PROGRESS REPORT
ON THE
GENDER EQUALITY ACTION PLAN
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**ABBREVIATIONS**

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>GEAP</td>
<td>Gender Equality Action Plan</td>
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<td>GEF</td>
<td>Global Environment Facility</td>
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<td>GGP</td>
<td>GEF Gender Partnership</td>
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<td>IEO</td>
<td>Independent Evaluation Office</td>
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<td>MEA</td>
<td>Multilateral Environmental Agreements</td>
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<td>MTR</td>
<td>Mid-Term Review</td>
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INTRODUCTION

1. This Progress Report aims to update the GEF Council on progress towards implementing the GEF Equality Action Plan (GEAP) over the last 12 months.

BACKGROUND

2. Responding to GEF-6 Policy Recommendation, the GEAP was developed in close collaboration and consultation with GEF Agencies, secretariats of the relevant Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), and experts.

3. The GEAP was approved at the 47th GEF Council Meeting in 2014 to support implementation of the GEF Policy on Gender Mainstreaming and to enhance the coherence and effectiveness of gender mainstreaming at the corporate, program, and project levels. Implementation of the GEAP began in FY2015 and includes actions to be undertaken throughout the GEF-6 period.

OVERVIEW

4. The first part of this report provides a brief overview of the GEAP implementation status since its inception in 2015 (Table 1). Further details on activities in FY15, FY16, and FY17 are found in previous GEAP progress reports (GEF, 2015; GEF, 2016; GEF, 2017b). The following section of this report provides details on specific actions by GEF Secretariat, in coordination with GEF Agencies, during the past 12 months. The final part of the report includes a reflection on the results during the GEF-6 replenishment period that relate to GEF-6 core gender indicators. The report concludes with a brief description of plans, key priorities, and activities as the new Policy on Gender Equality comes into effect in July 2018.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS: OVERVIEW

5. Table 1 outlines key activities undertaken to implement the GEAP since its inception in 2015.
### Table 1. Overview of the Implementation Status of the Gender Equality Action Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GEAP Action Areas</th>
<th>Progress</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Coordination, Outreach, and Capacity Development</strong></td>
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</table>
| Establish an Inter-Agency Working Group on Gender | ▪ GEF Gender Partnership (GGP), formalized in 2015 and serving as a community of practice  
▪ Regular GGP virtual meetings and annual face-to-face workshops facilitated to expedite consultations and sharing of lessons learned |
| Enhance staff capacity and expertise at the GEF Secretariat | ▪ GEF Gender and Social Workstream established in 2015, and Senior Gender specialist hired in 2016  
▪ Completed an online training course with more than 10 hours of instructive material, led by GEF Secretariat, GEF Small Grants Programme, IUCN, and UN Institute for Training and Research, in collaboration with GGP |
| Awareness raising on gender | ▪ Leveraged Expanded Constituency Workshops and National Dialogue Initiatives to raise awareness and capacity on gender among Operational Focal Points and other national partners |
| **Knowledge Management** | |
| Develop/maintain gender webpage on GEF website | ▪ GEF website on gender updated in 2016, with ongoing updates  
▪ GEF Secretariat and GEF Agency blogs and articles posted regularly |
| Develop analytical products | ▪ A comprehensive portfolio review of emerging best practices that mainstream gender in GEF is completed; findings to be published in June 2018 |
| **Policy** | |
| Update, as necessary, GEF’s Policy on Gender Equality | ▪ A new GEF Policy on Gender Equality adopted at the 53rd GEF Council Meeting in November 2017, following a robust consultation process involving GEF Agencies, the GGP, and the broader GEF constituency  
▪ GEF Gender Implementation Strategy completed, specifying action areas to support the operationalization of the new Policy in GEF-7 |
| **Program and Projects** | |
| Review/update GEF project templates | ▪ Templates for Project Identification Forms, Program Framework Documents, and CEO Endorsement Requests updated in 2015  
▪ Revised templates for Project Identification Forms, Program Framework Documents, and Chief Executive Officer Endorsement Requests drafted, as part of the upgrade of GEF’s IT platform, to support implementation of the new Policy |
| Develop GEF Guidelines on gender | ▪ Guidelines to advance gender equality and women’s empowerment in GEF programs/projects completed, following consultation with GEF Agencies and GGP |
| Incorporate/strengthen gender elements in key GEF programs/projects | ▪ Ongoing technical support on gender provided to Integrated Approach Pilot programs and Small Grants Programme is incorporating strategy and approach on gender issues  
▪ Ongoing GEF Secretariat reviews of projects from a gender perspective |
| **Results Management** | |
| Report annually on Gender Equality Action Plan progress | ▪ Regular portfolio reviews, and detailed Gender Equality Action Plan progress reports submitted to Council annually |
| Monitor and report on GEF-6 core gender indicators | ▪ Reporting on GEF-6 core gender indicators, including in the GEF Scorecard since 2016  
▪ Analysis of progress to mainstream gender regularly included in the GEF Annual Performance Monitoring Review  
▪ A new GEF gender tagging framework developed to improve the capture and reporting of results on gender equality and women’s empowerment in GEF-7 |
| Evaluate GEF gender equality results | ▪ Independent Evaluation Office evaluations include sections on gender (Terminal Evaluation guidelines are still under review) |
IMPLEMENTATION STATUS: DETAILS

6. The following provides detailed information on key activities by GEF Secretariat, in coordination with GEF Agencies, during the past 12 months.

Coordination, Outreach, and Capacity Development

Coordination and Outreach

7. The need to establish an Inter-Agency Working Group on Gender was recognized during the development of the GEAP, and was supported by GEF Council and partners. GEF Secretariat responded by consolidating a Working Group in 2015. GEF Secretariat agreed with GEF Agencies to rebrand the Inter-Agency Working Group as the GEF Gender Partnership (GGP). The aim is to broaden the scope and membership beyond the inter-agency group and to better leverage the wide range of skills and experiences on gender equality and women’s empowerment from partner institutions and organizations. GGP is now formally operational with active participation of gender focal points from each GEF Agency, relevant MEA secretariats, and representatives from the GEF Independent Evaluation Office (IEO), GEF Network of Civil Society Organizations, GEF Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group, and other key partners.

8. GGP increasingly serves as a community of practice, functioning not only as a platform for consultation, but also as a space to exchange information, share lessons learned, and collaborate on events and other work products. Since its establishment, GEF Secretariat has organized regular calls and organized two larger face-to-face meetings. The meeting in June 2017 gathered experts from 30 international and civil society organizations to provide ideas on how to mainstream gender into GEF-7 programming, and to provide feedback on the forthcoming policy on Gender Equality (GEF, 2017c). These workshops discussed progress and the challenges of mainstreaming gender in GEF projects and programs. Moreover, they provided opportunities to consult on GEF’s Policy on Gender Equality; guidelines to advance gender equality in GEF programs and projects; best practice reviews; online training modules; and the GEF Gender Implementation Strategy.

9. The GEF continues to strengthen collaboration on gender with the three Rio Conventions and other partners. As part of the facilitation of the GGP, GEF Secretariat has initiated and maintained a strong relationship with the designated gender experts of the Rio Conventions, as well as with those of the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions. GEF Secretariat also has continued close communication and has initiated several meetings with other finance mechanisms, including the Green Climate Fund, Climate Investment Funds, and Adaptation Fund, to explore opportunities to better and more systematically share lessons learned and support each other’s efforts to address gender in the respective organizations.
**Capacity Development**

10. In collaboration with the GEF Small Grants Programme and the GGP, GEF Secretariat completed a comprehensive e-course and webinar series on gender and the environment in close collaboration with gender focal points from the MEAs, GEF Agencies, and expert organizations such as UN Women. This course, designed to raise awareness and build capacity among GEF partners to mainstream gender in environmental policies, programs, and projects, contains over 10 hours of instructive material covering thematic areas such as biodiversity, land degradation, climate change, international waters, and chemicals and waste. The course is specifically designed to target (i) GEF country-level stakeholders, staff, and agency project managers; (ii) country-level stakeholders of the GEF Small Grants Programme, including staff, steering committee members, and potential grantee partners; (iii) constituencies of MEAs (e.g., country focal points); and (iv) other key global and local partners working in environmental sectors that are interested in improving their ability to address gender.

11. In 2018, GEF Secretariat continued to leverage the GEF website on gender and to showcase and share training materials, best practice examples, blogs, and other materials to raise awareness among the broader public about GEF’s gender activities. Continuous efforts have been made to improve support to GEF Operational Focal Points, Convention Focal Points, and other partners on the ground in implementing the GEAP. As an initial step, GEF Secretariat has used existing mechanisms, including the Extended Constituency Workshops at the subregional level and National Dialogue Initiatives to raise gender awareness. For the 2017 and 2018 Extended Constituency Workshop programs, the GEF has included dedicated sessions on gender to raise awareness and update participants on (a) important commitments across the MEAs that are served by the GEF in terms of inclusion and gender equality; and (b) the GEF’s evolving policies, standards, and practices regarding stakeholder engagement and gender mainstreaming. It is expected that the online training course will be introduced as an additional capacity development tool for GEF’s country partners in Fall 2018.

**Knowledge Management and Communication**

12. As the GEF shifts toward implementation of its new policy on gender equality, it has begun to generate and share knowledge on good practices, methodologies, and lessons learned in the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women relating to GEF areas of work. As such—and in line with the GEAP—GEF Secretariat has launched, in collaboration with GGP, a comprehensive review of emerging best practices to mainstream gender at the GEF, set to provide close to 100 examples of good practice in the latest GEF replenishment cycles. This review takes the findings of an examination of good practices in GEF-4 through to GEF-6, which was carried out in 2016–17 across a range of GEF Agencies and environmental issues. This effort has culminated in a publication, the launch of which is expected during the GEF Assembly in June 2018, and which will be promoted on the GEF website as well as other forums. So far, findings of the review have confirmed that GEF-6 investments are resulting in concerted improvements. For example, initial findings suggest better gender analyses, improved
consultation with women through project planning and design, and greater incorporation of
gender dimensions in project results frameworks and monitoring and evaluation plans.

13. GEF Secretariat staff also has continued to actively raise awareness and share
information on gender and environment at workshops, webinars, and meetings. These events
and other activities, including several blogs, have been increasingly promoted through the GEF
website and social media. Furthermore, GEF Secretariat has continued to share experiences and
lessons relating to gender mainstreaming in GEF projects at international conferences and
events. These include participation at sessions on gender at the Conferences of the Parties
relating to the Convention on Biological Diversity under the United Nations Framework
Convention on Climate Change.

Policy

14. At its 53rd GEF Council Meeting in November 2017, the GEF adopted a new Policy on
Gender Equality (GEF, 2017a). The policy responds to the recommendations of the GEF IEO’s
evaluation of gender, endorsed by GEF Council in May 2017. It also draws on the four-year
process of implementing the GEAP; a collaborative and consultative process involving GEF
Agencies; and the multi-stakeholder GGP that comprises gender focal points from GEF
Agencies, MEA secretariats, and representatives from the GEF Civil Society Organization
Network, GEF Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group, and GEF IEO, as well as other environmental
finance providers and expert organizations.

15. The new policy introduces current principles and requirements to mainstream gender in
the design, implementation, and evaluation of GEF programs and projects, and to promote
gender equality and the empowerment of women pursuant to GEF’s mandate to achieve global
environmental benefits. It marks a distinct shift in GEF’s approach to gender mainstreaming—
from a gender-aware, “do no harm” approach to a gender-responsive, “do good” approach. The
policy further aims to ensure equal opportunities for women and men to participate in,
contribute to, and benefit from GEF-funded activities, and more strategically to seize
opportunities to address gender gaps critical to the achievement of global environmental
benefits.

Programs and Projects

16. With the objective to support the effective implementation of the policy, GEF
Secretariat, over the last several months, has worked with the GGP to develop guidelines to
advance gender equality and women’s empowerments in GEF programs and projects. These
guidelines will be finalized prior to the June 2018 GEF Council Meeting; they will be published
as the new policy comes into effect in July 2018.

17. The guidelines are organized around the GEF project cycle and focus on the necessary
expected actions and steps to meet the requirements set out in the policy. They are applicable
to full- and medium-size projects, as well as enabling activities and programmatic approaches.
While the target audiences for these guidelines are the GEF Agencies responsible for project
design, implementation, and supervision, the guidelines also aim to serve as resource material for country and other partners such as GEF Operational Focal Points and national executing partners and consultants involved in GEF projects.

**Results Management**

18. As agreed in the GEAP, work is ongoing to strengthen the monitoring and reporting of core gender indicators as part of the GEF-6 Results Framework. This work is advancing in conjunction with efforts to improve the overall GEF results-based management approach and system. Initial results have been reported in the Corporate Scorecards that were introduced at the June 2016 GEF Council Meeting.

19. In line with the GEAP and the GGP recommendations to explore opportunities to strengthen the GEF’s monitoring and reporting system on gender, GEF Secretariat, in collaboration with GEF Agencies, has explored options to improve the capture of and reporting on results relating to gender equality and women’s empowerment. As part of this effort, GEF Secretariat has developed a GEF gender tagging system that will be launched as the new policy comes into effect in July 2018. This tagging framework builds on the upgrade of GEF’s IT platform, the GEF Portal, and is designed to effectively (i) ensure policy compliance; (ii) prompt considerations on gender early in the project cycle; and (iii) capture portfolio results across key dimensions of gender equality relating to GEF-7 programming. The system will label and track GEF projects and programs that (a) have identified relevant gender differences and gaps in their analyses; (b) addressed these differences and gaps through specific measures; and (c) linked measures to gender-sensitive indicators in the results-based management framework. While GEF programs and projects contribute to gender equality and women’s empowerment in various ways, GEF gender tags will focus on tracking GEF’s contribution to narrowing three key gender gaps, relevant to GEF-7, as follows:

(a) access to and control of natural resources
(b) participation and decision-making
(c) access to socioeconomic benefits and services.

20. GEF Secretariat will use the information derived from the gender tags, combined with qualitative portfolio analysis, to monitor and track progress and results and to compile annual reports to GEF Council. Information derived from the tagging system also will be used to support learning and knowledge products with a view to improving guidance on gender-responsive programs and projects in the future.

**RESULTS**

21. The GEAP has committed the GEF to strengthen its monitoring and reporting on gender mainstreaming in the GEF portfolio. GEF Core Gender Indicators, outlined in the GEF-6 Results Framework for Gender Mainstreaming, cover “quality of entry” and “quality of implementation” alike.
Table 2. GEF-6 Core Gender Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality at Entry</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Percentage of projects that have conducted a gender analysis during project preparation</td>
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<td>2. Percentage of projects that have incorporated a gender-responsive project results framework</td>
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<tr>
<th>Quality at Implementation</th>
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<tr>
<td>3. Share of women and men as direct beneficiaries</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Percentage of project monitoring and evaluation reports that incorporate gender equality/women’s empowerment issues and assess results</td>
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<td>5. Share of convention related national reports incorporated gender dimensions</td>
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22. The GEF’s capacity to assess progress and results has deepened since the GEF’s results framework on gender was developed in 2014. Portfolio-level data confirm an upward trend since indicators were used in GEF-6 to track projects that addressed gender in project design and implementation. The following describes the findings relating to previously mentioned indicators.

23. In terms of quality at entry, GEF Secretariat has analyzed 281 GEF-6 full- and medium-size projects. The findings corroborate a steady positive trend in terms of considerations of gender in the project design and development stages. The data validates improvements of projects that have conducted a gender analysis and incorporated gender in results frameworks.

Table 3. Progress on GEF-6 Quality of Entry Indicators

1 The quality of entry analysis is based on a review of the 281 GEF-6 projects, comprising of 185 full-size and 96 medium-size projects, endorsed/approved between July 2014 and March 2018.
24. Specifically, the analysis found the following:

(a) **Percentage of projects that have conducted gender analysis during project preparation:** The analysis found that 66 percent (185 of 281) of projects—a majority of full-size and medium-size projects under GEF-6—have carried out some type of gender analysis. These figures demonstrate a notable increase of projects that conduct gender analyses in the project design and planning stages compared to the GEF-5 baseline of 18 percent. Gender analyses in these projects continue to provide valuable information on gender differences in needs, roles and responsibilities, and opportunities for equal participation and leadership of women and men. For many of the 185 projects, gender analyses have led to the development of additional gender-related actions, including project outputs, activities, or sex-disaggregated indicators.

(b) **Percentage of projects that have incorporated a gender-responsive project results framework:** The analysis found that 78 percent (220 of 281) projects endorsed by GEF CEO under GEF-6 included some type of gender-responsive results framework. These projects had sex-disaggregated data and targets or indicators. The data suggest a notable increase of projects that incorporate gender compared to the GEF-5 baseline, where only 57 percent of projects are estimated to have referred to gender in their results-based management frameworks. In addition, 21 percent of projects reviewed included distinct and specific gender activities and/or had developed some type of gender action plan.

25. In terms of quality at implementation, a GEF Secretariat analysis of 470 Mid-Term Reviews (MTR) and Terminal Evaluations (TE), submitted from FY15 to FY17 concludes a steady upward trend in terms of project gender reporting.

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2 In most projects, gender analysis has been a part of the social assessment or social analysis. Gender analysis, however, was conducted as a separate stand-alone activity in a few projects during project preparation or inception.

3 Baseline information emanates from data provided in GEF-IEO (2013) and GEF (2008).

4 Ibid.

5 These were mainly GEF-4 and GEF-5 projects. It is important to note that this analysis is limited to a cohort of projects received in the respective financial years.
26. Specifically, the analysis found the following:

(a) **Share of women and men as direct beneficiaries of project**: The share of women and men as direct beneficiaries—as indicated in earlier progress reports—has proved difficult to systematically track and aggregate in the current GEF results architecture. Modifications to the definition for this indicator, therefore, were introduced in 2016. The indicator now reports on the percentage of projects that include sex-disaggregated information on beneficiaries in the MTRs and TEs. The analysis found that 45 percent of GEF-5 projects reviewed included sex-disaggregated information compared to 28 percent of reviewed GEF-4 projects. Analysis of the projects that report on beneficiaries or individuals impacted by the respective project shows a wide range and variety of beneficiary classifications. Some projects specifically identify beneficiaries and affected populations, while others discuss recipients of project activities, such as those of capacity building activities, members of committees, or women’s associations.

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6 Analysis reflects the status of gender mainstreaming based on contents in the reports that do not necessarily capture the real situation.
(b) **Percentage of monitoring and evaluation reports that incorporate gender equality/women’s empowerment issues and assesses results:** The analysis found that 73 percent\(^7\) of project evaluation reports (MTRs and TEs) submitted in FY17 had included information on gender. Specifically, the analysis discovered that 73 percent of reviewed GEF-5 projects incorporated gender in the reports compared to 54 percent under GEF-4. It is anticipated that project reporting on gender will gradually improve as the policy comes into effect and the guidelines for monitoring and evaluation are included in the forthcoming GEF guidelines to mainstream gender into the GEF project cycle.

27. **Share of convention related national reports incorporated gender dimensions.** The following information is based on a desk review of available analyses carried out by Convention Secretariats and partners. It covers National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs), Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs), National Action Programmes (NAPs), and National Implementation Plans (NIPs).

(a) NBSAPs are the principal instruments for implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). They define priorities and modalities for efficient and equitable biodiversity management at the national level, and include opportunities to recognize and integrate women’s empowerment and gender equality considerations. A recent review by IUCN of 174 countries revealed that **61% (107 countries of total countries examined) contain at least one gender and/or women keyword** (IUCN, 2017a). The same study concludes that 14% of countries included women’s empowerment and/or gender equality as a guiding principle, and that 24% of most recent NBSAPs include at least one specific activity geared towards women or otherwise proactively including gender considerations, e.g., to address gender gaps.

(b) INDCs are primary means for governments to communicate internationally the steps they will take towards achieving the objectives of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). INDCs reflect each country’s ambition for reducing emissions, taking into account its domestic circumstances and capabilities. A study by IUCN of the 160 INDCs submitted as of 1/18/16, **revealed that 37.5% explicitly mention “gender” and / or “women” in the context of their national priorities and ambitions for reducing emissions.**

(c) NAPs are key instruments in the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), spelling out the practical measures to combat desertification in specific ecosystems. Analyses suggest a growing awareness of the need to address women’s empowerment and gender equality, and concludes that **23% of 335 reports (submitted between 2010–2014) mentioned the role of**

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\(^7\)The majority of the reviewed projects were designed and implemented under GEF-4, prior to the adoption of the GEF Policy on Gender Mainstreaming.
women, women’s groups or gender with varying degrees of importance (UNCCD, 2017).

(d) NIPs are key instrument to implement the obligations under Stockholm Convention. A recent study IUCN and the BRS Secretariat revealed that 91% of NIPs contain women and/or gender keywords that point to some recognition of how women and men are impacted differently by chemical management in the action planning for the sound management of POPs (IUCN, 2017b).

28. Overall, the GEF-6 results framework on gender has provided important information relating to GEF’s progress in mainstreaming gender into its project portfolio. Although the findings suggest a positive trend in the number of projects that report on gender, the in-depth analysis highlights the fact that many projects still lack systematic and adequate reporting on activities, progress, and results on gender equality in their MTRs and TEs. Moreover, the framework itself has focused primarily on “box checking” rather than monitoring or reporting on the quality of interventions or gender results. As such, it has had limited benefit in terms of helping to track compliance or moving beyond gender mainstreaming alone to strategically address gender inequality, gender gaps, and social norms and behaviors to support the transformative system change required to generate positive impact on the global environment. The increased ambition outlined in the new GEF Policy on Gender Equality to improve the monitoring and reporting of gender equality results should play an important role in catalyzing action in parallel to tracking and reporting on results.

MOVING FORWARD

29. GEF’s new Policy on Gender Equality will come into effect on July 1, 2018, as the GEF enters its seventh programming cycle. GEF’s efforts over the next two years will focus on ensuring effective implementation of the policy.

30. To support effective implementation of the new policy, GEF Secretariat has developed a Gender Implementation Strategy to guide GEF Secretariat’s work throughout GEF-7. The strategy draws on the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of GEF-IEO (2017); the analysis carried out by GEF Secretariat; and consultations with GEF Agencies and the multi-stakeholder GGP.

31. The operationalization of the GEF Policy on Gender Equality, during the GEF-7 replenishment period, will be delivered through a set of actions in four priority action areas. The outputs for each action area are as follows:

- **Action area 1:** Gender-responsive approaches and results are systematically promoted in GEF programs and projects

- **Action area 2:** Strengthened capacity of GEF’s Secretariat and its partners to mainstream gender and size strategic entry points to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment
Action area 3: GEF’s collaboration with partners to generate knowledge and contribute to learning on links between gender and the environment are improved.

Action area 4: GEF’s corporate systems for tracking and reporting on gender equality results are enhanced.

32. It is envisaged that GGP serves as an effective mechanism to support the implementation of the GEAP, identified in the IEO evaluation on gender as “an effective platform for building a wider constituency on gender and the environment.” It should continue to play a key role to advise, guide, and support GEF’s gender mainstreaming efforts in the GEF-7 replenishment period.

33. GEF Secretariat will provide GEF Council information to assist in its exercise to provide oversight through annual progress reports and updates on results. It will use the information derived from the gender tags, combined with qualitative portfolio analyses.
REFERENCES


