



# The Role and Contribution of the GEF in Supporting a Global Green Future

*Seventh Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF  
FIRST REPLENISHMENT MEETING*

GEF IEO April 22, 2021



# Highlights

## Evaluation Findings

### 2018-2021

# Outline of the Report

*The GEF's Role  
and Contribution  
Towards a  
Greener Global  
Future*

## **Chapter 1**

Background

## **Chapter 2**

Performance, Sustainability  
and Scaling Up of GEF  
Interventions

## **Chapter 3**

Focal Area Impacts

## **Chapter 4**

How does the GEF deliver  
its support? –  
GEF Modalities

## **Chapter 5**

GEF Support to Countries

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GEF Support To Innovation

## **Chapter 7**

GEF's Engagement with the  
Private Sector

## **Chapter 8**

The Institutional Framework  
of the GEF: Policies  
Gender, Safeguards and  
Stakeholder Engagement

## **Chapter 9**

The GEF's Comparative  
Advantage in building a  
global greener future



Background

# OPS7: Purpose

A

Provide **evidence** for GEF-8 replenishment

B

Assess to what extent the GEF is achieving its objectives of enhancing **global environmental benefits**

C

Identify potential areas for **improvement**

D

Assess the GEF's **progress** in implementation and achievement of the GEF 2020 Strategy

# OPS7: 34 Evaluations between 2018-2021



## Completed evaluations

- Evaluation of Health Co Benefits of GEF Interventions In Chemicals And Waste
- Evaluation of GEF's Engagement in Fragile and Conflict Affected Situations
- Strategic Country Cluster Evaluations in LDCs, SIDs and African Biomes
- Annual Performance Reports with Focus on Sustainability, Transport
- Evaluation of GEF's Interventions in Fisheries and Freshwater
- Evaluation of the GEF Artisanal Gold Mining Program
- Review of the Terminal Evaluation Validation Process
- Evaluation of the GEF-UNIDO Clean Tech Program
- Evaluation of GEF's Experience in Scaling Up
- Evaluation Lessons Relevant for the Pandemic
- Evaluation of the Country Support Program
- Evaluation of the Small Grants Programme
- Evaluation of GEF Medium Sized Projects
- Evaluation of Biodiversity Mainstreaming
- LDCF Program Evaluation



# OPS7: 34 Evaluations between 2018-2021



## Ongoing work

- GEF Engagement with the Private Sector: Micro-, Small-, Medium-Size Enterprises
- Institutional Policies: Gender, Safeguards and Stakeholder Engagement
- Evaluation of GEF Engagement in Brazil, India, China and South Africa
- Comparative Advantage and Governance of the GEF
- Formative Review of the GEF Integrated Approach
- Results-based Management and the GEF Portal
- GEF Support to SFM and REDD+ Projects
- Climate Change Resilience Mainstreaming
- Evaluation of the GEF Wildlife Program
- Evaluation of the Non-Grants Instrument
- Annual Performance Report 2021
- Agency Self-evaluation Systems
- Innovation in the GEF
- Enabling Activities
- SCCF Evaluation
- LDC/SCCF AER





Performance,  
Sustainability and  
Scaling Up of GEF  
Interventions

# GEF relevance: Conventions and Countries



Consistent with convention priorities while pursuing integration



Commitment to the mandate alongside **innovation**



Consistent with country strategies in **LDCs, SIDS, MICs, African Biomes**



Responsiveness to contemporary environmental challenges



United Nations  
Framework Convention on  
Climate Change



Convention on  
Biological Diversity



# Continued good performance



80%

of the 1686 completed projects have **satisfactory outcome** and implementation ratings



62%

sustainability ratings of **moderately likely or above: ratings improve considerably post completion**

# GEF support to successful SCALING-UP



**10-20 years' support**



**Higher co-financing ratios**



**Higher outcomes**

## GEF's comparative advantage

Piloting

Establishing enabling conditions, catalyzing sustainable financing, strengthening institutional capacities

Partnership with Agencies with varying strengths

## INFLUENCING FACTORS AT EACH STAGE

### *Adoption of intervention*

Establish ownership and demonstrate benefits through pilots



### *Sustained support for scaling*

Political priority and support, information dissemination, partners



### *Learning for adaptability and cost-effectiveness*

Evaluations, knowledge exchange networks, multi-stakeholder meetings



# Focal Areas Impact

# Biodiversity Mainstreaming



## Additionalities going beyond incremental cost benefits

### Facilitating features include

- **alignment** with national development objectives
- **engagement** with key stakeholder groups
- **good governance**, political will and, champions
- Test for **policy coherence** with multiple sectors

Majority of projects received **lower ratings** for M&E and sustainability

The existing M&E framework is **not sufficient**

Capturing additionalities is a **challenge**



# Climate Change: Sustainable Transport

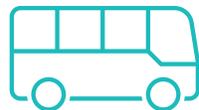
**73% of projects** mainstreamed sustainable transport approaches



**Transformed markets**  
in China, Malaysia, South Asia



Promoted  
**non-motorized** transit



Contributed to establishing  
**BRT in cities** in Mexico  
and Tanzania



Promoted **transit-oriented**  
**development** when efforts aligned  
with the vision of the local leadership

# Artisanal and small-scale gold mining

Highly relevant to **Minamata Convention** targets major mercury using countries

GOLD program learned lessons from past, increasing focus on **access to finance**, markets for miners and **private sector** partners

GEF-5 projects **sustained mercury use reductions** in many cases, but common replacement is cyanidation

Global “hub” project **increases communication and learning** between child projects

The GOLD program targets mercury reductions but not **other environmental or health monitoring** issues related to ASGM

2/3 of mercury reductions to come from knowledge dissemination which will be **difficult to monitor**

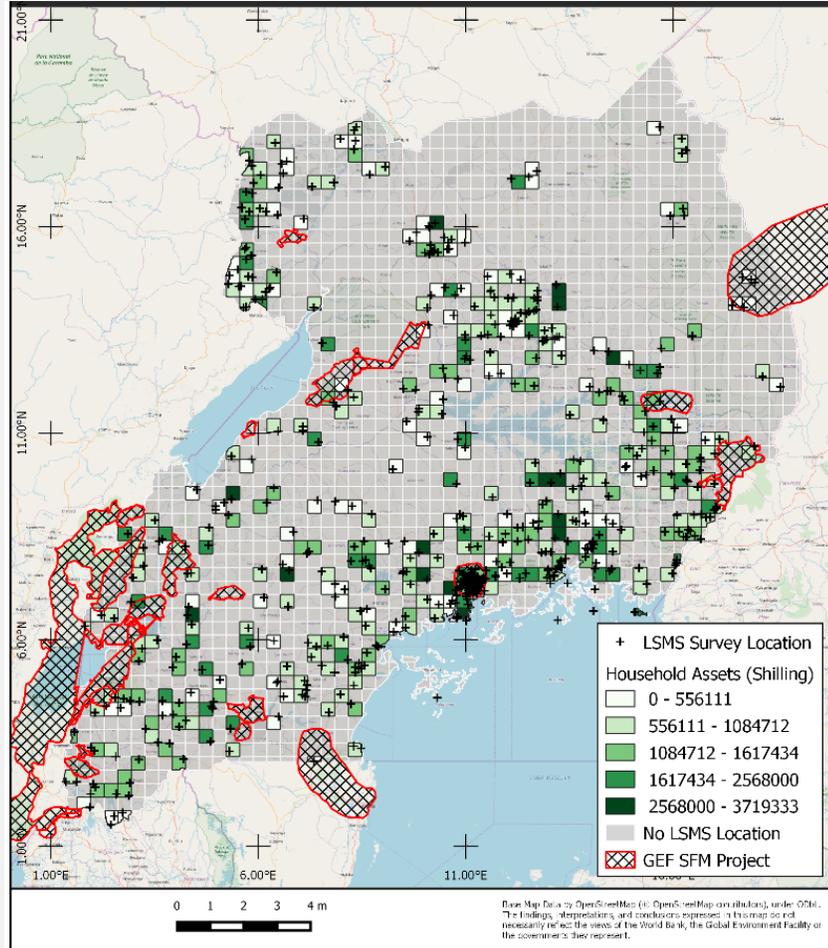
# Sustainable Forest Management

Neutral to slightly positive impact at the portfolio level on **socioeconomic benefits** as proxied by **nighttime lights**

In Uganda households in proximity to GEF SFM interventions have approximately

**USD 310 more** in household assets compared to households further away.

Correlation ≠ causation



**0.27%**  
less deforestation  
each year than  
similar areas

**1.33 tons**  
of carbon  
sequestered per  
hectare/ year

**\$727,900**  
Average value of  
above-ground  
carbon  
sequestered  
annually/project

**\$1.17/\$1.00**  
per year

# International Waters: Fisheries



Responds to **overexploitation** of marine fishery resources; funding has been limited in freshwater fisheries.



Achieved **benefits** include stress reduction on fishery resources, improved management of marine habitats.



Fisheries projects have resulted in **increased** income, food security, and women's empowerment.



GEF's additionality is in promoting **transboundary** ecosystem-based governance.



The **private sector** is engaged through sustainable fisheries supply chains and sustainable financing arrangements.



**Discrepancies** between GEB targets at program and child project level in GEF-6 need to be reconcile.



How does the GEF  
deliver its support?  
– GEF Modalities

# GEF Modalities

Small  
Grants  
Program

Medium-  
Sized  
Projects

Integrated  
Approach  
Pilots, Impact  
Programs

Enabling  
Activities

# Small grants program

- + Success in **securing** Global Environmental Benefits
- + Attention to **community level** benefits, **poverty and livelihoods**
- + More successful at **mainstreaming gender** than other GEF projects
- **Differing views** on the extent to which SGP should address socio-economic priorities
- The upgrading policy brought **challenges**
- M&E remains too **complex**

# Medium-sized projects: Findings



An **entry point** into the GEF



Higher **engagement** with CSOs



Address **funding** gaps



**Perform** on par with or slightly higher than FSPs



A **catalyst** for financing innovation and scaling up



Used for capacity building and developing **knowledge products**



The **\$2 million limit** seems appropriate for smaller agencies but not for larger agencies



2 step approval process is seen as **inefficient relative to funding**

# Integrated Approach (IAPs & IPs)



## From IAPs to IPs: design

IPs continue to address **multiple environmental conventions**

IP child projects **align with countries and other donors' priorities**

Concerns on **delivery of countries commitments** to conventions

Further improvements in **innovative and flexible design**

Coherence of **M&E design** improved

Clearer **selection criteria** with EOIs for country participation

Better sequencing of **program and hub project**

Inclusive program design engaging **country stakeholders**

Lead Agency role expanded to **improve program coordination and integration**



# Integrated Approach (IAPs & IPs)



## IAPs early results

Positive progress towards **results at midterm** despite Covid-19

Program self-reporting shows some progress towards **global benefits**

**All IAPs** support national policy/regulatory outcomes and institutional structures

**IAP knowledge platforms and networks** have been effective

Uneven CPs progress towards results: **RFS (77%)**  
**GGP (40%), SC (23%)**

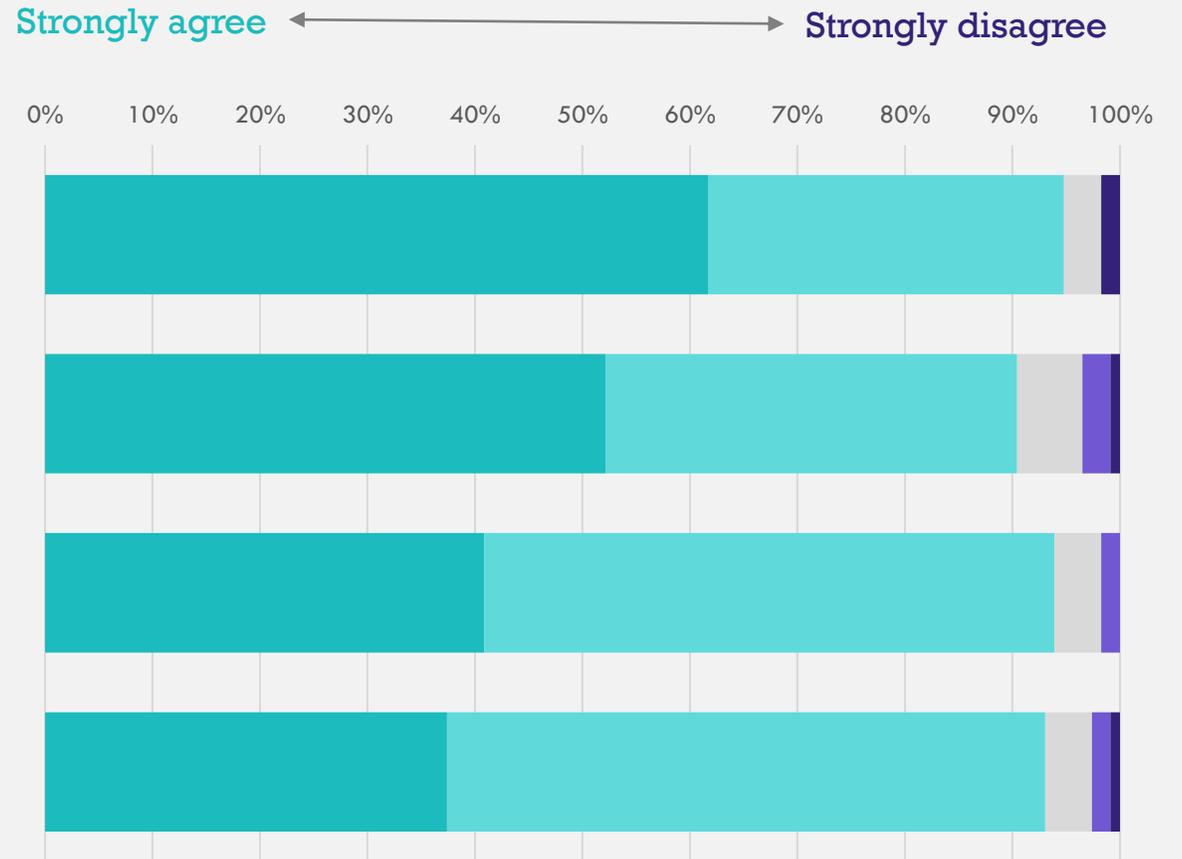
Few **socioeconomic and household resilience outcomes** reported thus far



# Integrated Approach (IAPs & IPs)



Level of agreement with alignment questions by country-level survey respondents



The CP is well aligned with national environmental priorities

The CP is well aligned with other relevant domestic programs and initiatives

The UN Conventions' major objectives are well considered in the design of the CP

The CP will help the country address the Conventions at multiple levels (local, national, regional)

# Integrated Approach (IAPs & IPs)



## Level of agreement with additionality in design by country-level survey respondents

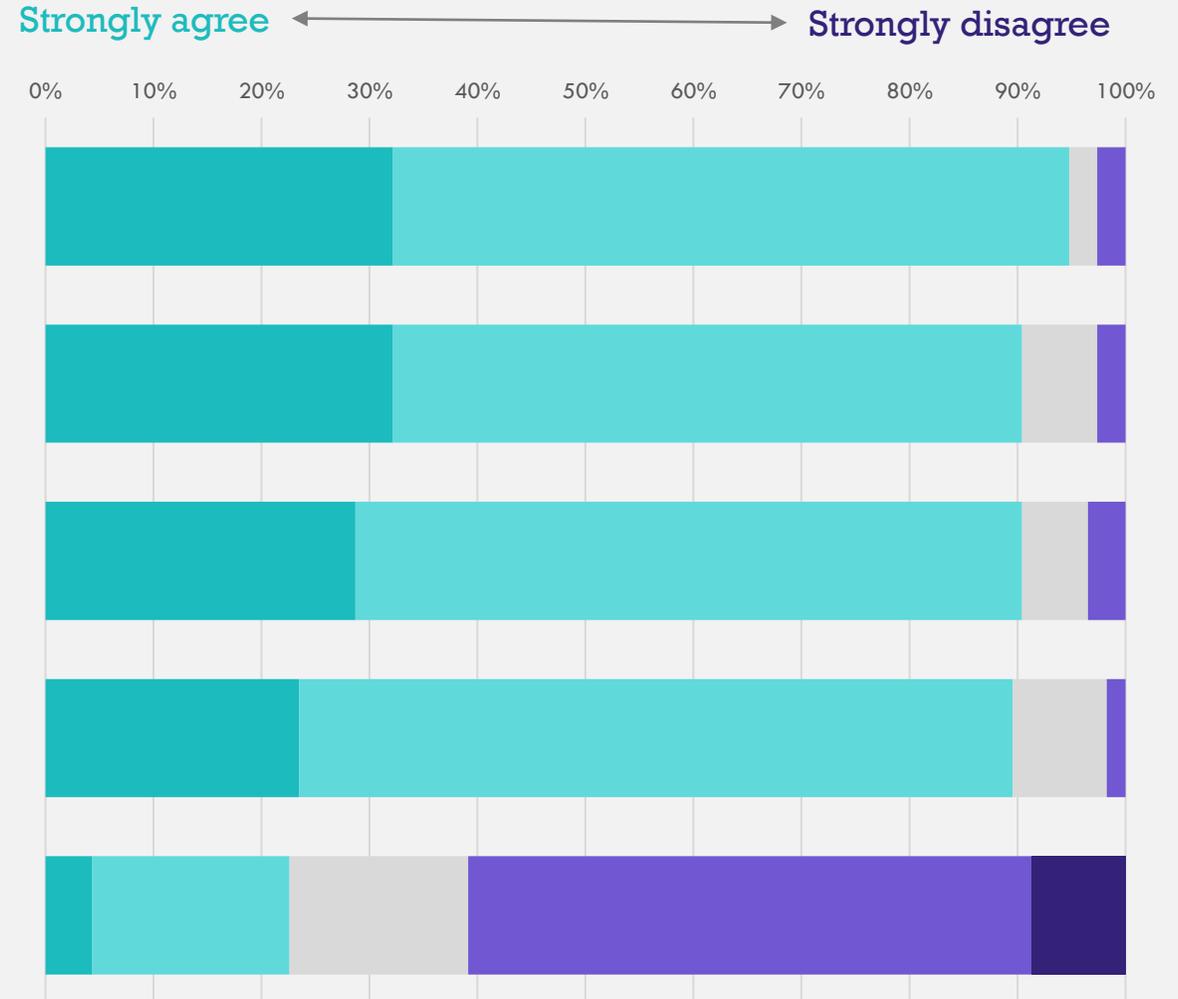
The CP will strengthen institutions to provide a supportive environment for achievement and measurement of environmental impact as a result of the project

The CP will generate global environmental benefits that would not have happened without GEF's intervention

The CP will introduce an innovation (i.e., something new or different in the country context that adds value)

The CP will lead to improvements in the living standards among population groups affected by environmental conditions

There are no major differences between this GEF-7 CP and other GEF projects.



# Integrated Approach (IAPs & IPs)



## Level of agreement with governance issues in IAPs by country-level survey respondents

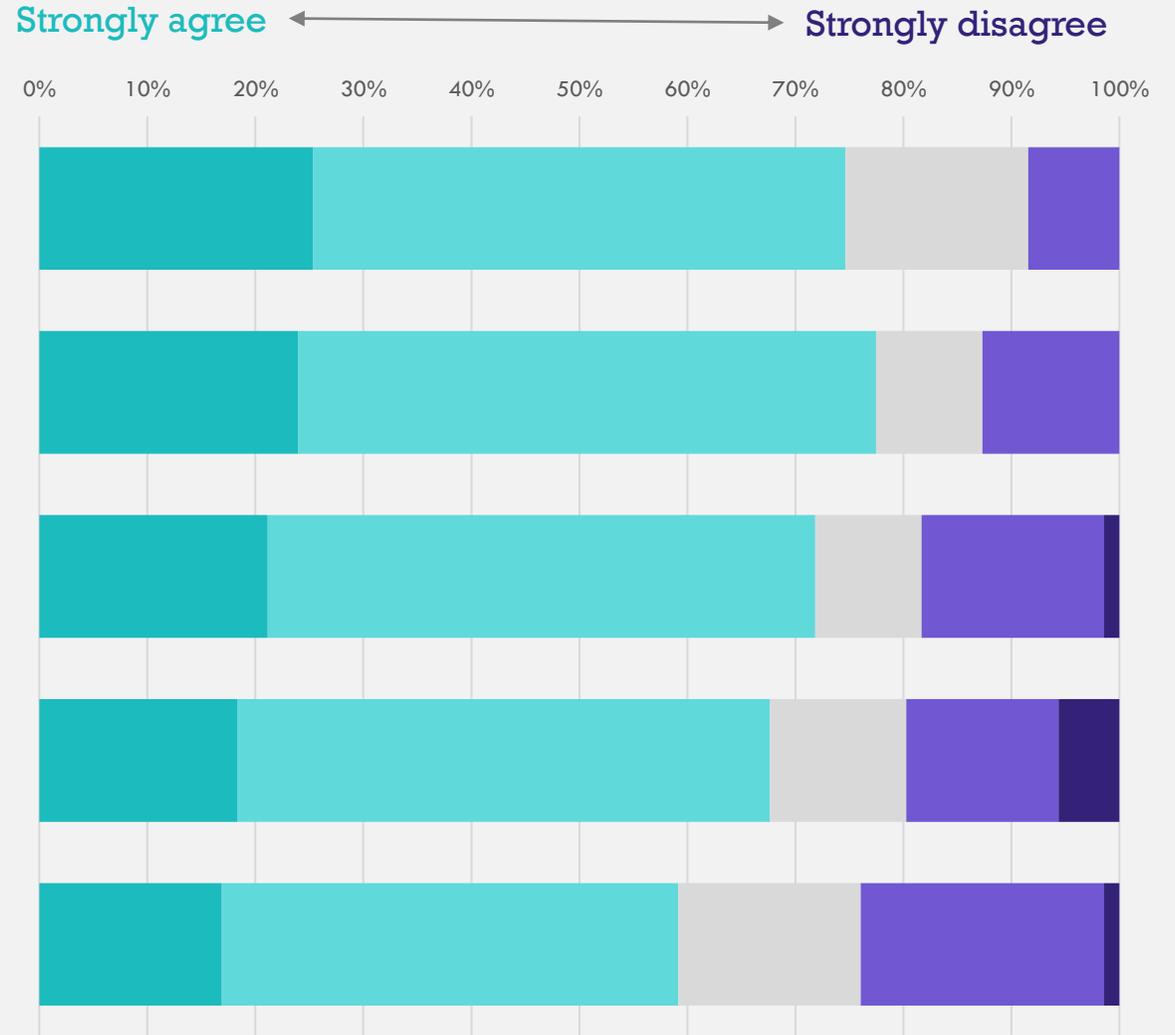
The share of responsibility between the global/regional coordination project and the country child projects is clear

The role of the GEF Operational Focal Point (OFP) has been clear during IAP and child project implementation.

Roles and responsibilities are clear between the global/regional project and country child project(s).

The Lead Agency/PCU has performed well in coordinating the IAP.

Program/project governance mechanisms have been developed at the right scales



# Enabling Activities

1534 projects  
Over USD 1 billion



## Also Help

1. identifying key **national priorities** for future projects
2. reporting to **conventions**
3. as a basis for **future GEF projects**



## Early Results

Indirect contributions to **national policies/strategies**

**Recipient countries** have established baseline data, improved policy & legislation frameworks strengthened environmental management capacity of staff, and established action plans for next steps.

There are concerns regarding **disbursements** and administrative complexity and inefficiency



# GEF Support to Countries

# LDCs, SIDS, Africa Biomes

## **Sustainability ratings**

Lower than the overall GEF portfolio in Sahel ad Sudan-Guinea Savanna, and LDCs  
*Similar* to the overall GEF portfolio in SIDS

## **Sustainability post-completion**

Tends to improve over time

## **Synergies and tradeoffs**

Between environmental and development objectives in LDCs, when considered, fostered sustainability.

## **Design matters for sustainability**

Region specific factors such as financial mechanisms or institutional capacity

## **Multi-focal and programmatic interventions**

Have led to delays and lower outcomes and sustainability



# Operating in fragile countries can affect performance



The shift in priorities associated with conflict can **negatively affect** the relevance of projects



Conflict **impacts** human rights, indigenous peoples, gender and GEF's ability to engage with the private sector



Increases the **duration** of a project's delays



**Negatively affects** outcomes, sustainability, implementation, execution, monitoring

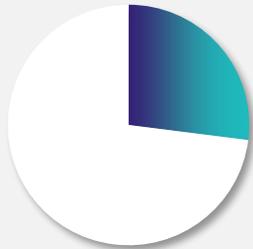


Increased likelihood that a project will be **cancelled and dropped**

The GEF needs to develop **conflict-sensitive safeguards, policies, and guidance** necessary to systematically manage these risks

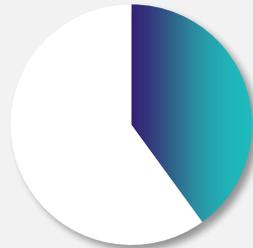
# Middle Income Countries

Brazil, China, India, Mexico, and South Africa



received over \$7 billion or  
27 percent of total **GEF funding**

contributed over \$54 billion or  
40 percent of the total **cofinancing**



## CHALLENGES

- Short term country **needs** vs long term global environmental objectives
- Sectoral and fiscal **policies** that are not coherent with environmental gains
- Robust **capacities** at the central level but diverse range of capacities at other levels
- Business community with widely diverse **interests** in the environment

### Higher outcome and sustainability ratings

Adopted Multisectoral engagement, partnership and financial mechanisms to ensure sustainability

Progress in Legal frameworks, policy, and institutional capacities

Major contributions to MEAs through Innovation and scaling up impacts

# Country support program:

Substantial resources: Allocated USD 50 million since GEF 5

- ⊕ Increased countries' capacity to apply in a **strategic and coordinated manner**
- ⊕ **Quality CSP support**, timely communications
- ⊕ **Events** are important platforms for gathering feedback and stakeholders
- ⊖ **A limited variety** of stakeholders is involved in the planning of CSP activities
- ⊖ Country ownership remains a **challenge** in some countries
- ⊖ **Suboptimal timing** of the National Dialogue
- ⊖ **Underutilized** envelope for the CSP
- ⊖ No **strategy** or **theory of change** for CSP



# GEF Support To Innovation

## GEF's Engagement with the Private Sector

# Support to innovation



Best supported as **integrated clusters**

Technical innovations+ policy reforms, +innovative business models increase the likelihood of transformational outcomes

**Comparative advantage** in grant funding and management of risks

Involving private sector generates higher **value added**

GEF's risk tolerance comparable to other multilaterals, but **more flexible**

**Well-positioned** to continue supporting innovation, but need clear articulation of risk appetite

# GEF and the Private Sector

## STRENGTHS

**Robustness and transparency**

Stakeholders praise the **unique mandate** of the GEF

Source of scientific and technical **expertise**

**Public sector** reach and government relationships

**Limited mutual understanding**

**Underutilised brand**

**Tedious processes**

**Limited role** in IAP/IP implementation

## CHALLENGES

# GEF Support to MSMEs



- >half GEF Private sector projects include **MSMEs**
- **Heterogeneity within MSMEs and diverse needs**
- More involved in the **biodiversity** and **multifocal areas**
- **Most common GEF interventions**
  - technical knowledge and skills training,
  - technologies
  - access to finance
- Successful engagement requires **going beyond a co-financing role**
- More than **50% projects** generated environmental, economic and social benefits
- Need to address **context-specific needs**, barriers, and economic viability

# GEF-UNIDO Clean Tech Program

## Global Cleantech Innovation Programme

### Most beneficial elements



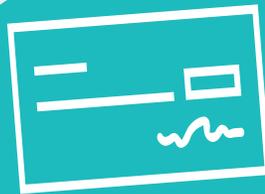
Business development training



Mentorship



Opportunities to showcase technologies



At least 12 startups were able to access **finance** ranging from USD 5,000-1.9 million



Policy and regulatory **strengthening** additionality was limited



Global **coordination** between country projects not readily realized



Focus on **outputs** rather than outcomes



# The Institutional Framework of the GEF

# Policies: Stakeholder Engagement, Safeguards and Gender

- ▶ The three GEF policies align with relevant **global strategies** and align with **peers**

- ▶ **Three key factors** influencing policy implementation:



- ▶ **Cross-referencing** is evident, but **gaps** underplay the complementarities

- ▶ **Introduction of requirements** for monitoring and reporting helps to demonstrate policy impact. Need to demonstrate contributions toward program/project outcomes

# Stakeholder Engagement



GEF's commitment **has been reinforced**. At program/project level, policies however could have stronger emphasis on **inclusion**



Incremental gains in GEF's engagement with **indigenous peoples**



Position of the GEF CSO Network **has weakened** over the past four years. Efforts are stalled



Indigenous Peoples' Advisory Group (IPAG) has gained **credibility** as a knowledge resource

# Progress in Gender



- Updated Gender Policy aligned with **international best practice**

- Policy **Gaps** along two dimensions:

- (i) **Lacking clarity** on the role of gender focal points,
  - (ii) **Lacking tracking** financial data, or ensuring financial targets are set and met

- **Good Support** for policy implementation

- **Lacking 100% compliance:** Constraints are mostly at agency or country level

- Issues with quality and reporting on **achievement of actual results and impact**

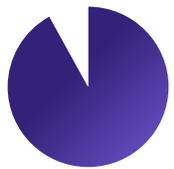
# Results-based management: Terminal Evaluations and Agency Self-Evaluation Systems

The **terminal evaluation** reviews are well substantiated and aligned with criteria following good practices.



**Terminal evaluations improved in quality**

Credible evidence and few data gaps

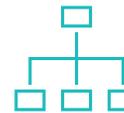


**92%** evaluations rated in **satisfactory** range for quality (2017-2020)

**Self evaluation systems** have accountability and learning objectives



Support the provision of **credible, quality, and timely information**



Work well for **accountability purposes**



Comparing **ratings of Agencies** is complicated

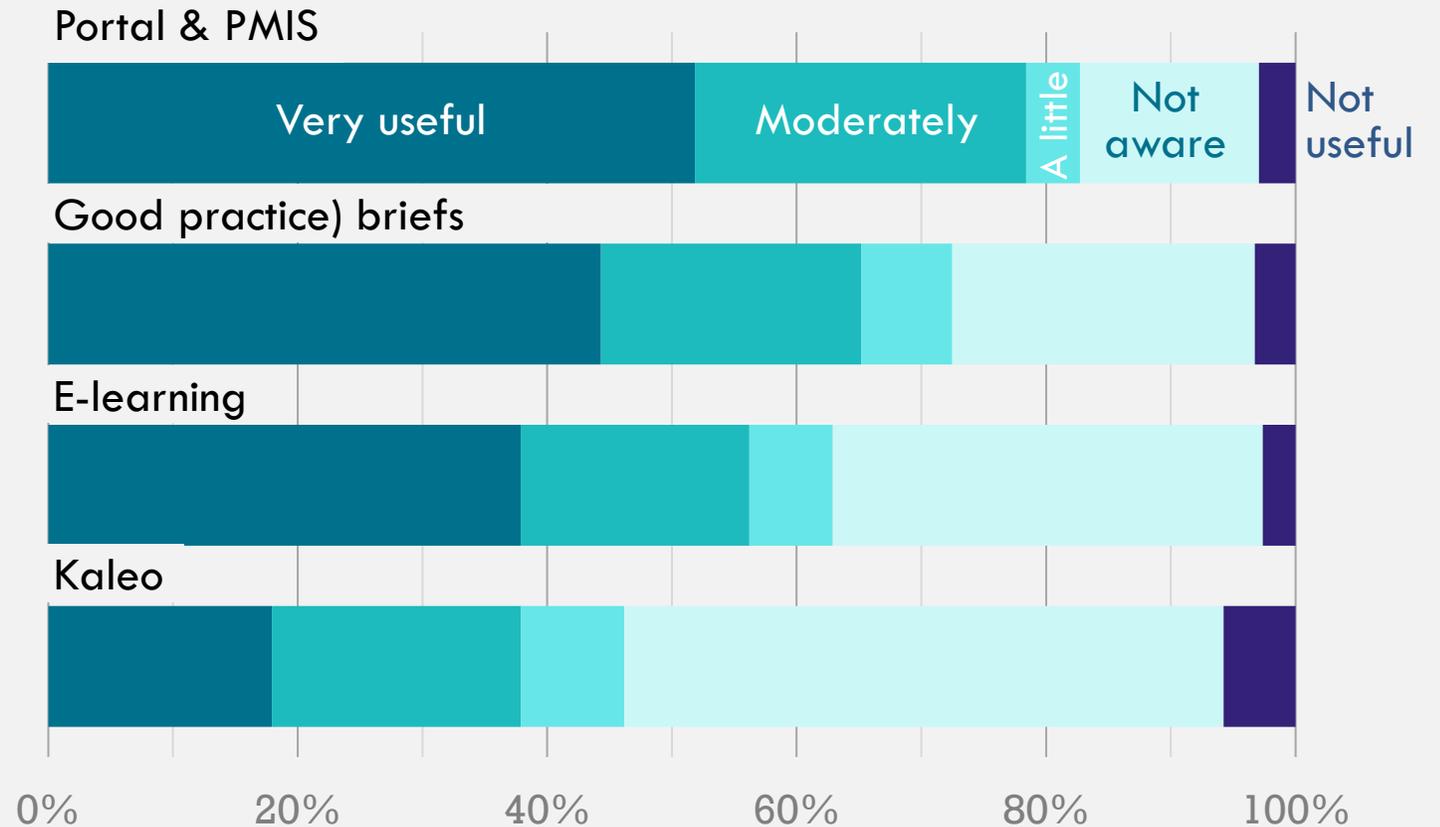


Need to be better leveraged for **cross-Agency learning**

# Knowledge management at the GEF: New products, greater integration with programs

## CHALLENGES

- Absence of KM **strategy** and **clear role** of KM Advisory Group and other members of partnership
- Limited Capacity **to connect** with GEF Agency systems and platforms
- Absence of detailed KM project-level **guidance and examples**



## Institutional Framework

# GEF Portal



- **Has enhanced** the online project proposal submission and review capabilities of the GEF Partnership.
- **Has contributed to improvement** in data quality especially on the recent projects through increased automation and arrangements to ensure data entry discipline
- **Easy to navigate**, visually appealing, and accessible and compares well with its peers on these criteria.
- Is yet to be developed to its **potential, particularly as a KM tool.**

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# The GEF's Comparative Advantage in building a global greener future

## Opportunities

- Link environment/health; SDGs
- Integration
- Risk taking | Innovation
- Policy reform
- Policy coherence

- Growth | Poverty reduction
- Focus: climate change
- Links human/natural systems

## Challenges

### *GEF comparative advantage*

## Strengths

- Strategic financing
- Countries environmental challenges
- Performance record
- Integration
- Risk taking | Innovation
- Policy and regulatory reforms
- Institutional infrastructure
- Modalities
- Good governance

- Competition (Agencies)
- Roles of GEF partners
- Implementation
- Private sector engagement
- Project cycle
- Branding
- Context specific needs
- Socioeconomic/health co-benefits

## Issues to Address