

# **Global Greengrants Fund**

## **Brazil Case Study**

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## 1. Introduction and background

Global Greengrants Fund (GGF) provides small grants to support grassroots groups working toward environmental justice and sustainability around the world. The organization bridges the gap between donors and grassroots organizations in developing countries that can make effective use of these financial resources to address regional environmental and social issues. GGF helps donors overcome the barriers to grassroots grant-making by identifying worthy organizations and moving funds at minimal cost.

Since 1993, GGF has made more than 2,000 grants in 113 countries, ranging from \$500 and \$15,000 per grant. A key to the model is the use of established regional and international advisory boards, composed of environmental and social justice leaders who recommend grants and provide follow up monitoring. Feedback from advisors and grantees provides substantial evidence that in many cases this form of grant-making promotes change at the local, national, and international levels. After ten years of operation, Global Greengrants Fund (GGF) has generated a wealth of experience in using small grants to grow the environmental movement around the world, especially in areas with limited access to grassroots funding.

In order to continue the learning process, GGF has undertaken an examination of the grant-making experience in Brazil over the past decade. GGF decided to focus on Brazil for several reasons:

- GGF has a long history of grant-making in Brazil, with nearly 200 grants worth a combined \$612,000 from 1993 to mid-2004. Initial grants were made through the Francisco Foundation (Fundação Francisco), whose members eventually transitioned to form the GGF Regional Advisory Board.
- The Brazil Advisory Board is well-established, and has had minimal turnover. As a result, current advisory board members have a wealth of experience and knowledge about GGF grants in Brazil over the past ten years. The Brazil Board has accounted for 84% of the total grants in the country, and therefore serves as the primary focus for the case study.
- The GGF Global Board, composed of international environmental organizations, has also been active in making grants in Brazil over the past decade, which provides a broader spectrum of experience for the case study.
- Grants in Brazil have utilized a number of strategies, providing a basis for analyzing the relative effectiveness of specific strategies employed.
- The Brazil Advisory Board is transitioning to an independent, “affiliated” organization. Therefore this case study is timely in providing valuable feedback about program operations and observed impacts.

Key findings are summarized the final section of this case study.

## 2. Case study objectives

The Brazilian case study synthesizes a decade of GGF experience with small grants in the country. It describes what strategies have worked well, what kinds of impacts have been observed, as well as broad trends and challenges. More generally, the study seeks to illustrate how small grants have promoted social change and helped to build the capacity of the Brazilian environmental movement over the past ten years.

The case study is not meant to serve as a formal program evaluation, but rather as an analytical synthesis of the Brazilian experience, drawing primarily on the knowledge and reflection of program advisors who have been closely involved with grant-making in the country. The study focuses primarily on the experience of the Brazilian Advisory Board, which accounted for 84% of grants disbursed in the country over the past ten years. The GGF Global Board accounted for 15% of grants in Brazil and the GGF International Financial Institutions (IFI) board for just 1%.

Specific goals of the case study include:

- Summarize the evolution of GGF activities in Brazil;
- Gain an understanding of how small grants promote change in the country;
- Describe GGF program impacts in Brazil;
- Evaluate grant strategies utilized and key success factors;
- Obtain feedback on operational issues;
- Outline areas for discussion and further evaluation.

The study aims to provide useful insights to GGF staff and advisors and, for a broader audience, it aims to offer a greater understanding of how small grants can build environmental movements and promote positive social change.

## 3. Research process and methodology

### *(a) Research process*

The case study utilizes multiple sources of information, including:

- Review of GGF internal documents;
- Analysis and synthesis of quantitative grant statistics from GGF database; and
- In-depth interviews with a diverse set of internal and external stakeholders.

The in-depth interviews serve as the centerpiece of the case study. These interviews were segmented by type of stakeholder or audience to obtain a broad perspective of the GGF experience in Brazil. The most detailed interviews were carried out with the current members of the regional Brazil Advisory Board – all Brazil advisors were interviewed for this study, most in person. Additionally, interviews were carried out with GGF Global Board members (who also recommend grants in Brazil), GGF staff, a small number of

grantees in Brazil, as well as “external observers.” External observers included Brazilian environmental and social NGOs, other small grants programs, and other observers familiar the GGF history in Brazil or with small grants programs in the country more generally.

The following chart summarizes the interview allocations and the interview objectives for each interview “tier”:

**Table 1: Interview summary**

<b>Tier</b>	<b>Completed Interviews</b>	<b>Interview Objectives</b>
<b>GGF Staff</b>	Chris Allan, Chet, Heather R., Heather P., Mohan, Colleen	Validate study objectives, refine work plan, obtain background information
<b>Tier 1a</b> GGF Global and IFI Boards	<u>Global Board:</u> Rainforest Action Network: Tracy Solum/Chris Hatch Earth Island Institute: John Knox International Rivers Network: Glenn Switkes <u>IFI Board:</u> Jorge Daniel Taillant, Argentina	Provide overview of the GGF experience with small grants in Brazil: historical evolution, grant-making trends, types of impacts observed, effectiveness of strategies, and other factors that influence grant outcomes.  Discuss operational issues, common challenges, and areas for improvement.
<b>Tier 1b</b> GGF Brazil Board	Amália Souza, Regional Coordinator Alcides Faria, ECOA Miriam Prochnow, Apremavi Rubens Born, Vitae Civilis Renato Cunha, Gambá Alexandre Araújo, Aspan Sérgio Guimarães, ICV	
<b>Tier 1c</b> Other GGF	Denise Bebbington, Humberto Mafra Beto Borges	Historical perspective of experience in Brazil.
<b>Tier 2</b> GGF Grantees in Brazil	Small number of grantees in Brazil (4). - Vida Pantaneira (MS/Brazil) - CEPPEC (MS/Brazil) - REABA (BA/Brazil) - APEDEMA (BA/Brazil)	Further explore program impacts in 2-3 areas of grant-making activity (based on environmental issue or region).
<b>Tier 3a:</b> Other small grant programs  <b>Tier 3b:</b> Third party observers with knowledge of GGF: and environmental movement in Brazil	GEF/PPP/ISPN, “Gefinho”: Don Sawyer (DF/Brazil) Global Fund for Women: Ana Maria Enriquez (California) FASE small grants program: Jean Pierre Leroy (RJ/Brazil)  Ford Foundation: Aurelio Vianna (RJ/Brazil) ISA – Instituto Socioambiental: Adriana Ramos (DF/Brazil) Both ENDS: Tamara Mohr (Netherlands) Nature Conservancy: Ana Cristina Barros (DF/Brazil) Fundação Francisco: Eliana Jorge Leite (DF/Brazil)	Obtain outside perspective on GGF program in Brazil or, more broadly, on the role of small grants programs in the Brazilian environmental/social movement.  Identify other small grant models and best practices in Brazil.

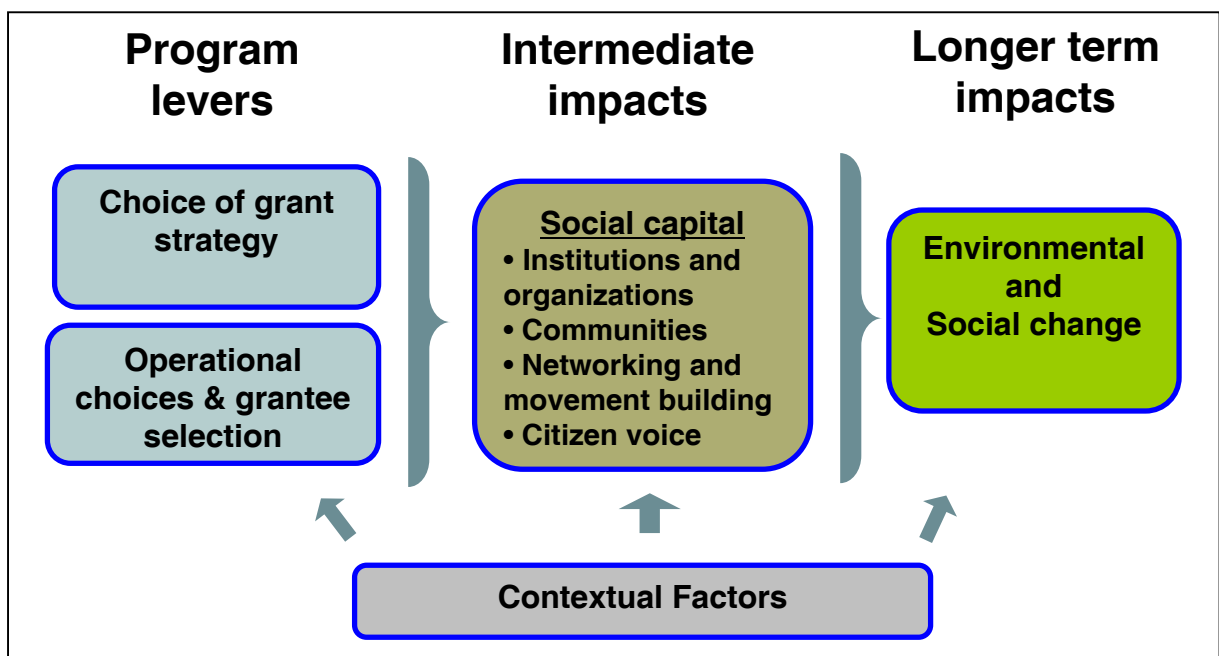
In total, over 30 interviews were carried out, most in person at the GGF central office in Boulder, Colorado, and in several Brazilian cities (Rio de Janeiro, Campo Grande, Salvador, Brasília, and Cunha in the state of São Paulo). The diversity of interview audiences allowed for data triangulation, and for the identification of common lessons, challenges, and promising approaches.

*(b) Conceptual approach and key research questions*

The Brazil case study is not intended to serve as a formal, structured impact evaluation, which would have required a longer-term, more concerted research effort. However, a structured conceptual approach was utilized to guide the interviewing process and the analysis.

The conceptual model assumes that small grants promote long-term environmental and social change through a two stage process (see Figure 1 below). The first step involves the “program levers” utilized by GGF – namely the choice of grant strategy and operational decisions such as grantee selection. These programmatic choices influence the effectiveness of small grants. Local contextual factors (social, political, economic) also influence grant outcomes. GGF grants lead to intermediate impacts primarily related to strengthening of “social capital,” or the ability of civil society organizations to promote longer term environmental and social change through stronger organizations, networks, more organized communities, and greater citizen voice. Though certain GGF grants may result in more visible, direct social and environmental impacts, most grants promote change by strengthening social capital.

**Figure 1: Conceptual approach for analysis**



The Brazil case study address key research questions related to each of the “boxes” above – program levers (strategy and operations), contextual factors, and observed impacts related to intermediate outcomes (social capital) and longer term environmental and social change. The key research questions are analytical objectives are described below.

**Key research questions: Strategies pursued**

GGF has defined a set of eight grant-making strategies including:

- Organization building
- Networking
- Community Organizing
- Technical review, citizen monitoring
- Networking and collective action
- Legal Action
- Media
- Advocacy

One of the analytical objectives of the case study is to evaluate the effectiveness of these strategies in achieving intermediate and longer term objectives (e.g., building social capital and/or promoting environmental and social change). To facilitate the analysis, these eight strategies were grouped into four consolidated strategy areas:

**Table 2: Strategy groupings**

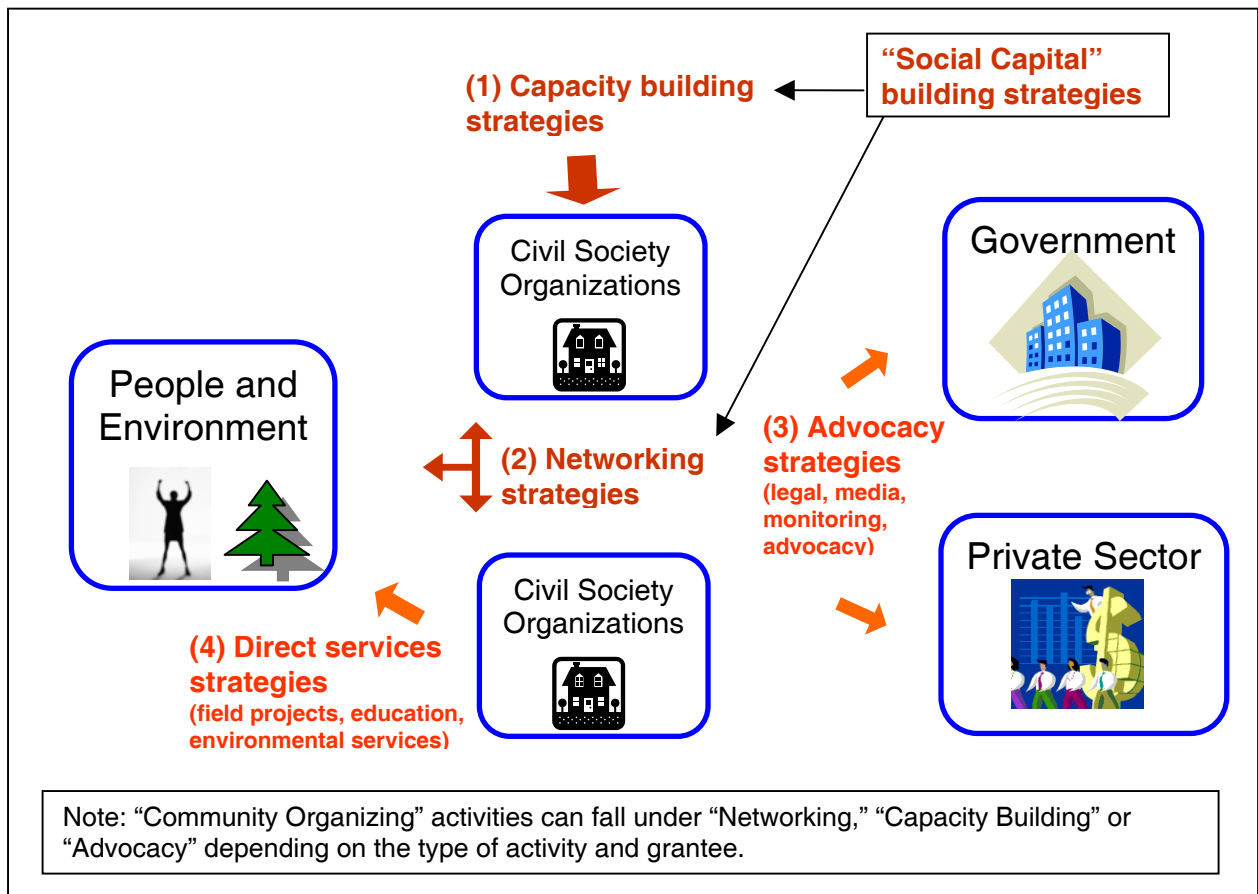
<b>“Social Capital” related strategies</b>		<b>(3) Advocacy strategies</b>	<b>(4) Enabling direct services (environmental and social services)</b>
<b>(1) Capacity Building Strategies</b>	<b>(2) Networking and Relationship Building Strategies</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organization building</li> <li>• Community Organizing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Networking</li> <li>• Community Organizing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical review and citizen monitoring</li> <li>• Networking – collective action</li> <li>• Legal Action</li> <li>• Media</li> <li>• Advocacy</li> <li>• Community Organizing</li> </ul>	<p>There are no specific strategies in this area, but there a small number of grants in Brazil enable direct environmental services, environmental education, and the provision of social services.</p>

There are “grey” areas among these four categories. For instance, “Advocacy” strategies may also contribute to building social capital by fostering collaboration among civil society organizations. Another grey areas relates to the classification of “Community Organizing”

activities – these can fall under “Networking,” “Capacity Building” or “Advocacy” (e.g., in the case of organized advocacy or protests at the community level). Despite these grey areas, the four higher level categories proved helpful during the interviews in stimulating discussion on the effectiveness of different strategic approaches.

These four broader strategy areas also provide a model for how GGF grants can touch the different actors in Brazilian society, including Civil Society Organizations, Government, Private Sector, and Communities (people and their environment):

**Figure 2: GGF grant strategies**



Key research questions related to strategies pursued include:

- What types of strategies are most effective?
- What kinds of strategies are more appropriate for a small grants model?
- What kinds of impacts result from specific strategies?
- Does the effectiveness of strategies vary by (a) type of environmental issue (b) geographic and social context, (c) political context, and (d) other factors?



***Key research questions: Programmatic decisions and choice of grantee***

The case study also analyzes the effect of programmatic and operational factors on the effectiveness of grants. Brazil advisors were asked open-ended questions about what factors contributed to the success of grants. They were also asked to evaluate and rate a list of possible factors, below:

**Table 3: Programmatic/operational factors evaluated in the study**

- Timing of grant, availability of funding at the right moment;
- Turn around time from request to funding, minimal bureaucracy;
- Flexibility of grant: grant money can be used for a different activity if strategy changes;
- Choosing the right grantee (what kinds of grantees are the best match for GGF?);
- Having an ongoing relationship (mentoring) with grantee;
- Choosing the right type of strategy;
- Ability of GGF grantee to obtain matching funds and other resources, leveraging GGF grant;
- Ability to provide follow up funding to grantee;
- Availability of technical support for grantee (in planning, administration, etc.), from GGF or other sources;
- Relative size of grant (e.g., \$3,000 vs. \$5,000);
- Coordination and “critical mass”: grant made in conjunction with wider network of civil society activity or other funding streams;
- Coordination with GGF Board: grant coordinated with the work of other advisors and/or GGF Global Board;
- Coordination with Brazil advisor organization: grant related to work carried out by the organizations headed by the Brazil advisors.

An examination of these programmatic factors also led to the identification of current operational challenges and insights regarding process improvements going forward.

***Key research questions: Contextual factors***

The interviews also examined whether contextual factors can influence grant outcomes. These “exogenous” contextual factors include the type of environmental issue, geographical and social context, political context, and other pre-existing conditions within a region or community. In particular, the interviews investigated the interaction between contextual factors and grant strategies employed. That is, do certain strategies work better in specific social contexts or for a specific type of environmental issue?

***Key research questions: Intermediate and longer term impacts***

Longer-term program impacts refer to environmental and social changes over time. These impacts can include changes in environmental policy, better environmental stewardship, and improved local livelihood and social justice. Longer-term impacts are sometimes difficult to discern, and often result from multiple, concurrent actions by civil society organizations over time.

It is also important to underscore the role of small grants in promoting intermediate impacts related to building “social capital” – the ability of civil society to influence the environmental and social agenda. Social capital refers to the development of civil society institutions, with a particular focus on building movements, networks and relationships between institutions to enable sustained collective action and citizen voice. The ability to engage in sustained collective action, to create a broader “movement,” enables organizations to have a greater impact on social and environmental issues over time.

As described above, the concept of social capital provides a useful framework for understanding the impact of a small grants program such as GGF. Although some GGF grants in Brazil have directly contributed to more immediate environmental and social change in specific cases, many of the grants in the country have sought to build the fabric of social capital in Brazil, including strengthening environmental organizations and networks. Again, social capital building can be seen as an “intermediate” impact, leading to longer-term impacts related to environmental and social change.

**Key research questions related to program impacts included:**

- What kinds of impacts have been observed as a result of GGF grants?
- What kinds of longer-term changes have been observed over the past 10 years?
- How have small grants helped to build the socio-environmental movement in Brazil?
- Through what mechanisms do small grants promote change?
- What are other small grants programs doing in Brazil (and how is GGF different)?
- What best practices can be adopted by GGF?

#### 4. Overview of the environmental movement in Brazil

Brazil encompasses several major biomes (see graphic below), each facing major environmental challenges. GGF grants in the country address many of these critical environmental issues, including:

- Deforestation (Amazon and Atlantic Rainforest);
- Expansion of the agricultural frontier, particularly for soybeans (Cerrado, Semi Arid primarily);
- Water resource management, including hydroelectric plants and irrigation infrastructure projects (Pantanal, Semi-Arid, and other areas);
- Tourism development (Semi-arid and Atlantic region);
- Large scale infrastructure projects and road construction (various biomes).

Figure 3: Major Brazilian biomes



The urgency of these environmental challenges has helped to catalyze the Brazilian environmental movement over the past 10-15 years. During this period, particularly since “Eco 1992” in Rio de Janeiro, the environmental movement in the country has evolved in unique ways.

- Growth and consolidation of civil society organizations: the number of civil society organizations in the country has expanded significantly since Eco 1992, in the environmental field as well as in other domains of policy and advocacy. There are an estimated 1,600 registered environmental organizations in the country, most operating with minimal, if any, funding. Despite the funding challenges, the growth in the number of environmental organizations indicates the degree of environmental awareness and activism in the country.
  
- Creation of important environmental networks: A number of important environmental networks have been created in Brazil, enabling the movement to attain critical mass to address specific issues at a regional or national level. GGF grants have supported the formation of a number of these networks at critical junctures in time. More recently, even conservationist organizations, such as The Nature Conservancy, have placed greater emphasis on networking strategies in Brazil. Important environmental networks in Brazil include:
  - Brazilian Forum of NGOs and Social Movements for Sustainable Development and Environment (FBOMS - Fórum Brasileiro de ONGs e Movimentos Sociais para o Meio Ambiente)
  - Atlantic Rainforest NGO Network (Rede Mata Atlântica)
  - Living Rivers Coalition (Coalizão Rios Vivos)
  - Movement of People Affected by Dams (MAB - Movimento dos Atingidos por Barragens)
  - Amazon Forest Working Group (Grupo de Trabalho [GT] Amazônia)
  - Semi-Arid Network (ASA - Articulação no Semi-Arido)
  - Cerrado Network (Rede Cerrado)
  
- Integration of environmental and social movements (“socio-ambientalismo”): The environmental movement in Brazil has recognized and integrated the social dimension of environmental problems. The environmental (“ambientalista”) movement in the country has to some extent always adopted this perspective, but the socio-environmental (“socio-ambientalismo”) movement has grown considerably over the past 10-15 years. This movement, which has been championed by many organizations including those led by the GGF Brazil advisors, merges the environment, human rights, and social justice agendas in a powerful and compelling way. One of the impacts of socio-ambientalismo has been to reframe a number of important environmental debates such the hydroelectric dams, the expansion of soybean agriculture, and forest management. (The socio-ambientalismo movement remains distinct from the more traditional, conservationist movement, represented in Brazil by organizations such as The Nature Conservancy, World Wildlife Fund, Conservation International and SOS Mata Atlântica.)

In parallel, many civil society organizations initially focusing on social issues have gradually incorporated the environmental dimension into their agenda (some observers point that certain organizations have done this to pursue environment-related funding). This has resulted in a convergence of agendas between traditional “environmental” and “social” organizations. The Brazilian NGO and Social Movements Forum (FBOMS) reflects the greater convergence and interaction between these two kinds of organizations.

- Institutionalization and “professionalization” of the environmental movement: With the evolution and maturation of the environmental movement, Brazil has seen the formation of a cadre of established environmental organizations, as well as a new class of environmental professionals. Observers of the environmental movement have highlighted both positive and negative aspects of this trend. On the positive side, the movement is seen to have evolved from “protest” to organized advocacy, supported by better technical capacity and know-how to face environmental challenges and help shape the national policy agenda. The establishment of professional civil society organizations also means that there is less reliance on volunteers, making it possible to sustain activities and advocacy. The “professionalization” of the movement provides more legitimacy to organizations, and often the ability to participate in the national policy debate, sitting on the same table as government and private sector leaders

On the negative side, some observers feel that the move to professionalization has dulled the edge of the Brazilian environmental movement, that the movement now has less vocal advocacy. As one critic put it, the movement has been sapped of passion (“amor à camisa”). The institutionalization of the movement has also brought another important internal challenge, namely the financial survival and sustainability of environmental organizations.

Through this period of internal change and evolution, the Brazilian environmental movement has produced a number of important achievements.

- Gains in policy formulation: There have been important gains in environmental policy formulation. These include environmental laws enacted as part of the 1988 Brazilian constitution, the Law for the Atlantic Rainforest (Lei da Mata Atlântica), and the Temporary Protected Areas Resolution (Resolução Provisória das Áreas Protegidas – though some feel this law is too rigid as it does not take into account the needs of local/native populations.)
- Greater environmental awareness: Another important achievement has been the rise in environmental awareness throughout Brazilian society (“conscientização,” or “consciousness-raising” is the term often used in Brazil.) The environment is now an important part of economic development and social debates, as well as everyday life.

- Creation of government organizations for the environment: A number of public sector entities charged with environmental matters have been created in Brazil, many with participation and leadership of Brazilian environmentalists. The best example is perhaps the Ministry of Environment, currently under the leadership of former senator Marina Silva, a noted environmentalist from the Amazon region. Another important environmental entity is the Working Group for the Atlantic Rainforest (Núcleo Assessor de Planejamento da Mata Atlântica - NAPMA), formed to address deforestation along the Atlantic coast. Environmental leaders and community organizations also have a “seat” in many federal and state-level advisory commissions such as the PRODETUR-II tourism development project committee, described later in this document.
- Localized successes: During the past 10-15 years the environmental movement has achieved a number of localized successes. For instance, the Living Rivers Coalition (Coalizão Rio Vivos) successfully opposed the construction of the Paraguay-Paraná waterway (“hidrovia”) – GGF provided initial support to key groups in the coalition, drawing attention of new funders such as the Mott Foundation. Another important success of the movement has been the reduction in deforestation rates in specific locations in the Amazon and the Atlantic region. Additionally, environmental organizations have promoted positive experiences with community-based projects for sustainable economic development (including examples of projects partially supported by GGF grants).

Despite these achievements, the environmental movement in Brazil faces major obstacles, both “external” and “internal.”

External challenges to the Brazilian environmental movement:

The main challenge is the growing awareness that the environmental movement is losing major battles with powerful economic and political interest groups, which are increasingly better organized and prepared to influence regional and national environmental agendas. Recent setbacks for the environmental movement in Brazil include the approval of genetically modified seeds (GSMs), the ongoing expansion of soybean cultivation in the Cerrado region, and the realization that major infrastructure projects continue to gain approval despite their environmental and social impact. The feeling of powerlessness is exacerbated by the lack of progress in the international level, where the Bush government continues to take steps backward with regard to the Kyoto agreement and other matters.

A second external challenge has been the recent backlash against perceived environmental “radicalism” in Brazil, as evidenced by the recent spate of violence against environmentalist leaders in the country, including the murder of Sister Dorothy in the Amazon, as well as other cases of threats and violence against leaders in the Amazon and other areas. The environmental movement also faces more conventional opposition from segments of the media, who have recently published articles against environmentalists, as

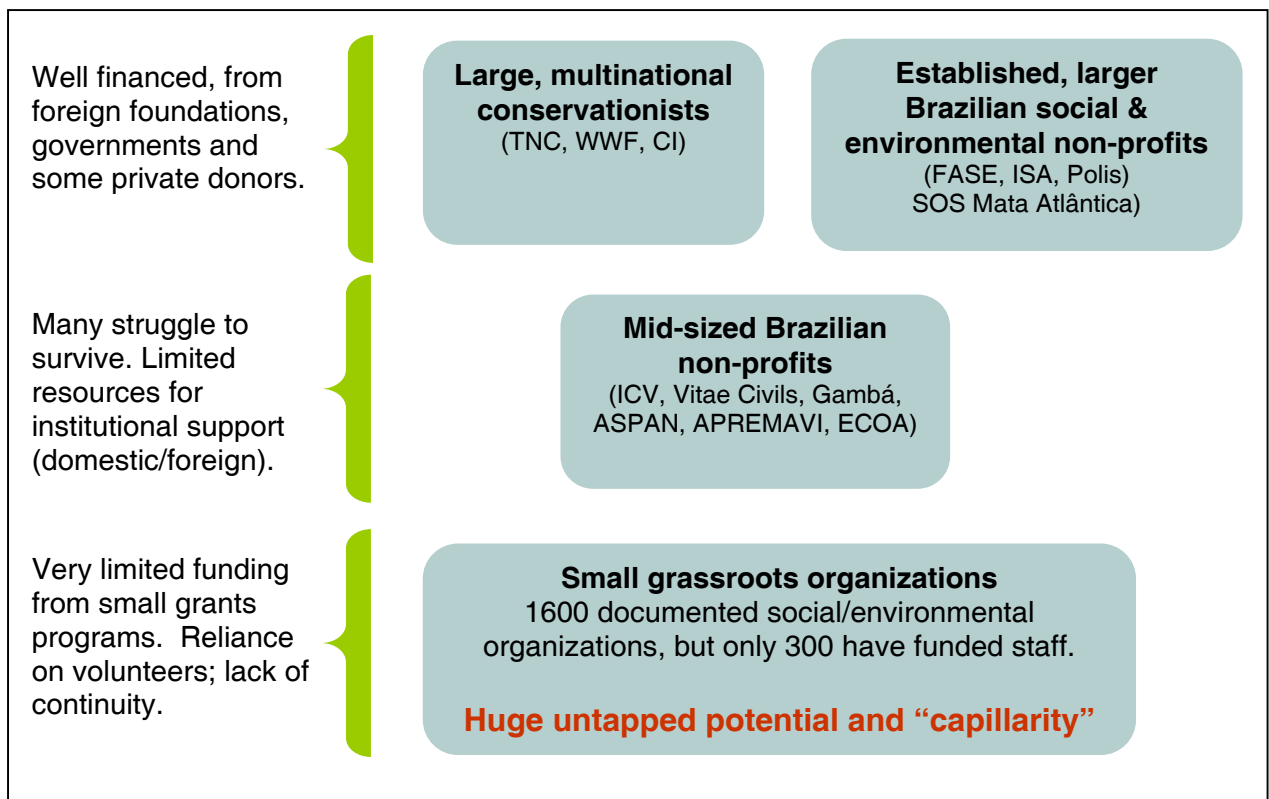
well as interest groups that are better prepared and organized to oppose the environmental movement. A final external challenge, and source of disappointment for the movement, has been the inability of the Lula government to move the environmental agenda forward despite the high hopes for his government. Even so, many people in the environmental movement are hesitant to criticize a government perceived as their own ideological “flesh and blood.”

Internal challenges to the Brazilian environmental movement:

As alluded to above, one of the key internal challenges of the environmental movement is balancing strong, vocal advocacy with the ability to work effectively with government and the private sector, while avoiding the pitfalls of cooptation (“greenwashing”). Some observers point to the need of the movement to generate new ideas and new leadership – both critical for future success. Finally, the movement continues to struggle to validate and demonstrate the economic viability of alternative, community based, economic development models.

But perhaps the most pressing internal challenge for the Brazilian environmental movement is the financial sustainability of civil society NGOs – few organizations in the country have secure funding sources. Environmental NGOs in Brazil can be divided into three levels:

**Figure 4: Profile of Brazilian environmental NGOs and institutional sustainability**



At the top level, a few larger international conservationist organizations have more stable sources for funding, primarily from private philanthropy. This top tier includes a very small number of Brazilian environmental and social organizations that have a steady stream of funding from governments, foundations, as well as corporate donations.

Small and medium sized organizations, in particular, currently face a difficult funding environment. Medium sized organizations include many of the institutions led by members of the GGF Brazil Advisory Board. These organizations primarily rely on financing from international foundations. The third tier of small community based organizations includes an estimated 1,600 groups with virtually no funding, which rely primarily on volunteer time. These small organizations are often the beneficiaries of GGF funding, and represent a huge untapped potential for the Brazilian environmental movement, with “capillarity” and support from local communities.

Several factors contribute to the difficult funding environment for small and medium sized environmental organizations in Brazil. First, there are limited small grant programs in the country to support small organizations. Medium sized organizations rely on foundation grants, but they often need to compete for these grants with the larger, more “visible” conservationist and social policy organizations (WWF, CI, TNC, as well as socially oriented organizations such as ISA and FASE; SOS Mata Atlântica is fully funded by membership and Brazilian private sector.)

But even international sources of funding are becoming more scarce, as international foundations have reduced the volume of grants targeting environmental programs in Brazil – funds appear to be moving towards other areas of the world, as well as to poverty alleviation and social programs (in Brazil, these social programs focus primarily on the Northeast region, though funding for environmental programs is still growing for the Amazon). Many of the international donors also focus on top-down, larger projects that provide more visibility and lower grant management costs. Additionally, foundation grants often cannot be utilized for institutional support and operations – only for direct projects and services. Some foundations also are hesitant to fund organizations engaged in more vocal advocacy activities.

Grants from government and private sector sources are also restrictive. Government funding – primarily from the National Fund for the Environment (Fundo Nacional do Meio Ambiente) – requires matching funds and cannot be utilized for institutional support. Private and corporate philanthropy have a limited history in Brazil. It does not help that companies and individuals cannot receive tax benefits from sponsorship of environmental projects, even though tax deductions are available for the support of educational and cultural programs. Companies often prefer to fund programs in education, culture, and the arts, which receive tax incentives and represent “safer” social investments compared to environmental programs, which often have political ramifications. When companies invest in the environment, they often do so through their



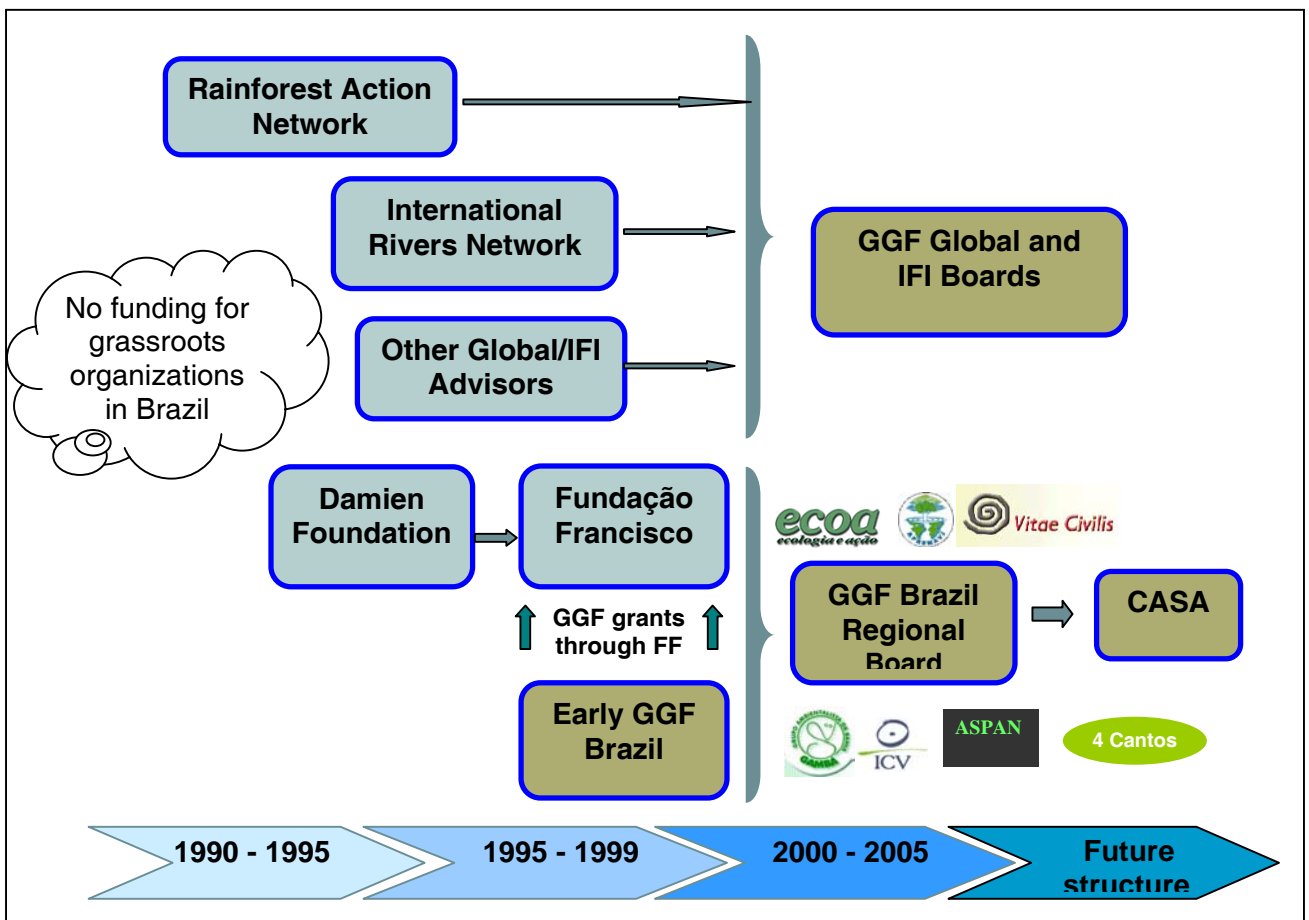
own foundations, which avoid thorny environmental issues but are less effective in dealing with major challenges to the environment.

The GGF program in Brazil has sought to bridge this funding gap, particularly for small, grassroots community groups.

### 5. GGF experience in Brazil – History

The current GGF program in Brazil evolved from a series of parallel activities supporting grassroots environmental organizations in the country. The figure below illustrates the evolution of GGF activities in Brazil from the early 1990’s to the present:

**Figure 5: Evolution of GGF in Brazil**



GGF’s work in Brazil grew from the early efforts of Fundação Francisco, the Rainforest Action Network (RAN), and the International Rivers Network (IRN). In the early 1990’s grassroots environmental organizations in Brazil had no sources of funding and relied almost entirely on volunteer work. As a result, much of the environmental work lacked

continuity and effectiveness. Humberto Mafra, the founder of Fundação Francisco, saw an opportunity to link U.S. and European funders with grassroots organizations in Brazil. Humberto initially began funding local Brazilian groups through his relationship with the Damien Foundation in the United States. Humberto then created Fundação Francisco, the first organization of its kind in Brazil, to facilitate the grant process with an on-the-ground presence in the country.

In parallel, the Rainforest Action Network, through the leadership of Randy Hayes and José Roberto (Beto) Borges, had been working intensely in Brazil with rainforest issues and indigenous populations since 1985. The International Rivers Network (IRN) began working more actively in Brazil in 1994, focusing on organizing the opposition to the construction of the Paraguay-Paraná Waterway and support for the Movement of People Affected by Dams (Movimento dos Atingidos por Barragens). Both RAN and IRN expanded their engagement in Brazil through their participation in GGF's Global Advisory Board, through which they recommend small grants in the country today.

Fundação Francisco provided the early model for the GGF/Brazil. Unique characteristics of the Fundação Francisco model included:

- Establishment and innovative mechanism for parsing lump-sum funding into small grants;
- Involvement of key Brazilian environmental leaders as program advisors, providing immediate credibility and community level links;
- Support for institutional capacity building and operations, rather than only grants strictly tied to projects;
- Provision of follow up funding to ensure early sustainability of grantees; and
- Socio-environmental (“socio-ambientalismo”) philosophy.

Fundação Francisco provided critical support for the consolidation and growth of the environmental organizations that were founded by the members of the Brazil Advisory Board. *These organizations have become key contributors to the Brazilian grassroots environmental movement.*

This “ready-made” advisory board structure transitioned to form the GGF Brazil regional board, which currently recommends most of the grants in the country. GGF now provides funding for a new generation of civil society organizations in Brazil.

**Figure 6: GGF Brazil regional advisory board**



Note: 4 Cantos do Mundo recently joined the GGF Brazil Board.

The GGF Brazil board is currently composed of key environmental leaders who also head important Brazilian NGOs:

- Amália Souza, Regional Coordinator
- Alcides Faria, ECOA – Ecologia e Ação
- Miriam Prochnow, APREMAVI - Associação de Preservação do Meio-Ambiente do Alto Vale do Itajaí
- Rubens Born, Vitae Civilis
- Renato Cunha, GAMBÁ – Grupo Ambientalista da Bahia
- Alexandre Araújo, ASPAN – Associação Pernambucana de Defesa da Natureza
- Sérgio Guimarães, ICV – Instituto Centro de Vida
- Carolina Campos, 4 Cantos do Mundo

The Brazil Board is currently transitioning to a new, independent organizational structure called “CASA” (Center for Socio-Environmental Support, or “Centro de Apoio Sócio-Ambiental,” in Portuguese). The CASA structure seeks to provide greater autonomy for the Brazil Board to conduct fundraising domestically and internationally. CASA also responds to the need to provide more capacity building support, training, and mentoring for grantees, either through direct interaction or third-party support services that will be made available to grantees in areas such as strategic planning and fundraising. CASA plans to fund programs that can benefit multiple organizations, such as workshops, leadership development activities, and other support services (currently, GGF grants are earmarked for individual organizations). The new organization will continue to support grantees with general administration funds, much like Fundação Francisco and GGF. Fundraising will be a key challenge in enabling the new CASA model.

## 6. GGF experience in Brazil – Program analysis

### (a) Program positioning in Brazil

GGF is one of the few organizations providing small grants for grassroots environmental organizations in Brazil. The following table provides a summary of the scope and focus of some of the better known small grants programs in the country (the table is not meant to provide an exhaustive inventory):

**Table 4: Relative positioning of GGF compared to other small grants funds in Brazil**

		Program Focus	
		Multiple/other Areas	Environment Focused
Grant Size	Small (typically <\$5,000)	<p><b>FASE - SAAP fund.</b> 20 year track record, small funds in various areas.</p> <p><b>CESE</b> – Focus on Northeast region; reportedly, the largest small grants fund in Brazil. Religious organization.</p> <p><b>CERIS/FAM</b> (Fundo de Apoio a Miniprojetos) – 180 small grants per year. Religious organization based in Salvador.</p> <p><b>Global Fund for Women</b> (Fundo Angela Borba in Brazil)</p> <p><b>FMP-Sul</b> – Focus on Rio Grande do Sul region.</p> <p><b>German consulate funds</b> – Up to US \$5,000 in individual grants.</p>	<p><b>GGF-</b> Annual funding of around US\$100,000 for Brazil (2004). One of the only small grants programs in Brazil with an environmental focus addressing various environmental issues (not just Amazon). Socio-environmental focus.</p> <p><b>FASE Fundo Dema</b> – specific focus on Amazon/Pará sub-region. Net endowment of US\$ 1.3 million and annual project funding of US\$80,000.</p>
	Medium/ Large		<p><b>PPP/Gefinho</b> – Focus on the Cerrado region. Supported by the World Bank Global Environmental Facility (GEF). Larger awards, around US\$30,000. Around \$500,000 per year in funding + other matching funds.</p> <p><b>Funbio</b> – Innovative public/private partnership, with funding from GEF, Ford Foundation, and others Endowment based. Funded 10 projects with a total commitment of US\$2.1 million in the last cycle (US\$210,000 per project).</p> <p><b>Nature Conservancy and Instituto Socioambiental (ISA)</b> also provide funding for environmental projects.</p>

Compared to other small grants programs, GGF is unique in providing more targeted funding for small environment groups. Fundo Dema, managed by FASE, is perhaps the most similar fund in Brazil. However, Fundo Dema focuses strictly on a sub-region of the Brazilian Amazon in the state of Pará (the fund was established through revenues generated by an illegal wood shipment that was confiscated.) In effect, many funds have a more regional focus (e.g., Dema, CESE, CERIS, PPP/Gefinho), while GGF addresses issues nationally based on perceived need, without geographical restrictions. This model is supported by the national reach of the Brazil Advisory Board, with experts in various issues and regions of Brazil.

The next table summarizes some of the unique points of differentiation of GGF in Brazil in relation to larger funds and conservationist organizations, as well as compared to other small grant funds in the country.

**Table 5: Unique aspects of GGF compared to other fund programs in Brazil**

GGF compared to larger funds and conservationist organizations:	GGF compared to other small grants funds:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Localized experience &amp; credibility of advisors provides direct access to small, grassroots organizations</li> <li>• Grantees plugged into communities</li> <li>• Demand driven approach</li> <li>• Willingness to fund small scale activities and organizations with no fundraising experience</li> <li>• Integration of environmental and social aspects (not just conservation) – “sócio-ambientalismo”</li> <li>• Support for advocacy (policy) and network building activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on environmental issues and their social dimensions               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most small funds have broader focus, more social emphasis</li> </ul> </li> <li>• National scope – GGF addresses various issues in different regions               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many small funds have a more regional focus</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Support for advocacy (“activism”)</li> <li>• GGF has a global “brand”</li> </ul>
GGF compared to both types of peers:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decentralized structure</li> <li>• Fast turn-around time</li> <li>• Minimal bureaucracy</li> </ul>	

*(b) Grant-making process and program statistics*

GGF has over ten years of grant-making experience in Brazil, often providing important seed funding for the creation and growth of new NGOs and environmental networks. Grants in Brazil are made through three separate advisory boards: the Brazil Board (one of 12 regional GGF advisory boards), the GGF Global Board, and the GGF International Financial Institutions (IFI) Board.

Over the past ten years, the Brazil board accounted for the majority (84%) of grants in the country. The Brazil advisors have a long history of collaboration and share a common vision for GGF grants in Brazil, including a strong sense of the importance of the socio-environmental perspective (“socio-ambientalismo”). As a result, grant-making strategy in Brazil is well coordinated and consistent. The Brazil advisors recommend grants on a rolling basis, typically in accord with other members of the board – though occasionally a grant recommendation goes through an additional consultation process. Once a year, the members of the Brazil Advisory Board meet in person to review institutional issues and chart program strategy.

The GGF Global Advisory Board accounted for 15% of grants in Brazil. The name “Global Advisory Board” is a bit of a misnomer, in that it implies that the five members do their grant-making collaboratively. In fact, these five organizations work independently, integrating GGF resources into their own program strategy. Grant procedures and strategy vary with the organization, but all groups follow the same GGF process guidelines, with a concurrent allocation of funds and three deadlines per year for submitting grants. Global Advisory Board members include the following organizations:

- **International Rivers Network (IRN)** is an environmental human rights organization which makes grants based on thematic, strategic reasoning that focuses on rivers and large scale infrastructure water projects.
- **Earth Island Institute (EII)** is an umbrella organization that provides logistical infrastructure to a number of small environmental entities. Given this structure, the strategy of EII’s grants vary depending on the scope and emphasis of these entities.
- **Rainforest Action Network (RAN)** makes grants to Southern groups in support of its broader campaign work. The basic RAN strategy is to protect forests around the world by bringing pressure on the markets and sources of finance of the major companies involved.
- **Pesticide Action Network** makes GGF grants through its regional affiliates around the world. These grants mainly support the promotion of alternatives to pesticide use and citizen action on government and multilateral pesticide policy.
- **Friends of the Earth International (FOEI)** is composed of an executive committee of member representatives who have an allocation from GGF. This executive committee meets twice a year and uses GGF funds to respond to group requests. Grants focus on the current strategy of the FOEI network: recent themes include Genetically Modified Organisms, negotiations on the Free Trade Area of the Americas, and the current World Bank Extractive Industry Review.

Over the past five years, the International Rivers Network and the Rainforest Action Network have been the most active participants in Brazil: their grants accounted for over

70% of Global Advisory Board funding in the country. IRN began working in Brazil in 1994, successfully helping to catalyze opposition for the proposed Paraná-Paraguay Waterway (Hidrovia Paraná-Paraguay). Since then, IRN has broadened its focus to address proposed hydroelectric dams (particularly new projects in the Amazon), the populations affected by these projects, and alternative energy issues. IRN has followed a more strategic, coordinated approach in the country, employing a long term representative in Brazil (Glenn Switkes), and working in collaboration with Brazilian environmental networks such as the Living Rivers Coalition (Coalizão Rios Vivos) and the Movement of People Affected by Dams (MAB – Movimento dos Atingidos por Barragens).

The Rainforest Action Network (RAN) focuses on Amazon Rainforest issues and indigenous populations. Unlike IRN, which works closely with existing environmental networks in Brazil, RAN has chosen to employ a more “arms length,” opportunistic approach in Brazil. RAN provides support to local organizations based on recommendations by knowledgeable sources such as the Amazon Alliance, the World Rainforest Movement, the Rainforest Foundation, and Brazilian environmental experts such as Amália Souza, Ailton Krenak, and Beto Borges.

The GGF International Financial Institutions (IFI) board has had limited participation in Brazil, making just two grants.

These three boards make grants independently, with occasional, informal consultations. During the interviews for this case study, members of both the Brazil Advisory Board and the GGF Global Board underscored the need for greater grant-making coordination between the different GGF boards, citing specific cases where funding decisions were inconsistent.

Given the relatively greater importance of the Brazil Advisory Board in the grant-making volume in the country, as well as depth of experience and local knowledge of the members of this advisory board, it was decided that the case study would focus primarily on this set of grants. An analysis of historical funding statistics from the GGF grant database provides the following profile of grants made between 1993 and mid-2004.

**Table 6: Summary of GGF grant statistics in Brazil, 1993 to mid-2004**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Total of 197 grants worth a combined \$612,000</li><li>• <b>Brazil Advisory Board:</b> 165 grants worth \$500,000<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 84% of grants</li><li>• 82% of total funds</li><li>• Average grant size: \$3,000</li></ul></li><li>• <b>Global Advisory Board:</b> 30 grants worth \$100,000<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 15% of grants</li><li>• 16% of total grant funds</li><li>• Average grant size: \$3,300</li></ul></li><li>• <b>IFI Advisory Board:</b> 2 grants worth \$12,000.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1% of grants</li><li>• 2% of total grant funds</li><li>• Average grant size: \$6,000</li></ul></li><li>• Annual funding level for 2004: \$107,000<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Median grant size in 2004: \$3,000</li></ul></li><li>• Median budget of organizations funded in 2004: \$5,500</li></ul>
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It is important to note that the average GGF grant (US\$3,000) *corresponded to over 50% of the average budget of organizations funded in Brazil in 2004*. This attests to the importance and potential impact of GGF grants, even at relatively modest funding levels.

*(c) Profile of grant strategies utilized in Brazil*

One of the key research questions for the Brazil case study revolves around the effectiveness of different grant-making strategies. GGF employs a classification of eight grant strategies:

- Organization capacity building / organizational development
- Environmental education, local studies, and research
- Networking
- Advocacy, lobbying
- Media
- Technical review, project monitoring, and enforcement
- Legal action
- Community organizing



Grant statistics from 2000-2004 were used to analyze the profile of strategies utilized in Brazil, as well as in other areas of the world (note: a single grant can cover more than one type of strategy.) Organization building, networking, and environmental education were the most commonly used strategies in Brazil. Compared to worldwide GGF regions, Brazil utilized relatively more organization building, networking, and media strategies. The relatively high utilization of networking strategies reflects an explicit strategic decision made by the Brazil Advisory Board.

As part of the interviews, Brazil Board members were asked to rate the perceived effectiveness of these eight grant strategies based on their experience, on a scale of 1 to 4 where 4 denotes “very effective” and 1 denotes “not effective.” Networking, capacity building, and policy advocacy were seen as the most effective grant strategies. The category for “Environmental education, local studies, and research” was seen as relatively less effective, even though this grant strategy was the second most utilized strategy in Brazil.

**Table 7: Rating the effectiveness of 8 GGF grant strategies**

<b>Effectiveness of strategies 1=low, 4=high</b>	<b>Average Rating</b>
Networking	<b>4.00</b>
Organization capacity building / organizational development	<b>3.71</b>
Advocacy, direct action, lobbying	<b>3.67</b>
Media	<b>3.20</b>
Community organizing	<b>3.17</b>
Technical review, project monitoring, and enforcement	<b>2.75</b>
Environmental education, local studies, and research	<b>2.71</b>
Legal action	<b>2.60</b>

*(d) Consolidated strategies*

To facilitate more in-depth discussion during the interviews, the eight strategies utilized by GGF in Brazil were consolidated into four areas:

- Capacity building strategies
- Networking strategies
- Advocacy strategies (includes advocacy, legal, media, and monitoring strategies)

- Direct services strategies (includes field projects, environmental education and environmental/social services)

(note: there are some grey areas among these broader strategy strategies. For instance, “Community Organizing” activities can fall under “Capacity Building,” “Networking,” or “Advocacy” depending on the context, type of activity, and type of grantee)

The four consolidated strategy categories led to in-depth analysis and discussions on program impact under each type of strategy. To begin, most Brazilian advisors **emphasized the interrelation between the four strategy areas**. For example, networking strategies require prior capacity building activities to help create and strengthen regional organizations. Similarly, the formation of networks increases the effectiveness of advocacy strategies.

Brazil advisors also emphasized that **the “right” strategy depends on the local context and type of environmental issue**. For example, capacity building strategies are seen as more important in geographical areas with few established grassroots organizations. Networking strategies are viewed as more effective when there is already an established base of organizations, but more information exchange and coordinated “critical mass” (movement building) is required. And finally, Advocacy strategies are most effective in specific, opportunistic moments in time – if these can be accurately identified. Direct services strategies, are generally seen as less effective with small grants, but the importance of environmental education in specific cases was emphasized.

As part of the interviews, Brazilian GGF Board members and other observers (e.g., environmentalists interviewed from other organizations and GGF Global Board Members) were asked to rank the four consolidated strategies in order of effectiveness and importance. Votes were compiled based on which strategies were ranked at the top, or in the top 2:

**Table 8: Rating the effectiveness of consolidated strategies**

Number of ranking votes (figures include ties)	Brazil advisors and managers		Other observers	
	Votes for top strategy	Votes for top 2 strategies	Votes for top strategy	Votes for top 2 strategies
Capacity Building	4	5	3	5
Networking	3	6	2	2
Advocacy	2	4	4	5
Direct Services	0	0	1	1

Most Brazilian advisors found it difficult to rank the four strategy areas, emphasizing their interrelation, but see capacity building and networking as most important, followed by advocacy. Outside observers place relatively *more* emphasis on advocacy and relatively *less* emphasis on networking. Again, Brazilian advisors' greater emphasis on networking reflects their explicit focus on networking strategies and movement building, as well as their personal involvement in creating important environmental networks in Brazil over the past 10-15 years.

Both Brazilian advisors and outside observers find “direct services” to be the least effective strategy for the small grants model.

*(e) Program impacts by strategy area and grant cases*

In discussing program impacts, it is helpful to group the observed results by the four consolidated strategy areas. Case examples of grants in each of these areas highlight the dynamics through which small grants can promote change.

**(1) Impact mechanisms and examples: Capacity building strategies**

Some of the most visible impacts of GGF grants in Brazil have occurred through capacity building strategies. Observed impacts include:

- **Increase in survival rate and development of environmental organizations:** According to Brazil Board member Alcides Faria, more than 50% of important environmental organizations in Brazil at some point received a small grant. GGF often provides the initial funding to local environmental groups, financing organizations that have no fundraising experience and limited options. Perhaps the best example of the impact of small grants on the survival and development of organizations comes from the early experience of Fundação Francisco and GGF in Brazil: Fundação Francisco and GGF grants provided early support for the development of the environmental organizations led by current GGF Brazil board members. These NGOs and their leaders have come to play an important role in various areas of environmental activism in Brazil.
- **Strengthening the links between advisor organizations and their grantees:** In collaboration with GGF, the advisor organizations have provided small grants for a new generation of environmental NGOs in the country. These new grants have helped to strengthen the relationship between advisor organizations and their grantees by promoting ongoing collaboration and providing financial resources for organizational development and specific activities.
- **Taking the organization to the “next level”:** A common observation in many of the interviews centered on the role of small grants in increasing the confidence and self-esteem of organizations funded, leading the groups to the “next level” in terms of effectiveness, growth, broadening of work, and credibility within local communities. Often, GGF provides early funding to community groups, providing a timely boost in quality and confidence.

**Grant Case #1: Serra da Abelha and FEEC****GGF advisor:** Miriam Prochnow, APREMAVI**Region/biome:** Atlantic Rainforest

Serra da Abelha and FEEC are small, local community groups working with Atlantic Rainforest issues. The initial funding from GGF led these groups to gain independence and visibility, beyond what could have been expected from the size of the grant, enabling the groups to achieve a “leap in quality”.

In the case of Serra da Abelha, a small grant was utilized to develop educational materials (“cartilha”) that surprised GGF because of the quality and accuracy of the materials. FEEC used a GGF grant to restructure their web site, and today this site serves as a reference for community organizations in the state of Santa Catarina. The grant also enabled FEEC to participate in meetings and engage in community mobilization activities, providing greater visibility for their work.

As a result of the grants, the work of the Serra da Abelha and FEEC groups gained “their own light,” in the words of Miriam Prochnow. Miriam underscored that the impact of these grants went beyond the financial support, making these organizations feel “valued, competent and capable,” as well as recognized within their communities. Miriam also noted the parsimonious use of funds of these and other grantees, which save and spend judiciously down to the last cent.

**Grant Case #2: Diadema and AGUA****GGF advisor:** Rubens Born, Vitae Civilis**Region/biome:** Atlantic Region

Brazil advisor Rubens Born also underscored the themes of “greater community visibility” and “organizational self-esteem,” providing two examples from GGF grants.

A small grant enabled a group in Diadema to finance a book about its work. This NGO was already somewhat known and had years of activity, however there was no documentation about its work. As a result of the grant, the organization was strengthened within its community and gained self-esteem and encouragement.

Similarly, a GGF grant to AGUA (the Association of Guapiruvu Residents) enabled this organization to increase its community visibility and demand for services. AGUA works with water resources protection, and used a \$5,000 fund for various activities, including equipment for eco-tourism development. With just \$1,500 of these funds, AGUA establish a rotating fund, lending money at low interest rates for local community projects. This “re-granting” strategy has been utilized by other small grants programs in Brazil.

(Note: The AGUA grant is profiled in detail in a separate document)

**Grant Case #3: Camaragibe****GGF advisor:** Alexandre Araújo, ASPAN**Region/biome:** Recife metropolitan area, Northeast Brazil

The Camaragibe case in Recife illustrates how a small grant for organizational development can help broaden the work of a local community group. GGF provided a small capacity building grant to a local group in Camaragibe, which already had legal standing and had been working with children in poor neighborhoods on health and environmental projects. However, the work up to that point had been “timid” given the community needs and scope for greater activity.

The GGF grant enabled the organization to expand activities in areas such as recycling, environmental education, urban sanitation and advocacy. The Camaragibe group also began working on an income generation project with a group of trash recyclers, or “sorters.” Today, the organization has established a recycling center and works with 12-14 sorters, selling directly to local industries that receive recycled materials. Before this “quality leap” in organizational capacity, the trash sorters earned R\$80 (US\$32 per month on average). Today they earn R\$300-320 (US\$120-128) per month – a major impact on their livelihood.

Alexandre Araújo, the GGF advisor who recommended the grant, credits the grantee for their hard work and results, but notes that the GGF grant had an important role, not only providing financial resources but also increasing the visibility and self-esteem of the Camaragibe group. Alexandre recounts that the organization felt stronger after the grant, and gained greater visibility and recognition within their community, which before was unaware of the group’s existence.

GGF has expanded its support in the Recife metropolitan region by helping to create the Forum of Communities for the Environment, which convenes 60-70 community groups in the area, working on issues such as urban trash, environmental education, recycling, and advocacy for better urban sanitation. This collective, networked approach has created a broader movement by disseminating best practices and consolidating advocacy activities.

Alexandre believes that these small interventions in the Recife region have had a noticeable impact, helping to improve quality of life within the communities in the area.

- Ability to leverage GGF funding to obtain other resources: A fourth type of observed impact under “Capacity Building” strategies has to do with the ability of grantees to leverage the initial GGF funding to obtain further resources, allowing them to reach the critical mass required to have a greater impact. GGF advisors highlighted examples such as the GGF support for FORMADS-MS, the environmental forum of

the state of Mato Grosso do Sul, which enabled the organization to sustain itself and later obtain US\$200,000 in funding from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Similarly, GGF support for the Brazilian NGO Forum (Forum Brasileiro de ONGs), paved the way for the organization to receive follow up support from the Ford Foundation.

- Ensuring continuity of work by funding program staff and program operations: *Continuity of work* is seen as one of the key success factors for local environmental programs. GGF capacity building grants in Brazil have made a tangible difference in specific cases by allowing local groups to hire or maintain full-time or part-time program staff, thereby reducing their reliance on volunteers. The flexibility of GGF funds also allows organizations to use funds in support of operational activities. Communities become more trusting and more engaged in the work of local environmental groups when they see commitment through continuous action and engagement.

**Grant Case #4: Vida Pantaneira (Porto Murtinho) and CEPPEC**

**GGF advisor:** Alcides Faria, ECOA

**Region/biome:** Pantanal, state of Mato Grosso do Sul

GGF has provided capacity building support to several programs in the Pantanal region of Brazil, including Vida Pantaneira (“Pantanal Life”) in the town of Porto Murtinho and the CEPPEC project, operating in the settlement of Andalucia. In both cases, GGF funding has enabled programs to hire or maintain program staff, as well as fund program operations to help ensure continuity of services.

Vida Pantaneira provides a range of social and environmental services to local communities, in areas such as environmental education, housing, and women’s issues. The organization received two grants, for R\$8,700 and R\$8,200 (around US\$3,000 at the time). The Vida Pantaneira grants allowed Cida, a dynamic local community leader, to build her group’s capacity and devote herself full time to the organization, leading to an expansion of local activities and services. Compared to other sources of funding, Cida highlighted the flexibility and minimal bureaucracy of GGF funds, funds that can be used to support operations without linkage to specific projects or activities. The GGF grants also have enabled Vida Pantaneira to successfully obtain funding from other sources.

The CEPPEC program, another grantee in the region, focuses on sustainable income generation projects in agro-forestry (“baru” nuts) and local arts and crafts (weaving based on natural fibers). CEPPEC is a larger program, and receives most of its funding from sources such as the UNDP (United Nations Development Program) and the Program for Small Projects (PPP/“Gefinho”, a small grants program sponsored by the World Bank environmental facility).

CEPPEC has used GGF funding to support two local coordinators for the production of nuts, woven baskets, tourism and other project initiatives. According to CEPPEC

director Rosane, as a result of the grant support, these two local leaders can devote much more time to the project, ensuring the continuity of services. Among its results, CEPPEC has successfully provided new income sources for several families involved in crafts and nut production. In particular, it has supported the women in the community who previously had few economic options, increasing their earnings as well as their personal confidence and self-esteem.

As a result of the CEPPEC project, the incidence of “queimadas” (burning to clear land) has diminished as the community perceives the value of local renewable natural resources. The project currently serves as a model and reference point for nearly 120 other settlements in the state; it provides “horizontal” training and other knowledge sharing activities. CEPPEC has been featured in *Globo Rural* and other magazines. Project director Rosane underscored the importance of continuity, frequency of interaction, and “persistence” for the success of the project. While GGF provided modest support, the funding for program staff clearly played a role in the continuity of services.

- Increase in visibility of organizations and issues: A related impact has to do with increasing the visibility of organizations within the community, and more broadly, with increasing awareness for the issues championed by these organizations. Visibility for organizations often promotes more community engagement and involvement. This greater visibility sometimes extends beyond the local communities, bringing issues to the regional or national stage: for instance, the GGF grantee APEDEMA in the state of Bahia (profiled further below) has become a regional and national reference point for environmental issues related to the proposed São Francisco River water diversion project. The New York Times has interviewed GGF board member Renato Cunha, from GAMBÁ, who oversees grants related to the São Francisco River diversion (including grants to other organizations such as CEPEDS and SEAN).
- Support for the dissemination of important environmental information: As mentioned in the case studies above for Serra da Abelha and FEED, GGF grants sometimes lead to the dissemination of important environmental information, leading to greater awareness of environmental issues and community engagement. Building awareness is often the first step in addressing environmental challenges.

## **(2) Impact mechanisms and examples: Networking strategies**

Impacts of networking strategies have been more difficult to assess because GGF grants often have been a part of a broader network building process. However, in specific cases GGF grants have clearly played an important role in strengthening environmental networks working on specific issues, such as the opposition to the Paraguay-Paraná

Waterway (through support for the Living Rivers Coalition, via its associated network secretariats and members) and the São Francisco River diversion project.

Networking activities have better results when there is a *clear focus and objective*. Grants with vague objectives such as “network strengthening” are less effective than grants with specific networking building goals, and a clear plan. Similarly, funds for participation in meetings are more effective when there is a clear objective for attendance. GGF IFI (International Financial Institutions) Board member Daniel Taillant underscores the importance of funding that gets “the right people in the right meetings.”

GGF funding for networking contributed to specific outcomes through the following mechanisms:

- Ensuring the survival of environmental networks whose funding had lapsed: In specific moments in time, GGF has stepped in to ensure the survival of existing environmental networks whose funding had lapsed. For instance, GGF provided a grant for the continuation of the Mato Grosso State Forum for Environmental and Development (FORMAD/MT, Forum Matogrossense de Meio Ambiente e Desenvolvimento). As a result of the grant, FORMAD continues to exist and has an important role in state level policy. The organization has since obtained new funding from other sources. In another example, GGF provided funding for the NGO housing the secretariat of the Brazilian NGO and Social Movements Forum (Forum Brasileiro do ONGS e Movimentos Sociais) at a critical moment in time when the organization and the Forum had no other funding options.
- Supporting the early formation of key networks at specific moments in time: As with early support for individual organizations, GGF grants have helped environmental networks expand and gain visibility. GGF provided early support for the formation of the Cerrado Network, an environmental network that works with issues related to the savannah region of Central/Northeast Brazil, an ecosystem that is increasingly under pressure from the rapid expansion of soybean cultivation. Today, the Cerrado Network has gained political importance with the Brazilian Ministry of the Environment. As mentioned in the Camaragibe case above, GGF grants also contributed to the creation of the Community Forum for the Environment (Forum de Comunidades para o Meio Ambiente), a network of community organizations working together on urban sanitation issues in poor areas of the Recife metropolitan area. Also in the Northeast region of Brazil, GGF has supported the Semi-Arid Network (ASA - Articulação no Semi-Arido) in the state of Maranhão, in an initiative to enhance the coordination and networking of organizations for semi-arid environmental issues. But perhaps the highest profile recent GGF networking effort has been its work on the São Francisco River diversion project, briefly profiled below:



**Grant Case #5: APEDEMA, SEAN, and the São Francisco River Diversion**

**GGF advisor:** Renato Cunha, Alcides Faria, and Alexandre Araújo

**Region/biome:** São Francisco River basin, Northeast region of Brazil

GGF provided support for APEDEMA-BA (The Permanent Assembly of Organizations for Environmental Defense in Bahia – Assembléia Permanente das Entidades de Defesa do Meio Ambiente na Bahia), a key environmental network in the state of Bahia. Simultaneously, GGF supported SEAN – the Northeast Region Environmental NGOs Secretariat. These organizations became key players in challenging the proposed diversion of the São Francisco River. This expensive, proposed mega-project would divert water from the São Francisco River, the largest river in the semi-arid Northeast, to areas of chronic drought but low population density, primarily in the state of Ceará to the north. Both the economic benefits and environmental impacts of this project remain major question marks.

GGF provided two grants specifically targeting the São Francisco issue (one through IRN and the Global Board, and the second through the Brazil Board). This support enabled APEDEMA and SEAN to initiate and sustain regional mobilization and articulation around the diversion issue, leading to the establishment of Permanent Forum for the Defense of the São Francisco (Forum Permanente de Defesa do São Francisco), a civil society network that works exclusively to influence policies for the São Francisco. The Forum is now comprised of some 60 organizations involved with São Francisco issues.

This movement led to the establishment the federal Committee for the Geographic Basin of the São Francisco, under the Secretary of Water Resources, Ministry of the Environment. (The Brazilian water resources policy requires the formation of such a committee for each river basin to define policies and water use plans.) The creation of this committee was a major step towards sustainable water resource management for the São Francisco. The committee is composed of government and civil society representatives, and has been strongly influenced by the Permanent Forum for the Defense of the São Francisco, which has helped to ensure equitable participation in this committee, to select member organizations, and to influence the agenda.

As a result of these efforts, the management of the São Francisco is now part of the national policy agenda, and the proposed project is now under greater scrutiny. The discourse has evolved from one of “diversion” to one of “management” and “revitalization” of the São Francisco, including broader themes such as industrial pollution, deforestation, hydroelectric power, irrigation infrastructure, as well as impacts on riverine populations. APEDEMA and GAMBÁ (the organization led by GGF Brazil advisor Renato Cunha) have become reference points for the movement – for churches, universities, the press – not only in the Salvador area but nationally and internationally. This work has been the subject of several newspaper and magazine articles, including an article in the *New York Times* and the British paper *The Guardian*.

- Gaining representation of networks in key policy councils: As highlighted in the case above, networking strategies have sometimes resulted in greater participation of civil society organizations in government policy-setting committees. In addition to the São Francisco case, above, GGF support helped FORMADS-MS, the Environmental and Sustainable Development Forum of the State of Mato Grosso do Sul, participate in debates with the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) on policy for the Pantanal biome. In another example, GGF has made grants that led to greater civil society participation in committees to monitor the planning and implementation of tourism development projects in Northeast Brazil, sponsored by the Inter-American Development Bank through the PRODETUR program.

In both cases, increased participation in policy-setting councils led to a greater community voice and ability influence ongoing policy and planning debates. In the FORMADS-MS case, the GGF grant helped to mobilize 50 institutions in 11 municipalities, including non-profits and associations (“sindicatos”). These institutions participated in public consultations carried out by the IADB, leading to greater, formalized involvement of civil society in the planning and monitoring process.

Under the PRODETUR II program, local communities are now informed earlier in the planning process and are able to provide input into regional development plans called “PDITS” (Plan for Integrated Development of Sustainable Tourism – Plano de Desenvolvimento Integrado de Turismo Sustentável). This has been an improvement in relation to the process utilized under PRODETUR I (the first iteration of the IADB program), where communities were typically informed only after the PDITS plans had already been completed, or were far enough along as to preclude any change.

- Enabling small organizations to “plug” into existing networks: Finally, networking grant strategies have sometimes enabled small environmental groups to participate in broader environmental networks. These networks benefit from gaining scale and from having new members who work on the “bleeding edge” of environmental issues. The small organizations, in turn, feel better supported through their participation in the network. Making this happen often involves small investments to purchasing communication equipment.

### **(3) Impact mechanisms and examples: Advocacy strategies**

GGF is one of the few grant sources that provides support for advocacy activities. Advocacy strategies are often used in conjunction with capacity building and networking strategies (the São Francisco case is a good example). The success of advocacy strategies hinges on identifying an emergency situation and forging alliances. Movement building is typically carried out over time, sometimes with multiple grants to different organizations working in the same region or issue area.

GGF funding for advocacy contributed to specific outcomes through the following mechanisms:

- Altering the balance of power in key policy debates: As the São Francisco example illustrates, advocacy activities (often coupled with networking efforts) can alter the balance of power in key policy debates. The support for FORMADS-MS, discussed above, provides another example. Similarly, GGF grants in the state of Bahia have helped to strengthen the participation of local communities in councils overseeing the PRODETUR tourism development program. This new consultation process will enable these communities to influence the planning process for the new PRODETUR II project in tangible ways.
- Increasing awareness of important issues on a regional or national scale: Advocacy strategies, again tied to networking efforts, play a critical role in bringing environmental issues to the regional or national agenda, as illustrated by the São Francisco case. GGF's support for the Semi-Arid Network (Articulação no Semi-Arido - ASA), in the Northeastern state of Maranhão provides another example, profiled below:

**Grant Case #6: ASA**

**GGF advisor:** Alexandre Araújo, ASPAN

**Region/biome:** São Francisco River basin, Northeast region of Brazil

GGF worked with the organization Semi-Arid Network (Articulação no Semi Arido - ASA) to provide critical seed funding for the identification of organizations involved with semi-arid issues in the state of Maranhão. At the time, the state was not included in the regional and national agenda for semi-arid environmental issues, even though Maranhão is subject to the same problems of drought and desertification as its neighboring states.

The funding allowed ASA to carry out an inventory of organizations at the municipal level, outside the capital city of São Luis. Even though the grant amount was modest, Alexandre Araújo, the GGF Advisor overseeing the grant, believes that it was very strategic at the time. The inventory of programs and subsequent articulation and advocacy activities led to the inclusion of the state in the regional and national agenda for semi-arid areas. The GGF support also opened the doors to other sources of support, such as the state government and UNICEF funds.

Today Maranhão is part of “the map” for semi-arid issues at the state and national levels. The advocacy activities supported by GGF played a key role in this outcome. Alexandre believes this example underscores the important role of small grants in supporting advocacy activities for “burning issues” in specific moments in time.

- Changing or stopping proposed projects with potential environmental impacts:  
Perhaps the most visible, direct impact of GGF grants has been to contribute to altering the course of proposed projects with serious environmental consequences. Early in its history in Brazil, GGF funding and support to the Living Rivers Coalition (Coalizão Rios Vivos) and its member organizations contributed to the successful opposition to the construction of the Paraguay-Paraná Waterway. The project, which would have had devastating impacts, has been abandoned. More recently, GGF supported community advocacy activities against the building of the Barra Grande Dam, in the state of Santa Catarina:

**Grant Case #7: Barra Grande**

**GGF advisor:** Miriam Prochnow, APREMAVI

**Region/biome:** Atlantic Rainforest, state of Santa Catarina

GGF provided support for community opposition to a hydroelectric project at Barra Grande, a high profile recent case in Brazil. The Barra Grande hydroelectric project was based on an incorrect initial environmental and social impact assessment. As part of a larger effort, GGF provided funding for a book about the project, to raise awareness and “set the record straight.” This publication was seen as fundamental for bringing the issue to the national spotlight and catalyzing support for the opposition movement.

As a result of the broad movement contesting the hydroelectric dam, the project was forced to provide compensatory environmental measures including the purchase and donation of nearly 6,000 hectares of land for preservation, as well as additional compensation for displaced families.

The funding for the book was a small part of a broader advocacy effort coordinated by Miriam Prochnow and others, but played an important supporting role in the process.

**(4) Impact mechanisms and examples: Direct services strategies**

Direct service projects (“field projects”) often require larger levels of sustained funding for implementation. Given GGF’s relatively small funding levels – and focus on capacity/movement building in Brazil – direct services are seen as a less effective strategy by most Brazil advisors. However, positive impacts were observed in specific cases:

- GGF grants can help support direct services in the context of building organizational capacity and leveraging other resources. These are cases when the initial funding by GGF enabled local groups to broaden their work and secure other forms of support for the provision of direct services. The Vida Pantaneira (Porto Murтинho) grant, profiled above, provides a good example: the initial organizational support grant enabled the

provision of direct services in several areas, including local housing construction (using volunteer labor and donated construction materials). Similarly, GGF's initial support for the Camaragibe initiative in Recife led to expanded provision of community services such as recycling.

- GGF funding for direct services can be more effective when made in tandem with other funding resources. For instance, GGF reinforced the CEPPEC project (primarily funded by PPP/GEF) with additional support to hire program staff, ensuring better continuity of work.
- More broadly, field projects do have an important role in the environmental movement, even if they require higher levels of funding. Several observers noted the importance of the “demonstration effect” of direct services projects, validating sustainable economic development models. Direct service projects often generate income for local families, as evidenced by the CEPPEC experience with sustainable local economic development. And finally, direct services projects provide important feedback for public policy related to local economic development: policy formulation is informed by the results of actual projects. In fact, some of the organizations led by GGF Brazil advisors are engaged in a variety of direct services and environmental education projects outside the scope of GGF grants (e.g., APREMAVI, ECOA).

#### *(f) Key success factors*

In addition to analyzing program impacts, Brazil advisors were asked to identify the common characteristics of more successful grants.

- Profile of grantee organization: Many advisors emphasize the *profile of the grantee organization* as a key success factor for positive grant outcomes (grantees can be individual groups or a network of groups that have been brought together by an umbrella organization). The following are seen as important organizational characteristics:
  - Grantee with some history, track record and commitment to the issues. The grantee could be a “new” organization from a legal standpoint, but the work already existed. A good example is the funding for Vida Pantaneira, profiled above. Cida, the group leader, had been engaged in community work for a significant amount of time prior to the grant and official formation of the organization.
  - Organization with clear objectives, with the ability to formulate a concrete plan and manage the activities/initiatives. Grants are most successful when there is a clear goal and direction.

- Leadership capacity is emphasized by both Brazil advisors and GGF global board members (particularly John Knox, director of the Earth Island Institute).
- At the forefront of environmental issues. Organizations at the forefront of local environmental issues have proven to be more effective grantees. A good example is APEDEMA's advocacy in the São Francisco river valley.
- Strong linkages to the community and local support are also seen as key success factors for GGF grantees, both by GGF advisors and external observers familiar with small grants programs. The Camaragibe case in Recife provides a good example of an initiative with strong community linkages.
- Organizations that combine social and environmental dimensions are seen to be more effective in reaching the goals of sustainable environmental protection.

Additionally, advisors highlight other factors that influence grant success, including:

- Advisors' understanding of the opportunity being funded: knowledge of issues, context, and timing of grant; and
- Ability to monitor and support grantee during the execution of planned grant activities.

Brazil advisors note that more successful grants often end up leading to more demand for services and/or greater participation in programs by local communities, which also leads to a greater need for funding – a “double-edged sword.”

Brazil advisors were also asked to identify common characteristics of less successful grants. These were generally a mirror image of the key success factors identified above:

- Lack of program focus and limited operating history;
- Limited strategic planning capacity of organization;
- Weak leadership;
- Weak links to community; and
- Dissenting internal stakeholders, lack of cohesion.

While mentioning specific examples of less successful grants, GGF advisors emphasize that the GGF grant model involves *risk-taking and experimentation*, and that they do not expect all grants to be successful.

The open ended (“unaided recall”) exercise was followed by a more structured evaluation of key success factors for GGF grants. For this exercise, Brazil advisors rated a pre-determined list of several factors that may influence grant outcomes. Observers outside

the Brazil Board, including members of GGF Global and IFI Boards, also rated the same items. The following table summarizes the result of the rating exercise:

**Table 9: Rating key success factors for GGF grants**

<b>Effectiveness of strategies 1=low, 4=high (Top 5 factors in color)</b>	<b>Brazil advisors score</b>	<b>Other observers score</b>
<b>Timing of grant, availability of funding at the right moment</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>3.3 (5)</b>
<b>Turn around time from request to funding, minimal bureaucracy</b>	<b>4.0</b>	3.1 (9)
<b>Flexibility of grant: grant money can be used for a different activity if strategy changes.</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>3.7 (2)</b>
<b>Choosing the right grantee</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>3.5 (3)</b>
<b>Having an ongoing relationship (mentoring) with grantee</b>	<b>3.4</b>	3.0 (10)
Choosing the right type of strategy	3.3	3.2 (8)
Ability of GGF grantee to obtain matching funds and other resources, leveraging GGF grant	3.3	<b>3.5 (3)</b>
Ability to provide follow up funding to grantee	3.1	3.0 (10)
Availability of technical support for grantee (in planning, administration, etc.), from GGF or other sources	2.9	2.7 (13)
Relative size of grant (e.g. \$3,000 vs. \$5,000)	2.7	3.0 (10)
Coordination and “critical mass”: grant made in conjunction with wider network of civil society activity, other funding	2.7	3.3 (7)
Coordination with GGF Board: grant coordinated w/ work of other advisors and/or GGF Global Board	2.3	<b>3.3 (5)</b>
Coordination with Brazil advisor organization: grant related to work that your own organization was doing	1.9	<b>3.8 (1)</b>

The speed and flexibility of the GGF model are seen as key factors in reaching positive grant outcomes. Among the 13 factors rated, Brazil advisors feel that timing of grant, speed/low bureaucracy, and flexibility are key success factors, with ratings of 3.6 and above. All these factors relate to the core of the GGF operational philosophy.

Other important factors include the “choosing the right grantee” and having an ongoing mentoring/monitoring relationship with the grantee. These answers are consistent with the advisors’ earlier, open-ended description of the characteristics of more successful grants, which emphasize these same points.

Brazil advisors express a range of viewpoints on whether it is best to concentrate funding on areas/issues where a *critical mass* of environmental activity already exists. Some advisors feel that this was a more effective approach, while others believe that GGF should focus on areas/issues that are under-funded or neglected. In analyzing the GGF experience in Brazil, both approaches have been utilized, depending on the specific situation.

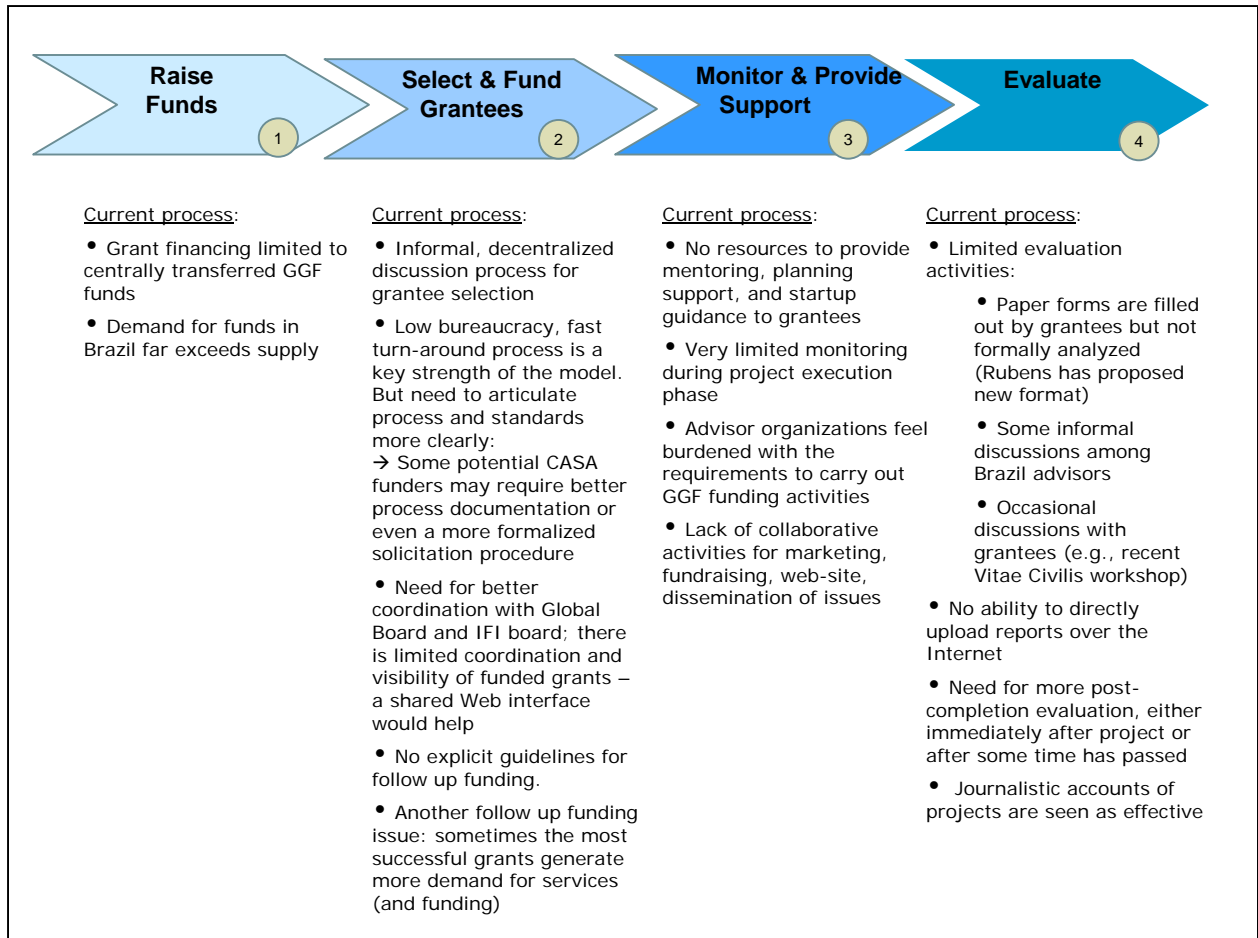
External observers (third column, above) also emphasize the importance of the GGF operation model (grant flexibility, speed, minimal bureaucracy), as well as choosing the right grantee. However, compared to Brazil advisors, they perceive relatively greater importance in coordinating grant-making activities and strategy between the GGF Global Board, the GGF Brazil Board, and regional organizations managed by the Brazil Board members.

***(g) Brief operational assessment***

The interviews with Global and Brazil Board members also examined operational issues such as grantee selection, coordination between boards, follow-up funding, grant monitoring and evaluation. Specific issues were identified for further discussion based on a GGF grant funding “lifecycle” model for Brazil.



**Figure 7: Assessment of operational issues and gaps along the grant funding lifecycle**



## **7. The effectiveness of small grants in Brazil: general observations from study participants outside the GGF Brazil Board**

Interviews were carried out with several additional observers, including directors of Brazilian environmental and social NGOs, directors of other small grants programs, past and present GGF staff/advisors, and other observers familiar with the GGF program in Brazil or small grants programs in general. The objective of the interviews was to gain a broader perspective on the role of small grants in the Brazilian environmental/social movement and, whenever possible, identify other small grants models and best practices in Brazil (a brief inventory of other small grants programs was presented in section 6(a), above.)

Most external observers had limited knowledge of GGF's grant portfolio and history in Brazil, and talked about small grants programs in broader terms. They expressed a broad array of viewpoints and opinions, but a few important themes emerged, some echoing previous points by Brazil advisors:

- Important impact of small grants on grassroots organizations: Several observers underscore the impact of small grants on local groups. Even modest grant amounts can represent a significant source of support for local community groups, particularly during their early years. (In fact, the average GGF grant size of \$3,000 was equivalent to over 50% of the operational budget of organizations funded in 2004.) Brazil has an estimated 1,600 environmental organizations, but only 300 have enough funding to hire staff. Most organizations rely solely on volunteers.

Jean Pierre Leroy, from FASE, sees the dedication and passion of volunteer organizations as “one of the greatest qualities of the environmental movement in Brazil,” but notes that “these numerous organizations scattered throughout the country are fragile” and that support at the level of US\$3,000 can be vital for a small group. Other observers highlight how these small organizations are accustomed to operating with so little money that the funds received usually go a long way. According to Glenn Switkes, from IRN, “many local groups operate on such as ‘shoestring’ that even basic activities become difficult, such as organizing protests, public meetings, campaigns in the media, or putting out a publication. It doesn’t take much money and this can be decisive in a certain issue or region.”

Many external observers also mention the self-esteem, or prestige effect of small grants. According to Tamara Mohr, from Both ENDS, “with small grants you need to be very creative. If you have a startup fund, you can leverage other funds or in-kind donations.”

- Greater effectiveness of small grants vs. large grants: Some of the external observers clearly view small grants as more effective than large projects, with higher “return on the dollar,” in the words of Beto Borges. Tamara Mohr notes that small grants go to special kinds of organizations, organizations that “do things not because they have a big project approved.” Tamara emphasizes that the impact of small grants depends on the person behind the organization, and that grantee choice is key. In particular, small organizations have much better involvement with local people, a major barrier for larger environmental organizations. According to Tamara, “small grants by definition go to local people... [larger organizations] come and leave, so sustainability is best served by making sure local people are the ones who do the work.”
- Benefits of program focus: Some external observers emphasize the benefits of focusing on a specific region or issue area. Examples of small grants programs with a specific focus include PPP/Gefinho (Cerrado region) and Fundo Dema (state of Pará, in the Amazon region). Overall, GGF has had a much broader focus in Brazil, but each of its regional Brazil Board advisors has focused on a narrower set of regional issues.

- Importance of networking: Most external observers emphasize the role of small grants for movement building and networking. Networking is seen as an important strategy to link small and large organizations, resulting in greater critical mass required to gain legitimacy and influence policy. Networking also allows smaller, more isolated organizations to feel connected and supported by a larger movement – sometimes a small investment in communication equipment is sufficient. Even traditional conservationist organizations, such as The Nature Conservancy have recently become more engaged in networking activities in Brazil.

Tamara Mohr talked about the unique networking culture of the Brazilian environmental movement; people respect and rely on one another. In her view, this is lacking in Europe, where there is more competition between organizations. Humberto Mafra also emphasizes that through networks “people develop a perspective of movement building, of partnership, of ‘co-responsibility.’; People begin to reason strategically in terms of a ‘movement’.” He also notes that when a network exists, people monitor one another; there is good accountability with regard to activities and use of funds.

- Role of experimentation and innovation: An important common theme is the role of experimentation and innovation with small grants. In evaluating the longer-term results of small grants programs, Tamara Mohr reasons that “small grants are not always successful or never successful. Some organizations funded are blooming, others disappeared.” As Glenn Switkes puts it: “You can make some mistakes, but these are not as serious as when you give away a million dollars.” Humberto Mafra talks about the opportunistic philosophy of the initial grants through Fundação Francisco; of making “bets” on people and organizations in whom they believed.

Small grants also allow for experimentation with innovative activities. John Knox from the Earth Island Institute, talks about a program in Borneo, where “one of the magical things was providing video cameras to help communities document their boundaries, do mapping, and tell the story through video to neighboring villages. The conversational style fit into the local culture.”

- Importance of field projects: Some observers (particularly those involved in larger projects) emphasize the importance of field projects, particularly experimentation with alternative sustainable development models that provide new income generating opportunities for local communities. These kinds of projects also have an important role of helping to orient development policy through feedback from real world experience. TNC and PPP/Gefinho focus on these types of projects, which generally require larger, sustained funding. GGF sometimes contributes to field projects (for instance, CEPPEC), but usually in tandem with other funding sources. Don Sawyer from PPP/Gefinho notes that, although projects need to be led by communities, it is important to provide appropriate technical support from outside, in disciplines such as project management, production technologies, marketing, and even political articulation.

- Role of small grants in building new leadership: Finally, many observers (e.g., Humberto Mafra, John Knox, Denise Bebbington) make a strong case for the role of small grants in building new leadership in the environmental movement. According to John Knox, from Earth Island Institute, “building youth leadership is an important part of building movements.” He suggests that GGF should consider an explicit strategy and activities for building youth leadership. Humberto Mafra talks about his historical experience with Fundação Francisco and its role in investing in environmental leaders. He notes that “some of the great leaders in the environmental movement [in Brazil] today received support from Fundação Francisco.”

Both John Knox and Humberto Mafra emphasize that there are many good people in Brazil: leaders, potential leaders and “social entrepreneurs.” Though organizations such as Ashoka and Avina provide leadership support, demand for funds far outstrips supply.

## **8. Summary and conclusions**

The Brazil case study focuses primarily on the experience of the Brazil Advisory Board, which accounted for 84% of grants in the country over the past five years. Brazilian advisors have collaborated closely for many years and share a vision of socio-environmentalism (“socio-ambientalismo”), which has been a guiding philosophy behind their grant-making in the country. Compared to other GGF regional boards, the Brazilian advisors have emphasized strategies oriented toward networking and movement building, but also have placed similar weight on capacity building grants that promote the emergence and development of grassroots organizations.

The case study presents a conceptual model that describes the mechanisms through which small grants promote environmental and social change. GGF grants in the country primarily lead to intermediate program impacts related to building “social capital” – stronger grassroots organizations, networks, and civil society institutions that enable citizens to influence the course of social and environmental issues in the country. By building the fabric of social capital in the country, GGF grants result in longer term impacts related to environmental and social change. The program “levers” utilized include the choice of grant strategy and a series of factors related to program operations such as grantee choice and the grant-making process – characterized by speed, flexibility, minimal bureaucracy, as well as opportunity recognition.

In evaluating the effectiveness four strategic approaches put forth in this case study (capacity building, networking, advocacy, and direct services), the members of the Brazil board emphasize the interrelation between the four strategy areas. For instance, networking strategies require prior capacity building activities to strengthen regional organizations. Similarly, the formation of networks increases the effectiveness of movement building and advocacy strategies.

Capacity building strategies are seen as more important in areas with few established grassroots organizations. Networking strategies are more effective when there is already an established base of organizations, but more information exchange and coordinated “critical mass” is required to reach desired objectives. Advocacy strategies are most effective in specific, opportunistic moments in time – if these can be accurately identified. Direct services strategies, are generally seen as less effective under the GGF small grants model, but the importance of environmental education was emphasized. Overall, Brazil advisors find that networking and capacity building strategies are the most important strategies, followed closely by advocacy.

The identification and evaluation of program impacts (intermediate and longer term), was structured according to the four strategy areas, and seven case studies were used to illustrate program impacts. Some of the most visible impacts of GGF grants in Brazil have been through *capacity building strategies*. Observed impacts include:

- Increase in survival rate and development of environmental organizations;
- Strengthening the links between advisor organizations and their grantees;
- Increase in confidence and self-esteem of organizations, taking the organization to the next level (growth, independence, broader work);
- Ability to leverage GGF funding to obtain other resources;
- Ensuring continuity of work by funding program staff and program operations (less reliance on volunteers); Continuity of work is seen as key success factors;
- Increase in visibility of organizations and issues; promote more community involvement;
- Support for the dissemination of important environmental information.

There is a great need for capacity building grants in Brazil. The country has an estimated 1,600 registered environmental organizations, most operating with minimal, if any, funding (of these 1,600 organizations, 1,300 rely only on volunteers.) According to Brazil Board member Alcides Faria, more than 50% of important environmental organizations in Brazil at some point received a small grant. (In fact, Fundação Francisco and GGF provided early support for the development of the organizations led by the current GGF Brazil Board members.) GGF often provides the initial funding to local environmental groups, financing organizations that have no fundraising experience and limited options. It is important to note that the average GGF grant (US\$3,000) *corresponded to over 50% of the average budget of organizations funded in Brazil in 2004*. This attests to the importance and potential impact of GGF grants, even at relatively modest funding levels. These small organizations represent a huge untapped potential for the Brazilian environmental movement, with “capillarity” and support from local communities.

The impacts of *networking* activities have been more difficult to assess because GGF grants often play a small part of the overall network building process. In general, networking activities achieve better results when there is a *clear objective*. GGF funding for networks contributed to specific outcomes through the following mechanisms:

- Ensuring the survival of existing networks whose funding had lapsed;

- Supporting the early formation of key networks at specific moments in time;
- Gaining representation of networks in key policy councils;
- Enabling small local organizations to “plug” into existing networks.

GGF is one of the few grant sources that provides support for **advocacy** activities. Advocacy strategies are often used in conjunction with capacity building and networking strategies (the São Francisco case is a good example). The success of advocacy strategies hinges on identifying an emergency situation and forging alliances. Movement building is typically carried out over time, sometimes with multiple grants to different organizations working in the same region or issue area. GGF funding for advocacy contributed to specific outcomes through the following mechanisms:

- Altering the balance of power in key policy debates;
- Increasing awareness of important issues on a regional or national scale;
- Changing or stopping proposed projects with potential environmental impacts.

*Direct service* projects (“field projects”) often require larger levels of sustained funding for implementation. Given GGF’s relatively small funding levels – and focus on capacity/movement building in Brazil – direct services are seen as a less effective strategy by most Brazil advisors. However, positive impacts were observed in specific cases:

- GGF grants can be effective in providing direct services in the context of building organizational capacity and leveraging other resources (e.g., Porto Murinho case);
- GGF funding for direct services has also been made in tandem with other funding (e.g. CEPPEC)

Brazil advisors were asked to identify the characteristics of more successful grants – factors linked to program operational choices. They emphasize the choice of grantee and the profile of the grantee organization (or network) as a key success factor – grants are more successful when they involve organizations with some history, clear objectives, commitment to issues, leadership, and strong community ties. The GGF operational model – characterized by speed, low bureaucracy, and flexibility – is seen as a key success factor. Advisors also underscore the importance of “opportunity recognition” – understanding a specific opportunity, context, and timing of the grant. This is another point of differentiation of the GGF model, which relies on local experts.

Members of the Brazil board express a range of viewpoints on whether it is best to concentrate funding on areas/issues where a *critical mass* of environmental activity already exists. Some advisors feel that this was a more effective approach, while others believe that GGF should focus on areas/issues that are under-funded or neglected. In analyzing the GGF experience in Brazil, both approaches have been utilized, depending on the specific context.

Observers outside the Brazil Advisory Board also commented on the effectiveness of small grants in Brazil. A few important themes emerged, some echoing previous points by Brazil advisors:

- Important impact of small grants on grassroots organizations;\_\_
- Greater effectiveness of small grants vs. large grants;
- Benefits of program focus;
- Importance of networking;
- Role of experimentation and innovation;
- Importance of field projects; and
- Role of small grants in building new leadership.

In summary, GGF's program in Brazil has contributed to longer term impacts and changes in several areas:

**Table 10: Summary of longer term impacts**

- |  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In its early days, support for the organizations of GGF Advisors, now key players in the Brazilian environmental movement;</li><li>• Subsequent support for the creation of a new generation of environmental organizations and environmental leaders in Brazil. GGF funds reach the forefront of environmental issues, at the community level;</li><li>• Promoting closer links and collaboration between advisor organizations and their grantees;</li><li>• Supporting the growth of environmental networks and key organizations in these networks<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• These networks have led advocacy initiatives and participated in important policy debates at the regional and national levels;</li></ul></li><li>• Ensuring the survival of environmental organizations and networks in key moments in time (e.g., FORMAD-MT);</li><li>• Funding for project monitoring, advocacy, and network-building in specific issue areas, leading to increased regional/national visibility and concrete results<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Paraguay-Paraná Waterway</li><li>• São Francisco River diversion</li><li>• PRODETUR</li><li>• Barra Grande</li><li>• IADB Pantanal Program advocacy</li><li>• ASA Maranhão</li><li>• Camaragibe in Recife</li></ul></li></ul> |
|--|

- Enabling participation of civil society in government councils and policy making entities
  - São Francisco basin council
  - PRODETUR community councils
  - FORMADS-MS involvement in IADB programs for the Pantanal
  - CONAMA (national environmental council);
- Strengthening of the social-environmental perspective in Brazil (“socio-ambientalismo”); and
- More broadly, providing new opportunities for people to exercise their citizenship by actively participating in social and environmental debates in the country.



## **Appendix A: SWOT analysis based on the Brazil experience Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats**

### **SWOT Analysis – what does it mean?**

- Strengths
  - What is unique about GGF? How do we build on our strengths?
  - What are key messages that we should communicate to funders and other stakeholders?
- Weaknesses
  - What are areas for improvement? Why are these weaknesses?
  - How do we address and prioritize program improvements?
- Opportunities and recommendations
  - What are areas of unrealized potential?
  - What is our vision going forward?
- Threats and risks
  - What are the threats to the sustainability of the GGF model?
  - What happens if we don't address these threats and risks?
  - What are possible approaches to address these threats?

### **Strengths based on Brazil experience**

- One of the only programs in Brazil that focuses on building the capacity of small, grassroots environmental organizations and their networks
  - Grants are not strictly tied to projects – unique approach
- One of the only grants programs in Brazil to support environmental advocacy, often an effective strategy for promoting change
- Regional advisor model links GGF with local organizations and communities
  - Decentralized model with local decision making
  - Deep understanding of local issues
  - Trust and access to local environmental networks
- GGF advisors' reputation in the environmental movement provides instant credibility
  - (Story, when you mention GGF, people don't always know, but when you mention advisor names, they take you seriously)
- Fast turn-around enables support at critical times
  - Minimal bureaucracy and virtually no lead time

- Other small grants programs interviewed (GEF/PPP, Global Fund for Women) require several months to evaluate proposals and disburse grants
- Grants can address emerging and emergency situation
- Flexibility in the use of funds

### **Weaknesses (areas for improvement)**

- Advisors have limited time to devote to GGF activities
  - Very busy running their organizations, involved in national policy debates
  - Time is limited for grantee selection, mentoring/monitoring and evaluation
- Restricted selection process based on personal contacts
  - Process may not be reaching deserving organizations
  - CASA: some funders may be reluctant to invest in a model without an open solicitation process; at the very least, better articulation of the current process is needed
- No resources to provide mentoring/monitoring for grantee activities/initiatives
- Evaluation and feedback process can be more structured
- Better coordination with Global and IFI Boards for grant-making
- Unclear guidelines for follow up funding

### **Opportunities and recommendations**

- Huge unmet need for funding of grassroots organizations in Brazil
  - 1300 of 1600 environmental organizations rely only on volunteers
  - GGF can have an important role in building the “social capital” of the Brazilian environmental movement.
- Funding initiatives and potential opportunities
  - Investigate feasibility of establishing an “endowed fund,” leveraging the earnings from Brazil’s high interest rates
  - Establish a “loan fund,” in addition to grant program; survivability examples
  - Institutional sponsor model for CASA (e.g., ISA); with solidified institutional funding, other funds can be applied directly to grantees
    - What organization would be a good match?
  - Explore matching fund opportunities for CASA
    - PPP – GEF matching funds
    - USAID programs
    - Ford Foundation view: need to come up with innovative model; stress on leveraging funding, coming up with new funding sources

- Establish separate accounts for different donor priorities.
- Grantee support initiatives
  - Assistance with strategic planning is a fundamental need for grantees; ongoing mentoring for grantees
    - Lack of focus is a common problem, key aspect of less successful grants; CASA to address this issue
  - Leadership development activities, particularly youth leadership
  - Establish 3 year period for follow up funding, with performance review
  - Promote collaboration, exchanges, workshops among GGF grantees (growing base)
- Operational initiatives
  - Online “grant pipeline” to assist coordination between Global, IFI, and regional boards
  - More collaboration among board members’ organizations and grantees: joint marketing, web sites, funding, and dissemination activities
  - More structured evaluation activities: for internal assessment and donor messaging
- Coordination with other small grants funds to achieve critical mass in movement building (FASE, CESE, PPP)

### **Threats/Risks**

- Sustainability of grantees and networks
- Sustainability of GGF advisors’ organizations
- Ability of CASA to raise funds
  - Difficult funding environment
  - Lack of philanthropic tradition in Brazil
  - Requires time, contacts, experience
  - Will need funds for larger administrative structure
- Funding moving out of environmental area
  - International funders pulling out
  - Brazilian corporations funding their own foundations
- Donor policies and biases:
  - Resistance of funders to fund general operations
  - Resistance of funders to fund policy advocacy activities
  - Donors think top-down, favor large projects
  - Requirement of open (or well documented) selection process