



GEF/E/C. 64/ 03/Rev.01

June 28, 2023

GEF Council
June 26-30, 2023
Brasilia, Brazil

Agenda Item 12

**FOUR-YEAR WORK PROGRAM AND BUDGET OF THE
GEF INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OFFICE: GEF-8**
(Prepared by the GEF Independent Evaluation Office)

Recommended Council Decision

The Council, having reviewed document GEF/ME/C.64/03/Rev.01 the “Four-Year Work Program and Budget of the GEF Independent Evaluation Office: GEF-8”

- (1) Approves the annual IEO budget for FY24 for a total of \$8.34 million, which includes the Indirect overhead charge of 11% applied by the World Bank Group.
- (2) Approves the work program for GEF-8 including the preparations for the Eighth Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1 This four-year work program and budget presents the strategy and programming of all evaluations and other work of the Independent Evaluation Office proposed for the GEF-8 period. The work program has been developed to provide evaluative evidence pertaining to the major strategies approved in the Eighth Replenishment of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Trust Fund and reflected in the GEF-8 Programming Directions. The work program contains both accountability-focused and developmental evaluations that will generate lessons for GEF programming. The evaluations will focus on the results, impact, and performance of the GEF and will evaluate key questions related to GEF strategies—including delivering multiple benefits through the impact programs and addressing drivers of global environmental change. The evaluations have been developed strategically to build up to the Eighth Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF (OPS8). Furthermore, the work program proposes to update and further strengthen guidance and evaluation methodologies in key areas, including the evaluations of programs. The work program also emphasizes the need to strengthen knowledge management, learning, and evaluation utilization.

2 The GEF-8 budget allocation agreed on for the IEO during the Eighth Replenishment is \$30.0 million. The budget includes salaries and benefits, operational costs, travel costs, costs for consultants and advisory support, and publications. The FY24 budget request is for \$8.34 million and includes the indirect overhead of 11 percent by the World Bank.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary.....	iii
Overview	1
Proposed Evaluations for GEF-8 by Theme and Scope	2
1. Integrated Approaches and Impact Programs.....	2
2. Addressing Drivers of Global Environmental Change: Thematic Evaluations.....	5
3. Evaluating GEF Performance and Institutional Policies	8
Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF: OPS8.....	9
Policy Guidance and Methodological Development.....	9
1. Terminal Evaluation Guidelines	9
2. Methodologies to Measure Impacts.....	10
Knowledge Management and Learning.....	10
1. Recent Activities.....	10
2. Fourth International Conference on Integrating Environmental and Socioeconomic Domains for Sustainability.....	12
Final Budget Report on GEF-7 and Estimated Budget for the IEO for FY24	12
1, IEO Total Budget Execution for GEF-7	12
3. FY24 Budget Request	13
4. IEO Staffing.....	15
Annex: Indicative IEO Evaluation Program FY23–26	16

TABLES

Table 1: IEO GEF-7 total execution budget, in million \$	13
Table 2: IEO GEF-8 FY24 budget request, in million \$	14
Table 3: IEO staffing FY24	15

OVERVIEW

1. During GEF-8, the work program of the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) will continue to build on its past work, recognized for its independence and credibility.¹ The IEO will continue to provide feedback on the performance, results, and impacts of GEF support by focusing and organizing its work program around key evaluative issues, while enhancing the utility of the evaluations to the GEF partnership. Knowledge management activities will focus on greater dissemination of evaluation findings to promote learning across the GEF partnership and external stakeholders. The IEO will strive to remain at the forefront of evaluation approaches and methodologies, and it will contribute to creating and sharing knowledge through participation in evaluation communities and dissemination events.

2. The role of evaluation is to look back and determine what was accomplished, how, and why. But to remain relevant, evaluations must consider the current and future needs of those who will use the knowledge produced. Particularly important is that the evaluations address key strategic issues of the organization in a comprehensive and timely manner. Thus, while the IEO will continue to provide quality evaluations on the impacts, results, and performance of the GEF for accountability purposes, the GEF-8 evaluation work program (annex) is organized around key issues derived from the Eighth Replenishment of the GEF Trust Fund and directly relevant to the GEF-8 Programming Directions. To this end, the IEO has organized its GEF-8 work program around the following evaluative issues:

- (a) The extent, mechanisms, and conditions by which GEF support has identified and delivered integrated solutions and multiple benefits, with a special focus on the integrated approach and impact programs
- (b) The extent, mechanisms, and conditions by which GEF support has addressed drivers of environmental degradation
- (c) The performance of the GEF, its institutional policies and practices, and the overall health and governance of the GEF partnership

3. Many of these topics are not completely new to the GEF, or to the GEF IEO. The overall approach presented in the GEF-8 strategy, which gives increased attention to the transformation of systems at scale through the continuation and expansion of integrated programs, is very much in line with the recommendations of the IEO in its Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Overall Performance Studies/Comprehensive Evaluations of the GEF (OPS5, OPS6, and OPS7).

4. During GEF-7, the IEO work program addressed issues such as impact and sustainability and the drivers of environmental degradation—within and across focal areas; and within country groups, including small island developing states (SIDS), least developed countries, and fragile and conflict-affected situations—through a spectrum of thematic evaluations, focal area studies, strategic country cluster evaluations, and formative evaluations. The performance of the GEF partnership was

¹ Report of the Second Professional Peer Review of the GEF Evaluation Function (GEF/ME/C.46/06).

evaluated by assessing the various GEF modalities, the Country Support Program, and policy and governance dimensions critical to the functioning of the GEF as a system. This work, conducted as part of [OPS7](#), provides a foundation on which to further build and refine the data, methods, and approaches to address the GEF-8 strategic priorities and emerging issues. Evaluations conducted between 2022 and 2025 will culminate in the Eighth Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF (OPS8), which will build on all evaluative evidence generated through the four-year period. The approach paper for OPS8 will be presented to the Council in June 2024.

5. In addition to the evaluative work for the GEF Trust Fund, the IEO provides support to the two adaption funds managed by the GEF: the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) and the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF). The four-year work program and budget will be submitted to the LDCF/SCCF Council in June 2023. The evaluative work for these funds is submitted to LDCF/SCCF Council in the LDCF/SCCF annual evaluation report (AER) and through special thematic reports. During FY23--25, the IEO will report on completed LDCF/SCCF projects, LDCF and SCCF program evaluations, and special studies and other assessments, in line with the GEF Programming Strategy on Adaptation in the AER. OPS8 will also synthesize conclusions and evaluative evidence on GEF support of adaptation to climate change.

6. The IEO will continue reporting to the Council by providing full reports on completed evaluations at every Council meeting as working documents. The presentation to the Council will also include progress on other IEO work for the reporting period. The annual performance report, (APR) including review of the management action record MAR, will continue to be presented as an information document.

PROPOSED EVALUATIONS FOR GEF-8 BY THEME AND SCOPE

7. The annex presents the indicative IEO work program for GEF-8. This section provides a brief description of the various evaluation themes. The proposed work program was developed by the IEO taking into consideration the inputs from Agencies and their evaluation units, the GEF Council, and the GEF Secretariat. Sufficient flexibility is built in to respond to new and emerging issues that are of concern to the Council and GEF Partnership.

1. Integrated Approaches and Impact Programs

8. Beginning in GEF-6, the GEF has shifted toward integrated approach programs that seek to address the drivers of environmental degradation and capture synergies and multiple benefits across the focal areas. These programs are designed to contribute to each of the focal area strategies of the GEF, corresponding to the global environmental agreements while concomitantly delivering multiple benefits across these agreements. Three pilot programs were structured around major emerging drivers of global environmental challenges: two addressed urbanization and commodity-driven deforestation; the third entailed resilient food systems in the drylands of Sub-Saharan Africa. The IEO conducted a formative evaluation of these three integrated approach pilots and included them in OPS6.

9. Building on the GEF-6 experiences, a set of impact programs were introduced in GEF-7 to promote transformational shift in key economic systems that meet multiple convention goals and form an integral component of each focal area strategy. The GEF supported implementation of three impact programs: the Sustainable Cities Impact Program; the Food Systems, Land Use, and Restoration Impact Program, and the Sustainable Forest Management Impact Program. During GEF-7, the IEO once again conducted an evaluation of the integrated approach pilots and a review of the designs of the impact programs. Included in this evaluation were several child projects launched under the integrated approach pilots, including the Sustainable Cities Program, Taking Deforestation out of the Commodity Supply Chains, and the Food security pilot in Sub-Saharan Africa, which were approved in GEF-6.

10. In GEF-8, integrated programs are being designed to promote blue and green recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. These programs seek to (1) promote the integration of actions across sectors (e.g., agriculture and conservation), focal areas, and supply chains; (2) complement country-level investments with transboundary action and impact at regional or global scales; (3) mobilize a diverse coalition of stakeholders from relevant sectors for system transformation; (4) promote greater private sector engagement; and (5) foster knowledge sharing and learning. The following integrated programs have been approved for GEF-8:

- Sustainable Cities
- Food Systems
- Ecosystem Restoration
- Amazon, Congo, and Critical Forest Biomes
- Circular Solutions to Plastic Pollution
- Blue and Green Islands
- Clean and Healthy Oceans
- Net-Zero Nature-Positive Accelerator
- Wildlife Conservation for Development
- Greening Transportation Infrastructure Development
- Elimination of Hazardous Chemicals from Supply Chains

11. For OPS8, the IEO is conducting several evaluations covering these integrated programs as several child projects launched under the Sustainable Cities Program, taking deforestation out of the commodity supply chains and food security pilot in Sub-Saharan Africa, which were approved in GEF-6, are closed or under implementation, and can now be evaluated. With evidence on performance now available, the IEO will, for OPS8, conduct separate evaluations of several integrated program initiatives, including those addressing sustainable cities, drylands, wildlife, and food systems and land use, as well as integrated programs in SIDS; all of these will cover closed, ongoing, and recently approved projects. The GEF Support to Sustainable Forest Management evaluation was presented to the 62nd Council will feed into OPS8. In addition, the IEO will carry out a formative review of the

other new impact programs and global projects recently approved in GEF-7 and GEF-8 focusing on design, quality at entry aspects before the first replenishment meeting for GEF-8. While evaluating these integrated programs, the IEO will also keep track of benefits and results in specific focal areas to assess their alignment with conventions' guidance and reporting requirements. The evaluation will also seek to assess the value added of the integrated program approach.

Evaluations on integrated programs that are currently under way include the following:

12. **Evaluation of Integrated Interventions in SIDS.** SIDS share certain geophysical constraints, environmental challenges, and economic vulnerabilities due to their small size, geographic remoteness, and fragile environments; further, they have a history of regional cooperation and whole-of-island approaches to tackle these issues and challenges. The IEO SIDS Strategic Country Cluster Evaluation (SCCE) found that multifocal area projects form the largest share of the GEF-4 to GEF-6 project portfolio and recommended that the GEF increase the number of integrated interventions in SIDS. This evaluation will build on the previous SCCE and follow up on its findings and recommendation regarding integrated interventions. It will assess integrated approaches including in the Ridge to Reef, Climate Proofing Development in the Pacific, and Implementing Sustainable Low and Non-Chemical Development in SIDS initiatives. 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 policy coherence of these programs and 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 June 2024 Council meeting.

13. **Evaluation of GEF Support to Combating Illegal Wildlife Trade.** The GEF Global Partnership on Wildlife Conservation and Crime Prevention for Sustainable Development (GWP) has several national child projects and a global project to coordinate, provide technical resources, and foster knowledge exchange among the child projects. The GWP continued under the GEF-7 replenishment cycle in 2019, and the GEF approved an integrated program to address illegal wildlife trade in GEF-8. The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the outcome and results from the ongoing and completed GEF illegal wildlife trade projects, report on findings and lessons, and provide practical recommendations. This evaluation builds on the 2017 formative evaluation of the GWP, which mainly focused on program design and structure, as the child projects were in the early stages of implementation. The present evaluation will examine the implementation and results of ongoing and completed GWP global and national child projects; it will also include a formative assessment of the recently approved GEF-8 Wildlife Conservation for Development integrated program. The evaluation will be presented to the June 2024 Council meeting.

14. **Evaluation of the Sustainable Cities Program.** The Sustainable Cities Program was launched in 2016 as a pilot and subsequently transformed into a long-term program. The program activities typically address city governance, coherence in policies and land use, capacity building, and engagement with stakeholders. Through June 2022, the program had covered 51 cities over 17 countries. The program has provided \$310 million in GEF funding, along with raising over \$4.0 billion in cofinancing pledges. Much of the GEF financing provided through the program has been used for

planning and implementation of climate change actions; a sizable number of cities have also used it to support activities related to protected area management, land restoration, and wetland management. During the pilot phase of the Sustainable Cities Program (2016–18), the GEF provided financing for activities in 28 cities in 11 countries, along with financing for the Global Platform for Sustainable Cities. As implementation of these activities nears completion, it is timely to learn from the experience and draw lessons to improve the program. It is also important to assess how the activities funded by the program in GEF-7 are being implemented. The IEO is evaluating the Sustainable Cities Program, with the report to be presented to the Council in 2024. The evaluation will assess the program’s design, implementation experience, results of the activities implemented during the pilot phase, utility of the knowledge platform, sustainability, and value added by the GEF. It will also draw lessons that may improve the program.

2. Addressing Drivers of Global Environmental Change: Thematic Evaluations

15. Through evaluations of clusters of GEF projects addressing a common set of concerns and through focal area studies, the IEO will assess GEF performance in addressing the drivers of global environmental change in its programming. These evaluations will be scaled at the country, regional, or global level, as most appropriate to the issues and concerns under examination. In GEF-7, some of these studies included GEF contributions to innovation, focal area studies in international waters, land degradation, climate change, chemicals and waste, and biodiversity. Several evaluations based on focal areas will be included in OPS8, notably on sustainable forest management, nature-based solutions to address climate change, climate information early warning systems, water security, and GEF support in phasing out PCBs. These focal area-oriented studies will assess GEF strategies and effectiveness and will provide lessons for future interventions. Other evaluation themes include community based approaches in the GEF, the small grants program, GEF support to phasing out PCBs, GEF engagement with the private sector, The Capacity-Building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT), the Challenge Program for Adaptation, socio economic co-benefits of GEF interventions, Nature based Solutions, policy coherence, GEF policies and practices related to gender, safeguards, and Indigenous Peoples, the country engagement strategy, and knowledge and results based management in the GEF.

Highlights of thematic evaluations that are currently under way follow.

16. **Evaluation of GEF Support to Climate Information and Early Warning Systems.** Climate information and early warning systems (CIEWS) are a vital part of reducing vulnerability to the impacts of climate change and building climate change resilience. Strengthening these systems has been a commonly deployed intervention for the LDCF and has also been addressed by several GEF Trust Fund, SCCF, and multitrust fund projects. A detailed review of projects addressing CIEWS would fill a knowledge gap in the performance and trends of an intervention that has been elevated to a priority theme in the GEF-8 Programming Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change. The evaluation intends to understand the relevance and effectiveness of these interventions, including their outcomes and the mechanisms used to achieve these outcomes. It also aims to identify lessons applicable to the GEF’s future programming of CIEWS interventions. The evaluation is using a variety of methods, including a portfolio review of projects addressing CIEWS, a summary of best practices in

CIEWS, project site visits, and key informant interviews. The work for this evaluation will be presented to the December 2023 Council.

17. **Evaluation of Community-Based Approaches in the GEF.** Projects that use community-based approaches at the GEF are those that are designed to use a people-centered approach for management of natural resources, characterized by participation of local communities and resource users (including indigenous people, women, youth, and marginalized or vulnerable people) in decision-making activities. This evaluation will assess the characteristics of community-based approaches in GEF projects and programs and the extent to which these approaches influence the effectiveness and sustainability of GEF interventions and provide lessons on their use. With the understanding that these approaches may not have universal applicability, the evaluation will also consider the merits and challenges associated with the use of these approaches in the GEF focal areas and implementation mechanisms. In addition to environmental considerations, the evaluation will provide data on socioeconomic co-benefits, gender, and inclusion. This evaluation will be presented to the December 2023 Council.

18. **Strategic Country-Level Cluster Evaluations.** SCCEs were introduced with the objective of assessing the multiple benefits of GEF support and whether GEF projects and portfolios in countries have addressed and are addressing the driving forces of global environmental change. The SCCEs share two overarching objectives: (1) to assess GEF results and sustainability in terms of environmental benefits and associated socioeconomic co-benefits, and (2) to assess the relevance and performance of GEF support toward these areas' main environmental challenges from the countries' perspective. In addition, SCCEs assess gender, the resilience and fragility of the operational context, engagement with the private sector, and indigenous peoples as cross-cutting issues, when applicable.

19. In GEF-8, the IEO will conduct three SCCEs—a cluster of countries in the Lower Mekong River Basin ecosystem where the GEF has had a long history of implementation; in countries with major drylands with one-fifth of the total GEF-4, GEF-5, GEF-6, and GEF-7 funding; and in South America, in the Amazon countries. The selection of country clusters and special themes addressed are based on sufficient experience with GEF programming and the availability of a critical mass of projects, particularly those implemented as part of integrated programs. The common themes include strategic issues such as sustainability and resilience and understanding the factors influencing the special situations within which these clusters operate. Such strategically selected SCCEs will provide useful lessons for GEF programming, including for the new impact programs. As was the case with the GEF-7 SCCEs, a 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 GIS mapping levels. Selected project post-completion verifications will be conducted. The SCCE for the Lower Mekong River Basin has been completed and is being presented at this Council meeting. The SCCE on drylands will be presented to the December 2023 Council; the Amazon SCCE will commence this summer to be presented at the December 2024 Council meeting.

20. **The Environmental and Socioeconomic Co-benefits of GEF Interventions.** This study will provide one of the first systematic, global-scope assessments of the environment and the associated

socioeconomic co-benefits of GEF activities—a topic on which limited evidence is available in the literature. It builds on an IEO pilot study in Uganda, which measured income benefits alongside environmental outcomes. The evaluation will draw on currently available geospatial data and socioeconomic survey data in addition to country case studies. The report will be presented to the GEF Council in June 2024.

21. Evaluation of GEF Support to Nature-Based Solutions. Nature-based solutions (NbS), as defined by the IUCN, are “actions that protect, manage, or restore natural or modified ecosystems to effectively and adaptively address societal challenges while providing human well-being and biodiversity benefits.” Although the terminology has recently gained traction, the GEF has been supporting interventions to protect, restore, and sustainably manage natural resources for almost three decades. The term began to appear in GEF strategy and programming directions in GEF-6 and became broadly embedded in GEF-7. NbS is now integral to GEF-8 focal areas and integrated programs. This is the first evaluation that will systematically examine GEF support for NbS. It will assess the performance of the GEF NbS portfolio and provide insights and lessons for future GEF-supported NbS interventions. The evaluation will identify the GEF NbS portfolio and examine the characteristics of GEF projects involving NbS; identify the factors influencing project results and effectiveness, examine the value of and challenges in integrating NbS to deliver global environmental benefits; and provide key lessons for implementing NbS in future GEF interventions and strategies. The evaluation will also consider cross-cutting issues such as gender, the private sector, indigenous peoples, and local communities. The report will be presented to the December 2024 Council.

22. GEF Engagement with the Private Sector. OPS8 will include an assessment of the GEF’s engagement with the private sector, focusing on the GEF’s implementation of its approved private sector engagement strategy. Feeding into this evaluation will be the thematic evaluations and integrated program evaluations that will look at the GEF’s engagement with the private sector to assess the extent to which large companies, associations, and Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMES) are engaged by the GEF to effectively address supply chain constraints. The evaluation will also look at good practices for engaging the private sector to effectively scale up such engagement. An initial study on the engagement of the private sector in the commodities supply chain is currently under way. Recent developments in the nongrant instrument will be reviewed as part of this study. This report will be presented to the December 2024 Council.

23. Learning from Challenges in the GEF. 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: such a perspective can help distill lessons on mitigating the risk of failure and adapting to challenging circumstances. To address this gap, the IEO is conducting a deep dive into projects with below satisfactory outcomes at closure and those projects that were failing but managed to recover. A sample of ongoing operations with below satisfactory implementation ratings will also be analyzed to understand if lessons from older, closed projects are being applied. This study will be presented to the December 2023 Council.

3. Evaluating GEF Performance and Institutional Policies

24. The IEO undertakes performance evaluations to provide feedback on the quality of the GEF portfolio, GEF policies and processes, the governance and health of the partnership, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E). The evaluations also assess the relevance, efficiency, and effectiveness of GEF-supported activities and processes in delivering expected outputs and outcomes. During the GEF-8 period, the IEO will prepare several performance evaluations: these include APRs and annual evaluations of the LDCF and SCCF as well as targeted studies on performance-related topics such as a review of the results-based management system with a special focus on M&E in fragile and conflict situations, cofinancing, the knowledge management system and learning strategy, the GEF approach to country engagement, the SGP, the Fiduciary Standards Policy, and the overall governance of the GEF partnership.

25. **Annual Performance Report.** The APR is a feature product of the IEO's performance evaluation work. Based on the information received on completed projects, the APR presents a detailed account of the performance of the GEF portfolio in terms of project results, processes that may affect project results, and M&E arrangements. It also provides feedback on the quality of terminal evaluations. The APR also includes the management action record, which tracks progress in implementation of management's action plan to address GEF IEO evaluation recommendations. APRs feature special studies on various performance-related themes. APR 2023 highlights behavior change; APR2024 will look at the GEF indicator framework and the use of project results indicators; APR 2025 will review the quality of terminal evaluations and the GEF Portal.

26. **LDCF/SCCF Annual Evaluation and Program Evaluation Reports.** The LDCF/SCCF AERs during FY2024–27 will follow a biennial schedule and will report on the performance of the LDCF and SCCF through assessment of completed projects using information from terminal evaluations in FY25 and FY27. The AER 2023 presents an analysis of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on project design, implementation, and results of LDCF and SCCF projects under design or implementation between March 2020 and December 2021. The AERs will also continue to present management action records to track adoption of the LDCF/SCCF Council's decisions across the partnership. In FY24, the AER will present a special study on the Challenge Program for Adaptation under the LDCF/SCCF.

27. Through its program evaluations, the IEO proposes to report on the LDCF/SCCF portfolio and assess performance through synthesis of evaluative evidence, findings, conclusions, and recommendations from GEF Trust Fund evaluations conducted by the IEO during GEF-8 that also cover LDCF/SCCF projects. Evaluations that integrate adaptation to climate change include evaluations of water security and nature-based solutions interventions among others. This work will be conducted in FY24 and FY25.

28. **Evaluation of Policies and Practices Related to Gender, Safeguards, and Indigenous Peoples in GEF Programming.** The IEO has integrated dimensions of gender equality across its evaluations and will continue improving its methods on gender during GEF-8. Approach papers for major IEO evaluations include attention to gender as a cross-cutting theme or key evaluation question; gender standards and principles are reflected in evaluation methodologies. The IEO will also continue to report annually about its evaluations and their gender coverage to the United Nations System-Wide

Action Plan on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP). Evaluative findings on gender mainstreaming and inclusion in the GEF will be discussed in OPS8.

29. The IEO will evaluate implementation of the GEF Agency Minimum Standards on Environmental and Social Safeguards and the Fiduciary Policy. Gender and Engagement with indigenous peoples is a cross-cutting theme in several evaluations in the work program; findings on these topics will be consolidated and presented in OPS8.

COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION OF THE GEF: OPS8

30. OPS7 was completed and presented to the Eighth Replenishment of the GEF. While performance-related concerns continue to be addressed, with greater maturity of the GEF portfolio and an increasing cumulative body of work, impacts and related issues are given more attention in evaluation, including topics related to the drivers of environmental degradation, transformational change, multiple benefits, and integrated and impact programs. To inform the ninth replenishment of the GEF in 2026, OPS8 will indicatively have integration as its overarching theme and will focus specifically on the GEF's performance in delivering on global environment benefits through the integrated and impact programs, the social and economic co-benefits of GEF interventions, the mainstreaming and integration of gender and inclusion in GEF interventions, and the GEF's engagement with the private sector. GEF support to countries and GEF processes, policies, systems, and safeguards that support implementation of the GEF program and structure will also be examined. The entire IEO work program has been designed so multiple evaluations (annex) can be brought to bear to shed light on this integration theme.

31. OPS8 will primarily be based on the performance of closed projects—a portfolio that has steadily increased over the GEF's life span. From about 40 terminal evaluations submitted per year in 2004–05, the number of terminal evaluations submitted annually by the Agencies had increased to about 160 in 2022. The cumulative number of terminal evaluations has increased from 108 in 2004, when the Office first began tracking terminal evaluations, to 2,134 in 2022. This large pool of terminal evaluations, and the GEF IEO's validation reports for these evaluations, provide the Office with myriad opportunities to prepare deeper analyses and uncover new relationships influencing outcomes and sustainability. In addition to closed projects, all OPS8 evaluations will include, to the extent possible, formative assessments of ongoing and recently designed projects based on project implementation reports, midterm reviews, and documents endorsed by the GEF Chief Executive Officer.

POLICY GUIDANCE AND METHODOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

1. Terminal Evaluation Guidelines

32. The IEO issues terminal evaluation guidelines to provide the GEF Agencies with guidance on the preparation of terminal evaluations. These guidelines cover topics including, but not restricted to, the purpose and scope of terminal evaluations, roles and responsibilities, content of the terminal evaluation, and communication with the IEO. Since the IEO last issued terminal evaluation guidelines in 2017, there has been progress in several areas. The IEO now pays greater attention to topics such

as theory of change, integration, coherence, additionality, gender, and stakeholder engagement. The terminal evaluation guidelines for full-size projects are being updated to reflect these new emphases. The IEO is also working on developing streamlined guidance for terminal evaluations for enabling activities so that the results of these activities are adequately captured. And, in 2022, the IEO issued guidelines for conducting program evaluations. These guidelines are aimed at assisting the GEF Agencies and their evaluation units in preparing program evaluations.

2. Methodologies to Measure Impacts

33. The IEO applies a spectrum of approaches and evaluation methodologies to measure the outcome and impacts of GEF-supported interventions, including remote sensing, quasi-experimental designs, rapid impact evaluations, and carbon valuations, alongside other qualitative methods to measure environmental and socioeconomic co-benefits. The IEO also continues to apply the framework for broader adoption and progress toward impact developed in 2012. Geospatial analysis has been effectively integrated with other socioeconomic surveys and field-based case studies. The IEO will continue to apply innovative evaluative approaches drawing on multidisciplinary knowledge from fields such as conservation science, forestry, geography, remote sensing, economics, statistics, and the social sciences to assess progress and to measure environmental outcomes and related impacts.

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND LEARNING

34. The purpose of IEO knowledge management, learning, and outreach activities is to increase the use of evaluations across the GEF partnership and in countries, and to promote the application of lessons from evaluations to improve the overall performance and impact of the GEF. During GEF-7, the IEO made substantive contributions to knowledge and learning activities. The IEO has always served as a resource and source of information to the Council, government focal points, and stakeholders in general, and will, during the GEF-8 period, continue developing instructional and learning products to facilitate the dissemination of lessons learned from its evaluations. At the same time and in coordination with GEF country support initiatives, the IEO will continue to develop relevant material based on evaluative evidence for engagement with the various constituencies.

1. Recent Activities

35. During the January-June 2023 period, the GEF IEO has been actively engaged in knowledge management and learning activities. The GEF IEO hosted the United Nations Evaluation Group's (UNEG's) Annual General Meeting, which brought together evaluators across UN agencies to exchange knowledge on a spectrum of evaluation approaches and challenges including mainstreaming environmental sustainability in development evaluations, evaluation during times of crisis, and artificial intelligence in evaluation. The event also featured a panel, organized by the GEF IEO, on the [Environmental Dimensions of Sustainable Development](#), highlighting the crucial role of the environment in sustainable development and providing insights for evaluation. Evaluation and knowledge management staff from the GEF IEO, the Green Climate Fund, the Adaptation Fund Technical Evaluation Reference Group, and the Climate Investment Funds met at a side event of the

UNEG Annual General Meeting to exchange lessons learned on common themes and explore potential areas of collaboration.

36. The GEF IEO chaired the working group on Evaluation Practice Exchange (EPE) for the past year, with 21 EPE sessions held between November 2022 and March 2023. The EPE's theme was Evaluation for Transformational Change and Greater Sustainability, which included topics such as climate resilience, evaluation methods, and national evaluation capacity development. The GEF IEO also contributed to the follow-up to the National Evaluation Capacities Conference (NEC), which set forth the Turin Agenda, a call for action to strengthen national evaluation systems with the priority for gender equality, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability. The follow-up virtual event, [NEC+6: Taking Forward the Turin Agenda. What Do Gender-Responsive and Climate-Informed Evaluation Systems Look Like?](#), included a discussion moderated by the IEO that explored steps to foster climate-informed national evaluation systems.

37. The GEF IEO presented evaluation findings at various conferences on environmental and evaluation issues. The IEO experience in evaluating environmental programs during challenging times and in fragile and conflict-affected situations was highlighted during the European Investment Bank's evaluations conference [Picking up the pace: Evaluation in a rapidly changing world](#) and the Alliance for Peacebuilding's [PeaceCon2023](#). In addition, the GEF IEO participated in workshops and knowledge exchange sessions focused on evaluating at the nexus of environment and development ([IFAD](#)) environment and the Sustainable Development Goals ([United Nations University](#)), evaluating research for development initiatives aimed to produce outcomes that benefit society and the environment ([CGIAR](#)), and measuring climate adaptation in cities ([Measuring Development 2023](#), the World Bank).

38. Leveraging its track record in providing evaluation training and capacity building, including the Office's participation in last year's International Program for Development Evaluation Training ([IPDET](#)), the IEO is preparing to deliver a [workshop](#) on evaluation at the nexus of environment and development to participants from governmental, nongovernmental, and international organizations at IPDET, in Berne in July 2023. The Office is also developing an online training course for evaluators to expand their knowledge of environmental evaluations. The online course will include modules on systems thinking, methods, the use of geospatial tools and approaches, and transformation change and scaling up. The IEO also presented in the online GEF Induction Training in February 2023.

39. The IEO website has been revamped with enhanced search function capabilities and interactive data and maps displays that support users in independent exploration of evaluations. The IEO website features data from evaluations to inform stakeholders on country ratings and results. Social media channels will continue to expand coverage of Office-related events and conferences in real time.

40. During GEF-8, the IEO will maintain an active role in UNEG and the Evaluation Cooperation Group of the international financial institutions. The Office will maintain close interactions with universities and research institutes on specific methodological and analytical work, both for the benefit of its evaluations and to remain at the forefront of evaluation approaches in the multilateral world. The IEO will systematically communicate evaluation findings to members of the GEF

partnership and to broader audiences. For all completed evaluations, Learnings briefs will be prepared and, where appropriate, other “bite-sized” communication products, such as short videos. The IEO will host presentations and webinars and will share evaluation findings at relevant platforms, conferences, and stakeholder meetings.

2. Fourth International Conference on Integrating Environmental and Socioeconomic Domains for Sustainability

41. The GEF IEO is organizing the Fourth International [Conference on Evaluating Environment and Development](#) in October 2023. The previous three IEO conferences were held in 2008, 2014, and 2019, resulting in authoritative books based on selected presentations at the conference. The Fourth International Conference will bring together leading practitioners and thinkers on environmental evaluation from international and national public organizations in the North and the South, the academic community, environmental organizations and think tanks, civil society, and the private sector. The conference aims to explore the integration between environmental domains, and between environmental and socioeconomic and policy domains, and what this means for evaluation.

- (a) Specific topics to be discussed at conference include, but are not limited to, the following, many of which are themes and issues addressed in the IEO GEF-8 work program: Integrated perspectives to climate change, biodiversity conservation, and ecosystem services
- (b) Climate change adaptation, resilience, and nature-based solutions
- (c) Conflict, fragility, and environmental and social sustainability
- (d) Indigenous perspectives to natural resources and the environment
- (e) Circular economy
- (f) Private sector contributions to sustainability transitions
- (g) Sustainable cities
- (h) Marine pollution, coastal management, and plastics

FINAL BUDGET REPORT ON GEF-7 AND ESTIMATED BUDGET FOR THE IEO FOR FY24

1, IEO TOTAL BUDGET EXECUTION FOR GEF-7

42. For the GEF-7 period, IEO total expenses, as of June 30, 2023, have been estimated at \$24.064 million. The original approved budget for this period was \$24.5 million. The undisbursed funds, approximately \$436,000, have been returned to the Trustee, as instructed. The Office delivered the approved work program for less than the approved budget for the GEF-7 cycle (table 1). Execution of the GEF-7 total budget was lower than expected primarily because of lower travel costs due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the departure of three Evaluation Analysts.

Table 1: IEO GEF-7 total execution budget, in million \$

	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23 (est.)	Total
Fixed costs					
Salaries	2.409	2.490	2.589	2.743	10.231
Benefits	1.686	1.738	1.709	1.857	6.990
Subtotal	4.095	4.228	4.298	4.600	17.221
Operations	0.522	0.529	0.534	0.531	2.116
Total fixed costs	4.617	4.757	4.832	5.131	19.337
Variable costs					
Professional development	0.020	0.020	0.020	0.020	0.080
Networks	0.020	0.020	0.020	0.020	0.080
Management	0.229	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.424
Total variable costs	0.269	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.584
Total fixed and variable costs	4.886	4.862	4.937	5.236	19.921
Evaluations	1.300	1.700	0.900	0.243	4.143
Grand total	6.186	6.562	5.837	5.479	24.064

3. FY24 Budget Request

43. The approved budget for the IEO for the GEF-8 replenishment period is \$30 million. The budget for the first year of the GEF-8 cycle has been calculated at \$7.4 million, of which about \$5.9 million covers the Office’s fixed costs, salaries and benefits, and variable costs, including allocations for participation in networks, knowledge management initiatives, the Fourth International Conference, and professional development. The evaluation budget, calculated at \$1.6 million, is based on a multiannual model. This budget includes the costs of consultants, travel, and miscellaneous expenses. As the evaluations will all be led by IEO staff utilizing in-house human resources to the extent possible, staff costs will be charged directly to the individual evaluation budgets using the World Bank Group’s time recording system.

44. As the GEF Council has been informed, the World Bank Group has introduced a cost-recovery measure, via indirect costs, to be applied to all the financial intermediary funds hosted by the Bank. Application of this measure increases the GEF IEO’s costs by 11 percent annually—which will have a significant impact on the Office’s four-year work program. For FY24, the 11 percent charge has been calculated in the amount of \$874 thousand.

45. The revised FY24 IEO budget request is \$8.344 million, which includes the 11% indirect recovery cost that the World Bank is applying to the GEF. The IEO will present a budget proposal for FY25-27 in June 2024 based on the results of the negotiations between the World Bank Group and the GEF on the indirect cost.

Table 2: IEO GEF-8 FY24 budget request, in million \$

FY24 GEF IEO Budget	
	FY24 (million)
Fixed Cost	
Salaries & Benefits	
Subtotal (A)	\$5.075
Operations	
Subtotal (B)	\$0.185
Variable Cost	
Professional Development	\$0.075
Networks	\$0.040
Management	\$0.100
Sub-Total (C)	\$0.215
Total (A+B+C) = (D)	\$5.475
Multi Annual Budget	
Evaluations	
Sub-Total (E)	\$1.600
Total Direct Cost (D+E) = (F)	\$7.075
Total Lease Cost (G)	\$0.395
Total Indirect Cost = (H)	\$0.874²
IEO Total Budget FY24 (F+G+H) = I	\$8.344

² The calculation of the Indirect recovery cost was done following a WBG methodology where for every 89 cents of direct cost, there is an average 11cents of indirect cost. The table below shows the calculation for the calculated estimated cost of the IEO for FY24.

Calculation Indirect cost	million	Comments
Total Cost	\$7.949	Calculated = direct cost * 100/89. This is the WBG approach.
Indirect Cost	\$0.874	Result of applying 11% to the Total Cost.

4. IEO Staffing

46. The IEO is starting GEF-8 with a total of 14 permanent staff (table 3). To cover the demands of the evaluation work, the office has hired four new Evaluation Analysts and one Evaluation Officer, under the Extended Term Consultant modality. The Office is also participating in the World Bank's Donor Funded Staffing Program, under which Japan has agreed to fully cover the cost of an Evaluation Officer for a period of two years. It is expected that with this staff composition, the Office will be able to deliver on the IEO work program for GEF-8.

Table 3: IEO staffing FY24

No.	Staff Position
1	Director
1	Chief Evaluation Officer
4	Senior Evaluation Officer
1	Senior Operations Officer
5	Evaluation Officer (one Extended Term Consultant)
1	Knowledge Management Officer
1	Senior Program Assistant
1	Data and Systems Analyst
4	Evaluation Analyst (Extended Term Consultant)

ANNEX: INDICATIVE IEO EVALUATION PROGRAM FY23–26

FY23 (completed)	FY24	FY25
EVALUATIONS		
<p>GEF Support to Sustainable Forest Management</p> <p>Resilience, Climate Change Adaptation, and Climate Risks in the GEF Trust Fund</p> <p>Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on GEF Activities</p> <p>Review of the GEF Management Action Record</p> <p>APR 2023</p> <p>GEF Approach to and Interventions in Water Security</p> <p>SCCE of GEF Support to the Lower Mekong River Basin Ecosystem</p> <p>LDCF/SCCF AER 2023</p>	<p>Community-Based Approaches in the GEF</p> <p>SCCE on Drylands</p> <p>Integrated Interventions in SIDS</p> <p>Learning from Challenges in the GEF</p> <p>Sustainable Cities Program</p> <p>Environmental and Socioeconomic Co-benefits of GEF Interventions</p> <p>GEF Support to Climate Information and Early Warning Systems</p> <p>GEF Support to Combating Illegal Wildlife Trade</p>	<p>SCCE in the Amazon</p> <p>GEF Support to Nature-Based Solutions</p> <p>The Food Systems, Land Use, and Restoration Impact Program</p> <p>Formative Evaluation of the GEF-7 and GEF-8 Impact Programs</p> <p>Governance of the GEF</p> <p>APR 2025</p> <p>LDCF/SCCF AER 2025</p> <p>Implementation of the GEF Private Sector Engagement Strategy</p> <p>LDCF Program Evaluation: The Challenge Program for Adaptation</p>
SHORT STUDIES		
<p>Update of the Terminal Evaluation Guidelines</p>	<p>Policy Coherence in the GEF</p> <p>Water Security in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Contexts</p> <p>GEF Support in phasing out PCBs</p>	<p>The Capacity-Building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT)</p> <p>GEF Results-Based Management (special theme: RBM in Fragile and Conflict Affected Situations)</p> <p>Knowledge Management and Learning Strategy in the GEF</p>

FY23 (completed)	FY24	FY25
		<p>Focal area strategy and performance assessments for each focal area</p> <p>Implementation of GEF Fiduciary Policy</p> <p>Policies and Practices Related to Gender, Safeguards, and Indigenous Peoples in GEF Programming</p> <p>Small Grants Programme (update study)</p> <p>Country Engagement Strategy (update study)</p>