves of Sindh) and thematic (biodiversity) focus also figured in the 1999 CPS that the SGP implemented for one year. However, the program found the strategy restrictive in terms of finding appropriate organizations that possessed the necessary experience and capacity to implement SGP projects. The revision of this strategy in 2000 was made on the recommendation of the Pakistan SGP NSC that the program should fund projects in close proximity to each other, but should not restrict itself geographically and thematically. This revision of the CPS was both timely and effective. Capacity building of partners, scale-up, replication, and innovation were other strategic priorities of the program in this period.

The CPS formulated for 2004–09 endorsed the strategic principles and guidelines set by the earlier strategies with additional emphasis on gender orientation. It called for projects specifically tailored to increase women's participation and the development of women's capacities for sustainable use of natural resources. This period was marked by its focus on program expansion and enhancing impacts. It linked its actions within a sustainable development (microregional) framework, which included increasing access to external goods and services and securing program sustainability through carefully targeted interventions. Consolidation of work and building on prior successes became more important with time. This CPS lacked coherence, and was perhaps overly ambitious in the various initiatives that it proposed. But it was apparently the first strategy that explicitly mentioned the need to define a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework for the program; to this end, it attempted to define process and impact indicators for project approvals, replication, and sustainability.

The Pakistan SGP recently formulated an updated strategy for 2006–09. This strategy responds to some of the recommendations of the 2004 Biennial Program Review relating to the need for a geographic focus at the district level, promoting synergies among stakeholders, and maintaining innovation as the guiding focus for interventions outside the geographic focus. The main objectives of this current strategy relate to consolidating past experiences of the SGP, creating economies of scale, enhancing program sustainability, knowledge management, and policy advocacy geared toward broad-scale replication of SGP projects. The strategy also spells out the need for a thematic focus.

1.5 SGP Structure and Operations

Consistent with GEF global guidelines, the implementation of the SGP in Pakistan is highly decentralized and demand driven. UNDP has historically implemented the SGP in Pakistan and its country office has housed the SGP program office. This has changed only recently, when the SGP office was moved to Hyderabad, Sindh province, under its new geographically focused strategy. As executing agency, the United Nations Office for Project Services is responsible for overseeing administrative and financial matters. A small Central Programme Management Team (CPMT) based in New York provides overall guidance on GEF focal areas and priorities.

Pakistan's SGP has retained a "lean and mean" structure from its inception until today. A locally recruited national coordinator is appointed to carry out day-to-day management of the program and serves as the secretary to the NSC. In coordination with the NSC, the national coordinator is responsible for reaching out to potential grantees, developing and formulating country-specific strategies, reviewing project proposals, and selecting and overseeing implementation of projects. At the recommendation of the national coordinator, a monitoring position was created a year into the program. This was facilitated by the sharing of staff with another global funding mechanism, the Local Initiative Facility for Urban Environment (LIFE), which is also managed by the UNDP SGP unit.

The SGP awards grants to NGOs and CBOs for a maximum of $50,000, paid in three installments. Grants are awarded directly to NGOs and CBOs, and project duration ranges from one to three years. A broadly based NSC serves as the main advisory body for program development and implementation. In response to an expanded portfolio, the SGP decentralized its operations in 1998 by recruiting provincial coordinators for the program in Balochistan and Punjab. This arrangement was discontinued during operational phase 2 of the SGP as a cost-reduction measure.

The operations of the SGP have evolved with time and, as discussed above, in accordance with the CPS. The SGP has worked with a range of diverse partners and grant recipients, including CBOs, NGOs, and intermediary organizations. The idea of operating through intermediary NGOs was later discarded in view of the limited portfolio size and standard problems in meeting reporting and compliance requirements. The SGP has worked with a number of different partners and has supported a diverse range of projects. With respect to quality and sustainability issues, the program has experimented with the idea of having a built-in mechanism for assessing grantee capacities. The SGP thus signed a memorandum of understanding with the NGO Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy in 2002 to assess and certify the credentials of SGP grantees. This arrangement ultimately did not materialize for a number of reasons. The SGP also entered into an agreement with the Rural Support Program Network to promote large-scale replication, resource sharing, and technical backstopping support to SGP grantees. This approach was not successful in meeting these objectives.

The SGP initiated an online networking group of partner organizations, the Local Initiatives Network for Knowledge, which has proved useful for information sharing. A separate Indus

Delta Network Group was created in 2002. Various additional initiatives and accomplishments were targeted at the objective of experience sharing, including networks, documentation, and grantee workshops. The SGP also commissioned external evaluative case studies for four SGP projects during 2002 and 2003.

The changing nature of the SGP in Pakistan and the fluidity of the situation (both in country and as dictated by the GEF) are reflected in an interesting observation made about the program: that "the SGP has constantly struggled to find its identity." From the program's inception in Pakistan, when its overall purpose was ambiguous, SGP operations have been ever evolving and dynamic, to say the least.

SGP Portfolio

As stated, the design of the global SGP has been based on the premise that communities suffer due to environmental degradation and that the provision of small grants could halt, if not reverse, these degradation processes. The experience of the Pakistan SGP generally upholds this assumption, but indicates that the grant money alone is not necessarily sufficient to alleviate the problems. Technical and social guidance to communities are also needed to compensate for a lack of community-level institutions. As with many other donor programs and initiatives, the SGP faced a learning curve in the country. A key challenge was to try to fill the vacuum of both social and administrative infrastructure (especially below the *tehsil* level). The situation in Pakistan is compounded by a lack of community-level institutions for service delivery; limited or no technical assistance by government line departments, with limited outreach due to few extension workers; a lack of organized CBOs; and a strong tribal and feudal structure at the local level that dominates major decision making, resource control, and management issues. The SGP recognized and responded to this situation.

As noted earlier, the SGP has been guided by different parameters from its pilot phase (1993–95) to the current operational phase 3 (2006–09). The program has evolved gradually from limited or no clear guidelines to a well-defined CPS that is currently steering SGP operations. In line with the national interest, the project portfolio of the SGP in 1993–94 consisted mostly of social forestry projects. The emphasis on social forestry slowly shifted, as it became clear that forestry alone was not a viable GEF approach. This triggered a focus on fuel-efficient technologies, including fuel-efficient stoves and microhydels. Lessons learned from these two years of funding nursery plantation projects indicated the need to shift from fully subsidizing projects run by individuals to providing key inputs and encouraging business practices for joint initiatives. (Home-based nurseries promoted by the SGP were later picked up by the Swiss Development Corporation and incorporated in its farm forestry projects.)

During the SGP's operational phase 2 (1999–2001), the portfolio comprised mostly biodiversity projects (16 projects). Some initiatives aimed at raising awareness and the documentation and material development of successful projects also started around this time. The thrust of the SGP was supporting initiatives and individuals, rather than organizations. Capacity assessment of grantees also began during this phase. The 2002 Biennial Program Review concluded that the

SGP needed to consolidate the work done and to build a network of partners for replication, enhance the role of the NSC in implementation and M&E, and revise the CPS to pay more attention to scaling up successful SGP projects and effective capacity building in civil society organizations. The subsequent strategies thus moved away from piloting to replication, partnership building, and scale-up. The SGP also followed a cluster-based approach to some extent, whereby projects could work in geographical proximity, as in the Soan Valley where four SGP projects were implemented.

The 2004 Biennial Program Review notes that the portfolio for this second phase (guided by the CPS of 1999 and its revision in 2001 and 2002) consisted mostly of projects related to small-scale infrastructure development geared toward energy-efficient technologies, improvements in water supply and waste management, and community-based management of resources (forests, protected areas, indigenous species, and traditional agricultural practices). Allocations to projects falling under different operational programs were driven by their potential for replication, scale-up, and optimal resource use and mobilization. During this phase, the NSC supported a number of initiatives promoting sustainable agricultural practices, rangeland and pasture management, and woodland management. Again, the largest number of projects in the portfolio was in biodiversity conservation, followed by climate change and international waters, respectively. The GEF land degradation focal area was primarily addressed in terms of promoting projects geared toward the reduction of POPs in pesticides through awareness raising, capacity building, and demonstrations aimed at farmers' communities.

Based on lessons learned in its first few years, the NSC decided in 1994–95 to emphasize aligning the SGP with the GEF focal areas, although actual direction on the need for this alignment came only in 1997–98 from the GEF SGP global headquarters. The shift of the SGP portfolio toward biodiversity conservation in 1995–96 led to some now widely acclaimed projects, such as the Torghar Conservation and Deosai Brown Bear Projects. Projects focusing on climate change started appearing from 1997 onward.

Since 1994 the SGP has disbursed $4,253,575 for a total of 171 projects. Table 1.1 breaks down by operational phase the total and average annual disbursements, as well as the distribution of SGP projects by GEF focal area.

Table 1.1: Pakistan SGP Portfolio

Phase	Total SGP disburse-ment	Average per project	Number of projects by focal area							Total no. of projects
			BD	CC	IW	LD	POPs	MF	Other	
Pilot	$278,916	$7,969	12	21	-	-	-	2	-	35
1	$445,660	$13,505	17	8	1	6	-	-	1	33
2	$2,164,027	$30,479	26	21	3	4	4	13	-	71
3	$1,364,972	$42,655	10	8	5	5	2	1	1	32
Total	$4,253,575	$24,875	65	58	9	15	6	16	2	171

Note: BD: biodiversity; CC: climate change; IW: international waters; LD: land degradation; MF: multifocal.

The balance of the overall Pakistan portfolio is skewed toward biodiversity and climate change; this slant is justified by the GEF's own statement that "the result of the democratic and transparent procedure for inviting project proposals at the country level is a portfolio that is demand driven and responds to the needs and priorities in each participating country" and that "it is unrealistic to set ex ante targets for the balance of projects between the three focal areas."

2 Relevance

This chapter provides an assessment of the relevance of the SGP in Pakistan and the fit of the SGP with national sustainable development and environmental priorities and major strategies and policies adopted by the GOP in this regard. The chapter also assesses the relevance of the Pakistan SGP to the GEF mandate and operations, the relationship of the SGP to the GEF Pakistan country portfolio, and the SGP's contribution to and linkages with the GEF portfolio.

2.1 Relevance of the Pakistan SGP to National Environmental Priorities and Programs

Pakistan was selected as one of the countries for piloting the GEF SGP in 1992 on the basis of standard GEF eligibility criteria, including

- ratification of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,
- government concurrence with GEF SGP operational guidelines,
- environmental conditions warranting GEF intervention,
- government strategies and programs addressing the environment.

The following provides an overview of how the Pakistan SGP has since related to various national and international policy instruments, country-specific sustainable development policies and plans, and strategies of the GOP relevant to the GEF mandate.

The 1973 Pakistan constitution introduced environment as a legislative subject for the first time and placed it under the concurrent jurisdiction of the federal and provincial governments. Pakistan launched its National Conservation Strategy in 1992. This represented a major step taken by the GOP in terms of enacting environmental policy and practice. Momentum was gradually generated that encouraged and legitimized inclusion of the environment in the discourse on development. Pakistan has since witnessed significant progress toward the creation of institutions and the adoption of policy measures for the environment sector. The Pakistan Environmental Protection Act was passed in 1997 and led to the reorganization and enhanced powers of the Pakistan Environmental Protection Council, the establishment of environmental tribunals, and formal recognition of the right of citizens to seek recourse for their collective environmental rights through the judicial system. Regulatory advances included agreement among stakeholders on revising the national environment quality standards in 1995 (and again in 1999) and imposition of a pollution charge on industry.

Pakistan is a signatory to various international conventions and protocols. Box 2.1 lists the major international agreements to which Pakistan is party.

Box 2.1: Major Multilateral Environmental Agreements Signed by Pakistan

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna—signed 1976

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change—signed 1992, ratified 1994

United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity—signed 1992, ratified 1994

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification—signed 1994, ratified 1997

Montreal Protocol on Ozone Depleting Substances—ratified 1992

Biodiversity Conservation

Pakistan has been a party to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity since ratification in 1994. The convention obliges party countries to conserve biodiversity; foster the sustainable use of forests, fisheries, agriculture, and other resources; transfer related technologies; and share in financial investments. Pakistan has been involved in many aspects of biodiversity conservation, including national park planning, endangered species protection and recovery, and plant and animal propagation and breeding. The *Biodiversity Action Plan for Pakistan* (GOP 2000) was a first attempt to show the country's commitment to the convention. The plan gives the status and trends in biodiversity. It outlines strategic goals and objectives and identifies a plan of action, including coordination arrangements and implementation measures. Its key objectives are to create a policy framework that fosters the sustainable use of biological resources and strengthens national biodiversity conservation programs and capacity for conserving biodiversity. The plan is particularly relevant to the GEF SGP in terms of its focus on threatened areas and species (for example, the Indus dolphin, markhor, Marco Polo sheep, snow leopard, western tragopan, and green turtle) as well as the conservation of endangered species and ecosystems.

The National Council for the Conservation of Wildlife is implementing the obligations of the following three conventions to which Pakistan is a signatory:

- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
- Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Water Fowl Habitat (Ramsar)
- Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals

Climate Change

Pakistan contributes little to overall greenhouse (GHG) emissions, but remains severely affected by the negative impacts of climate change. The ratification of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1994 triggered a series of activities in Pakistan regarding climate change issues. These included a comprehensive national project on climate change—

Asia Least-Cost Greenhouse Gas Abatement Strategy—which covered the quantification of emissions and establishment of a long-term emissions reduction program, as well as assessment of the impact of climate change. A Pakistan National Communication was prepared; this contains an inventory of GHGs, the most comprehensive research undertaken, and indicates policies and measures the government will implement to adapt to or mitigate the adverse impacts of climate change.

The government approved the *Clean Development Mechanism: National Operational Strategy* (GOP 2006) as an instrument for implementing project activities that reduce or remove GHG emissions in return for certified emission reductions. The strategy fulfills the requirements of establishing a designated national authority within the Ministry of Environment and ensures effective management of the clean development mechanism in the country. Building on the Asia Least-Cost Greenhouse Gas Abatement Strategy and Pakistan's Initial Communication on Climate Change, the strategy provides a general framework for operating clean development mechanism projects in Pakistan. A carbon emission strategy has also been formulated.

Persistent Organic Pollutants

Pakistan joined global efforts to phase out POPs by signing the Stockholm convention in December 2001. In following up on its commitment, the government launched a project on POPs management and their phaseout. This project was intended to strengthen capacity and build ownership in Pakistan to meet its obligations under the Stockholm convention, including preparation of a POPs national implementation plan.

Land Degradation and Desertification

Pakistan signed the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in 1994 and ratified it in 1997. This demonstrates the country's recognition of and commitment to combating desertification and degradation of land due to rapid increase in population and growing pressure on natural resources. The main issues related to desertification in Pakistan include water erosion, wind erosion, depletion of soil fertility, deforestation, livestock grazing pressure, loss of biodiversity, waterlogging and salinity, drought, and flooding. In fulfilling its obligations under the desertification convention, the government prepared a National Action Program to Combat Desertification in Pakistan. The program identifies factors contributing to the process of desertification in Pakistan and suggests measures and strategies, using an integrated bottom-up approach to combating desertification and drought. Progress in relation to the international convention has been modest to date and mainly consists of promoting efficiency in the use and distribution of water and other water management and storage initiatives.

Key National Environmental Policies and Programs

Of the 14 priority areas identified by Pakistan's 1992 National Conservation Strategy, 12 are subsumed in three GEF focal areas: biodiversity conservation, climate change, and international waters. The relevance of the GEF SGP to national priorities is also reflected in the strategy's focus on air pollution, water resource management, and the management of wetlands, rangelands, and national parks. The strategy was followed by the National Environmental Action

Plan in 2001, which builds on the National Conservation Strategy and focuses on "healthy environment and sustainable livelihoods by improving the quality of air, water, and land." The primary objective of the plan is to initiate actions and programs for achieving a state of the environment that safeguards public health, promotes sustainable livelihoods, and enhances the quality of life of the people of Pakistan.

The National Environmental Action Plan also served as the basis for the National Environmental Policy of 2005, which addresses sectoral and cross-sectoral issues. These include water management and conservation; energy efficiency and renewable energy; agriculture and livestock; forestry and plantation; biodiversity and protected areas; climate change, air quality, and noise; and pollution and waste management. Under the National Environmental Action Plan Support Program, the GOP is planning a full-scale land management program for combating desertification. The SGP has assisted the GOP in carrying out related stakeholder consultations.

A recent positive development is the systematic attention to the environment and sustainable development in the *Medium Term Development Framework 2005–10* (GOP 2005). This framework lists 16 environmental indicators (eight more than the Millennium Development Goals report; it also allocates 28 billion rupees (roughly $460 million) for sustainable development (10 billion rupees of which is for clean water initiatives). The SGP is consistent with and responds to the key areas of concern and action identified by the framework, namely, pollution of air and water, climate change, ozone depletion, deforestation, desertification, vanishing biodiversity, and land degradation. SGP relevance to the framework is further indicated by the five environmental targets set out by the framework for 2005–10, which are consistent with the goals of the GEF and the SGP.

The National Environmental Policy for 2005–15 provides an overarching framework for addressing the environmental issues facing Pakistan. It identifies 11 key environmental issues, almost all of which are relevant to the SGP. The policy emphasizes the need to address the poverty-environment nexus at the grassroots level, enhance community-level environmental management by strengthening capacities, and improving access of the poor to environmentally sound technologies, such as improved cooking stoves, crop production technologies, and integrated pest management (IPM).

Objectives of the National Environmental Policy—relating to conservation, restoration, and efficient management of environmental resources; capacity building of stakeholders at all levels for better environmental management; and creation of a demand for environmental improvement through mass awareness and community mobilization—are all related to the SGP's mandate. In addition, the SGP's relevance to the National Environmental Policy can be seen in the emphasis the policy places on freshwater bodies and coastal waters, air pollution, deforestation, loss of biodiversity, desertification, and climate change. The policy reiterates the government commitment to "promote the conservation and sustainable use of Pakistan's biodiversity and the development, implementation, and effective management of protected areas and conservation of ecosystems."

2.2 Relevance of the Pakistan SGP to the GEF's Mandate and Operations

As mentioned in chapter 1, the SGP has evolved gradually to reflect greater consistency with the global GEF mission and mandate. The GEF Secretariat and its Implementing Agency UNDP is guided by the GEF operational strategy in the GEF focal areas of biodiversity, climate change, international waters, ozone layer depletion, land degradation (desertification and deforestation), and POPs. This strategy incorporates guidance from and is consistent with the relevant conventions for which the GEF serves as the financial mechanism.

Consistent with the GEF's overall objectives, the Pakistan SGP has also gradually moved toward global environmental benefits in the GEF focal areas through community-based approaches that generate local and (directly or indirectly) global benefits. In biodiversity, the major objective has been to develop projects in ecosystems of global significance intended to secure biodiversity conservation. In climate change, the strategy focuses on long-term mitigation measures by removing barriers to adoption of efficient renewable energy technologies and reducing the cost of promising technologies.

The Pakistan SGP portfolio in the past 13 years reflects a narrowing of focus onto GEF focal areas as well as a steady improvement in the quality of project proposals, which exhibit greater awareness of and capacities for addressing GEF focal areas. As the Pakistan SGP increased its focus on developing the capacities of NGOs and CBOs, it also helped launch new programs related to the GEF mission and focal areas. Similar to the GEF global portfolio, the Pakistan SGP country portfolio is skewed toward biodiversity conservation and climate change. Starting from social forestry (reflecting a national focus at that time), the SGP evolved and expanded toward a stronger focus on community-level biodiversity conservation with a sustainable use perspective and, more recently, on energy efficiency and renewable energy sources, reflecting local and national priorities. The SGP has also pioneered projects in IPM, with a focus on eliminating POPs. GOP interviewees confirmed SGP relevance and contributions, noting that the "GEF SGP has been an excellent area of intervention in the sense that the results have been outstanding, and SGP has provided many good models to the government."

The UNDP and GEF SGP *Global Strategic Framework (Including an Addendum)* of March 2002 provides guidance in the development of the program, revision or elaboration of the CPS, as well as the development of projects that better fit the GEF operational strategy and programs. The SGP's current national CPS (for 2006–09) also responds to GEF priorities by achieving better fit and congruence as it seeks to "create a critical mass of projects sufficient in size and concentration to contribute to GEF's overall mission and implement GEF Operational Programs" within the GEF focal areas. This CPS also attempts to integrate and achieve consistency between GEF focal areas and priorities and various national policy instruments and programs. However, a comparison of the CPS with GEF global objectives indicates the CPS is less relevant to the GEF objectives of enhancing the possibilities for increasing in-country collaboration with other programs and projects, influencing policy, and building key strategic partnerships.

The geographic focus of the Pakistan SGP CPS for 2006–09 also enhances its relevance. This focus entails concentrating up to 80 percent of SGP resources in the Sindh Indus Delta region for the next four-year period, after which the SGP will have the flexibility to retain or shift the focus to other parts of the country. Pakistan is the third country in which the SGP has been tailored to such a specific geographic focus. The Sindh province in general is an arid land, spread across 21.7 million acres, with forest cover of only 2.78 million acres. The gradual encroachment of the sea into the Indus Delta and up the main course of the River Indus in lower Sindh has caused large-scale environmental degradation. Seawater intrusion is cited as the main cause of the destruction of thousands of hectares of land in the coastal districts of Thatta and Badin, rendering prime agricultural land barren, contaminating aquifers, and causing the degradation of coastal, deltaic, and riverine ecosystems. The ecology and physiology of the richly productive deltaic ecosystems are undergoing adverse changes, and experts believe that this is due to a lack of freshwater flow in their environment, depleting the biodiversity of these areas. Productivity is on the decline, and, in some cases, extinction of species has occurred, especially in mangroves. The repercussions from the faulty national drainage project, the Left Bank Outfall Drain, have exacerbated the situation, particularly in southern parts of the Badin and Thatta districts. It is reported that changes in the *dhandh* (lake) ecosystems have resulted in a major decrease in birds, waterfowl, fish species, vegetation, and other fauna.

The degradation of the Indus Delta and of its biodiversity and natural resources is increasing with time. The situation is not only affecting the deltaic ecosystem, but also the natural livelihood resources of the region. Agriculture is very underdeveloped. Due to flood irrigation systems, acute water shortage, and inadequate systems of drainage, the cultivable land has degraded to varying degrees, causing a threat to food security, incomes, and employment of the farming community, particularly of small landowners. About 75,000 acres of land degrade annually in Sindh (75 percent of the total land being degraded in Pakistan as a whole). Water-logging, salinity, water shortage, flood irrigation, seawater intrusion, the impact of pesticides, and desertification are the main causes of this degradation. Moreover, Thatta and Badin are among the poorest districts in the country, and almost 80 percent of their land has been degraded.

2.3 Relevance of the Pakistan SGP to the GEF Country Portfolio in Pakistan

At present, there is not much involvement of the GEF focal points for the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, and POPs in priority setting, governance, or oversight of the SGP country programs. The evaluation was unable to find substantial data and/or evidence about SGP operational links with the GEF national portfolio of full-size projects (FSPs) and medium-size projects (MSPs). One reason for this is that no permanent designated counterpart for the GEF has existed in the country. The present GEF focal person within the Ministry of Environment noted, “There is no institutional memory for GEF, SGP, or other in my ministry” and “there is virtually no interaction of the focal point with GEF except for signing off on project proposals.”

The ministry has traditionally been the location of the GEF operational focal point in the country. As in other parts of federal and provincial governments, the ministry has suffered from neglect, high staff turnover, and a shortage of human resources. Interviews revealed that the GEF focal point has interacted more with the SGP than with any MSPs or FSPs. It is clear that the ministry has neither the institutional capacity nor the time for appointed focal persons to do justice to this position. It was opined that, given the large amounts of investment the GEF makes in the country, it is imperative that adequate resources be assigned to a focal point in the Ministry of Environment for monitoring, evaluation, performance assessment, and linkage building. A suggestion for the creation of a GEF "cell" was also noted.

The government focal point for biodiversity conservation and desertification noted that the SGP has offered much to poor communities that were otherwise bypassed by mainstream development interventions, in terms of promoting conservation and livelihood restoration activities. The SGP has motivated people, raised awareness levels, and reduced pressure on natural resources, which ultimately takes some pressure off the state forest department. It was noted that greater involvement of the government in priority setting for the SGP's operational phase 3 could have been particularly useful in implementing the GOP's Biodiversity Action Plan. Interviewees noted that both the SGP and GOP could benefit greatly by engaging in a joint priority-setting and consultative process.

Examples of SGP Project Links with the GEF

Many specific examples at the project level exhibit links between the GEF and the SGP. The Pakistan SGP has made conscious efforts to promote links between its projects and GEF MSPs and FSPs. Three SGP projects that demonstrate linkages and lessons shared with larger GEF projects—as well as with previous SGP projects—are the Conservation of the Indus Dolphin through Ecotourism, the Indus Dolphin Rescue Unit, and the Deosai Brown Bear Project. All three were identified as top priority sites during consultative workshops in each ecozone.

The SGP organized 27 orientation workshops for creating awareness on global environmental issues and building capacities for organizations to write "GEF-able" project proposals. Workshops were organized with the National Rural Support Program to promote understanding of GEF objectives, as well as replicate and mainstream SGP projects at scale.

Overall Relevance Rating of SGP Sample Projects

Of 12 sample projects visited and rated for relevance (table 2.2), four projects (33 percent) were rated as highly satisfactory; these were Ecosystem Management through Community Participation, the Fuel-Efficient Stove Project (implemented by the Shahbaz Development Foundation), the Fuel-Efficient Stoves Project (implemented by the Rural Development Project), and Conservation of the Blind Indus Dolphin through Ecotourism at Taunsa Barrage. Six projects (50 percent) were ranked as satisfactory—Khura Forest Training and Development Centre, Community Fire Brigade in Soan Sakesar Valley, Environmental Protection with Increase in Income, Cotton Plus and Environment, Natural Resource Management for Conservation of Biodiversity, and Environmental Education for Youth through Nature Study

Camps in Protected Areas. Two projects (17 percent) were rated moderately satisfactory—Promotion and Demonstration of Appropriate Building Designs for Urban Multan and Establishment of Nursery for Social Forestry.

Table 2.2: Relevance Ratings for Sample Projects

Rating	Number of projects	Percentage of projects
Highly satisfactory	4	33
Satisfactory	6	50
Moderately satisfactory	2	17
Moderately unsatisfactory	0	-
Unsatisfactory	0	-
Highly unsatisfactory	0	-
Total	12	100

The recently launched Indus Ecoregion for All program funded by the Royal Netherlands Embassy and implemented by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) has five important ecoregion sites identified for Pakistan. Two of the four sites selected under the program are in the Thatta district, which is one of the two focal districts for the SGP in Sindh. This Indus program offers great potential for collaboration and exploring synergies between the SGP and the WWF, particularly in capacity building of new local government structures, natural resource management, and policy components. The WWF views the SGP as a key strategic partner, especially in Thatta. The SGP has also partnered with WWF in joint planning of a transboundary international waters project near Lahore.

Cases exist in which an SGP grant has been recognized as paving the way for a GEF MSP or FSP, such as the Torghar Conservation Project (see box 2.2), which received an SGP grant in 1995. This project not only managed to protect and stabilize the populations of endangered animal species, but was scaled up to access a GEF MSP with a budget of $1.2 million for Sustainable Use of Biodiversity in Balochistan. The MSP was approved in 2004, and the project started in 2005.

Box 2.2: Society for Torghar Environment Protection

The Society for Torghar Environment Protection, established as an NGO in 1994, is a vibrant example of how community mobilization for wildlife protection can pave the way for sustainable development. The society is a major SGP success story.

In 1984 Sardar Naseer A. Tareen, a U.S.-trained professional filmmaker, decided to take on the difficult task of saving the endangered Suleiman markhor and Afghan urial in Torghar from extinction. Torghar, a range of sandstone mountains, lies within the Toba Kakar mountain range in the Qila Saifullah district in Balochistan. Due to uncontrolled hunting in this tribal region, accelerated by an influx of weapons from neighboring Afghanistan, large populations of wild animals were wiped out. Realizing that the extremely rare markhor, whose total world population is found largely within Pakistan, would become extinct unless something was done, Sardar Naseer initiated the Torghar Conservation Project. Its immediate focus was to ban all hunting activities in the area with the help of locally hired game guards. These initial seven game guards were all expert hunters who agreed to put down their weapons. Trophy hunting was allowed after a few years when animal populations had recovered sufficiently. This brought in the revenue necessary to support the program and motivated the local tribesmen by showing them the economic viability of conservation.

The project has directly resulted in a complete cessation of uncontrolled markhor and urial hunting. An estimated 100 urials and around 56 markhors existed when the project began in 1985. The most recent survey (1999) estimated the markhor population to be about 1,684 and that of the urial to be about 1,742; they were protected by 62 tribesmen appointed as game guards.

Torghar is now home to the largest population of these unique animals in the world. In 1994 the program was converted into an NGO, the Society for Torghar Environment Protection. Around 1995 the society initiated the Torghar biodiversity conservation and sustainable use program with support from the GEF SGP. The program eventually expanded from wildlife protection to integrated conservation and development. Project interventions undertaken with GEF funding include the construction of a dam for water storage with water tanks, irrigation channels, and retaining walls; agricultural activities include building of terraces for orchards, supply of fruit and fuel saplings, establishment of a nursery, repair of dirt roads, and construction of new ones; other activities include provision of medical assistance and medicines and establishment of schools.

Apart from the NGO's positive impact in protecting the markhor and urial, and other biodiversity in general, the project has increased local sensitivity toward environmental issues, created job opportunities, and generated income. The project has received local and international acclaim and was scaled up to become a GEF MSP.

The SGP has also been able to fill in gaps that are not covered by GEF FSPs or MSPs. For example, the program was able to support the compressed natural gas and liquefied petroleum

gas conversions of three-wheelers in Rawalpindi, because the GEF FSPs on vehicle emission reductions did not address alternative fuel promotion initiatives in two-stroke engines.

With its focus on testing innovations and developing community capacity, the Pakistan SGP has been able to fill in gaps and sustain interest until a GEF FSP or MSP starts up; examples include the Palas Conservation project and the GEF Mountain Area Conservancy Project.

The Central Indus Wetlands Complex and the Salt Range Wetlands Complex (Ucchali Lake) are two of the four wetland complexes selected under the seven-year GEF FSP, Pakistan Wetlands Program, launched in 2006 and funded by a number of other donors in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment. The wetlands program also includes the Central Indus Wetlands Complex (Taunsa) that was the site of the SGP Indus Blind Dolphin Conservation Project. The FSP builds on concepts of ecotourism developed in the earlier SGP and subsequent SGP interventions in support of Indus blind dolphin rescue and conservation and a conservation information resource center.

The SGP's successful experiment with the Aga Khan Planning and Building Services' Building and Construction Improvement Program (BACIP) in the Northern Areas was approved for GEF project development facility block A funding ($25,000). Its purpose was to develop a proposal for reducing pressure on forest resources and reducing carbon dioxide emissions by providing and promoting energy-efficient housing technologies. This initiative was also scaled up to a GEF MSP.

Other examples are believed ready for scale-up and offer great potential for replication. SGP grants for IPM and POPs with partners, such as Eco-Conservation Initiatives, Cotton Plus, and Green Circle Organization (for organic farming), are expected to influence future GEF MSPs and FSPs.

However, on the whole, links from the SGP to GEF MSPs and FSPs have remained modest. It is argued that the program's mode of operation and focus on the grassroots pose a difficulty in influencing larger projects and programs. In those instances in which an SGP project has been scaled up to an FSP or MSP, the SGP is often confronted with the problem of attribution.

The new CPS (2006–09) does not propose any steps to link the SGP to the GEF FSP and MSP country portfolio. The larger GEF projects are often carried out within the federal government system, and the SGP is carried out with NGOs and CBOs. Not surprisingly, the linkages between these are often very limited.

SGP Linkages with UNDP

The SGP is reported to have become the base of all UNDP environment-related interventions. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework is intended to encourage civil society participation and partnership in efforts to broaden choices and increase opportunities for the poor, women, and marginalized groups. The framework's outcome for the environment is stated as "improved living conditions through environmental management for sustainable

development." The GEF SGP enjoys a good working relationship with the UNDP country office. The UNDP resident representative has participated in SGP-organized activities and has represented the SGP at high-level forums. The SGP national coordinator has regularly participated in UNDP-GEF local program appraisal committee meetings for project proposal reviews and has worked with the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development to incorporate lessons learned from practices in community development in government policy. UNDP gives credit to the SGP for offering field-tested ideas to it, opening up windows to CBOs, and providing a quicker, easier, and more efficient route to UNDP as well as to other GEF MSPs and FSPs. The flexibility of the SGP is also reported to have led to the program's partnering with the UNICEF in a joint initiative to reduce arsenic pollution and create awareness about POPs in six districts of Punjab and Sindh. Knowledgeable interviewees stated that housing the SGP within the UNDP country office has facilitated greater interaction between UNDP-GEF and the SGP.

2.4 SGP "Reputational Benefits" for the GEF

The benefits that the SGP has generated for the reputation of the broader GEF are derived from its reputation for a unique and flexible approach to meeting local and global objectives, responsiveness to community needs, and downward accountability at the grassroots level. The program's responsiveness is characterized by its ability to meet local needs and concentrate resources on the project or intervention, rather than on the often long and cumbersome procedures associated with some other donor-funded initiatives. On the whole, the SGP's reputational benefits for the GEF are best summarized in the many opinions and viewpoints noted during the evaluation to the effect that the SGP is a quick, efficient mechanism for launching community-based efforts and that it offers many field-tested approaches for the GEF system as a whole.

The SGP has also received national recognition as identifying, promoting, and supporting community-level and community-led initiatives. It is seen to have increased outreach to remote and isolated communities, increased awareness and capacities of communities to recognize and respond to environmental problems (some of which affect the global environment), and resulted in a network of community-level mechanisms for addressing local concerns affecting the environment.

2.5 The SGP and Its Beneficiaries

SGP's focus on local communities as a key mechanism for demonstrating and disseminating community-level responses to the environment is consistent with the overall GEF philosophy and belief that "local solutions to global environmental problems are feasible" and that "global environmental problems can only be addressed by involving local people" (UNDP, GEF SGP 2002). As such, the SGP has retained its focus on the community as its top priority. This focus is both relevant to and necessary for achieving its objectives. Findings from an SGP workshop organized to review community mobilization strategies reveal that target communities of the SGP projects vary greatly and include occupational groups, village communities, clusters of villages, and local advocacy groups.

The SGP has had to be particularly careful in retaining a genuine focus on community needs while identifying "win-win options" for the communities as well as the GEF focal areas involved. Generally, these GEF focal areas are not seen as local priorities, which are usually water and sanitation, health and education, and poverty and income generation. The SGP has tried to find creative ways to link GEF priorities together with these local development priorities, albeit with varying degrees of success. In looking at the entire range of targeted beneficiaries, it can be stated that, in almost all projects, the stakeholders targeted were highly relevant, given the project objectives. However, one important qualification is that the *relevance* of the intended beneficiaries does not necessarily ensure the *effectiveness* of targeted beneficiaries (this is discussed further in chapter 3).

The SGP was demonstrably able to reach Pakistan's poorest communities with tangible project results that addressed both global environmental goals and local needs. For example, the Torghar Biodiversity Conservation Project attempted to conserve a critically threatened and endangered ungulate, the markhor and, at the same time, resulted in tangible returns to the community in terms of social and economic empowerment. The Indus Blind Dolphin Ecotourism project (see box 2.3) helped indigenous and marginalized communities along the Taunsa Barrage increase their income by protecting and conserving the rare and endemic Indus blind dolphin. The SGP has been unique, not only in terms of its response to saving these animals, but also in being quick, efficient, and effective—compared with larger programs—in responding to rapidly deteriorating situations.

The SGP has succeeded to a great extent in targeting indigenous and marginalized communities. These include the Kelasha Indigenous People Survival Program, a women's organization of the Kelasha people in Pakistan's Northern Areas, which is working on the poverty-environment nexus, and indigenous communities such as Rebaries, Muhannas (fishermen), Maheries, and Jats (cameleers), who are targeted by different projects in the current operational phase 3 in the Indus Delta. The SGP is also reaching cotton growers in southern Punjab with key information and awareness on POPs where few similar initiatives exist. Tribal leaders in remote Balochistan have become protectors of two endangered ungulate species (the markhor and urial).

Village communities are integrating biodiversity conservation and sustainable use into their natural resource management practices in the North West Frontier Province; here, a grant to the NGO Sungi has led to preservation of local species of vegetables, fruit trees, medicinal plants, and other indigenous varieties. SGP partners are working with various CBOs to help them integrate energy-efficient stoves within their overall programs. Many SGP grantees stress poverty reduction through income generation—for example, through stove construction for sale by community members, promotion of local handicrafts, sustainable use of biodiversity, and ecotourism. Some partners are contributing to disaster preparedness and energy-efficient techniques and practices, such as the Aga Khan Planning and Building Services' project on house design and other structural products and technologies in the Northern Areas.

Box 2.3: Increasing the "Visibility" of the Blind Dolphin

The Indus River in Pakistan is the last habitat of an internationally threatened mammal—the Indus blind dolphin. Centuries of living in the river's muddy waters have made its eyes redundant; instead, it has developed a sophisticated sonar system of echolocation. Over the years, numerous barrages on the river have carved up its home range so the dolphin has virtually no room to move about. Overfishing in the area not only limits the dolphins' food supply but also poses a potential threat, because they sometimes get caught in the nets and drown.

The Indus boat people live in abject poverty; the Indus is their home and their livelihood. Given their extensive knowledge of the river, they are the closest human link to the Indus blind dolphin; thus, backed with SGP funding, the Adventure Foundation of Pakistan looked for ways to make the boat people the guardians of the dolphins and to use their knowledge and expertise to help save the animal. The project involves training boat people to run safaris in the river using their traditional boats. Visitors experience not just the thrill of the boat ride, but also see the dolphin in its natural habitat.

A small cooperative society has been set up to manage the proceeds from the ecotourism activity. The Adventure Foundation of Pakistan provided technical guidance to the boat people, helping them to upgrade their boats, improve safety for boatmen and visitors, and provide training facilities to individuals to become certified Indus guides. The foundation also helps promote the activity worldwide through alliances with other conservation NGOs, such as the WWF and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and the GOP, which has declared the dolphin's territory a protected area. The aim is to make dolphin viewing a noninvasive activity by using the traditional practices of the boat people, while enabling visitors to understand the animal better.

The boat safari is an incentive for the boat people to conserve the blind dolphin. The project also encourages them to value their traditional ways of life and helps promote and market their handicrafts, such as basketry and embroidery. The project led to the establishment of an Indus Dolphin Rescue Unit at Sukkur Barrage, and the GEF Pakistan Wetlands Program incorporates the concept of ecotourism first introduced by this project.

SGP Focus on Women

Given Pakistan's poor international rating for gender empowerment and extremely low indicators in female health, education, participation, and economic activity, it is not surprising that the SGP has not fared particularly well regarding its impacts on women. Targeting of women has not happened in all projects, and gender is not even explicitly mentioned in most project objectives. The 2004 Biennial Program Review notes that, despite the mandatory provision of gender impact assessments in the project planning exercise, they remain an "enormous challenge for GEF SGP"; however, some examples of SGP support have led to the establishment of independent women-based organizations, and the current CPS encourages such organizations and proposes specific interventions for targeting women.

SGP projects and program documentation do not provide gender-disaggregated data. Similarly, an absence of clear objectives and impact indicators leads to difficulties in assessing the program's contributions to women. This lack belies the focus on rural and marginal women that is explicit or implicit across the board in almost all SGP projects. Nonetheless, gender-disaggregated data and data disaggregated with respect to age, class, family, economic status, and—more important—discrimination and vulnerability status are not provided. This finding holds true for project as well as non-project activities such as policy dialogues, knowledge management, and workshops.

Many projects do have gender-specific objectives and interventions, such as those involving fuel-efficient stoves, which are directly targeted at women and whose impact on women is documented. Of the 12 projects visited, participation of and benefits to women in projects involving fuel-efficient stoves was highest. Women trained in stove making have replicated these in their villages and neighboring areas as well as incorporated many unique modifications in stove design to meet local requirements.

Women interviewed in both project areas claim significant benefits due to the SGP projects—mainly, increases in their confidence and participation, acquisition of training in the making and use of stoves, reduction in the time and effort needed for cooking, ability to prepare two meals at the same time, and a cleaner smoke-free environment overall. Some women also reported reduction in their use of firewood for cooking, but few were able to quantify these reductions.

The current CPS is more explicit in giving attention to women by engaging women-led and women-focused organizations in the Indus Delta area, such as the Shirkat Gah and Bakhtawar Women Development Organization.

3 Effectiveness

This chapter assesses SGP contributions at the global, national, and local levels as well as project-specific ratings and examples of SGP project contributions under the GEF focal areas. It also summarizes the results of the evaluation's review of 12 sample projects. In addition, the chapter looks at the SGP's monitoring and evaluation, the effectiveness of the SGP governance structure, and its success in achieving innovation, replication, and sustainability.

3.1 SGP Achievements toward Generation of Global Environment Benefits

Under the aegis of climate change, the SGP has promoted and supported many projects geared toward energy efficiency and/or alternative energy sources (table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Pakistan SGP's Results in Addressing Climate Change (Energy Efficiency)

Indicator	Energy-efficient stoves	Energy-efficient housing products and technologies	Alternative sources of fuel provided
NGOs (number)	8	6	7
Villages (number)	293	127	
Beneficiaries (number)	8,547 stove makers trained	5,833 households 341 people trained 66 entrepreneurs established (income generated)	12,567
Products installed (number)	19,947 mud stoves	5,856 energy-efficient products	6 cleaner sources of energy promoted 168 biogas units 100 *fanoo* units 10 microhydels 163 CNG and LPG units 73 fuelwood storage units 3 solar systems
Biomass saving (kilograms a day)	119,682		35,000 8,616 liters of fuel saved
Annual reduction in carbon dioxide emissions (gigagrams)	39.48	11.55	

Note: CNG = compressed natural gas; LPG = liquefied petroleum gas.

To promote energy-efficient stoves, the SGP has partnered with at least eight different NGOs. Collective results indicate that 8,547 stove makers have been trained. Together, they have made 19,947 stoves in 293 villages, resulting in reduced biomass fuel use of 119,682 kilograms a day and 39.48 gigagrams of reduced carbon dioxide emissions a year. In the area of energy-efficient housing products and technologies, the SGP has worked with six different NGOs; and 5,856 energy-efficient products have been installed, benefiting 5,833 households and establishing 66 entrepreneurs, leading to a reduction of carbon dioxide emissions of 11.55 gigagrams a year.

To promote alternative sources of fuel, SGP projects in Sindh and Punjab have installed 168 biogas plants, 100 *fanoos* (candles) resulting in savings of 19,422 liters of kerosene oil used for lighting in addition to capturing 764.4 tons a day of methane gas; 10 microhydels resulted in reduction of 64,000 liters of kerosene oil and 35,000 kilograms of biomass a month (and a monthly saving of 1,536,000 rupees). In addition, 163 compressed natural gas and liquefied petroleum gas plants, 73 rooms for fuelwood storage, and 3 solar systems cumulatively resulted in savings of 8,610 liters of liquid fuel a day.

In biodiversity conservation (table 3.2), Pakistan's SGP supports many projects with demonstrated potential to contribute significantly to global environmental benefits if replicated on large scales. The SGP 2004 Biennial Program Review provided an assessment of 23 SGP projects and noted that, of these 23, 20 projects have had clear impacts, 11 are innovative, 20 have the potential for replication, and 19 have clear global benefits. Other examples that illustrate the SGP contribution to global benefits follow:

- Projects implemented through 12 NGOs have resulted in the establishment of 44 community game reserves and one national park covering an area of about 525,964 hectares.
- Projects have enhanced the protection of biodiversity; for example, the brown bear and mountain glaciers.
- The rescue of Indus dolphins from canals has saved 2 percent of the species' global population in the past year.
- The Torghar conservation project has increased populations of the markhor and urial from fewer than 100 and 200 individuals, respectively, to current sustainable populations of about 3,000 each.
- Unique and endangered endemic species that SGP projects have helped conserve include the Indus dolphin, brown bear, snow leopard, wooly flying squirrel, Palas cat, blue sheep, ibex, chinkara, and western tragopan.
- Agrobiodiversity has increased through a project in the North West Frontier Province and the growth of indigenous varieties of maize, tomatoes, rice, and walnuts.
- Mangrove restoration has been accomplished through projects with Shirkat Gah, women's NGOs, and the Naujawan Social Welfare Association.
- A plantation of at least 500 acres of mangroves has been established, and conservation achieved through trained and mobilized communities.
- A contribution toward POP reduction has been made through the Cotton Plus project in the cotton belts of southern Punjab.

- Organic agriculture has been promoted; for example, the Sungi NGO's promotion of traditional pest control in horticulture, including garlic and marigolds.
- Reductions in GHGs have been achieved through the fuel-efficient stoves projects and the Aga Khan Planning and Building Services' BACIP; the latter won United Nations Habitat and Alcan awards for best overall sustainable intervention.
- The Thardeep Rural Support Program has contributed to reversing land degradation and desertification through sustainable resource and biodiversity use in desert regions, drip irrigation, and kitchen gardens.
- Two recent projects on saline agriculture promotion in the degraded lands of the coastal *talukas* of district Badin intended to reclaim lands degraded by sea intrusion.
- A project in the Khuzdar district of Balochistan is intended to rehabilitate land degraded by excessive use of tube wells.
- The community game reserves and national park protect various species of animals including the markhor, goral, black and brown bears, urial, and snow leopard, along with other endangered species of birds and animals.
- Agricultural biodiversity has been promoted by the SGP through NGOs introducing IPM across an area of 257,626.5 hectares. Some 186 endangered seed varieties have been preserved and reintroduced, and 38 species of medicinal plants have been introduced for farming.

Table 3.2: Pakistan SGP Results in Biodiversity Conservation

Indicator	CGRs and protected areas	Ecotourism and trophy hunting for biodiversity conservation	Agricultural biodiversity, medicinal plants, and IPM
Number of NGOs	12	6	7
Amount of land	525,964.4 hectares covered by CGRs; 44 CGRs; 1 national park		257,626.5 hectares brought under IPM
Number of species	22 key species protected	14	186 endangered seed species preserved and reintroduced; 38 medicinal plant species introduced for farming
Number of beneficiaries		718 families; 22 conservation officers trained	
Number and types of benefits		55 trainings and capacity building for conservation officers; 7 income-generation schemes; 257,000 rupees in income generated for community	

Note: CGR = community game reserve.

The 2006 *GEF Review of Small Grants Programme Documents: Final Report* (Imbach and Imbach 2006) has difficulty "aggregating local impacts at scales meaningful to GEF global scales" and notes that the SGP has generally been weak on quantitative targets and indicators for results and impact." A number of examples exist in which the SGP contribution to achieving direct global environmental benefits is not possible to assess as yet, either because of the relatively short time span or because replication and/or scale-up has not yet occurred, but great potential exists for it in the future. Therefore, it is not feasible to analyze potential probabilities at this stage, except to state the proviso that examples exist that offer great potential and promise for direct, significant global benefits. The GEF is also cognizant of the fact that "there is significant potential to enhance the global benefits of the program" and that this will be achieved through "more rigorous focusing of projects consistent with GEF criteria, increased capacity building and technical assistance, better M&E, and more effective communications and outreach."

3.2 SGP Local and National Benefits and Consequences

Local benefits within GEF focal areas are more visible than are global benefits, and are documented to a greater extent. For example, the SGP's contribution in terms of establishing a link between income generation and biodiversity conservation is demonstrated by the fact that six of the SGP-funded projects formed for ecotourism and trophy hunting have included training and capacity-building components benefiting 718 families and generating an income of 257,000 rupees for the community from seven such schemes. Other impacts (not directly affecting the global environment) include extensive outreach to poor and marginalized communities, innovative and cost-effective projects, improved knowledge management, institutional development of partner organizations, and creation of new community institutions at the grassroots level.

The single biggest challenge for the SGP has been to localize the concept of conservation of the environment, given the often very limited or nonexistent institutional capacities at the local level. The program's biggest success has been the creation of local institutions and the improvement of their capacities for identification, planning, implementation, costing, service delivery, and the imparting of new skills. A major achievement is that many of the institutions supported by the SGP have become viable and self-sustaining; many SGP-funded initiatives have been scaled up by others. Some of these institutions have mobilized resources at large scales.

The SGP has made significant progress in institution building at the grassroots level and in building the capacity of communities to play a more informed and active role in the management of their local resources and develop linkages to increase their access to public and non-state service providers. It is clear from the primary and secondary data collected that the most significant achievements of the SGP are that it

- has given communities knowledge and information leading to greater awareness of the benefits of community participation and management of their resources,

- has given communities an organized forum for dialogue and action to address key environmental issues as well as non-GEF issues with which they are confronted,
- has increased awareness, knowledge, and information regarding roles and responsibilities within the community and about the resources that they use, their potential use, rights, and some of the ways and means they can employ in attaining them,
- has increased community knowledge of and access to other resources and organizations.

SGP Project Contributions at the Community Level

In the past 13 years, the SGP has engaged, motivated, and catalyzed a diverse and impressive number of individuals and institutions and has formed effective partnerships and coalitions—many of which have carried out innovative and unique processes for understanding, owning, and managing their natural resources in efficient and effective ways. Community mobilization and participation have been at the core of all SGP interventions, and one of the greatest contributions of the SGP at the community level is the social capital generated. It is noteworthy that the previous national coordinator of the Pakistan SGP has been appointed adviser to the UNDP resident coordinator on civil society partnerships. The SGP reports identify several results of social mobilization, such as enhanced cooperation for better resource management; improved access to government departments; enhanced community leadership, planning, management, and evaluation capacities; greater confidence; and the formation of village-level institutions.

Despite the difficulties of its early years, the SGP has managed to find good partners and today can boast of many successes. The common features of these successes are the identification of one local “champion” committed to the SGP cause who has a capacity for networking and finding appropriate support and guidance, the effort and investment made by the SGP in understanding local realities, trust in individuals with creativity and initiative, creative efforts for local institution building, and the programming flexibility and autonomy afforded by the existence of the SGP as a separate unit.

Several of the NGO and CBO partners visited at the project level, as well as national stakeholders, confirm that the SGP has made important contributions to developing the capacities of civil society organizations. At least 12 national NGOs have received their first grants from GEF SGP. SGP projects have supported close to 300 CBOs and NGOs, many of which have gone on to carry out larger programs with significant environmental impacts (see, for example, box 3.1).

Box 3.1: Anjuman Samaji Behbood—Local Benefits

Home to Pakistan's thriving textile industry, Faisalabad is the second largest city in Punjab. As the city has grown, low-income settlements have sprung up; today, these stretch for miles outside the main city. These settlements lack basic facilities such as sewerage, sanitation, and drinking water.

For 20 years, local resident Nazir Ahmed Wattoo tried to create change in these low-income areas through his NGO, Anjuman Samaji Behbood (ASB). Inspired by Karachi's Orangi Pilot Project, ASB began an Integrated Slums Development Program in 1994 in Hasanpura, Dhuddiwala, one of the low-income settlements around Faisalabad. Specifically, ASB set water lines in this area with interest-free credit from the Orangi Pilot Project. The NGO motivated the community to mobilize its own resources. It provided social and technical guidance in preparing designs and estimates to the area's activists and supervised the construction work. The community was able to lay down the main lines of water supply and an underground sewerage system on its own.

In 1998 ASB was given SGP funding for the establishment of a nursery for social forestry. Locals provided one acre of land rent-free to prepare a nursery of trees native to the area. The community was willing to purchase these plants, making the project sustainable. These have been planted in the houses and streets of the project area, making for a cooler, greener, and cleaner environment.

A recent comparative study reveals that ASB has achieved better results than a foreign-funded NGO working in another settlement. In addition, the technical design of the ASB low-cost model was more sophisticated and sustainable. Nazir Wattoo's achievements have won him recognition not just in his community, but throughout Faisalabad. His partnership with the SGP has enabled a dialogue with senior government officials, who are not only interested in learning how he managed the Hasanpura project at only 60 percent of the official estimated cost, but also want him to replicate his model throughout Faisalabad and in other cities in Punjab. ASB is also working to provide slum dwellers with a better standard of living through such activities as constructing proper sanitation lines through a participatory community approach and increasing income levels through skills training and the provision of credit. The ASB approach has built a strong sense of ownership in the community and demonstrated to the people that it is possible to live within one's means with dignity.

Examples of Local Benefits of Biodiversity Conservation Projects

The SGP has supported community-based projects focused on trophy hunting, organic agriculture, medicinal plants, and ecotourism.

- In addition to the global benefits mentioned earlier, the Torghar project has resulted in significant improvements and capacity enhancement of communities. Its major achievements include wildlife conservation and sustainable use, local income generation through trophy hunts, social changes in terms of enhanced decision-making dynamics in

an otherwise traditional tribal establishment, attitudinal changes among the people, community empowerment, and the establishment of trust within the communities. The project has also changed government attitudes and has built capacity within the Balochistan wildlife department.

- The Indus Dolphin Rescue project in Sukkur builds on the SGP-supported initiative aimed at dolphin conservation in Taunsa. The project attempts to reduce the losses of Indus River dolphins due to canal stranding through rescue operations and community awareness. Another component deals with habitat assessment and agricultural practices improvement. Awareness raising about the dolphin is a key element and builds on the two SGP-promoted ideas of ecotourism and the Dolphin Conservation and Information Centre, which were launched in the original SGP project in Taunsa. The project has provided technical support to the Sindh Wildlife Department and Lahore Zoo, and rescued 70 trapped dolphins from irrigation canals between 2000 and 2005. The success of the Conservation of the Blind Indus Dolphin through Ecotourism lies in conserving the endangered species and establishing a link between ecological conservation and economic benefits.

- The Green Circle Organization obtained SGP funding for a project aimed at improving local livelihoods and biodiversity by conserving and promoting indigenous plants and traditional agricultural practices in Punjab. The project has successfully enhanced local biodiversity by cultivating local plants and trees, reduced inorganic agricultural inputs, and established a seed bank and nursery to provide quality seeds to farmers.

- The Baltoro Environmental Protection Program aimed to reduce the negative impacts of tourism on the environment and promote ecotourism in the Karokoram mountain range. It was able to generate substantial revenues from camping fees, raise additional revenues for additional campsites along the glacier, and enter into a successful partnership with an international NGO to implement a three-year integrated project for a full-fledged management plan for the area.

- The SGP work done in the Soon Sakesar Valley (Soan Valley Development Program and others) enjoyed good local support and drew the federal government's attention to its conservation of biodiversity and sustainable irrigated agriculture through participatory management. The Soon Sakesar Valley Network, comprising local CBOs and NGOs, has emerged as an effective and broadly linked platform for improving local resource management in the valley.

Examples of Local Benefits of Climate Change Projects

Projects geared to mitigating climate change mostly address energy-efficient housing needs, fuel-efficient stoves, and promotion of clean fuels.

- The SGP has funded a project for promotion and dissemination of fuel-efficient technologies for environmental conservation and capacity building through training of

entrepreneurs and artisans to replicate BACIP technologies. The project specifically promoted three energy-efficient products—fuel-efficient stoves, a water-warming facility, and a roof hatch window. The Aga Khan Planning and Building Services' BACIP, funded under an SGP grant, was able to install 135 demonstration models in 13 villages, train 62 entrepreneurs to produce BACIP products, and establish seven businesses for selling these products.

- The SGP funded BACIP again in 2003 for adapting and replicating its energy activities in the Sindh. BACIP was able to introduce fuel-efficient stoves as well as energy-efficient housing designs, biogas plants, a water desalination plant, and artisan training to construct these products. Based on the BACIP experience in the Northern Areas, GEF project development facility block A funding was obtained to develop an MSP to further extend work in the Northern Areas.

- An SGP project executed by the Sungi Development Foundation has adapted and modified the fuel-efficient stoves model of the Escorts Foundation. The project was able to install some 570 stoves within one year in an area of 1,729 households, with a local adoption rate of more than 34 percent; this is seen as a major achievement.

Example of Local Benefits of POP Projects

- Community IPM for Woolly Aphid is another project funded by the SGP. Implemented by the National Rural Support Program and Eco-Conservation Initiatives, it aims to build IPM capacity with a focus on woolly apple aphids and providing funds for training staff of community organizations in the Murree Hills and the National Rural Support Program. IPM was also incorporated as one of the National Rural Support Program's activities in Hyderabad based on the success of the SGP project. Other IPM-focused projects include the Human Development Foundation project, Rahimyar Khan, which established a bio-lab and successfully convinced farmers to reduce the number of sprays and use biomechanisms for pest control and management instead; the DevCon project on rice in the Badin district in the Indus Delta; and the Eco-Conservation Initiatives project on biological pest control methods for apple orchards in Pishin, Balochistan.

- The Cotton Plus project, executed by the Jhoak Development Foundation, aims to provide information on safe agricultural practices and raise awareness about POPs. The project has organized two broadly based forums or seminars that brought together elected representatives, CBOs, NGOs, and the media on a range of topics including safe drinking water, arsenic content, and the hazards of agricultural pesticides. The distribution list for the foundation's publications grew from 5,000 to 5,900; however, the actual readership of the magazine may not have risen in proportion to the volumes produced. Lack of analysis of subscription lists and other data on dissemination, usage, and so forth makes it difficult to assess the impact of the information disseminated. The project has faced other difficulties, such as delays, limited resources for research work, inability to conduct

planned seminars or district-level forums, and a dearth of locally relevant information on the use and hazards of POPs.

Unsuccessful Projects

Examples of unsuccessful projects are instructive; these include the SGP project on Forestation in the Suburbs of Mitha Tiwana. This project was intended to reclaim waterlogged land through large-scale planting of eucalyptus trees. The project planted 200,000 trees that were intended to be sold at good prices for pulp and paper and to create a revolving tree plantation fund from the proceeds. The project met with limited success, because little research went into its design. It had little or no technical assistance (the plantings were done incorrectly), and no market existed for the trees, once grown. Most of the harvest was ultimately used as fuelwood. Despite these problems, there were successes: the annual net income per acre for the farmers was substantial, resulting in 150,000 rupees at the end of five years; some income was returned to the NGO. Waterlogged land was reclaimed for agriculture, but the revolving fund was never established. The project was unable to meet its anticipated objectives of addressing global warming, increasing productivity, and conserving biodiversity.

The Khura Forest Training and Development Centre is another disappointing SGP project. Implemented in the Soon Sakesar Valley, the project was designed to train other community groups in forest conservation as practiced by the group of village elders in Khura. Another project in the Sakesar range is replicating the initiative, which did not expand in its own area. The project was able to mobilize the forest department to demarcate project boundaries, which helped mitigate conflicts with neighboring villages on forest use. However, little evidence exists on the use of the training center to train locals in establishing a community-based protection system, and the local clientele exhibited little willingness to pay for such a service. In addition, the project had no provision for extension or replication efforts to take the concept further.

Contribution to Development of Policy Reforms

The SGP program budget does not allocate funds for policy advocacy. Moreover, unlike other programs such as the Local Initiative Facility for Urban Environment, the SGP's inability to support local government is a constraint in terms of policy influence. The core focus of the SGP has been institution building at the local level, identification of cost-effective innovations, and advocacy for government ownership. Nevertheless, the policy influence of the SGP is cited as a "success of Pakistan's National Conservation Strategy" in the independent mid-term review of the National Conservation Strategy. The SGP Torghar Conservation Project is also mentioned as a landmark initiative in this review.

The latest National Environmental Action Plan (GOP 2001) includes as one of its subprograms Grassroots Initiatives in Pakistan, which is intended to provide small-scale funding to NGOs; it follows the same modalities developed by the GEF SGP. Projects funded by the SGP have been awarded various prizes, such as the Ashden Sustainable Energy 2004 Award won by the Escorts Foundation for its SGP-funded fuel-efficient stoves project, and the Alcan and United Nations

Habitat awards won by BACIP for best overall sustainable intervention (energy-efficient products project).

A documentation review carried out as part of the GEF SGP global evaluation reports that, at the global level, the SGP has had difficulty deciding "how to collect, organize, and make sense of the experiences and lessons to take them to higher levels of abstraction to make them more useful to SGP and GEF and also for influencing policy dialogue." However, the Pakistan SGP has made constant efforts to do so, and examples of projects that have influenced the policy debate and evolving policies are numerous.

The SGP initiated a series of consultations with various stakeholders, including policy makers, and organized a National Conference with Parliamentarians and Political Parties on Environment in November 2003. This significant achievement represents the first such consultation of UNDP with policy makers on environmental issues. The outcome of this conference was the adoption of the Islamabad Declaration on Environment, a key policy document that petitions the government to facilitate and strengthen rights to natural resources for the poor and community empowerment through community-based management of natural resources.

SGP partners who have had influence on policy include the Himalayan Wildlife Foundation, which has developed a management plan for the Deosai National Park (box 3.2), which the government has adopted. Using the brown bear to influence policy, the project was able to bring this habitat under protection, which is considered a significant achievement.

Another SGP grantee, the Baltoro Environmental Protection Program, was able to solicit the support and commitment of the government (Ministries of Tourism, Environment, and Kashmir and Northern Affairs) to help eliminate and/or curb unsustainable types of mountain tourism and enforce regulations to this end. Another grantee, the Hirrak Development Center, was able to engage the provincial government in efforts to ban the use of insecticides. The Consumer Rights Commission of Pakistan implemented a project addressing national environmental quality standards. The project is intended to engage public representatives at the federal level to ensure that public policies and laws on the environment and their implementation frameworks are strengthened in light of civil society experiences from community-based projects. The Consumer Rights Commission developed an energy-efficient building design manual and was able to influence the Punjab government in the use of energy-efficient building designs for a government school. Similarly, Eco-Conservation Initiatives was able to introduce IPM for sugarcane crops with private sector funding benefitting 150,000 farmers.

A transboundary project on international waters funded by the SGP in collaboration with the WWF for water quality monitoring of the Hudiara Drain influenced the government of Punjab to initiate a similar project for monitoring water pollution in another transboundary river (Ravi).

Box 3.2: The Himalayan Brown Bear: Conserving Biodiversity

What started as a simple trek by two adventurous friends in 1987 soon led to the start of the Himalayan Wildlife Project and an ongoing odyssey to save the Himalayan brown bear, a highly specialized subspecies adapted to the Deosai plains and found nowhere else on earth.

Spread across an area of 3,000 square kilometers at an altitude of about 4,115 meters above sea level, the plains are home to unique species of plant and animal life, of which the Himalayan brown bear is the most famous. But in 1987, when Anis ur Rehman and Vaqar Zakaria went looking for the bears, they could not find any. The first scientific census of the bears in 1993 revealed that, contrary to the official population figure of 625, there were in fact only 19 bears left in Deosai. Threatened by hunting and a shrinking habitat, the bears needed protection; despite a lack of experience and resources, the two men decided to take on the task.

Lobbying under the Northern Areas Wildlife Act, they managed to get Deosai declared a national park and had their foundation approved as its honorary warden. Realizing that excluding the people's right to use the area was impracticable, they defined their own policies based on mutual understanding with locals from 16 villages in the area. Jeep tracks were delineated, beyond which no traffic was allowed. Adequate grazing grounds for livestock were demarcated. Several check posts to monitor traffic coming in and out of Deosai were set up, staffed by local residents. These efforts were fostered by an SGP grant to research a detailed management plan for the park. The grant also helped to establish the Himalayan Wildlife Foundation and gain it visibility and recognition.

Within five years, the bear population increased to 28. Other state-of-the-art conservation techniques, such as radio collaring and satellite monitoring, were used to study the habitat and understand better the social and genetic makeup of the species. The foundation won the prestigious International Rolex award in 1996 and received television coverage from South Africa and the BBC. The foundation has formed a surveillance network to keep a check on illegal trade. Based on the belief that the plains, wildlife, and people are all linked, the foundation is also trying to help local people. It has managed to get three drinking water projects approved by the Social Action Program (a multidonor government program for poverty alleviation) and has set up health camps and other facilities for the local residents.

Policy Failures

Examples also exist of projects that were supported with the right intentions and had the potential of engaging government stakeholders in a constructive way, but failed for any number of reasons. One example is Coordination Support to the GOP to Establish Management and Research Priorities in Accordance with the National and International Conservation Strategies and Conventions, funded by SGP and executed by the WWF-Pakistan. The project was intended to establish ways and means for effective coordination of various relevant agencies by the GOP and National Council to meet national targets for nature conservation. It identified key requirements to be fulfilled under conventions for protecting species and their habitats, identified gaps in conservation approaches of various organizations, and recommended ways to develop

and improve coordination among researchers and managers and among various provinces to manage wildlife species. The project had ambitious, important objectives; however, the results were poor. The project was marked by many weaknesses in design and implementation and was ultimately judged as not having achieved its objectives as set forth in the project proposal.

Overall Effectiveness Rating of SGP Sample Projects

Four of the sample projects visited (33 percent) were rated as highly satisfactory: Environmental Education for Youth through Nature Study Camps in Protected Areas, Fuel-Efficient Stove Project (implemented by the Shahbaz Development Foundation), Fuel-Efficient Stoves Project (implemented by the Rural Development Project), and Conservation of Blind Indus Dolphin through Ecotourism at Taunsa Barrage. One project, Natural Resource Management for Conservation of Biodiversity, (8 percent) was rated satisfactory; whereas another four (33 percent) were found to be moderately satisfactory: Khura Forest Training and Development Centre, Community Fire Brigade in Soan Sakesar Valley, Environmental Protection with Increase in Income, and Ecosystem Management through Community Participation. Three projects (25 percent) were rated as moderately unsatisfactory: Promotion and Demonstration of Appropriate Building Designs for Urban Multan, Establishment of Nursery for Social Forestry, and Cotton Plus and Environment. Table 3.3 summarizes the results of the project effectiveness review.

Table 3.3: Effectiveness Ratings for Sample Projects

Rating	Number of projects	Percentage of projects
Highly satisfactory	4	33
Satisfactory	1	8
Moderately satisfactory	4	33
Moderately unsatisfactory	3	25
Unsatisfactory	0	-
Highly unsatisfactory	0	-
Total	12	100

3.3 SGP Country Monitoring and Evaluation

The M&E system of the SGP has evolved over the years. Program-level M&E consists of project-level monitoring visits and maintenance of an M&E sheet developed for each project. Quarterly submission of financial and project progress reports also make up part of the M&E methodology. This part of the M&E system has had limitations in the sense that projects (grantees) have not always been regular and/or consistent in terms of frequency of reporting and in capturing and reflecting data appropriately.

All project documents clearly state objectives, expected results, and some indicators. Financial reporting is mandatory, and it appears to be sufficient for assessing if finances are being managed effectively and efficiently for project operations. Project monitoring visits are typically

scheduled before disbursements. Depending on project duration, these take place theoretically every 6 or 12 months; however, it was observed that budget limitations make it difficult to average more than one visit per project per year.

Overall Assessment of M&E Arrangements at the Program Level

Assessment of program-level monitoring reveals that approximately 30 percent of the overall GEF SGP portfolio was visited in both fiscal 2005 and 2006[2]; all supervision of SGP projects includes review of project-level M&E and financial data. A few common issues that are taken up during the field visits include knowledge management, social mobilization, and local government involvement. The SGP national coordinator provides regular quarterly financial reports to the United Nations Office for Project Services; all projects closed in fiscal 2005 and 2006 have submitted their project completion reports to the SGP.

The SGP has been constrained in developing and maintaining an updated M&E system for many reasons: a lack of time given the large number of small projects scattered across the country, budget and human resource constraints, and the often changing and sometimes complex requirements established by the GEF Secretariat are some of the important factors that limit SGP's ability to carry out M&E effectively. Lack of human and financial resources for M&E appears to be the most serious constraint; as one observer noted, "To get good reporting and analysis, it has to be outside the national coordinator and program assistant structure. They are already swamped."

The SGP received GEF SGP Global M&E guidelines in 2000, after which a number of improvements were made. The GEF guidelines contain three key elements: a regularly updated global database, biennial and semiannual reports to headquarters, and Biennial Program Review reports. The national coordinator has tried to strengthen M&E arrangements in a number of ways, such as focusing on measuring achievements, strengthening data collection methods through various M&E formats at the project level, and emphasizing the construction of project baselines. The SGP viewpoint on these guidelines was that the global database serves the program at the global level and was of little use or value to SGP country programs, until it was redesigned in 2002–03 to improve analysis and reporting.

Overall Assessment of M&E Arrangements at Project Level of 12 Sample Projects:

Assessment of project-level monitoring arrangements at entry reveals the following of the 12 sample projects:

- Ten (83 percent) included monitoring activities, and two (17 percent) did not.
- Results indicators were fully identified for project objectives for six projects (50 percent); three projects (25 percent) partially identified such indicators, and another three had not.

[2] The GEF fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30.

- Baselines were established for three projects, but not for eight other projects (67 percent).

Regarding quality of M&E at the implementation stage, analysis of the 12 sample projects indicates the following:

- Responsibility for project monitoring lies with communities and CBOs or with NGOs (50 percent each). Some projects (25 percent) assign responsibility to other groups, such as refuge owners, trade unions, drivers or owners, and NGO board members.

- Eleven projects (92 percent) have been visited by the national coordinator, and consultants or personnel, delegated by the national coordinator so far.

- Of the project completion reports submitted thus far, seven (58 percent) cover all project objectives that have been accomplished.

3.4 Effectiveness of SGP Governance Structure

The National Steering Committee is a voluntary body formed to provide the "major substantive contribution to and oversight of the program." The primary responsibilities of the NSC are review of, advice on, and approval of concept papers and project proposals. On average, the NSC is required to meet four times a year to review proposals, give guidelines for program development, and interpret guidance received from the SGP Secretariat. The NSC membership rotates (theoretically) every three years, but some members of the Pakistan NSC—such as the chief conservator of wildlife in the North West Frontier Province, an ex-IUCN official, and the current program manager of the Aga Khan Foundation—have served much longer terms, owing to their technical or functional expertise, interest, and commitment to SGP work.

The Pakistan NSC is adequate in its composition and balance in terms of institutional and individual representation, gender mix, geographical focus, and technical expertise regarding the GEF focal areas. Its current membership consists of federal and provincial government representatives (the Ministry of Environment, Economic Affairs Division, and Ministry of Social Welfare) and the chief conservator of wildlife in the North West Frontier Province; two journalists, one of whom is an active environmental journalist; national and international development and environment organizations and NGOs (the IUCN and the WWF-Pakistan); one bilateral agency representative (U.S. Agency for International Development); and other thematic specialists (the dean of Bahauddin Zakariya University and the director of the National Herbarium, National Agricultural Research Centre). This provides good networking opportunities for NSC members, and the SGP's outreach and access are extended by this mix of journalists, senior civil servants, policy and thematic specialists, and national NGOs. Government representation on the NSC is mandatory and provides the necessary direction for ensuring relevance and consistency with national sustainable development priorities.

The Pakistan NSC has played an important role in giving technical input and advice for improving the quality and consistency of proposals against GEF priorities. Functioning as an advisory board, the NSC has also contributed to setting strategic guidelines and directions for the

program as a whole and for suggesting changes in implementation procedures. The GEF SGP Secretariat maintains a record of the NSC minutes. Grantees are sometimes invited to NSC meetings to understand its operations and constraints better.

Weaknesses in the Governance Structure

The NSC contribution to monitoring—despite its interest in doing so and its development of a monitoring plan in 2002—has remained weak. This is attributable mostly to the time limitations of members and unavailability of travel budgets. There is also limited evidence that NSC members have been able to utilize their own networks for program information dissemination and increasing impact and visibility; a couple of members have used their own networks and resources for writing and disseminating SGP successes through various forums.

Despite the current focus on working with grantees to develop sustainable income-generating and productive activities in the GEF focal areas, the ability to attract nontraditional (private) sources of funding and local government funds has remained underutilized. There were observations that the NSC was more effective and nonbureaucratic in the early years. Moreover, it was alleged that NSC members "intelligently pursue their own agendas" and that "peer pressures" (for example, from the IUCN and the WWF) and "power pressures" (from federal and provincial ministries) affect the committee's independence and objectivity.

3.5 Innovation and Replication

The work of the SGP is perhaps best characterized by its focus on promoting innovations. The SGP seems to have established a reputation for trusting new ideas and individuals, taking risks, and trying to apply new and cost-effective ways to address problems and opportunities (box 3.3). These sometimes encompass new institutional or technological approaches, and new and innovative partnerships. There are many examples of innovations being tested and leading to replication and scale-up.

SGP's partner, Environmental Protection Society, undertook the River Swat Conservation Project for the protection of the River Swat against pollution, encroachment, and illegal fishing practices and for conservation of its biodiversity. The project is innovative, because it was based on a self-help and participatory approach that created awareness and involved coordination at multiple levels; it has helped the government develop land-use planning and zoning in the area along the river.

Box 3.3: Small Is Beautiful: Success of the Fuel-Efficient Stoves

In 1994, at the age of 24, Maryam Bashir established the Escorts Foundation with the aim of improving health, education, and income generation in targeted villages around Changa Manga forest in Kasur District outside Lahore. Armed with a small grant from her businessman father, a small team of field workers, and a lot of passion, Bashir chose this poor rural area. The foundation secured a grant and began home schools in selected villages. Local handicrafts were encouraged, and the dead indigenous cottage industries for silk production and apiculture

were revived. With this small success behind it, the foundation was awarded an SGP grant for fuel-efficient cooking stoves.

When the project staff first started working in the field, they noticed that families spent many hours illegally pillaging the forest for firewood to use in their kitchens. Women spent long hours stooped over smoky stoves, developing lifelong respiratory and eye problems. The immense pressure for firewood damages the forest, while the resultant smoke contributes to GHG emissions, damaging the atmosphere and contributing to global climate change. New technology for cooking stoves had already been introduced by the Family Planning Association of Pakistan and had failed due to lack of proper training in making the stoves and the high cost of paying a local blacksmith to make the stove's steel chimney. With GEF funding, the foundation introduced a modified version with a cheaper mud chimney in 24 villages. The construction of the stove was demonstrated in every village, and local women were trained as *chullah* mechanics, who could then make the stoves for others in their villages for a nominal fee. Checkups were conducted every month to ensure their maintenance. These mud-built smokeless stoves used only half the fuel needed for a traditional one.

With the chimney modification and regular check-ups, the success rate for the smokeless stoves reached almost 80 percent in 24 villages. In addition, an SGP evaluation revealed other, unexpected benefits as well. Women are enjoying better relationships, because they are spending less time cooking, school attendance is higher, because the children are spendiing less time collecting firewood, and they appear cleaner. Average time spent by a family foraging for wood is cut by 70 percent. The overall consumption of fuelwood in the area is down by 50 percent.

A number of SGP projects have tested new technologies, techniques, and methodologies. Many have demonstrated a potential for and interest in scaling up. The SGP also formulated a project with the objective of identifying barriers to scaling up successful interventions and devising support mechanisms to help partners address management and technical concerns in scaling up success stories. The different interventions, which the SGP itself identifies as ripe for scaling up and ready for replication at wider scales, include civil society and government partnerships for managing protected areas, community game reserves, ecotourism, conservation and protection of medicinal plants, IPM, microhydels, fuel-efficient stoves, use of compressed natural gas and liquefied petroleum gas in two-stroke rickshaws, sewage treatment in coastal communities, industrial effluent treatment, composting toilets for rural areas, solid waste management, and irrigation water conservation. Examples of innovative approaches that the SGP is promoting include the first-ever project with the Kelasha people and the Koochis, an indigenous tribe.

The Sungi Development Foundation's project, Natural Resource Management for Conservation of Biodiversity, involved many innovations in the management and utilization of local natural resources through biodiversity conservation and the use of advocacy for achieving development outcomes (box 3.4). This project was able to accumulate a wealth of indigenous knowledge

regarding local crop varieties and cropping patterns, promotion of local species, establishment of demonstration plots of key indigenous varieties, community-based seed clubs, identification of local medicinal plants and herbs to encourage their use, and many other practices promoting organic farming and local alternatives to pesticides and chemical fertilizers. The project was unique in terms of its involvement of village-based organizations at all stages of the project cycle.

Box 3.4: The Story of the Sungi Development Foundation

In 1989, when Omar Asghar Khan (now deceased) decided to work with the people of his native city of Abbottabad, the Sungi Development Foundation came into being. From the beginning, the organization focused on social mobilization and advocacy, civic rights, enterprise development, and natural resource management.

Over the years, as the population grew, large-scale deforestation in Hazara Division took place; the heavy floods of 1992 consequently wreaked havoc in the area. Sungi, at that time a small advocacy research-oriented NGO, launched a community-based development initiative. Thereafter, it began its struggle against the timber merchants and campaigned for reforms in the forestry sector of the North West Frontier Province. The government subsequently put a complete ban on forest harvesting in the area. This ban is still in place and is attributed to Sungi's advocacy efforts.

In 1996 Sungi started its program of conservation of biodiversity through natural resource management with a grant funded by the SGP—the first organization to entrust Sungi with a substantial grant for its new work. By 1999 Sungi was working in 141 villages and had organized 267 village committees. The initiative's major components include infrastructure schemes for irrigation and soil conservation; training in forestry, livestock, agriculture, and land use; forestry projects to promote nurseries and saplings; and agricultural projects to improve seeds and new varieties of crops and vegetables. Demonstration plots of different field crops, vegetables, and fodders were established to create awareness for adoption and proper use. Sungi also helped establish a gene bank at the community level to conserve valuable seed varieties and form the basis of good, disease-resistant, high-yield varieties for the future. To further its advocacy work at the national level, Sungi began organizing "people's assemblies" to mobilize people to pursue an agenda of social change.

Sungi has succeeded in reaching out to the poor on a partnership basis with its home-grown approach to development. Its future is currently secured with a healthy portfolio of resources, many of which followed the SGP grant.

The SGP project on the Indus blind dolphin involved working with river communities; it represents the first example of a community-based ecotourism project that developed poor Pakistani communities' capacities for sustainable use of this endangered species and spread awareness at the national and international levels.

The SGP grantee Hirrak Development Center undertook an innovative project intended to use street theatre as a tool for education, community (farmer) mobilization, and awareness raising. The project was intended to promote biodiversity conservation through protection of polyculture-based agricultural ecosystems, organic farming practices, and awareness raising. It promoted and conserved traditional varieties of pest control based on centuries-old management techniques.

The Himalayan Wildlife Foundation's project for protecting the Deosai brown bear was innovative in terms of its approach toward protecting the bear and managing the Deosai National Park in collaboration with the Northern Areas Forest Department. Local communities have been engaged effectively in park management and research support, and training is provided to relevant institutions.

Other innovative projects include ones for biocomposting industrial waste (Shakar Ganj Sugar Mills), microhydel power stations for lighting tribal homes in federally administered tribal areas, and experimentation with biogas units in rural areas. For the latter, the SGP worked with the Pakistan Council for Renewable Energy Technology to develop a renewed and credible approach to biogas that overcame earlier problems; the council went on to install 200,000 units.

Energy Efficiency: Climate Change

The Promotion and Demonstration of Appropriate Building Designs for Urban Multan project is examining and auditing traditional and contemporary houses to assess the adaptation of building designs to the local climate and suggest new design proposals incorporating appropriate plan types, building materials, and structural and technical details for energy-efficient building design that is cost effective and culturally appropriate. The project is trying to achieve maximum possible demonstration value and document impacts and lessons. A few model houses have been built; two are now occupied, but it is as yet too early to comment on impacts. The high costs of most of the energy-efficient materials and inputs, such as insulation, are a key concern affecting adoption of such houses.

The success of the SGP-funded fuel-efficient stoves project conducted by the Escorts Foundation, based on a design rejected by an earlier program, has led to wide-scale replication of the fuel-efficient stoves by different SGP partners, covering more than 16 districts in Pakistan, including projects by the Rural Development Project, Caritas Pakistan, Punjab Rural Support Program, Rural Development Foundation, Shahbaz Welfare Foundation, and Shaheen Welfare Society. The Escorts Foundation received the Ashden Award for Sustainable Energy in 2004 for the GEF SGP project; this included a cash award of £30,000.

The BACIP model of energy-efficient housing products and technologies is being adapted and implemented in Sindh. Other projects that have potential for further replication and scaling up include the Green Circle Organization's organic farming initiative and the World Pheasants Association's conservation interventions.

Other Programs Influenced by the SGP

The Promote Tropical Forestry Program funded by the European Union has been mentored and guided by the SGP. The program has based its social mobilization component on the grassroots work done by the SGP and notes that the "SGP has pioneered and established a sound base." The program has funded 29 projects and shares common NSC members with the SGP. Six grantee NGOs of the program were SGP partners, and the SGP has helped the program develop its methodology for institutional support, knowledge management, and partner capacity building.

The Small Action Facility of Intercooperation, a Swiss international organization funded by the Swiss Development Corporation, has also been influenced by the SGP model. The Small Action Facility is a discretionary fund within larger ongoing Intercooperation programs and is mostly focused on the promotion of horticultural activities. The organization notes that the "SGP has been instrumental in NGOs' capacity building, in catalyzing medium and larger scale projects." Intercooperation and the SGP share partners in common; in terms of focal areas, they overlap in energy efficiency, environmental education, climate change, and sustainable land use.

In addition, the Pakistan SGP has had effects on other GEF SGPs around the world. For example, NSC members from Iran, Malaysia, and India have visited to see the Pakistan SGP model; and the Pakistan SGP national coordinator led SGP program inception missions to Iran and Ethiopia.

3.6 Sustainability

The overall growth-driven economic strategy pursued by Pakistan does not include the environment (or any GEF focal areas) among its top priorities. A distinct lack of political will and high-level commitment to environmental issues has been well documented.

At a broad (national) level, the key risks facing the SGP derive primarily from Pakistan's high poverty levels (especially in rural areas), high population growth rate, rapid urbanization and industrialization, escalating prices and increase in market value of resources, deteriorating law and order situation, and breakdown in governance structures. Other factors affecting program- and project-level sustainability include the following:

- Pressure on the program to meet disbursement targets, and the time and cost investment in guiding and mentoring existing and potential grantees
- The obligation of the SGP to support creativity, initiative, and experimentation, which by definition will not be sustainable in all cases
- The adverse socioeconomic situation in SGP-targeted communities, combined with the fact that many of the GEF priorities and focal areas are not considered key community priorities
- The SGP mandate to reach marginal populations and isolated communities and the inherent limitations of small grants in such communities

- Limited options for resource mobilization for GEF focal areas, which inhibits the sustainability of core interventions
- The design of the SGP, which precludes involvement and ownership by provincial and/or local governments at early stages
- Lack of technical competencies in different areas due to low budgets
- Limited success in advocacy of highly successful initiatives, such as the fuel-efficient stoves, community-based water treatment technologies, and microhydel power generation, also due to low budgets
- The limited SGP staff, which constrains capacity to respond to partners' needs, particularly demands for capacity enhancement, linkage development, and access to external resources—key factors influencing project-level sustainability

At the project level, the problems are many and diverse. They relate mostly to lack of resources, policy and legislative gaps or loopholes, lack of access to technical institutions and experts, human-induced threats to natural resources, local power elite structures that control and exploit natural resources, limited capacity and/or commitment of concerned government line departments, widespread poverty and lack of livelihood opportunities, and low awareness levels regarding the (local or global) environment. Some of the challenges enumerated by SGP partners include internal community differences and conflicts, limited scope of the project in terms of community needs, social and cultural constraints in accessing female community members, and incompatibility of the GEF mandate with larger socioeconomic issues faced by the communities.

Overall Risks (Sustainability) Rating of SGP Sample Projects

Table 3.4 summarizes the risks to sustainability of the 12 projects reviewed.

Table 3.4: Risk to Project Results Ratings for Sampled Projects

Rating	Number of projects	Percentage of projects
Likely	1	8
Moderately likely	4	33
Moderately unlikely	1	8
Unlikely	5	42
NA	1	8
Total	12	100

Note: NA = not available.

The SGP recognizes potential risks to the sustainability of project results and has tried to address these. Earlier, the submission of a project completion report would signify the closing of the project and its partnership with the SGP. But efforts were made to invest in documentation of experiences, dissemination of information through experience-sharing workshops, and assisting projects in accessing other funding support. The 2004 Biennial Program Review emphasized the

need for enhancing program sustainability by ensuring environmental (technical assistance to be offered at the design stage), financial (emphasizing projects that combine environment with economic incentives), and institutional sustainability (assessing organizational capacities) of interventions. It recognizes that the strategy should make provisions for extending management and technical support to CBOs and NGOs and accessing technical expertise from the CPMT.

Communications Strategy

The 2004 Biennial Program Review also mentions the need for a communication strategy as part of the efforts to ensure program visibility and sustainability. A communications strategy for the SGP was first developed in 1999, and the current CPS (2006–09) proposes further refinement of this to develop a well-targeted, focused communications strategy. Experience-sharing workshops have been held in the past as part of the communications strategy. These have had had modest success in identifying "champions" and partnerships for advocating the SGP cause at higher levels and enhancing program sustainability.

Knowledge Management for the Purposes of Advocacy

This is another area in which the SGP has devoted considerable effort. Attention has been given to ensuring wide media coverage through interviews, documentaries, television and radio broadcasts, and other awareness-raising activities. Having journalists on the NSC has helped in this regard. Some efforts were also made to initiate project-level media strategies. Communications and outreach activities have tried to serve the twin objectives of enhancing program visibility and disseminating useful experiences.

The SGP has endeavored to define "sustainability" for its program. In 2003 the SGP was asked to "plan its program to 2015 or 2020, with no resource constraints"—guidance that was subsequently contradicted by later signals received from the GEF. The current CPS does not contain any explicit statements or plans in terms of its sustainability, but the SGP has already entered into a dialogue with a number of private sector (mostly oil and gas) companies to mobilize non-GEF resources; these companies include British Petroleum, OMV, Nike, and the *Friday Times*. British Petroleum has already entered into a one-year partnership with the SGP. Any future, long-term commitment made by the company will be enacted after it has assessed the outcome of this trial project in Badin and Thatta. It was noted that the SGP partnership offers British Petroleum a credible, effective, and professional partnership at the national level (mainly because of the SGP association with UNDP), as well as the vast community outreach that the SGP enjoys.

One of the key strengths for the SGP in terms of its new geographic focus on the Indus Delta is that it already has a strong partnership base in the Sindh region. Some of these partners are from earlier SGP phases; a few are new partners with which the program proposes to work with in the future. Among these are the award-winning Aga Khan Planning and Building Services, which is replicating the BACIP model in Thatta and Badin districts, as well as implementing various projects on water and sanitation and fuel-efficient technologies. Another is the Thardeep Rural Support Program, which is currently conducting an integrated and highly innovative natural

resource management program in the Kuch desert. WWF is another (potentially long-term) partner, which is implementing the Indus for All program. Shirkatgah, a renowned women-focused national NGO, is working with the SGP on a women-focused mangrove plantation and management project. Another partner is doing a highly innovative project to introduce new crops in Sindh, which includes testing drought-resistant varieties and crops suitable for saline conditions.

The current SGP strategy thus features a plethora of good partners and access to external resources and to their broad networks, such as those of WWF and the Aga Khan Foundation. These will help the program access the resources of international partners as well as those of district governments (for example, Thatta and Badin), which have significant untapped resources.

Many of the SGP partners include individuals who started out with little except an idea or vision. The SGP trusted these individuals and believed in the potential they offered (box 3.5). Many were successful not just in the projects the SGP has financed, but also in creating institutions, influencing practices and behaviors, accessing external resources and services, and laying down the foundations of long-term sustainable development.

Almost all of these partners are involved in research and development of new products and technologies, innovation diffusion, mass replication of tested fuel-efficient technologies, institutional capacity building, and advocacy. Collectively, these partner organizations are a key strength for the SGP in implementing its new strategy; they enhance the program's credibility and sustainability.

Box 3.5: Individuals Create Institutions: The Soan Valley Development Program

Nestled in the heart of the Salt Range in Punjab lies the Soan Valley—a closed basin surrounded by scrub forest where rainwater collects in three interdependent brackish lakes. These saltwater lakes are important to international conservation, as they support the only wintering flock of the endangered white-headed duck in Pakistan, as well as being home to other migratory birds from Siberia. Cutting down the forest cover and surrounding vegetation for fuelwood has affected the watershed area. Also, a lack of rains has caused the lakes and groundwater to begin drying up. The dug wells in the villages are the only source of fresh water in the region, which is primarily an agrarian community. This is the land where Gulbaz Afaqi grew up—and to which he returned years later, inspired by Akhtar Hameed Khan's concept of grassroots development, to found the community-based Soan Valley Development Program.

In 1996 Afaqi established a microcredit program for local farmers, most of whom grow off-season vegetables. At 3,000 feet above sea level, the valley is cooler and can sustain off-season crops, which sell for a higher profit in the big cities. Community incomes increased, but the initiative resulted in increased exploitation of underground water. After conducting extensive surveys, Afaqi learned that the water level is quickly lowering. In 1997, with funding from the GEF SGP, the program started an on-farm water management project, giving small loans to farmers to construct proper water channels or lay underground PVC pipes to save water lost through evaporation during conveyance (most farmers use flood irrigation, which loses 30 percent of its water). From 1997 to 1998, around 40 farmers constructed brick-lined water courses or laid down PVC pipes to convey water directly to their fields.

This simple yet effective concept by the Soan Valley Development Program not only helped save water, but also won the trust of local farmers. The program has initiated early steps toward encouraging organic farming and promoting the use of farmyard and green manure and compost. The biggest challenge is to get the farmers to work together to protect their much-overused forests on the hills surrounding the valley. However, Afaqi is optimistic; his vision for Soan Valley is of a place where ecofriendly practices conserve not just soil and water, but also the traditional way of life and the wildlife. The GEF SGP has subsequently supported many other projects in the valley.

4 Efficiency

4.1 Efficiency of SGP Country Administrative Structure

This chapter presents an assessment of the efficiency of the SGP country administrative structure and of the factors and processes that affect SGP efficiency. It also summarizes the results of project-level efficiency assessments for the 12 projects visited by the evaluation.

The assessment of SGP efficiency presented here considers various aspects such as whether the project was implemented as anticipated, the timeliness of projects, and the achievement and quality of outputs. Given the lack of detailed program and project data, this analysis relies on a subjective assessment based on a number of factors that influence efficiency and looks at the results that have been achieved and choices that have been made. It includes factors such as project revisions or implementation delays and/or redesigns, level of benefits compared with expectations, utilization rates for project facilities and services, and whether services and facilities meet good practice standards.

Factors Affecting Efficiency

The program's evolution over the years, its search for new and reliable partners, its sharpening of focus on global GEF priorities, and its incorporation of M&E and other GEF guidelines have all had a positive impact on program efficiency. The SGP's early experimentation with ideas and partners resulted in a large and scattered program and led to mistakes, time delays, cost overruns, and so on. Although specific data are lacking, it was reported that the program had high overheads in the early years, which was a direct outcome of its spreading itself too thin, with many small projects and initiatives, often in remote and far-flung areas.

The wide geographical spread of the SGP portfolio and promotion of demonstrations, along with the need to develop community-level capacities, all proved to be demanding in terms of time and money. Additional pressures came from the need to meet disbursement targets (finding and funding new partners), along with conducting the coaching and mentoring the program was expected to provide. The thrust of previous strategies (1999, 2000, and 2004) was toward extending coverage to new NGOs and CBOs. The lack of a geographic or thematic focus increased management costs and M&E liabilities.

An important point is that the SGP core mandate or focus over the years has been to pilot innovative approaches: innovation and piloting are always costlier than routine programs; however, considerable evidence exists that innovating through pilots and scaling up through partnerships ultimately make an effective and efficient program.

Changes in the program's strategic thrusts have affected its efficiency in a positive manner. The current strategy (CPS 2006–09) responds to earlier pressures and allows for long-term capacity development among core partners in a focus region. This geographic focus improves future efficiency in terms of giving the SGP a smaller project area, an opportunity for creating economies of scale, a good partner base, and cofinancing arrangements. The strategy depends on

core support from the SGP's own resources and continuation of support from British Petroleum and/or other partners.

In terms of administering the SGP, elements that appear to affect efficiency in a positive way include optimal utilization of resources, including staff. The SGP has maintained a "lean and mean" staff structure, which makes it cost efficient. In this regard, the Third Independent Evaluation of the GEF SGP did make a particular reference to the high level of staff "burn out" within the SGP. For almost 13 years until early 2005, the Pakistan SGP shared the key positions of national coordinator and M&E specialist with the Local Initiative Facility for Urban Environment program. Salaries had been shared between the two programs; this cost-sharing arrangement enabled the SGP to recruit a program assistant.

As noted earlier, the SGP is widely considered in Pakistan to be a quick and efficient mechanism for grant financing, compared with other larger projects and programs. Its current overhead (from April to November 2006) is reported at 8 percent of total disbursement ($0.8 million), which is among the lowest proportions of global SGPs. Given the fluid and dynamic situation in which the Pakistan SGP has evolved, it has done well in learning lessons, changing strategic direction, and building in safeguards that make the program effective in many ways (as was discussed in chapter 3).

Project-Level Efficiency

The selection of partners has affected efficiency at the project level. Initial failures or trials in attracting the right kind of partner have had a negative impact; this gradually improved as the SGP started simple capacity assessment procedures. The SGP required its grant proponents (a few intermediary NGOs and mostly small NGOs and CBOs) to provide self-assessments as part of their project proposals, thus enabling it to make a rapid organizational assessment. But this requirement was not applied consistently or coherently, with the result that the SGP was again faced with the challenge of weak project proposals and the necessity of devoting extensive time and energy to the development of sound proposals. Two planning grants were awarded to help address this issue; a role was proposed for the Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy, but this did not materialize. The three main reasons for project planning and implementation delays noted by the SGP are revisions in project proposals, introduction of the new ATLAS payroll system, and delays in SGP project monitoring.

Efficiency Ratings of Sample Projects

Of the 12 projects visited by the evaluation, two (17 percent) were rated highly satisfactory: the Fuel-Efficient Stove Project (implemented by the Shahbaz Development Foundation) and Fuel-Efficient Stoves Project (implemented by the Rural Development Project). Five projects (42 percent) were rated as satisfactory: Environmental Education for Youth through Nature Study Camps in Protected Areas, Conservation of Blind Indus Dolphin through Ecotourism at Taunsa Barrage, Natural Resource Management for Conservation of Biodiversity, Establishment of Nursery for Social Forestry, and Cotton Plus and Environment. Three projects (25 percent) were rated as moderately satisfactory: Khura Forest Training and Development Centre, Community

Fire Brigade in Soan Sakesar Valley, and Environmental Protection with Increase in Income. Two projects were rated as moderately unsatisfactory: Ecosystem Management through Community Participation, and Promotion and Demonstration of Appropriate Building Designs for Urban Multan (table 4.1).

Table 4.1: Efficiency Ratings of Sample Projects

Rating	Number of projects	Percentage of projects
Highly satisfactory	2	17
Satisfactory	5	42
Moderately satisfactory	3	25
Moderately unsatisfactory	2	17
Unsatisfactory	0	-
Highly unsatisfactory	0	-
Total	12	100

Resource Mobilization

The Pakistan SGP believes that its resource mobilization suffered from mixed messages received from the GEF's CPMT regarding the likelihood and likely scale of future support for the program. The 2004 Biennial Program Review claims to have raised resources amounting to $232,620 in cash and $164,672 in kind during the last two years of operational phase 2 covering March 2002–February 2004, but notes that in-kind contributions from project partners were not clear. For a longer period, the SGP has tried to assist individual partners in resource mobilization activities and in sharing information on possible avenues of support with them. For example, the Hashar and Eco-Conservation Initiatives project proposals were developed with the participation of external experts and potential donors in order to cater to the resource mobilization concerns raised by the CPS 1999.

The current focus is on mobilizing private sector funding regardless of whether it is for "GEF-able" interventions and to cover administrative and management costs. The SGP's success in leveraging additional non-GEF resources augurs well for the program's future. The SGP has mobilized resources of $2 million, which will fully cover its administrative costs. The GOP has reportedly agreed to contribute Resource Allocation Framework funds amounting to $1.4 million for the next SGP phase. The district (local) government of Badin has also agreed to mobilize citizen community board funds for SGP models, but it is not yet clear how much these funds will total.

4.2 Cost Effectiveness of SGP Compared with Similar Country Approaches or Funds

The evaluation was unable to meet with or find out about other strictly comparable (in terms of grant size, focus area, and financing mechanisms) programs or approaches of non-GEF small grant delivery services that seek to reach poor and marginalized populations, NGOs, and CBOs. It also found that no GEF MSPs and FSPs have similar small grant components in Pakistan.

The Promote Tropical Forestry program funded by the European Union and administered by UNDP was the most comparable initiative to the SGP in the area. This program was reportedly developed along the lines of the SGP because of its perceived efficiency, but it differs from the SGP in many ways. Its average grant size is much larger, providing up to €150,000 to NGOs and CBOs to undertake projects intended to support and promote community forestry. Program grants fund up to a maximum of 80 percent of total project cost; the remaining 20 percent is provided either in cash or in kind by the beneficiaries. Twenty-nine projects have been funded to date.

The program reported that approximately 9 percent of its annual $1.2 million budget is "operational," which covers travel costs, salaries, and NSC meetings; another 10 percent covers the UNDP fee (3 percent), currency fluctuation reserve (5 percent), and M&E (2 percent). The balance (81 percent) is the grant budget. The SGP's reported current overhead of 8 percent of total disbursement ($0.8 million) makes it appear to be a relatively efficient program by comparison.

5 Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Entry Point and Win-Win Outcomes: A Design Issue

To have an impact on the lives of the poor and marginalized, the vulnerabilities of the poor need to be addressed and people need to be able to improve their quality of life, incomes, assets, and social conditions. Although the SGP recognizes that the GEF focal areas alone are not intended to achieve these outcomes, it is also true that in most, if not all, cases, the demand for and ownership of GEF SGP outcomes will occur only if these are accompanied by tangible gains valued by the community.

Given the low socioeconomic indicators in almost all SGP-targeted communities and the fact that GEF priorities are very seldom priorities for the SGP communities, it is clear that the SGP approach has to be more flexible and accommodating to achieve win-win outcomes. The SGP experience shows that the program's best practices invariably create real income-generating or cost-saving opportunities. This implies that SGP projects, most of which involve strong community mobilization, may have to be more explicit in promoting and facilitating sustainable livelihoods and income generation. Concurrently, the SGP needs to do more to sensitize grantees on global environmental issues and how their local issues link with GEF global concerns.

5.2 Sharing Responsibility for Meeting Baseline Conditions

As the GEF focal areas are typically not high priorities for poor Pakistani communities, it is important for the SGP to be seen as sharing responsibility for meeting these communities' unmet basic needs, as is encouraged in global GEF SGP guidelines. Unless this responsibility is shared and arrangements made for addressing non-GEF priorities, it is unrealistic to expect that an SGP grant can lead to sustainable community initiatives relevant to the GEF. Communities need to be provided with viable alternatives, facilitated directly or indirectly by the SGP; this is the only way they will be able to devote the kind of resources and commitment needed to sustain environmentally sound practices, and the kinds of attitudinal and behavioral changes needed to affect GEF focal areas.

5.3 Defining Sustainability: Long-Term Support

The Pakistan SGP has targeted several important areas of concern, learned valuable lessons, and built individual and community capacities at various levels, but it needs a longer-term effort to build on its early successes. Such longer-term and rigorous efforts will enhance government ownership of results and that of key partners, as well as ensure wide-scale replication, ownership, and sustainability of the good models developed to date. Similarly, community institutions offer tremendous potential and need further nurturing and support if they are to contribute to achieving the long-term objectives of the program.

SGP support to partners takes place in a highly politicized and uncertain environment. Grantees clearly struggle with a variety of issues related to institutional, financial, and technical requirements. The SGP needs to continue building ownership, consolidating gains, and defining measures to promote sustainability among partner organizations (in addition to those in the Indus

Delta) that have the potential to bring about meaningful long-term change based on successful implementation of short-term SGP projects.

5.4 GOP Commitment and Action in Support of SGP

The relevant government departments that are already working with or that are expected to contribute to GEF SGP objectives are seriously constrained in terms of their financial and human resources. The SGP intentionally does not involve government in the planning stage. But many projects have demonstrated their value and have successful lobbied with the government. The program clearly stands to benefit from enhanced interaction and coordination with key government stakeholders, as well as increasing linkages and consultations with the designated GEF operational focal points.

5.6 Mainstreaming of Gender

Most, if not all, projects recognize that gender is an important issue; however, most of the projects visited were not aware of any guidelines for incorporating gender concerns in project design, and few had received any gender sensitization training. Many also treated gender issues more or less of concern only regarding women. Some projects have relied only on their own cultural knowledge and customs to take gender issues into account.

The SGP has not had the resources to provide support to projects specifically for purposes of gender mainstreaming. Lack of such capacities does not appear to have had a bearing on grantee selection, although the Biennial Program Review notes that priority will be given to projects with a multisector approach and gender considerations. Some of the projects do implement separate interventions for women and report accordingly on a gender basis; however, there is almost no systematic gender-based reporting on results.

Because the SGP sees gender as a crosscutting issue in all its projects and a focus on marginalized people is one of the program's overall objectives, women-specific project activities have been supported. But integration of gender concerns is not occurring. Project design and implementation needs to be made more gender sensitive. The SGP should improve the focus on women, because their role in environmental management and the impact of environmental degradation on them are well known. Some important prerequisites for mainstreaming are gender-disaggregated data; gender-specific objectives, outcomes, outputs, and activities; as well as impact indicators. Consideration of the gender dimensions of poverty should also be introduced in SGP project planning, implementation, and M&E.

5.7 Redefining the Role of the NSC

The NSC is a high-level steering committee and is expected to provide a substantive contribution to and oversight of the program. As reflected in its terms of reference, the committee is currently expected to carry out a range of functions—essentially project cycle management functions—such as program development and design, strategy formulation, project review and selection, revision, and M&E. However, this has not been possible in practice.

The SGP needs to define the role of the NSC more precisely; its main functions can be summed up as determining if the SGP is doing the right thing and if it is doing it correctly. Realistically, this means that the role of the NSC should be to serve as a filter for project proposals, ensuring quality at project entry. This includes reviewing, checking, and improving quality of project proposals in terms of their relevance to national and GEF priorities.

5.8 Increasing Coordination with Other Actors

The SGP clearly has a comfortable relationship with UNDP; UNDP Pakistan is vocal about the many contributions of the SGP and how it is the "visible grassroots face of UNDP." However, it is not fully clear how this relationship benefits the SGP. Although the SGP does benefit from UNDP's credibility and visibility in the country, it may also compete with the SGP for mobilizing resources. With the exception of the Local Initiative Facility for Urban Environment and Promote Tropical Forestry initiatives, a lack of synergy seems to exist between the SGP and core UNDP programs (governance, poverty, and sustainable livelihoods). This is particularly true of new UNDP initiatives emerging under National Environmental Action Plan Support Program II. The SGP needs to explore the benefits that can be accrued from its affiliation with UNDP, such as information exchanges, cross learning, and resource mobilization.

Untapped potential also exists for the Pakistan SGP to collaborate with, benefit from, and realize synergies with other donors, especially multilateral organizations and large NGOs and other agencies. In particular, the SGP could benefit from greater collaboration with the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and IUCN. A long-term initiative that offers great potential to the SGP is the Indus for All Program: An Action Program for the Indus Ecoregion in Sindh. This ecoregion covers at least 18 districts, including the SGP focus districts of Thatta and Badin. The SGP can benefit in many ways by staking out a clear role for itself within this initiative, particularly in community-based natural resource management, institutional capacity development, and awareness building for sustainable environmental management.

The SGP needs to strengthen its ties with the World Bank in Pakistan as it reorients its focus on the Indus Delta region. The Bank, as part of its response to the repercussions of the Left Bank Outfall Drain, is in the process of initiating a large program in the Sindh coastal belt; one component of this deals with community-level response. Approximately 2,840 villages in Thatta, Badin, Tharparkar, and Karachi West are targeted under this program; and a Sindh Coastal Area Development Network has been formed, which includes the World Bank, the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund, various NGOs, and several other partners. This is an opportunity for the SGP (as identified by the World Bank and mentioned in the CPS 2006–09), and the SGP needs to explore how it can bring added value through collaboration with this initiative in areas such as networking, resource sharing, and capacity building of delta organizations.

The following mechanisms for coordination with other actors should be considered:

- Relevant project partners should hold quarterly coordination meetings.

- The partners can share their work plans with each other and contact each other as often as necessary before finalizing or embarking on new activities.

- The SGP should establish and share clear project selection criteria, a needs assessment methodology for new partners, and standard terms of partnership defining roles and responsibilities.

5.9 Consolidating Impact: Geographic Focus a Good Strategic Move

The geographic focus under the current CPS is a good move, for reasons mentioned in this report. A momentum seems to be building in the selected districts and beyond, and the SGP will hopefully be in a position to select and nurture partnerships, forge linkages, consolidate impact, and have a long-term institutional network of organizations working for common objectives. The new geographic focus is seen not only as a positive but an essential step toward consolidation and replication for demonstrating impact and for contributing to achievement of global environmental benefits.

Previous SGP strategies suggested that adopting specific geographic or thematic focuses would be too restrictive and that, in terms of the specific mandated areas of the GEF, channeling all resources into one region would have repercussions in terms of capacity building and absorptive capacities. It remains to be seen how the clear geographic focus of the current strategy will address these issues.

The SGP will need to exercise caution in implementing its current CPS. For instance, it will have to assess the assumptions made in the strategy and their implications for sustainability and replicability, particularly regarding soliciting government support. It must determine time lines for its geographic focus, given that SGP projects addressing the GEF focal areas often involve social processes, such as in biodiversity conservation, that require concerted efforts during longer time spans. In addition, it must maintain a balance between piloting and testing of innovations, on the one hand, and the need for accelerating impact through speedy adoption and/or replication, on the other.

5.10 Staffing Constraints

The multitasked national coordinator is involved in partner identification and monitoring, maintaining a pipeline, and resource mobilization. He has obviously been overburdened, and this has diluted strategic thinking.

The SGP needs to address the genuine problems relating to staff capacity and size. The importance of a monitoring officer cannot be overstated, and this position needs to be filled. This officer should receive appropriate training in project management, data collection and analysis, gender and poverty analysis, and report writing.

5.11 Narrowing the Menu of Interventions

Despite the tremendous achievements of many SGP projects, it appears that some of a relatively modest size and one to three years' duration have attempted to address too many areas with broad, ambitious objectives and targets. The spread and expansion of the project portfolio are also indicative of this tendency. Projects are spread across a vast area from one end of Pakistan to the other, as demonstrated by the sample projects visited.

In some cases, projects may have taken on more than they can realistically be expected to manage efficiently and effectively. Some projects' activities range from community mobilization and awareness building to capacity building to conservation activities and management plans and strategies. Such large numbers of activities in small projects tend to dilute, rather than enhance, impacts on GEF focal areas and priorities. Although ensuring relevance and consistency of design with the GEF SGP guidelines is important, project goals, purposes, objectives, and outcomes need to be stated in more explicit, attainable, and measurable formats. There is a need to focus on a few innovations that are affordable and to improve their adoption rates and/or replication and scale-up as well as to define a strategy (at the design stage) on how this will be achieved. For example, demonstration of energy-efficient housing units is a first essential step, but adoption will remain low unless the technology is made affordable.

The idea should be to determine where and how the SGP could best add value in the niche that it has created so far in order to deepen its focus and the quality of its models and interventions. Overly ambitious approaches will inevitably lead to a loss of focus and credibility—which the SGP should not risk. Focusing the program on niche areas (or selected types of interventions) will also improve effectiveness and sustainability.

5.12 Policy Influence: How Best Can the SGP Do This?

Small projects are generally not considered the best means for having any significant influence on policy dialogue and/or formulation. Notwithstanding, some SGP projects have had successes in this regard. Others have had limited results due to policy limitations and/or gaps and weaknesses. The SGP-supported initiative Environmental Protection with Increase in Income is an example of a project that was constrained due to policy and legislative loopholes. Increased effort in engaging in policy dialogue could be beneficial for the SGP as well as for its projects. However, for now, the most important consideration is to consolidate the achievements made so far and ensure their sustainability.

The SGP has a communication strategy, but this is being redesigned. So far, publications and media coverage are two outcomes of this strategy. The *GEF Review of Small Grants Programme Documents: Final Report* (Imbach and Imbach 2006, p. 13) states that there appears to be "a problem about how to collect, organize, and make sense of the experiences and lessons from small interventions and take them to higher levels of abstraction, making them useful for SGP and GEF actions and other policy." This holds true for the Pakistan SGP as well. The future communication strategy needs to address issues such as inter- and intra-agency coordination and linkage development. It also needs to identify what operational and analytical information and

knowledge the SGP has generated in the past 13 years and how this can best be used to add value to policy debate, decision-making, and advocacy efforts at a national level.

5.13 Introducing a Poverty Focus

Specific poverty-related objectives should be included in the design of SGP projects to reflect the program's objective of reaching and having an impact on the poor and the vulnerable. Poverty profiling in the target area and household profiles can help in better measuring results and impacts on the vulnerable. The inclusion of vulnerability analysis and poverty-specific objectives can help SGP interventions reach identifiable groups of the vulnerable and poor.

5.14 Strengthening Monitoring

The *GEF Review of Small Grants Programme Documents: Final Report* (Imbach and Imbach 2006) states that the "SGP seems not to have quantitative indicators, clearly defined targets (global and national) on impacts and results on geographic and/or thematic areas." This holds true for the Pakistan SGP. Monitoring efforts can always be improved to address these issues, and the Pakistan SGP can benefit by doing the same.

Monitoring is an area in which improved policies and/or procedures should be introduced as a matter of priority, especially with reference to a system for continuous monitoring, gender-differentiated reporting and monitoring, and poverty- and vulnerability-based monitoring. Indicators for assessing project impacts across different domains, scaling-up potential, and organizational capacities are also important. Given the specificity of the GEF focal areas and measurement of impact, there is immense value in investing time and resources in constructing and updating baseline and endline data.

5.15 CPMT Support

As recommended by the Third Independent Evaluation of the GEF SGP, the Pakistan SGP requires greater support from the CPMT, including technical assistance to the country program for interpreting and incorporating GEF global guidelines, achieving greater fit and consistency with GEF focal area priorities, as well as streamlining operational procedures in line with GEF guidelines pertaining to M&E, resource mobilization, and so on. Financial assistance from the CPMT is urgently needed, at the very least for enhancing country program staff and capacity building.

5.16 Implementing the 2004 Biennial Program Review

The evaluation reiterates the recommendations of the SGP's 2004 Biennial Program Review concerning the need for providing timely feedback from the SGP to grantees on project implementation, M&E, and results; increasing the NSC role in project design and ensuring relevance; developing a targeted resource mobilization strategy; mainstreaming gender in SGP projects; developing information and education material for SGP grantees; developing clear, simple guidelines for grantees on documentation of project results and impacts; employing grantee assessment procedures (institutional capacities); and helping grantees formulate project-specific M&E tools.

Annex A:
List of Reviewed Documents

GEF SGP–Related Documents

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IUCN (World Conservation Union), www.iucn.pk

Small Grants Programme, www.sgp.net.pk

United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, www.biodiv.org

Annex B:
List of Projects Visited

Project number	Project name	Location and date of visit	Recipient name
PAK/00/15	Khura Forest Training and Development Centre	Khushab (Soan Sakesar Valley), Punjab; April 26, 2007	Khura Welfare Society
PAK/01/31	Fuel-Efficient Stove Project	Sakrand, District Nawabshah, Sindh; April 10, 2007	Shahbaz Development Foundation
PAK/95/34	Natural Resource Management for Conservation of Biodiversity	Abbottabad, North West Frontier Province; April 5, 2007	Sungi Development Foundation
PAK/97/12	Establishment of Nursery for Social Forestry	Faisalabad April 19, 2007	Anjuman Samaji Behbood
PAK/99/05	Conservation of Blind Indus Dolphin through Ecotourism at Taunsa Barrage	Taunsa and Islamabad (Project visited at the Islamabad office) April 12, 2007	Adventure Foundation Pakistan
PAK/01/17	Environmental Protection with Increase in Income	Rawalpindi; April 3, 2007	Alfalah Development Organization
PAK/01/21	Fuel-Efficient Stoves Project	Haripur, North West Frontier Province; April 4, 2007	Rural Development Project
PAK/03/46	Ecosystem Management through Community Participation	Dera Ismail Khan, North West Frontier Province (project not visited)	Organization for Rural Development and Research
PAK/04/62	Cotton Plus and Environment	Islamabad April 12, 2007	Jhoak Development Foundation
PAK/04/64	Promotion and Demonstration of Appropriate Building Designs for Urban Multan	Multan, Punjab; April 17, 2007	Sh. Abdul Malik Trust
PAK/05/08	Environmental Education for Youth through Nature Study Camps in Protected Areas	Islamabad; April 12, 2007	Adventure Foundation Pakistan
PAK/01/30	Community Fire Brigade in Soan Sakesar Valley	Khushab (Soan Sakesar Valley), Punjab; April 26, 2007	Ogali Welfare and Development Society