



GEF IWCAM BULLETIN FROM THE PROJECT COORDINATION UNIT

OCTOBER 2007 ISSUE NO. 6

The last GEF-IWCAM Bulletin (August 2007, Issue No. 5) focused on Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) systems. This naturally leads to the question: What should we be monitoring and evaluating? The answer is indicators!

Indicators

What is an indicator?

Indicators are quantitative or qualitative statements that can be used to describe existing situations and measure changes or trends over time. Indicators can be used to define a performance standard which, when reached, represents achievement of an objective.

What are some examples of indicators?

There are many different types of indicators. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) suggests that international waters projects, such as GEF-IWCAM, group indicators into three categories:

1) Process:

Institutional processes on the multi-country or the single-country national-level that will result in joint action on needed policy, legal, and institutional reforms and investments which aim to reduce environmental stress.

Examples: Establishment of country-specific inter-ministerial committees to engage key ministries that may be involved with reducing sectoral stress on the water body; Country ratification of the regional or global conventions and protocols pertinent to the project; Country adoption of specific water, environment, or sector-related legal reforms, policies, institutions, standards, and programmes necessary to address the transboundary priority issues, including stakeholder participation programmes.

2) Stress Reduction:

On-the-ground measures implemented by the collaborating countries to reduce damage to the environment.

Examples: Non-point source pollution programmes implemented (areas treated with best management practices; kg reduced); Amount of underwater or wetland area placed into protected management, including the establishment of no fishing zones; Reduced pollution to groundwater recharge zones.

3) Environmental Quality:

Actual performance or success in restoring or protecting the targeted area.

Examples: Measurable improvements in tropic status; Improved (measurable) ecological or biological indices; Changes in local community income and social conditions (stable or not worsened by the GEF intervention and, in some cases, improved) as a result of improvements in environmental conditions.

Why are indicators important for the GEF-IWCAM Project?

It is important that the GEF-IWCAM Project determine how successful we have been in achieving the objective of integrating watershed and coastal area management with resulting improvements in the state of the environment and livelihoods. Identifying indicators and keeping track of them throughout the life of the project help us to measure the effectiveness of activities or measures put in place. In some cases, these indicators will be adopted by others and will continue to be monitored long after the GEF-IWCAM Project has finished. This would help to determine the long-term impact of the project, and more specifically, its sustainability.

The establishment of indicators and their consistent monitoring and evaluation should help us to determine which

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approaches are beneficial to Caribbean SIDS and therefore should continue to be used. Approaches may sometimes need to be modified or expanded upon. The hard and convincing data provided by indicators is essential to "spreading the IWCAM message." Being able to show improvement in conditions over time can help convince key stakeholders of the benefits of this approach.

How are indicators established?

The GEF-IWCAM Project Coordinating Unit, consultants hired for this activity, Dr. Sherry Heileman and Mr. Leslie Wallings, Demonstration Projects and Participating Countries (PCs) are working together to develop a suite of indicators. The first step in this process was to determine the baseline. To do this the Project surveyed all PCs regarding their current tracking of indicators and other data. This provides a "snapshot" at the beginning of the GEF-IWCAM project against which comparisons can be made at a later date, or at different stages.

Currently, GEF-IWCAM is compiling a template of key indicators related to institutions, policy, legislation, community participation and stakeholder involvement, atmosphere, biodiversity, coastal zones, freshwater, land, natural disasters, sanitation and human health, population, poverty level, land tenure, etc. This template will be evaluated at a Workshop of experts in early 2008. It will then be further refined and presented to the PCs.

What is the next step after the indicators are established?

The GEF-IWCAM Project will be working with PCs to determine and establish sustainable mechanisms for data monitoring and capture, through capacity building, institutional strengthening, national laboratory enhancements, etc. We will be consulting our colleagues in the region, as well as beyond, to help us determine the best way to do this.

The indicators will also be monitored in the ongoing monitoring and evaluation (M&E) programme under the GEF-IWCAM project (see the August 2007 Bulletin).

How can I find out more about indicators?

See "Monitoring and Evaluation Indicators for GEF International Waters Projects" by Alfred Duda:

http://www.iwcam.org/information/iwcam-orientation-may-2007/documents-referenced-in-indicators-training/duda_indicator.pdf

Some of the information in this bulletin was excerpted from that paper.



Monitoring and evaluating carefully selected indicators can help us to preserve the environment.



Other useful websites include:

The Environment Agency, United Kingdom:
http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/yourenv/432430/?version=1&lang=_e

A Guidebook to Environmental Indicators, CSIRO, Australia:
<http://www.csiro.au/csiro/envind/code/pages/menu.htm>

The United Nations Global Environment Monitoring System:
<http://www.gemswater.org/publications/index-e.html>

UNEP IWRM 2005 Programme:
<http://www.ucc-water.org/iwrm05/components/indicatorssem.html>

The presentations on indicators which were made at the GEF-IWCAM Orientation Workshop held in May 2007 may also be useful. These can be found at:

<http://www.iwcam.org/information/iwcam-orientation-may-2007/Presentation%204%20-%20Indicators%20training.ppt>

<http://www.iwcam.org/information/iwcam-orientation-may-2007/Presentation%205%20-%20IWRM%20Indicator%20Presentation.ppt>

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