GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY
INVESTING IN OUR PLANET

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**UPDATE ON PROGRESS TOWARDS THE DEVELOPMENT OF
A GEF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND LEARNING STRATEGY**

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.   At its 59th meeting in December 2020, having reviewed the document, *Evaluation of Knowledge Management in the GEF (2020)[1],* prepared by the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) as well as the GEF Secretariat's respective Management Response, the GEF Council endorsed the recommendations that:

      (a)   the GEF partnership should develop a clear KM strategy, and

      (b)   the GEF partnership should invest in a technical solution that strengthens the KM system.

2.   In accordance with this Council decision and in parallel with partnership-wide efforts to develop the GEF-8 strategic vision and the policies and procedures that will accompany it, the Secretariat initiated a collaborative process in December 2021 to develop a **GEF Knowledge Management and Learning (KM&L) Strategy and Action Plan for the GEF Partnership**. The objective of the strategy is to improve and enhance knowledge capture, sharing and learning across the GEF partnership, building on past efforts, achievements and lessons learned and to bring together existing efforts and good practices from the partnership, in sync with the GEF-8 strategy.

3.   The GEF's collaborative KM&L strategy development process includes a KM Audit and stock-taking exercise, broad-based consultations around stakeholder needs and priorities, as well as an investigation of the feasibility of a technical solution for greater knowledge capture, exchange and dissemination across the Partnership, as requested by the IEO. This process is currently underway and the KM&L strategy will be prepared by the Secretariat, building on the findings of the KM Audit as well as stakeholder inputs and strategic guidance compiled through partnership-wide consultations. The strategy will be presented to the GEF Council for consideration at its meeting in December 2022.

4.   This information paper provides an overview of the ongoing process to develop the KM&L strategy and serves as an update to Council on the progress made to date. Although not requested by Council, this update offers an opportunity to also share with the Council preliminary findings of two studies conducted thus far as part of the KM Audit. These preliminary findings are available in the annex of this paper and at this stage, they are for information only.

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[1] GEF/E/C.59/04, Evaluation of Knowledge Management in the GEF (2020)

II. BACKGROUND

GEF's Unique Role as a Knowledge Broker and Facilitator

5.	The Global Environment Facility (GEF) is a mechanism for international cooperation, creating unique opportunities for knowledge capture, exchange and learning at global, national and local levels. Since its establishment on the eve of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, the GEF has provided more than $21.7 billion in grants and mobilized an additional $119 billion in financing for more than 5000 projects. Today, the GEF is an international partnership of 184 countries, 18 international institutions, civil society organizations and the private sector that addresses global environmental issues. It also receives continuous input from an independent evaluation office (GEF IEO) and a world-class Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP). This diverse and complex organizational set up across a wide range of stakeholders provides the GEF partners a prolific environment for knowledge capture, exchange, learning and collaboration.

6.	Furthermore, the GEF serves as a financial mechanism for 5 major international environmental conventions: the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD), the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and the Minamata Convention on Mercury. Given this unique role, GEF is well placed to connect and integrate the missions of all these environmental conventions by making investments that facilitate collaboration, knowledge exchange, learning and joint intervention to enhance their collective impact on the ground. In fact, to date, GEF support has been critical in allowing parties to translate these agreements into national action and innovative investments, and in ensuring transparency of action through effective reporting from countries to conferences of the parties.

7.	The GEF's role as an innovator and catalyst - supporting multi-stakeholder alliances to preserve threatened ecosystems on land and in the oceans, build greener cities, boost food security and promote energy efficiency and clean energy for a more prosperous, climate-resilient world – will be reinforced in the GEF-8 replenishment period by further emphasizing system change through tackling major drivers of environmental degradation thorough enhanced integration, innovation, collaboration, knowledge sharing and learning.

Knowledge and Learning at the GEF

8.	Knowledge is one of the key assets of the GEF Partnership and is a critical tool for sustainability and scale up. The GEF has a diverse portfolio of investments that include pilots, demonstrations, innovative instruments and integrated approaches which use and generate knowledge. It also has an extensive global network of partners and stakeholders, which uniquely position the GEF to facilitate the capture, transfer, uptake and scale up of lessons, expertise and best practices. These features enable the GEF to not only address environmental challenges effectively, but also, to influence critical decision-making regarding the global environment, culminating in sustainable and scalable solutions

9.   The GEF has been actively working to better mainstream knowledge and learning into its investments since GEF-6. In 2014, the GEF-6 Replenishment Policy Recommendations emphasized "the importance of developing a knowledge management (KM) system that aims to improve the GEF partnership's ability to learn by doing and thereby enhance its impact over time." Subsequently, the Council welcomed, in June 2015, the *GEF Knowledge Management (KM) Approach[2]*.

10.   According to this approach, the purpose of KM in the GEF context is to facilitate and enable the capture, exchange and uptake of knowledge within and beyond the GEF Partnership with two key objectives:

    (a)   to improve the impact of GEF-supported projects and programs, and

    (b)   to inform global, regional and national policy dialogues on options and approaches to reverse the course of environmental degradation.

11.   The GEF Secretariat began implementing the KM Approach in September 2015, in consultation with the **Partnership-wide KM Advisory Group (KMAG),** which was convened as an informal sounding board, bringing together GEF Partners, including GEF Agencies, STAP, IEO, CSOs, member countries and the Conventions. Since then, the Secretariat has undertaken partnership-wide knowledge and learning initiatives in support of GEF programming, in close collaboration with all GEF partners, at both project and portfolio (corporate) levels.

12.   Accordingly, at the project/program level, **KM Requirements** were introduced in 2016 for all GEF Investments going forward, at both Project Identification Form (PIF)/Program Framework Document (PFD) and CEO Endorsement/Approval stages of the GEF project cycle, including a *KM Approach* **for every project and program**. These requirements facilitate integration of knowledge and learning into project design and enable better knowledge capture and sharing during project implementation. They have also been reflected in the GEF Project and Program Cycle Guidelines[3].

13.   In elaborating their KM Approaches, GEF project/program proposals have been required to include:

    (a)   an overview of existing lessons and best practice that inform the project concept,

    (b)   plans to learn from relevant projects, programs, initiatives & evaluations,

    (c)   processes to capture, assess and document info, lessons, best practice & expertise generated during implementation,

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[2] GEF/C.48/07/Rev.01, GEF Knowledge Management Approach, June 2015

[3] Guidelines on the Project and Program Policy, 2020, GEF/C.59/Inf, https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/GEF_Guidelines_Project_Program_Cycle_Policy_20200731.pdf

(d)   tools and methods for knowledge exchange, learning & collaboration (at both program and project levels if a PFD), including knowledge platforms and websites,

(e)   knowledge outputs to be produced and shared with stakeholders (at both program and project levels if a PFD),

(f)   a discussion on how knowledge and learning will contribute to overall project/program impact and sustainability,

(g)   plans for strategic communication,

(h)   budget and timelines for KM approach implementation/delivery (required at CEO endorsement stage).

14.   In parallel, at the portfolio (corporate) level, based on a partnership-wide knowledge needs assessment conducted in 2016, a series of knowledge and learning initiatives were introduced by the Secretariat, targeting different audiences and aiming to enhance existing corporate efforts to capture, store, share and disseminate knowledge. These initiatives, most of which have received high ratings and positive feedback from target audiences, include:

(a)   **GEF Portal**, an information technology system and database with an on-line interface for processing GEF project and program proposals and for capturing monitoring data for GEF investments under implementation,

(b)   **GEF KALEO** "Ask the Expert" online knowledge sharing tool based on machine-learning,

(c)   Dedicated **Knowledge and Learning Page** on the GEF website,

(d)   **GEF Academy**, a learning initiative with a curriculum of GEF e-courses and videos designed to enhance the capacity of GEF stakeholders,

(e)   Pilot synthesis of **Lessons Learned** from terminal evaluations of multi-focal area projects,

(f)   Systematic collection of **Lessons Learned from projects at MTR** stage along a series of categories,

(g)   Regional **GEF Knowledge Days and Learning Stations** with project site visits that facilitate peer-to-peer learning, targeting GEF recipient country counterparts,

(h)   **Art of Knowledge Exchange Guide and Workshops**, showcasing tools and techniques of knowledge exchange across the GEF and highlighting best practice from the GEF portfolio,

(i)   **GEF Good Practice Briefs** that showcase successful examples of GEF investments that align with GEF strategy, programming directions and policies, highlighting integrated approaches, and online seminars to introduce lessons learned from these GEF investments.

15.   In addition, the GEF has continued its funding for targeted Knowledge Sharing Projects, such as IW:Learn, a long-standing GEF investment in a global platform to strengthen transboundary water management around the globe by collecting and sharing best practices, lessons learned, and innovative solutions to common problems across the GEF International Waters portfolio (www.iwlearn.net).

16.   The GEF-6 cycle (2014-2018) introduced the Integrated Approach Pilots (IAPs) and other larger-scale systemic investments through programmatic approaches. In GEF-7 (2018-2022), the GEF launched the Impact Programs to address multiple drivers of environmental change across many more relevant sectors. Through the Impact Programs, the GEF has evolved a variety of influencing models towards delivering results across multiple geographies, sectors, and markets. In addition to responding to country-specific needs, the programs enabled the GEF to better crowd-in other stakeholders, including the private sector, enhance knowledge sharing and learning, promote south-south knowledge exchange, build capacity, facilitate innovation and ensure more effective use of GEF resources.

17.   The GEF has invested deliberately and strategically in knowledge and learning components of GEF-6 Integrated Approach Programs (IAP) and GEF-7 Integrated Programs (IP), supporting the creation of multiple international Knowledge Platforms, such as the Global Platform for Sustainable Cities, a forum for knowledge sharing and partnership to achieve urban sustainability (www.thegpsc.org).

18.   Experience from both GEF-6 and GEF-7 has shown strong country demand for the GEF to offer knowledge platforms where countries can come together around common challenges and opportunities for learning and networking. These platforms provide a variety of services, from knowledge sharing to lessons learned to technology transfer, to name a few. These platforms also bring together expertise from within the network of participating countries and agencies, as well as from the wider community of practice in specific technical areas relevant to the programs.

19.   In the meantime, at the corporate level, the GEF Secretariat has continued to act as a knowledge broker and to share pertinent knowledge at global forums, including COPs, via GEF side events, presentations and displays, to produce and disseminate outreach products such as publications, brochures, and videos, and to use social media to highlight relevant knowledge materials and events.

20.   In 2020, with the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Secretariat moved all its KM work on-line, initiating virtual knowledge exchanges, including webinars, workshops, Council meetings, Agency retreats as well as GEF Introduction Seminars, National Dialogues, Constituency Meetings and South-South Exchanges, facilitated through the GEF Country Support Program.

21.   All these efforts have contributed to the quality and impact of the GEF's investments by increasing awareness, knowledge, capacity and collaboration among beneficiaries, decision makers and practitioners, and by facilitating uptake and scale up of innovative solutions. These

efforts will continue into GEF-8 and beyond, in support of the GEF's mission, investments and operations.

Plans for Knowledge and Learning in GEF-8

22.   In GEF-8, the GEF intends to focus on nature-positive, carbon-neutral, and pollution-free investments that support and influence transformational change in natural, food, energy, health, and urban systems. The GEF-8 strategy includes four critical levers for creating desired transformations in the target systems: a) governance and policies, b) financial leverage, c) multi-stakeholder dialogues, and d) innovation and learning.[4] Accordingly, the GEF-8 programming directions prioritize these transformational levers as criteria and entry points for GEF-8 investments and recipient countries will have the opportunity to program GEF resources in a manner that best suits their national interests and priority while generating multiple global environmental benefits and building on lessons learned to ensure impactful GEF outcomes at scale.

23.   To help operationalize these transformational levers, the GEF KM&L Strategy and Action Plan will provide a roadmap that lays out a common understanding and a set of guiding principles and practical steps that GEF partners can follow around knowledge capture and sharing, innovation and learning in support of GEF-8 programming. Building on past achievements and existing KM&L initiatives, the strategy will point to areas that need to be prioritized across the Partnership and define key knowledge and learning actions that GEF partners should take, both individually and collaboratively, to achieve GEF-8 goals. As indicated in the GEF-8 Strategy, such actions could include:

(a)   Strengthened project and program monitoring, learning and adaption;

(b)   Capturing and sharing emerging lessons of transformative changes in GEF investments;

(c)   Systematic learning from science and past investments;

(d)   Increased emphasis on multistakeholder platforms to exchange knowledge, understand incentives and pathways to behavioral change that will drive systems change, and facilitate collaboration and scale up.

24.   Accordingly, in GEF- 8, the GEF will continue to require integration of knowledge management and learning into project design and implementation, to capture and share operational knowledge and lessons learned from its investments, and to support projects with pilots, demonstrations, innovative instruments as well as integrated programs (IP) which use, generate and share knowledge. KM&L will continue to be mainstreamed in each IP and focal area programming in GEF-8, through the design and delivery of wide raging knowledge

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[4] GEF/R.08/28, GEF-8 Strategic Positioning Framework, March 29, 2022

products and initiatives as well as the creation of knowledge platforms to facilitate knowledge exchange and collaboration across borders and institutions.

25.   In addition, in GEF-8, the GEF's diverse network of partners and stakeholders will continue to help facilitate capture, transfer, uptake and scale up of lessons, expertise and best practices, both globally, regionally and at the country level. Accordingly, the GEF Country Engagement Strategy includes a KM&L pillar that targets recipient countries and aims to support capacity building, learning, knowledge exchange and collaboration at the country and constituency levels. As part of this effort, a variety of knowledge exchange and learning opportunities are being planned, targeting stakeholders in GEF recipient countries, as outlined in the CES Strategy[5]. In addition, a **pilot Knowledge and Collaboration Platform (KCP) for GEF Focal Points** is currently under development. It is being created to facilitate collaboration and knowledge exchange among and within recipient countries as a community of practice in GEF-8.

26.   All these efforts will be consolidated, organized and implemented under the **Knowledge Management &Learning (KM&L) Strategy** that is currently under development. This strategy will guide, enhance and facilitate partnership-wide knowledge and learning efforts in GEF-8 around a common-understanding and a systematic approach, in accordance with the recommendations of the GEF Independent Evaluation Office and subsequent Council decision.

Towards a KM&L Strategy for GEF-8 and Beyond

27.   In December 2020, the latest KM evaluation by the GEF Independent Evaluation Office (IEO)[6i], highlighted the progress made in implementing the GEF KM Approach and recommended that the GEF develop a clear KM strategy in line with GEF-8 replenishment goals.

28.   In this evaluation, IEO acknowledged that

> "**substantial progress had been made in KM** during GEF-6 and this progress has continued in GEF-7 with an increase in knowledge and learning activities including in project design and implementation, recently developed KM services and products such as Good Practice Briefs, the effective use of KM in programs, including in IAPs and Impact Programs, and outreach and training efforts in person and on-line,..."

29.   The IEO also identified certain gaps and made the following recommendations to improve the GEF's knowledge and learning efforts:

(a)   **The GEF partnership should develop a clear KM strategy**. Within the planning toward GEF-8, a group dedicated to KM, or the KM Advisory Group, should advise the GEF Secretariat on developing a partnership-wide KM strategy with clear

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[5] INSERT: CES paper title and number

[6] GEF/E/C.59/04, Evaluation of Knowledge Management in the GEF (2020)

priorities and focus. The strategy would need to be supported by the necessary resources and endorsement of the GEF Council. The strategy should set out the KM priorities and define the roles and responsibilities across the GEF partnership, including the role of the KM Advisory group. Supported by an action plan, the strategy should set out principles and standards for the KM steps: knowledge capture, development, sharing, dissemination, and application articulated in reinforced project-level guidelines, requirements, and common KM metrics.

(b) **The GEF partnership should invest in a technical solution that strengthens the KM system.** At the operational level, a common approach is needed to guide the KM steps, supported by a technical solution which can support KM needs: the ability to capture KM data, lessons, and good practices and to present them in a usable and accessible format for both GEF stakeholders and externally. This would require either enhancing the KM capabilities of the new Portal or building a GEF Knowledge Exchange Hub as previously proposed by the GEF Secretariat in order to facilitate capture and storage of knowledge in a uniform and accessible form; exchange of knowledge between the GEF Secretariat and agencies; collation and curation of knowledge in comparable and usable formats to increase accessibility and avoid fragmentation.

30.   These IEO recommendations were well received by the GEF Council and the GEF Secretariat, especially in the light of upcoming GEF 8 Replenishment negotiations. Having considered IEO's recommendations and the Secretariat's management response, the GEF Council endorsed the recommendations that:

(a)   the GEF partnership should develop a clear KM strategy, and

(b)   the GEF partnership should invest in a technical solution that strengthens the KM system.

31.   It is clear that effective mainstreaming of knowledge exchange and learning into project/program design and implementation will be critical in making GEF investments a success, and a partnership-wide IT-based KM system, including GEF Communities of Practice, that can foster knowledge exchange, communication and collaboration among GEF partners will help facilitate global up-take, replication and scale up of proven solutions and good practice during GEF 8 and beyond.

III. Process for Strategy Development

32.   In accordance with the latest Council decisions and in parallel with the GEF-8 replenishment process the Secretariat has embarked upon developing a **GEF Knowledge Management and Learning (KM&L) Strategy and Action Plan for the GEF Partnership**, including a technical solution for greater knowledge capture, exchange and dissemination across the Partnership. This strategy will be presented to the GEF Council for consideration at its meeting in December 2022.

33.   As an initial step, the Secretariat consulted with GEF Agencies and STAP in April 2021, regarding challenges and opportunities. Based on this discussion, the Secretariat has identified the following elements as key to developing an effective **KM&L Strategy** for the GEF**:**

   (a)   Strengthening existing systems to extract and share knowledge and lessons learned from GEF investments,

   (b)   Increasing knowledge flow among GEF investments and partners,

   (c)   Enhancing the use of existing knowledge to improve future GEF investments and to enhance impact, uptake and scale up of innovative solutions, and

   (d)   Monitoring and measuring the impact of GEF investments in knowledge and learning.

34.   Based on these elements and after internal brainstorming and consultations, the Secretariat designed an evidence-based and consultative strategy development process and hired experienced KM experts to implement the different components of this process with broad participation from key GEF stakeholders. (Figure 1)

Figure 1. Towards a GEF KM&L Strategy

Principles:
- Broad engagement
- Highly consultative
- Evidence-based
- Practical & utility oriented
- Responsive to stakeholder needs
- Cost-effective
- Informed by industry best practice
- Aligned with GEF-8 Replenishment Goals

KM Advisory Group
CSOs & Private Sector
GEF Agencies
IEO & STAP
GEF Recipient Country Focal Points
GEF K&L Strategy
Conventions
GEF Secretariat
GEF Donors

Step-wise Process:
1. KM Audit/Stocktaking & Assessment of GEF Knowledge Assets
2. Assessment of Agency Policies, Practices & Platforms
3. Collaborative Strategy and Action Plan Development
4. Council Discussion and Adoption
5. Resource Allocation
6. Partnership-wide Implementation

35.   Given the diverse and global nature of the GEF Partnership, it will be most impactful and effective for the GEF to develop its KM&L Strategy and Action Plan in consultation and collaboration with key stakeholders across the GEF partnership.

36.   Accordingly, the **GEF KM Advisory Group (KMAG)** has been reconstituted to provide a forum where such consultation and collaboration can take place. A KMAG meeting was held in December 2021 with broad participation from GEF Agencies, Council members, Focal Points, CSOs, STAP, IEO and GEFSEC and at this meeting, GEFSEC launched the process to develop the GEF KM&L Strategy.   (Figure 2)

37.   In addition, the Secretariat has also established an **internal GEFSEC Knowledge and Learning Coordination Group** in January 2022, bringing together Secretariat staff from the programming, operations and communications teams. This is a group that represents all the different functions across the Secretariat, and it has been set up to guide and contribute to the process to develop the new GEF KM&L Strategy.

Figure 2. Key Deliverables and Timeline
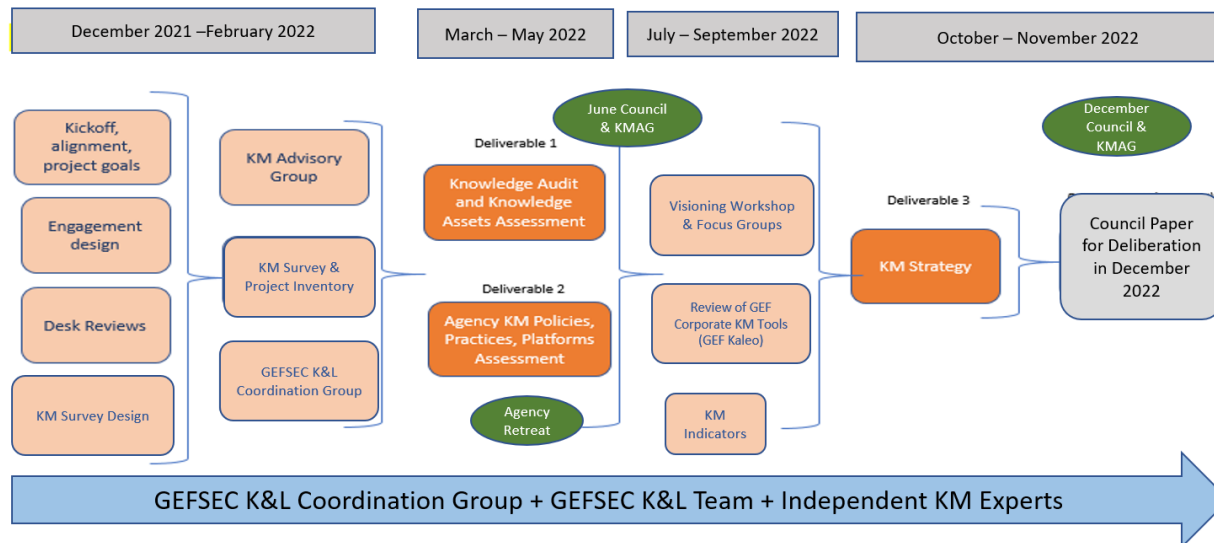
Progress to Date

38.   As a first step towards a KM&L Strategy and to establish a baseline upon which the new strategy can be built, the Secretariat has undertaken a **KM Audit** of the GEF Partnership. This Audit is a stock-taking exercise and has several sub-components, including:

(a)   a partnership-wide K&L survey;

(b)   "project KM inventory" to take stock of GEF investments made in knowledge and learning through GEF 6 and 7 portfolios and knowledge outputs produced/planned as a result;

(c)   assessment of Partnership-wide K&L activities/initiatives undertaken in GEF-6 and GEF-7, including IAP/IP Platforms, knowledge initiatives under the Country Support Program (CSP), and corporate K&L tools such as GEF Kaleo and the GEF Portal;

(d)   interviews and focus group discussions, as needed, with key GEF partner and stakeholders, including member countries and agencies.

39.   The KM Audit will enable a clearer understanding of status of KM&L across the GEF. The goal is to generate insights to help identify the most promising strategic choices for knowledge and learning to have enhanced impact in GEF-8 and beyond. Factors to be considered include:

(a)   how KM&L can be better addressed in GEF projects/programs as well as at the corporate level,

(b)   what are the strength and weaknesses of current efforts,

(c)   what specific changes in direction or adjustments in GEF processes are needed,

(d)   whether the situation calls for a widening or narrowing of KM&L focus,

(e)   whether it is feasible or reasonable to expand into new KM&L products and initiatives,

(f)   which areas offer the best chances of success in meeting stakeholder needs,

(g)   which areas can be considered priority areas,

(h)   which stakeholders can be considered priority audiences,

(i)   whether existing KM&L products and services can be improved or updated,

(j)   what scope there is for innovation in KM&L processes,

(k)   how collaboration among GEF partners can best be tackled,

(l)   how existing KM&L assets of GEF partners can best be leveraged,

(m)   what organizational development initiatives may be needed, and

(n)   whether there are things the GEF needs to stop doing.

40.   The two components under the KM Audit (project inventory and K&L survey) have been completed. Preliminary findings from these exercises are provided in the Annex of this paper, helping gauge where the GEF Partnership currently is in terms of KM&L and pointing to strengths, gaps as well as opportunities for improvement. Once finalized, these findings will be considered in formulating the KM&L strategy. A final version of these findings will also be presented to the GEF Knowledge Management Advisory Group (KMAG) for discussion and feedback at its meeting in June 2022.

Current Work Underway

41.   As a second step towards a KM&L Strategy and in response to IEO's recommendations, an **IT Analysis of GEF Partner Knowledge Platforms and Systems** is currently being conducted**,** including identification of system requirements and options for a potential GEF Knowledge Hub and GEF Communities of Practice that can leverage and link to existing Agency and Convention Secretariat KM Platforms and Systems, and support the GEF's knowledge and learning agenda by enabling wider sharing of Agency and Convention expertise and experience. This study will require outreach to KM and IT staff of GEF agencies as well as Convention Secretariats. This will be done through individual interviews as well as group discussions, including a consultation at the Agency Retreat on May 25-26, 2022.

42.   The IT Analysis will be completed by the 62nd Council meeting and preliminary findings will be presented to the GEF Knowledge Management Advisory Group (KMAG) for discussion and feedback at its meeting in June 2022.

43.   In the meantime, an effort to explore and identify a structured approach to *monitoring and reporting on knowledge management and learning* will be conducted. This effort will look at the merits and challenges of using quantitative, such as through indicators, and qualitative analysis to track, monitor and report on progress in knowledge and learning across the GEF portfolio. And its conclusions will feed into the KM&L Strategy and Action Plan.

IV. NEXT STEPS

44.   Upon completion of the studies, broad-based consultations will be undertaken across the Partnership, to discuss and reflect on the findings, targeting different stakeholder group. A Visioning Workshop and a series of focus group discussions with key stakeholder groups are planned for the Fall of 2022 for this purpose.

45.   In the visioning exercise and the focus group discussions, the following will be considered by GEF Partners:

(a)   Current status of KM&L at the GEF, based on KM Audit findings,

(b)   Reflection on how the GEF got here and where it now wants to go, given GEF-8 objectives,

(c)   Agreement on GEF KM&L objectives in the context of the GEF's corporate identity (mission, vision and values),

(d)   Analysis of the GEF's strengths and weaknesses in the KM&L space,

(e)   Analysis of the environment in which the GEF operates and opportunities and challenges it presents,

(f)   Identification and evaluation of strategic options given the above,

(g)   Potential scope and resource requirements for operationalizing different options,

(h)   How best to track, measure and report on KM&L efforts,

(i)   Selection and agreement on actions for the Partnership to take.

46.   The GEF KM&L Strategy and Action Plan will then be drafted by the Secretariat, taking into consideration the findings and recommendations of all studies, and inputs compiled through broad consultation across the Partnership. A draft will be presented to the GEF KM Advisory Group in October, 2022 for discussion and feedback.

47.   The strategy and action plan are scheduled to be completed by November 2022 for consideration at the 63rdCouncil meeting in December 2022.

Study 1. Knowledge and Learning Survey Findings

1. The partnership-wide K&L survey was conducted from February 24 through Mar 14, 2022. Invitation was sent to 2095 people across all GEF stakeholder groups. 526 individuals accessed the survey online and 371 (71%) respondents started it while 159 respondents (30%) completed the survey in its entirety.

2. The survey resulted in the following preliminary findings, organized under three themes:

    (a)   Theme 1 – Taking Stock

        (i)   Seminars/webinars, conferences, technical training workshops, and stakeholder consultations are the most frequently implemented activities.

        (ii)   While networking, communities of practice, exchange visits, and peer to peer exchanges are highly valued as useful, actual implementation of such activities is sparse and fall short of this sentiment, indicating a potential gap and an opportunity.

        (iii)   Lowest usage external facing Secretariat KM tool is GEF Kaleo (online "ask the expert" tool and knowledgebase), likely due to lack of awareness and/or complexity to use.

        (iv)   Participants place significant emphasis on knowledge products/tools with practical utility and technical depth rather than promotional content.

    (b)   Theme 2 – KM Maturity

        (i)   Current GEF K&L processes are generally rated as working well overall.

        (ii)   Most respondents (over two-thirds) rate their organization at medium or high KM capacity.

        (iii)   MTR is seen as a key tool for learning: Over 85% of the respondents in the agency and focal point group consider the MTR as a tool for learning.

        (iv)   Areas for Improvement include

            1.   Identify and share best practices and lessons learned from investments

            2.   Improve governance and resources for KM at the Secretariat

            3.   Create incentives to codify and share knowledge across the GEF partnership

    (c)   Theme 3 – Knowledge Access and Flows

        (i)   Across all key stakeholder groups, there was overwhelming agreement that the go-to public resource for GEF-related information is the GEF Website.

(ii)   Top three public resources used to find GEF related knowledge and information are the GEF Website, GEF project websites, and web searches.

(iii)   The OFP websites and IP platforms were rated as the least helpful. Open-ended responses reveal that many respondents are not aware of these resources.

(iv)   In terms of ease of access for documented lessons, learned, stories, etc. most (67%) found the GEF Website easy to access and use; about 60% found the GEF Portal easy to access and use.

3. Based on these findings, the survey resulted in the following preliminary conclusions and suggestions for consideration:

(a)   Enhance quality and improve flow and accessibility of existing GEF K&M tools, products, methods, activities and platforms

(b)   Raise awareness of K&L tools/products that the GEF already has.

(c)   Be more realistic about expectations around KM for the GEF partnership.

(d)   Invest more corporate resources into KM governance, coordination and capacity at the GEF Secretariat.

(e)   Prepare clear guidance around KM products, tools, and methods found as most effective for project level knowledge sharing and learning.

(f)   Create incentives to better codify and share knowledge across the GEF partnership

(g)   Build a shared understanding & capacity and provide guidance around good knowledge and learning outcomes for GEF funded projects/programs to enhance their impact and sustainability.

Study 2. Project KM Inventory Findings

4. For the Project K&L Inventory, a sample of 56 full-size and CEO-endorsed GEF-7 projects were selected. This sample included 28 stand-alone and 28 child projects, representing GEF investments in 65 countries, implemented by 13 GEF agencies in all focal areas. The inventory also considered a review of 8 GEF-6 projects that had reached mid-term.

5. The inventory resulted in the following preliminary findings:

(a)   GEF 7 projects are still in their early stage, so this inventory evaluates only "proposed" and approved KM approaches which vary widely and often come with the use of the "right buzzwords." The actual delivery may look quite different from what is proposed. It would be important to track and gauge delivery at project completion.

(b)   In this sample, there was a sincere attempt to integrate KM into the project cycle; but in many projects, there was a lack of a systematic approach to capturing,

developing, sharing, and applying knowledge to enhance project impact and sustainability or to customize, replicate and scale up environmental solutions.

(c) In some projects, proposed KM activities appear ad hoc or disconnected and a clear "theory of change" is missing.

(d) In this sample, there was a "lot of KM" without a clear strategy to drive the KM. Projects need to internalize that a "lot of KM" does not necessarily translate into higher impact. What they need to focus on is "strategic KM."

(e) K&L information is spread throughout project documentation in addition to the KM section; and it is provided in varied formats. So, it can be challenging to get a coherent view of the KM approach for each project and how it will enhance or catalyze progress towards the project outcomes.

(f) In this sample, Dissemination/Communication stage of the KM cycle was universally mentioned and included. There was a clear sense that communication was important. Some included more disciplined communication strategies than others, but awareness and intention was consistent.

(g) There was a consistent focus on the need for (and importance of capacity building) and a sincere attempt to include capacity building in different components of the project document.

(h) Documenting & Sharing experiences and lessons learned was another area of consistent focus across most projects.

6. These findings have led to the following preliminary conclusions and suggestions for consideration:

(a) **Provide KM guidance and support to Agencies. C**lear guidelines from the GEFSEC are necessary to assist agencies when developing KM approaches for GEF projects/programs.

(b) **Build capacity in projects/programs to design/manage KM deliverables**: Agencies should designate or hire a KM lead for each project from the start. Consider a GEF requirement to ensure that part of KM budget is allocated to designating/hiring a KM lead and an M&E specialist.

(c) **Target capacity building towards KM that is results-focused and strategic.** For each GEF project/program, in addition to designating or hiring a KM lead, agencies should build the capacity of a larger set of stakeholders involved in the planning and implementation of the project/program's KM components.

(d) **Enhance the usefulness of Section 8 (KM Approach) of GEF PIF/CEO Endorsement Templates** by introducing a KM template for agencies to fill out in the Portal, including prompts and questions which encourage a systematic and results-focused approach to KM and how it can support project outcomes.

(e) **For future project inventory work, unless it is a formative evaluation, consider focusing on projects that have completed an MTR or PIR.** Evaluating projects that are in their infancy has limited usefulness for understanding the reality, good practices, actual deliverables, and lessons learned from project level KM.

(f) **Introduce KM indicators** that can help track and measure progress in implementing K&L components/deliverables in GEF investments.

(g) **For any future work related to Portal effectiveness, GEF should seek feedback from a broad group of users, stakeholders, and key informants** to provide a holistic picture on the effectiveness of the portal as a key K&L tool for the GEF, especially in terms of knowledge capture and reporting, as ease of use and usefulness is going to vary depending on the role of different users as well as their access to the Portal.