Theme 1: Implementation of the GEF Public Involvement Policy

All GEF projects have to ensure adequate information dissemination, consultation and stakeholder participation. These three elements are the pillars of the *Public Involvement in GEF-Financed Projects Policy*.

The Public Involvement Policy (PIP), adopted in 1996, responds to one of the GEF's ten operational principles, which states that 'GEF projects shall provide for full consultation with, and participation as appropriate, of the beneficiaries and affected groups of people[1]'.

By informing, consulting and making stakeholders participate in all stages of a project, partnerships are generated. Thus, the PIP is the cornerstone for partnership building in GEF projects.

All full sized and medium sized project documents include a specific section to describe the Stakeholder Involvement Plan. In this section, a detailed description of the consultations held to identify partners, the stakeholders to be engaged in project implementation, as well as their roles and responsibilities, has to be included.

Most partnerships with CSOs have been initiated through the effective implementation of the PIP. However, additional opportunities for partnering with CSOs may be missed in some projects.

As part of the Fifth Overall Performance Study (OPS5), a review on Civil Society Organizations Engagement was conducted[2]. The revision included the PIP, and concluded that although the policy's call for the documentation of CSO engagement in every project is very clear, the PIP is not systematically implemented. The evaluation recommended that guidelines for the implementation of the PIP should be developed, embracing the current understanding of stakeholder relationships and their respective added value.

The Policy Recommendations for GEF-6 are based on six key areas targeted towards delivering higher impacts in an effective and efficient manner for the GEF as a whole. One of these areas is *Strengthening Country and Civil Society Engagement*. Efforts will be focused on formulating public involvement guidelines for information of the GEF Council. An action plan and clear guidance for the effective implementation and monitoring of the PIP will also be prepared.

The GEF-CSO Network has undertaken an extensive consultation among its CSO members, aimed at identifying opportunities, gaps and recommendations for enhancing CSO engagement in GEF projects, through the effective implementation of the PIP. The recommendations by the GEF-CSO Network will serve as input for the GEF Secretariat in the formulation of the Guidelines for the Implementation of the PIP, to be undertaken in GEF-6.

The following examples illustrate projects which have effectively implemented the PIP, and successfully engaged CSOs at its various stages, making them partners in its implementation.

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[1] GEF Operational Strategy (1995)
[2] OPS5 (2013) Technical Document on CSO Engagement:
http://www.thegef.org/gef/sites/thegef.org/files/EO/TD14_CSO%20Engagement.pdf

Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use for Improved Human Nutrition and Well-being	
Countries	Brazil, Kenya, Sri Lanka, Turkey (Global)
Focal Area	Biodiversity
Project type	FSP
Allocation	$5,777,620 (GEF), $8,410,000 (cofinancing)
GEF Agency	United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO)
Executing partner	Bioversity International
Type of partner	International Research Organization
Approval	November, 2011
Status	Under implementation

Project Overview

Agricultural biodiversity supports human nutrition. High-input industrial agriculture, long-distance transport and unsuitable land use practices have hindered the sustainable utilization of biodiversity with high nutritional potential and have caused it to be relegated to a minor role in agriculture. This has resulted in a considerable disconnect between diet and local food sources, increasing the incidence of diet-related nutrition and health problems, such as critical micronutrient deficiencies. To contribute to the improvement of global knowledge of biodiversity for food and nutrition, Bioversity International is implementing this project to strengthen the conservation and sustainable management of agricultural biodiversity. Despite being among some of the world's most mega-diverse countries, the use of biodiversity with high nutritional potential is scarcely explored, appreciated or conserved in Brazil, Kenya, Sri Lanka and Turkey. Thus, this project aims at strengthening the conservation and sustainable management of agricultural biodiversity in these four countries through mainstreaming into national and global nutrition, food and livelihood security strategies and programs, by:

1. Integrating the knowledge base on Biodiversity for Food and Nutrition to build support for biodiversity conservation and enhanced well-being in relevant sectors. Activities are focused on developing multi-stakeholders assessments of nutritional value of agricultural biodiversity and associated traditional knowledge, creating databases on nutritional properties of agricultural biodiversity and associated traditional knowledge in selected sites, and testing biodiversity indicators for food composition and consumption.
2. Enhancing policy and regulatory frameworks to support the mainstreaming of biodiversity conservation and sustainable use across sectors. The disconnect between the biodiversity, agriculture, health and education sectors is being addressed by establishing inter-sectoral national policy platforms and developing national and international policy guidelines and recommendations for mainstreaming agricultural biodiversity conservation and sustainable use into nutrition, health and education programs, and identifying and developing new marketing options for agrobiodiversity with high nutritional value.

3. Adopting and up-scaling tools, knowledge and best practices in development programs, value chains and local community initiatives. Key activities include capacity development and training of producers, processors, users and researchers related to biodiversity for food and nutrition, as well as the definition and documentation of best practices for the conservation and utilization of nutritionally rich biodiversity.

Partnerships

A global inception workshop and a series of national level consultations were held in Brazil, Kenya, Sri Lanka and Turkey, including extensive stakeholder analysis and consultations. As a result of this participatory multi-level process, Bioversity International established the following partnerships for the implementation of this project:

- **Local Communities** and farmers are being engaged in documenting local knowledge relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in almost 500,000 hectares of landscape in the selected project sites. Through participatory assessments and community-based approaches, locally important agrobiodiversity species are being identified and prioritized in each participating country. Communities are also fully engaged in developing local capacities on community-based management of biodiversity and marketing tools to better link communities and biodiversity for food and nutrition to markets, which in turn improve communities' livelihoods and health. Schools are also being involved, to establish school gardens as a complementary educational tool at the community level. Key partners include 25 community groups in Busia County in western Kenya; three communities in the Udukumbura, Gampola and Ambathanna pilot sites in Sri Lanka; and three communities in the Aegean and Mediterranean regions in Turkey.
- **Civil Society Organizations** at the national level in the four participating countries are providing mentoring and support to communities. Main activities being implemented by CSOs include outreach and capacity development activities and consultations and mobilization of communities for participatory action research. National CSOs engaged include SINGI in Kenya; Green Movement of Sri Lanka, Community Development Centre and Seva Lanka Foundation in Sri Lanka and the Turkish Association for Protection of Nature in Turkey.
- **Government Agencies** from the agriculture, environment and public health sector in the four partner countries are actively participating in cross-sectoral working groups and platforms. These multi-disciplinary and institutional partnerships are aimed at biodiversity conservation, sustainable use and improved health and nutrition using biodiverse, food-based approaches. Key partners include the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute, Kenya; the Ministry of Environment through the Department of Agriculture, Sri Lanka; and the General Directorate of Agricultural Research of the Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Affairs, Turkey. Activities in Brazil are targeted to the federal level engaging relevant public and private sector partners to mainstream biodiversity into policies and practices, and are coordinated by the Biodiversity Conservation Department of the Ministry of Environment.
- **International Organizations** are contributing relevant tools, resources, data sources as well as technical guidance and training to develop and adapt approaches and methodologies. Main partners include the World Food Programme; Crops for the Future; the World Agroforestry Center and the World Vegetable Centre.
- **Academic Institutions**, at the international and national levels. A vital alliance has been established with Columbia University through its Earth Institute, which has already established regional multidisciplinary Masters in Development Practice (MDP) in Brazil and Sri Lanka. MDP students are facilitating significant cross-cultural learning and sharing between participating countries. In addition, national universities are actively participating.

For example, a multidisciplinary team of scientists and students from the universities of Peradeniya, Ruhuna and Wayamba in Sri Lanka are partnering with the project by assessing local agrobiodiversity and foods, collecting indigenous knowledge associated with locally important biodiversity, assessing community nutritional and dietary diversity and health status, and options for community biodiversity management, and identifying and prioritizing traditional foods with no or little nutrient data which are most promising in terms of community acceptability in a community food-based promotion strategy. In Brazil, food composition analysis being carried out at School of Public Health in the São Paulo University to provide evidence of the nutritional value of local agricultural biodiversity.

Mainstreaming Conservation and Sustainable Use of Medicinal Plant Diversity in Three Indian States	
Country	India
Focal Area	Biodiversity
Project type	FSP
Allocation	$4,935,000 (GEF); $6,479,121 (cofinancing)
GEF Agency	UNDP
Executing partner	Ministry of Environment and Forests
Type of partner	Government agency
Approval	January, 2008
Status	Under implementation

Project Overview

India is the second world's largest producer of medicinal and aromatic plants, with some 8,000 species. An estimated 60-80 percent of India's population rely on medicinal plants to meet their primary health care needs. Over 95 percent of these medicinal plants are found in diverse natural forest habitats. Uncontrolled and unmonitored wild harvesting, unsustainable exploitation to meet commercial demand and forest habitat loss and degradation are increasing. These threats, coupled with loss and limitations of traditional knowledge to determine appropriate levels of harvesting on a larger commercial scale, are putting medicinal plant resources under pressure. To achieve the long-term conservation and sustainable use of India's medicinal plant diversity, particularly of its globally significant species, the Ministry of Environment and Forests is implementing this project to mainstream the conservation and sustainable use of medicinal plants into the productive forest sector in the Arunachal Pradesh (North-East), Chhattisgarh (central India) and Uttaranchal (North-West) states, by:

1. Creating an enabling environment at the national level for mainstreaming the conservation and sustainable use of medicinal and aromatic plants into forest management policies and practices. Inter-sectoral and multi-stakeholder consultations are being held to develop a national strategy that addresses issues relating to the *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation, cultivation and the sustainable use of medicinal plants, including the role of medicinal plants in the livelihoods of local communities, access of local communities to traditional medicine,

protection of traditional knowledge and the trade in medicinal plants. Legal mechanisms are also being developed to protect traditional knowledge specifically relating to the sustainable harvest, cultivation and use of medicinal plants.

2. Promoting forest management policies in the three project states for the conservation and sustainable use of medicinal and aromatic plants. Multi-stakeholder consultations in the three participating states are being organized to integrate medicinal plant conservation and sustainable use strategies into state forest policies, including legal mechanisms to protect traditional knowledge relating to the sustainable harvest, cultivation and uses of medicinal plants.
3. Mainstreaming conservation and sustainable use of medicinal and aromatic plants at the local level into government and community forest management norms and practices at demonstration sites in the three project states. *In situ* and *ex situ* conservation and sustainable management of medicinal plant diversity are being piloted on community-owned or community managed forest land in the three participating states, to establish Medicinal Plants Conservation Areas and Forest Gene Banks. Capacities of the communities are being strengthened document and preserve their traditional knowledge related to the sustainable use of medicinal plants.
4. Developing materials and methods for replicating the successful models of conservation and sustainable use of medicinal plants across other sites and states. Technical information, experiences and lessons learned are being assembled and disseminated through field visits, exchange visits, workshops and seminars to encourage replication in other sites within the three participating states as well as other states of India.

Partnerships

The project was designed through extensive consultations, including an inception workshop, with relevant stakeholders at the national, state and local levels. The active participation of all interested parties in this initial stage enabled the Ministry of Environment and Forests to create the following partnerships for its implementation:

- **Community-based organizations.** CBOs in the three participating states are taking leadership in the management of the project at the demonstration sites, especially at the community-owned and managed sites through Local Management Groups. Through increased local ownership, CBOs are also partnering with the State Forest Departments to implement conservation, sustainable harvest and adaptive management of medicinal plants; enabling them to share successful models to other communities in forest areas. Some of the CBOs involved include the Orchid Society of Arunachal Pradesh, Oju Welfare Association Naharlagun, R K Mission Arunachal Pradesh, Pali Vidya Peeth, Itanangar, Herbs for Better Health Toing Dibang Valley, and Shri Nanda Devi Lok Vikas Samithi Gopeshwar.
- **Indigenous Peoples Organizations.** Tribal populations from the project sites are actively engaged in the documentation of traditional knowledge related to the medicinal plants, as well as in training on sustainable harvesting, vegetation monitoring, scientific identification of medicinal plants, and provisions of biodiversity act for conservation. Through People's Biodiversity Registers and Community Knowledge Registers, tribal communities closely working with CBOs are documenting and preserving their traditional knowledge. Key partners include the Danus and Takulis of Jhuni in Uttarakhand, the Baigas Traditional Healers' Community of Chhattisgarh, Native People Committee of Itanangar and the Monpas of Arunachal Pradesh.
- **Civil Society Organizations.** CSOs are actively engaged, contributing technical expertise and on-the-ground experience. A key alliance was created with the Foundation for the

Revitalization of Local Health Traditions (FRLHT) which has extensive experience with establishing Medicinal Plant Conservation Areas and home herbal gardens. In close collaboration with another CSO, the Traditional Healers Association, over 12,000 home herbal gardens have already been established in Chhattisgarh.

- **Government Agencies**, at the national and state levels are engaged though inter-sectoral dialogue and coordinated actions to develop and effectively implement a National Strategy and state-specific strategies for the medicinal plant sector. the National Biodiversity Authority and the National Afforestation and Ecodevelopment Board of the Ministry of Environment and Forests; The National Medicinal Plants Board and the Department of Indian Systems of Medicine and Homeopathy from the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare; the Ministry of Rural Development; and the Department of Science and Technology; the State Governments, the State Forest Departments and the State Medicinal Plants Boards in the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Uttaranchal.

Improve the Health and Environment of Artisanal and Small Scale Gold Mining Communities by Reducing Mercury Emissions and Promoting Sound Chemical Management	
Countries	Burkina Faso, Mali, and Senegal (Regional)
Focal Area	Chemicals
Project type	MSP
Allocation	$990,000 (GEF), $2,450,000 (cofinancing)
GEF Agency	United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)
Executing partner	Blacksmith Institute
Type of partner	International non-governmental organization
Approval	August, 2011
Status	Under Implementation

Project Overview

Artisanal and small scale gold mining (ASGM) is one of the most significant sources of mercury release into the environment, accounting for 30 percent of total annual anthropogenic mercury emissions. This practice, which is a traditional livelihood for many countries in West Africa, uses mercury to help separate gold from sediments using rudimentary processing methods. Over the last decade, mercury emissions from ASGM have been increasing along with the rise in gold prices, also impacting human health. To reduce the impacts of mercury on human health and the environment, the Blacksmith Institute is implementing this project to strengthen national and local capacities in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Senegal to effectively manage and reduce mercury use, emissions and exposure in artisanal gold mining communities while promoting cleaner production of gold, by:

1. Improving the understanding of the scope of ASGM. In the three participating countries, local investigators are being trained to conduct site risk assessments and active ASGM sites are

being identified to determine the national mercury use and emissions from ASGM in each country.

2. Developing and implementing National Strategic Action Plans for sound management of mercury in ASGM. These plans will also include recommendations for policy changes towards reduction and elimination measures of mercury in the three countries.
3. Developing comprehensive health education programs on the health risks of mercury, and training programs on technical knowledge about low mercury/mercury free technologies.
4. Implementing mercury reduction/elimination pilot projects. At least one site in each country is being identified, where mercury use, emissions, and exposure could be halved.
5. Evaluating opportunities for fair trade certification, in at least one pilot project per country, as an incentive mechanism for miners to reduce mercury use.
6. Documenting lessons learned from the pilot projects to be shared and used to inform national policy and the Minamata Convention on *Mercury*.

Partnerships

At the 2009 UNIDO Global Mercury Partnerships Sub-Regional Workshops on gold mining, representatives from the governments of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Senegal expressed interest in addressing ASGM and mercury use. Responding to this request, UNIDO and the Backsmith Institute coordinated consultations with national and local stakeholders to design this project. As a result of the consultative processes in the three participating countries, the following partnerships were created to implement this project:

- **Government Agencies.** The active engagement of all relevant national agencies in the three participating countries was crucial in addressing ASGM and mercury use. Key partners include the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Mines in Senegal; the Ministry of Environment and Sanitation, the Ministry of Mines and the Ministry of Health in Mali; and the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Mines in Burkina Faso.
- **International Organizations.** Various organizations working on ASGM issues are involved in the project, providing technical expertise and guidance regarding the pilot projects, and education and training programs. Alliances have been established with the Artisanal Gold Council and the Natural Resource Defense Council. Another partnership was developed with the Alliance for Responsible Mining (ARM) which will implement activities related to fair trade certification.
- **Civil Society Organizations.** At the national level in the three participating countries, CSOs are participating in the implementation of activities, for example, the management of the pilot projects and education and awareness programs. National partners include AfricaClean and La Lumiére in Senegal; the Miner's Associations in Mali; and the National Corporation of Small-scale Miners (CONAPEM) and the Mining Association of Women of Burkina (AFEMIB) in Burkina Faso.
- **Local Communities,** through Stakeholder Groups at each of the pilot sites. Representatives from the local community, including miners, leaders, teachers, doctors, and business owners, in close consultation with local governments, a local university and other project partners are engaged in the design of interventions, the identification of needs and challenges, and in finding appropriate solutions.