GEF COUNCIL MEETING 66

IEO Evaluation Update

February 2024

IEO Independent Evaluation Office
GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY

Celebrating two decades of influence

Website   **Anniversary Video**   **Anniversary Brochure**

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT
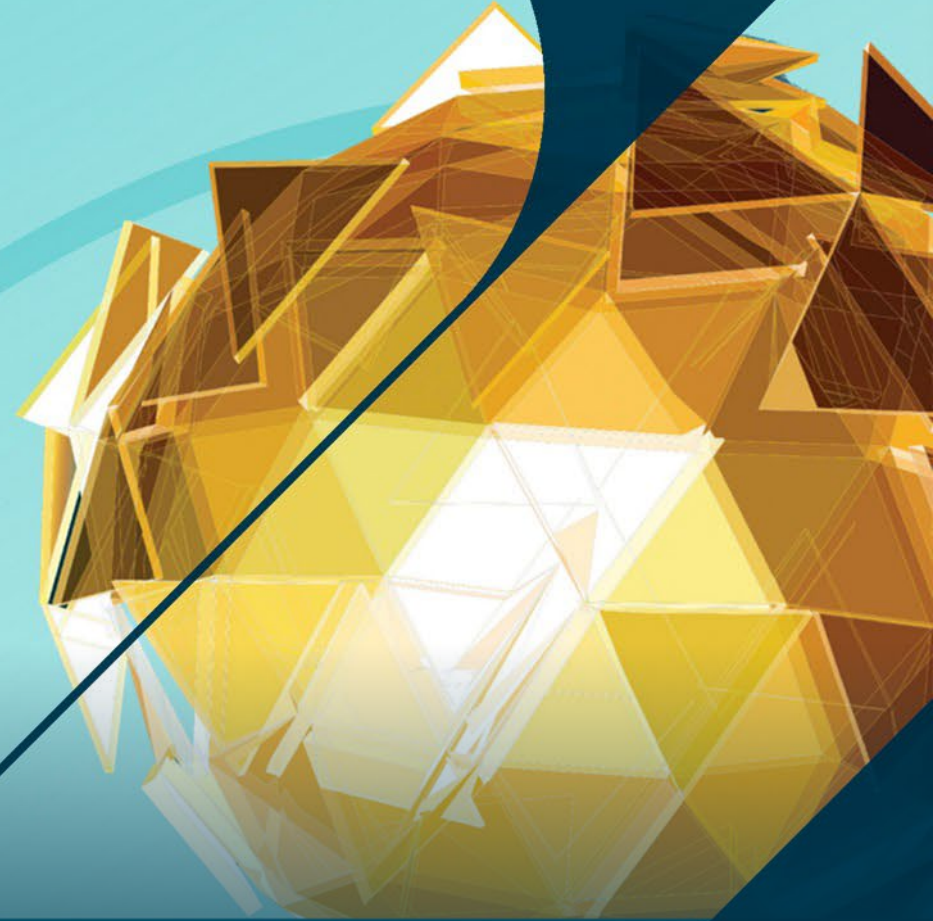
Knowledge Management

BOOKS AND GUIDELINES

- **Open access publication** *Conflict-Sensitive Conservation. Lessons from the Global Environment Facility*
- **Guidelines** on terminal evaluations, completed enabling activities, program evaluation

TRAINING

- **Workshop on Evaluation** at the nexus of the environment and development for the *International Program for Development Evaluation Training*
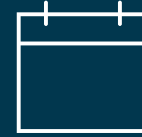- **Online training** on environmental evaluation

MEETINGS AND PARTNERSHIPS

- **GEF Assembly:** Side event on evaluation use and influence
- **COP28:** Co-hosted events with evaluation units of multilateral climate funds
- **IEG@50 & GEI:** Future proofing national evaluation systems environment

GEF IEO Conference

2024, March 5ᵗʰ - 7ᵗʰ
Washington, DC

INTEGRATING

ENVIRONMENTAL AND **SOCIOECONOMIC DOMAINS** FOR **SUSTAINABILITY**

20 ANNIVERSARY

International Evaluation Academy

IDEAS
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION ASSOCIATION
KNOWLEDGE   CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT   NETWORKING

GEI Global Evaluation Initiative

Earth-Eval

Evaluation Overview

1 Drylands

2 Community-based approaches

3 Learning from challenges

4 Climate information and early warning systems

1

Strategic country cluster evaluation

GEF SUPPORT TO DRYLANDS COUNTRIES

Background and key challenges

Over

40 percent

of the Earth's land surface

Home for

2 billion

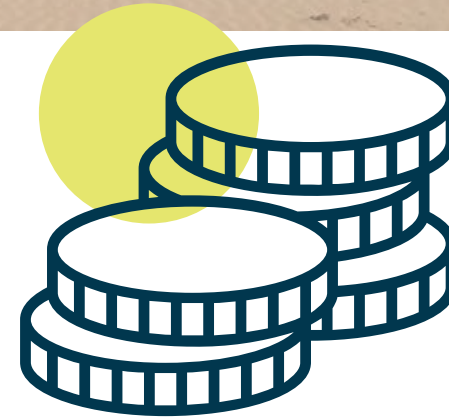people

Shared land-based

environmental challenges
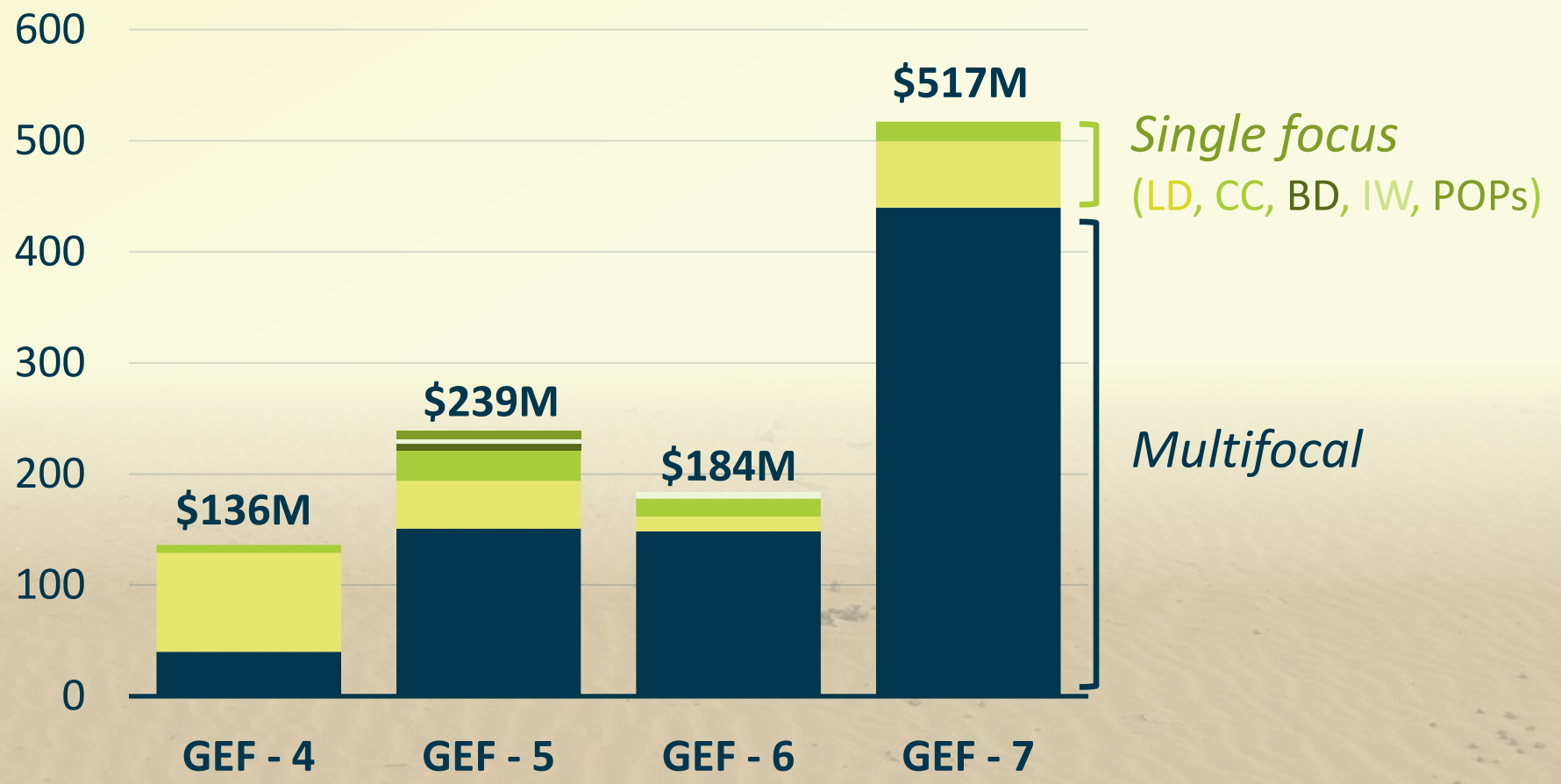
Challenges to

human well-being

GEF support

Land degradation strategies

GEF substantial and increasing share of funding in management of drylands

Portfolio

GEF drylands related funding in USD million

Single focus
(LD, CC, BD, IW, POPs)

Multifocal

- GEF - 4: $136M
- GEF - 5: $239M
- GEF - 6: $184M
- GEF - 7: $517M

Portfolio

Share of evaluation portfolio´s GEF funding

Funding Source

GEF Trust Fund 81%

Project Type

Full-size Project 96%
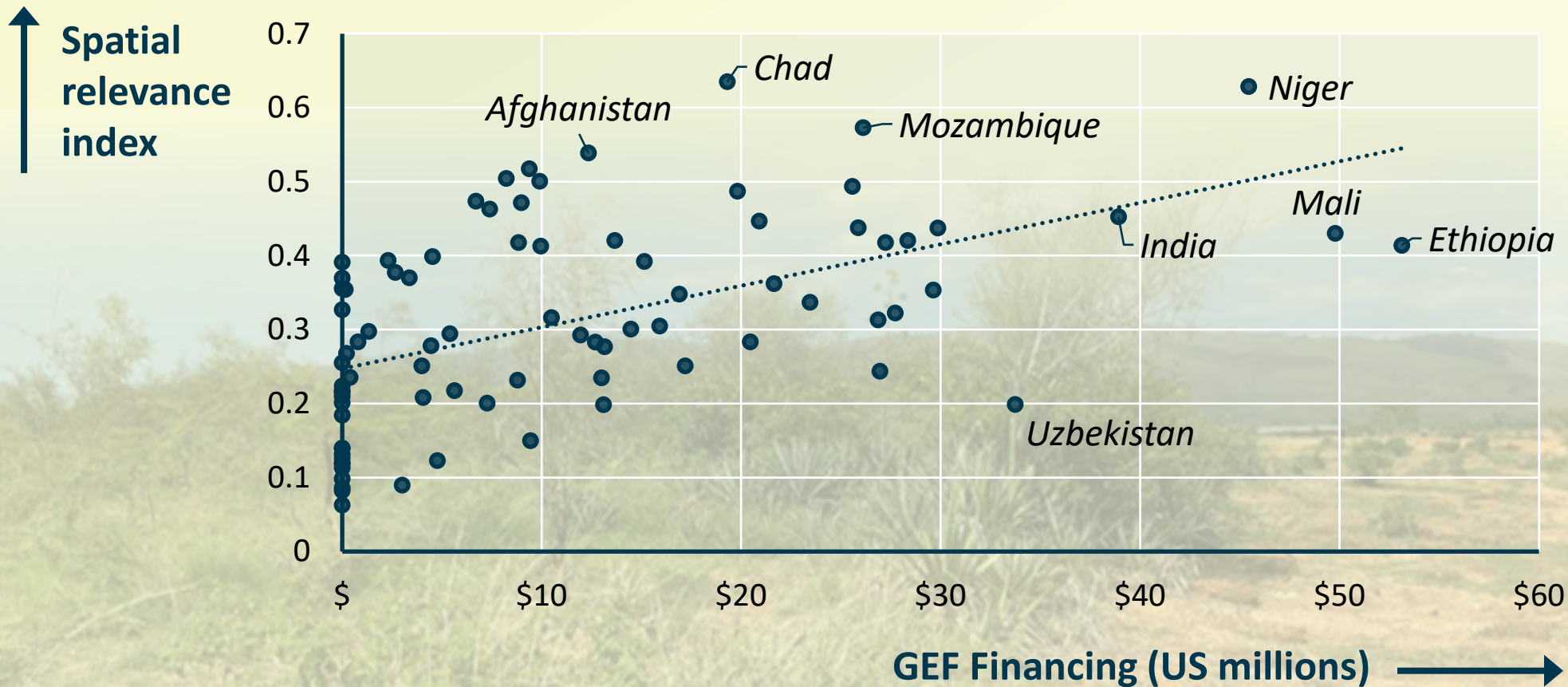
Focal Area

Multi-Focal 72%

Region

Africa 59%

1 Relevance and Coherence

GEF has been highly relevant to key environmental challenges in drylands

Spatial relevance index vs. GEF Financing (US millions). Labeled points: Chad, Afghanistan, Mozambique, Niger, Mali, India, Ethiopia, Uzbekistan.

1 Relevance and Coherence

Key drylands environmental challenges targeted by GEF drylands projects

Land Degradation — **84% of projects**

Threats to Biodiversity — **52%**

Climate Change — **42%**

Deforestation — **32%**
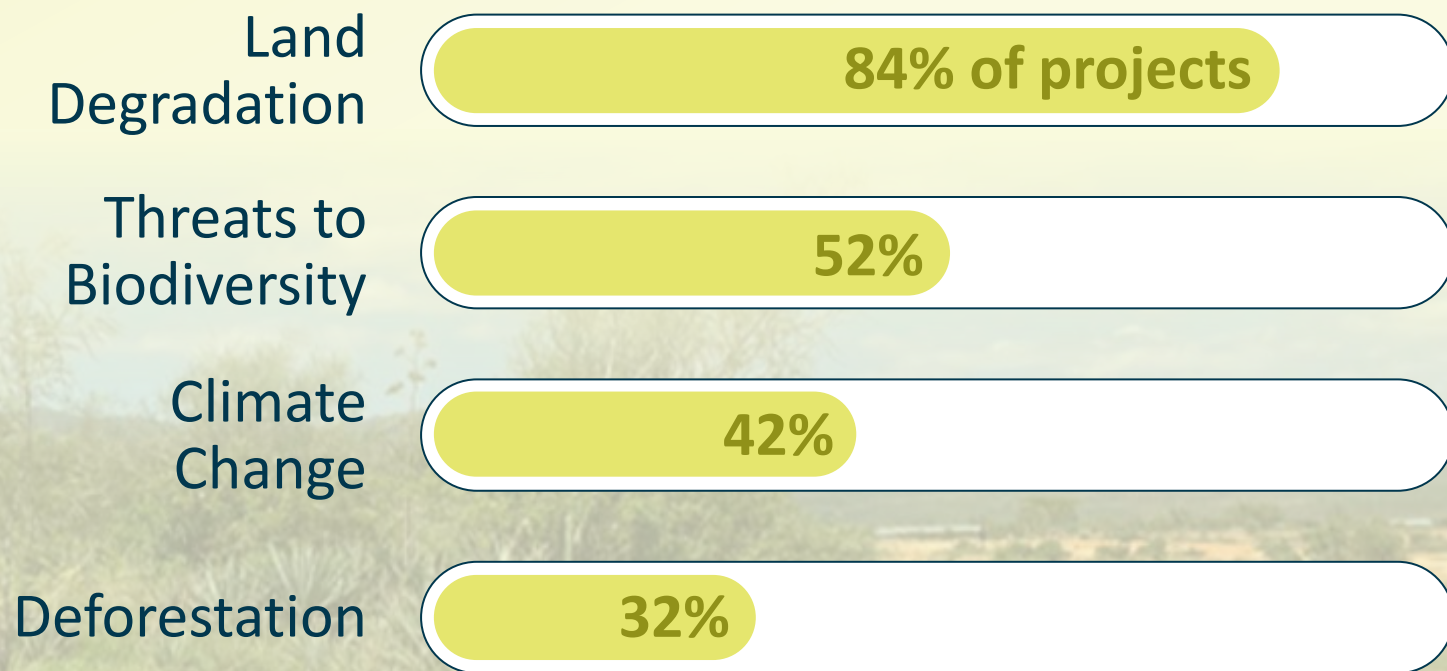
Source: GEF/IEO project document review. Confirmed by stakeholder surveys.

1

Relevance and Coherence

Projects identified **policy misalignments at design** but **didn't succeed** in mitigating their impact on outcomes

National policy coherence **did not translate** into **local policy coherence** during implementation

Dugna Fango district, Ethiopia

2 Environmental and socioeconomic sustainability: Performance

Drylands vs **Overall GEF** portfolio performance

GEBs and Socio Economic co-benefits delivered across dryland sub habitats, less in pastoral lands

83% **of GEF4, GEF5 & GEF6 projects** [n=781] with performance ratings in the satisfactory/likely range

82% [n=50]

68% [n=740]

44% [n=44]

OUTCOMES
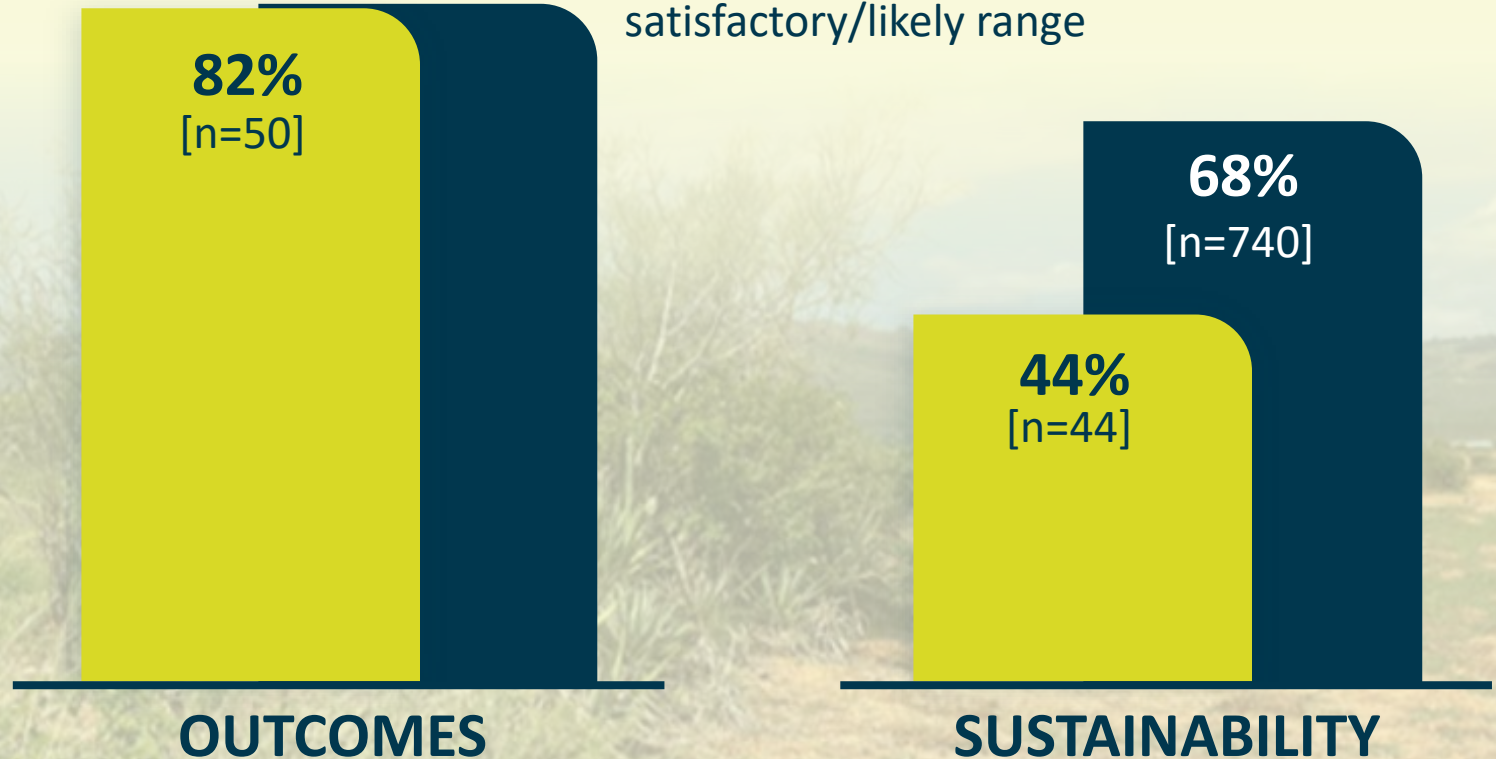
SUSTAINABILITY

Results and Impact (Example)

GEF IDs 3376 & 4625

MALAWI

Improved sustainable landscape management practices and agricultural productivity on 480,000 ha, more than 10% of agricultural lands

Balaka district, Malawi: Stabilizing the Mwayi and Mkasi rivers through riverbank reafforestation (GEF ID 3376)

Results and Impact (Example)

GEF IDs 3382 & 5252

NIGER

Delivered over 250,000 ha under improved soil and water management practices

Sustainably improved vegetation coverage, reduced erosion and soil salinity

Madjekameram and Kosseri Blabrim districts, Niger: Fixed land dunes and beneficiary vegetable gardens (GEF ID 3382)

Results and Impact (Example)

GEF IDs 2794 & 5220

ETHIOPIA

Restored about 154,000 ha of degraded farmland and communal land

Agroforestry and area closures led to a 5% increase in vegetation cover

Gross primary production grew by 14% in project areas affected by severe droughts

Dugna Fango district, Ethiopia: Non restored and restored land areas side by side (GEF ID 5220)

2 Environmental and socioeconomic sustainability

Reliance on area-based indicators **limits ability** **to track changes** in Environmental status

Natural resource governance at design **not translated** **in results**

Limited attention to **conflict and land tenure** in project design

Madjekameram and Kosseri Blabrim districts, Niger: Fixed land dunes and beneficiary vegetable gardens (GEF ID 3381)

2 Environmental and socioeconomic sustainability

Successful in fostering synergies between environment and development

Not enough attention to **mitigating trade-offs**

Ismayilli region, Azerbaijan: **Pasture pilot sites** (GEF ID 4332)
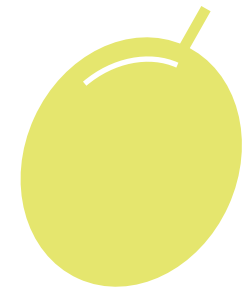
2

Environmental and socioeconomic sustainability

Madjekameram and Kosseri Blabrim districts, Niger: Fixed land dunes and beneficiary vegetable gardens (GEF ID 3381)

Sustainability
less assured

Involvement of
private sector
more limited
but improving

Recommendations

1 Focus **policy coherence efforts** on subnational and local levels

2 Include **land tenure security** and **conflict resolution** at design

3 Equal attention to **fostering synergies** and **mitigating trade-offs** between environment and socioeconomic development

4 Provide **project level monitoring data** showing associated biophysical changes for relevant area-based core indicators

2

EVALUATION OF COMMUNITY BASED APPROACHES AT THE GEF

Coverage

Involve

communities and people
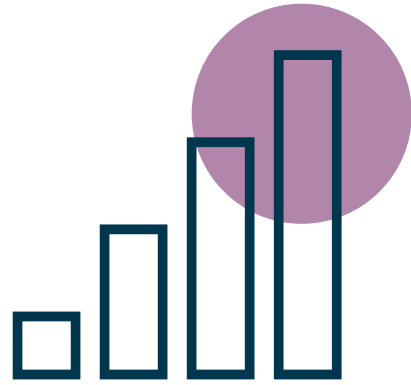
with both social and environmental objectives
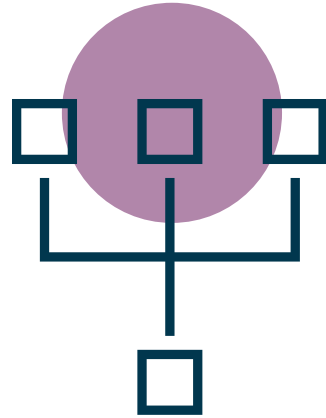
Contribute to the

durability and ownership

of investments

GEF Support

Since GEF-4, increasing frequency through GEF-8

Whole of Society' approach in Climate Change Adaptation Strategy for GEF-8

GEF policies foster inclusion and prevent harm to stakeholders and the environment

Portfolio

Share of evaluation portfolio´s GEF funding
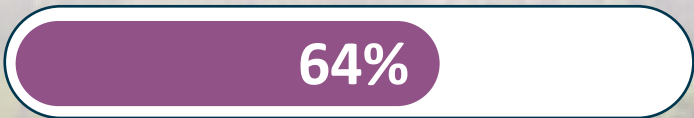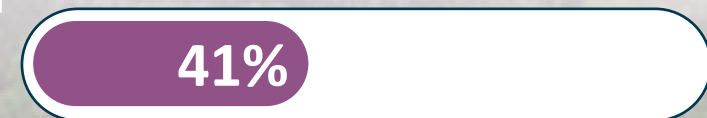
Funding Source

GEF Trust Fund

81%

Project Type

Full-size Project

96%

Focal Area

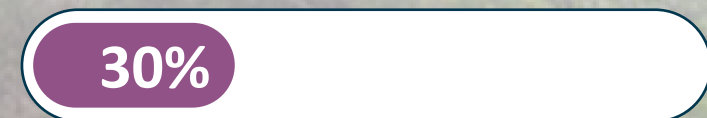**Multi-Focal**

64%

Region

Africa

41%

Asia

30%

Relevance

Present in:

Multilateral environmental agreements;
GEF projects, programs, and policies;
National priorities

*Community-managed forest near
protected area in Indonesia,
supported by GEF ID: 3279*
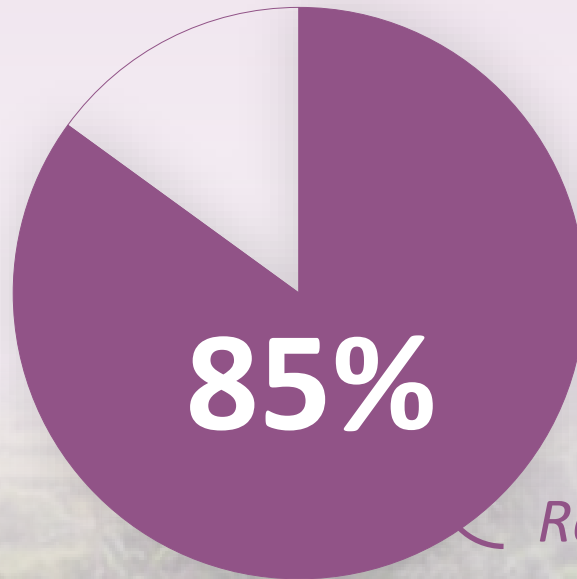
Results and Performance
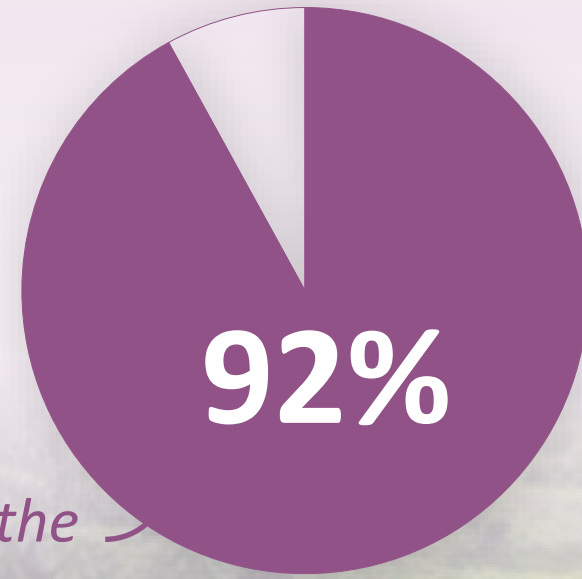
Effectiveness ratings for CBA projects

- **Better performance ratings**

- **Achievement of socioeconomic co-benefits at project close**
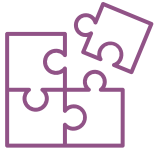
GEF-4 & 5

85%

GEF-5

92%

Ratings in the positive range

Results and Performance

Sustainability associated with behavior change, and to some extent alternative livelihoods

Activities related to **capacity building for ecological monitoring** sustained post completion in most sites visited

MRPA project in Ambavarano, Madagascar

Results and Performance

MRPA (GEF ID 3687)

MADAGASCAR

Decreased rates of mangrove deforestation and expansion of the forested mangrove area

The MRPA project:
- *Strengthened community groups*
- *Fostered legitimacy through a participatory planning process*
- *Recognized community land tenure*
- *Community-selected livelihoods activities linked to private sector, supporting sustainability.*

2012   2015   2022

Inclusion

More inclusive of women, IPLCs, and youth over time
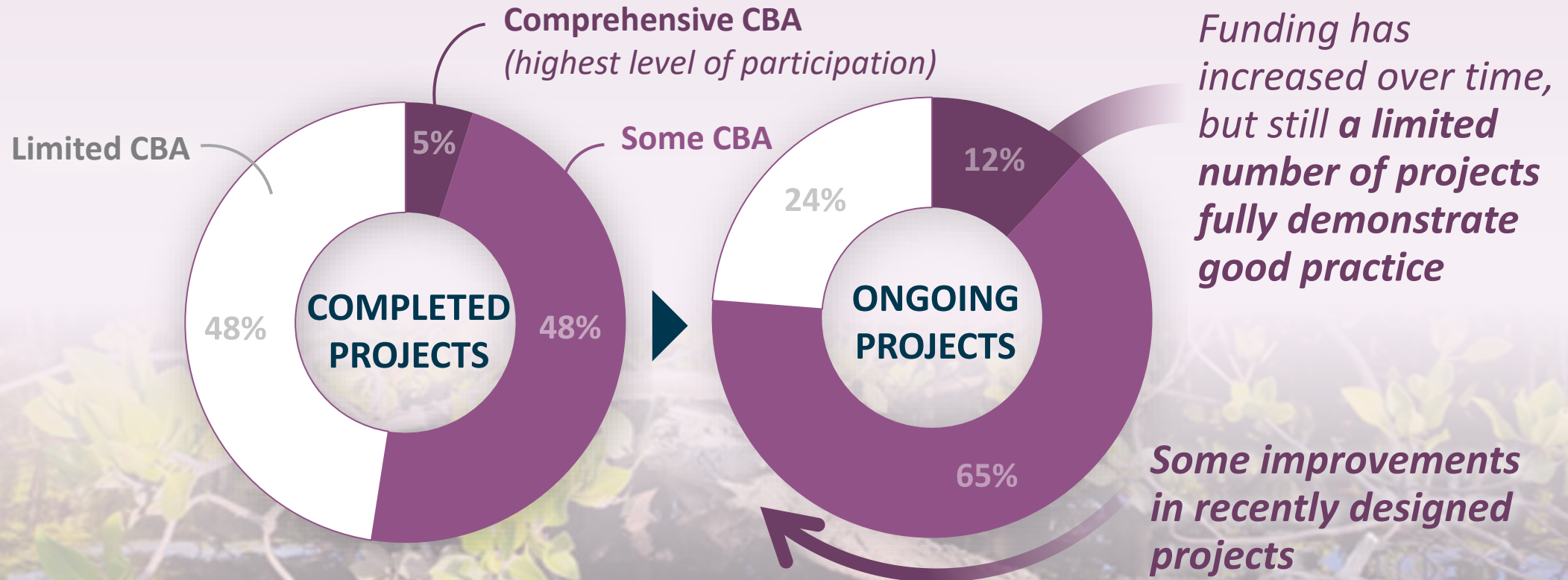

Voluntary community forest patrol group, Madagascar (GEF ID: 3773).

Community-based approaches in the GEF: Community Voices

Alignment with good practice

Comprehensiveness of community based approaches

Comprehensive CBA
(highest level of participation)

Some CBA

Limited CBA

5%

48%   48%

COMPLETED PROJECTS

12%

24%

ONGOING PROJECTS

65%

*Funding has increased over time, but still **a limited number of projects fully demonstrate good practice***
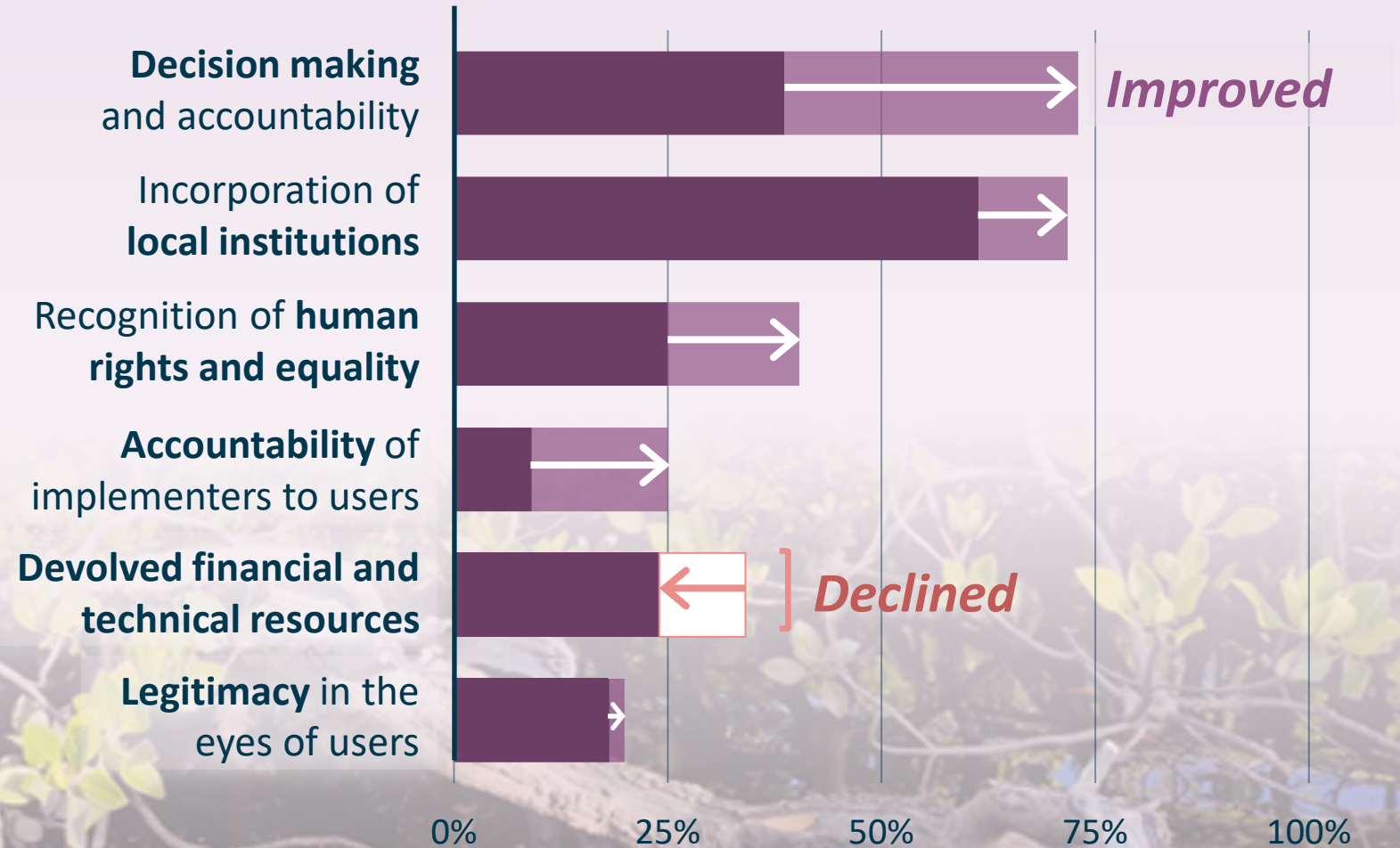
Some improvements in recently designed projects

Source: GEF/IEO analysis.

Alignment with good practice

Projects scoring in the top two categories for good practices

6 DIMENSIONS

Chart — Projects scoring in the top two categories for good practices (6 dimensions):

- Decision making and accountability — *Improved*
- Incorporation of **local institutions** — Improved
- Recognition of **human rights and equality** — Improved
- **Accountability** of implementers to users — Improved
- Devolved financial and **technical resources** — *Declined*
- **Legitimacy** in the eyes of users

Axis: 0%   25%   50%   75%   100%

Community engagement in design, implementation, and monitoring

GEF project cycle presents **challenges for implementing** CBA projects

Lack of indicators limits ability to adaptively manage

GEF ID 9600, Indonesia

Recommendations

1 Ensure that **co-design of projects with communities** is possible under the suite of GEF policies and guidelines

2 Provide **more clarity and guidance** on when and how CBAs can be used in GEF projects

3 Develop **an approach for tracking** of devolved responsibility and/or financial resources to the local level

3

LEARNING FROM CHALLENGES IN GEF PROJECTS

Background

80 percent
of completed GEF projects are successful

Evidence from less successful projects often **overlooked**

Enhance performance through learning from both **successes and failures**

Purpose — objectives — data sources

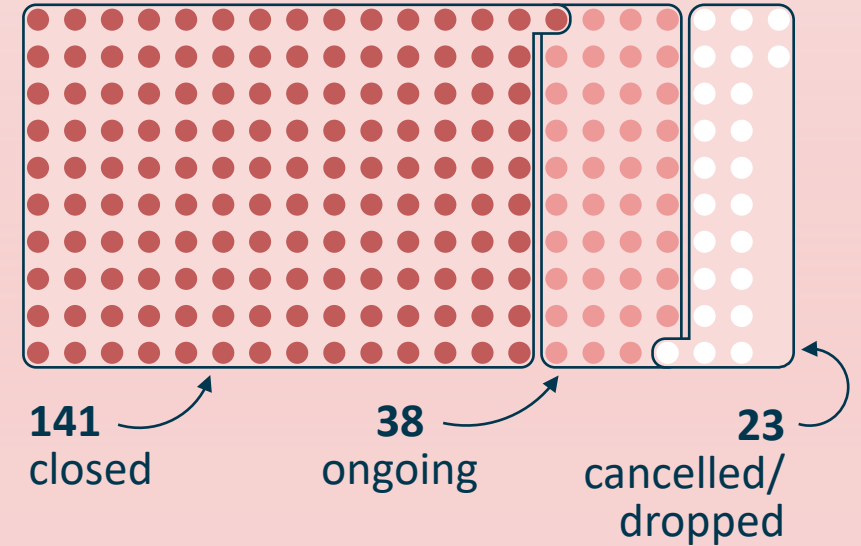*Learn from challenges in underperforming operations*

Analyze factors contributing to underperformance

Examine **risk mitigation** and **adaptive management** measures

Provide insights on how the GEF can enhance its role as a learning organization

202 UNDERPERFORMING PROJECTS

141 closed

38 ongoing

23 cancelled/ dropped

12 case studies

Document and literature review

Interviews

Methodological framework

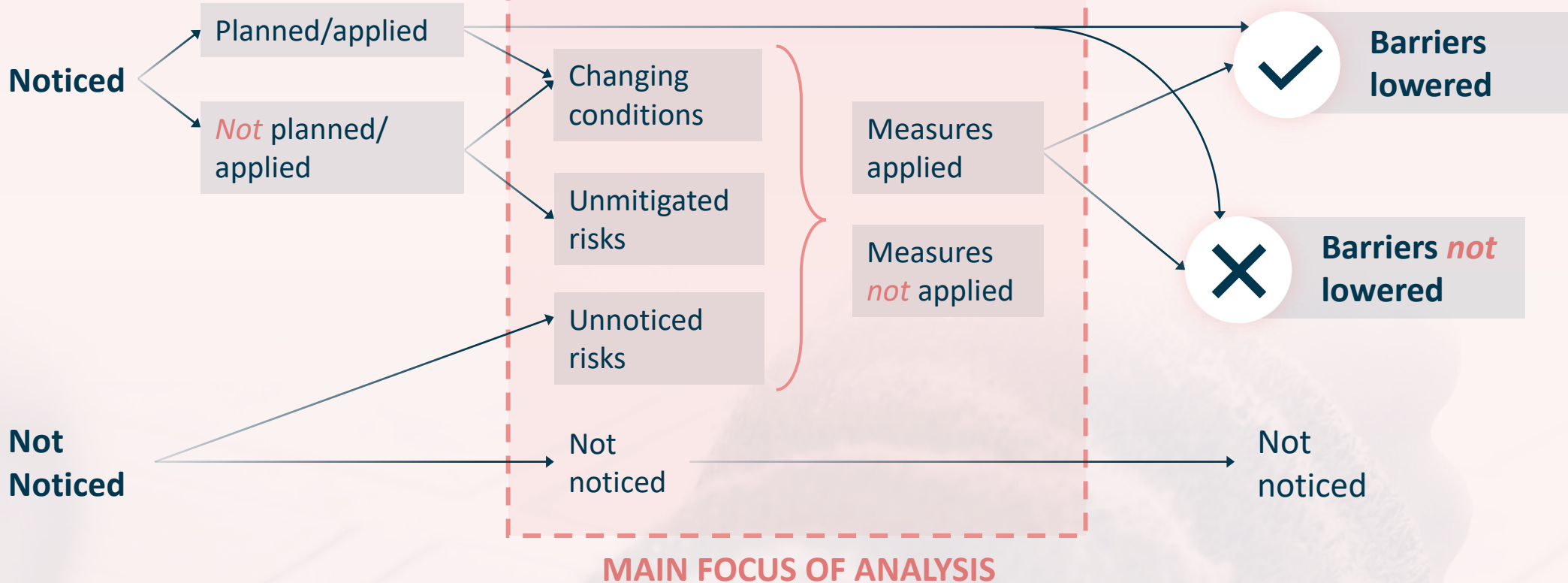| PREPARATION / APPRAISAL	IMPLEMENTATION	CLOSURE / POST-CLOSURE / SCALE-UP

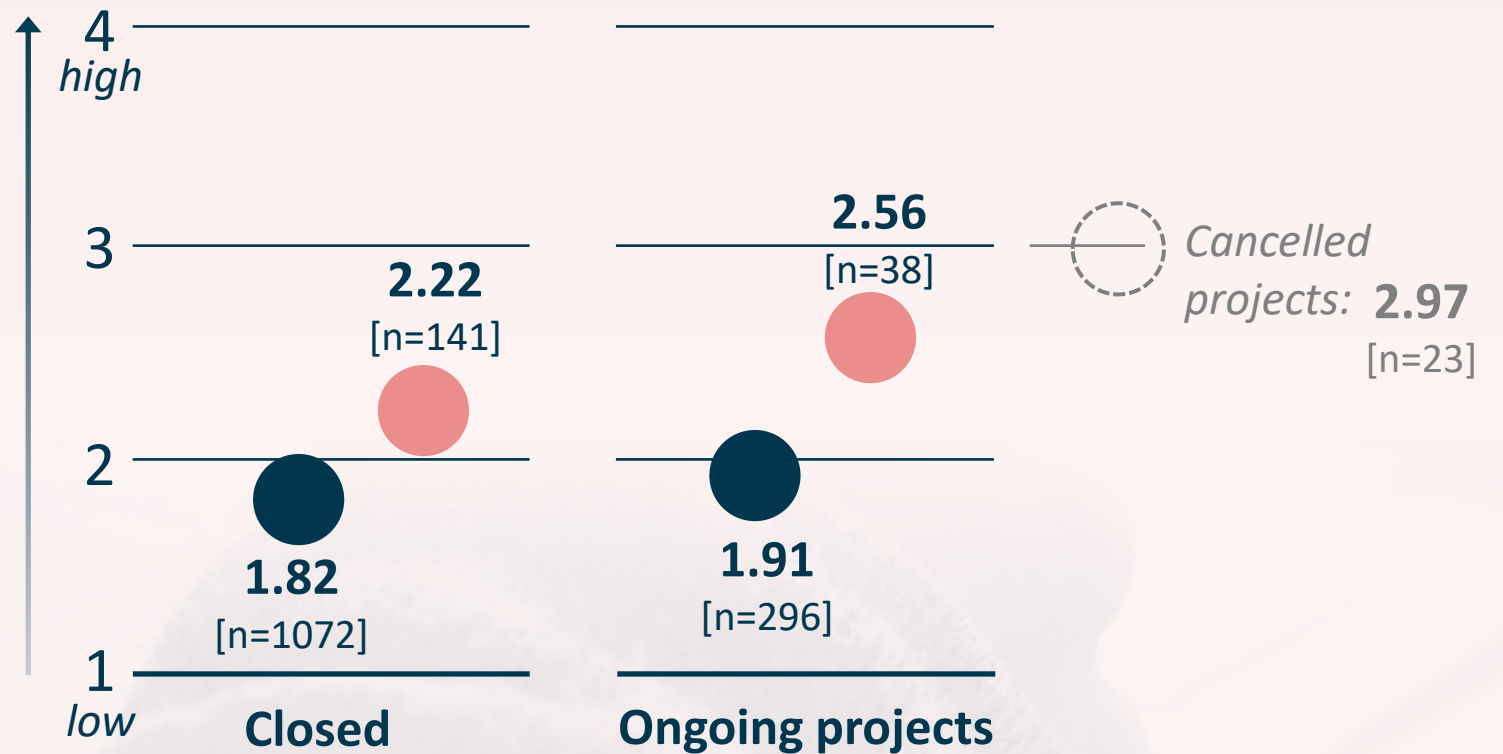RISKS   MITIGATION   CHALLENGES   ADAPTATION   OUTCOMES OF MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION

Noticed
- Planned/applied
- *Not* planned/applied

- Changing conditions
- Unmitigated risks
- Unnoticed risks

- Measures applied
- Measures *not* applied

✓ **Barriers lowered**

✗ **Barriers *not* lowered**

Not Noticed

Not noticed

Not noticed

MAIN FOCUS OF ANALYSIS

Risks

Underperforming projects- slightly higher risk levels compared to **all GEF-supported** projects

Risk rating

4 *high*

3

2

1 *low*

2.22
[n=141]

2.56
[n=38]

Cancelled projects: **2.97**
[n=23]

1.82
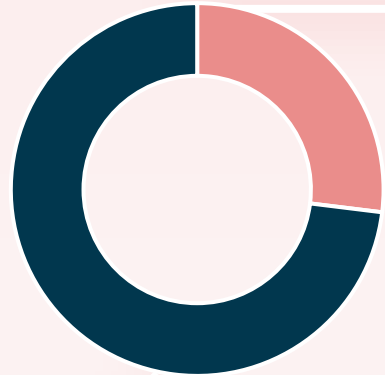[n=1072]

1.91
[n=296]

Closed

Ongoing projects

Adaptive Management Measures

Improved projects
implemented comprehensive restructuring

Improved
[n=38]

Unimproved
[n=103]

Improved
projects adapted to

82%
of challenges

Unimproved
projects adapted to

44%
of challenges

Nonlinear, non-uniform impact trajectories

FACTORS

- **Complexity**
- Design **characteristics**
- Diligence in Implementation
- **Known** and **unknown risks**
- **Adaptive management**

LESSONS

1. **Something can be learned** even from disappointing projects

2. **Effective adaptive management** can generate big wins

3. **Modest but thoughtful adaptive management** can consistently deliver small wins

1 Moldova: "Unsatisfactory" performance

GEF ID
5157

Transforming the market for Urban Energy Efficiency by introducing Energy Service Companies (ESCO)

CHALLENGES

- Low government ownership
- Corruption scandals
- Banking crisis and mistrust
- Inadequate policy and legal framework
- Overly ambitious objectives

ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

- Terminated the project

POST COMPLETION

- Design of a new project with similar objectives but a different approach

2 Paraguay: "Turned-around" performance

GEF ID 2690

Improving the Conservation of Biodiversity in Atlantic Forest

⚠ CHALLENGES

- Political crisis
- Economic boom disincentivizing forest restoration
- Limited government support and capacity

ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

- Shifted focus to Indigenous Communities
- Accounted for cultural specifics
- Changed execution arrangements

POST COMPLETION

- Catalyzed conservation of over 1 million hectares through new biosphere reserve
- Lasting partnership with Itaipu for further conservation

3 Liberia: "Turned-around" performance

GEF ID 8015

Enhancing Resilience of Montserrado County Vulnerable Coastal Areas to Climate Change Risks

⚠ CHALLENGES

- Political transitions
- Increased coastal erosion
- Disagreement between partners
- Design and budget not based on projections

⤬ ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

- Focused on one critically vulnerable site
- Synergized with Green Climate Fund
- Increased government co-financing
- Addressed community concerns

📚 POST COMPLETION

- Demonstrated feasibility of coastal defense structures
- Built local capacity and strengthened institutions
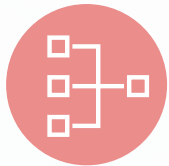- Catalyzed replication and scaling up in other coastal regions

Becoming a stronger learning organization-Guiding Principles

Engaging with **complex problems** through **experimentation**

Establishing conditions under which outcomes can/cannot be expected

Setting **realistic expectations** aligned with problem complexity

Ensuring that decisions are informed by **contextual analysis**

Regarding monitoring as a **learning tool**

Strategic pursuit of **ambition** and **innovation**

Ensuring **sustained legal** and **political support**

Developing **credible measures** of the extent to which problems were solved

Recommendation

Reflect and apply the lessons/guiding principles relevant to the GEF, in the detailed action plans for knowledge and learning

4

Evaluation of GEF support to

CLIMATE INFORMATION AND EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS (CIEWS)

Background and definitions

Fundamentals of

Climate Information

and **Early Warning Systems** **(CIEWS)**

Observations of weather data, and simulations of both past and future forecasting
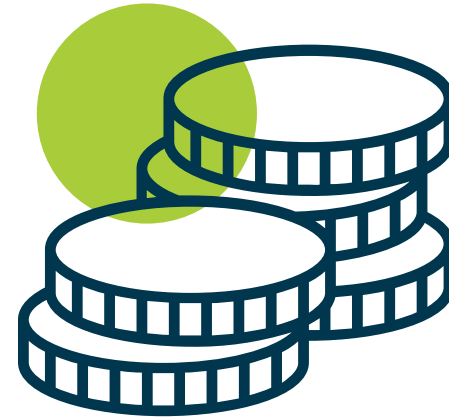
Timely and effective information to take action

Combined systems to **collect, analyze, interpret,** and **disseminate** information about climate patterns and trends to provide timely warning of hazards
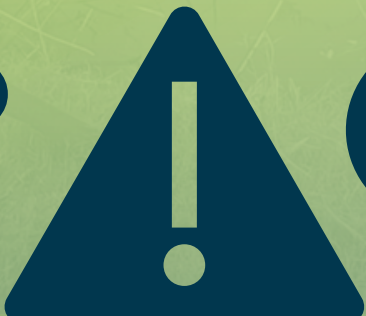
GEF Support

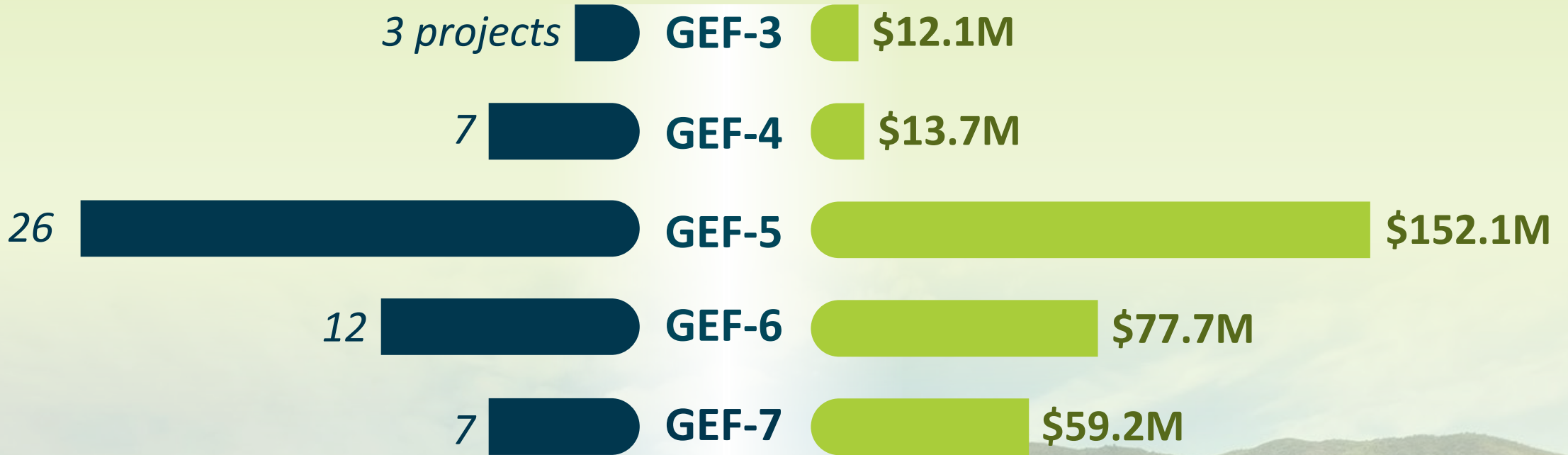**Elevated to one of the four priority themes in the 2022–2026 strategy**
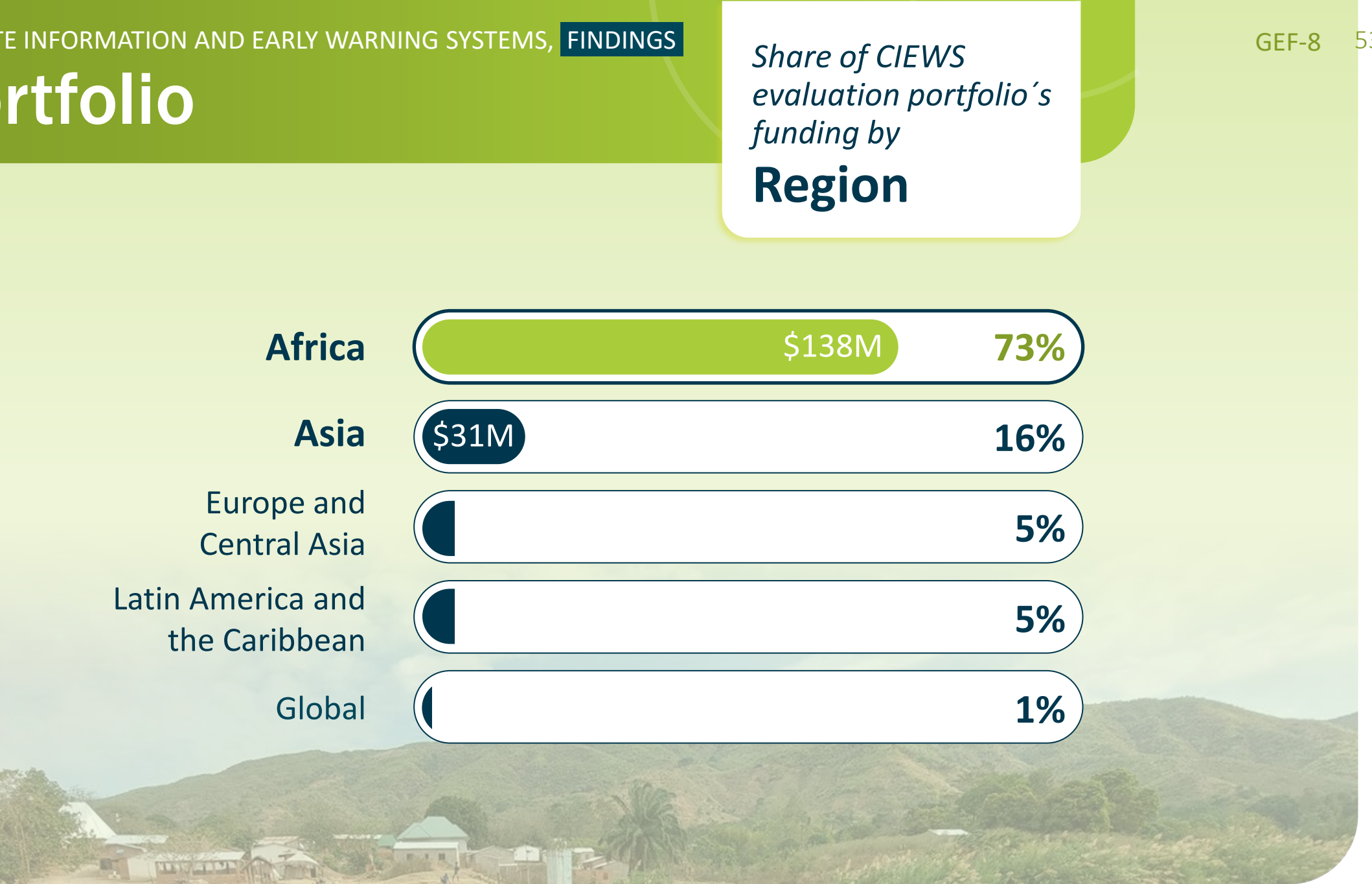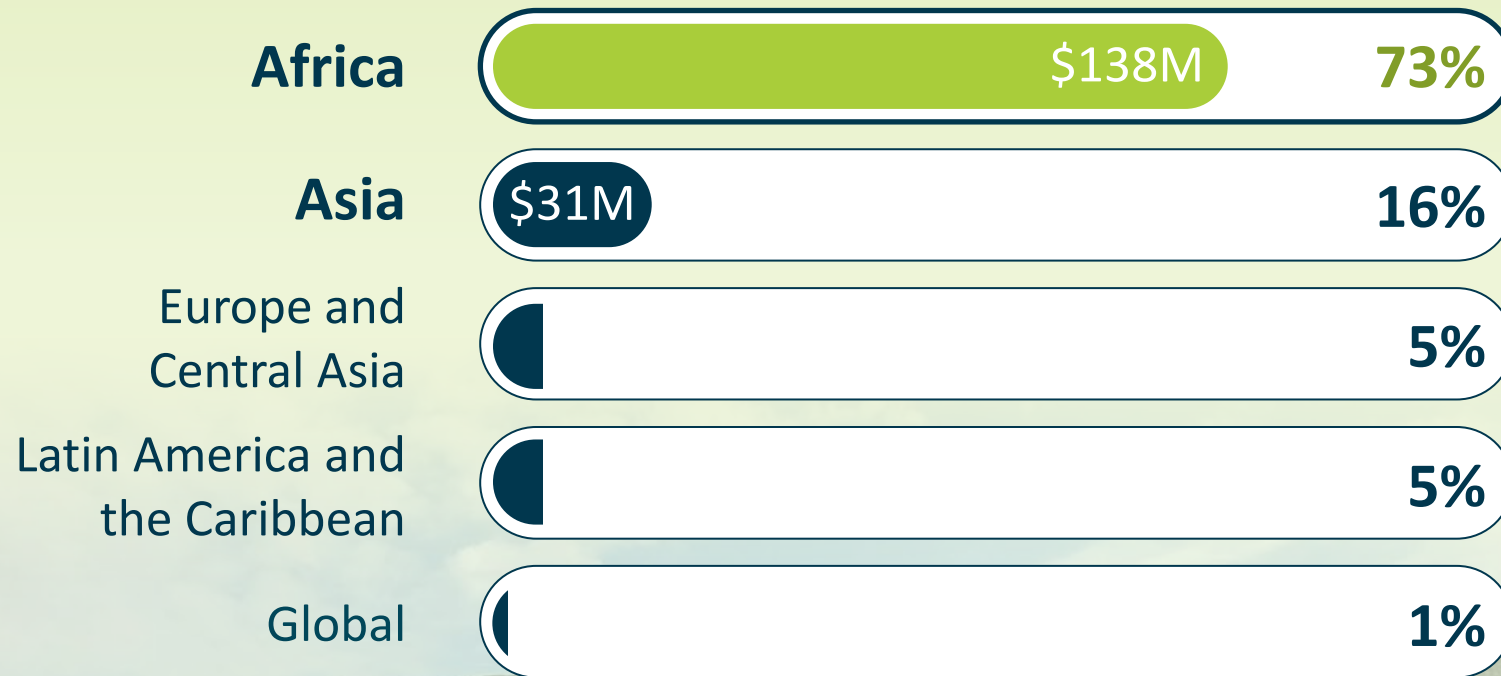
Investments in CIEWS for climate-related hazards

Portfolio

CIEWS evaluation portfolio by

GEF period

3 projects	**GEF-3**	**$12.1M**
7	**GEF-4**	**$13.7M**
26	**GEF-5**	**$152.1M**
12	**GEF-6**	**$77.7M**
7	**GEF-7**	**$59.2M**

Portfolio

Share of CIEWS evaluation portfolio´s funding by

Region

| Region		
Africa	$138M	**73%**
Asia	$31M	**16%**
Europe and Central Asia		**5%**
Latin America and the Caribbean		**5%**
Global		**1%**

Relevance

Strong alignment with GEF and LDCF/SCCF strategies
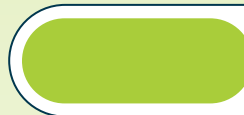
Demand-driven by **countries' beneficiaries**

Relevance

Main beneficiaries concentrated within the agricultural and fisheries sectors

Non-specific: 4

Forestry: 8

Coastal / Fishers: 17

Agriculture / Farmers: 25
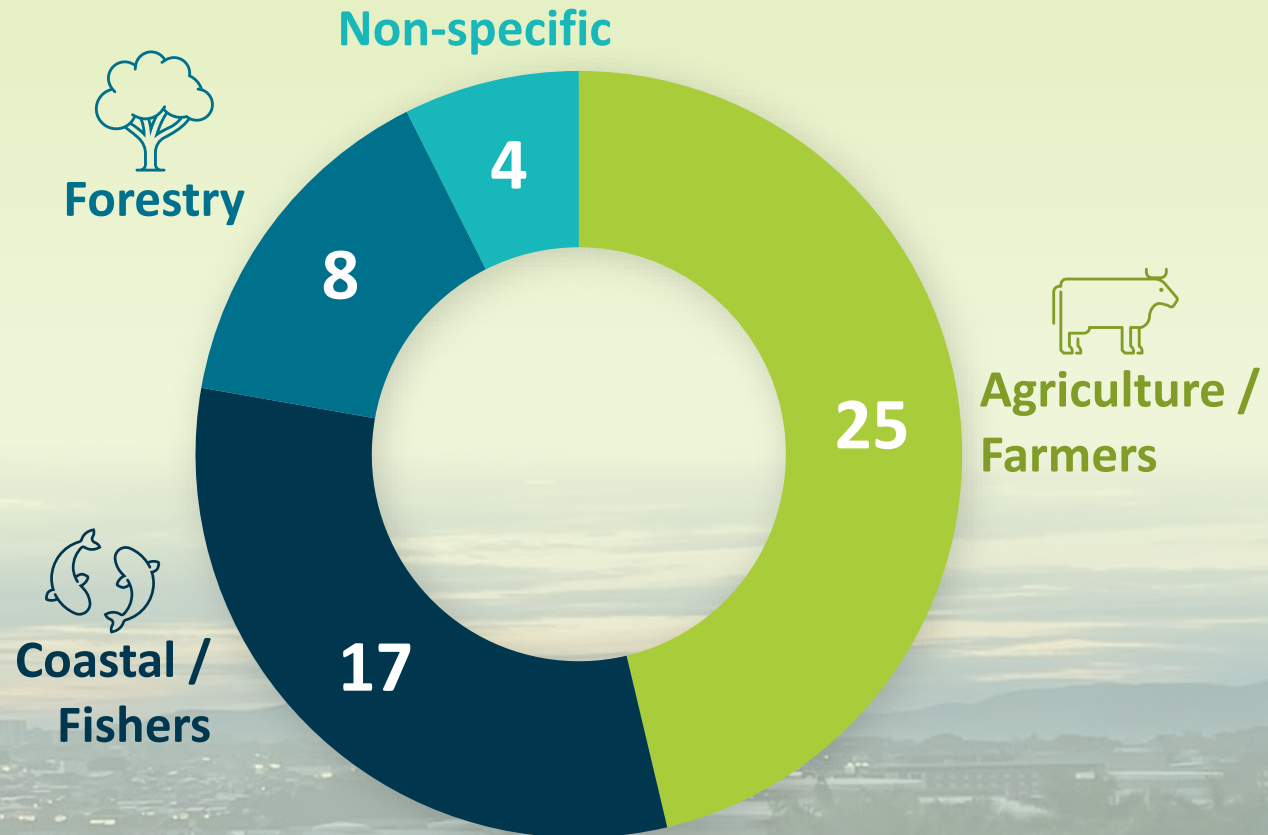
Effectiveness

Outcome ratings of CIEWS projects

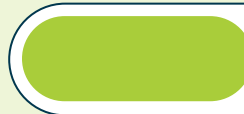| Rating	Percentage
Highly Satisfactory	23%
Satisfactory	46%
Moderately Satisfactory	23%
Moderately Unsatisfactory	8%

Sustainability

1 Sustainability ratings of CIEWS projects

Highly Likely — 12%

Likely — 24%

Moderately Likely — 52%

Moderately Unlikely — 8%

Unlikely — 4%

Highly Unlikely — 0%
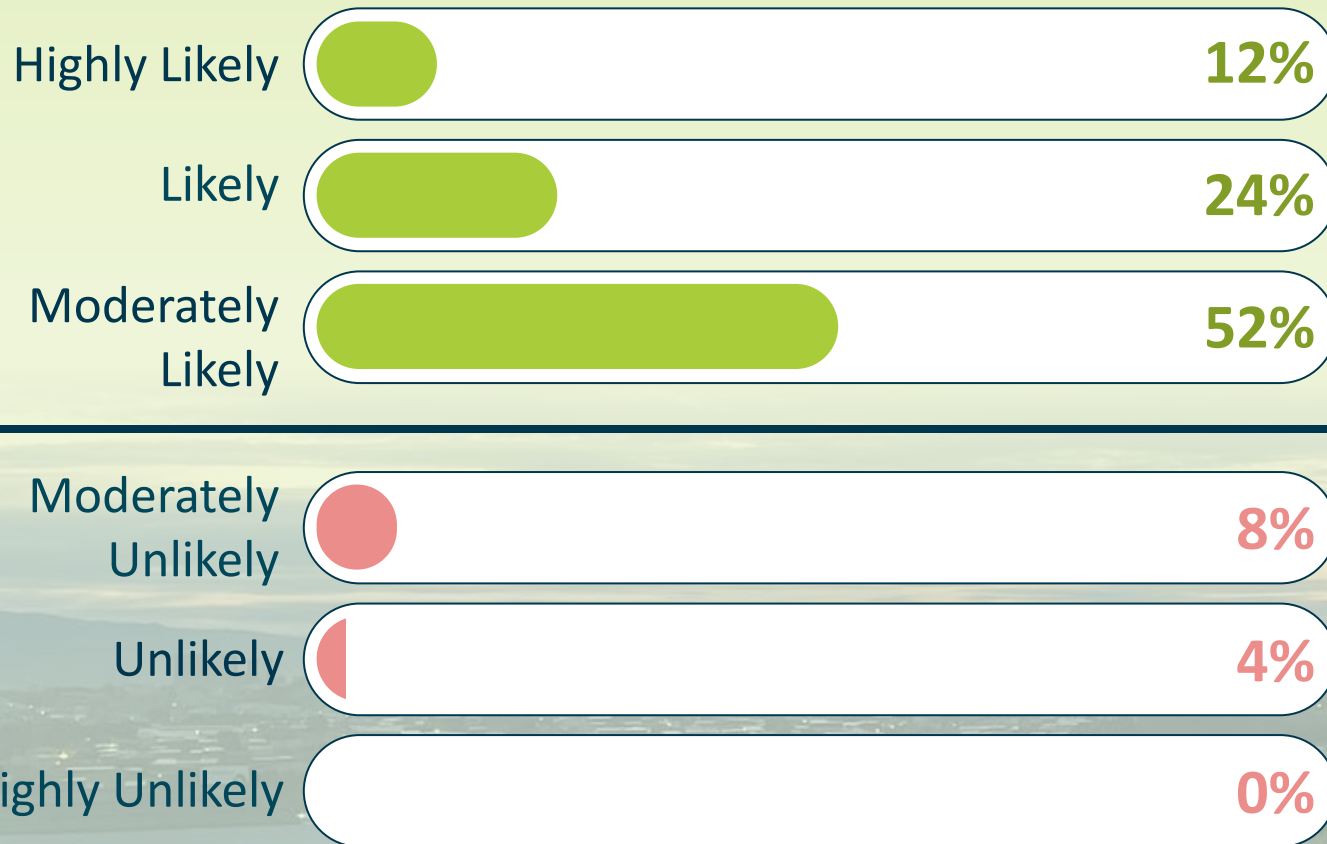
2 Weather stations functional at completion

Installed

309 out of 394

Rehabilitated

52 out of 65
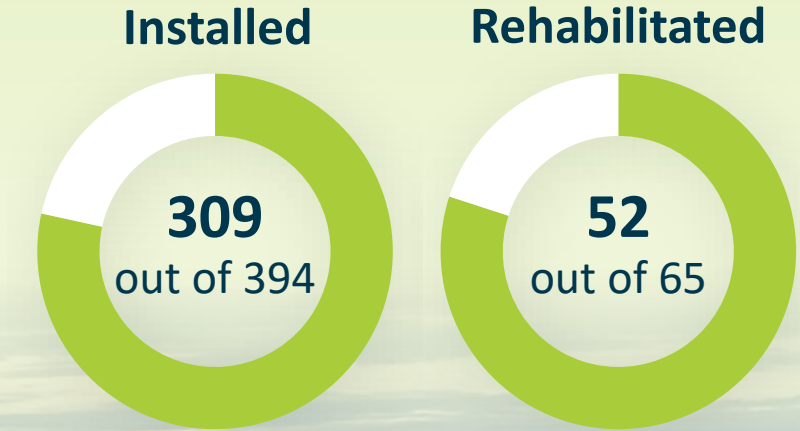
3 Critical "last mile" challenge persists

Impact (Example)

(SCCF, GEF ID 6945)

Costa Rica: **Strengthen capacities to address climate change risks**

- **Early Warning System implemented** to mitigate the risk of floods in a region inhabited by a population of 55,000

- High level of **decentralization**

Impact (Example)

LDCF, GEF ID 4991

Tanzania: **Strengthen the climate monitoring capabilities and early warning systems**

- Installation of **automatic weather stations** increased the accuracy, quality, and timeliness of data

- Farmers **increased their income**

Recommendations

1 Shift focus from solely providing early warning information to **fostering early actions during disaster events**

2 Continue **aligning indicators** with established good practices

3 Continue to explore strategies to **enhance the financial sustainability** of CIEWS components

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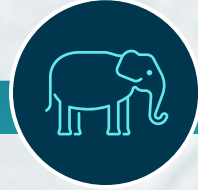
IEO Evaluation Update

February 2024

IEC Independent
Evaluation Office
GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY

What's coming next

Co-financing
in the GEF

Assessment of
Portfolio Risk
in the GEF

Evaluation of the
**Global Wildlife
Conservation Program**

Approach
paper to the **8th
Comprehensive
Evaluation of
the GEF**

Private Sector Engagement in the
GEF-Evidence from the **Commodities
and Sustainable Cities Programs**

GEF IEO **Work
Program and
Budget** for FY 25