



GEF Focal Area: Biodiversity

Scope of the Challenge

Of all global environmental challenges, the loss of biodiversity, and the concomitant degradation of ecosystem services, is the only one likely to be irreversible. At the current scale, the loss of biodiversity from habitat change, overexploitation, invasive alien species, climate change, and pollution is threatening the life support systems that sustain societies and economies.

The rate of global biodiversity loss, as measured by threats to species, could be up to 1,000 times the rates previously observed in the geologic record. The GEF-funded Millennium Ecosystem Assessment found that 60 percent of the 24 primary ecosystem services that provide humanity with food, fiber, and fuel, among other important services, is being used unsustainably to meet rapidly growing human demands. Reversing this unprecedented loss of biodiversity and degradation of ecosystems is a significant challenge requiring substantial changes in policies, institutions, and practices.

GEF Response

The GEF's biodiversity portfolio has been the largest focal area portfolio in terms of grant amounts provided, and accounts for about one-third of total GEF investment to developing

KEY FACTS

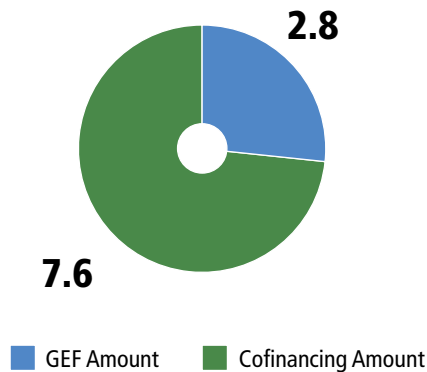
- The GEF has invested \$2.8 billion, leveraging \$7.6 billion in cofinancing, for 790 projects in more than 155 countries to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity.
- The GEF is the largest funding mechanism for protected areas worldwide, investing more than \$1.6 billion of GEF money plus \$4.2 billion in cofinancing to 1,600 protected areas, equivalent to the combined area of Greenland and Mongolia.
- The GEF has supported both the development of National Biosafety Frameworks in 122 countries and their subsequent implementation under the Cartagena Protocol.
- Through GEF investments, biodiversity is being conserved and sustainably used in more than 100 million hectares of productive lands.



SUMMARY BY FOCAL AREA:

BIODIVERSITY

Amounts in billion USD



countries and to those with economies in transition. Since 1991, the GEF has invested about \$2.8 billion and leveraged about \$7.6 billion in cofinancing for 790 projects that address the loss of globally significant biodiversity in more than 155 countries.

As the financial mechanism of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) — the global multilateral accord dedicated to address biodiversity issues — the GEF helps developing countries and countries with economies in transition to meet their Convention commitments while generating global environmental benefits.

The goal of GEF's biodiversity program is the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, the maintenance of ecosystem goods and services, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources.

The GEF's biodiversity strategy has evolved from focusing solely on site-specific action to investments that address systemic barriers to sustaining the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity over the medium to long term. The strategy encompasses four objectives:

- improving the sustainability of protected area systems,
- mainstreaming biodiversity conservation and sustainable use into production landscapes/seascapes and sectors
- safeguarding biodiversity through: (i) building country capacity to implement the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (CPB), and (ii) prevention, control, and management of invasive alien species
- capacity building on access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing.

Together, these objectives make a substantial contribution to implementing most of the Millennium Development Goals, particularly environmental sustainability and poverty reduction, while meeting the priorities identified by the Conference of the Parties (COP) of the CBD.

Priorities and Projects

PROTECTED AREAS

The GEF has been the largest investor in the creation and effective management of protected areas around the world — more than \$1.6 billion of GEF money plus \$4.2 billion in cofinancing has been directed to 1,600 protected areas, covering 360 million hectares, equivalent to the combined area of Greenland and Mongolia, and close to 20 percent of total land area protected globally.

CONSERVATION TRUST FUNDS

The GEF is recognized as a pioneer in supporting more than 26 conservation trust funds worldwide, investing more than \$300 million in total.

SMALL GRANTS PROGRAMME

The Small Grants Programme has supported more than 5,200 community-based biodiversity projects, totaling \$117 million, which have leveraged an additional \$81 million in cash cofinancing and \$85 million in in-kind contributions.

CRITICAL ECOSYSTEM PARTNERSHIP FUND

The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) is a partnership among the GEF, the governments of France and Japan, the MacArthur Foundation, Conservation International, and the World Bank designed to help nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and private sector partners protect the earth's biologically richest regions, or biodiversity hotspots. CEPF has supported more than 1,000 civil society groups in 33 countries.

MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY INTO PRODUCTION LANDSCAPES AND SEASCAPES

The GEF supports efforts to remove the barriers that prevent public and private sector actors from mainstreaming biodiversity, including the development of the policy and regulatory frameworks that promote and reward mainstreaming and the strengthening capacities of resource managers to produce biodiversity-friendly goods and services.

PAYMENT FOR ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

The GEF's biodiversity mainstreaming portfolio includes more than 30 projects that apply the mechanism of "Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES)." Within these projects, the GEF supports the design and implementation of PES schemes to compensate resource managers for off-site ecological benefits. Investments have been made in the development of national systems of PES, regional or local schemes with investments from the private sector, and public-private partnerships. Through a PES project, for example, the biodiversity-rich nation of Costa Rica went from having the highest deforestation rate in Latin America to having the highest natural reforestation rate among all tropical countries. (see below).

NATIONAL BIOSAFETY FRAMEWORKS

The GEF has supported the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (CPB) by providing financial support for four different types of activities: the development of the National Biosafety Frameworks (NBF), the implementation of these NBF, the participation in the Biosafety Clearing House (BCH), and building the capacity and public awareness for the for compliance with the CPB. GEF has supported 130 countries in developing their National Biosafety Frameworks (NBF) while promoting regional collaboration and exchange of good practices. GEF has invested \$36 million and leveraged \$13 million in cofinancing for these efforts. Support for the full implementation of the National Biosafety Framework and the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety has been provided to 24 countries, with an investment of \$17 million leveraging \$25 million in cofinancing. During GEF-4, 27 additional countries have received approval to develop the proposals

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for the implementation of their NBF with an investment of \$25 million and \$29 million in cofinancing. GEF has also invested in building the capacity for the effective participation in the Biosafety Clearing House (BCH) of the Cartagena Protocol. Support for this activity has been provided to over 100 countries with an investment of \$13.5 million.

