

63rd GEF Council Meeting
November 28 – December 02, 2022
Virtual Meeting

Agenda Item 07

**REPORT ON LEAD AGENCY SELECTION PROCESS
FOR THE INTEGRATED PROGRAMS**

Recommended Council Decision

The Council, recalling its decision 9/2022 and having considered document *GEF/C.63/07, Report on Lead Agency Selection Process for the Integrated Programs*, notes the technical and analytical steps taken by the GEF Secretariat and endorses the agencies selected to lead the Integrated Programs.

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Since GEF-6, the GEF has focused on demonstrating the importance of systems transformation as a powerful approach for delivering global environmental benefits by promoting integration across GEF focal areas. Through these programs, the GEF has evolved a variety of influencing models towards delivering results across multiple geographies, sectors, and markets. In addition to responding to country-specific needs, the programs enable the GEF to better crowd-in other stakeholders, including the private sector, enhance knowledge sharing and learning, promote south-south knowledge exchange, and ensure more effective use of GEF resources. Experience from both GEF-6 and GEF-7 also showed strong country demand for the GEF to offer platforms where countries can come together around common challenges. These platforms, which were considered innovative features of the IAP programs by the IEO, provide a variety of services, from knowledge sharing to lessons learned to technology transfer, to name a few. These platforms also bring together expertise from within the network of participating countries and agencies, as well as from the wider community of practice in specific technical areas relevant to the program.

2. The [GEF-8 Programming Directions](#) includes focal area and integrated program investments to maximize potential for impactful outcomes, in line with expected country priorities for a green and blue recovery. Building on the GEF-6 and GEF-7 experience, the eleven (11) Integrated Programs¹ (IPs) are focused on tackling drivers of environmental degradation and advancing systems transformation through the integrated approach. The IPs cover the full spectrum of the GEF mandate as financial mechanism of major multilateral environmental agreements. They are also integral to the GEF-8 Theory of Change for achievement of a healthy, productive, and resilient environment which underpins the well-being of human societies. Furthermore, the scope and breadth of issues covered will specifically address the interest and needs of LDCs and SIDs, and as a result support their post-COVID-19 green and blue recovery effort and strengthen their role in safeguarding the planet.

3. The IPs will enable countries to invest focal area resources in a manner that more directly aligns with national priorities for a green and blue recovery, and for advancing transformative change in key systems. With the IPs, countries can harness synergies across focal areas and generate multiple global environmental benefits while at the same time advancing systemic change at the land and seascapes levels. As compared with multi-focal area projects, this increases efficiency and maximizes the use of GEF resources and potential for higher co-financing and impacts. This approach also allows countries to address drivers of environmental degradation and lack of policy coherence across sectors that have links to regional and global supply chains and are therefore not adequately addressed in single country projects.

¹ IPs are: 1) *Food Systems*, 2) *Ecosystem Restoration*, 3) *Sustainable Cities*, 4) *Amazon, Congo, and Critical Forest Biomes*, 5) *Circular Solutions to Plastic Pollution*, 6) *Blue and Green Islands*, 7) *Clean and Healthy Ocean*, 8) *Greening Transportation Infrastructure Development*, 9) *Net-Zero Nature-positive Accelerator*, 10) *Wildlife Conservation for Development*, and 11) *Elimination of Hazardous Chemicals from Supply Chains*

4. The IPs will be designed and delivered through the GEF programmatic approach, which requires engagement by Lead GEF Agency. During its 62nd meeting, the Council considered and approved the document GEF/C.62/05/Rev.01, which outlines the terms of reference, criteria, and process for selection of Lead Agency for the IPs. The Lead Agency is responsible for delivering on all aspects of the program — from development of the Program Framework Document (PFD)² for inclusion in a biennial work program, to establishing a governance framework that ensures that the “whole of the program is greater than sum of the parts,” to overseeing “program-level” outcomes that amplify global environmental benefits and influence systemic change, and responsibility for “program-level” monitoring and reporting. The Lead Agency is therefore critical for ensuring that the program operates in a space that enables the GEF financing to harness existing efforts by a wide range of entities including development partners, private sector, other non-state actors, and other financing institutions.

5. Because of the critical need to influence transformational change in the key economic systems targeted by each of the IPs, a Lead Agency must demonstrate strong capabilities on many fronts. In general, agencies serving in a lead role are expected to meet the following criteria: *recognized leadership (global or regional) in the specific program area; capability of convening stakeholders from all relevant sectors; capability of leveraging own resources; capability of engaging with the private sector and mobilizing their investment; capability of accessing key decision makers in recipient countries; and recognition for knowledge innovations.* Based on these criteria, GEF agencies interested in serving as lead for IPs can participate in the selection by submitting a proposal to the GEF Secretariat. In doing so, they are required to:

- Demonstrate institutional strength / comparative advantage relative to the IP-specific agenda, including institutional mandate, technical expertise, institutional capacity, and track record of achievements
- Propose a compelling vision and approach for the IP, including how the global platform in synergy with the child projects will be used to engage key stakeholders, achieve coherence and consistence in delivery, and influence systemic change, and
- Clarify approach to mobilizing resources and leveraging investment, including existing or planned initiatives that could be potentially harnessed for the IP.

6. This report outlines the process facilitated by GEF Secretariat, including steps taken to address council requests concerning engagement by STAP, securing inputs from recipient countries, and potential impacts of selected agencies on aspirational targets of agency share for GEF-8.

² In some cases, the Lead Agency may be required to prepare an *Addendum* to add countries to a program for which a PFD was already submitted and approved by Council.

II. SELECTION PROCESS

7. The Lead Agency³ selection process involved three main steps: i) issuance of call for proposals to agencies, ii) assessment of submitted proposals and recommendations by designated committees, and iii) final selection by the GEF Secretariat Leadership. The steps are based on experiences from GEF-6 and GEF-7, with improvements to enhance greater clarity of roles and responsibilities based on recommendations from *OPS7 Formative Evaluation*. In response to request by the Council, the GEF Secretariat also designed and administered a survey for recipient countries to provide inputs on the Lead Agency role. The survey was focused on the total 55 countries with child projects under the integrated programs from GEF-6 and GEF-7.

Call for Proposals

8. A Call for Proposals was issued to all 18 GEF Agencies on 15 July 2022, with deadline for submission as 20 August 2022. The call included explicit reference to the Council approved document as guidance for criteria and requirements specific to each IP. In developing the proposal for an IP, agencies were urged to organize the content into the following three main sections that served as basis for assessment:

SECTION 1 - Institutional Strength / Comparative Advantage

SECTION 2 - Vision and Approach to Designing the IP

SECTION 3 - Approach to Mobilizing Resources and Leveraging Investment

9. Agencies seeking to serve as “co-leads” were also required to submit one proposal following the format. Additionally, the proposal should include a separate note to justify the co-leading arrangement. In accordance with the Council approved document, the separate note should also outline roles and responsibilities of each agency, and how the accountability and coherence across the entire program will be assured. This should also consider GEF requirements and expectations in the Project Cycle Policy and Guidelines as they relate to the Programmatic Approach.

10. During the four-week period, the GEF Secretariat organized three separate 2-hour sessions to engage and consult with agencies on criteria and expectations for each of the IPs. All agencies were encouraged to participate in these sessions. The sessions also allowed agencies to seek clarifications from the GEF Secretariat on any issues or concerns they may have in developing their proposals.

11. By the August 20 deadline, a total of 24 proposals were received from agencies seeking to lead one or more IPs. Twelve (12) of the 18 GEF agencies were associated with at least one of the submitted proposals, while six (6) agencies – BOAD, DBSA, EBRD, FUNBIO, FECO, and UNIDO – were not directly associated with any of the submissions. Except for UNIDO which was amid

³ Selection of an Agency to serve as Lead for an IP does not preclude its selection by a country or countries to serve as Agency for child project(s) under that IP.

reorganization when the process was launched, these agencies are constrained by their geographical scope and mandate rather than lack of interest in the role of Lead Agency. Seventeen (17) of the 24 proposals were for SINGLE agency lead from the following agencies: AFDB, CI, FAO, IUCN, WB, WWF, UNDP, and UNEP (Table 1). Ten (10) of the 11 IPs attracted proposals from agencies, but agencies interested in the *Clean and Healthy Ocean* IP were not able to submit proposals before the deadline. Hence a separate call for this IP will be issued in early 2023.

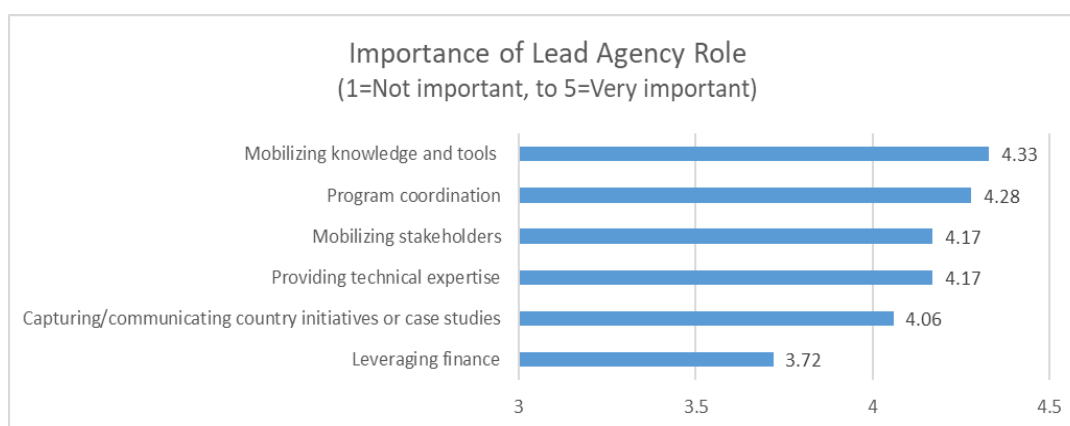
Table 1. Summary of Agency Proposal Submitted

GEF-8 Integrated Programs	Proposals Submitted
Food Systems	IFAD-FAO as co-lead WB as single lead
Ecosystem Restoration	CI as single lead IUCN as single lead UNEP-FAO as co-lead
Sustainable Cities	UNEP as single lead WB as single lead
Amazon, Congo, and Critical Forest Biomes <i>(Note: Agencies were informed by GEF Secretariat that because of the geographically distinct scope of biomes targeted under this IP, separate proposals to serve as lead for each biome will be welcome.)</i>	WB as single lead for <i>Amazon Basin</i> UNEP as single lead for <i>Congo Basin</i> IUCN-FAO as co-leads for <i>Indo-Malay</i> FAO as single lead for <i>Meso-America</i> IUCN as single lead for <i>Meso-America</i> AfDB as single lead for <i>West Africa</i> CI as single lead for <i>West Africa</i> FAO as single lead for <i>West Africa</i>
Circular Solutions to Plastic Pollution	UNEP-WWF as co-lead
Blue and Green Islands	WB as single lead UNDP as single lead
Greening Transportation Infrastructure Development	WWF as single lead
Net-Zero Nature-Positive Accelerator	IDB-UNDP as co-lead IUCN-AfDB-ADB as co-lead UNEP-ADB-CAF as co-lead
Wildlife Conservation for Development	WB as single lead
Elimination of Hazardous Chemicals from Supply Chains	UNEP as single lead

Country Consultations on Lead Agency Role

12. In response to council request,⁴ the GEF Secretariat designed and conducted an online survey to solicit inputs from recipient countries on their experiences and perceptions with Lead Agencies for the GEF-6 Integrated Approach Pilot (IAP) programs and the GEF-7 Impact Programs (IP). The survey instrument was designed to focus primarily on Lead Agency roles for program governance, knowledge management and learning, and facilitating country engagement through the coordination platforms. The survey was sent to GEF Operational Focal Points (OFPs) of all countries participating in the existing programs. After a month-long posting period, fifteen (15) of 55 countries (27.3%) targeted submitted responses to the survey.

Figure 1. OFP assessments of Lead Agency Role



13. Overall, most of the respondents (72%) confirmed that they are well aware of the Lead Agency or the programs in which their country participated, and they acknowledged the importance of the Lead Agency for key roles in supporting their countries stated in Figure 1. Some also noted the Lead Agency role in supporting monitoring and evaluation and stakeholder engagement of the country projects. Regarding program governance, OFPs confirmed that Lead Agencies were important for coordinating the country child projects, promoting coherence in the program, and linking to other regional and global initiatives and platforms. On the other hand, they expressed a higher expectation for Lead Agency support to knowledge exchange and learning, and responsiveness to changing or evolving knowledge needs of participant countries. The perspectives from countries reaffirmed the importance of these roles in the selection of agencies to lead the GEF-8 IPs.

⁴ Paragraph 12 of GEF/C.62/05/Rev.01

Review and Assessment of Proposals

14. The GEF Secretariat in consultation with STAP organized committees to review and assess the proposals for each IP. The committee for each IP included representation from the GEF Secretariat, STAP Secretariat, and STAP panel members. The committees were assigned three main tasks for the assessment of proposals: first, to assess the technical quality of the proposal along explicit dimensions; second, where multiple proposals are involved for an IP, to assess which proposal is the most innovative; and third, where co-leads are involved, to establish if the proposed co-lead arrangement is adequately justified, including approach to governance and coordination for effective delivery of the IP.

15. To ensure a consistent approach by all committees, a standard template⁵ was used for review and assessment of the proposals (see Annex 1). The committees were each designated a lead who was responsible for coordinating the assessment process, which included two steps: first, committee members individually assessed proposals for their assigned IP; second, committee members met to consolidate their assessments and decide on final ratings for each proposal. In addition to comments and ratings of criteria in the assessment template, the consolidated assessment included the committee's recommendation on whether the overall proposal was *technically sound* for the agency or agencies to be considered as lead or co-leads for an IP.

16. Using the consolidated assessments, committee leads for each IP met with GEF management to discuss the overall results, recommendations, and need for further consultation with agencies. For IPs with multiple proposals, the discussion was focused on establishing options for consideration, including any potential concerns to be addressed by selected agency or agencies during program development. For IPs with only one proposal, the discussion mainly focused on whether the committee considered the proposal technically sound for consideration of the agency or agencies involved. Finally, the discussion also considered adequacy of the co-lead arrangement for those proposals that involved two or more agencies as co-leads.

⁵ The template was an Annex to the Council approved document GEF/C.C2/05/Rev.1.

Table 2. Summary of Proposal Assessment Outcomes

(See Annex 2 for summaries and Annex 3 for overall ratings of the proposals)

GEF-8 Integrated Programs	Committee Recommendation: <i>Was the proposal Technically Sound for consideration of Agency?</i>		Proposal Follow-up Needed
	YES	NO	
Food Systems	FAO-IFAD WB	-	FAO
Ecosystem Restoration	CI UNEP-FAO	IUCN	None
Sustainable Cities	WB UNEP	-	None
Amazon, Congo, and Critical Forest Biomes			
<i>Amazon Basin</i>	WB	-	None
<i>Congo Basin</i>	UNEP	-	None
<i>Indo-Malay</i>	IUCN-FAO	-	IUCN
<i>Meso-America</i>	IUCN FAO	-	None
<i>West Africa</i>	CI FAO	AFDB	None
Circular Solutions to Plastic Pollution	UNEP-WWF	-	None
Blue and Green Islands	WB UNDP		UNDP
Greening Transportation Infrastructure Development	WWF	-	None
Net-Zero Nature-Positive Accelerator	IDB-UNDP UNEP-ADB-CAF	IUCN-AFDB-ADB	UNEP
Wildlife Conservation for Development	WB	-	None
Elimination of Hazardous Chemicals from Supply Chains	UNEP	-	None

17. Table 2 summarizes outcomes of the meeting by committee leads, including proposals for follow-up consultations with agencies, and a summary of the proposal assessment for each IP is presented in Annex 2. Overall, only three (3) of the 24 proposals did not qualify as technically sound for further consideration: AFDB for *West Africa Forest Biome*, IUCN for *Ecosystem Restoration* and IUCN-AFDB-ADB for *Net-Zero Nature-Positive Accelerator*. No further action or follow-up was recommended for these proposals.

18. Of the 21 proposals considered technically sound by the assessment committees, further consultations were needed for four: FAO-IFAD for *Food Systems*, IUCN-FAO proposal for *Indo-Malay Forest Biome*, UNDP for *Blue and Green Islands*, and UNEP-AFDB-CAF for *Net-Zero Nature-Positive Accelerator*. Since the proposals were already deemed technically sound, the

consultations were only needed to clarify issues or address questions raised during the assessment. For the IUCN-FAO proposal for *Indo-Malay Forest Biome*, the assessment committee recommended consultation with IUCN to clarify aspects related to governance of the program and proposed co-lead arrangement. Following the consultation and additional information provided by IUCN, the proposal was confirmed as technically sound for consideration.

III. FINAL LEAD AGENCY SELECTIONS

19. The committee recommendations were presented and discussed with the GEF CEO. In deciding on the final selection, the Council recommendation to consider a portfolio wide aspirational target for the regional multilateral development banks and IFAD was an important factor. This was particularly important for IPs where the MDBs and IFAD were involved with proposals to lead or co-lead alongside other GEF agencies, such as for *Food Systems*, *Sustainable Cities*, and *Net-zero Nature-Positive Accelerator*. The fact that MDBs were well represented amongst the proposals considered technically sound made it possible to accommodate the aspirational target. A final selection of Lead Agencies was made against this backdrop and the fact that most of the recommended proposals were deemed technically sound (Table 3). For programs with two proposals considered technically sound, the final selection was ultimately determined by added value of the agency or agencies for the IP as well as the need to ensure balance in representation of agencies in the lead role.

20. During the final selection, IPs with only one proposal that was recommended as technically sound by the assessment committees were first considered. As shown in Table 3, Lead Agencies for those programs were selected as recommended by the respective committees:

- *Amazon, Congo, and Critical Forest Biomes*
 - *Amazon Basin – WB*
 - *Congo Basin – UNEP*
 - *Indo-Malay Biome – IUCN as co-lead with FAO*
- *Circular Solutions to Plastic Pollution - UNEP as co-lead with WWF*
- *Greening Transportation Infrastructure Development - WWF*
- *Wildlife Conservation for Development - WB*
- *Elimination of Hazardous Chemicals from Supply Chains - UNEP*

Table 3: Final Lead Agency Selections for the GEF-8 IP

Integrated Programs	Technically Sound Proposals	Final Selection
Food Systems	FAO-IFAD WB	FAO-IFAD
Ecosystem Restoration	CI UNEP-FAO	CI
Sustainable Cities	WB UNEP	WB
Amazon, Congo, and Critical Forest Biomes		
<i>Amazon Basin</i>	WB	WB
<i>Congo Basin</i>	UNEP	UNEP
<i>Meso-America</i>	FAO IUCN	IUCN
<i>West Africa</i>	CI FAO	CI
<i>Indo-Malay</i>	IUCN-FAO	IUCN-FAO
Circular Solutions to Plastic Pollution	UNEP-WWF	UNEP-WWF
Blue and Green Islands	UNDP WB	UNDP
Greening Transportation Infrastructure Development	WWF	WWF
Net-Zero Nature-Positive Accelerator	IDB-UNDP UNEP- ADB-CAF	UNEP-ADB-CAF
Wildlife Conservation for Development	WB	WB
Elimination of Hazardous Chemicals from Supply Chains	UNEP	UNEP

21. For IPs with two or more proposals recommended as technically sound, a specific effort was made to achieve balance in representation across agencies while at the same time reflecting on specific needs for efficient delivery of the programs, including recipient country inputs from the survey. Based on this, the recommended agencies were selected as follows:

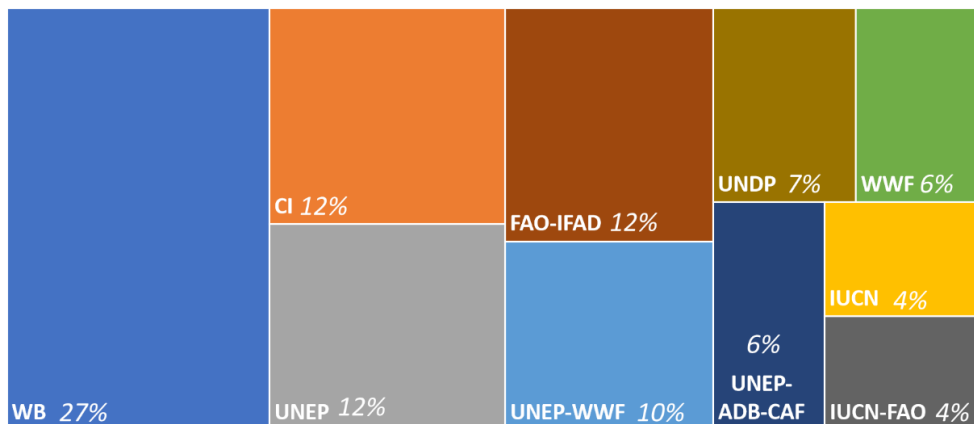
- *Food Systems* - **FAO as co-lead with IFAD**. This co-lead arrangement was considered useful for leveraging the strengths of two agencies that have a critical role to play in supporting transformative change in global food systems including engagement with diverse stakeholders. FAO has experience with previous GEF programs and both agencies are also well placed to engage other GEF agencies including MDBs.
- *Ecosystem Restoration* - **CI**. In addition to presenting an innovative approach to development of the IP, CI will bring a strong technical expertise to support restoration efforts across multiple scales and sectors.
- *Sustainable Cities* - **WB**. In addition to presenting a comparatively stronger proposal, the WB has the technical capacity, convening power, and global

influence to deliver the IP. The WB will also leverage its experience with the GEF-6 pilot for a more transformative approach.

- *Amazon, Congo, and Critical Forest Biomes*
 - *Meso-America - IUCN*. In addition to its global leadership on conservation of intact forest landscapes, IUCN has a strong track record of relevant activities in the region, including engagement with network of CSOs and countries. The agency is therefore well placed to leverage its experience for innovative policies, investments, and capacity building toward conservation and protection of intact forests landscapes.
 - *West Africa - CI*. The agency presented a compelling approach for the biome that draws on its technical strength and demonstrated capability to work from the bottom-up and with grassroot organizations, such as through the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund. In addition, CI's technical expertise on developing knowledge innovations such as irreplaceable carbon and biodiversity mapping, ecosystem profiles, will be invaluable in supporting transformative approach for the biome.
- *Blue and Green Islands - UNDP*. The agency is well placed to harness its technical strength, global SIDS presence, and ongoing work with multiple regional entities such as CARICOM and AOSIS.
- *Net-Zero Nature-Positive Accelerator - UNEP-ADB-CAF*. This co-lead proposal brings together three agencies with complementary strengths. With the two regional MDBs as co-leads, UNEP is well-placed to leverage its technical and scenario modelling capacities, and existing platforms to support successful delivery of the IP.

22. The final selection includes ten (10) of the 12 GEF agencies that were directly associated with submitted proposals as leads or co-leads, including three (3) MDBs and IFAD. AfDB and IDB were the only two agencies that submitted proposals and were not selected. Since the actual GEF-8 resources to be programmed under the IPs are dependent on country participation, the breakdown of global platform amounts is used as proxy for the agency share (Figure 2). Based on this, the WB accounts for highest share (27%) of IP resources allocated for the global platforms.

Figure 2. Distribution of Global Platform Amounts by Agencies selected to Lead Integrated Programs



IV. CONCLUSION

23. The selection of Lead Agencies was only the first step toward an effective process for delivering the IPs. While the proposals submitted by agencies provided some initial perspectives on program design, the selection clears the way for development of the Program Framework Document, which will benefit from GEF Secretariat and STAP inputs. This will ensure that programming expectations related to systems thinking, theory of change, transformational change, and knowledge management and learning are appropriately addressed.

24. With Lead Agency selection now concluded for all but one of the IPs, the process for country selection will be launched by the GEF Secretariat. In preparation for the launch, the GEF Secretariat has initiated a series of regional workshops to ensure all recipient countries are fully informed about criteria and requirements for their participation in the programs. Lead Agency selection for the *Clean and Healthy Ocean* IP will be relaunched in early 2023 and completed ahead of the June Council meeting.

ANNEX 1: GENERIC TEMPLATE FOR ASSESSMENT OF LEAD AGENCY PROPOSALS

Review Criteria and Questions	Qualitative Assessment	Score ⁶ HIGH = 3, MODERATE = 2, LOW = 1
INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTH / COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE		
1. Does the agency clearly articulate its strengths/comparative advantages as relevant to the IP?		
2. Did the agency clearly demonstrate how its strengths/comparative advantage will be deployed toward effectively delivering the IP objectives ?		
3. Did the agency demonstrate capability and commitment toward convening relevant stakeholders and partners that are critical for the IP agenda?		
4. How the agency foresees to facilitate and encourage the participation of a wide variety of agencies for the implementation of child projects, taking into account country drivenness and regional differences?		
PROGRAM DESIGN FRAMEWORK		
5. Is proposed framework in line with the IP strategy in the GEF-8 programming directions document?		
6. Does the proposal include a clear vision of how global/regional Child Project will be linked with country investments ?		
7. Does the agency propose a clear vision for the global/regional Child Project that will help catalyze the needed systems change?		
8. Does the agency provide a clear and valid explanation of the role of private sector and how to involve them in the IP?		
9. Does the agency provide a clear explanation on the involvement of women, youth, civil society, indigenous peoples and local communities?		
10. How will the agency facilitate and drive transformational change in the context of the IP?		
RESOURCE MOBILIZATION AND INVESTMENT LEVERAGE		
11. Does the proposal include a clear vision for expected finance to be mobilized across the IP? Is the vision clear and are the estimates realistic?		

⁶ **3-HIGH** = Strong evidence provided; **2-MODERATE** = Some evidence provided; **1-LOW** = Limited evidence provided.

12. Does the agency provide clear and realistic estimates, type (i.e., leveraged investment and others) and source of co-financing ?		
13. Does the agency vision include capability of leveraging its own resources for the IP?		
TOTAL SCORE		

Summary Recommendation:

- 1) Does the overall proposal provide adequate evidence and justification for the agency to be considered as Lead for the IP?
- 2) If yes, are there areas that warrant follow-up discussion if necessary to strengthen the case?
- 3) If no, what aspects make it unlikely for the agency to assume this role?

ANNEX 2: SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL ASSESSMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Amazon, Congo Basin, and Critical Forest Biomes

The agency selection for this IP was considered for the five distinct geographies targeted for the global significance of their forest biomes for a *Healthy People, Healthy Planet*: Amazon, Congo Basin, Indo-Malay, Meso-America, and West Africa. This approach will ensure that a dedicated Lead Agency for each region will leverage its strengths to support program design and delivery in accordance with the unique circumstances of countries and specific needs for safeguarding integrity of the forest biomes. Proposals submitted by the agencies were based on this consideration and assessed accordingly by the designated committees. Eight (8) proposals were considered as follows:

- a. WB as single lead for *Amazon Basin*
- b. UNEP as single lead for *Congo Basin*
- c. IUCN in a co-lead arrangement with FAO for *Indo-Malay*
- d. FAO as single lead for *Meso-America*
- e. IUCN as single lead for *Meso-America*
- f. AfDB as single lead for *West Africa*
- g. CI as single lead for *West Africa*
- h. FAO as single lead for *West Africa*

Amazon Basin Forest Biome - The assessment committee determined that the WB proposal is strong and provides solid evidence and justification for selection of the WB as lead. In addition to demonstrating the agency's proven capacity and commitment to the Amazon basin, the proposal highlighted technical expertise and community of practice already in place, convening power within and beyond the region including collaboration with other GEF agencies, and potential to leverage co-financing. The proposal also includes a clear framework to deliver on priorities to amplify outcomes beyond those of existing programs. While these strengths were considered adequate for Lead Agency role, the committee highlighted need for the agency to focus more explicitly on approach to advance transformational change, promote policy coherence through the regional platform, and reinforce private sector engagement.

Congo Basin Forest Biome - The UNEP proposal to serve as single lead builds on the agency's current lead of the GEF-7 Congo Basin Sustainable Landscapes Impact Program. The assessment committee determined that the proposal adequately demonstrated the agency's strength on science, convening power with national governments, and links with relevant initiatives in the Central Africa region. While these were deemed adequate to justify selection of the agency for the GEF-8 program, the committee highlighted a few issues that will need to be addressed during development of the program. Of particular concern are the need to target intact forests and landscape connectivity issues, advance transformational change in management of the biome, and engage key stakeholders including financing entities and private sector toward investing in integrated solutions.

Indo-Malayan Critical Forest Biome – The assessment committee determined that the co-lead proposal from IUCN demonstrated broad alignment with the basic components of the IP and clarified how technical strengths of both agencies will be harnessed including existing technical initiatives and networks. However, the committee identified several concerns that needed further consultation with the agencies. Of particular concern are the value-added of a co-lead arrangement regarding roles and responsibilities for the program, approach to leveraging investments, and the need to achieve coherence and economies of scale in a region that is a very fragmented and dispersed, potentially spanning some 7,000 square kilometer with a strongly uneven distribution of intact forest landscapes. Following the consultation and additional information provided by IUCN, the proposal now reflects a clearer awareness of the complexity of governance challenges in the region and offered a much more differentiated treatment of agency roles in the co-lead arrangement proposed. The committee, however, noted that development of an appropriate governance framework should be a priority when preparing the Program Framework Document for the Biome.

Meso-America Critical Forest Biome – The assessment committee established that proposals from both FAO and IUCN were adequate to justify either agency as lead for the biome. However, the proposal from IUCN was considered strongest of the two based on track record of relevant activities in the region, engagement with network of CSOs and countries, global leadership on conservation of intact forest landscapes, and relevant partnering in the IP arrangements such as with the World Conservation Society. The proposal also includes an explicit focus on systems transformation, with a clear regional-level commitment to leverage the IP for innovative policies, investments, and capacity building toward conservation and protection of intact forests landscapes in Meso-America. While the FAO proposal equally makes a strong case based on global mandate for forests, regional presence, and track record of activities, aspects related to conservation of intact forest landscapes were not adequately demonstrated.

West Africa Critical Forest Biome - The assessment committee was unanimous on the strong quality of the proposal from CI. The FAO proposal had some merits but not to the extent as those in the CI proposal. The assessment committee established that the proposal from AfDB did not present a compelling case for further consideration. The CI proposal presented good evidence to support the agency as lead and builds on the agency's strengths and comparative advantage working the region. In addition to providing a good analysis of the main pressures on biodiversity and interventions to achieve transformational change, the proposal includes the compelling track record and technical capacity of the agency and vision of a biome-wide approach to maintain ecological integrity. The agency's technical strength is also complemented by demonstrated capability to work from the bottom-up and with grassroot organizations such as through the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund and developing knowledge innovations such as irreplaceable carbon and biodiversity mapping, ecosystem profiles, which can underpin global environment benefits.

Blue and Green Islands

Two proposals were submitted for this IP as follows:

- a. UNDP as single lead*
- b. WB as single lead*

Overall, the assessment committee determined that both the UNDP and WB proposals provided adequate evidence and justification for either agency to be considered as lead. The committee noted that the WB proposal was strong on both technical level (specific to valuation, Natural Capital Accounting, Nature-based Solutions) and potential to leverage key organizations, the private sector, and others. Furthermore, the WB's economy wide development programming lends itself to promoting policy coherence. For the UNDP proposal, the committee note the agency's comparative advantage with high level technical skill and support (such as BioFin), global SIDS presence, and ongoing work with multiple regional entities such as The Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) and Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS). Additionally, UNDP's Rise-Up Offer for the SIDS could provide a strong foundation to GEF investments. A follow-up consultation also helped to clarify concerns about how the agency will ensure that the overall program development supports advancement of transformational change in the SIDS. Along with the demonstrated capabilities and thought leadership in areas relevant to the IP, the committee noted that the UNDP experience and engagement with SIDS gave it an additional edge to serve as Lead Agency.

Circular Solutions to Plastic Pollution

Only a single proposal was submitted as follows:

- a. UNEP in a co-lead arrangement with WWF*

The assessment committee determined that the proposal provided ample justification and evidence for UNEP and WWF to serve as co-leads for the IP. The proposal adequately highlighted strengths of the two agencies and included a theory of change that is consistent with overall vision for achieving impactful outcomes. The committee highlighted several issues that will need to be considered by the agencies in developing the program, such as shifting from an overemphasis on downstream measures (i.e. collection, recycling, landfill) to the fully lifecycle including upstream solutions (i.e. elimination, alternative materials, reuse systems); engagement of the stakeholders along the entire plastic value chain (e.g. farmers, plastic producers, innovators, major corporations) as well as key influencers from outside the chain (e.g. tech companies); and, reducing duplicity between the proposed Plastic Smart Cities and national child projects.

Ecosystem Restoration

Proposals were submitted by three agencies as follows:

- a. CI as single lead*
- b. UNEP in a co-lead arrangement with FAO*
- c. IUCN as single lead (with support from WWF)*

While all three proposals demonstrated strong capabilities of the agencies involved, only those by CI and UNEP were considered technically sound for the IP. The assessment committee concluded that the proposal by CI was the most innovative in its approach to addressing specific needs of the IP. It also made the best case on how the Lead Agency's rationale and experience will be employed in designing the IP and implementing interventions on systems change. The co-lead proposal from UNEP was noted for links with the UN Decade of Restoration and the extensive experience of the two agencies working with stakeholders on ecosystem restoration across multiple scales. However, the potential for inclusion of other agencies and the approach influencing systems transformation were inadequate. CI was therefore considered the first choice to serve as Lead Agency for the IP.

Elimination of Hazardous Chemicals from Supply Chains

Only a single proposal was submitted for this IP as follows:

- a. UNEP as single lead*

The assessment committee concluded that that the proposal was of sufficient quality to justify selection of UNEP as lead for the IP. The committee noted UNEP's proven track record in leading complex chemicals and waste programs in the GEF and clear articulation of its approach to leveraging the strengths of partner agencies. The proposal also included a theory of change that weaves together two supply chains (fashion and construction) and proposes a pathway to drive change by spurring the production of new materials and working upstream to influence demand for new, sustainable materials and practices. The committee noted, however, that several areas will need to be addressed by UNEP for ensuring a transformative program, particularly approach to leveraging co-financing, stakeholder engagement including indigenous peoples and local communities.

Food Systems

Two proposals were submitted for this IP as follows:

- a. WB as single lead*
- b. FAO in a co-lead arrangement with IFAD*

Both proposals were deemed by the assessment committee as adequate to justify the agencies' leadership of the IP. The committee noted, however, that while the WB proposal was strong on operational efficiency and effectiveness, scale of tangible investments and potential for in-

country policy dialogue, there was not enough detail on how the agency will foster a more a transformative approach. Instead, the GEF-8 IP was merely presented as an opportunity to expand the GEF-7 program, with limited focus on systems transformation and external engagement. On the other hand, the assessment committee noted that the FAO co-lead proposal was adequately framed to support transformative change in food systems including engagement with diverse stakeholders but presents a coordination structure that is complex and could present challenges for supporting countries. While either proposal is considered adequate for selection of Lead Agency, the committee had to consult with FAO for clarification of the governance arrangement and how this will be addressed prior to developing the program.

Greening Transportation Infrastructure Development

Only a single proposal was submitted for this IP as follows:

c. WWF as single lead

The assessment committee considered the proposal as adequate for WWF to serve as the single Lead Agency. The committee noted that bringing together the demonstrated convening power of WWF in the infrastructure space along with UNEP's global governance function, and the strength and experience of the participating MDBs (AfDB, IADB, EBRD, ADB) in a "consortium" was appropriate. The proposal also includes a well-developed theory of change, a governance mechanism to ensure (policy) coherence at the program level, and a robust approach and clear vision to knowledge management, which involve plans for the creation of a knowledge hub and a Global Platform. The proposed approach and theory of change include clear references to innovative approaches and solutions, which cover both 'product' and 'process' innovation and involve both project design and operational delivery on the ground. The committee highlighted key issues that need to be addressed during development of the program, including refinement of theory of change to include assumptions and stress-testing, engagement by other important infrastructure donors at regional and subregional level, and a stronger articulation of UNEP's role and added value in the platform.

Net-Zero Nature-Positive Accelerator

Three proposals were submitted for this IP, all of which were for co-lead arrangements as follows:

- a. IDB in a co-lead arrangement with UNDP*
- b. IUCN in a co-lead arrangement with AfDB & ADB*
- c. UNEP in a co-lead arrangement with ADB & CAF*

The assessment committee concluded that the IDB and UNEP proposals provided adequate evidence and justification for the co-lead arrangements to be considered. The IDB proposal follows the logic of the IP strategy and presented a good vision for the whole-of-economy deep decarbonization and alignment of climate strategies with nature-positive considerations. The proposal also includes the creation of a MDB Collaborative Mechanism to engage others MDBs

and potentially leverage the prospective MDBs Long-term support (LTS) Facility. The committee noted that while the co-lead arrangement will bring to the table good platforms to build on, including IDB's nationally determined contributions (NDC) platform and UNDP Climate Promise, the logic of having IDB as de facto lead and UNDP as co-lead was not strong. The committee considered the UNEP proposal as technically solid, building on the technical, scenario modelling capacities of UNEP, and engagement by two regional development banks as co-leads. The proposal also highlighted how relevant existing platforms at UNEP would be leveraged to add value to the IP. The committee identified a few areas for clarification, including how the two RDBs will be leveraged through the co-lead arrangement for successful development of the IP. After consultation with UNEP, the committee concluded that the UNEP's co-lead arrangement with ADB and CAF was most appropriate for the IP. The committee noted that the IUCN co-lead proposal did not provide adequate evidence of the ability of co-leads and was almost exclusively focused on nature-based solutions with not details on how other sectors would be covered. For these reasons, the committee concluded that the proposal did not provide enough evidence and justification for the co-lead arrangement to be further considered.

Sustainable Cities

Proposals were submitted by the two agencies as follows:

- a. UNEP as single lead*
- b. WB as single lead*

The assessment committee concluded that both proposals from the WB and UNEP were of good enough quality for either agency to be considered for lead role of the IP. Since both agencies have track record with leading sustainable cities programs in GEF-6 (WB) and GEF-7 (UNEP), the proposals highlighted how each will build on and leverage the experiences with those programs. The UNEP proposal included some innovative ideas such as the engagement of national financial institutions, a Solutions Accelerator, and an Investors Hub which can be transformative. The committee determined, however, that the WB proposal was comparatively stronger than the UNEP proposal in demonstrating technical capacity, convening power, and global influence to deliver the IP. The potential for financial leverage for the IP gives the WB an edge over UNEP as Lead Agency. The assessment committee highlighted the following aspects that need to be considered in developing the IP: stronger engagement with the scientific community and civil society to ensure science-based and inclusive growth approaches, greater ownership by partners, greater focus on digital and other technology innovations, and a theory of change to support urban transformation.

Wildlife Conservation for Development

Only a single proposal was submitted for this IP as follows:

a. WB as single lead

The assessment committee determined that the proposal provided ample justification and evidence for WB to serve as lead for the IP. In addition to adequately articulating approach to co-ordination and governance for the program, the proposal made a compelling case for leveraging the WB's proven track record and experience with other GEF programs on wildlife conservation and development, including its strengths and comparative advantage as a convener of partnerships with a range of stakeholders. The committee highlighted key issues for the agency to consider in development of the GEF-8 program to foster transformational and systems change through sustainable management and conservation of terrestrial, coastal, and marine wildlife and ecosystems. This included the need to consider dynamic with changing markets, shifting behaviours, and other emerging issues relating to illegal wildlife trade.

ANNEX 3. ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE RATINGS OF LEAD AGENCY PROPOSALS

(Note: The number is the total rating from a maximum of 39; “Co-Lead” means the agency was associated with one of the proposals in a co-lead arrangement)

GEF-8 Integrated Programs	WB	IDB	AfDB	ADB	IFAD	CAF	FAO	UNEP	UNDP	CI	IUCN	WWF
Food Systems	28				Co-Lead		29					
Ecosystem Restoration							Co-Lead	30		37	27	
Sustainable Cities	30							27				
Amazon, Congo, and Critical Forest Biomes												
<i>Amazon</i>	34											
<i>Congo</i>								28				
<i>Guinean Forest</i>			13				23			33		
<i>Meso-America</i>							25				33	
<i>Indo-Malay</i>							Co-Lead				29	
Circular Solutions to Plastic Pollution								32				Co-Lead
Blue and Green Islands	25								30			
Clean and Healthy Oceans												
Greening Transportation Infrastructure Development												31
Net-Zero Nature-Positive Accelerator		29	Co-Lead	Co-Lead		Co-Lead		34	Co-Lead		29	
Wildlife Conservation for Development	37											
Elimination of Harmful Chemicals from Supply Chains								31				