

58th GEF Council Meeting
June 02–03, 2020
Virtual Meeting

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO:

- (1) STRATEGIC COUNTRY CLUSTER EVALUATION OF THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES**
- (2) STRATEGIC COUNTRY CLUSTER EVALUATION OF THE SAHEL AND SUDAN-GUINEA SAVANNA BIOMES**

INTRODUCTION

1. This paper presents the Secretariat's management responses to the following reports of the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO):
 - a. The Strategic Country Cluster Evaluation of the Least Developed Countries (Document [GEF/E/C.58/Inf.03/Rev.01](#))
 - b. The Strategic Country Cluster Evaluation of the Sahel and Sudan-Guinea Savanna Biomes (Document [GEF/E/C.58/Inf.02/Rev.01](#))

THE STRATEGIC COUNTRY CLUSTER EVALUATION OF THE LEAST DEVELOPED STATES

2. The Secretariat welcomes the IEO's report on the Strategic Country Cluster Evaluation of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), and is in broad agreement with its conclusions and recommendations.
3. The Secretariat is pleased to see the IEO's findings that the GEF's support to LDCs has increased consistently since the pilot phase, and that GEF interventions continue to be well aligned with and highly relevant to the national environmental priorities and main environmental challenges of LDCs.
4. The Secretariat is encouraged by the IEO's conclusion that the expansion of GEF Agencies has led to more options for most LDCs, and is confident that the LDCs that are also SIDS will increasingly continue to derive benefits from the expanded GEF partnership.
5. The Secretariat appreciates the conclusion that the demonstration of sustainability takes time. The Secretariat notes the role of project design in the improvement of sustainability, including the need to take into due consideration the socioeconomic and political context of the LDCs. The Secretariat welcomes the report's findings that more recently concluded projects have higher sustainability ratings than earlier projects, which is consistent with recent IEO analyses on other project cohorts.
6. Given the importance of climate resilience in LDCs, the Secretariat is encouraged by the conclusion that climate resilience is being addressed in climate change adaptation projects. The Secretariat notes the need to strengthen climate resilience considerations in other GEF focal areas, and welcomes the observation that more recent projects are indeed showing an increasing integration of resilience considerations.
7. Finally, the Secretariat is confident that the GEF's continued positive impact for LDCs will be further strengthened by the programming strategies and policies adopted in GEF-6 and GEF-7.

THE STRATEGIC COUNTRY CLUSTER EVALUATION OF THE SAHEL AND SUDAN-GUINEA SAVANNA BIOMES

8. The Secretariat welcomes the IEO's report on the Strategic Country Cluster Evaluation of the Sahel and Sudan-Guinea Savanna Biomes, and is in broad agreement with its conclusions and recommendations.

9. The Secretariat is pleased to see the IEO's findings that GEF support to the two biomes has increased substantially since the pilot phase. The Secretariat welcomes the conclusion that GEF support addresses the main environmental challenges faced by countries in the biomes, with relevance to countries's specific priorities, and with no major gaps of coverage.

10. The Secretariat appreciates the conclusion that the demonstration of sustainability takes time, and notes the role of project and program design in the improvement of sustainability. The Secretariat welcomes the finding that more recently concluded projects have higher sustainability ratings, which is consistent with other recent IEO analyses of projects in Africa.

11. The Secretariat further notes the importance of synergies and trade-offs between environmental and socio-economic objectives, and the role this plays in sustainability. Given the pressing socio-economic needs of countries in the biomes, the Secretariat is also encouraged by the observations that GEF interventions are increasingly considering country socio-economic priorities, and that gender considerations are being progressively incorporated at both design and implementation stages.

12. Finally, the Secretariat is confident that the GEF's continued positive impact on the countries in the Sahel and Sudan-Guinea Savanna Biomes will be further enhanced and strengthened by the programming strategies and policies adopted in GEF-6 and GEF-7.