

Transfer of environmentally-safe technologies

GEF successes with developing countries

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Concern for the global environment has led to a growing demand for worldwide deployment of environmentally-sound technologies. But the transfer of such technologies to developing countries is not easy. There are wide disparities between the levels of technology in developed and developing countries. Also, many of these countries do not have an enabling business and policy climate. The efforts of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) are therefore praiseworthy. This article presents an overview of successful GEF efforts in transferring technologies to protect the global environment.

Introduction

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) channels financial assistance for global environmental problems to developing countries and economies in transition. A substantial portion of its funds flows to Asia and the Pacific countries. Nearly all the projects that are funded by GEF promote technology transfer as a “socio-economic process of technological change and learning.” Its policy tools create an enabling environment for technology change.

As part of GEF’s work to support private sector solutions to global environmental problems, a portion of GEF funds is channelled through small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). We shall discuss here the broad

view adopted by GEF on technology transfer and illustrate it by presenting a number of successful or promising GEF projects.

Nearly ten years ago, the nations of the world met in Rio de Janeiro to set the world community on a path of sustainable development. The 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development - or Earth Summit - brought 178 governments together to find ways to work jointly on serious global environmental problems that threaten the natural safety net on which life depends. Among these are the irretrievable loss of diverse species of plants and animals, a warming climate, the pollution of international waterways and water bodies, and the depletion of the earth’s protective ozone layer.

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