

62nd GEF Council Meeting
June 21 – 23, 2022
Washington, D.C.

Agenda Item 9

**WORK PROGRAM AND BUDGET OF THE INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OFFICE:
JUNE 2022**

(Prepared by the Independent Evaluation Office of the GEF)

Recommended Council Decision

The Council, having reviewed the “Work Program and Budget Report of the GEF Independent Evaluation Office: June 2022,” acknowledges the progress made by the Independent Evaluation Office in the reporting period, and approves the IEO budget for FY23.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	Introduction	1
II.	Evaluation Work in Progress	1
1.	Review of the Management Action Record	1
2.	Study on the Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Project Design and Performance	1
3.	Strategic Country Cluster Evaluation of Mekong River Ecosystem: Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Vietnam	2
4.	Annual Performance Report 2023	2
5.	GEF Approach to Water Security	2
6.	Community-Focused Approaches in the GEF.....	3
7.	Strategic Country Cluster Evaluation on Drylands	3
8.	Integrated Interventions in SIDS	3
9.	Evaluation of GEF Support to Combating Illegal Wildlife Trade	3
10.	Socioeconomic Co-Benefits in the GEF with a Focus on Biodiversity and Multifocal Projects.....	4
11.	Learning from Challenges	4
12.	Least Developed Countries Fund/Special Climate Change Fund Annual Evaluation Reports 2023	4
13.	Early Warning System Interventions in the LDCF and the SCCF	5
III.	Knowledge Management, Learning, and Outreach	5
IV.	Budget and Human Resources for FY23	7
V.	Draft Indicative Work Program and Budget for GEF-8	10
1.	Draft Proposed Work Program (FY23–25)	10
2.	Tentative Budget for GEF-8 (FY24–27).....	11

TABLES

Table 1:	Estimated IEO Budget for FY23	9
Table 2:	IEO Staff.....	9
Table 3:	Tentative Work Program FY23–25	11
Table 4:	Estimated GEF IEO GEF-8 Budget, FY24–27 (million \$).....	13

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) completed the Seventh Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF (OPS7) and presented the full report at the September 2021 virtual replenishment meeting and at the December 2021 virtual Council meeting. The recommendations in the overall OPS7 report were adopted by the Council in December 2021. The recommendations of the individual evaluations underpinning OPS7 were adopted between December 2018 and December 2021, when these evaluations were presented to the Council. The OPS7 report was finalized in January 2022 after its presentation to the Council. The IEO has since completed three evaluations: an Evaluation of GEF Support to Sustainable Forest Management; a Study on Climate Risk, Adaptation, and Resilience in the GEF Trust Fund; and an Evaluation of GEF Enabling Activities. The IEO has also developed guidelines for program evaluation. This report includes an update on the evaluations in progress and the knowledge management and communication activities to disseminate OPS7 evaluation findings during the reporting period. Finally, the budget and staffing of the IEO for fiscal year (FY) 2023, which is the last year for the IEO under GEF-7, is presented for Council approval; savings were realized in the FY22 budget mainly due to limited travel. The full evaluation reports and the guidelines for program evaluation are provided respectively in the following Working and Information Documents:

IEO Working Documents

1. GEF/E/C.62/02 Evaluation of GEF Support to Sustainable Forest Management
2. GEF/E/C.62/03 Study on Climate Risk, Adaptation, and Resilience in the GEF Trust Fund

IEO Information Documents

3. GEF/E/C.62/Inf.01 Evaluation of GEF Enabling Activities
4. GEF/E/C.62/Inf.02 Guidelines for Conducting Program Evaluation

I. INTRODUCTION

1. During the reporting period, the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) finalized the Seventh Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF (OPS7), following presentation of OPS7 findings and recommendations to the GEF Council in December 2021 and feeding into the GEF-8 Replenishment process. Since then, the IEO has completed three evaluations—Evaluation of GEF Support to Sustainable Forest Management; Study on Climate Risk, Adaptation, and Resilience in the GEF Trust Fund; and Evaluation of GEF Enabling Activities—and a set of guidelines for evaluating programs. The first two evaluations are presented as Working Documents to this Council; the Evaluation of Enabling Activities is included as an information document, as many of its findings and recommendations were reflected in OPS7. This report includes an update on the evaluations in progress and the knowledge management and communication activities undertaken to disseminate OPS7 evaluation findings during the reporting period. Finally, the budget and staffing of the IEO for fiscal year (FY) 2023, which is the last year for the IEO under GEF-7, is presented for Council approval.

II. EVALUATION WORK IN PROGRESS

2. With the completion of OPS7, the IEO has embarked on a new evaluation work program. These ongoing and planned evaluations will feed into the Eighth Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF (OPS8), to be completed by the fall of 2025, in time for the next replenishment of the GEF. Toward this goal, evaluations currently under way, and which will be completed by December 2023, are the following.

1. Review of the Management Action Record

3. The purpose of the review is to distill lessons from the management action record (MAR) experience so that they may be useful to the stakeholders involved in the MAR process. The review aims to understand factors that affect the level of adoption and follow-up actions through assessment of the relationship between the recommendations and corresponding management actions, and other factors that affect progress in the adoption and implementation of follow-up actions. It will also survey current practices among other multilateral organizations in assessing the level of progress in implementation of actions specified in their management response to the evaluations prepared by their evaluation units, so as to identify good practices that may be applied in the GEF case. This review will be presented to the December 2022 Council.

2. Study on the Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Project Design and Performance

4. This review is aimed at assessing the extent to which lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic experience have been mainstreamed in GEF activities and processes through a review of recent approval documents. The review will focus on whether and how the design of activities and GEF processes has changed. The study will also assess the impacts of COVID-19 on environmental outcomes in GEF projects using quantitative and qualitative approaches,

building on earlier IEO analyses of the impact of COVID on ongoing projects. This review will be presented to the December 2022 Council.

3. Strategic Country Cluster Evaluation of Mekong River Ecosystem: Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Vietnam

5. The Mekong nourishes agricultural areas and the largest lake in Southeast Asia, which benefits half of Cambodia’s population and nearly one-quarter of Vietnam’s. It also has the most concentrated biodiversity per hectare of any river basin in the world, second only to the Amazon in its global biodiversity. The objective of this country cluster evaluation is to draw evidence of the GEF’s contribution to strengthening transboundary river basin management in the Mekong River ecosystem to address social, economic, and environmental issues related to increased flooding, drought, surface and groundwater recharge, and biodiversity losses that are threatening the environment and the region’s inhabitants. It also aims to assess the degree to which the GEF has effectively contributed to strengthening transboundary watershed management for national and regional partners in the Mekong region through policy and governance processes, good practices, and lessons that can be shared with similar projects to sustain the investment and improve their effectiveness and overall sustainability—as well as contributions to the intergovernmental Mekong River Commission. This evaluation will be presented to the December 2022 Council, if we are able to complete travel by August 2022.

4. Annual Performance Report 2023

6. The Annual Performance Report (APR) provides a detailed account of the performance of GEF project portfolio in terms of outcomes, sustainability, processes that may affect results, and monitoring and evaluation arrangements. It also reports on the performance of the GEF systems, policies, and procedures that have a bearing on institutional performance. It presents the MAR, which tracks implementation of the action plan detailed by management in response to GEF IEO evaluations. APR 2023 will include an analysis of the performance of GEF regional and global projects and the effects of the GEF Cancellation Policy on the efficiency of the project activity cycle. This report will be presented to the June 2023 Council.

5. GEF Approach to Water Security

7. Water security, a topic of increasing international importance given population growth and climate change, generally encompasses ensuring water quantity and quality for (1) human consumption and well-being, (2) livelihoods, and (3) ecosystems; and (4) protecting society and ecosystems against water-related natural disasters. Starting in GEF-7, the GEF has framed its work in freshwater resources around the concept of water security, particularly as a key topic in the international waters focal area; the topic is also addressed in the GEF-managed Adaptation Funds, several focal areas, and integrated programs such as food security, landscape restoration, sustainable cities, and blue and green islands. This evaluation will provide GEF stakeholders with evaluative evidence on the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, and sustainability of GEF interventions that directly or indirectly affect water security to inform future programming. This evaluation will be presented to the June 2023 Council.

6. Community-Focused Approaches in the GEF

8. Since the 1980s, development finance institutions and governments have relied on community-based development and community-based natural resource management. Such approaches involve communities in their own development, with engagement ranging from information sharing and consultation to decentralizing decision-making and implementation roles to communities. While not required by the GEF Council, these approaches are explicit in GEF strategies and projects. The objective of this evaluation is to examine the evidence on the application of community-based approaches in GEF programs and projects, and the extent to which these approaches influence the effectiveness and sustainability of GEF interventions and provide lessons on their use. The study will include a stocktaking of the prevalence of these approaches in the GEF portfolio; their characteristics; and data on socioeconomic co-benefits, gender, and inclusion. This evaluation will be presented to the June 2023 Council.

7. Strategic Country Cluster Evaluation on Drylands

9. Building on the experience gained with the three strategic country cluster evaluations (SCCEs) conducted in GEF-7 (Africa Biomes, least developed countries, and small island developing states [SIDS]), the IEO in GEF-8 will conduct an SCCE on GEF support to countries with major drylands. This focus is justified by the substantial investment made by the GEF in the sustainable management of drylands. The evaluation's overarching objectives are to assess (1) the relevance and coherence of GEF investments in dryland/rainforest countries, and (2) GEF results and sustainability in terms of environmental benefits and associated socioeconomic benefits. As with the GEF-7 SCCEs, a "zoom-in," sequential approach will be applied, with deep dives on selected themes in specific countries, projects, and sites, starting from aggregate analysis at the GEF portfolio, terminal evaluation database, and geographics information system (GIS) mapping levels. Selected project post-completion verifications will be conducted (assuming travel restrictions will be lifted). This evaluation will be presented to the December 2023 Council.

8. Integrated Interventions in SIDS

10. This evaluation will build on the IEO SIDS SCCE of and follow up on its findings and recommendations on integrated interventions in SIDS. It will assess integrated approaches including Ridge to Reef (GEF ID 5395), Climate Proofing Development in the Pacific (GEF ID 5037), and Implementing Sustainable Low and Non-Chemical Development in SIDS (GEF ID 10185), among others. Evaluative evidence will be collected through review of program and project documentation, key informant interviews, and country field visits. A focus of the evaluation will be on the application of lessons from the scientific and development literature and completed GEF projects on ridge to reef, climate proofing, and nonchemical development approaches in the design of these program and child projects. The evaluation will be presented to the December 2023 Council meeting.

9. Evaluation of GEF Support to Combating Illegal Wildlife Trade

11. The COVID-19 pandemic has drawn attention to the importance of human-wildlife interactions and highlighted the role of illegal wildlife trade (IWT) in zoonotic disease

transmission. The pandemic has also reinforced the need to understand how projects that deal with IWT, such as those in the Global Wildlife Program (GWP), are faring and whether they are meeting their target outcomes and objectives. The GWP is the GEF's first attempt to provide an overall coordinating structure for efforts to address IWT and has been supported through GEF-6 and GEF-7. This evaluation is being undertaken to learn from the GEF's ongoing experience in addressing IWT through its support to GWP projects; it will report on the findings and provide practical recommendations to help the GEF achieve its IWT-related objectives. It will build on the IEO formative evaluation conducted in 2017 that assessed the design of GWP Phase I projects. The present evaluation will focus primarily on GWP Phase 2 while also considering other projects that address IWT. The evaluation will be presented to the December 2023 Council.

10. Socioeconomic Co-Benefits in the GEF with a Focus on Biodiversity and Multifocal Projects

12. The socioeconomic co-benefits that have been generated through GEF support over the past three decades have seldom been assessed. The IEO is thus undertaking a first systematic assessment of the socioeconomic co-benefits of GEF-supported interventions in Latin America and the Caribbean, Central Africa, and Asia using satellite and geospatial information together with socioeconomic survey data. The evaluation will use geospatial analysis as well as qualitative approaches to analyze the primary results of these projects alongside other environmental outcomes and socioeconomic co-benefits, taking into account the concepts of economics, health, and fragility. This evaluation will be presented to the December 2023 Council.

11. Learning from Challenges

13. The GEF and the GEF IEO commonly analyze program and project success factors, providing good practice examples and insights for future operations. However, evidence from programs and projects that are less successful is often overlooked. This is a missed opportunity: studying factors of operations' challenges and failure provides a different angle for analysis and can offer a new vision on how to strengthen success and effectively manage challenges in GEF programs and projects. The objective of this study is to review the GEF's experience with a representative sample of interventions that have faced challenges in achieving their objectives, identify the risk factors and available risk mitigation solutions in the design and implementation of these operations, and distill lessons learned. This study will be presented to the December 2023 Council.

12. Least Developed Countries Fund/Special Climate Change Fund Annual Evaluation Reports 2023

14. In line with the APR 2023, this annual evaluation report of the Least Developed Countries Fund/Special Climate Change Fund (LDCF/SCCF) will assess the terminal evaluations that have been submitted to the IEO since APR 2021. The evaluation will report on outcomes, sustainability, monitoring and evaluation design, and implementation ratings; innovative approaches; and gender considerations in these projects. It will also include a synthesis of lessons learned from the cohort of completed projects. The MARs reporting on progress in

implementing agreed follow-up actions to LDCF/SCCF evaluation recommendations will also be presented in this evaluation. The report will be presented to the June 2023 LDCF/SCCF Council.

13. Early Warning System Interventions in the LDCF and the SCCF

15. The IEO is conducting a special study on early warning system activities financed by the LDCF/SCCF. The GEF-8 adaptation strategy includes early warning and climate information systems as one of four priority themes for the LDCF and the SCCF. Given this proposed focus, a detailed review of past LDCF and SCCF projects addressing early warning systems has the potential to influence the future direction of a major area of work and will fill a knowledge gap regarding intervention area performance and trends. The study will assess a portfolio of 88 LDCF/SCCF projects approved in GEF-5 to GEF-7 and conduct a review of existing literature for lessons on early warning systems. The work for this special study has begun with the preparation of a concept note and will be completed for the June 2023 LDCF/SCCF Council.

III. KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT, LEARNING, AND OUTREACH

16. The purpose of GEF IEO knowledge, learning, and outreach activities is to support the use of evaluations across the GEF partnership and more broadly, and to promote the application of lessons from evaluations to improve overall GEF performance and impact. During the reporting period, the GEF IEO has published and disseminated open-access books and papers on transformational change and environmental evaluations, engaged with stakeholders via virtual events, shared findings of OPS7 and component evaluations, initiated the use of shorter and more engaging products such as blogs and podcasts, and strengthened the use of social media and partner collaboration.

17. The open-access book [Transformational Change for People and the Planet](#), edited by the GEF IEO Director and Deputy Director, was published by Springer in January 2022. It offers a unique perspective to evaluation policy and practice, with lessons on how to conduct sustainable development evaluations. Another open access book, [Environmental Evaluation and Global Development Institutions: A Case Study of the Global Environment Facility](#) written by Geeta Batra, Juha Uitto, and Osvaldo Feinstein, was published by Taylor & Francis Group in October 2021. Drawing on comprehensive evaluations of the GEF, the book provides useful pointers to other organizations seeking to enhance evidence-based decision making for improving their relevance, performance, and impact. In addition, the GEF IEO staff have contributed to several publications on evaluation and the environment.¹ In particular, the Office's Evaluation of GEF Support in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations informed a white paper on environmental peacebuilding.²

¹ Juha I. Uitto. Confronting storms, fires, and pestilence: Meaningful evaluation for a hazardous world. *Evaluation Matters—He Take Tō Te Aromatawai* 7: 2021. <https://bit.ly/3Nqmmqg>; Rob van den Berg, Dennis Bours, Astrid Brousselle, Jindra Čekan, Scott Chaplowe, Eleanor Chelimsky, Ian Davies, Weronika Felcis, Timo Leiter, Debbie Menezes, Robert Picciotto, Patricia Rogers, Andy Rowe, Juha Uitto. What should evaluation learn from COP 26? Views of evaluation practitioners. *Evaluation*. 2022;28(1):7-35. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F13563890221074173>

² Carl Bruch, Shehla Chowdhury (Environmental Law Institute); Alec Crawford (International Institute for Sustainable Development); Amanda Woomer (Environmental Peacebuilding Association); Geeta Batra, Anupam Anand (Independent Evaluation Office of the Global Environment Facility). 2022. *Conflict-Sensitive Approaches to*

Participation in in-person events continued to be affected by travel restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the IEO has stayed engaged virtually during the reporting period and has made presentations at several events.

18. In February 2022, the 2nd International Conference on Environmental Peacebuilding was held online by the Environmental Peacebuilding Association and the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies. IEO staff [presented](#) on leveraging geospatial science in fragile and conflict-affected conservation hotspots, and chaired a [session](#) on environmental peacebuilding monitoring and evaluation. The office also participated in a Wilton Park [dialogue](#) on making transformational change for climate action post-COP26. The same month, the IEO co-sponsored the Third Asia Pacific Evaluation [Conference](#) and presented on Making the 2030 Agenda Realistic: Role of Evaluation and on Adaptation and Resilience to Climate Change: Lessons from Evaluation. Over 600 people from across the globe participated in the virtual event.

19. In March 2022, the GEF IEO [discussed *Transformational Change for People and the Planet*](#) at a virtual coffee talk of the Independent Evaluation Office of the International Fund for Agricultural Development and subsequently at an online seminar organized by the Independent Evaluation Group of the World Bank on challenges and opportunities of evaluation for transformational change. During both events, leading evaluation and international development experts discussed how evaluation can play a more effective role in promoting transformational change. Furthermore, the IEO staff organized a [session](#) on Approaches and Methods to Climate Change and Environmental Evaluations at the Evaluation Symposium by the Islamic Development Bank in March 2022. The session offered insights from recent evaluations conducted by the GEF IEO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the World Bank, and the Adaptation Fund.

20. The IEO has also been sharing the findings of OPS7 and related evaluations. The Office has prepared executive summaries of OPS7 in [English](#), [French](#), and [Spanish](#) and initiated the use of shorter, more engaging products to bring more stakeholder attention to evaluation findings. The IEO website has been revamped and now includes blogs and a [podcast](#) episode on innovative evaluation methods featuring GEF IEO Deputy Director that was developed with the European Evaluation Society. During the first month since its launch, the podcast episode was listened to more than 100 times.

21. The IEO website has undergone some improvements to stay current with trends and features of the latest technology, and visual design. New sections and materials have been added:

- (a). The Data & Ratings section features a new menu with filters to improve user experience, allowing a user to narrow and display information of interest. Also, all terminal evaluations and terminal evaluation reviews for completed and rated projects (1,806) are available for download.

Environmental Peacebuilding by Ecosystem for Peace: Considerations for a Future Effective Programming. IN: The Future of Environmental Peacebuilding: Nurturing an Ecosystem for Peace. A White Paper and Compendium. <https://link.medium.com/VVKqAd5dcqb>

- (b). Evaluation reports include a new section for visual display of findings, recommendations, and/or conclusions for all reports.
- (c). New articles and blogs have been added to the News & Events section to highlight evaluation work performed by the IEO.
- (d). All content has been re-indexed to improve the internal website search function; more accurate results are shown after each search is performed, and a new tagging methodology allows for a better relationship across documents.

22. A total of 177 evaluations are currently available, and these can be downloaded and/or shared across some social media channels and various platforms. The website's News & Events section has contributed to new users accessing supporting documentation such as videos and presentations through the IEO website. As of April 30, the website had a total of 49,665 views in FY22.

23. The IEO has increased its use of social media and deepened the relevance and timeliness of its posts—for example, by regularly posting pertinent evaluation findings and lessons during conferences of the parties of multilateral environmental conventions and other stakeholder meetings. The Office's number of Twitter followers has increased by 13 percent since the beginning of the calendar year, and the number of impressions (the number of times a social media post was seen) has doubled. To strengthen the visibility of its evaluation findings and enhance stakeholder engagement, the IEO has distributed its content through partner communication channels and platforms, such as the Global Evaluation Initiative, the European Evaluation Society, and the GEF Secretariat.

24. To facilitate learning, the IEO is developing a [training](#) module on evaluation at the nexus of the environment and development for the International Program for Development Evaluation Training (IPDET), which will be delivered to participants from governmental, nongovernmental, and international organizations in person in Bern, Switzerland, in July 2022. In parallel, the IEO is developing online training on environmental evaluation that will become available for the public by December of this year.

IV. BUDGET AND HUMAN RESOURCES FOR FY23

25. The GEF Council approved the IEO budget for FY22 in the amount of \$6.046 million (Table 1). The allocation of the budget was as follows: \$5.146 million for operations and \$900,000 for evaluation work.³ The operations budget includes both fixed and variable costs. The fixed costs pertain to staffing costs, and the variable costs cover operational expenses (Table 1). In the case of the evaluation budget, FY22 focused on the delivery of the OPS7 full report and the dissemination of its findings and recommendations to internal and external GEF stakeholders. Most evaluation work is conducted by IEO staff. As in the previous two fiscal years and due to the COVID situation, the Office has not been able to fully disburse the

³ For FY23, the World Bank Group Board approved a 5 percent salary structure adjustment for HQ-appointed staff. Salary increases for all staff will continue to be linked to performance and position in the salary range. The size of the merit envelope, which can be up to 1.5 percent, will be determined after the end of the fiscal year.

approved budget, as travel restrictions are still in place. A sum of \$152,000 from the FY22 operations budget will be returned to the Trustee. The IEO continues to manage and execute the operations and evaluation budgets in strict accordance with all applicable World Bank rules and regulations. The World Bank routinely conducts quality assurance reviews to ensure that the funds are being used as intended.

26. FY23 represents the last year of the GEF-7 cycle for the IEO. The IEO is requesting a budget of \$5.364 million to cover fixed costs and operational activities (an increase of 4 percent over the approved budget for FY22) and \$243,000 for evaluation work, for a total of \$5.607 million (Table 1). The available budget for FY23 is lower than the previous fiscal years, FY19-22, following the completion and delivery of the OPS7 final report. The budget for evaluation activities will be used to initiate evaluation work for the GEF-8 period, which will eventually feed into OPS8.

27. The IEO budget request for FY23 is based on the four-year IEO program budget approved in 2019.

Table 1: Estimated IEO Budget for FY23

<i>Expense Category</i>	<i>FY22 Approved Budget</i>	<i>FY22 Estimated Expenses</i>	<i>FY23 Budget Request</i>
<i>Fixed Cost</i>			
IEO Salaries and Benefits Cost	4.472	4.200	4.728
General Operations Cost	0.545	0.490	0.531
<i>Total (A)</i>	5.017	4.690	5.259
<i>Variable Cost</i>			
Professional Development	0.020	0.030	0.020
Participations in Networks	0.034	0.040	0.020
Knowledge Management	0.075	0.040	0.065
<i>Total (B)</i>	0.129	0.110	0.105
<i>Total Annual Budget (A+B)</i>	5.146	4.800	5.364
<i>Evaluations (C)</i>	0.900	0.900	0.243
<i>Total IEO Budget (A+B+C)</i>	6.046	5.700	5.607

28. In terms of human resources, the IEO operated during FY22 with 17 staff members; there was no change in staff composition over the year. The IEO's current staff composition is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: IEO Staff

FY22 IEO Staff	
Director	1
Chief Evaluation Officer	1
Senior Evaluation Officers	4
Evaluation Officers	3
Evaluation Analysts	2
Senior Operations Officer	1
KM Officer	1
IT Analyst	1
Research Assistant	1
Senior Executive Assistant	1
Evaluation Assistant	1

29. For FY23, the IEO plans to hire three Extended Term Consultants (ETC) and one Senior Evaluation Officer. The first ETC position is for a Communications Officer, who will be responsible for the development and implementation of an IEO communication strategy. During the OPS7 exercise, the Office collected a substantial amount of evaluative evidence and

lessons that would be useful for a broad group of internal and external GEF stakeholders in decision making and/or project preparation in addition, the IEO plans to hire two evaluation analysts to mine the information emanating from the growing number of projects reaching completion.

V. DRAFT INDICATIVE WORK PROGRAM AND BUDGET FOR GEF-8

30. This section presents the indicative draft work program and the estimated IEO budget for GEF-8. The work program and budget will be formally submitted for Council approval in June 2023 Council meeting. The FY23 evaluations are addressed in the previous section on ongoing evaluations and are also included in Table 3.

31. The IEO's strategic directions for FY23–26 are defined to maximize alignment with the key strategic priorities of the GEF and the main environmental challenges expected to affect client countries over the period. The IEO's work program is designed to help the GEF enhance its impacts and better address the most relevant environmental and related development challenges faced by recipient countries.

1. Draft Proposed Work Program (FY23–25)

32. **Evaluations.** The draft proposed program of evaluations for the last year of GEF-7 and three years of the GEF-8 period (FY23–25) responds to some of the biggest strategic priorities of relevance to GEF recipient countries and donors. In all, the IEO plans to maintain its yearly delivery of four to five evaluations and the APR. It will also maintain a coverage rate of validation of approximately 160 terminal evaluations over the GEF-8 period. The IEO will also complete 30 post-completion verifications during GEF-8. Each APR will continue to include a thematic chapter on a process, policy, or focal area. The IEO will continue its program of strategic country-level evaluations (SCCEs), which will be clustered around country groups facing common environmental challenges—i.e., drylands and the Mekong River Basin. In addition, country level work is embedded in all our evaluations.

33. The IEO will conduct separate evaluations of the integrated programs as well as a formative evaluation of recent impact programs. Focal area studies that were completed in OPS7 will be updated, with an emphasis on special themes such as the Capacity-Building Initiative for Transparency. Topics and initiatives related to GEF interventions that have not been addressed in previous comprehensive evaluations of the GEF—including socioeconomic outcomes, water security, community-based approaches, and nature-based solutions—will be evaluated during this period. A focus on the private sector will be maintained in IEO evaluations in GEF-8 through an evaluation of implementation of the GEF Private Sector Engagement Strategy. An evaluation of GEF's integrated programs will look at GEF's engagement with the private sector through value chains, among other issues. An update of the nongrant instrument evaluation will also be carried out.

34. Closer to OPS8, the IEO will assess implementation of the gender, safeguards, and Indigenous Peoples policies; as well as the System for Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR), knowledge management, and results-based management—all of which are currently being revised by the GEF Secretariat. A separate evaluation of the GEF fiduciary policy and its implementation will be conducted as well.

35. All evaluations implemented between FY22 and FY25 will feed into OPS8, which will be delivered in time for the replenishment meetings in the fall of 2025 (FY26). Table 3 summarizes our planned evaluations for FY23–25. FY26 will focus on finalizing OPS8 and disseminating the findings of the comprehensive evaluation.

In response to the Council’s expressed interest in focused, real-time evaluations from the IEO to contribute to the search for effective solutions to specific environmental and program implementation challenges, the Office will continue to provide more real-time evaluation evidence. The impact programs designed in GEF-7 and GEF-8 will be evaluated using this approach and will have a strong focus on learning and process components. This work program is based on GEF-8 strategies and programming directions and will consider evolving demand for evaluations by the GEF partnership. As such, this tentative WP may be subject to adjustments before finalization and submission in June 2023.

36. **New Methodologies.** The IEO continues to push the frontier in developing and testing new methods for environmental evaluation. Complementing our earlier work on value for money approaches and frameworks for evaluating additionality and transformational change, the IEO will test approaches to measure outcome efficiency, process tracing to assess outcomes in fragile and conflict-affected situations and combine qualitative and quantitative methods to assess socioeconomic co-benefits of GEF interventions. Geospatial analysis is now an integral part of most evaluations, as are case studies. The IEO continues to partner with the STAP, relevant government agencies, and academic and research institutions to maintain its leadership in this area. The IEO will also pilot data collection efforts using drones in hard-to-reach areas and include visual profiles of intervention locations over time.

Table 3: Tentative Work Program FY23–25

FY23	FY24	FY25
<p>Impact of COVID-19 on project results (overall from TEs, PIFs case analysis)</p> <p>Evaluation of GEF’s strategy and portfolio in water security</p> <p>Annual Performance Report 2023 Special Themes: regional and global projects, cancellation policy.</p> <p>MAR 2022: special report on GEF IEO recommendations and implementation</p>	<p>Socioeconomic co-benefits in the GEF with a focus on Biodiversity and MFA projects.</p> <p>SCCE on Drylands</p> <p>Evaluation of the Sustainable Cities program (Deep dives into 2 regions)</p> <p>Evaluation of GEF Support to Combating Illegal Wildlife Trade (Include the formative evaluation of the proposed GEF-8 Wildlife IP).</p> <p>Integrated interventions in SIDS Ridge to Reef, Islands Program, GEF National Portfolio Formulation</p>	<p>Evaluation of the Country Engagement Strategy (update study)</p> <p>Evaluation of the Small Grants Program (update study)</p> <p>Food Security & Commodities IAP focused on value chains in livestock and palm oil</p> <p>Annual Performance Report 2024. Theme: STAR reforms, activity cycle, Agency resource concentration, assessment of the GEF Portal.</p> <p>Evaluation of the Implementation of the Private sector Strategy (with</p>

<p>Community-focused approaches in the GEF</p> <p>Assessment of early warning and climate information systems.</p>	<p>Exercise, CPDP: Climate Proofing Development in the Pacific.</p> <p>LDCF/SCCF 2024 LDCF program evaluation Focus on food security and health, conflict, fragility and migration, nature-based solutions, and early warning and climate information systems.</p>	<p>a special focus on programs, and progress on the NGI).</p> <p>Focal area assessment: Synthesis report (portfolio and performance by focal area -special themes include clean and healthy oceans)</p> <p>Formative Evaluation of the GEF-7 and GEF-8 Impact Programs</p> <p>Governance of the GEF, including structure of the partnership, administrative processes, decentralization, communications.</p> <p>Eighth Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF (2022-2025)-June 2025 FINAL REPORT TO COUNCIL-September 2025 (FY 2026)</p>
<p>Climate Change Mitigation - Special themes (tbd)</p> <p>Behavioral Change in GEF Interventions</p> <p>Guidance for incorporating Environment into all UN evaluations (jointly with UNEG)</p> <p>Evaluation of policy influence interventions (expansion of UNEG work)</p> <p>LDCF/SCCF LDCF/SCCF Annual Evaluation Report 2023: Review of performance of completed projects (outcomes, sustainability, quality of implementation, and M&E) and special study on Early Warning Systems.</p> <p>Updated Guidance Document: Evaluation in the LDCF/SCCF</p>	<p>Learning from Challenges – a case study-based assessment of projects</p> <p>Project efficiency in GEF interventions.</p> <p>Review of The Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT)</p> <p>Evaluation of GEF Support to Nature Based Solutions (NbS).</p> <p>LDCF/SCCF LDCF/SCCF Annual Evaluation Report 2024: Special study on nature-based solutions in LDCF/SCCF projects in collaboration with the GEF Trust Fund evaluation on this topic.</p>	<p>Review of GEF Results Based Management (data aggregation, target setting, GEB monitoring)</p> <p>Implementation of GEF Policies: deep dive into Fiduciary Policy</p> <p>Review of Knowledge Management in the GEF (assessment of the KM strategy roll out)</p> <p>LDCF/SCCF LDCF/SCCF Annual Evaluation Report 2025: Review of performance of completed projects (outcomes, sustainability, quality of implementation, and M&E)</p>

2. Tentative Budget for GEF-8 (FY24–27)

37. The IEO has requested \$30.0 million as part of the GEF-8 replenishment package. The estimated budget, which will be submitted for Council approval in June 2023, is presented. The IEO budget share as a percentage of the replenishment total has remained constant over the last three replenishment periods.

Table 4: Estimated GEF IEO GEF-8 Budget, FY24–27 (million \$)					
	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27	Total
Fixed costs					
Salaries	2.985	3.104	3.229	3.358	12.676
Benefits	2.090	2.173	2.260	2.350	8.873
Subtotal (A)	5.075	5.277	5.489	5.708	21.549
Operations	0.580	0.580	0.580	0.580	2.320
Subtotal (B)	0.580	0.580	0.580	0.580	2.320
Variable costs					
Professional development	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.300
Networks	0.040	0.040	0.040	0.040	0.160
Management	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.400
Subtotal (C)	0.215	0.215	0.215	0.215	0.860
Total D = (A+B+C)	5.870	6.072	6.284	6.503	24.729
Multiyear budget					
Evaluations	1.600	2.000	1.000	0.671	5.271
Subtotal (E)	1.600	2.000	1.000	0.671	5.271
Total (D+E)	7.470	8.072	7.284	7.174	30.000