

59<sup>th</sup> GEF Council Meeting  
December 7 – 11, 2020  
Virtual Meeting

Agenda Item 03

## **THE GEF MONITORING REPORT 2020**

**Recommended Council Decision**

The Council, having reviewed GEF/C.59/03, *The GEF Monitoring Report 2020*, welcomes the report, its framework tracking effectiveness and efficiency, as well as progress in reporting on results. The Council requests the Secretariat, in collaboration with Agencies, to continue to assess implementation progress made by projects and programs to ensure the timely delivery of expected global environmental benefits and to engage with Agencies on ways to improve and adapt to the current operating context affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. **In fiscal 2020, GEF-financed projects and programs made important progress toward generating global environmental benefits, even as the COVID-19 pandemic created multiple implementation challenges.** Progress data reported by Agencies indicate strong levels of disbursement and portfolio performance. At the same time, projects report facing higher risks than a year ago. They also indicate delays in implementation linked to the pandemic such as travel restrictions, which affect the ability to execute project activities on the ground. Agencies note that projects are adapting to the situation, including by using remote supervision techniques.

2. **Recent measures taken to enhance operational efficiency are starting to yield results.** These include adjustments to Agency fee schedules, more timely financial closure and adherence to project preparation deadlines. Progress is taking place in areas where the full effect of efficiency measures is already evident in projects under implementation. This is the case for the timely financial closure of projects, which is registering progress. In light of the extraordinary circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Secretariat invoked provisions in the GEF Cancellation Policy that allow for a cancellation deadline extension, extending deadlines for a total of six months. This provided Agencies and recipient countries with the extra time needed to prepare quality projects, as the extent of varied lockdowns and other restrictions was being rolled out. With this, a limited number of projects are so far receiving Agency fees as per the new commitment schedule set forth for projects approved after March 2019.

3. **Projects financed by the GEF Trust Fund are making progress, as they adapt implementation to travel and other restrictions linked to the pandemic.** The metrics presented in this report track operational effectiveness and efficiency, providing a balanced representation of the performance taking place across the portfolio in this ongoing context of COVID-19. They also build on the more strategic and performance-focused approach developed in last year's Monitoring Report, to assess progress in alignment to the core objectives of the Partnership. Key highlights include:

- Disbursement continues to remain strong overall with a ratio of 25 percent during fiscal 2020 up from 18 percent in the previous year. In fiscal 2020, GEF-financed projects disbursed \$0.7 billion, and 85 percent of projects which are five years into implementation have disbursed the majority of their financing.
- In the COVID-19 context, projects face start-up delay as indicated by the fact that half of the projects that reached first disbursement this year did so within 18 months of CEO endorsement, down from 78 percent in the previous year. Importantly, 33 projects had yet to start implementation 18 months after reaching CEO endorsement.
- Just below 60 percent of projects reached the mid-term review milestone within 4 years of implementation. Delays in reaching this critical project stage increase given challenges in fielding international consultants to help conduct the review. The result is that projects review progress and take corrective actions later during implementation, reducing opportunities for earlier adjustments and improvements where needed.

- While the share of completed projects with financial closure reached 84 percent in fiscal 2020, 80 percent of the projects which financially closed in the last year reached this milestone within the policy standard of 12 months from the submission of the terminal evaluation report. This highlights strong progress in the implementation of this efficiency measure now effective for over a year.
- In the context of COVID-19, the risk to project outcome is important to assess. Early in the pandemic, the reporting currently indicates that less than 20 percent of projects were rated by Agencies as facing high or substantial risks, and that only a minority of these indicate unsatisfactory implementation progress and outcome ratings.

4. Tracking and reporting results is a key element of the GEF-7 results architecture. It is based on data relating to the programming of new resources and Agency reporting on results during project implementation. Highlights provided by this report are:

- Projects under preparation in GEF-7 use Core Indicators directly linked to their focal area of funding, as well as other relevant Core Indicators, highlighting and capturing better the co-benefits generated.
- This Monitoring Report provides the first systematic account of progress in tracking actual results in the most recent two fiscal years. It includes results from GEF-6 projects that have reached the mid-term review and terminal evaluation report stages.
- In addition to using Core Indicators, projects continue to track results specific to their individual design. This includes developing and tracking custom indicators, as well as engaging in assessments that help promote the delivery of project outcomes.

5. This report also includes an analytical section on the Integrated Approach Pilot programs mid-way through implementation. It highlights that the three programs are on track to deliver their intended outcomes, while adapting to COVID-19. Salient points include:

- Both the Good Growth Partnership and Resilient Food System programs are achieving strong implementation progress, and the Sustainable Cities program is ramping up disbursement. Progress updates made available on each project by Agencies indicate that child projects have made a strong start and are overcoming implementation challenges.
- Just over three years into implementation, IAP programs are making significant contributions in achieving global environmental results. They report on results through the Core Indicators, and also at program level on progress made against their respective theory of change.
- Programs and their child projects are adopting effective and systematic ways to address cross-cutting areas to enhance implementation. The IAP programs are engaging stakeholders, the private sector, as well as strengthening resilience and gender equality.

6. Agencies made data available on project progress directly through the GEF Portal for the first time. These data form the foundation of this report.

## INTRODUCTION

1. Each year, the **GEF Monitoring Report** provides an overview of the portfolio of projects under implementation with financing from the GEF Trust Fund, and assesses the progress made in the most recent year. The GEF Monitoring Report is an important tool that helps the GEF partnership take stock of how well it is doing and where it can do better. This report covers the fiscal 2020 period from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020.
2. **The report is a continuation of the strategic and performance-focused approach adopted in recent editions.** The report continues to provide headline numbers on the size of the portfolio of projects under implementation, as well as its distribution by focal area and region. In addition to this snapshot, it provides an update on the progress achieved in fiscal 2020, along a series of indicators measuring the effectiveness and efficiency of the portfolio of GEF-financed projects. This approach assesses progress against a tracking framework. It allows to monitor the progress the GEF is making over time in delivering projects on time and with quality.
3. **Agencies provided the data for this report entirely through the GEF Portal for the first time.** Moving away from reporting through spreadsheets, this took place through dedicated online modules for Project Implementation Reports, Mid-Term Reviews and Terminal Evaluation reports, with data and information tailored along these project milestones' respective monitoring requirements. In turn, these important documents on project progress become available on project pages of the GEF website. The data from these documents form the foundations of this report, allowing GEF Secretariat to leverage this information to examine the project portfolio, including by mining narrative updates with text analytics methods to identify recurrent implementation challenges.
4. **Section 1** of this Monitoring Report focuses on the portfolio of projects under implementation. It first provides an overview of the distribution of projects across categories and then examines how effectively and efficiently implementation is taking place. This section analyzes progress against indicators that measure the quality and speed of projects, improvements in performance and the materialization of co-financing. The section also analyzes operational progress and risk to project outcomes during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is a useful complement to the paper presenting responses from agencies and Operational Focal Points<sup>1</sup>.
5. **Section 2** then measures the contribution of GEF-financed projects to delivering global environmental benefits and project outcomes. It assesses project results against the Core Indicators set in the GEF-7 results architecture. The project results provided in this report are extracted from mid-term reviews and terminal evaluation reports, and presented by fiscal year. The section also reviews the implementation of the current results architecture in the context of GEF-7 projects and programs.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Impact of COVID-19 on GEF Project Preparation and Implementation: Overview of Responses from Across the GEF Partnership*, GEF/C.59/11.

6. **Section 3** provides a “deep dive” analysis on the implementation of the three Integrated Approach Pilot programs, continuing the practice of deepening the analysis on one element of the portfolio every year. The section reviews implementation progress and highlights the programs’ contribution to generating global environmental benefits, as well as how they address cross-cutting areas. It also presents how the programs are adapting to COVID-19 in tackling select drivers of environmental degradation.

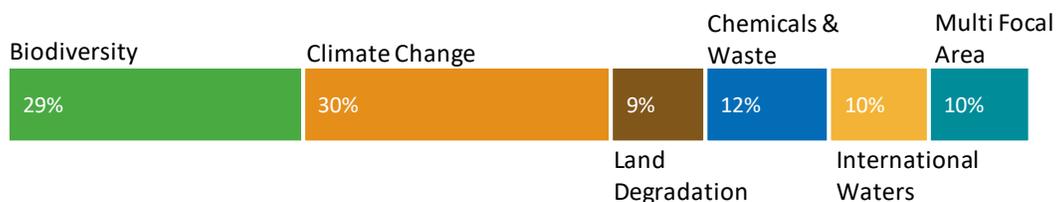
## THE GEF TRUST FUND PORTFOLIO IN FISCAL 2020

### Providing a Portfolio Overview

7. In fiscal 2020, the GEF Trust Fund’s net commitments rose to \$1.2 billion and GEF Agencies made disbursements of \$0.7 billion. The portfolio of GEF-financed mid- and full-sized projects reached \$4.4 billion, with 890 projects under implementation. This is lower than last year’s portfolio size of \$4.6 billion as more projects reached completion and fewer projects started implementation in fiscal 2020. The portfolio includes 656 Full-Sized Projects (FSPs) valued at \$4.1 billion and 234 Medium-Sized Projects (MSPs) valued at \$0.3 billion, with child projects making respectively 23 percent and 7 percent of these projects in number and 25 percent and 9 percent in volume. Separately and in addition to this, 179 Enabling Activities amounting to \$117 million are under implementation to support the preparation of convention reports.

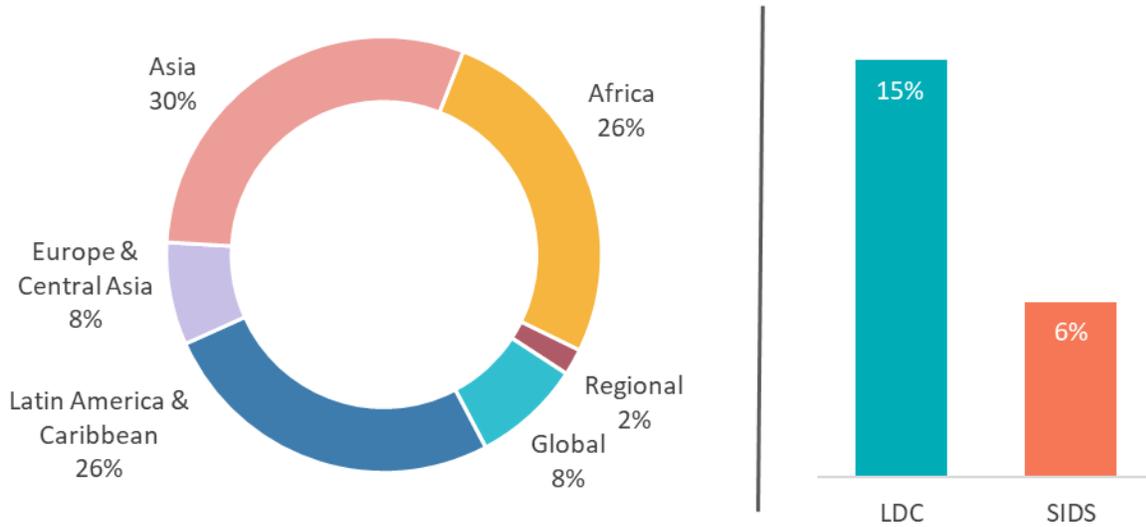
8. The distribution of projects under implementation highlights continued emphasis on Biodiversity and Climate Change, along with a smaller share for other focal areas. Figure 1 reflects the financial resources by focal area for the projects under implementation. The largest focal area in the portfolio is Climate Change with 30 percent of the portfolio volume in dollars, followed by Biodiversity with 29 percent, Chemicals & Waste, Land Degradation and International Waters. The breakdown of resources by focal area is not available for a residual share of “multi-focal area” projects from older GEF periods.

Figure 1. Portfolio distribution by resources to focal area



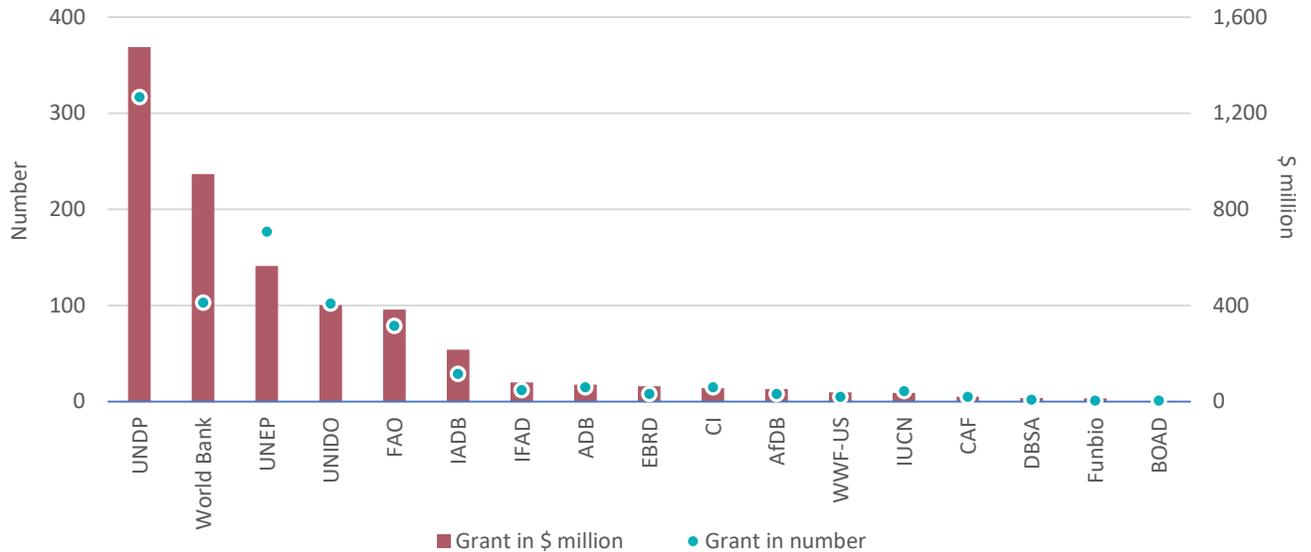
9. Over 80% of projects are taking place in Africa, Asia, and Latin America & the Caribbean. Separately, Least Developed Countries and Small Islands Developing States account for respectively 15% and 6% of the portfolio. With its global reach, GEF-financed projects are implemented in 143 countries. The regions with the largest share of projects in volume are in descending order: Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, followed by Europe & Central Asia. The size of the portfolio in Asia decreased marginally by a percentage point and increased by two points in Latin America and the Caribbean. Global and regional projects account for respectively 8 percent and 2 percent of the portfolio. Separately two groups of countries, which overlap with regions, the Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States, represent 15 percent and 6 percent each of the projects under implementation (Figure 2).

**Figure 2. Portfolio distribution by region and country group**



10. The three founding Agencies—UNDP, UNEP and World Bank—represent collectively 67 percent of all ongoing projects in operations’ volume, down from 69 percent in the previous year. The recent completion of large projects from these Agencies explains this decrease in part, as well as the fact that new projects from other Agencies entered the portfolio. AfDB, WWF and CAF have respectively added \$14 million, \$8 million and \$19 million to their portfolio from a year on. Figure 3 indicates the number of projects and portfolio volume by Agency, with the addition of BOAD compared to last year, which now has one project under implementation.

**Figure 3. Portfolio distribution by Agency**



## Assessing Portfolio Progress

11. **As COVID-19 continues to affect projects under implementation, the immediate consequences of the pandemic on progress in fiscal 2020 are preliminary and concentrated on project start-up.** While COVID-19 has direct impact on countries' and Agencies' ability to prepare and implement projects, data continues to indicate implementation progress, with strong disbursement and quality implementation. However, projects acknowledge facing a higher risk than they did last year and reported slower first disbursement. One of the reasons for this overall limited degradation of portfolio metrics stems from the fact that COVID-19 took place only during the second part of fiscal 2020, leaving the first half of the year unaffected. To detect early signs of the pandemic's impact on projects, this section looks at a range of operational areas that provides early evidence on implementation challenges. A separate paper presents the GEF's response to COVID-19 as well as the perception of Agencies and countries on the pandemic's impact<sup>2</sup>.

### *Tracking Implementation Progress in Fiscal 2020*

12. **This section shows that projects made progress in key effectiveness and efficiency areas this past year, along a Portfolio Scorecard focused on the drivers of operational performance.** Because the effects of the pandemic encompass multiple operational aspects, it is important to detect early signs of change to help the GEF learn important positive lessons to adapt and take corrective actions. That is why, within this context marked by heightened implementation challenges, the GEF is introducing the Portfolio Scorecard to track the GEF Partnership's progress. It provides a consistent approach to reporting progress over time, with indicators that allow for comparability across Agencies, reinforced by the use of a traffic-light system. Three clusters of indicators track different aspects of the GEF business. The first assesses the speed of projects. The second measures key portfolio management indicators, and the third monitors the materialization of project co-financing. The three groups of indicators complement one another, providing a picture of how well implementation is taking place. Annex A provides a methodological note and Annex B indicates definitions for each indicator. As a "living document", this framework will evolve and improve over time as the GEF's ability to track progress expands.

13. **Findings presented here offer a snapshot of the progress the GEF is making.** The analysis in this report draws on the update provided by Agencies covering separately fiscal years 2019 and 2020. Qualitative analysis helps make sense of the data, indicator by indicator. This provides context and improves the understanding of progress. Table 1 provides the fiscal 2020 update for the GEF average, along with the fiscal 2019 reference point. More in-depth analysis takes place bilaterally with Agencies to support portfolio oversight.

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<sup>2</sup> *The Impact of COVID-19 on GEF Project Preparation and Implementation: Overview of Responses from Across the GEF Partnership, GEF/C.59/11.*

**Table 1. Portfolio Scorecard**

	FY19 Reference	FY20 average
<b>ENHANCE THE SPEED OF OPERATIONS</b>		
Time from CEO endorsement (FSP) or CEO approval (MSP) to first disbursement below 18 months (%)	78 ●	47 ●
Time from CEO endorsement to mid-term review below 4 years	57 ●	58 ●
MSP age below 4 years (%)	71 ●	65 ●
FSP age below 6 years (%)	89 ●	88 ●
<b>ENSURE STRONG PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT</b>		
Disbursement ratio of ongoing portfolio (%)	18	25
Projects rated in the satisfactory range for both Implementation Progress and Development Outcome (%)	82 ●	81 ●
Projects rated in the satisfactory range for Implementation Progress (%)	86 ●	84 ●
Projects rated in the satisfactory range for Development Outcome (%)	87 ●	88 ●
Project with disbursement in the past year (%)	●	95 ●
Over 50% disbursed balance 3+ years into MSP implementation (%)	78 ●	80 ●
Over 50% disbursed balance 5+ years FSP implementation (%)	80 ●	85 ●
Projects with financial closure after Terminal Evaluation submission (%)	92 ●	84 ●
Projects financially closed on time in the last year (%)	67 ●	80 ●
<b>INCREASE CO-FINANCING ACROSS THE PORTFOLIO</b>		
Projects with co-financing materialized higher than 35% at MTR (%)	●	57 ●
Co-financing materialized at Terminal Evaluation (%)	●	111 ●

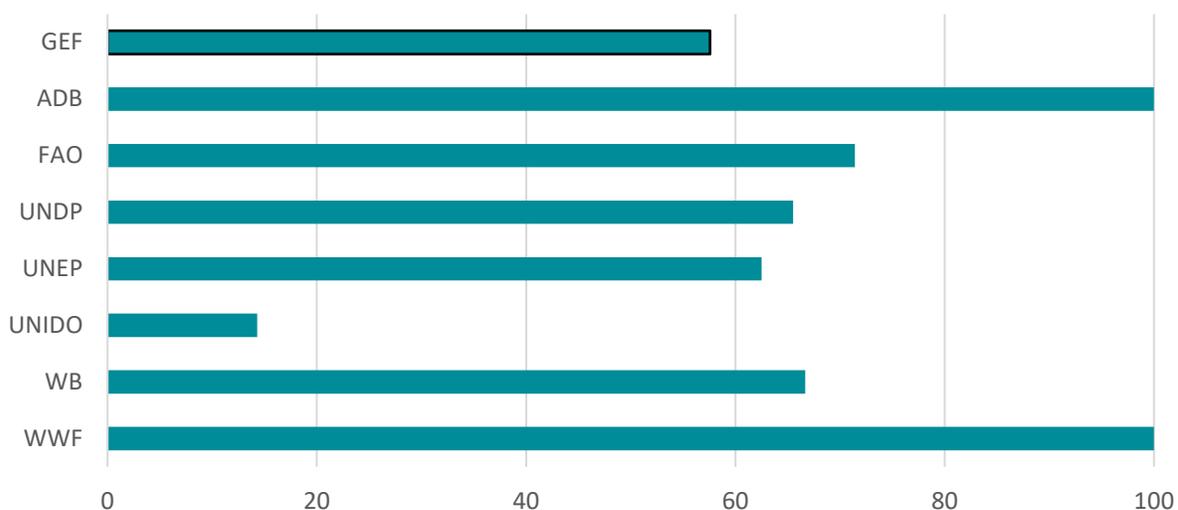
- Above 80% of the project portfolio    ● From 60% to 80% of the project portfolio
- Below 60% of the project portfolio    ● Data not available

## Enhancing the speed of operations

14. In fiscal 2020, projects encountered start-up delays caused by the need to adapt implementation arrangements to the new operating environment brought by COVID-19. The fact that projects took longer to reach first disbursement in fiscal 2020 than a year ago makes it evident. Just under half of the ● projects that disbursed for the first time in the last year did so within 18 months of CEO endorsement, lower from last year's share of 78 percent<sup>3</sup>. The main factor explaining this decrease lies in the fact that only a fraction of projects were able to reach first disbursement during the period of fiscal 2020 most affected by travel and social distancing restrictions enforced by governments. This resulted in postponing implementation start further.

15. About 6 in every 10 projects reached Mid-Term Review (MTR) within four years of implementation. This limits the ability to take stock of implementation progress and identify corrective actions that can have a positive effect by project completion. In fiscal 2020, 58 percent of ● projects reached MTR within 4 years of implementation, on par with last year's status of 57 percent. ADB, FAO, UNDP, UNEP and the World Bank performed above the average (see Figure 4). This year's status took place as Agencies reported challenges in undertaking MTRs. These included fielding international consultants on time to lead mid-term review exercises due to travel restrictions. Another challenge was to organize stakeholders and participatory meetings given social distancing measures. Agencies are now adapting to this context and finding ways to conduct the mid-term review, including by resorting to remote supervision approaches.

**Figure 4. Projects reaching MTR within 4 years in fiscal 2020 (%)**



16. Only a small minority of full-sized projects are reaching an age beyond the average project completion time, whereas the share is larger for mid-sized projects. This tends to indicate that smaller projects designed to take place within a shorter duration than larger ones

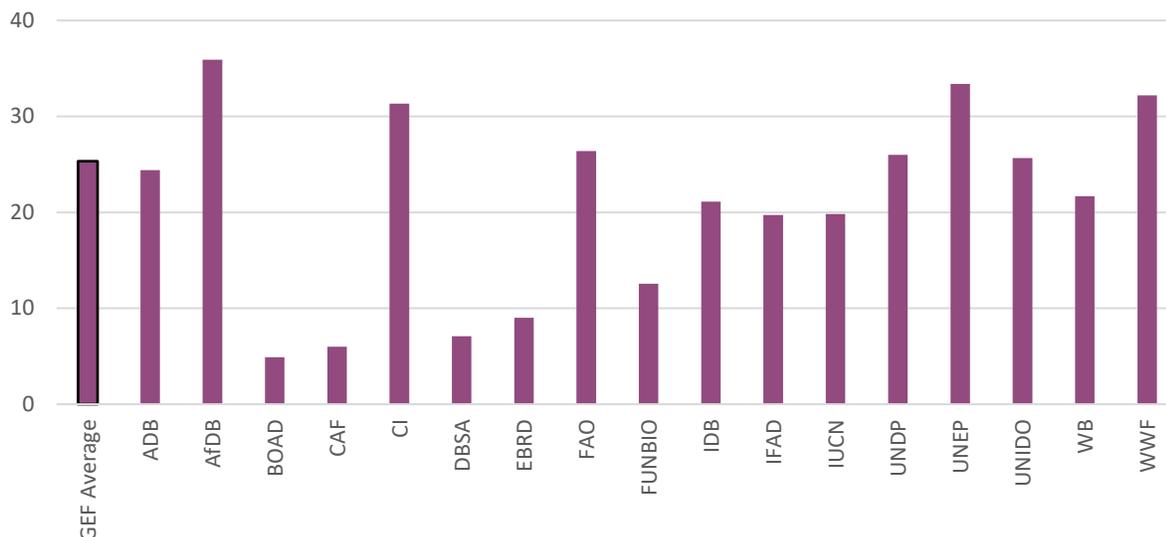
<sup>3</sup> Agencies may be disbursing their own co-financing resources earlier than the GEF Trust Fund portion of the project. This indicator only tracks the disbursement of GEF resources.

actually take almost the same time to reach completion. In fiscal 2020, close to two in every three ● **MSPs were younger than 4 years** — an age when smaller projects should be reaching completion. This marks a small decrease from 71% in the previous year. When it comes to larger projects, the proportion of older projects is much smaller. In fact, the share of ● **FSPs younger than 6 years** stands at 88 percent, similar to past year’s performance. Projects approved under GEF-5 constitute the bulk of the older projects that are moving toward completion.

Ensuring strong portfolio management

17. **The disbursement ratio increased this year, highlighting strong implementation progress at portfolio level.** By measuring the pace at which Agencies make resources available to countries, this indicator assesses the GEF partnership’s speed of implementation. The GEF’s overall **disbursement ratio** moved from 18 percent in fiscal 2018 to 25 percent in fiscal 2019 and is driven in part by large disbursement amounts from FAO, UNDP, UNEP, UNIDO and the World Bank, relative to the financing amount available (see Figure 5). This well performing disbursement ratio may paradoxically stem from the fact that only a limited number of new projects started disbursing in fiscal 2020, as first disbursements typically account for a small share of the project financing.

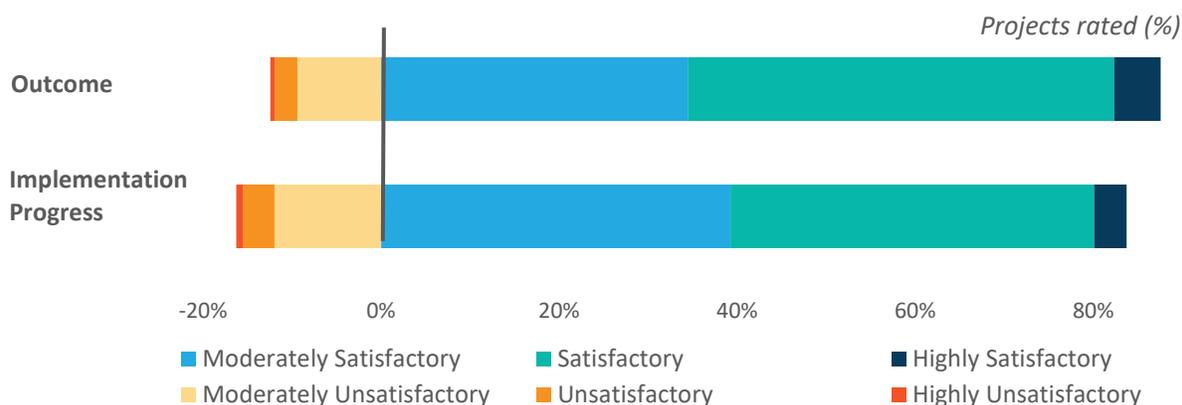
**Figure 5. Disbursement ratio of the ongoing portfolio (%)**



18. **Above 80% of projects received a ● rating in the satisfactory range for both implementation progress and project outcome, attesting to a healthy portfolio.** This progress level is consistent with fiscal 2018, pointing to strong implementation progress and confidence in reaching project outcome by completion, even as COVID-19 affected projects. In fact, both ratings marginally improved as compared to a year ago. Looking at each rating separately, 84 percent of ● **projects were rated in the satisfactory range for Implementation Progress**, against 82% a year earlier. Separately, 88 percent of ● **projects were rated in the satisfactory range for the likelihood to achieve Development Outcomes**, up from 87 percent in fiscal 2019. Box 1

presents the share of projects in the satisfactory range by region, country group and focal area, and Figure 6 highlights the distribution of ratings across the portfolio. These indicators help identify challenges in projects early on so they can be corrected<sup>4</sup>.

**Figure 6. Distribution of Outcome and Implementation Progress ratings of ongoing GEF projects**



19. **Virtually all but 5% of the projects already under implementation last year have disbursed resources for two years in a row, showing continuous progress.** This indicates that projects are on the move, continuously finding ways to ensure they make progress in reaching objectives and solutions to emerging challenges. Agencies **disbursed new project resources in the last year** with GEF financing for 95 percent of the projects under implementation<sup>5</sup>. Good progress registered across the GEF Partnership highlights that countries receive the resources that translate into project outputs and outcomes.

20. **By the time projects get close to completion, above four out of five projects have already disbursed well over half of their financing.** This confirms projects used the resources available in support of project objectives. This point is true across the portfolio, for both mid- and full-sized projects. In fiscal 2020, 85% of **FSPs older than five years have disbursed over 50 percent of their financing**, up from 80 percent a year ago. FAO, UNDP, UNEP, UNIDO and the World Bank are the highest performing Agencies. The standard applied for assessing this matter with MSPs is different because of their shorter duration. In fiscal 2020, 80 percent of **MSPs older than three years have disbursed over 50 percent of their financing**, a slightly higher performance than last year’s 78 percent status. AfDB, CI, IADB, IUCN, UNEP and UNIDO are the strongest performer.

<sup>4</sup> While all Agencies rate progress along similar criteria and scale, the exact methodology and level of candor or stringency used in rating project differ in each Agency. Data is presented as provided by Agencies.

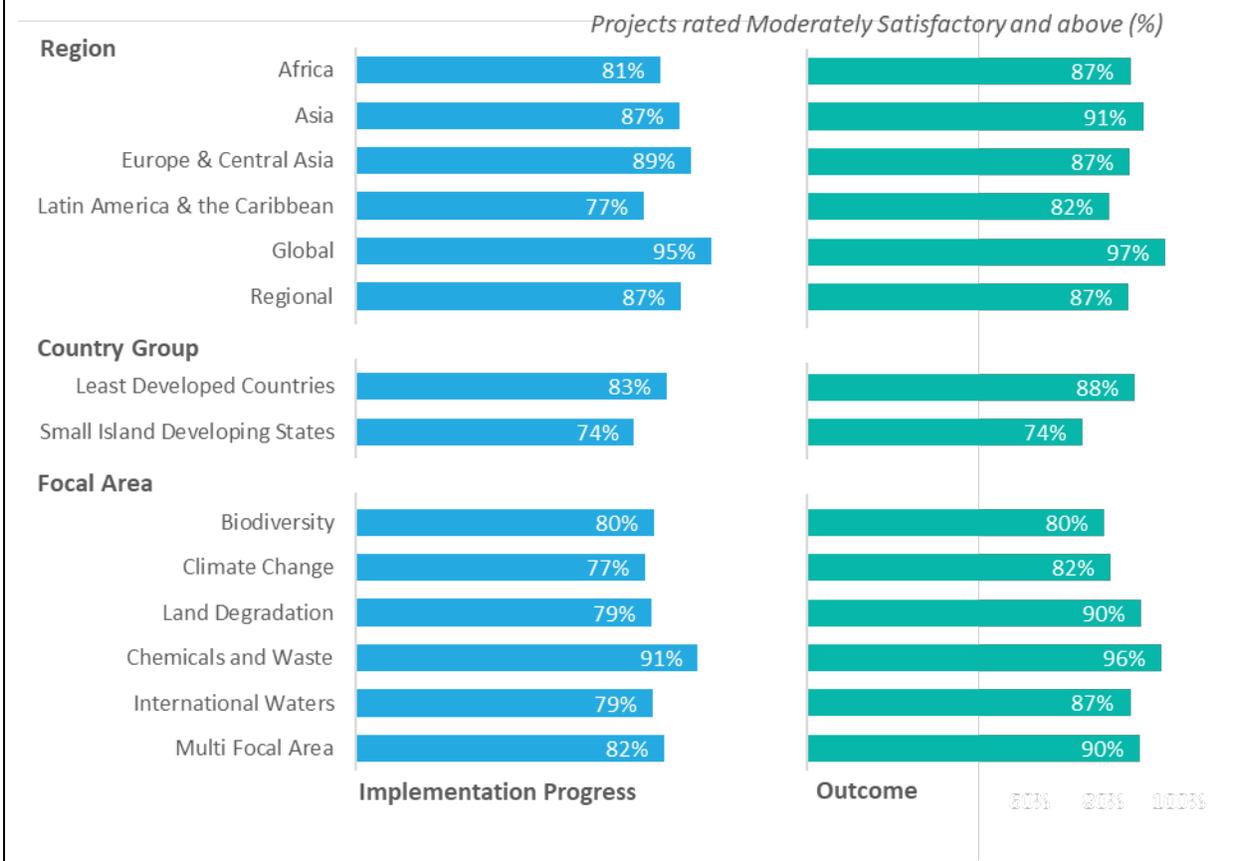
<sup>5</sup> It became only possible to start tracking effectively this indicator in fiscal 2020 through the GEF Portal’s data enhancement, which is why the fiscal 2019 reference point is not provided.

**Box 1. Projects rated in the satisfactory range by region, country group and focal area**

While Asia and Europe & Central Asia improved from a year on, the share of projects rated satisfactorily in implementation progress in Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean remained overall stable. When it comes to country types, Small Island Developing States received a lower share of projects rated satisfactorily for implementation progress with 74 percent, as compared to 83 percent for Least Developed Countries.

Across all regions the share of projects rated satisfactorily to achieve outcomes at project completion remains higher than 80 percent, affirming confidence in achieving expected project objectives. This is however not the case for the group of Small Islands Developing States, with a 74 percent average. The 26 percent of projects rated in the unsatisfactory range include 19 projects which are on average five years old, with 12 of them in the Caribbean, 6 in the Pacific and 1 in Africa.

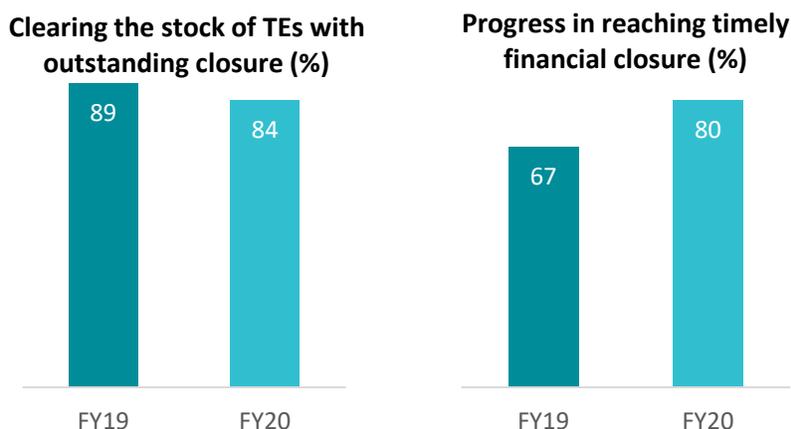
In terms of the share of projects rated in the satisfactory range by focal area, the Chemicals & Waste, Land Degradation and International Waters have the largest share of projects in this category for the outcome rating. Multi-focal area projects performed well with 82 percent of them rated in the satisfactory range for implementation progress and 90 percent for outcome. Climate Change projects have the lowest share of projects rated satisfactorily for implementation progress across focal areas.



21. **Agencies are making progress in reaching timely financial closure as they continue clearing outstanding completed projects without financial closure.** In doing so, they address the legacy of projects completed in recent years that had yet to reach financial closure. In fiscal 2020, 84% of **projects with terminal evaluation had reached financial closure.** This progress level is below the 92% achieved a year ago as terminal evaluations submitted in the past twelve months add to the list. The most progress is seen when looking specifically at the progress in the last year against the policy standard of reaching financial closure within 12 months from the submission

of the terminal evaluation. Under this lens, 80% of the ● **projects were financially closed on time in the last year**, up from 67% a year earlier. See Figure 7 for a summary of progress, highlighting that Agencies are making good progress in reaching financial closure quickly after project completion.

**Figure 7. Progress in reaching financial closure**



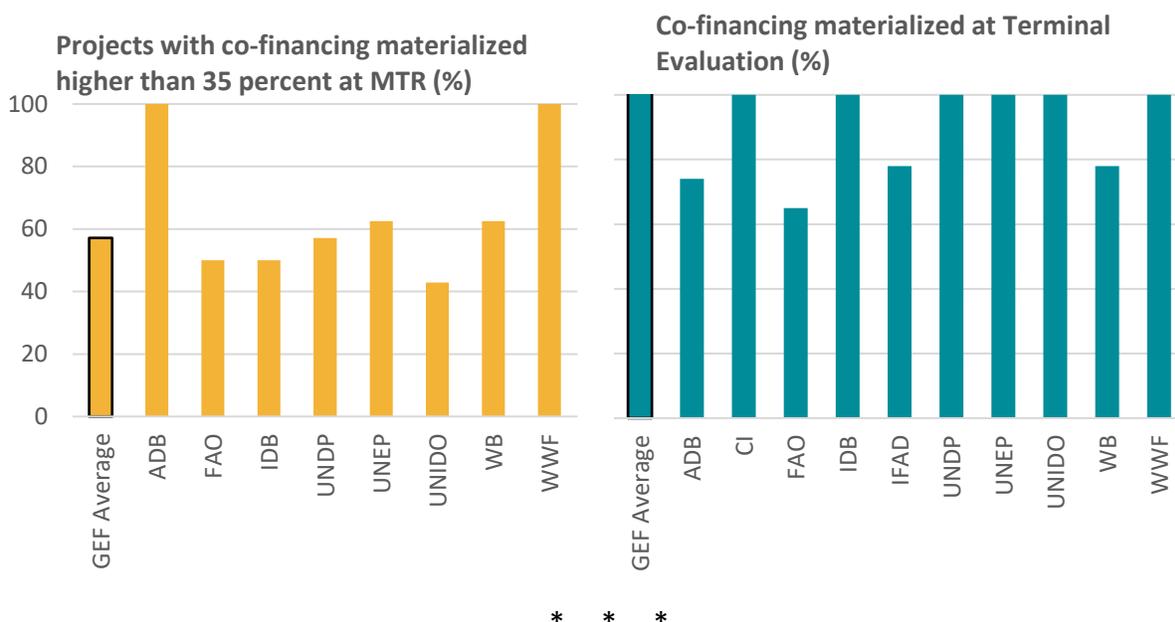
#### Increasing co-financing across the portfolio

22. **At mid-term, projects are making moderate progress in materializing co-financing.** To maximize finance and reach to achieve global environmental benefits, the GEF co-finances projects with donors, the private sector, governments and civil society organizations, among others. Mid-way through implementation, 57% of ● **projects materialized above 35 percent of the co-financing** anticipated during preparation. This indicates that it takes time for co-financiers to disburse and make available the co-financing promised at the project’s onset. ADB, UNDP, UNEP and the World Bank achieved a performance status higher than the GEF average.

23. **At completion, projects materialized a co-financing volume higher than the planned level identified at CEO endorsement.** This points to the dynamic and proactive nature of projects that continuously look for additional resources from partners in support of meeting objectives. Altogether, projects completed in fiscal 2020 ● **materialized a co-financing amount at terminal evaluation** of 111 percent when compared to expectations set at CEO endorsement stage. CI, ADB, UNDP, UNEP, UNIDO and WWF reached a materialization rate higher than 100 percent<sup>6</sup>. The charts in Figure 8 provide a representation of the two indicators by agency, along with the GEF average.

<sup>6</sup> There is no fiscal 2019 reference point for this indicator and the one at MTR stage as the data started to be entered consistently in the Portal less than a year ago.

**Figure 8. Progress in materializing co-finance at MTR and Terminal Evaluation**



24. **Agencies contribute to the overall GEF Partnership progress with their own respective portfolio, business models, operating environments and organizational settings.** Efforts made by the GEF in enhancing data management and governance now allow to analyze information as Agencies input them in the Portal. Table 2 indicates the progress disaggregated for each agency<sup>7</sup>. Annex B makes available the fiscal 2019 data Agency by Agency. It also provides the size of the cohort of projects considered to compute each indicator, allowing for a better grasp of the relative size of each Agency’s portfolio and how it may affect progress data. Timely reporting from agencies allows to identify implementation challenges early on, as well as trends across the portfolio. Agencies provided feedback on the Portfolio Scorecard concept and its findings during the two Agency Retreats held in 2020. This Portfolio Scorecard and data analysis build on the insights and experiences shared during these dialogues.

<sup>7</sup> Presenting data at Agency level is a complex undertaking as it makes apparent methodological challenges: 1) Variations of performance levels across Agencies may occur as only few projects populate an Agency’s data set, making averages sensitive to outliers. Threshold effects can compound this challenge, as was the case in fiscal 2020 for the World Bank which saw three out of six projects reaching first disbursement just few weeks away from the threshold of 18 months; 2) Countries, implementing and executing Agencies share the responsibility to achieve project progress; 3) Project progress can be challenged by external events, as evident from the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and 4) Agencies may use different methodologies or levels of candor in applying project ratings. This is the case of UNDP, which has made substantial changes to its annual reporting in 2017, resulting in a smaller share of projects rated moderately satisfactory or higher. The changes include revising the definitions of the Development Outcome and Implementation Progress ratings, introducing rigorous performance targets for each rating level, and a revised methodology for calculating the overall project ratings. Separately, it should also be noted that agencies use different triggers to disburse resources, which affect disbursement speed.

**Table 2. Values and performance by Agency**

● Above 80% of the project portfolio ● From 60% to 80% of the project portfolio ● Below 60% of the project portfolio ● Data not available  
 NB: No data is included in cells where Agencies did not contribute to indicators during the period under review

	FY19 Reference	FY20 average	ADB	AfDB	BOAD	CAF	CI	DBSA	EBRD	FAO	FECO	FUNBIO	IADB	IFAD	IUCN	UNDP	UNEP	UNIDO	World Bank	WWF
<b>ENHANCE THE SPEED OF OPERATIONS</b>																				
Time from CEO endorsement (FSP) or CEO approval (MSP) to first disbursement below 18 months (%)	78 ●	47 ●	0 ●			100 ●				50 ●			0 ●		0 ●	40 ●	83 ●	50 ●	0 ●	
- MSPs only (%)	67 ●	70 ●				100 ●							0 ●		0 ●		100 ●	100 ●	0 ●	
- FSPs only (%)	82 ●	38 ●	0 ●							50 ●			0 ●			40 ●	71 ●	0 ●	0 ●	
Time from CEO endorsement to mid-term review below 4 years	57 ●	58 ●	100 ●							71 ●			0 ●			66 ●	63 ●	14 ●	67 ●	100 ●
MSP age below 4 years (%)	71 ●	65 ●	100 ●				100 ●		0 ●	57 ●			80 ●		100 ●	80 ●	62 ●	47 ●	67 ●	100 ●
FSP age below 6 years (%)	89 ●	88 ●	75 ●	100 ●		100 ●	100 ●	100 ●	50 ●	96 ●		100 ●	81 ●	100 ●	100 ●	93 ●	86 ●	73 ●	78 ●	100 ●
<b>ENSURE STRONG PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT</b>																				
Disbursement ratio of ongoing portfolio (%)	18	25	24	36	5	6	31	7	9	26		13	21	20	20	26	33	26	22	32
Projects rated in the satisfactory range for both Implementation Progress and Outcome (%)	82 ●	81 ●	93 ●	50 ●		100 ●	82 ●	100 ●	100 ●	92 ●		100 ●	78 ●	83 ●	70 ●	68 ●	91 ●	90 ●	83 ●	75 ●
Projects rated in the satisfactory range for Implementation Progress (%)	86 ●	84 ●	93 ●	50 ●	100 ●	100 ●	91 ●	100 ●	100 ●	95 ●		100 ●	81 ●	83 ●	70 ●	71 ●	95 ●	91 ●	86 ●	80 ●
Projects rated in the satisfactory range for Development Outcome (%)	87 ●	88 ●	93 ●	83 ●		100 ●	82 ●	100 ●	100 ●	95 ●		100 ●	89 ●	100 ●	90 ●	76 ●	94 ●	96 ●	92 ●	100 ●

**Table 2. Values and performance by Agency**

● Above 80% of the project portfolio ● From 60% to 80% of the project portfolio ● Below 60% of the project portfolio ● Data not available  
 NB: No data is included in cells where Agencies did not contribute to indicators during the period under review

	FY19 Reference	FY20 average	ADB	AfDB	BOAD	CAF	CI	DBSA	EBRD	FAO	FECO	FUNBIO	IADB	IFAD	IUCN	UNDP	UNEP	UNIDO	World Bank	WWF
Project with disbursement in the past year (%)	●	95 ●	83 ●	86 ●	100 ●	80 ●	100 ●	50 ●	86 ●	99 ●		100 ●	93 ●	92 ●	100 ●	100 ●	82 ●	100 ●	96 ●	100 ●
Over 50% disbursed balance 3+ years into MSP implementation (%)	●	80 ●	0 ●	100 ●			100 ●		0 ●	75 ●			100 ●		100 ●	79 ●	80 ●	83 ●	67 ●	
Over 50% disbursed balance 5+ years FSP implementation (%)	●	85 ●	20 ●						50 ●	87 ●			75 ●	100 ●		88 ●	90 ●	85 ●	87 ●	
Projects with financial closure after Terminal Evaluation submission (%)	●	84 ●	96 ●	29 ●			86 ●		50 ●	56 ●			100 ●	93 ●		84 ●	72 ●	75 ●	92 ●	100 ●
Projects financially closed on time in the last year (%)	●	80 ●	90 ●	100 ●			83 ●			0 ●			100 ●	50 ●		70 ●	67 ●	86 ●	100 ●	
<b>INCREASE CO-FINANCING ACROSS THE PORTFOLIO</b>																				
Projects with co-financing materialized higher than 35 percent at MTR (%)	●	57 ●	100 ●							50 ●			50 ●			57 ●	63 ●	43 ●	67 ●	100 ●
Co-financing materialized at Terminal Evaluation (%)	●	111 ●	74 ●				105 ●			65 ●			236 ●	78 ●		131 ●	170 ●	361 ●	78 ●	121 ●

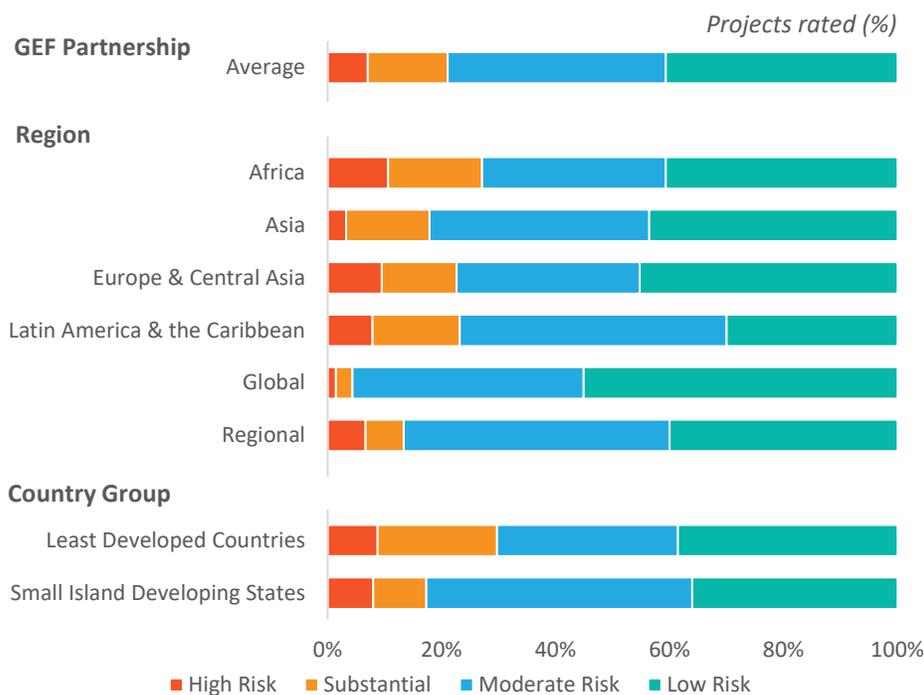
*Measuring COVID-19's Impact on Select Operational Areas*

25. **Unique circumstances brought by the COVID-19 pandemic heightened project risks and increased project start up delays.** This section examines changes from a year on in project implementation and risk rating as a proxy to assess if the impact of COVID-19 is already felt on implementation quality and the risk to project outcomes. It also explores the consistency between risk and implementation ratings, as an innovative area to track in the current context. Finally, this section looks at delays in reaching implementation start and at the delivery challenges operations face.

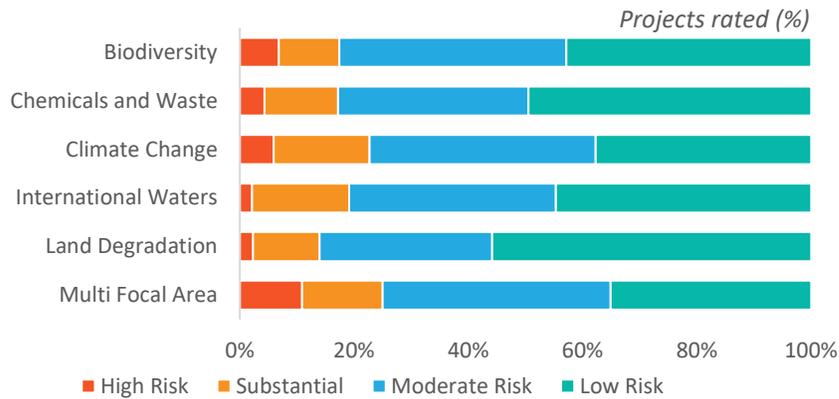
Tracking the risk to project outcomes

26. **The risk faced by projects is low or moderate for 79 percent of projects, at a time when monitoring risk ratings matters as the COVID-19 pandemic unfolds.** All Agencies report project risk ratings to help the GEF consistently assess and monitor risks across projects and programs. The largest share of projects rated as high or substantial risk is in Africa (27 percent), followed by Latin America & the Caribbean, and Europe & Central Asia (with 23 percent each). The proportion is even higher in the group of Least Developed Countries with 30 percent of projects facing high or substantial risk. Identifying risks helps place the attention on the projects that are facing the highest risk to ensure they deliver intended outcomes. Figure 9 and Figure 10 provide the breakdown of risk ratings across the portfolio of projects under implementation for all GEF-financed projects, by region and by country group, as well as by focal area.

**Figure 9. Distribution of risk ratings in ongoing projects for the GEF and by geographic area**

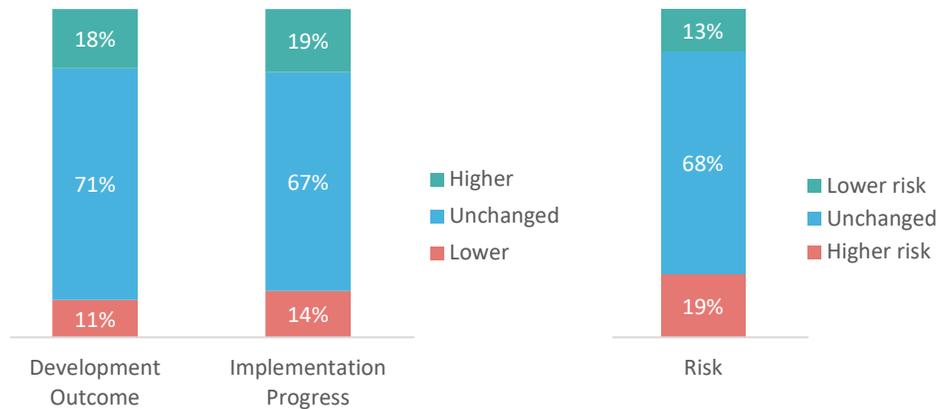


**Figure 10. Distribution of risk ratings in ongoing projects by focal area**



27. **Less than 15 percent of projects indicate facing higher challenges in achieving project outcome and making implementation progress than a year ago. Meanwhile, more projects acknowledge facing higher risk, seemingly in line with the added risk brought by the pandemic.** In a year when projects faced travel restrictions challenging implementation, 11 percent and 14 percent of projects indicate a lower development outcome or implementation progress rating than in the previous year. Meanwhile, the rest of the projects retained the same rating from a year on or improved, as indicated in Figure 11. This overall stability in ratings exists mainly because the data captured here covers fiscal 2020, of which only its last quarter or at most last semester was affected by the pandemic. The heightened risk faced by projects is however reflected in the fact that 19 percent of projects face higher risk in fiscal 2020 than in fiscal 2019. This is the most significant drop across the three ratings provided by Agencies and covers risk elements directly linked to the operating environment affecting the achievement of project outcome.

**Figure 11. Evolution in performance and risk ratings from fiscal 2019 to 2020**



28. **Project ratings indicate the pandemic is not yet affecting to a large extent the outlook for the portfolio, as three out of four projects are rated in the satisfactory range for outcome and as facing low to moderate risk.** The lower left quadrant of Table 3 highlights this population of projects least at risk and with the highest outcome ratings. Meanwhile, the top right quadrant covers the projects facing the highest and most substantial risk and rated unsatisfactorily in

reaching development outcomes. The 7% of projects in this category account for the projects most at risk of achieving their expected development outcomes by completion. These projects are on average at a younger age than projects facing low or moderate risks and rated satisfactorily, presenting sufficient time ahead to improve implementation. As the COVID-19 pandemic unfolds, the GEF will continue to monitor the risk to projects' results and identify changes over time.

**Table 3. Assessing the risk to achieving project outcomes**

*The lower right number in each cell indicates the number of concerned projects.*

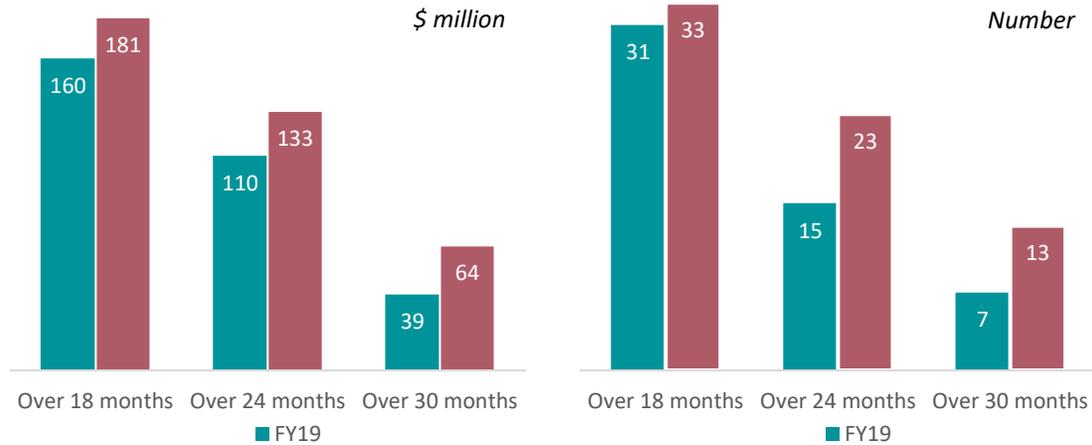


Identifying project start-up delays

29. **Starting implementation during the COVID-19 pandemic comes with a new set of challenges, which may cause delays.** Projects never envisaged the hardship caused by the pandemic when identifying implementation arrangements during preparation. This requires in turn to adapt to the new reality, including by finding new ways to hold activities, supervise projects and consult with stakeholders. All of this takes time and can delay planned implementation start, pointing to the need to assess the prevalence of start-up delays.

30. **The number of projects facing start-up delays 18 months after CEO endorsement is on par with last year, but the number is higher for projects delayed by over two years.** This points to the fact that projects that were already delayed in the past year now face heightened challenge as they likely reconsider implementation arrangements. A year and a half after CEO endorsement or approval, 33 projects have yet to start implementation, on par with 31 projects a year ago. Two years after endorsement the number drops to 23 projects and then to 13 projects, as compared to respectively 15 and 7 projects in the same situation a year ago. It happens that projects take time to start implementation and, in fact, over half of the projects that had not started implementation in fiscal 2019 eventually did so within the immediate next months. Figure 12 provides analytical elements in project volume and number for fiscal 2019 and 2020.

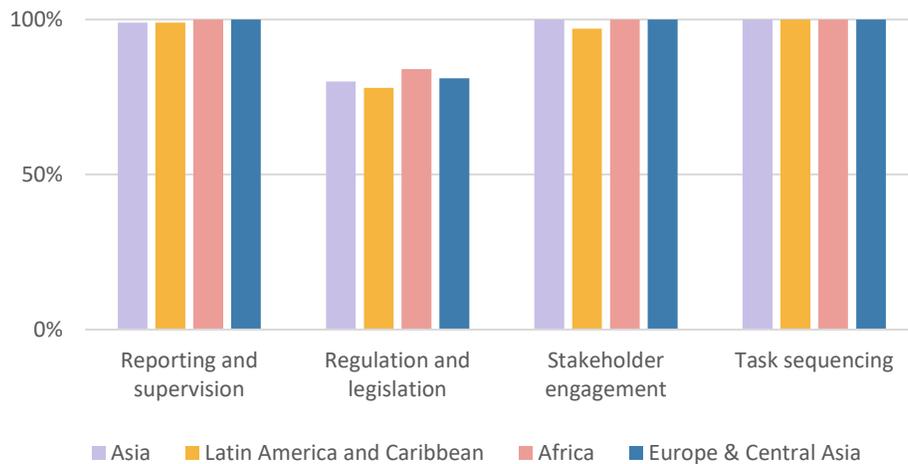
**Figure 12. Projects not under implementation after CEO endorsement**



Uncovering implementation challenges faced by projects

31. **Project timeliness, supervision and stakeholder engagement are the top three implementation challenges raised in project yearly reports, as made evident by leveraging text analytics along a curated classification of delivery challenges.** The three categories of challenges—timeliness, supervision and stakeholder engagement—were prevalent across over nine out of every ten projects. These are corroborated by the fact that Agencies and countries pointed to similar challenges when asked through recent surveys to comment on how COVID-19 affected project implementation. Likewise, challenges in monitoring projects and in engaging stakeholders ranked high in these surveys. Figure 13 demonstrates overall similar recurrence of challenges across regions. This figure also includes regulatory and legislative challenges as the fourth most prevalent challenge, present within on average four out five projects<sup>8</sup>.

**Figure 13. Distribution and prevalence of top 4 delivery challenges identified by text analysis**



<sup>8</sup> This analysis was conducted by using machine learning techniques developed by the Global Delivery Initiative, with support from environment and development finance providers and hosted by the World Bank

## Small Grants Programme

32. **Commitment of GEF-7 core resources to the Small Grants Programme has now reached 100%, with the two global projects approved and the first of the two now CEO endorsed.** Altogether, \$128 million of financing has been approved for the global projects in GEF-7 to support bottom-up actions for global environmental protection by empowering local civil society and community-based organizations, including women, indigenous peoples, youth, and persons with disabilities. The update provided here focuses mainly on the implementation of ongoing SGP phases, while the UNDP/SGP implementing unit makes available on its website a dedicated and broader *Annual Monitoring Report*.

33. **In fiscal 2020, the UNDP/SGP supported 2,549 GEF-financed grants, valued at \$89.1 million under implementation.** The SGP is operational with grants under implementation in 126 countries, with 110 countries supported by the global projects, and 15 as upgraded countries. Africa has the largest share of grant projects under management with 33 percent, followed by 27 percent in Asia and 27 percent in Latin America and the Caribbean. Table 4 provides the number and volume of SGP grants, along with an update on disbursement. It indicates that all SGP projects included in OP-4 (equivalent to GEF-4) phase have disbursed in full. Good progress is recorded in the utilization of GEF-6 resources with over 77 percent of resources disbursed. Data on grants vs. non-grants expenditures are also provided.

**Table 4. SGP grants under implementation and the grants to non-grants ratio in fiscal 2020**

	Approved financing (\$m)	Disbursement by FY20 (\$m)
<b>OPERATIONAL PHASE</b>		
OP4	168.9	168.8
OP5	255.3	241.6
OP6	171.1	132.0
OP7	61.6	-
Total UNDP Fee (4 %)	25.8	23.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>682.6</b>	<b>565.8</b>
<b>GRANTS AND NON-GRANTS EXPENDITURE</b>		
Grants	454.8	341.8
Non-Grants*	227.9	224.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>682.6</b>	<b>565.8</b>

\* Inclusive of UNDP and UNOPS fees/costs.

34. **The SGP is making progress in expanding support to all eligible countries.** UNDP reported that eleven countries provided official letters of interest to join, and activities started to prepare work with these countries. This includes completing appraisal missions in 4 countries

(Eswatini, Bangladesh, Gabon and Angola). In fact, the new country programme team is now operational in Eswatini. Meanwhile, both Bangladesh and Gabon are strengthening their teams to start operations. As countries join the programme for the first time, others that have upgraded from core SGP financing are now benefiting from STAR resources only. This is the case of Malaysia, which is transitioning to develop its own upgraded country programme.

**35. In working with communities, the SGP is adapting its support to COVID-19 challenges.**

Some of the solutions mitigating the challenge of the distance from project sites include conducting virtual communications and monitoring sessions, adjusting project activities, and aligning SGP projects with local government priorities. Altogether, this helps address the impact of the pandemic and improve SGP results on the country policies. This support builds on a survey conducted early on with communities to identify risks, which led to disseminating guidance on taking adaptive management measures at project and country level. Staff and grantees are making efforts to minimize disruptions, including with digital monitoring and communication tools.

## AN UPDATE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GEF-7 RESULTS ARCHITECTURE

37. **Over two years into implementation, the GEF-7 Results Architecture has strengthened the focus on results during program and project identification and preparation. It is also enabling the GEF to report on results, providing a robust strategic management and accountability tool.** In July 2018, the GEF set forth a simplified results measurement framework for GEF-7 consisting of a comprehensive set of Core Indicators aligned to the GEF’s strategic priority areas and backed by clear definitions and methodologies<sup>9</sup>. Since then, every new project and program uses Core Indicators to indicate its targeted level of ambition in generating global environmental benefits. Projects then track progress in reaching Core Indicators up until completion.

38. **Recently issued guidelines have clarified how GEF-financed projects’ focus on results and harmonized further the capture of results data from identification to completion**<sup>10</sup>. They bring together key elements from existing guidelines, policies and project documents that help strengthen the results focus of GEF-financed operations along the project life cycle. This includes using Core Indicators, but also designing a results framework and a monitoring and evaluation plan. The guidelines also highlight how projects report implementation progress and results. A checklist appended to the guidelines helps Agencies ensure that critical M&E and results dimensions are considered when preparing and implementing projects. Altogether these changes have enhanced the GEF’s ability to harness data and information on results for evidence-based decision-making and learning.

39. **This section is structured as follows.** Part I examines the experience in applying the current results architecture in new projects and programs. This part also describes the GEF’s support to developing monitoring and evaluation plans to achieve results. Part II presents a summary update on progress made in reporting on actual results, as supported by the GEF Portal, to enhance accountability.

### Taking Stock of the Experience in Preparing Projects with Core Indicators

40. **All programs and projects approved in GEF-7 use Core Indicators, indicating how they will contribute to generating global environmental benefits.** Each new project and program provides a desired level of ambition for at least one Core Indicator that falls under the intervention’s scope, results chain and description<sup>11</sup>. Twice a year, the *GEF-7 Corporate Scorecard* and the *Work Program for the GEF Trust Fund* report to Council on aggregate progress made in reaching the Core Indicator targets with GEF-7 funding. While the *GEF-7 Corporate Scorecard*

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<sup>9</sup> *Updated Results Architecture for GEF-7*, GEF/C.54/11/Rev.02 ([https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/EN\\_GEF.C.54.11.Rev\\_02\\_Results.pdf](https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/EN_GEF.C.54.11.Rev_02_Results.pdf)); *Guidelines on Core Indicators and Sub-Indicators*, ME/GN/02 [https://wwfgeftracks.com/sites/default/files/2019-04/indicators\\_0.pdf](https://wwfgeftracks.com/sites/default/files/2019-04/indicators_0.pdf)).

<sup>10</sup> See Annex 3 in: *Guidelines on the Project and Program Cycle Policy (2020 Update)*, GEF/C.59/Inf.03 ([https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/EN\\_GEF\\_C.59\\_Inf.03\\_Guidelines%20on%20the%20Project%20and%20Program%20Cycle%20Policy.pdf](https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/EN_GEF_C.59_Inf.03_Guidelines%20on%20the%20Project%20and%20Program%20Cycle%20Policy.pdf)).

<sup>11</sup> Core Indicators apply only to mid- and full-sized projects, as well as program framework documents. They do not apply to Enabling Activities, nor to projects under the Capacity-Building Initiative for Transparency.

supplements its update for the GEF Trust Fund with data disaggregated for Impact Programs, the *Work Program* provides disaggregated data relevant to the Work Program under consideration. Altogether these two documents help keep track of progress in meeting GEF-7 targets.

41. **The use of multiple Core Indicators captures the integrated approach adopted by multi-focal area projects and programs. It also highlights co-benefits in single focal area projects.** Multi-focal area projects use on average 4.2 Core Indicators, above the average of 2.7 indicators used by projects focusing principally on one focal area. This tends to attest to the broader impact of integrated projects and synergies across the GEF focal areas (see Table 5). Equally noteworthy is the fact that almost 60 percent of the projects approved in GEF-7 contribute to biodiversity objectives, in the sense that they use Core Indicators related to either terrestrial/marine protected areas or biodiversity mainstreaming. Similarly, almost 40 percent of the projects contribute to reducing GHG emission mitigation and one third to land restoration. This data carries relevance to programming and to reporting to conventions. The GEF updates regularly the Multilateral Environment Agreements it serves on the use of Core Indicators<sup>12</sup>.

**Table 5. The use of Core Indicators by single and multi-focal area project**

	Average number of Core Indicators per project
<b>Single Focal Area projects</b>	
Biodiversity	3
Land Degradation	3.9
Climate Change	1.7
Chemicals & Waste	2.6
International Waters	2.2
<i>Average</i>	2.7
<b>Multi-Focal Area projects</b>	
<i>Average</i>	4.2

42. **Agencies provide analysis identifying each project’s level of ambition for each indicator, informed by the identification and preparation stages.** In addition to the target retained for each Core Indicator, projects present the methodological approach used to identify their level of ambition. This is done in alignment to each indicator’s methodology available in the results guidelines, but also in a way that reflects the project’s design, resources, location and, among others, implementation arrangements. Protected areas, for instance, typically provide targets

<sup>12</sup> Recent examples include reports to the Convention on Biological Diversity, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD): [CBD Financial Mechanism – Preliminary Report of the GEF, CBD/SBI/3/6/Add.1](#), November 2020; [Report of the GEF to the 25<sup>th</sup> Session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC](#), August 2019; [Report of the GEF to the 14<sup>th</sup> Session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNCCD](#), July 2019.

linked to physical evidence, with projects including georeferenced data, maps, and identification numbers as available.

43. **In considering the contribution of co-financiers, Core Indicators reflect results areas that encompass the full project's theory of change and interventions.** Because projects are made of both GEF financing as well as co-financing, the project results framework captures the full extent of Core Indicator results to which the GEF-financed project is contributing. This approach is consistent with the GEF's co-financing policy which considers as co-financing additional resources that support the achievement of the project or program objectives, drawing on each partner's comparative advantage to heighten project outcome. For example, the large co-financing of the Sustainable Energy Scale-up project in Belarus contributes achieving the target of expected 8.4 metric tons of carbon dioxide emission reduction, with a division of activities between co-financiers. While the GEF's portion of the grant paves the way to track sector-wide reforms by establishing an integrated monitoring, reporting and verification tool for the heating sector, other project partners invest in the more costly component related to producing renewable wood biomass heating capacity.

44. **Given the vital role of project data for decision-making, accountability, and monitoring progress, GEF-financed projects support countries in strengthening their ability to track the achievement of results with effective and well-budgeted Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) plans.** A core component of the project's results focus, the M&E plan, specifies the role and responsibilities for collecting, reporting and analyzing data on results indicators, as well as the sources and frequency of data availability. It also identifies areas that need capacity strengthening to allow for effective M&E. A clear delineation of roles and responsibilities in undergoing M&E activities between the implementing Agencies and executing entities is defined during preparation and reflected in the related budget. While GEF-wide averages on M&E budget amounts are made available, project-specific determinants guide the preparation of the M&E plan—project size, number and remoteness of project locations, M&E capacity strengthening required and type of results to monitor.

45. **Following project approval, the preparation process informs, supports and helps refine the results target initially defined.** In the current COVID-19 operating environment, it matters to monitor possible deviations in target levels from the approval to the CEO endorsement stage, even more than it usually would. Of the number of GEF-7 projects CEO endorsed as of end of September 2020, two thirds of these projects retained or increased target levels, while one third reduced them. This analysis, which took place on a small set of projects, indicates that over half of the projects increased the number of targeted beneficiaries and the same is true on greenhouse gases emissions. Conversely, projects decreased half of the targets on biodiversity, which were not linked to protected areas. Because of the small sample of early GEF-7 projects analyzed, this analysis cannot be extrapolated to the rest of the portfolio.

### **Shaping the GEF Ability to Report on Actual Results**

46. **Agencies now report actual results online as projects reach MTR and TE milestones.** The GEF Portal includes an integrated results reporting system tracking project progress from PIF

stage to completion. It provides Agencies with a consistent format in which to report on project results with enhanced data discipline. This project-by-project data become in turn available to stakeholders with access to the Portal, including countries that can track project results as the data become available. It took time to build this capacity in the Portal, together with advanced reporting features to bring it all together, and Agencies started reporting Core Indicators implementation updates directly in the Portal at the beginning of fiscal 2020.

47. **GEF-6 projects are now starting to report on Core Indicators.** So far, Agencies submitted 25 MTRs and 9 TEs for GEF-6 projects with data on achievements using Core Indicators. When doing so, they retrofit the set of GEF Core Indicators to GEF-6's Global Environment Benefit indicators. In fiscal 2020, an additional number of 8 GEF-5 projects chose to retrofit their original results framework to GEF-7 Core Indicators. Table 6 summarizes overleaf the achievement rate of GEF-6 projects which shared progress data on Core Indicators in fiscal 2019 and 2020 by comparing the target set at CEO endorsement with the actual achievement at the reporting stage. The data indicates that good progress is recorded at MTR and TE, with achievement rates higher than planned at CEO endorsement in some cases. Because of the small size of the population of projects analyzed here, it is too early to derive trends across GEF projects. Quality assurance measures by the Secretariat and dialogue with Agencies help ensure the data provided at MTR and TE stages are aligned with guidelines on Core Indicators.

48. **It will take time for GEF-7 projects to start reporting on progress in achieving Core Indicator targets.** A key objective of the results architecture is to strengthen the GEF's ability to report on actual results. Because most GEF-7 projects have yet to start their implementation, data on actual results will continue to cover mainly GEF-6 projects for the next couple of years. Well over 200 and 300 GEF-6 projects expect to respectively reach the mid-term review and completion stages in fiscal 2021 and 2022, helping gauge the incoming flow of projects set to report on actual results. This lag in reporting on actual results reflects the average project duration until completion. As a reference, this edition of the Monitoring Report indicates that about 60 percent of projects reached the mid-term review within four years of implementation in fiscal 2020, providing a sense of the reporting lag inherent to the project lifecycle.

49. **Projects monitor an array of results beyond just the Core Indicators, and various reports are useful to fully reflect the GEF's contribution to generate Global Environmental Benefits.** This takes place through a full-fledged project results framework and updates on results achievement at mid-term and completion. Every project supplements the use of Core Indicators with custom results indicators specific to their own specific context and scope, which cannot be easily aggregated at portfolio level. For example, projects and programs that include more complex engagement rely on custom indicators and reporting that comprehensively translate the impact of capacity building activities, as well as support to policy, institutional or regulatory change (see for example the deep dive analysis in section 3 of this report). This matters because no Core Indicator alone can demonstrate how a project brought systemic change in a program. This requires broader assessments conducted for example at terminal evaluation stage.

**Table 6. Achievement rate of Core Indicator results for GEF-6 projects**

	Mid-Term Evaluation	Terminal Evaluation
Terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use (ha)	57%	
Marine protected areas created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use (ha)		
Area of land restored (ha)	16%	
Area of landscapes under improved practices (excluding protected areas) (ha)	271%	145%
Area of marine habitat under improved practices to benefit biodiversity (excluding protected areas) (ha)*		
Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated tCO <sub>2</sub>	379%	154%
Shared water ecosystems (fresh or marine) under new or improved cooperative management (number)	NA	NA
Globally over-exploited fisheries moved to more sustainable levels (ton)		
Reduction, disposal/destruction, phase out, elimination, and avoidance of chemicals of global concern and their waste in the environment and in processes, materials, and products (ton)	28%	
Reduction, avoidance of emissions of POPs to air from point and non-point sources (gTEQ)		
Direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment (number)	107%	110%

\* Because its captures the number of shared water ecosystems targeted, this indicator does not lend itself to be tracked along an achievement rate.

50. **In summary, the GEF-7 Results Architecture is providing evidence that informs management and programming at all levels, while reporting on actual results is starting at individual project level.** The GEF will gauge the full effect of this results approach once a critical mass of projects reaches MTR and TE stages in the immediate years to come. In parallel, the GEF continues leveraging its results architecture to strengthen project programming and achieve larger impact in generating global environmental benefits.

## DEEP DIVE ANALYSIS ON INTEGRATED APPROACH PILOT PROGRAMS

51. Like last year, this Monitoring Report includes as a separate section a deep dive focus on one dimension of work in the GEF-financed portfolio of ongoing operations. This section provides an opportunity to present information and data to assess progress and inform the work going forward in areas of high importance to the partnership. This year, the focus is on the GEF's Integrated Approach Pilot (IAPs) Program.

52. **The GEF-6 replenishment put the priority on using integrated approaches to tackle the drivers of environmental degradation, as key to heighten results.** It introduced three IAP programs in support of this priority: Fostering Sustainability and Resilience for Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa, also called Resilient Food Systems (RFS) program, Taking Deforestation out of Commodity Supply Chains, also called the Good Growth Partnership (GGP) program, and Sustainable Cities (SC) program. These programs are integrated, synergistic, and designed to be cost-effective, and directed at some of the underlying drivers of global environmental degradation. This places the GEF on the leading edge of innovation and experimentation with new tools arising from science and practice, and stimulates risk-taking in addressing challenges facing the global environment.

53. **Approaching mid-term of implementation, the evidence examined for this report indicates the three programs are delivering strong progress and are on track to meet their objectives even in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.** The progress made by IAP programs is assessed mainly through Progress Implementation Reports provided every year by Agencies, which include information and data on the extent of progress made by GEF-financed activities. In fiscal 2020, all child projects shared a Project Implementation Report. The analysis also relies on the six Mid-Terms Reviews submitted by child projects so far. In addition, it is informed by the yearly report each IAP program lead Agency provides on implementation progress, along with other knowledge products and stock taking exercises. These sources make available the evidence used to derive the analysis on progress and results presented in this section.

54. **This deep dive analysis discusses progress to date in four areas.** This deep dive analysis discusses the progress made to date: Part 1 summarizes the implementation progress and performance status of the three programs. Part 2 provides an early assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on implementation. Part 3 highlights how child projects are effective in tackling select drivers of environmental degradation in countries, and all together, start driving transformative actions through specific results. Part 4 presents the progress made in countries in addressing cross-cutting areas—gender equality, resilience, stakeholders and private sector engagement. Key results, challenges and opportunities to achieve larger impacts are also discussed.

### Gauging Implementation Progress

55. **Altogether, the 30 child projects of the three IAP programs endorsed between May 2016 and July 2017 account for \$283.9 million of GEF-financing from different focal areas, including matching incentives from set-aside funds.** Each program builds on existing linkages and connections across the different focal areas, in support of a more integrated approach in GEF

programming. That is why each child project draws from more than one focal area or thematic set-asides, in alignment with focal area strategies and multilateral environmental agreements, with resources incentivizing countries to participate in the program.

56. **Mobilizing finance proved effective for IAP programs, surpassing the GEF-6 targeted 6:1 co-financing ratio and drawing resources from key financiers of environmental funding.** This is highlighted in Table 7. There are different sources of co-financing for each IAP. Agencies are among the main co-financiers, along with government counterparts which account for over 60 percent of the co-financing mobilized, attesting to strong country ownership. In addition, Civil Society Organizations contribute to the Good Growth Partnership to a significant extent and so is the case for bilateral organizations for the Sustainable Cities program. Projects received a co-financing various types, with as the main ones: loans, equity, in-kind contribution and grants.

**Table 7. The size of IAP programs**

	<b>Child projects (number)</b>	<b>GEF grant (\$m)</b>	<b>Co-financing (\$m)</b>	<b>Total financing (\$m)</b>
<b>Resilient Food Systems</b>	13	106.4	786.2	892.6
<b>Good Growth Partnership</b>	5	40.3	263.5	303.8
<b>Sustainable Cities</b>	12	137.2	2,416.7	2,553.9

57. **While it is too early to confirm how much co-financing has actually been made available across IAP programs, six projects that reached the Mid-Term Review (MTR) stage indicate progress in materializing co-financing.** Under the Good Growth Partnership, the four projects that reached MTRs have achieved a mobilization rate of 194 percent, as compared to expectations at CEO endorsement. This higher than expected co-financing can be attributed to contributions identified during implementation from NGOs and GEF Agencies for the project focusing on the demand side of the supply chain; as well as from national and local governments and bilateral donors. for the project focusing on the production side. The Resilient Food Systems and Sustainable Cities programs are also showing progress in the MTRs available so far.

58. **Child projects of the three IAP programs are now well into implementation, after registering quick implementation starts.** This provides a sense of the quality of project design, including its implementation arrangements. In the case of the Good Growth Partnership program, it took on average 5.8 months to reach this milestone, whereas it took 7.7 months for Resilient Food Security’s child projects and 11.5 months for Sustainable Cities. Prompt project approval by implementing Agencies helped achieve this milestone faster than the GEF average. At the end of fiscal 2020, child projects were on average 3.5 years old in each program, with six of them having already reached the MTR stage. Nearly all child projects expect to submit MTRs by fiscal 2021.

59. **Both the Good Growth Partnership and Resilient Food System programs are achieving strong disbursement progress, and the Sustainable Cities program is now ramping up**

**disbursement.** The disbursement ratio tracks the extent to which projects disburse available resources each year. IAP programs recorded overall a satisfactory disbursement ratio in fiscal 2020, with the Resilient Food System achieving 20 percent and the Good Growth Partnership recording 32 percent. With a disbursement ratio of 15 percent, the Sustainable Cities’ ratio has increased sharply in fiscal 2020 up from 9 percent in FY19, highlighting an increased pace of activities. This gradual increase is due to the specific nature of projects in the Sustainable Cities program, which include front loading the development of technical studies and training teams to conduct procurement services, before undertaking the works, such as in the case of Mexico. It also highlights that resources can take time to flow through national governments before reaching cities participating in the IAP program. The cumulative disbursement rate provides a complementary way to assess progress. Figure 14 looks at the cumulative disbursement rate over time, which includes project-by-project data in light shaded color and the IAP average in plain color.

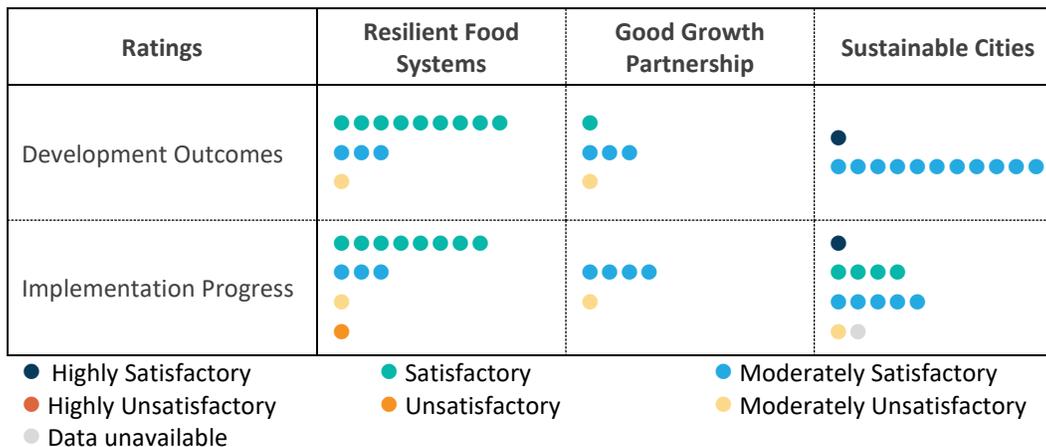
**Figure 14. Progress in disbursement rate over time**



60. **In yearly progress updates, Agencies rated 87 percent and 93 percent of projects in the satisfactory range on, respectively, implementation progress and the likelihood to achieve outcomes. This points to quality implementation.** Projects rated in the unsatisfactory range are the exception as evident in Figure 15 and implementing Agencies are taking proactive actions to place projects back on the right track. For example, projects under the Resilient Food Systems program are working at overcoming operational bottlenecks such as administrative changes which halted project implementation, as well as additional negative external factors including disease outbreak and the desert locust upsurge in East Africa. Other projects noted implementation delays due to coordination and engagement challenges within the government and sectoral circumstances in addition to COVID-19 impact. Projects pointed to taking adaptive management measures and, in some cases, requiring no-cost extensions to ensure the achievement of project objectives.

**Figure 15. The quality of implementation progress by IAP programs in fiscal 2020**

*Each dot represents a child project.*



### Adapting Management and Activities to the COVID-19 Pandemic

61. **Halfway through implementation of the IAPs, the COVID-19 pandemic threatens to erode early gains from the three first strong years of implementation.** While repercussions from the COVID-19 impact will be felt across the months to come, each IAP’s lead Agency provided an early assessment of the impact of the pandemic on implementation progress. Findings indicate that implementation has slowed down and, in some cases, temporarily stopped depending on the extent of restrictions established in countries. As the pandemic is altering urban life, the Sustainable Cities program noted challenges in implementation due to the engagement of city authorities in emergency response. This delayed procurement of services, capacity building activities and affected sometimes the scale and timing of co-financing contributions. Separately, the Resilient Food System program noted high limitations for select project activities, including: workshop and knowledge events, training activities, field work, work undertaken by contractors, and meeting with key stakeholders. The Good Growth Partnership moved activities to a virtual format when possible or in some instances postponed stakeholder consultations and field activities, providing time to ensure the program adapts and responds to the crisis.

62. **Recognizing the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and building on solutions identified early on, IAP programs have adapted to the situation and found alternative ways to continue implement projects effectively.** Agencies and countries have quickly started to do things differently. Countries participating in the Resilient Food Systems program reported now organizing virtual meetings with project teams and implementing partners (Uganda), moving from face-to-face to online training events (Kenya), limiting the number of participating trainees in training of farmers (Niger) and organizing reviews of bidding proposals online (Eswatini)<sup>13</sup>. Similarly, projects of the Sustainable Cities program in Brazil and Paraguay have moved to virtual platforms for capacity building and policy discussions. The online platform of the global project

<sup>13</sup> World Agroforestry, *Impact of COVID-19 on the Resilient Food Systems Programme*, May 2020, available at: [http://knowledgecentre.resilientfoodsystems.co/assets/resources/pdf/rfs\\_results-and-analysis-impact-of-Covid19.pdf](http://knowledgecentre.resilientfoodsystems.co/assets/resources/pdf/rfs_results-and-analysis-impact-of-Covid19.pdf)

now hosts resources on how cities adapt to COVID-19 and the Global Partnership on Sustainable Cities launched an Online Series of events that includes a focus on cities' COVID-19 recovery efforts. The Good Growth Partnership has shifted towards virtual interactions, reporting highly participatory and engaging online meetings. Projects will continue to monitor the COVID-19 impact on supply chains and the program's theory of change, including on the linkages between deforestations and preventing future zoonotic disease outbreaks.

**63. COVID-19 impacts the thematic area of each IAP program highlighting their relevance and prompting the need to enhance their impact.** The Good Growth Partnership examined the disruption of global supply chains around the palm, beef and soy commodity areas. It highlighted that it will continue to increase the protection of important forest landscapes through supporting and incentivizing sustainable supply chains while mitigating the emerging risk of increased deforestation for short term economic gains<sup>14</sup>. In the case of the Sustainable Cities program, some participating cities are experiencing the loss of various types of tax revenue, weakening their fiscal sustainability. That is why continuing to enhance integrated urban planning and facilitating access to finance will be key to help cities better plan for their sustainable recovery and adapt to shocks.

### **Generating Results from Integrated Approaches**

**64. Just over three years into implementation, IAP programs are making progress in achieving results as presented in the qualitative and quantitative analyses captured in project and program progress reports.** They are contributing toward sustainable food production, reducing deforestation from commodity supply chains, and placing cities on the path toward sustainability. While results are formally being reported for the first time at mid-term review stage, lead Agencies overseeing IAP programs are also reporting on results in yearly reports. This is supported by annual updates in Project implementation reports. This section provides a first look at the early and intermediate results achieved by IAP programs on their way to deliver the targeted outcomes. The following is grounded on each IAP's governance framework that encompass multiple levels of involvements and mechanisms to address complexity, accommodate diverse stakeholders, and build ownership through dialogue and collective action. Altogether IAPs report on results beyond Core Indicators alone, including on more complex engagement and institutional or regulatory change. The analysis presented here draws from these different lines of evidence.

**65. At design, each IAP program articulated its results focus in a Program Framework Document, with the overarching program objective backed by each child project's own results framework. This promoted an integrated, coherent and synergistic approach, where the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.** Since implementation start, lead Agencies have further shaped the results focus of the programs by designing theories of change, presenting the linkages leading to project objective achievement. As an example, all child projects of the Good Growth Partnership aim to reduce the global impacts of agriculture commodities expansion on

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<sup>14</sup> Good Growth Partnership, *Year Three Highlights 2020*, September 2020, available at: [https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/publications/GGP\\_Year\\_Three\\_Highlights\\_2020.pdf](https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/publications/GGP_Year_Three_Highlights_2020.pdf)

greenhouse gases emissions and biodiversity, by ensuring that the growing demand for palm oil, soy and beef is met through supply that does not lead to deforestation. Likewise, every Resilient Food Systems project aims to safeguard and maintain ecosystem services into investments, in support of smallholder agriculture and food value chains. And finally, the Sustainable Cities program seeks to promote urban sustainability through inclusive planning processes.

### ■ **Resilient Food Systems**

66. **“Engage-Act-Track” forms the guiding principles of the Resilient Food Systems’ theory of change to harness good practices for long-term sustainability and resilience of food production.** This implies engaging stakeholders in promoting collective action and coherent policies in support of the goals of reducing land degradation and biodiversity loss, recovering natural vegetation and increasing soil carbon. Achieving these goals also requires acting in support of them by intensifying, diversifying and adapting practices for a large-scale transformation of agro-ecosystems. A good tracking system helps monitor and assess progress for resilience in the agricultural sector. A Regional Hub project housed in the World Agroforestry Center (ICRAF) promotes exchanges across the 12 participating countries located in Sub-Saharan Africa, in addition to providing technical support to the country teams. As projects start completing MTRs, they each have an opportunity for course corrections, including examining target levels for sustainable land management in the light of baseline analysis and resources available for implementation<sup>15</sup>.

67. **Countries in the program are starting to adopt sustainable landscape management practices, while establishing an enabling infrastructure promoting behavioral change.** This is for example the case through South-South activities which are strengthening mechanisms for mainstreaming ecosystem services, climate resilience and gender sensitive approaches to food security. In addition, this Regional Hub is providing child projects with advisory services at the intersection of delivery and science. It has disseminated a stocktaking of good practices in developing sustainable land management policies. This took place notably through trainings, its online Knowledge Centre and annual workshops. A key focus is to support scaling up integrated approaches. UNDP and AGRA designed the “Greening Value Chains” training program to this end, with a view to roll it out in 2021.

68. **Countries are establishing multi-stakeholder fora and committees for integrated natural resource management to foster sustainability and resilience.** In Ethiopia, the project has set up 12 platforms at woreda (district) level. These platforms include representatives responsible for livestock, water management, small enterprises, as well as project staff. Meeting every quarter, they review activity implementation and make plans. These woreda-level platforms both support community groups and interact with the national level platform to

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<sup>15</sup> This approach is in line with IEO’s recommendation to balance ambition with realism in setting targets for IAPs. See at, GEF Independent Evaluation Office, *Formative Review of the Integrated Approach Pilot Programs*, July 2018, [https://www.gefio.org/sites/default/files/ieo/evaluations/files/iaps-2017\\_1.pdf](https://www.gefio.org/sites/default/files/ieo/evaluations/files/iaps-2017_1.pdf)

promote integrated landscape management. Separately, both Niger and Senegal have respectively set up three sub-national multi-stakeholder platform each.

69. **In implementing integrated landscape management, countries are starting to make smallholder agriculture more resilient, as already evident in Ethiopia.** This country, which already conducted its MTR, saw dramatic levels of vegetation and biodiversity recovery by preventing cattle from grazing in over 59,000 hectares of agricultural and forest land. This approach included planting 9.3 million seedlings to enhance food security and preserve ecosystem services, in a country where food production is hampered by environmental degradation, deforestation, soil erosion, recurrent droughts and pressures caused by population growth. As a result, the vegetation now provides a new rich and well-managed source of livestock fodder. Altogether, 118,000 households are now participating in more diversified production and livelihood activities in different value chains, including: community watershed land rehabilitation, reduction of fuelwood and dung demand for energy, and diversification of both on farm and off farm livelihoods. Elsewhere in Nigeria, 38,900 farmers are adopting climate resilient agricultural practices and improving livelihoods.

70. **Enhanced monitoring of ecosystem services enables more informed decision-making on agriculture and food security.** All 12 countries participating in the program are undertaking baseline analysis, mixing data from land surveys and leveraging Geographic Information System (GIS) tools to track project progress and trends in ecosystems and socio-economic resilience for decision making. In Eswatini, a Land Degradation Surveillance Framework is now in place in 6 sites. This, along with data generated from field surveys helps generate soil erosion models to better understand land degradation, in coordination with ICRAF for analysis. Using GIS tools, this data helped map all the land protection activities across 37 chiefdoms, including beekeeping, conservation agriculture, constructing ferrocement tanks and nurseries, and rehabilitating sites. The RFS internal M&E dashboard makes available progress data and visualization.

### ■ ***Good Growth Partnership***

71. **Bringing about sustainable production and transactions, while enhancing responsible demand, is at the core of the Good Growth Partnership's activities through the soy, beef and palm oil supply chains.** With five child projects, the program focuses on the systemic issues that lead to deforestation and environmental degradation. In doing so, it addresses land use policies, promotes sustainable agricultural practices and makes available adequate investment and economic incentives for select commodities. In parallel, it supports the shift towards a growing responsible demand. It leverages the role and contribution of each partners to overhaul supply change management with effective multi-stakeholder platforms.

72. **Through its Evidensia knowledge platform and Community of Practice, the program disseminates analysis, engages with partners and strengthens country capacity to help take deforestation out of commodity supply chains.** The Global impacts Platform, or Evidensia, has made available research synthesis and visual summaries that focus on good practices in engaging stakeholders for change and on adopting voluntary sustainability standards. A recent synthesis report on agrochemicals and antibiotics is an example of this work. It fills a gap in business

research by investigating the impact of market-based sustainability approaches on agrochemicals, soil quality and antibiotic use. The Good Growth Conference organized in 2019 was another milestone for the program. It brought together active partners and stakeholders to move forward sustainable supply chains. Ongoing learning activities of the program's Community of Practice support systemic change in supply chains with initiatives and tools. This growing community of 245 members from 14 commodity-producing countries and 50 organizations is strengthening practitioners' capacity on issues cutting across commodities, such as land-use, stakeholder dialogue, financial institutions engagement, farmer support and gender equality.

**73. Indonesia, Paraguay and Liberia are enabling the environment for producers to adopt sustainable practices, while improving land management in already 5.8 million of hectares to benefit biodiversity.** In Indonesia, the National Platform for sustainable palm oil is establishing linkages with similar platforms at provincial and district levels. Subnational action plans have been enacted in North Sumatra, Sintang and South Tapanuli to enable and improve sustainable oil palm production. Progress is taking place in Pelalawan, Indonesia's highest producing palm oil district. The important Indonesia National Action Plan for Sustainable Palm Oil (NAP SPO) developed by FoKBSI (the Indonesian Sustainable Palm Oil Platform) was signed by the President and is currently under implementation. Liberia is also moving toward improving palm oil production practices, starting with the development of a National Oil Palm Strategy and Action Plan to protect high conservation value and carbon stock areas. The country also submitted to the Secretariat of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) its national interpretation of this widely recognized certification to allow producers to access markets that require RSPO certification with strengthened safeguards to the oil palm production. In the Chaco region of Paraguay, a regional multi-stakeholder action plan for sustainable beef was developed and the definition of high conservation value and carbon stock areas is ongoing while one policy improving conservation of important biodiversity areas was adopted. Because supporting beef cattle ranchers is key to the success of any change promoting new production practices, the three countries have conducted farmers needs assessments and are now developing farmer support system strategies. Training of farmers in Pelalawan and Chaco took place to improve capacity and knowledge in applying good agricultural practices.

**74. The program is engaging with the main global buyers and traders of the oil, palm, soy and beef commodities through one-on-one meetings, national and international platforms, and conferences to encourage uptake of Deforestation and Conversion Free (DFC) standards.** These activities encourage key actors to source reduced deforestation commodities. The IAP also works with investors. For example, the Soy Toolkit was developed to support companies in responsibly sourcing soy, which has already prompted companies to revise their sourcing strategies. In addition, the program is developing and providing training on tools that guide implementation of DCF commitments for companies and ESG risks for investors. The program also supported the expansion of the Transparent Supply Chains for Sustainable Economies (<https://trase.earth/>) platform, a critical resource for companies which contributes to increasing supply chain transparency. In addition, the program works on the demand side. It is raising consumer awareness to increase the demand for sustainable commodities in the countries where

they are produced, for example through media and consumer awareness campaigns on the consequences of deforestation and benefits of buying sustainable palm oil in Indonesia markets.

75. **The Good Growth Partnership also works at providing better access to sustainable finance for businesses, farmers and producers for more environmentally sound practices, as is already the case in Paraguay.** This includes promoting the adoption of financial products such as green bonds and impact investment structures as well as subsidies and co-financing models that support sustainable business practices. More specifically in Paraguay, pilot intensification beef techniques have increased productivity by 44 percent, in part thanks to favorable weather conditions, while applying standards preventing deforestation. This pilot led to new blended finance investment of \$3.5 million to support beef intensification. The project also fostered the setting up of new regulations from the Paraguay Central Bank requiring the financial sector to implement Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) risk management. The program is actively working with the Central Bank to develop and deliver a training course for supervisors on the implementation of the new ESG risk management regulation.

### ■ *Sustainable Cities*

76. **In moving cities to sustainable urban planning and management, the Sustainable Cities IAP program works at strengthening land use planning, financing sustainable solutions and building effective city-city partnerships for knowledge sharing.** A total of 28 cities in 11 countries are implementing projects, under the program which also established the Global Partnership for Sustainable Cities (GPSC) to usher in integrated solutions and create cutting-edge knowledge to support cities seeking to improve their urban sustainability. The following snapshot of preliminary results demonstrates how cities are addressing systemic environmental challenges by adopting integrated approaches to building sustainable cities.

77. **The GPSC is enhancing program-level knowledge development and sharing, and capacity building.** It supports cities in creating knowledge and facilitating city-to-city learning and interactions on integrated urban planning, innovative sustainability solutions and municipal financing. The GPSC led by the World Bank has hosted 63 global events and capacity development workshops for more than 5,500 beneficiaries with support from the Resource Team (WRI, C40 and ICLEI). Global meetings and capacity building events are increasingly taking place online in the context of adjusting to the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of child projects, National Platforms were initiated in Brazil, China, India, Paraguay and Malaysia to promote knowledge sharing and engage a wider network of partners and cities domestically. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the GPSC created a dedicated knowledge page providing useful resources for cities to respond and adopt a green recovery path.

78. **Cities participating in the program are now embedding integrated urban planning and management in their actions for environmental benefits.** The cities participating through child projects are developing geospatial data to support integrated sustainable urban planning and management. In Malaysia, the *Melaka Sustainability Outlook Diagnostic* has contributed towards integrated approaches, including the State Structure Plan Melaka 2035 and Melaka Smart City Policy 2035. In India, the child project utilized geospatial data to assess spatial implications of city

planning strategies as well as to examine the extent of focus on sustainability and inclusiveness by the authorities and planners. GPSC has supported capacity building and technical support to participating countries and cities by providing partnership with technical partners such as European Space Agency (ESA) for urban geospatial data.

**79. In contributing to making cities healthy, countries are moving to green infrastructure and integrated waste management to improve the well-being of urban dwellers.** In Vietnam, Government officials took a study tour to Singapore to implement nature-based solutions for city development and developed technical standards for nature-based solutions of grey/green infrastructure. In Paraguay, two national plans covering the integrated management of solid waste and hazardous waste management are developed, including guidelines for municipalities. At city level in Asunción, a framework for a green sustainable city is already translating into key achievements. It is eliminating landfills of solid waste in the Banco San Miguel Reserve, applying phytoremediation techniques to address pollution in a major rubbish dump and ensuring the recovery of watersheds. Planning for the future is key and that's why the new city of Diamniadio in Senegal is anchoring strong environmental standards in its industrial park under development.

**80. Sustainable urban mobility mechanisms taking place through the program reduces congestion, limit the emission of greenhouse gases and tackle air pollution in cities.** This includes supporting establishment of bus rapid transit systems in cities grappling with traffic jam such as in Abidjan, where new bus lanes are under development. For more integrated sustainable transportation, Côte d'Ivoire developed the National Air Pollution Control Strategic Plan to better manage and reduce pollution. With Transit Oriented Development approach, six cities in China are adopting a cross-cutting approach that integrates the strategies of land use planning, transportation planning and land value capture, while aiming to ensure environmental sustainability and promote socially inclusive development. Influenced by this, China has established a platform to scale up this integrated planning approach across the country.

### **Establishing Synergies with Cross-cutting Areas**

**81. Integration with key cross-cutting areas takes place across IAPs, through implementation modalities, dedicated results areas and key products.** To tackle drivers of environmental degradation, the IAPs address cross-cutting areas to move toward a systemic shift ushering in sustainable practices. This includes taking into account and managing stakeholder engagement, with a focus on the role of the private sector; knowledge and learning to inform decision-making; mainstreaming gender; and resilience to shocks and risks. Addressing cross-cutting areas helps ensure each program's durability and is reflected in their respective theory of change as illustrated in Box 2.

## Box 2. IAPs on the road to durability

Building on previous analyses, the GEF Secretariat presented to the 57<sup>th</sup> Council a framework for durability, articulated around four inter-related pillars that IAP programs embody<sup>16</sup>. While analyzing durability is a “long game,” the features embedded in the design of IAP programs help assess progress made towards durability. These programs can also provide a source of learning so that such features can be designed or enhanced at the relevant scale for ongoing and future GEF programming.

- *Robust theory of change*. Ensuring durability starts with a robust theory of change was a key design feature of each IAP program, which ensured a coherent and consistent approach to implementation as reflected in the results part of this section.
- *Multi-stakeholder processes*. Given the complexities and challenges in each commodity supply chain, platforms and relevant roundtables at global, regional, national or subnational levels are interwoven into the child projects’ implementation to create space for dialogue and collaboration on an ongoing basis. This aspect is articulated in the stakeholder engagement and knowledge parts of this section.
- *Stakeholder involvement*. Stakeholder involvement can improve project performance, impact and co-financing, and therefore durability. As outlined in Table 8, IAP programs embody the good practices of inclusive and participatory stakeholder approaches, with an aim to replication, scaling-up, linkages and durability.
- *Adaptive learning*. Effective and adaptive monitoring, evaluation and learning, and knowledge management is key to program durability and also extends across and beyond scale. The evidence presented on knowledge activities in this section also provide lessons for ongoing and future programming of projects and programs. Each IAP program implements key knowledge management features to ensure that systems and tools facilitate knowledge exchange and learning, behavior change, replication and scale up.

### ■ Resilience

82. **Partners in the IAP programs shaped the design of projects and programs by applying tools and methodologies assessing resilience in specific contexts.** Drawing from the GEF Secretariat’s guidance note on *GEF Perspectives on Resilience in Relation to the IAP Programs*, the Inception Workshop of each program included a session on resilience. These sessions discussed key concepts and also shared methodological tools and approaches on resilience, such as the GEF Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel’s resilience assessment framework. As a result, a broad range of tools and methodologies are being applied across the programs. They help programs strengthen food security, cities and commodities cope and recover from a range of risks, stresses and shocks: forest fires, political shocks, floods.

83. **Capacity strengthening activities reinforced IAP program partners to identify, assess and monitor resilience.** Familiarity with approaches to identify, assess and monitor resilience considerations, and to appropriately factor these into interventions, was low among partners at the outset of the IAP programs. Increased knowledge from parties in the programs is now contributing to implementation. These include:

- The Resilient Food Systems program applies through nearly each of its child projects at least two resilience tools that look at factors such as climate change impacts, resilience of agro-biodiversity, women’s empowerment and multi-dimensional assessment of poverty.

<sup>16</sup> GEF/C.57/08, *Towards Greater Durability of GEF Investments*, [https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/EN\\_GEF\\_C.57\\_08\\_Towards%20Greater%20Durability%20of%20GEF%20Investments\\_0.pdf](https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/EN_GEF_C.57_08_Towards%20Greater%20Durability%20of%20GEF%20Investments_0.pdf)

- The Sustainable Cities program adopted resilience as a knowledge pillars. Child projects manage flood risks and help build city creditworthiness. They also broaden stakeholder participation, empower women and encourage learning and good governance.
- The Good Growth Partnership program supports resilience across supply chains: ensuring stable and sustainable production in the face of shocks and suppliers' diversification. It mainstreams gender equality, engages with stakeholders and considers climate change .

### ■ **Stakeholder Engagement**

84. **IAP programs embed an inclusive and participatory approach, harnessing engagement efforts of a wide range of actors to achieve global environmental benefits.** In engaging with a wide set of stakeholders, programs aim to achieve a larger impact than the immediate outputs of the program, including potential for replication, scaling-up and linkage with other existing platforms in the focus areas. That's why it established and supports multi-stakeholder platforms at sub-national, national, regional and global levels for advancing systemic shifts and transformational change. This includes the steering committees, knowledge platforms and advisory and technical committees presented in the results and knowledge parts of this section.

85. **Stakeholders include a wide range of government Agencies, private sector, academia, civil society organizations, smallholder farmers, local communities, financial institutions and GEF Agencies to tackle drivers of global environmental challenges (Table 8).** They include both *partners*, actively contributing to the program with particular roles and responsibilities; and *other stakeholders*, sometimes considered as beneficiaries, whom are consulted, provide technical expertise, share relevant experiences, contribute their time and resources in support of the project, and receive capacity strengthening support to enhance scale and scope of the program.

### ■ **Leveraging the Private and Financial Sector**

86. **In engaging the private sector, IAP programs target key value chain actors and develop public-private partnerships with early results taking place on the ground.** For example, the Good Growth Partnership is harnessing commodity roundtables to engage businesses in driving sustainable supply chain activities for soy in South America and palm oil in Africa. Companies share innovative approaches to ensure buyers have the skills, knowledge and right tools to source sustainably. The roundtables also provide information helping financial institutions invest into sustainable supply chains. Meanwhile at local level, where it is more difficult to engage large multinational companies than at regional or global level, the focus is on small and medium enterprises, such as in the case of the Resilient Food Systems program to drive sustainability and resilience in African agriculture. In both Nigeria and Niger, for instance, the program is engaging with the local banking sector to foster greater access to financing for farmers. In Nigeria, the country project team has established a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) platform for groundnut and rice value chain actors in Abuja to discuss and establish linkages, as well as to foster a more enabling business environment. One of the immediate results of the platform has been the creation of a joint venture between private millers and farmers from Katsina, Jigawa and Kano.

**Table 8. Typology of Stakeholders in the IAP Programs**

<b>RESILIENT FOOD SYSTEMS</b>	<b>GOOD GROWTH PARTNERSHIP</b>	<b>SUSTAINABLE CITIES</b>
<b>GOVERNMENTS</b>		
12 countries (Burkina Faso, Burundi, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Swaziland, Tanzania and Uganda) each represented at national level	4 target countries (Brazil, Paraguay, Indonesia and Liberia) each represented at national level; additional countries represented through designated national Agencies.	11 countries represented at national and sub-national level (Paraguay, Brazil, Malaysia, Vietnam, Mexico, Peru, Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, South Africa, China and India).
<b>SUB-NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS/ MUNICIPALITIES</b>		
Representation of sub-national entities (district, provincial), including as executing partners in some countries	Representation of sub-national entities (district, State, provincial), including as executing partners in all four countries	Engagement by 28 cities as executing partners through city authorities, municipal development Agencies or planning departments
<b>GEF AGENCIES</b>		
IFAD (Lead Agency), World Bank, UNEP, FAO, UNDP, CI (Vital Signs Program), and UNIDO	UNDP (Lead Agency), with CI, UNEP, WWF, and World Bank Group via International Finance Corporation (IFC)	World Bank (Lead Agency), with ADB, AfDB, DBSA, UNDP, UNEP, UNIDO and IDB
<b>DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS</b>		
Africa Union, AUDA/NEPAD, and RECs	Bilateral Agencies such as GIZ and Switzerland's State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO)	Bilateral Agencies such as JICA and EBRD and various national, bilateral development and financial institutions supporting cities
<b>TECHNICAL PARTNERS</b>		
The World Agroforestry (ICRAF) hosts the Regional Hub project; others include Bioversity International, the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), and the European Spatial Agency (ESA)	ISEAL Alliance, Proforest, Trase (partnership between Stockholm Environment Institute and Global Canopy), and GlobeScan are among the major executing partners supporting work on supply chain sustainability	European Space Agency (ESA), UN Habitat, city administration of Aarhus, California, Paris and Sao Paulo (global level), Countries have used diverse entities in line with their national priorities for urban development, as well as local universities
<b>CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS</b>		
Farmer organizations and grassroots communities are fully engaged across all country projects, as well as global, national, and local CSOs who are contributing to knowledge and technical expertise	In addition to CI and WWF as GEF Agencies, Pro-forest and Rainforest Alliance are executing partners at the global level; others are executing in countries: Brazilian Foundation for Sustainable Development (FBDS). CSOs are also active on commodity platforms.	The "Resource Team" of ICLEI, C40 and WRI are playing a major role in the GPSC, while major CSOs such as Guyra Paraguay are supporting work at city-level
<b>PRIVATE SECTOR</b>		
Models of engagement with the private and banking sectors are emerging in countries to increase investments flows in major value chains, local value chains, and natural resource management such as with the Water Fund in Kenya involving companies like Coca-Cola and Caterpillar	Key stakeholder across the three supply chains, including producers, suppliers, aggregators, commercial banks, private investors and assets managers	Private sector engaged as partners and contractors in some of the components, financial institutions, transport and others

88. Each of the IAP programs are promoting engagements with a range of private sector actors, from large multinational corporations to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. Each IAP program is covering all industry sectors involved in their area (see Table 9). This has been achieved through the collective engagement of businesses at local, subnational, national, regional to global level. In the Sustainable Cities program, city level private-public partnerships drive the creation of an enabling environment and support policies at national level. This is the case in India where a company directly co-finance the child project with \$10 million to establish business models and a PPP mode of operations for concrete investment.

**Table 9. Private sector entities engaged in IAP programs by industry classification**

Sectors (Global Industry Classification Standard)	Resilient Food Systems	Good Growth Partnership	Sustainable Cities
Energy			
Materials			
Industrials			
Consumer discretionary			
Consumer staples			
Health care			
Financial			
Info. technology			
Comm. services			
Utilities			
Real estate			

- Critical contribution to program outcomes
- Major contribution to child project outcomes or program components
- Valued contributor in projects

89. The strongest cases of private sector achievements in IAP programs are taking place through new financial products, business models, knowledge, training and funds. As an example, the Sustainable Cities program is helping the city of Melaka, in Malaysia, to get a credit rating which will enable it access private and international finance. The Good Growth Partnership program has signed a Statement of Intent with the Green Fund, opening the door for collaboration on financing more sustainable business models, possibly in Liberia. It is providing training for investors and assets managers from Southeast Asia on environmental, social, and governance (ESG) principles, and is developing deforestation risk management trainings for banks in Indonesia, Brazil and Paraguay as well as at the global level. In addition to that, in Indonesia, the Good Growth Partnership facilitated the creation of two new supply chains partnerships between smallholders and off-takers, directly contributing to more sustainable supply chains. The Resilient Food Systems programs is promoting cost-sharing financing mechanism through which several banks and micro-finance institutions signed partnership agreements are taking place, such as in Niger. The innovative multi-stakeholder Water Fund in Kenya is a model for leveraging private sector finance for investing in sustainable land management.

## ■ *Gender Mainstreaming*

90. **All three IAP programs included gender elements in their design to achieve broader environmental impact and project reports show progress.** Progress to-date includes emerging results on gender equality and women’s empowerment in areas such as improving women’s access and control over natural resources; women’s participation in natural resource decision-making and supporting women’s economic opportunities. While there are variations in the approaches and frameworks as well as in the experiences across the programs, progress in mainstreaming gender is reflected in three ways: a) gender analysis, b) gender monitoring, and c) dialogue and learning on gender. Most child projects under the Resilient Food Systems and Good Growth Partnership programs developed gender mainstreaming action plans, and some child projects under the Sustainable Cities program (e.g. Vietnam) developed gender action plans. Only few projects did not adopt a targeted approach to gender.

91. **All three IAP programs invested in initial efforts to collect sex-disaggregated data and have established frameworks to monitor and track sex-disaggregated and gender sensitive indicators and results at program or project level.** The Resilient Food Systems program is developing a program level gender monitoring framework, supported by the development of monitoring guidelines. Many child projects under the program have developed gender responsive results frameworks and are currently tracking gender indicators linked to the program results framework. The Good Growth Partnership program produced and disseminated a knowledge product on how “Gender Mainstreaming in Global Agricultural Supply Chains Can Accelerate Good Growth”, It provides a critical review of approaches to inform and guide the child projects. The program also made early efforts to collect sex disaggregated data for tracking potential beneficiaries. Gender action plans have been developed and integrated in the annual workplans under the production and demand child projects. These efforts will ensure that progress on gender mainstreaming is captured as part of regular monitoring processes. The Sustainable Cities program has invested in efforts to collect gender disaggregated data but is yet to develop a gender specific index to track gender results in implementation. Furthermore, child projects have mainstreamed gender in a variety of ways, but some have not incorporated any sex-disaggregated indicators.

92. **Raising awareness and encouraging learning, knowledge-building and skills development are essential tools used in programs to advance gender equality and women’s empowerment across the IAP programs.** In this regard, all IAP programs have in different ways supported capacity development and knowledge generation efforts. The Resilient Food Systems program incorporates elements of capacity development in annual workshops organized at the regional level with child project proponents and have developed training guidelines on issues such as gender transformative approaches and resilient landscapes. The same is true of the Sustainable Cities program. The Good Growth Partnership program has organised trainings and workshops at the global level on gender, including through specific child projects or more widely through its Community of Practice. The Good Growth Partnership Conference includes a roundtable on “Women Speak Their Truth” and quarterly country-focused meetings with a gender component. The knowledge product titled Gender mainstreaming in global agricultural

supply chains can accelerate good growth: what works and for whom? is proving invaluable for increasing the understanding of practitioners on approaches for addressing gender inequality in the commodity supply chains. The Green Commodities Community is developing and will offer a series of training events as a follow up to this resource.

### ■ **Knowledge Management**

93. **Deliberate strategic learning and sharing, as well as systematic management of knowledge assets, is a key feature of IAP programs.** Each program is now deploying key tools and techniques:

- *The Resilient Food Systems program* established knowledge platforms for South-South exchanges and is building an evidence base of sustainable agricultural practices. This includes peer learning between stakeholders from research and development projects working in common areas in Northern Ghana. The hub project continuously gathers and synthesizes information, best practices and evidence to support program goals and facilitate south-south exchanges.
- *The Good Growth Partnership's project promoting Adaptive Management and Learning* coordinates the Green Communities Community facilitates learning on effective and hands-on interventions to address deforestation in supply chains. Projects organized a business roundtable dialogue with the ISEAL alliance to move toward deforestation-free supply chains. The Evidensia platform also makes available access information on tools, including standards and certification, supporting the sustainability of supply chain.
- *The Sustainable Cities program* operates the Global Platform for Sustainable Cities (GPSC), serving as a knowledge platform. It conducts global forums involving cities, national governments and other stakeholders; city academies for capacity development; and city-city knowledge exchange and working groups. Engagement of city networks C40 and ICLEI also enabled the program to disseminate knowledge across their network cities.

94. **Each of the programs invested in a series of knowledge products capturing best practices, lessons, and achievements for advancing the integrated approach, hereby generating public goods.** For example, the Good Growth Partnership makes available a landscape analysis tool to assess the impact of interventions aiming to reduce deforestation, as well as commodity market intelligence updates that provide state-of-the-art information on market demand, trade patterns, consumption trends, financial flows and their impact on deforestation. The Sustainable Cities program has a suite of knowledge products developed through the GPSC and partners to support cities, such as Transit-oriented Development Implementation Resources and Tools, the Municipal Public-private Partnership Framework and the Urban Sustainability Framework.

95. **Each of the IAP programs manages an online platform that serves as the primary tool for disseminating knowledge.** For example, the Resilient Food Systems program has developed a tailored “knowledge center”, providing resources and toolkits for countries and the general public on key programmatic themes, such as Sustainable Land Management, Greening Value chains, Rural Extension (e.g. Farmer Field Schools), Monitoring & Evaluation and others. The

Good Growth Partnership program has launched the Global Impacts Platform, now branded as *Evidensia*, which delivers high quality evidence, information and insights on sustainability impacts. A significant component of the knowledge portion of the GPSC website is the Transit-oriented Development (TOD) space, through which information is disseminated for the GPSC “toolkit” on TOD Implementation Resource and Tools.

## Identifying Emerging Lessons and Way Forward

96. **Strong progress to date is driven by the integrated approach and governance of IAP programs, with programs adding value and heightening impact through the ripple effect of projects and global engagement.** Good practices identified across IAPs through this analysis and separate engagement and stock-taking exercises include, but are not limited to:

- *Lead Agencies are “leading from behind” and bringing consistency and knowledge in each program.* They are each reporting yearly on progress across the program, helping make a reality the principle that programs are more than the sum of their parts. They also provide an opportunity to share implementation challenges and successes across child projects.
- *IAP programs are implementing a comprehensive way to address cross-cutting areas that is now yielding results.* The examples provided in this section point to the proactive and comprehensive approach each IAP program is taking to address cross-cutting areas in a way that enhances the achievement of program outcomes.
- *The IAP programs are crowding-in diverse stakeholders across multiple levels to influence systemic shifts through consultative processes, knowledge exchange, and learning.* The level and nature of engagement taking place across programs demonstrates that platforms for change can help bring about a systemic shift, when also supported by effective child projects.

97. **Given the scale and urgency of the challenges addressed in the three IAP programs, continued leadership in strengthening implementation remains critical to ensure the achievement of program objectives.** To carry on the strong progress of the first half of implementation, greater emphasis and further efforts can be made in key areas. Below are few examples:

- *Keeping a strong implementation pace to achieve program outcomes.* The analysis highlighted timely and quality implementation progress. The mid-term reviews scheduled for the coming months present themselves with an opportunity to build on this momentum further and take corrective actions where needed to ensure projects are on track to meet their outcomes in contributing to program objectives.
- *Strengthening the assessment of each program’s value added.* A lot of progress has been made in making available collective knowledge and tracking results beyond direct child project results. And each program is continuing to strengthen the depth and scope of analytical tools to demonstrate the overall IAP impact.

- *Leveraging private sector engagement to bring about systemic change.* Efforts have been made to bring the private sector at the center of each IAP. To achieve bigger impact and further ensure companies adopt sustainable practices, enhanced dialogue and incentives need to continue taking place.
- *Increasing the focus on resilience and sustainability.* Due to the rising magnitude of climate impacts and other external shocks in countries, child projects and programs will continue adopting systematic planning and support for addressing climate risks and ensure they do not jeopardize the durability.

98. **Lessons emerging from this analysis are also feeding into the preparation of GEF-7 Impact Programs.** The design of the Impact Programs is informed from the experience of IAP programs. As child projects are now at advanced preparation stages, it is worth noting that they build on the IAP program experience in designing cost-effective projects that leverage linkages across the mutually reinforcing objectives of the environmental conventions through joint implementation arrangements. This focus on tackling the drivers of environmental degradation through an integrated approach goes hand in hand with the GEF's continued focus to maximize the impact of the programs and projects it supports in generating global environmental benefits.

## CONCLUSION

99. **The Monitoring Report highlighted that GEF-financed projects are making progress and contributing to generating global environmental benefits, even as they adapt implementation arrangements to the new operating environment brought by COVID-19.** In the past year, Agencies reached strong disbursement, demonstrated satisfactory implementation progress toward outcome and innovated in using effective remote supervision tools. Meanwhile, there are signs that projects take longer to start implementation and are facing overall a higher risk to meeting their objective than a year ago.

100. **The GEF established strong systems for capturing progress data through its Portal and fiscal 2021 will see a continued refinement of data quality and governance.** The Portal tracks key information during project implementation, including progress in achieving expected results and materialized co-financing, speed in reaching project milestones, and implementation of core GEF Policies on Gender Equality, Stakeholder Engagement and Environmental and Social Safeguards. Agencies also provide updates on project progress and challenges during implementation. Building on consultations with Agencies, work is ongoing to ensure that the system for data entry is effective and user friendly. This effort to translate results, knowledge and policy requirements into the GEF Portal helps enhance data capture and effective reporting, in a way that allows to continue improve analysis.

101. **As projects adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic, the GEF has been, and will continue to be, monitoring the progress operations are making in this environment and how they adopt new ways to deliver better results and value.** This new situation requires continuous monitoring of progress and evolution of risks over time so that the GEF Partnership can continue adapt its support to countries based on evidence from the ground. That's why this Monitoring Report adopted a framework to track project effectiveness and efficiency. This represents a commitment to improving the way the GEF tracks the progress of the projects it finances, but also to deepen its understanding of the drivers of operational progress in support of results and impact.

## ANNEXES

### Annex A — Technical Note on the Portfolio Scorecard framework

#### CONTEXT

The Portfolio Scorecard introduces a new methodology to track the GEF Partnership’s progress in key areas of operational effectiveness. The Portfolio Scorecard provides a consistent approach to reporting progress over time, with indicators that allow for comparability across Agencies, reinforced by the use of a traffic-light system. As a “living document”, this framework will evolve and improve over time as the GEF’s ability to track progress expands. The current indicators are aligned with the availability of data.

This Portfolio Scorecard builds on the *2019 Monitoring Report*<sup>17</sup>, which introduced Agency level data to highlight progress across the partnership. Since then, the GEF Secretariat designed a framework to track the progress around key indicators and used the March-April 2020 Agency Retreat to discuss the tool’s approach and technical design. This technical note is informed by the inputs and comments received during this consultative process.

To provide just-in-time information to Agencies and stakeholders on portfolio performance, the GEF is leveraging data submitted online by Agencies in the Portal. This data, shared mainly through Project Implementation Reports, is the foundation to provide yearly updates on project progress. In doing so, the Portal leverages the GEF’s ability to use robust analytics.

#### OBJECTIVES

The Portfolio Scorecard aims to achieve three mutually reinforcing objectives:

- *Supporting the implementation of new policy standards.* With new efficiency measures on projects’ processing now in place, the Scorecard tracks progress in implementing them and against the key drivers of operational progress.
- *Moving from ex-post monitoring to providing actionable evidence.* The Scorecard highlights performance areas where good progress is recorded. It also encourages Agencies to manage projects so that the number of well-performing grants increases.
- *Creating incentives and learning from good performers.* By making available portfolio data at Agency level, the Scorecard allows to identify and share good practices. It guides the GEF Partnership’s discussion on progress based on available and robust data.

#### REPORTING FRAMEWORK

Achieving these objectives requires clear directions. That is why three clusters of indicators structure this scorecard. Taken together, they provide a snapshot of how the GEF delivers on its

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<sup>17</sup> 2019 Monitoring Report, GEF/C.57/03, ([https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/EN\\_GEF.C.57.03\\_GEF%20Monitoring%20Report%202019\\_0.pdf](https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/EN_GEF.C.57.03_GEF%20Monitoring%20Report%202019_0.pdf)).

operations and corporate priorities. For each of the three drivers of operational progress that structure the Portfolio Scorecard, it identifies a small set of strategic indicators drawn from GEF priorities and recent policies. The first group of indicators tracks the speed of projects. The second measures key portfolio management indicators, and the third monitors the co-financing of projects.

The three groups of indicators complement one another, providing a picture of how well implementation is taking place. Designing the scorecard in this way helps build stronger conceptual linkages among key business drivers. It also makes it easier to analyze each field and report on progress.

## **ASSESSING PROGRESS**

This Portfolio Scorecard tracks progress in implementation along three bands, identifying whether projects fall within or outside of a specific standard. A three-colored “traffic light” system helps assess the overall shape of a project portfolio. Then color bands, moving from green (●) to amber (●) and then red (●), denote increasing distance from satisfactory progress. A green light means above 80% of the portfolio responds positively to an indicator’s threshold, a yellow one that it responds positively in 60-80% of the cases, and a red one that it responds positively in less than 60% of the portfolio. Grey (●) is used when data are not available.

The selection of the indicators was guided by making sure they allow for a consistent approach to reporting every year, are applicable to each Agency and represent valid and reliable measures. For the purpose of the indicators used in this Scorecard, progress is assessed against three types of thresholds used to determine suitable metrics for inclusion in the Scorecard (Tables A, B and C listing project indicators indicates the rationale for identifying each indicator’s threshold):

- *Based on data analysis.* The design of most of the indicators tracking timeliness and disbursement used in the Scorecard is derived from data analysis that consistently looked at the distribution of projects along metrics. The distribution supported the identification of a threshold that qualifies what is overall sound project progress. An example is the indicator tracking the share of full-sized projects that reached a disbursement rate higher than 50% five years into implementation.
- *Derived from a policy standard.* In cases where a target is clearly set in a policy document, the threshold is the stated policy standard. An example is the fact that each project has to reach financial closure within twelve months of completing the terminal evaluation.
- *Grounded on practice and experience.* Some indicators are based on generally accepted standards, such as whether a project was rated within the satisfactory range of implementation progress. Others are based on whether projects have reached key milestones within an acceptable time, such as the submission of a mid-term review within four years of project implementation.

Only one indicator, the disbursement ratio, is not assessed against a traffic-light system. Instead, the Scorecard simply monitors this indicator. Because the dynamics of a project portfolio are complex, variations may depend on the size and the number of projects in the portfolio, as well as their respective age. This complexity makes it that the disbursement ratio may be out of a regular range in particular in the face of a small number of projects within a portfolio.

## CHALLENGES

As this Portfolio Scorecard better equips the GEF to meet its mandate, it also introduces a new level of transparency that requires acknowledging the various business models, operating environments and organization settings of each Agency.

That's why additional reporting supports the data analysis provided through the scorecard. This analysis helps address some of the issues that the scorecard makes apparent:

- *Portfolio composition.* Variations of performance levels across Agencies may occur as only few projects populate an Agency's data set, making the computation of averages sensitive to outliers. On the contrary, an Agency with many projects is less subject to a significant deviation of its average performance level as a result of few outliers alone. Similar deviations may happen owing to a higher exposure to a given region or focal area facing higher than average challenges.
- *Shared performance responsibility.* Countries and Agencies share the responsibility to achieve project progress. While Agencies support progress, the country is responsible to execute the project. And in some cases, project progress can be challenged by external events. For example, the time it takes to reach first disbursement may be an indication of the quality of project design and dialogue with the country, but it may also be due to external factors such as the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- *Business practices.* While all Agencies report key data points on project progress each year, they may use different internal standards in coming up with the update. For example, Agencies may apply a different approach to rating projects on implementation progress and their likelihood to achieve development objectives.

To address these methodological challenges, the Scorecard is designed in a way that is transparent about these limitations and gives an account of them into its broader reporting framework. It includes narrative sections that provide analysis and context on progress status. In addition to accompanying the scorecard with qualitative sections, additional reporting also indicates the size of the project population under analysis. This helps make apparent any challenge associated with reporting progress in a comparable manner.

## FOCUS ON THREE PRIORITY AREAS

The Scorecard focuses on Full-sized projects (FSPs) and Medium-sized projects (MSPs) funded by the GET trust fund. This section provides a detailed description of the three groups of indicators

and rationale for each of the indicators used to track improvements under these objectives. Annex B provides detailed definitions of the Scorecard’s indicators.

### **1. Enhancing the speed of operations**

Accelerating project start-up helps achieve development effectiveness faster. Mindful of that, the scorecard tracks the timeliness in reaching first disbursement, a critical measure of project design and effectiveness, as well as adherence to plans in reaching key project milestones. It also looks at the time it takes to reach mid-term review, a key project milestone. Finally, this group of indicators also looks at the share of projects which are below 6 years of implementation in the case of FSPs, as 6 years would typically be time to reach completion.

**Table A. Enhancing the Speed of Operations**

<b>INDICATOR NAME</b>	<b>UNIT</b>	<b>THRESHOLD</b>
Time from CEO endorsement (FSP) or CEO approval (MSP) to first disbursement below 18 months*	%	Data analysis
Time from CEO endorsement to mid-term review below 4 years	%	Data analysis
Project age below 4 years for MSPs and 6 years for FSPs	%	Data analysis

\* Indicator disaggregated by project type: MSP only, FSP only and, MSP & FSP together.

### **2. Ensuring strong portfolio management**

To ensure that GEF resources are fully mobilized and put to good use, the scorecard tracks the disbursement ratio, which indicates the time it takes to financially execute an operation. Reaching portfolio efficiency also means proactively managing operations to disburse on time and with flexibility to ensure prompt and effective project management. Key indicators also help understand the extent to which operations are effective in implementing and executing their plans. In addition to a focus on disbursement, this group of indicators tracks the quality of implementation by taking a look at project ratings. It also looks at the timeliness in reaching financial closure after completion.

**Table B. Ensuring strong portfolio management**

INDICATOR NAME	UNIT	THRESHOLD
Disbursement ratio of ongoing portfolio	%	Monitored
Projects rated in the satisfactory range for both IP and DO	%	Practice
Projects rated in the satisfactory range for Implementation Progress (IP)	%	Practice
Projects rated in the satisfactory range for Development Outcome (DO)	%	Practice
Project with disbursement in the past year (%)	%	Data analysis
Over 50% disbursed balance 3+ years into MSP implementation and 5+ years for FSP	%	Data analysis
Projects with financial closure after Terminal Evaluation submission	%	Policy
Projects financially closed on time in the last year	%	Policy

### **3. Increasing co-financing across the portfolio**

Bringing more resources for countries is vital to meet the scale of the resources needed to protect the world's environment. And the GEF is doing its part in the global agenda to move from billions of development assistance to trillions of investments of all kinds to achieve climate goals. It works with Agencies to find all resources available to achieve them: public and private, and national and global. To ensure that the additional resources committed at endorsement stage come in support of projects, this new scorecard tracks whether expected co-financing materialized at two critical project milestones—mid-term review and terminal evaluations. It uses thresholds (e.g. reaching a 35% materialization rate at MTR) that are derived from analysis, including the average disbursement profile of projects during project life.

**Table C. Increasing co-financing across the portfolio**

INDICATOR NAME	UNIT	THRESHOLD
Projects with co-financing materialized higher than 35% at MTR (%)	%	Data analysis
Co-financing materialized at Terminal Evaluation (%)	%	Data analysis

## **Annex B — List and Definition of Indicators Used in the Portfolio Scorecard**

Annex B provides the definition for all the indicators tracked in the Portfolio Scorecard. The definitions also give additional information on the rationale for selecting the indicator and how it contributes to tracking progress towards the GEF's environmental and corporate objectives. This annex lists all indicators according to the structure of the scorecard by clusters of indicators. Each indicator has a short description of what it entails and how it is calculated, together with the source, the unit of measure and extent of disaggregation.

### **SMART INDICATORS**

Indicators of this Scorecard are tied to performance and results by focusing on one or more characteristics of the broader goal, using SMART criteria. The characteristics of SMART indicators are as follows:

- **Specific.** Indicators should convey clear, precise information that is easy to communicate and understand.
- **Measurable.** The values of indicators should be easy to determine, objectively and with scientific accuracy.
- **Achievable.** Indicators and their measurement units must reflect goals that are achievable during the relevant timespan.
- **Relevant.** Indicators should be directly applicable to the goals and context of the level being measured and be useful for management or analytical purposes.
- **Time-bound.** Indicators should enable progress to be tracked at a desired frequency for a set period.

### **LIST AND DEFINITIONS OF INDICATORS**

#### **ENHANCE THE SPEED OF OPERATIONS**

##### ***Time from CEO endorsement or CEO approval to first disbursement below 18 months***

The lapse of time between the endorsement of a project by the GEF's CEO and first disbursement is often a critical aspect of delay in project implementation. It may be an indication of the quality of project design and dialogue with the client, but it may also be due to external factors. The indicator shows how quickly new projects are moving from the beginning of implementation to reaching the actual first disbursement. It is calculated by taking into account all projects that have reached first disbursement in the most recent fiscal year.

**Source:** GEF Portal and Agencies | **Unit:** months | **Disaggregation:** MSP & FSP together, MSP, FSP

### ***Time from CEO endorsement to mid-term review submission below 4 years***

The lapse of time between the endorsement of a project by the GEF's CEO and mid-term review is often a critical aspect of delay in project implementation. It may be an indication of the quality of project design and dialogue with the client, but it may also be due to external factors. The indicator shows how quickly new projects are moving from the beginning of implementation to reaching mid-term review. It is calculated by taking into account all projects that have indicated an actual mid-term review date in the most recent fiscal year.

**Source:** GEF Portal and Agencies | **Unit:** months | **Disaggregation:** FSP only

### ***MSP age below 4 years / FSP age below 6 years***

The speed at which projects are implemented provides an indication of how quickly the intended project's global environmental benefits are delivered in the country. This indicator raises attention on the share of projects that are not overage or below 4 years old in the case of an MSP and 6 years in the case of an FSP within the total active portfolio of active projects as at the end of the most recent fiscal year (excluding projects not eligible to submit their first Project Implementation Report).

**Source:** GEF Portal and Agencies | **Unit:** percentage | **Disaggregation:** MSP, FSP

## **ENSURE STRONG PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT**

### ***Disbursement ratio of ongoing portfolio (%)***

By measuring the pace at which the GEF makes resources available to Agencies, this indicator shows the speed with which the GEF implements its portfolio. It captures the ratio of total GEF disbursement since the beginning of the fiscal year over the undisbursed GEF balance of projects at the beginning of the year. It takes into account all ongoing medium- and full-sized projects, with a disbursement value in the most recent fiscal year.

**Source:** GEF Portal and Agencies | **Unit:** percentage | **Disaggregation:** MSP & FSP together

### ***Projects rated in the satisfactory range for both IP and DO, and Projects rated satisfactorily for IP and DO separately***

The indicator measures the share of projects that Agencies have rated satisfactorily in both of the following two self-ratings i) implementation progress and ii) likelihood of achieving development objectives on a six-point scale—Highly Unsatisfactory, Unsatisfactory, Moderately Unsatisfactory, Moderately Satisfactory, Satisfactory and Highly Satisfactory. The implementation progress and development outcomes ratings are also tracked separately to highlight the share of projects rated in the satisfactory

range. It is computed by measuring the number of medium- and full-sized projects under implementation rated in the satisfactory range in Project Implementation Reports divided by the total number of rated projects in the portfolio at fiscal year-end.

**Source:** GEF Portal and Agencies | **Unit:** percentage | **Disaggregation:** IP & DO together, IP, DO

### ***Projects with disbursement in the past year***

The speed at which projects disburse financing is an indication of how quickly the intended project's global environmental benefits are delivered in the country. This indicator points the share of projects that have disbursed resources in the past 12 months. It includes only projects that have provided a disbursement value in the latest fiscal year and excludes projects with remaining undisbursed balance of less than 5%.

**Source:** GEF Portal and Agencies | **Unit:** percentage | **Disaggregation:** MSP & FSP together

### ***Over 50% disbursed balance after 3 years of implementation for MSPs and 5 years for FSPs***

By ensuring that Implementing Agencies make resources available to countries on time, this indicator shows the speed with which GEF Agencies implement projects. It captures the share of projects that have disbursed over half of the financing available over three years into implementation for MSPs and five years for FSPs. At this point in the project's life, MSPs should have normally disbursed over 50% of resources available. The cohort covers medium- and full-sized projects which have been under implementation for three years or more at the end of the most recent fiscal year in the case of medium-sized projects and five years or more in the case of full-sized projects.

**Source:** GEF Portal and Agencies | **Unit:** percentage | **Disaggregation:** MSP, FSP

### ***Projects with financial closure after TE submission***

The speed at which GEF Agencies report financial closure to Trustee after terminal evaluation is often a critical aspect of delay in meeting fiduciary requirements. It may be an indication of the project's effectiveness and dialogue with the client, but it may also be due to other factors. The GEF has set the requirement of financially closing all projects within 12 months after terminal evaluation submission or completion date. This indicator looks at all projects that have submitted Financial closure, after submission of a terminal evaluation, in part to assess progress in clearing the backlog of completed projects with outstanding financial closure. The cohort covers projects which have submitted a terminal evaluation at the end of the month of September of the most recent year.

**Source:** GEF Portal and Agencies | **Unit:** percentage | **Disaggregation:** MSP & FSP together

### ***Projects financially closed on time in the last year***

The speed at which GEF Agencies report financial closure to Trustee after terminal evaluation is often a critical aspect of delay in meeting fiduciary requirements. It may be an indication of the project's effectiveness and dialogue with the client, but it may also be due to other factors. The GEF has set the requirement of financially closing all projects within 12 months after terminal evaluation submission or completion date. This indicator looks at all projects that have reached Financial Closure during the year under reporting (October 1-September 30) and indicates the share of these projects that have reached this step below the 12-month requirement after submitting a Terminal Evaluation.

**Source:** GEF Portal and Agencies | **Unit:** percentage | **Disaggregation:** MSP & FSP together

### **INCREASE CO-FINANCING ACROSS THE PORTFOLIO**

#### ***Projects with co-financing materialized higher than 35 percent at MTR***

This indicator assesses how effectively the project has actually materialized the co-financing promised and expected to take place at the stage of CEO endorsement. This provides a reality check on actual co-financing happening on the ground. Co-financing may materialize in a different way than planned owing to a variety of reasons, including a donor pulling back due to a change of priorities or an additional private sector player coming in given an arising investment opportunity. The cohort covers projects that reached actual Mid-Term Review and Terminal Evaluation during the most recent fiscal year and provide co-financing materialization data. The uses a different threshold of respectively 35% co-financing materialized to account for the level of maturity in the project life; defined based on analysis including by taking into account the project disbursement rate at this stage of project life.

**Source:** GEF operations system | **Unit:** percentage | **Disaggregation:** MSP & FSP

#### ***Co-financing materialized at Terminal Evaluation (%)***

This indicator assesses how effectively the project has actually materialized the co-financing promised and expected to take place at the stage of CEO endorsement when it reaches the Terminal Evaluation. This provides a reality check on actual co-financing happening on the ground. Co-financing may materialize in a different way than planned owing to a variety of reasons, including a donor pulling back due to a change of priorities or an additional private sector player coming in given an arising investment opportunity. The cohort covers projects that reached actual Terminal Evaluation during the most recent fiscal year. The computation divides the co-financing amount materialized across the portfolio by the full co-financing amount expected at CEO endorsement.

**Source:** GEF operations system | **Unit:** percentage | **Disaggregation:** MSP & FSP

## Annex C — Fiscal 2019 Reference Point and Fiscal 2020 Project Population

**Table D. Values and performance by Agency in fiscal 2019**

● Above 80% of the project portfolio ● From 60% to 80% of the project portfolio ● Below 60% of the project portfolio ● Data not available

NB: No data is included in cells where Agencies did not contribute to indicators during the period under review

	GEF Average	ADB	AfDB	BOAD	CAF	CI	DBSA	EBRD	FAO	FECO	FUNBIO	IADB	IFAD	IUCN	UNDP	UNEP	UNIDO	WB	WWF
<b>ENHANCE THE SPEED OF OPERATIONS</b>																			
Time from CEO endorsement (FSP) or CEO approval (MSP) to first disbursement below 18 months	78 ●	75 ●			100 ●	100 ●	100 ●	50 ●	86 ●		100 ●	30 ●	80 ●	63 ●	79 ●	82 ●	88 ●	67 ●	100 ●
- MSPs only (%)	67 ●	100 ●				100 ●			100 ●						57 ●	76 ●	80 ●	50 ●	
- FSPs only (%)	82 ●	67 ●			100 ●	100 ●	100 ●	100 ●	83 ●		100 ●	38 ●	80 ●	71 ●	87 ●	91 ●	93 ●	68 ●	100 ●
Time from CEO endorsement to mid-term review below 4 years	57 ●	40 ●				100 ●			63 ●				50 ●		57 ●	61 ●	18 ●	68 ●	
MSP age below 4 years (%)	71 ●	50 ●	50 ●			100 ●		50 ●	90 ●			50 ●		67 ●	80 ●	67 ●	62 ●	60 ●	
FSP age below 6 years (%)	89 ●	79 ●	100 ●		100 ●	100 ●	100 ●	57 ●	93 ●		100 ●	89 ●	100 ●	33 ●	93 ●	74 ●	85 ●	90 ●	100 ●
<b>ENSURE STRONG PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT</b>																			
Disbursement ratio of ongoing portfolio (%)	18 ●	15 ●	9 ●		0 ●	11 ●	3 ●	11 ●	13 ●		0 ●	10 ●	16 ●	5 ●	22 ●	21 ●	14 ●	23 ●	12 ●
Projects rated in the satisfactory range for both Implementation Progress and Outcome (%)	82 ●	87 ●	83 ●		0 ●	92 ●	100 ●	78 ●	90 ●		100 ●	77 ●	92 ●	83 ●	71 ●	88 ●	89 ●	90 ●	100 ●
Projects rated in the satisfactory range for Implementation Progress (%)	86 ●	87 ●	83 ●		0 ●	92 ●	100 ●	78 ●	90 ●		100 ●	77 ●	92 ●	82 ●	73 ●	91 ●	90 ●	86 ●	100 ●
Projects rated in the satisfactory range for Development Outcome (%)	87 ●	96 ●	83 ●		100 ●	92 ●	100 ●	100 ●	92 ●		100 ●	92 ●	92 ●	91 ●	80 ●	91 ●	93 ●	90 ●	100 ●
Projects with disbursement in the past year (%)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

**Table D. Values and performance by Agency in fiscal 2019**

● Above 80% of the project portfolio ● From 60% to 80% of the project portfolio ● Below 60% of the project portfolio ● Data not available

NB: No data is included in cells where Agencies did not contribute to indicators during the period under review

	GEF Average	ADB	AfDB	BOAD	CAF	CI	DBSA	EBRD	FAO	FECO	FUNBIO	IADB	IFAD	IUCN	UNDP	UNEP	UNIDO	WB	WWF
Over 50% disbursed balance 3+ years into MSP implementation (%)	78 ●	100 ●				100 ●		0 ●	100 ●					100 ●	89 ●	74 ●	67 ●	75 ●	
Over 50% disbursed balance 5+ years FSP implementation (%)	80 ●	60 ●						25 ●	89 ●			40 ●	100 ●		94 ●	66 ●	63 ●	88 ●	
Projects with financial closure after Terminal Evaluation submission (%)	89 ●	95 ●	25 ●			100 ●		50 ●	62 ●			100 ●	93 ●		90 ●	76 ●	81 ●	95 ●	100 ●
Projects financially closed on time in the last year (%)	67 ●					100 ●		100 ●	80 ●			75 ●	0 ●		54 ●	33 ●	88 ●	100 ●	100 ●
<b>INCREASE CO-FINANCING ACROSS THE PORTFOLIO</b>																			
Projects with co-financing materialized higher than 35 percent at MTR (%)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Co-financing materialized at Terminal Evaluation (%)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

**Table E. Number of projects considered to calculate each indicator in fiscal 2020**

NB: No data is included in cells where Agencies did not contribute to indicators during the period under review

	GEF Average	ADB	AfDB	BOAD	CAF	CI	DBSA	EBRD	FAO	FECO	FUNBIO	IADB	IFAD	IUCN	UNDP	UNEP	UNIDO	WB	WWF
<b>ENHANCE THE SPEED OF OPERATIONS</b>																			
Time from CEO endorsement (FSP) or CEO approval (MSP) to first disbursement below 18 months	36	1			1				2			2		1	10	12	2	6	
- MSPs only (%)	10				1							1		1		5	1	1	
- FSPs only (%)	26	1							2			1			10	7	1	5	
Time from CEO endorsement to mid-term review below 4 years	66	1							7			4			29	8	7	9	1
MSP age below 4 years (%)	176	2				1		2	7			5		3	44	73	32	6	1
FSP age below 6 years (%)	556	12	2		1	9	2	6	68		1	21	11	7	214	66	59	73	4
<b>ENSURE STRONG PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT</b>																			
Disbursement ratio of ongoing portfolio (%)	852	12	7	1	5	13	2	7	75		1	28	12	9	313	169	97	96	5
Projects rated in the satisfactory range for both Implementation Progress and Outcome (%)	767	14	8		3	11	2	8	76		1	27	12	10	268	150	96	77	4
Projects rated in the satisfactory range for Implementation Progress (%)	770	14	8	1	3	11	2	8	76		1	27	12	10	268	151	96	77	5
Projects rated in the satisfactory range for Development Outcome (%)	764	14	6		3	11	2	8	76		1	27	12	10	268	148	96	78	4
Projects with disbursement in the past year (%)	850	12	7	1	5	13	2	7	74		1	28	12	9	313	168	97	96	5
Over 50% disbursed balance 3+ years into MSP implementation (%)	138	1	1			3		2	4			4		2	39	55	24	3	
Over 50% disbursed balance 5+ years FSP implementation (%)	222	5						4	15			8	1		77	31	34	47	

**Table E. Number of projects considered to calculate each indicator in fiscal 2020**

NB: No data is included in cells where Agencies did not contribute to indicators during the period under review

	GEF Average	ADB	AfDB	BOAD	CAF	CI	DBSA	EBRD	FAO	FECO	FUNBIO	IADB	IFAD	IUCN	UNDP	UNEP	UNIDO	WB	WWF
Projects with financial closure after Terminal Evaluation submission (%)	1989	23	7			7		2	32			23	30	1	937	274	67	584	2
Projects financially closed on time in the last year (%)	115	10	1			5			3			5	2	0	50	6	7	26	
<b>INCREASE CO-FINANCING ACROSS THE PORTFOLIO</b>																			
Projects with co-financing materialized higher than 35 percent at MTR (%)	49	1							6			4			14	8	7	9	1
Co-financing materialized at Terminal Evaluation (%)	125	8				4			6			3	5		63	14	4	17	1