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LDCF/SCCF ANNUAL EVALUATION REPORT 2021
(Prepared by the Independent Evaluation Office of the GEF)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Least Developed Countries Fund/Special Climate Change Fund (LDCF/SCCF) Annual Evaluation Report (AER) 2021—prepared by the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the Global Environment Facility (GEF)—analyzes outcome, sustainability, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) ratings. It also assesses innovative approaches, gender considerations, lessons learned, and impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on project sustainability. This Annual Evaluation Report covers 18 completed projects, having a combined value of \$98.2 million in LDCF/SCCF funding, and \$315.8 in materialized cofinancing.

2. The projects addressed climate change adaptation and resilience through a variety of different interventions and in multiple sectors. Four projects focused on or included components addressing sustainable land and water management (SLWM). Five projects sought to establish or improve early warning or information systems, while another focused on developing agro-climatic information systems. Three projects focused on coastal zone management and another three projects focused on watershed or water resource management. Other projects focused on mainstreaming adaptation into the agricultural sector, supporting low-carbon and climate-resilient technology transfer, and setting up a private sector climate resilience and adaptation fund.

3. Of the 18 projects presented, 14 were rated in the satisfactory range for achievement of outcomes (78 percent), consistent with past performance. Fifteen of the 18 projects were rated for likelihood of sustainability of outcomes, and of these, 7 (50 percent) were rated in the likely range. Of the 18 projects in the cohort, 14 were rated for M&E design and entry, and 13 were rated for M&E implementation. Eleven of the 14 projects rated for M&E design were rated in the satisfactory range (73 percent), and 8 of the 13 projects rated for M&E implementation were rated in the satisfactory range (57 percent).

4. Projects in the AER cohort were reviewed against the working definition for innovation introduced in the approach paper for an upcoming GEF IEO evaluation of innovation, namely, doing something new or different in a specific context that adds value. Eleven of the 18 projects in the cohort included a component or activity which focused on the introduction, demonstration, or piloting of adaptation interventions that were new or different in the context in which they were introduced and were therefore considered innovative. Some LDCF and SCCF projects which were not considered innovative were found to have supported innovation through scaling up of activities introduced by past projects or other stakeholders in country.

5. The AER review of gender shows increasing attention to gender considerations in later stages of the project cycle, with a higher share of projects including information on gender in project implementation reports, mid-term reports, and terminal evaluations than in project design documents. This likely reflects the fact that GEF policies and guidance on gender inclusion were evolving during project implementation. Notably, there was some discussion of gender outcomes or gender inclusion in all terminal evaluation reports reviewed.

6. Lessons learned from terminal evaluations were classified deductively into the main categories identified through past AERs: namely communications and stakeholder involvement lessons related to project design and management, climate change adaptation or content technical issues, and monitoring and evaluation. Main lessons are listed below:

Project Design and Management

- (a) Project design should take into account technical and staff capacity, proper sequencing of activities, and long-term agreements with stakeholders for sustainability.

Communication and Stakeholder Involvement

- (a) Identifying national champions, using participatory practices, and simple/verifiable methods for stakeholder targeting are key, along with a focus on strengthening stakeholder capacity.

Content or Technical Issues

- (a) For private sector engagement, de-risking early-stage climate technology businesses, greater support for accelerator programs, market-based partnerships with larger companies, and policy support for new start-ups is critical.
- (b) For private sector engagement, de-risking early-stage climate technology businesses, greater support for accelerator programs, market-based partnerships with larger companies, and policy support for new start-ups is critical.
- (c) Improving water resources management requires a combination of investments in institutions, information, and infrastructure.
- (d) Agro-pastoral farmer schools were effective in creating momentum in the adoption of good agro-pastoral practices.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- (a) Project management and monitoring tools need to be linked to serve their purpose of planning, monitoring, and reporting.
- (b) Measurement of community resilience is difficult and requires clear and agreed guidance up front for reporting
- (c) Monitoring plans should be extended beyond the project cycle, with mechanisms in place to track medium- and long-term impacts.

- (d) For projects implemented jointly by more than one agency, jointly conducting evaluations at midterm and closure can be an opportunity to identify synergies, realign, and build sustainability jointly.

7. In an effort to shed light on how outcomes may be affected post completion, AER 2021 includes information shared by GEF Agencies and other project stakeholders on four of the projects from this year's AER cohort. In all four cases, stakeholders noted an impact on continuation of benefits, though the reasons varied. In most cases, former project managers saw the increased strain on resources, and a slowing of progress or benefits, as the main impacts of the pandemic; but they also saw these as temporary setbacks, with some emerging evidence of resumed progress. Project managers also identified risk mitigation actions taken on the part of project stakeholders, which may provide useful lessons for ongoing projects. Finally, activities for two of the four projects have also received ongoing support from follow-on projects, strengthening the likelihood of sustained benefits.

8. The AER ends with a summary of the GEF Management Action Record tracking of the level of adoption of two LDCF/SCCF Council decisions: the May 2017 decision on recommendations of the Program Evaluation of the SCCF, and the December 2020 decision on recommendations of the Program Evaluation of the LDCF. The progress of adoption of the decision on the Program Evaluation of the SCCF is rated substantial. The IEO will retire the decision on the Program Evaluation of the SCCF, as a new decision will be made on the 2021 Program Evaluation of the SCCF in December 2021. The progress of adoption of the decision on the Program Evaluation of the LDCF is rated medium. The IEO will continue to track adoption of the decision on the Program Evaluation of the LDCF.

BACKGROUND

1. The Least Developed Countries Fund/Special Climate Change Fund (LDCF/SCCF) Annual Evaluation Report (AER) 2021—prepared by the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the Global Environment Facility (GEF)—presents an assessment of project outcomes and sustainability, and quality of project monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and innovative approaches. The assessment is based on an analysis of the ratings and information provided in 18 terminal evaluations, covered for the first time and submitted by August 31, 2020, representing this year’s AER cohort. These terminal evaluations were reviewed by the IEO or the evaluation offices of the GEF Agencies, or both. See annex A for details on the terminal evaluation report review guidelines.

2. AER 2021 presents a review of experiences in implementation of innovative approaches. In past years, in the absence of an official GEF-wide definition of innovation, the AER has considered projects and approaches innovative if they were deliberately applied to tackle an issue, and these approaches (1) had not been used before in the project implementation area, or (2) to tackle this specific issue, or both. Other conditions were that an innovative approach needed to be (3) widely replicable, and this should be possible (4) at low economic cost. Alternatively, AER 2021 adopts the working definition of innovation used by the GEF IEO in the upcoming evaluation of innovation in the GEF: namely, doing something new or different in a specific context that adds value (GEF IEO 2020a). More detail on this new definition is provided in the section on innovative approaches.

3. Projects were reviewed against indicators of gender considerations in design and implementation, with results presented. These indicators include evidence of stakeholder consultation with a gender perspective, inclusion of gender analysis and a gender action plan, and reporting on gender. A synthesis of lessons learned from the AER 2021 cohort of completed projects is also part of this year’s AER.

4. The COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on both the global economy and the country context in LDCF/SCCF-supported countries. In an effort to shed light on how outcomes have been affected post completion, AER 2021 includes information shared by GEF Agencies and other project stakeholders on four of the projects from this year’s AER cohort.

Completed Projects in the AER Cohort

5. AER 2021 includes 18 projects, 15 financed by the LDCF—of which three are multitrust fund projects—and three financed by SCCF, two of which are multitrust fund projects. This AER is the first to report on multitrust fund LDCF/SCCF projects, which were introduced in the GEF-5

period. The AER 2021 cohort has a shared value of \$98.2 million in LDCF/SCCF/GEF funding, and \$315.8 million in materialized cofinancing.¹

6. Seven of the 18 projects were implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), four were implemented by the World Bank, three were implemented by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and one project each was implemented by the African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank (ADB), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Conservation International. Sixteen of the 18 projects were national-level projects, with 12 of these implemented in countries in the Africa region, three in the Asia region, and one in the Latin American and Caribbean region. Of the remaining two projects, one was implemented regionally in Asia, and the other was implemented globally. Two of the projects were implemented in small island developing states (SIDS). The full list of projects along with their ratings is presented in table 1.

7. The projects addressed climate change adaptation and resilience through a variety of different interventions and in multiple sectors. Four projects focused on or included components addressing sustainable land and water management (SLWM). Five projects sought to establish or improve early warning or information systems, while another focused on developing agro-climatic information systems. Three projects focused on coastal zone management and another three projects focused on watershed or water resource management. Other projects focused on mainstreaming adaptation into the agricultural sector, supporting low-carbon and climate-resilient technology transfer, and setting up a private sector climate resilience and adaptation fund.

¹ Throughout the report, grant funding includes LDCF/SCCF/GEF amounts approved at CEO endorsement, plus project preparation grants. Agency fees are excluded. Information on realized cofinancing is available for 14 projects.

Table 1: Outcome, sustainability and M&E ratings of completed LDCF and SCCF projects in the AER 2021 cohort

GEF ID	GEF phase	Fund	Agency	Project title	Country	Grant (M\$)	Outcome rating	Sustainability rating	M&E design at entry rating	M&E plan implementation rating
3701	GEF-5	LDCF	AfDB	Enhancing Climate Risk Management and Adaptation in Burundi (ECRAMB)	Burundi	3.1	S	ML	UA	UA
3798	GEF-4	LDCF	World Bank	Increasing Resilience to Climate Change and Natural Hazards	Vanuatu	5.6	MS	NR	NR	NR
4141	GEF-4	LDCF	UNEP	Developing Core Capacity to Address Adaptation to Climate Change in Productive Coastal Zones	Tanzania	3.4	MS	MU	S	S
4268	GEF-4	LDCF	UNDP	Enhancing Resilience to Climate Change by Mainstreaming Adaption Concerns into Agricultural Sector Development in Liberia	Liberia	2.4	MS	ML	S	MU
4512	GEF-5	SCCF & GEF	ADB/ UNEP	Pilot Asia-Pacific Climate Technology Network and Finance Center	Regional	10.9	MS	L	MU	U
4616	GEF-5	SCCF & GEF	FAO	Climate Change Adaptation to Reduce Land Degradation in Fragile Micro-Watersheds Located in the Municipalities of Texistepeque and Candelaria de la Frontera	El Salvador	1.5	MS	MU	MS	MS
4625	GEF-5	LDCF& GEF	World Bank	Shire Natural Ecosystems Management Project	Malawi	6.6	MS	NR	NR	NR
4724	GEF-5	LDCF	UNDP	Enhancing Resilience of Vulnerable Coastal Areas and Communities to Climate Change in the Republic of Gambia	Gambia	8.9	MU	MU	S	S
4725	GEF-5	LDCF	UNDP	Solomon Islands Water Sector Adaptation Project (SIWSAP)	Solomon Islands	6.9	MU	MU	S	MS
4822	GEF-5	LDCF	FAO	Strengthening Resilience to Climate Change through Integrated Agricultural	Mali	2.3	S	ML	MS	S

GEF ID	GEF phase	Fund	Agency	Project title	Country	Grant (M\$)	Outcome rating	Sustainability rating	M&E design at entry rating	M&E plan implementation rating
				and Pastoral Management in the Sahelian Zone in the Framework of the Sustainable Land Management Approach						
4908	GEF-5	LDCF & GEF	World Bank	GGW: Agriculture Production Support Project (with Sustainable Land and Water Management)	Chad	9.3	U	NR	U	U
4950	GEF-5	LDCF	UNDP	Strengthening Liberia's Capability to Provide Climate Information and Services to Enhance Climate Resilient Development and Adaptation to Climate Change	Liberia	6.7	MU	ML	MU	MS
5006	GEF-5	LDCF	UNDP	Strengthening Climate Information and Early Warning Systems in Africa for Climate Resilient Development and Adaptation to Climate Change	Sierra Leone	4.0	MS	MU	MS	MU
5111	GEF-5	LDCF	FAO	Reducing Vulnerability and Increasing Adaptive Capacity to Respond to Impacts of Climate Change and Variability for Sustainable Livelihoods in Agriculture Sector in Nepal	Nepal	2.7	MS	L	S	MS
5220	GEF-5	LDCF & GEF	World Bank	Sustainable Land Management Project 2	Ethiopia	13.0	S	NR	NR	NR
5592	GEF-5	LDCF	UNDP	Enhancing Climate Resilience of the Vulnerable Communities and Ecosystems in Somalia	Somalia	8.0	S	MU	MS	MS
8015	GEF-6	LDCF	UNDP	Enhancing Resilience of Liberia Montserrado County Vulnerable Coastal Areas to Climate Change Risks	Liberia	2.0	MS	MU	MS	MU

GEF ID	GEF phase	Fund	Agency	Project title	Country	Grant (M\$)	Outcome rating	Sustainability rating	M&E design at entry rating	M&E plan implementation rating
9941	GEF-6	SCCF	CI	Structuring and Launching CRAFT: The First Private Sector Climate Resilience & Adaptation Fund for Developing Countries	Global	1.0	S	L	MS	UA

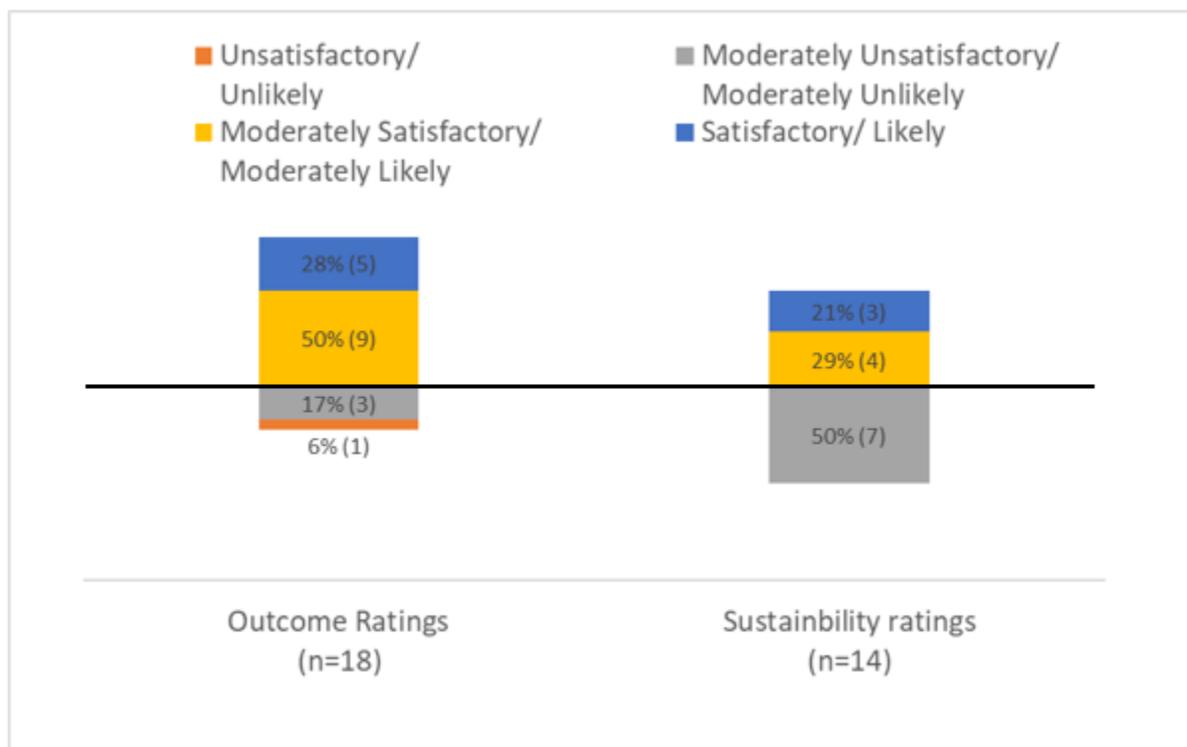
Source: GEF IEO terminal evaluation review data set.

Note: Grant is LDCF/SCCF/GEF funding approved at CEO endorsement, plus PPG. Agency fees are excluded. Outcome, M&E design and M&E implementation ratings are reported on a six-point rating scale: Highly Satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S), Moderately Satisfactory (MS), Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), Unsatisfactory (U), and Highly Unsatisfactory (HU). Sustainability ratings are reported on a four-point rating scale: Likely (L), Moderately Likely (ML), Moderately Unlikely (U). Any category may also be Not rated (NR) or rated Unable to assess (UA). ADB = Asian Development Bank; AfDB = African Development Bank; CI = Conservation International; FAO = Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; LDCF; Least Developed Countries Fund; SCCF = Special Climate Change Fund; UNDP = United Nations Development Programme; UNEP = United Nations Environmental Programme.

Outcomes and sustainability

8. Figure 1 presents the distribution of outcome and sustainability ratings. Of the 18 projects presented, 14 were rated in the satisfactory range for achievement of outcomes (78 percent), consistent with past performance. On a six-point scale from highly satisfactory to highly unsatisfactory, five projects were rated satisfactory for achievement of outcomes, nine were rated moderately satisfactory, three were rated moderately unsatisfactory, and one project was rated unsatisfactory. No projects were rated highly satisfactory or highly unsatisfactory. One of the five multitrust fund projects was rated satisfactory for achievement of outcomes, three were rated moderately satisfactory, and one was rated unsatisfactory.

Figure 1: Distribution of outcome and sustainability ratings in AER 2021 cohort

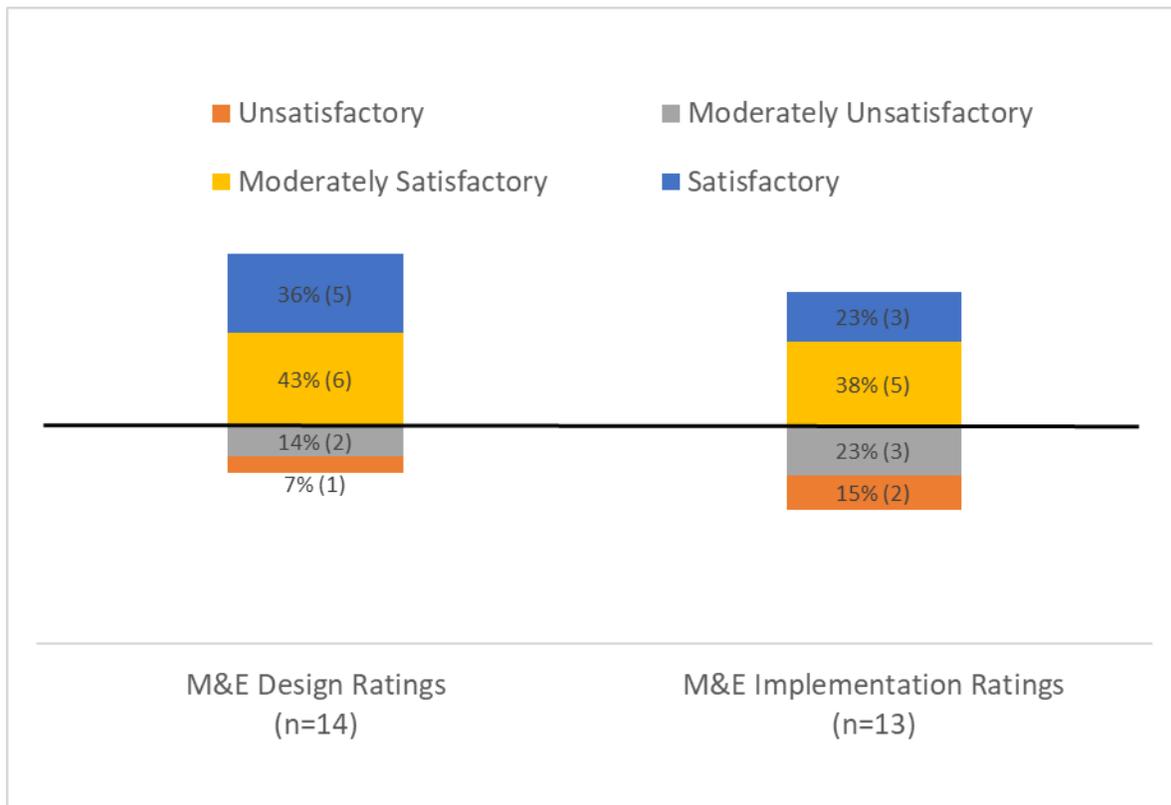


9. Fifteen of the 18 projects were rated for likelihood of sustainability of outcomes, and of these, 7 (50 percent) were rated in the likely range. This compares to 64 percent of the 82 projects previously reported on in the AER, though given the small number of projects presented, the lower share should not be considered to indicate a trend. On the four-point scale from likely to unlikely, three projects were rated likely, four projects were rated moderately likely, seven projects were rated moderately unlikely, and four projects were not rated.

Monitoring and evaluation design and implementation

10. Figure 2 presents the distribution of M&E design and implementation ratings in the AER 2021 cohort. Of the 18 projects in the cohort, 14 were rated for M&E design and entry, and 13 were rated for M&E implementation. Eleven of the 14 projects rated for M&E design were rated in the satisfactory range (73 percent), compared to 72 percent of the 82 projects previously reported on, and 8 of the 13 projects rated for M&E implementation were rated in the satisfactory range (57 percent), compared to 62 percent of past projects.

Figure 2: Distribution of M&E design and implementation ratings in AER 2021 cohort



Innovative approaches

11. Projects in the AER cohort were reviewed against the working definition for innovation introduced in the approach paper for an upcoming GEF IEO evaluation of innovation. The definition is provided in box 1.

Box 1: Working definition of innovation

“Innovation is defined as doing something new or different in a specific context that adds value.

Broadly,

(i) innovation is new in a specific context;

(ii) it represents an improvement compared to conventional alternatives (e.g. better quality, scale, efficiency, sustainability, replicability, or scalability of outcomes;

(iii) it catalyzes or produces environmental benefits, and may also result in socio-economic benefits related to the target environmental benefits; and

(iv) it could be associated with risks and higher likelihood of failure.”

Source: GEF IEO 2020a, 5.

12. Eleven of the 18 projects in the cohort included a component or activity which focused on the introduction, demonstration, or piloting of adaptation interventions that were new or different in the context in which they were introduced and were therefore considered innovative. Table 2 summarizes the innovations of each of these projects.

Table 2: Innovations in AER 2021 cohort

Project	Innovative component
Developing Core Capacity to Address Adaptation to Climate Change in Productive Coastal Zones (GEF ID 4141, Tanzania)	The project was one of the first field-based climate change preparation projects in Eastern Africa with strong links to basin and national planning and policy, thus serving as a national and regional demonstration site. Pilot innovations focused on reducing vulnerability of shorelines, mangrove forests, and settlements to climate change.
Enhancing Resilience to Climate Change by Mainstreaming Adaptation Concerns into Agricultural Sector Development in Liberia (GEF ID 4268)	One project output to test locally adapted innovations enhancing resilience to climate change tested at demonstration sites, specifically in the areas of the System of Rice Intensification, water stress management (both flood and drought response), local manure production and soil fertility, and integrated pest management.

Pilot Asia-Pacific Climate Technology Network and Finance Center (GEF ID 4512, Asia region)	The project focused on piloting of innovative financial mechanisms and investments in climate change adaptation technologies in water, agriculture/food security, disaster risk management, and urban development.
Shire Natural Ecosystems Management Project (GEF ID 4625, Malawi)	The project introduced new approaches for integrated catchment management. These included capacity and institution building, soil and water conservation interventions, sustainable forestry and protected areas management, and development of alternative livelihoods.
Enhancing Resilience of Vulnerable Coastal Areas and Communities to Climate Change in the Republic of Gambia (GEF ID 4724)	The project supported the piloting of saline agriculture and desalinization pilot plots.
Great Green Wall: Agriculture Production Support Project (with Sustainable Land and Water Management) (GEF ID 4908, Chad)	The project introduced Community-Driven Development in Chad. This concept sought to assist all users of the scarce land and water resources in a given community/geographic location, organized into viable and legally recognized common economic interest groups to follow a socially inclusive and participatory process to prepare local development plans and the associated budget.
Strengthening Climate Information and Early Warning Systems in Africa for Climate Resilient Development and Adaptation to Climate Change (GEF ID 5006, Sierra Leone)	As part of its work establishing community-based early warning systems, the project supported the adoption of new warning dissemination techniques including simple user-friendly SMS text and SMS pictorial messages in target areas.
Reducing Vulnerability and Increasing Adaptive Capacity to Respond to Impacts of Climate Change and Variability for Sustainable Livelihoods in Agriculture Sector in Nepal (GEF ID 5111)	The project introduced climate-adaptive knowledge, skills, and technologies to vulnerable farmers. These included simple climate-smart techniques such as riverbed vegetable cultivation, mineral blocks, and animal shed improvements. Innovative community assets introduced to farmers included drum seeders, and zero-till seed-cum-fertilizer drill machines.
Sustainable Land Management Project 2 (GEF ID 5220, Ethiopia)	The project supported an innovative pilot initiative aimed at engaging the private sector in the cofinancing of sustainable land management interventions, specifically resulting in a partnership with the Raya Brewery in Tigray.
Enhancing Climate Resilience of the Vulnerable Communities and Ecosystems in Somalia (GEF ID 5592)	The project introduced innovative designs for water harvesting infrastructures. For example, sand dams were introduced in Puntland (project implementation area) for the first time through the project's support.
Structuring and Launching CRAFT: the First Private Sector Climate Resilience & Adaptation Fund for Developing Countries (GEF ID 9941, global)	This project introduced the first private sector climate resilience and adaptation commercial investment vehicles for developing countries.

13. AER 2020 noted several lessons learned from innovative projects, including the fact that piloting of new approaches requires building in extra time for capacity building. One innovative project illustrates this lesson: the World Bank project implemented in Chad, the Great Green Wall Agriculture Product Support Project (GEF ID 4908), which was instrumental in introducing community-driven development in the country. Through this approach, users of scarce land and water resources in a given location were organized into legally recognized economic interest groups and encouraged to follow an inclusive preparatory process to prepare local development plans and budgets. While the terminal evaluation commends the project for the introduction of this new approach, it also notes that the lack of experience in the country with the approach required more upfront work to create the necessary conditions for the introduction of this innovation than was done, leading to delays. For example, the creation of local development plans was a condition for the disbursement of funds to finance micro- and sub projects, but adoption of these plans took much longer than expected, with their development not taking place until the third year of the four-year project.

14. In addition to piloting new techniques and approaches, LDCF and SCCF projects support innovation through scaling up. The LDCF World Bank project in Vanuatu, Increasing Resilience to Climate Change and Natural Hazards (GEF ID 3798), scaled up multiple approaches already initiated by the government or other donors. For example, the project supported rural water supply activities based on a national rural water supply program, a real-time data communication network which scaled up an initiative by the Vanuatu Meteorology and Geohazards department, and community-based activities which built on existing experience with conducting Vulnerability and Adaptation Assessments in Vanuatu and community-based planning. This support to previously tested approaches led to successful outcomes and sustainable results, particularly with regard to water-related investments. An estimated 21,843 people were provided with access to improved water sources, compared to a target of 1,500 people, with all water systems in use as of project completion and all operating well since they were set up. Another LDCF project, Strengthening Resilience to Climate Change through Integrated Agricultural and Pastoral Management in the Sahelian Zone in the framework of the Sustainable Land Management (SLM) approach, implemented in Mali by FAO (GEF ID 4822) included a component to build capacity and scale up adaptation technologies and best practices for small agropastoralists. Thus, while these projects did not meet the working definition for innovation, they made important contributions to innovations in country through scaling up.

Gender considerations

15. All projects were reviewed against indicators of gender consideration at design and during implementation, as well as gender results, with results outlined in table 3. These results show increasing attention to gender considerations in later stages of the project cycle, with a higher share of projects including information on gender in project implementation reports, mid-term reports, and terminal evaluations than in project design documents. This likely reflects the fact that GEF policies and guidance on gender inclusion were evolving during project implementation, with the majority of projects presented having been endorsed between 2008 and 2014 (two GEF-6 MSPs were approved in 2017), and closing between 2018

and 2020 (three projects closed prior to 2018). Notably, there was some discussion of gender outcomes or gender inclusion in all terminal evaluation reports reviewed. While the majority of projects did include gender/sex-disaggregated or gender-specific indicators in their results frameworks at design (11, or 61 percent), even more projects reported gender disaggregated indicators in PIRs, MTEs) or terminal evaluation reports (14 projects, or 78 percent). All but two projects presented some evidence of generating socioeconomic benefits for women, though not always clearly as a result of projects' targeting women beneficiaries, versus a result of the natural composition of beneficiary groups, which included women.

Table 3: Gender considerations in design and implementation

Design-stage indicators	# and % of projects
Stakeholder consultations included individuals or groups with a gender perspective (e.g., ministries of women, nongovernmental organizations focused on promoting gender equality, women's rights, or the empowerment of women)?	7 (39%)
Project include a gender analysis or equivalent?	2 (11%)
Project included a gender action plan or equivalent?	4 (22%)
Projects' results framework included gender/sex disaggregated or gender specific indicators?	11 (61%)
Implementation and results indicators	# and % of projects
Project reports against gender disaggregated indicators (in PIR, MTR or TE)	14 (78%)
TE includes some a discussion of gender	18 (100%)
Evidence presented that the project generated socioeconomic benefits or services for women	16 (89%)

Note: MTR = mid-term review; PIR = project implementation report; TE = terminal evaluation.

COVID-19 Impacts on Sustainability

16. Past GEF IEO studies have identified many of the factors that affect project sustainability post completion, including financial support for follow-up, political support, follow-up by and capacities of the executing agency, and stakeholder buy-in (GEF IEO 2019). The COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on both the global economy and the country context in LDCF/SCCF supported countries, which could likely impact these factors. In an effort to shed light on how outcomes may be affected post completion, AER 2021 includes information shared by GEF Agencies and other project stakeholders on four of the projects from this year's AER cohort.

17. To select projects for this review, project managers were contacted for all projects where (1) the project had closed in 2019 or later, and (2) contact information was available in project documents for project managers. This allowed for collection of information through stakeholder interviews, conducted in February and March 2021, for four projects. Stakeholders interviewed are listed in annex B.

18. Table 4 provides a snapshot of the projects' performance, impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and helping and hindering factors in the continuation of project benefits post-

completion. In all four cases, stakeholders noted an impact on continuation of benefits, though the reasons varied. In most cases, former project managers saw the increased strain on resources, and a slowing of progress or benefits, as the main impacts of the pandemic; but they also saw these as temporary setbacks, with some emerging evidence of resumed progress. Project managers also identified risk mitigation actions taken on the part of project stakeholders, which may provide useful lessons for ongoing projects. Finally, activities for two of the four projects have also received ongoing support from follow-on projects, strengthening the likelihood of sustained benefits.

Table 4: Impacts of COVID-19 on case projects

Project	Outcomes and likelihood of sustainability at closure	Post-completion impacts of COVID-19	Helping and hindering factors in maintaining projects' benefits during pandemic
Shire Natural Ecosystems Management Project (GEF ID 4625, Malawi)	Outcome rating: moderately satisfactory Likelihood of sustainability rating: not rated	Revenue streams from tourism have stopped flowing in protected areas in which project operated, with increased pressure on areas from local rural populations who have lost income from remittances and market in the pandemic. However, continued support from World Bank and the GEF in terms of follow-on projects has helped to maintain project benefits.	+Continued funding +Mitigation measures taken to maintain project impacts at community level
Developing Core Capacity to Address Adaptation to Climate Change in Productive Coastal Zones of Tanzania (GEF ID 4141)	Outcome rating: moderately satisfactory Likelihood of sustainability rating: moderately unlikely	While limited data on impact of COVID-19 in-country is available, project's outcomes, such as the gray infrastructure put in place, would likely not be affected. Handoff arrangements with town authorities also help to ensure continued maintenance of infrastructure.	+Sustainability of built infrastructure not impacted by COVID-19 +Well established agreements developed with town authorities for ongoing maintenance funding as part of project handoff -Lack of official response to COVID-19 in country
Sustainable Land Management Project 2 (GEF ID 5220, Ethiopia)	Outcome rating: satisfactory Likelihood of sustainability	Watershed management plans and institutions developed under the project are still functioning and will receive ongoing support from a follow-on project. The country has	+Continued funding -Compounding impact of conflict in Tigray district

	rating: not rated	been badly hit by COVID-19, with an impact on travel within the country. The follow-on project has conducted meetings in the open with mitigation measures in place.	
Structuring and Launching CRAFT: The First Private Sector Climate Resilience and Adaptation Fund for Developing Countries (GEF ID 9941, global)	Outcome rating: satisfactory Likelihood of sustainability rating: likely	The CRAFT team reports that fundraising was slowed down by the pandemic, especially during the first and second quarter of 2020, but is currently resuming. Ability to conduct final due diligence and finalize new investments is hampered, because this due diligence depends in part on their ability to conduct onsite company visits.	+De-risking features built into the fund have proven useful during heightened risks of pandemic -Travel and ability to conduct onsite verification are key for certain activities (closing investments)

19. Below are descriptions of the four projects and the impacts of COVID-19 on continuation of benefits.

Shire Natural Ecosystems Management Project (GEF ID 4625)

20. **Project overview:** The Shire Natural Ecosystems Management Project, a multitrust fund LDCF/GEF project implemented in Malawi by the World Bank from 2012 to 2019, aimed to improve land and water management for ecosystem and livelihood benefits in target areas. The LDCF component of the project focused on water-related infrastructure and flood management, including establishing “last mile” flood warning and community response systems covering 40,000 households, developing small-scale green infrastructure along a 200 km stretch of the Shire River, and developing a management and adaptation strategy, and pilot community co-management activities in the 120,000 ha Elephant Marshes critical for climate-vulnerable communities in the lower Shire Basin. Other components of the project, including those funded through the GEF Trust Fund biodiversity and land degradation focal area, were investments for sustainable management of the Lengwe and Liwonde National Parks, community-based forest management at the Mangochi and Tsamba Forest Reserves, alternative rural livelihoods, as well as institutional capacity for coordinated basin management and catchment management.

21. **Project results:** The project was rated moderately satisfactory for achievement of outcomes and was not rated for likelihood of sustainability of outcomes. In the component financed by LDCF and focused on water related infrastructure and flood management, achievements included the reclassification of a 3,155 households in targeted flood-prone areas to a lower flood risk, and the development of an operational decision support system for flood and drought forecasting, which issues automated alerts and warning via SMS to stakeholders, used during Cyclone Idai in March 2019 with positive impacts.

22. The project also supported the preparation of six area intervention plans covering flood prone areas, and 22 village flood action plans at the community level, and supported preparation of community-based flood risk management guidelines, which were adopted by the government. The terminal evaluation lists as one of the project's most impressive results the implementation of the Elephant Marshes management plan, leading to their designation as a wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention.

23. **Post-completion progress and impacts of COVID-19:** The World Bank has been working in the Shire Valley for 20 years, so the results of this project can be taken in the context of long-term support and overlapping interventions. Since the completion of the Shire Natural Ecosystems Management Project, two separate World Bank projects have been approved providing follow-on support in the project area. One of these, the Shire Valley Transformation Program (GEF ID 9842), which includes GEF funding (though not LDCF funding), is working with many of the same project partners as the Shire National Ecosystems Management Project, building on work in the Elephant Marshes and in the Lengwe National Parks and expanding into extension areas. The other, the Malawi Watershed Services Improvement Project (WB ID 167860), while not including LDCF or GEF funding, also builds on the foundations of the past project, as it will focus on expanding and consolidating landscape restoration and conservation investments developed under the Shire National Ecosystems Management Project in the upper and middle Shire basin.

24. The protected areas in which the projects are operating have been significantly affected by the pandemic, as they have impacted revenue streams from tourism, which essentially stopped flowing as the pandemic decreased travel and tourism in the country. The situation has also affected the nearby large rural populations, who have lost income both from regular market activities and from remittances during the pandemic, and may seek resources in forests and protected areas, increasing pressure on these areas. Mitigation measures to deal with these impacts have included the front loading of the follow-on project activities focused on community engagement which work with communities on sustainable livelihood practices, to make sure that gains from past work, including the Shire National Ecosystems Management project, are not lost.

Developing Core Capacity to Address Adaptation to Climate Change in Productive Coastal Zones of Tanzania (GEF ID 4141)

25. **Project overview:** Developing Core Capacity to Address Adaptation to Climate Change in Productive Coastal Zones of Tanzania (GEF ID 4141), implemented by UNEP from 2012 to 2019, aimed to develop institutional capacities to manage climate change impacts through improved climate information, technical capacity, the establishment of demonstration projects to reduce vulnerability in key areas, and learning. The project planned to produce participatory coastal vulnerability assessments in three districts and Zanzibar, enhance public engagement in climate change adaptation, and to restore mangroves in pilot sites, protect water resources from sea level rise and erosion, and protect coastal infrastructure and assets. The project was implemented in parallel with a separate Adaptation Fund project.

26. **Project results:** The project was rated moderately satisfactory for achievement of outcomes, and moderately unlikely for sustainability of outcomes. The terminal evaluation reported that the project resulted in better protection of coastal communities from sea level rise on the coast of Mainland Tanzania and in Zanzibar, with most of the pilot adaptation interventions fully delivered and meeting or surpassing performance targets. The project produced grey and green infrastructure including sea walls and groynes, and restored coastal mangroves, protecting coastal settlements and farmland from rising sea levels. Training and capacity building outputs were also delivered as planned.

27. **Post-completion progress and impacts of COVID-19:** Tanzania is in a unique situation, with a government which has not formally acknowledged the pandemic as a threat. This presents its own threat to sustainability, because risk management is difficult, and because limited data are available on the impact of COVID-19.² However, some of the project's outcomes, such as the gray infrastructure put in place, would likely not be affected, because limited ongoing support is required to sustain them. The project's manager reported that handoff involved agreements developed with town authorities who committed funding for maintenance, with a budget for this work included in district development plans.

Sustainable Land Management Project 2 (GEF ID 5220)

28. **Project overview:** Sustainable Land Management Project 2 (GEF ID 5220) implemented by the World Bank in Ethiopia from 2014 to 2018, aimed to reduce land degradation and improve land productivity in selected watersheds in targeted regions in Ethiopia. The project was the second in a series, following a first phase implemented from 2008–13. Specifically, the project aimed to support scaling up and adoption of appropriate sustainable land and water management technologies and practices by smallholder farmers and communities in the selected watersheds, to strengthen capacity at the institutional level in complement to on the ground activities, and to enhance the tenure security of smallholder farmers in the project area.

29. **Project results:** The project was rated satisfactory for achievement of outcomes and was not rated for likelihood of sustainability of outcomes. The project terminal evaluation and Independent Evaluation Group's terminal evaluation review report high levels of achievement suggesting that the project made significant progress in scaling up SLM interventions in the Ethiopian highlands. The project introduced SLM practices, with an average of 5.2 percent increase in the vegetation cover in watersheds treated by the project and 270,670 farmers applying SLM and climate smart agriculture. The project also achieved land certification for households in the project area. Achievements of the project are being built on in a follow-on World Bank project, the Ethiopia Resilient Landscapes and Livelihoods Project, which focuses on 1) supporting the restoration of degraded landscapes in selected watersheds, 2) building capacity for promotion and management of Sustainable Land and Watershed Management practices, and 3) strengthening the rural land administration system for securing tenure rights.

² At the time of writing, two months into the administration of a new president in Tanzania, there are signals to a change in approach to COVID-19 in country.

30. **Post-completion progress and impacts of COVID-19:** Interviews with project managers reveals that the watershed management plans and institutions developed under the project are still functioning and will receive ongoing support from a follow-on project. The country has been badly hit by COVID-19, which has affected travel within the country. The ability of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Project Management Unit to travel to regional sites, and the ability to travel within regions to communities, have all been impaired. The impacts of COVID-19 are compounded in Tigray, where there is armed conflict as well.

31. Managers report that mitigation measures including social distancing have been implemented, but that this can affect certain activities more than others. For example, it is difficult to implement social distancing for activities such as the review of land use plans, which requires meetings with large numbers of people. The World Bank follow-on project has conducted meetings in the open with mitigation measures in place.

Structuring and Launching CRAFT: The First Private Sector Climate Resilience and Adaptation Fund for Developing Countries (GEF ID 9941)

32. **Project overview:** The CRAFT project, implemented by Conservation International between 2018 and 2019, aimed to establish and mobilize resources for the Climate Resilience and Adaptation Finance and Technology Transfer Facility (CRAFT), the first private sector climate resilience and adaptation investment fund and technical assistance facility for developing countries, consistent with the goals of the Paris Agreement. The medium-size project focused on the preparation of a fund investment and impact strategy and resource mobilization.

33. **Project results:** The project was rated satisfactory for achievement of outcomes and likely for sustainability of outcomes. By the project's closure the key targets had been achieved, namely the development of an investment and impact strategy, legal and regulatory structure, and mobilized resources including \$50 million. In December 2019, a few months after the project closed, the CRAFT fund was officially launched with \$90 million committed by government, multilateral, and private sector investors.

34. **Post-completion progress and impacts of COVID-19:** The CRAFT team report that fundraising was slowed down by the pandemic, especially during the first and second quarter of 2020, but is currently resuming. Working remotely, the CRAFT team can map out companies and meet virtually, but their ability to conduct final due diligence and finalize new investments is hampered, because this due diligence depends in part on their ability to conduct on-site company visits. However, hitherto the team has been able to finalize and close two investments with companies with which it has had long-term discussions and with which they were able to visit prior to the start of the pandemic, and is hopeful that soon more onsite visits will be possible. In terms of addressing risks of the pandemic, in addition to a shift to remote work for the CRAFT team, the CRAFT fund implemented a business continuity and disaster recovery plan. While the team expects some months' delays in medium- and longer-term outcomes, such as reduction of climate vulnerabilities, GHG emissions reductions, and delivery on Sustainable

Development Goals through investments, they are expected to be realized as the fund is operational and ongoing.

35. The team also noted that the inclusion of a risk-mitigating junior capital-absorbing layer, through which 20 percent of the CRAFT funds were set aside to absorb first losses, was helpful in the context of COVID-19. The need to decrease risks for the private sector through this junior layer, provided by public funders or foundations willing to absorb first losses and take a lower share of upside returns on investments, had been identified during project implementation, but became even more relevant in the context of the pandemic, which potentially heightened risks on investments.

Synthesis of lessons learned from completed projects

36. Terminal evaluations were reviewed for lessons learned, with lessons classified deductively into the main categories which have emerged through past AER reviews: communications and stakeholder involvement, lessons related to project design and management, lessons on content or technical issues, and lessons related to monitoring and evaluation. Only lessons with potential applicability in other contexts were classified. Table 5 summarizes main lessons, which are explained in more detail and in the context of the specific projects from which they were learned in this section.

Table 5: Summary of main lessons learned

Categories	Main lessons
Project design and management	Project design should take into account technical and staff capacity, proper sequencing of activities, and long-term agreements with stakeholders for sustainability.
Communication and stakeholder involvement	Identifying national champions, using participatory practices, and simple/verifiable methods for stakeholder targeting are key, along with a focus on strengthening stakeholder capacity.
Content or technical issues	<p>For private sector engagement, de-risking early-stage climate technology businesses, greater support for accelerator programs, market-based partnerships with larger companies, and policy support to develop an enabling environment for new start-ups is critical.</p> <p>Improving water resources management requires a combination of investments in institutions, information, and infrastructure.</p> <p>Agro-pastoral farmer schools were effective in creating momentum in the adoption of good agro-pastoral practices.</p> <p>Sustainable land management investments need to take into consideration the livestock population in a microwatershed in relation to the carrying capacity of the area.</p>
Monitoring and Evaluation	Project management and monitoring tools need to be linked to serve their purpose of planning, monitoring, and reporting.

	<p>Measurement of community resilience is difficult and requires clear and agreed guidance up front for reporting</p> <p>Monitoring plans should be extended beyond the project cycle, with mechanisms in place to track medium- and long-term impacts.</p> <p>For projects implemented jointly by more than one agency, jointly conducting evaluations at midterm and closure can be an opportunity to identify synergies, realign, and build sustainability jointly.</p> <p>There is an extra value of a well-designed monitoring and evaluation system with highly decentralized projects.</p>
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Project design and management

37. The most frequently cited lessons learned on project design and management relate to the importance of staff capacity and execution arrangements, with 8 of the 18 projects reviewed including lessons on both these areas. In terms of staff capacity, some projects pointed to the need for specialists in key topics within a project management unit, or to the negative consequences of not hiring such specialists (the Pilot Asia-Pacific Climate Technology Network and Finance Center project, GEF ID 4512 and the Solomon Islands Water Sector Adaptation project, GEF ID 4725), while others focused more broadly on the importance of dedicating resources to strengthen the capacity of PMUs (in areas such as administrative or financial management) for efficient project management (Climate Change Adaptation to Reduce Land Degradation in Fragile Micro-Watersheds , GEF ID 4616, and Strengthening Climate Information and Early Warning Systems in Africa for Climate Resilient Development and Adaptation to Climate Change, GEF ID 5006). An LDCF World Bank project implemented in Vanuatu, Increasing Resilience to Climate Change and Natural Hazards (GEF ID 3798) noted a positive example of building the capacity of local officers by pairing them with international advisors. Lessons on execution arrangements considered the pros and cons of government execution modalities (which can drive country ownership but must be pragmatic and based on a realistic assessment of preparedness) (Developing Core Capacity to Address Adaptation to Climate Change in Productive Coastal Zones, GEF ID 4141). The Pilot Asia-Pacific Climate Technology Network and Finance Center project, a multitrust fund regional project implemented jointly by ADB and UNEP, (GEF ID 4512) found joint implementation to be more effective at policy and activity levels than at the overall project level, because the different business processes of ADB and UNEP did not favor the sequencing of activities in the project design. An LDCF UNDP project, Strengthening Liberia’s Capability to Provide Climate Information and Services to Enhance Climate Resilient Development and Adaptation to Climate Change (GEF ID 4950) found that when making arrangements for service providers, long-term agreements may work better than short-term consultancy contracts.

38. Lessons learned on provisions for sustainability were brought up in seven projects. Several of these focused on the need for clear exit strategies, and follow-up commitments, such ensuring that the government services continue support post-project. For example, the project in Vanuatu, Increasing Resilience to Climate Change and Natural Hazards (GEF ID 3798), included a lesson that community microprojects need clear exit strategies and follow-up, and

that an agreement with governments on the maintenance strategy for community investments should be reached, preferably during project preparation.

Communication and stakeholder involvement

39. The importance of adequate attention to stakeholder engagement was highlighted in 8 of the 18 projects reviewed. Notably, many of the multitrust fund projects included such lessons, including the Pilot Asia-Pacific Climate Technology Network and Finance Center project (GEF ID 4512), which pointed to the need to identify national champions with financial or planning authority to successfully integrate climate technology into country investment plans. The multitrust fund SCCF/GEF Climate Change Adaptation to Reduce Land Degradation in Fragile Micro-Watersheds project, implemented by FAO in El Salvador (GEF ID 4616), included a lesson on the value of participatory processes to involve communities in micro-watershed work. The multitrust fund LDCF/GEF project implemented by the World Bank in Malawi, Shire Natural Ecosystems Management Project (GEF ID 4625), demonstrated that a community-led landscape approach can achieve results at scale and help build resilience. Some projects included lessons on stakeholder targeting, including gender/poverty targeting. The multitrust fund LDCF/GEF Great Green Wall: Agriculture Production Support Project implemented in Chad by the World Bank (GEF ID 4908) included the lesson that gender/poverty targeting mechanisms that are simple, verifiable, and based on objective criteria can foster transparency, minimize political interference in project resource allocation, and ensure that project resources reach target beneficiaries.

40. Strengthening stakeholder capacity was one area highlighted in lessons learned. For example, the Agriculture production support project in Chad (GEF ID 4625) included a lesson that reversing watershed degradation requires significant investment in capacity building and facilitation at the central, district, and local levels. The Strengthening Liberia's Capability to Provide Climate Information and Services to Enhance Climate Resilient Development and Adaptation to Climate Change project (GEF ID 4950) noted the importance of building technical expertise for future results to create ownership in-country. Other lessons included the importance of clearly identifying and understanding cofinancing arrangements and interventions (the LDCF UNDP project Strengthening Climate Information and Early Warning Systems in Africa for Climate Resilient Development and Adaptation to Climate Change project in Sierra Leone, [GEF ID 5006] and the LDCF FAO project Strengthening Resilience to Climate Change through Integrated Agricultural and Pastoral Management in the Sahelian Zone in the Framework of the Sustainable Land Management Approach in Mali, GEF ID 4822) and the general importance of investing time in coordination of institutions (the LDCF UNDP Solomon Islands Water Sector Adaptation Project, GEF ID 4725, and the Sierra Leone Project, GEF ID 5006).

Content or technical issues

41. Seven of the 18 projects reviewed include lessons on content or technical issues. The Climate Technology Network Project (GEF ID 4512) found that for de-risking early-stage climate technology businesses, greater support for accelerator programs, market-based partnerships

with larger companies, and policy support for new start-ups is critical. The Shire Natural Ecosystems Management Project (GEF ID 4625) concluded that improving water resources management requires a combination of investments in institutions, information, and infrastructure. The agricultural and pastoral management project in Mali (GEF ID 4822) found that agropastoral farmer schools were effective in creating momentum in the adoption of good agropastoral practices, as did an LDCF FAO project, Reducing Vulnerability and Increasing Adaptive Capacity to Respond to Impacts of Climate Change and Variability for Sustainable Livelihoods in Agriculture Sector in Nepal (GEF ID 5111). The agriculture production support project in Chad (GEF ID 4908) included an International Development Association–funded emergency component focused on serving the areas of northern Chad most affected by the 2010–11 drought, and found that emergency operations must prioritize actions on immediate restoration of productive assets for food insecure rural households, rather than attempting to build Community-Driven Development systems, which will involve a steeper learning curve and require upfront capacity building and social mobilization including information campaigns. Finally, the multitrust fund LDCF/GEF World Bank Sustainable Land Management Project 2, implemented in Ethiopia, (GEF ID 5220) included several technical lessons on sustainable land management investments, including the fact that they need to take into consideration the livestock population in a microwatershed in relation to the carrying capacity of the area, and that area closures to limit free grazing for erosion control should be complemented by fodder production, to better support enclosed livestock management practices.

Monitoring and evaluation

42. Seven of the 18 projects reviewed include lessons on monitoring and evaluation. The project in Vanuatu, Increasing Resilience to Climate Change and Natural Hazards (GEF ID 3798) noted that project management and monitoring tools need to be linked to serve their purpose of planning, monitoring, and reporting, and that the measurement of community resilience is difficult and requires clear and agreed guidance up front for reporting. An LDCF UNEP project on Developing Core Capacity to Address Adaptation to Climate Change in Productive Coastal Zones in Tanzania (GEF ID 4141) noted that monitoring plans should be extended beyond the project cycle, with mechanisms in place to track medium- and long-term impacts. The regional Asia-Pacific Climate Technology Network project implemented jointly between ADB and UNEP (GEF ID 4512), noted the importance of jointly conducting evaluations at midterm and closure as an opportunity to identify synergies, realign, and build sustainability jointly (for this project, both Implementing Agencies produced separate terminal evaluations). Other lessons included the importance of user-friendly M&E systems and training of M&E staff during the preparatory phase (GEF ID 4908), the importance of procuring a baseline at project start for setting up an M&E system (GEF ID 5006), and the extra value of a well-designed M&E system with highly decentralized projects. Finally, in an SCCF Conservation International project, Structuring and Launching CRAFT: The First Private Sector Climate Resilience Adaptation Fund for Developing Countries (GEF ID 9941), in which the project objectives were to establish a strategy and to mobilize resources for an adaptation fund, which would not become operational until after project closure, a lesson learned was included on the difficulty of capturing outcomes in such projects when evaluations are required at project endpoint.

MANAGEMENT ACTION RECORD

43. The GEF Management Action Record tracks the level of adoption by the GEF Secretariat or the GEF Agencies, or both (together here referred to as GEF Management) of GEF Council and LDCF/SCCF Council decisions that have been made on the basis of GEF IEO recommendations. The Management Action Record serves two purposes: “(i) to provide Council with a record of its decision on the follow-up of evaluation reports, the proposed management actions, and the actual status of these actions; and (ii) to increase the accountability of GEF Management regarding Council decisions on monitoring and evaluation issues.”(GEF 2005, p. 1)

44. The 2021 Management Action Record for the LDCF/SCCF tracks two LDCF/SCCF Council decisions: the May 2017 decision on recommendations of the Program Evaluation of the SCCF and the December 2020 decision on recommendations of the Program Evaluation of the LDCF (GEF 2005, GEF IEO 2020b). Management was invited to provide a self-rating of the level of adoption of Council decisions on recommendations and to add comments, as necessary. After management's self-rating, the GEF IEO verified actual adoption and provided its own ratings and comments. The rating categories for the progress of adoption of Council decisions, listed below, were agreed on through a consultative process of the IEO, the GEF Secretariat, and GEF Agencies. Categories are as follows:

- (a) **High.** Fully adopted and fully incorporated into policy, strategy, or operations.
- (b) **Substantial.** Decision largely adopted but not fully incorporated into policy, strategy, or operations, as of yet.
- (c) **Medium.** Adopted in some operational and policy work, but not to a significant degree in key areas.
- (d) **Negligible.** No evidence or plan for adoption, or plan and actions for adoption are in a very preliminary stage.
- (e) **Not rated or possible to verify yet.** Ratings or verification will have to wait until more data are available or proposals have been further developed.
- (f) **N/A.** Not applicable.

45. The LDCF/SCCF Council decisions tracked in the 2020 Management Action Record are described below.

46. For the SCCF evaluation, the LDCF/SCCF Council decision, taken in May 2017, stated that “the Council, having reviewed document GEF/LDCF.SCCF.22/ME/02, Program Evaluation of the Special Climate Change Fund and GEF/LDCF.SCCF.22/ME/03, Management Response to the Program Evaluation of the Special Climate Change Fund, takes note of the conclusions of the evaluation and endorses the recommendations taking into account the Management Response”(GEF 2017). The SCCF evaluation’s recommendations are as follows (GEF IEO 2017):

- (a) **Recommendation 1.** Reaffirming and strengthening a recommendation from the previous SCCF Program Evaluation in 2011, the GEF Secretariat should prioritize the development of mechanisms that ensure predictable, adequate, and sustainable financing for the Fund, given its support for, and focus on innovation.
- (b) **Recommendation 2.** The GEF Secretariat should articulate and publicly communicate the SCCF's niche within the global adaptation finance landscape, to include an explicit statement regarding the SCCF's relation with—and complementarity to—the Green Climate Fund.
- (c) **Recommendation 3.** The GEF Secretariat should ensure that Project Management Information System data are up to date and accurate.

47. In response to the first IEO recommendation, The Secretariat's efforts to systematically provide information on the resource constraints and requests donor support at Council meetings and at donor consultations and promoting SCCF complementarity with the GCF are welcome. The IEO encourages the Secretariat to develop a more systematic mechanism.

48. The second recommendation has been addressed through the GEF Programming Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change for the LDCF and the SCCF, presented to the Council in June 2018, which articulates the SCCF's niche in the climate finance landscape. The IEO is assessing the implementation of the GEF adaptation strategy by the SCCF in the ongoing 2021 SCCF program evaluation.

49. The transition to the portal has led to improvements in accuracy, though the GEF IEO has found that data accuracy issues remain both in historical data migrated to the portal, and in the new data and reports generated automatically based on inputs by Agencies.

50. The overall rating of adoption of the LDCF/SCCF Council decision regarding the SCCF Program Evaluation is substantial. This decision will be retired as a new Council decision will be made on the 2021 Program Evaluation of the SCCF in December 2021.

51. For the LDCF evaluation, the LDCF/SCCF Council decision, taken in December 2020, stated that "The Council, having reviewed documents GEF/LDCF.SCCF.29/E/01, 2020 Program Evaluation of the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Management Response, endorses the following recommendations" (GEF 2020). The LDCF evaluation's recommendations are as follows:

- (a) **Recommendation 1:** Build on progress made on mainstreaming gender in the LDCF portfolio and aim to decrease the knowledge gap about gender-related results.
- (b) **Recommendation 2:** Continue to enhance the likelihood of the sustainability of outcomes.

52. For the first recommendation, the Secretariat's efforts to mainstream gender in project design and Agencies' increased reporting on gender in terminal evaluations is noted. The IEO will continue to track the implementation of gender mainstreaming and related reporting.

53. For the second recommendation, the IEO welcomes the actions to advance the likelihood of the sustainability of outcomes of LDCF projects and encourages a stronger focus on financial arrangements for post completion.

54. The overall rating of adoption of the LDCF/SCCF Council decision regarding the LDCF Program Evaluation is medium. The IEO will continue to track adoption of this decision.

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ANNEX A: TERMINAL EVALUATION REPORT REVIEW GUIDELINES

1. The assessments in the terminal evaluation reviews will be based largely on the information presented in the terminal evaluation report. If insufficient information is presented in a terminal evaluation report to assess a specific issue, such as, for example, quality of the project's monitoring and evaluation system or a specific aspect of sustainability, then the preparer of the terminal evaluation reviews will briefly indicate so in that section and elaborate more, if appropriate, in the section of the review that addresses quality of report. If the review's preparer possesses other first-hand information, such as, for example, from a field visit to the project, and this information is relevant to the terminal evaluation reviews, then it should be included in the reviews only under the heading "Additional independent information available to the reviewer." The preparer of the terminal evaluation review will take into account all the independent relevant information when verifying ratings.

B.1 Criteria for Outcome Ratings

2. Based on the information provided in the terminal evaluation report, the terminal evaluation review will make an assessment of the extent to which the project's major relevant objectives were achieved or are expected to be achieved,³ relevance of the project results, and the project's cost-effectiveness. The ratings on the outcomes of the project will be based on performance on the following criteria:⁴

- **Relevance.** Were project outcomes consistent with the focal area/operational program strategies and country priorities? Explain.
- **Effectiveness.** Are project outcomes commensurate with the expected outcomes (as described in the project document) and the problems the project was intended to address (that is, the original or modified project objectives)?
- **Efficiency.** Include an assessment of outcomes and impacts in relation to inputs, costs, and implementation times based on the following questions: Was the project cost-effective? How does the project's cost/time versus outcomes equation compare to that of similar projects? Was the project implementation delayed as a result of any bureaucratic, administrative, or political problems and did that affect cost-effectiveness?

3. An overall rating will be provided according to the achievement and shortcomings in the three criteria, ranging from highly satisfactory, satisfactory, moderately satisfactory, moderately unsatisfactory, unsatisfactory, highly unsatisfactory, and unable to assess.

³ *Objectives* are the intended physical, financial, institutional, social, environmental, or other development results to which a project or program is expected to contribute (OECD DAC 2002).

⁴ *Outcomes* are the likely or achieved short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention's outputs. Outputs are the products, capital goods, and services that result from a development intervention; these may also include changes resulting from the intervention that are relevant to the achievement of outcomes (OECD DAC 2002). For the GEF, environmental outcomes are the main focus.

4. The reviewer of the terminal evaluation will provide a rating under each of the three criteria (relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency). Relevance of outcomes will be rated on a binary scale: a satisfactory or an unsatisfactory rating will be provided. If an unsatisfactory rating has been provided on this criterion, the overall outcome achievement rating may not be higher than unsatisfactory. Effectiveness and efficiency will be rated as following:

- **Highly satisfactory.** The project had no shortcomings.
- **Satisfactory.** The project had minor shortcomings.
- **Moderately satisfactory.** The project had moderate shortcomings.
- **Moderately unsatisfactory.** The project had noticeable shortcomings.
- **Unsatisfactory. The project had major shortcomings.**
- **Highly unsatisfactory.** The project had severe shortcomings.
- **Unable to assess.** The reviewer was unable to assess outcomes on this dimension.

5. The calculation of the overall outcomes score of projects will consider all three criteria, of which relevance criterion will be applied first; the overall outcome achievement rating may not be higher than unsatisfactory. The second constraint that is applied is that the overall outcome achievement rating may not be higher than the effectiveness rating. The third constraint that is applied is that the overall rating may not be higher than the average score of effectiveness and efficiency criteria calculated using the following formula:

$$\text{Outcomes} = (b + c) \div 2$$

6. In case the average score is lower than the score obtained after application of the first two constraints, then the average score will be the overall score. The score will then be converted into an overall rating with mid values being rounded up upwards.

B.2 Impacts

7. Has the project achieved impacts, or is it likely that outcomes will lead to the expected impacts? Impacts will be understood to include positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention. They could be produced directly or indirectly and could be intended or unintended. The terminal evaluation review's preparer will take note of any mention of impacts, especially global environmental benefits, in the terminal evaluation report, including the likelihood that the project outcomes will contribute to their achievement. Negative impacts mentioned in the terminal evaluation report should be noted and recorded in section 2 of the terminal evaluation reviews template in the subsection on "Issues that require follow-up." Although project impacts will be described, they will not be rated.

B.3 Criteria for Sustainability Ratings

8. Sustainability will be understood as the likelihood of continuation of project benefits after completion of project implementation (GEF 2000). To assess sustainability, the terminal evaluation reviewer will identify and assess the key risks that could undermine continuation of benefits at the time of the evaluation. Some of these risks might include the absence of or inadequate financial resources, an enabling legal framework, commitment from key stakeholders, and enabling economy. The following four types of risk factors will be assessed by the terminal evaluation reviewer to rate the likelihood of sustainability of project outcomes: financial, sociopolitical, institutional frameworks and governance, and environmental.

9. The following questions provide guidance to assess if the factors are met:

- **Financial resources.** What is the likelihood that financial resources will be available to continue the activities that result in the continuation of benefits (income-generating activities, and trends that may indicate that it is likely that in future there will be adequate financial resources for sustaining project outcomes)?
- **Sociopolitical.** Are there any social or political risks that can undermine the longevity of project outcomes? What is the risk that the level of stakeholder ownership is insufficient to allow for project outcomes/benefits to be sustained? Do the various key stakeholders see in their interest that the project benefits continue to flow? Is there sufficient public/stakeholder awareness in support of the long-term objectives of the project?
- **Institutional framework and governance.** Do the legal frameworks, policies, and governance structures and processes pose any threat to the continuation of project benefits? While assessing this parameter, consider if the required systems for accountability and transparency, and the required technical know-how, are in place.
- **Environmental.** Are there any environmental risks that can undermine the future flow of project environmental benefits? The terminal evaluation should assess whether certain activities in the project area will pose a threat to the sustainability of project outcomes. For example, construction of a dam in a protected area could inundate a sizable area and thereby neutralize the biodiversity-related gains made by the project.

10. The reviewer will provide a rating as follows:

- **Likely.** There are no risks affecting that criterion of sustainability.
- **Moderately likely.** There are moderate risks that affect that criterion of sustainability.

- **Moderately unlikely.** There are significant risks that affect that criterion of sustainability.
- **Unlikely.** There are severe risks affecting that criterion of sustainability.
- **Unable to assess.** Unable to assess risk on this dimension.
- **Not applicable.** This dimension is not applicable to the project.

B.4 Criteria for Assessment of Quality of Project M&E Systems

11. GEF projects are required to develop M&E plans by the time of work program inclusion, to appropriately budget M&E plans, and to fully carry out the M&E plan during implementation. Project managers are also expected to use the information generated by the M&E system during project implementation to improve and adapt the project to changing situations. Given the long-term nature of many GEF projects, projects are also encouraged to include long-term monitoring plans that measure results (such as environmental results) after project completion. Terminal evaluation reviews will include an assessment of the achievement and shortcomings of M&E systems.

- **M&E design.** Project should have a sound M&E plan to monitor results and track progress in achieving project objectives. An M&E plan should include a baseline (including data, methodology, and so on), SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely) indicators and data analysis systems, and evaluation studies at specific times to assess results. The time frame for various M&E activities and standards for outputs should have been specified. Questions to guide this assessment include: In retrospect, was the M&E plan at entry practicable and sufficient (sufficient and practical indicators identified; timely baseline; targets created; effective use of data collection; analysis systems including studies and reports; practical organization and logistics in terms of what, who, and when for M&E activities)?
- **M&E plan implementation.** The M&E system was in place and allowed the timely tracking of results and progress toward project objectives throughout the project. Annual project reports were complete, accurate, and with well-justified ratings. The information provided by the M&E system was used to improve and adapt project performance. An M&E system should be in place with proper training for parties responsible for M&E activities to ensure that data will continue to be collected and used after project closure. Question to guide this assessment include: Did the project M&E system operate throughout the project? How was M&E information used during the project? Did it allow for tracking of progress toward project objectives? Did the project provide proper training for parties responsible for M&E activities to ensure data will continue to be collected and used after project closure?
- **Other questions.** This includes questions on funding and whether the M&E system was a good practice.

- Was sufficient funding provided for M&E—in the budget included in the project document?
- Was sufficient and timely funding provided—for M&E during project implementation?
- Can the project M&E system be considered—a good practice?

12. A number rating 1–6 will be provided for each criterion according to the achievement and shortcomings, with highly satisfactory = 6, satisfactory = 5, moderately satisfactory = 4, moderately unsatisfactory = 3, unsatisfactory = 2, highly unsatisfactory = 1, and unable to assess = no rating. The reviewer of the terminal evaluation will provide a rating under each of the three criteria (M&E design, M&E plan implementation, and M&E properly budgeted and funded) as follows:

- **Highly satisfactory.** There were no shortcomings in that criterion of the project M&E system.
- **Satisfactory.** There were minor shortcomings in that criterion of the project M&E system.
- **Moderately satisfactory.** There were moderate shortcomings in that criterion of the project M&E system.
- **Moderately unsatisfactory.** There were significant shortcomings in that criterion of the project M&E system.
- **Unsatisfactory.** There were major shortcomings in that criterion of the project M&E system.
- **Highly unsatisfactory.** There was no project M&E system.

The rating for M&E during implementation will be the overall rating of the M&E system:

Rating on the Quality of the Project Monitoring and Evaluation System = b

B.5 Criteria for Assessment of Quality of Terminal Evaluation Reports

13. The ratings on quality of terminal evaluation reports will be assessed using the following criteria:

- The report presents an assessment of all relevant outcomes and achievement of project objectives in the context of the focal area program indicators, if applicable.
- The report was consistent, the evidence presented was complete and convincing, and ratings were well substantiated.
- The report presented a sound assessment of sustainability of outcomes.
- The lessons and recommendations are supported by the evidence presented and are relevant to the portfolio and future projects.

- The report included the actual project costs (totals, per activity and per source) and actual cofinancing used.
- The report included an assessment of the quality of the M&E plan at entry, the M&E system used during implementation, and whether the information generated by the M&E system was used for project management.

14. A number rating 1–6 will be provided for each criterion according to the achievement and shortcomings with highly satisfactory = 6, satisfactory = 5, moderately satisfactory = 4, moderately unsatisfactory = 3, unsatisfactory = 2, highly unsatisfactory = 1, and unable to assess = no rating.

Each criterion to assess the quality of the terminal evaluation will be rated as follows:

- **Highly satisfactory.** There were no shortcomings in the terminal evaluation on this criterion.
- **Satisfactory.** There were minor shortcomings in the terminal evaluation on this criterion.
- **Moderately satisfactory.** There were moderate shortcomings in the **terminal evaluation on this criterion.**
- **Moderately unsatisfactory.** There were significant shortcomings in the terminal evaluation on this criterion.
- **Unsatisfactory.** There were major shortcomings in the terminal evaluation on this criterion.
- **Highly unsatisfactory.** There were severe shortcomings in the terminal evaluation on this criterion.

15. The first two criteria (of all relevant outcomes and achievements of project objectives, and report consistency and substantiation of claims with proper evidence) are more important, and, therefore, have been assigned a greater weight. The quality of the terminal evaluation reports will be calculated by the following formula:

$$\text{Quality of the Terminal Evaluation Report} = 0.3 \times (a + b) + 0.1 \times (c + d + e + f)$$

The total number will be rounded and converted to the scale of highly satisfactory to highly unsatisfactory.

B.6 Assessment of Processes Affecting Attainment of Project Outcomes and Sustainability

16. This section of the terminal evaluation review will summarize the factors or processes related to implementation delays and cofinancing that may have affected attainment of project results. This section will summarize the description in the terminal evaluation on key causal linkages of these factors:

- Cofinancing and project outcomes and sustainability. If there was a difference in the level of expected cofinancing and actual cofinancing, what were the reasons for it? To what extent did materialization of cofinancing affect project outcomes or sustainability, or both? What were the causal linkages of these effects?

Delays and project outcomes and sustainability. If there were delays, what were the reasons for them? To what extent did the delay affect project outcomes or sustainability, or both? What were the causal linkages of these effects?

ANNEX B: LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

CRAFT Project (GEF ID 9941, Conservation International)

Sanjay Wagle, Co-Founder and Managing Director, Lightsmith Group

Developing Core Capacity to Address Adaptation to Climate Change in Productive Coastal Zones of Tanzania (GEF ID 4141, UNEP)

Mara Yasmin Baviera, Task Manager, United Nations Environment Programme

PSG: Sustainable Land Management Project 2 (GEF ID 5220, World Bank)

Edward Felix Dwumfour, Senior Environmental Specialist, World Bank

Million Alemayehu Gizaw, Senior Natural Resources Management Specialist, World Bank

Nigel Ross Hughes, Senior Natural Resources Management Specialist, World Bank

Shire Natural Ecosystems Management Project (GEF ID 4625, World Bank)

Javier Zuleta, Senior Water Resources Management Specialist, Task Team Leader, World Bank

Nicholas Stephen Zmijewski, Environmental Engineer, World Bank