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**GEF PROGRAMMING STRATEGY ON
ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE FOR
THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES FUND AND THE SPECIAL
CLIMATE CHANGE FUND FOR THE GEF-9
PERIOD OF JULY 1, 2026 TO JUNE 30, 2030
AND OPERATIONAL IMPROVEMENTS**

PREPARED BY THE GEF SECRETARIAT

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Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AfDB	African Development Bank
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AMR	Annual Monitoring Review
AR6	Sixth Assessment Report
CIF	Climate Investment Funds
CIFAR	Climate Adaptation and Innovation Resilience Alliance
COP	Conference of the Parties
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CMA	Conference serving as Meeting of Parties to Paris Agreement
ESS	Environmental and Social Safeguards
FCS	Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations
FI	Financial Institution
FRLD	Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage
GARI	Global Adaptation and Resilience Investment Group
GBFF	Global Biodiversity Framework Fund
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GGA	Global Goal on Adaptation
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFI	International Financial Institution
IFSP	Inclusive Financial Service Provider
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IPLCs	Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities
LDC	Least Developed Country
LDCF	Least Developed Countries Fund
MCF	Multilateral Climate Fund
MDB	Multilateral Development Bank
MSME	Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise

MSP	Medium-Sized Project
MTF	Multi-Trust Fund
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NCQG	New Collective Quantified Goal
NDB	National Development Bank
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NbS	Nature-based Solutions
NGI	Non-Grant Instrument
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OFF	Operational Focal Point
PriA	Project/Program-based Implementation Approach
RSF	Resilience and Sustainability Facilities
SCCF	Special Climate Change Fund
SCCF-A / SCCF-B	Special Climate Change Fund Window A / Window B
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UN-OHRLS	United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WMO	World Meteorological Organization

Executive Summary

1. In every region on earth, climate change impacts are already being felt and are intensifying – from rising temperatures and extreme weather events to sea-level rise – causing widespread negative impacts on nature and people's lives. The three years, 2023-2025, were the three warmest years ever recorded, with the past decade accounting for the ten warmest years on record. The rate of global sea-level rise doubled in the decade up to 2024,ⁱ with profound negative impacts on the ocean and coastal ecosystems, putting millions at risk of displacement and economic loss.

2. This Global Environment Facility (GEF) Programming Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change for the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) and the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF) for the GEF-9 Period and Operational Improvements is presented with a clear vision towards helping developing countries take proactive measures to build climate resilience and reduce vulnerabilities. The Programming Strategy recognizes and helps account for the social and environmental benefits of adaptation measures, and facilitates an economically sound approach to climate adaptation that addresses the urgent need for transformational adaptation to keep pace with accelerating climate risks.

3. The goal is to continue facilitating transformational adaptation in developing countries towards achieving the Paris Agreement's Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA). In doing so, the two funds seek to help operationalize the implementation of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Framework for Climate Resilience, which was agreed at the 28th Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), at the national level.

4. The two funds have a strategic and unique position in the climate finance landscape. The LDCF provides targeted support to the 44 least developed countries (LDCs), which face the most severe climate vulnerabilities, despite contributing least to global emissions. These countries, with over 1.6 billion people, lack sufficient financial, technical, and institutional resources and capacity to implement effective adaptation, making LDCF support critical for building climate resilience.

5. The SCCF, with two active windows, provides dedicated support to non-LDC Small Island Developing States (SIDS) under Window A, addressing their unique climate vulnerabilities – including sea-level rise, coastal erosion, and saltwater intrusion – and limitations in the policies, capacity, and market scale needed to address them. Window B supports technology transfer,

ⁱ Stokes, Chris R., Jonathan L. Bamber, Andrea Dutton, et al. 2025. [“Warming of +1.5 °C Is Too High for Polar Ice Sheets”](#). *Communications Earth & Environment* 6: 351.

innovation, and private sector engagement in all eligible developing countries through both grant and non-grant instruments (NGI).

6. Together with the GEF Trust Fund, these two funds serve as the GEF's key mechanism for delivering climate finance. As of December 2024, both funds have demonstrated increased efficiency, effectiveness, and inclusion, with 88 percent of projects achieving satisfactory outcome ratings and improved sustainability ratings, while enjoying broad support from recipient countries and GEF Agencies for their responsive and country-driven approach.ⁱⁱ As of June 2025, LDCF projects have reached 33.16 million direct beneficiaries, while SCCF projects have impacted over 10.75 million direct beneficiaries. Innovation is at the core of the funds' mandates, as demonstrated by initiatives such as the Challenge Program for Adaptation Innovation and the Inclusive GEF Assembly Challenge Program.

7. This Programming Strategy is structured around a comprehensive Theory of Change driving transformative adaptation action through three core programming areas that reflect the most urgent adaptation needs of countries served by the LDCF and SCCF:

- **Agriculture and Food Systems**, strengthening climate-resilient production practices including agroforestry, agroecology, regenerative agriculture, conservation agriculture, integrated pest management, and improved irrigation techniques, while supporting sustainable and resilient healthy diets, value chain development, market access, and income diversification to reduce climate-induced migration and enhance community stability;
- **Water Security and Sustainable Management**, addressing critical challenges of water scarcity, quality, proactive drought management, and climate-resilient infrastructure through integrated water resources management approaches that promote water storage, enhance governance and partnerships, leverage digital innovations, and stimulate job creation in the water sector value chain; and
- **Nature-based Solutions (NbS) and Infrastructure**, which advances climate-resilient infrastructure systems that incorporate NbS, particularly in vulnerable urban and peri-urban systems, while supporting landscape-level NbS, such as mangrove restoration, catchment rehabilitation, erosion management, water quality and run-off management, and urban green spaces that buffer infrastructure from climate extremes and restore ecosystem services.

8. It also integrates health systems resilience and climate information services and early warning systems as critical enabling foundations, ensuring health vulnerabilities are addressed

ⁱⁱ GEF IEO. 2025. [LDCF/SCCF Annual Evaluation Report 2025](#). GEF/LDCF.SCCF.38/E/01.

within sectoral interventions. Climate information services provide the data foundation for evidence-based adaptation decision-making.

9. The Programming Strategy employs four distinct approaches, alongside two cross-cutting approaches, to drive transformational adaptation: Policy Integration and Country Leadership; Adaptive Social Protection; Partnerships with Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) and International Financial Institutions (IFIs); and Innovative Finance and Market Development. These four approaches build on the strengths of the two funds, with potential to generate and sustain impact to address the themes identified above. Whole-of-society engagement and fragility-sensitive programming may be incorporated into all support to ensure sensitivity to fragile and conflict-affected situation (FCS) contexts and meaningful inclusion of stakeholders in decision-making and implementation roles.

10. As a key feature, the Programming Strategy, along with the Programming Directions for the GEF Trust Fund, embraces the GEF Family of Funds principle. This principle embodies the unique value addition of the GEF, specifically its ability to respond to evolving needs in the multilateral environmental landscape via targeted funds with distinct priorities – such as the LDCF and SCCF – as both additions and alternatives to the GEF Trust Fund, while also presenting a holistic, GEF-wide value proposition. This enables Multi-Trust Fund (MTF) programming and coordinated interventions that enhance efficiency and impact.

11. The Programming Strategy further operationalizes Multilateral Climate Fund (MCF) cooperation. During GEF-9, the LDCF and SCCF will pursue an aspirational target of allocating 10 percent of programming resources to investments that advance MCF complementarity and coherence.

12. This document outlines several operational improvements to enhance delivery and effectiveness. These include the Project/Program-based Implementation Approach (PrIA) Capacity Building Program, a transformative support system specifically designed to strengthen executing entities for enhanced access to climate adaptation finance. Program delivery will follow a competitive, performance-based approach through separate requests for proposals issued by the GEF Secretariat. It also sets out considerations for a time-bound Working Group to be established by the GEF Council to examine governance arrangements, including the potential for expanded participation by non-sovereign contributors in LDCF and SCCF governance, subject to consistency with the GEF Instrument.

13. Two indicative financial scenarios are presented for each fund. For the LDCF, Scenario A proposes \$1.0 billion, with a \$20 million country cap for LDCs, increased in Scenario B to \$1.3 billion with a \$25 million country cap for LDCs. For SCCF-A and SCCF-B combined, Scenario A is

presented at \$200 million, with a \$3 million country cap for SIDS under SCCF-A, and Scenario B at \$300 million with a \$5 million cap for SIDS under SCCF-A.

14. Both financial scenarios incorporate differentiated support for graduated LDCs through the LDCF; LDCF and SCCF-relevant Country Engagement Strategy support; the new PrIA Capacity Building Program; and the new Non-Grant Instrument (NGI) Program for Climate Adaptation. Enhanced resource mobilization efforts will include multi-year pledging mechanisms, improved donor coordination, and proactive engagement with potential new contributors including sub-national governments and regional bodies. The financial scenarios also incorporate measures to manage programming in the context of constrained financial resources.

15. The LDCF and SCCF Results Framework includes five core indicators aligned with the GGA. Gender is an integral part of the results framework. Indicator refinements include expanding beneficiary counting to include both direct and indirect beneficiaries, harmonizing indicators across MCFs, and streamlining the list of sub-indicators. The framework is designed with flexibility to track progress towards GGA themes and dimensions.

16. Building on the strong performance acknowledged in recent evaluations, the Programming Strategy positions the two funds to deliver predictable support, enables blended finance through NGI for the SCCF, and facilitates coordinated support across the GEF Family of Funds. It emphasizes country-driven programming that responds directly to national priorities while aligning with recent COP decisions, including the UAE Framework for Climate Resilience, the Baku Adaptation Roadmap, and specific guidance to the LDCF and SCCF.

17. In a rapidly changing global context marked by escalating climate impacts, worsening fragility and conflict, food insecurity and malnutrition, and deepening inequality, the LDCF and SCCF play an increasingly critical role in delivering targeted, inclusive, and catalytic support for climate adaptation where it is needed the most. This Programming Strategy serves as a blueprint for maximizing the impact of LDCF and SCCF resources during the GEF-9 period, ensuring that adaptation investments build long-term resilience and transform development pathways in the world's most vulnerable countries and communities.

18. The Programming Strategy represents the culmination of an extensive, participatory development process spanning February 2025 to April 2026. It has been refined through multiple rounds of systematic stakeholder engagement, reflecting the country-driven nature of these funds and the importance of responsive adaptation programming for the world's most climate-vulnerable countries. To enhance readability, certain detailed operational and technical content has been condensed in the main sections.

I. Introduction

1. This document presents the GEF-9 Climate Change Adaptation Programming Strategy, which will form the basis for supporting adaptation actions under the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) and the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF) for the GEF-9 period of July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2030. Measures for operational improvements to deliver the support are also presented in this document. It is to serve as a blueprint for recipient country programming of LDCF and SCCF resources in the GEF-9 period.

2. The Programming Strategy has been developed based on discussions at meetings, held in May and October 2025 and January 2026, and written comments received. A Planning Note for the Development of the GEF Programming Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change for the Least Developed Countries Fund and Special Climate Change Fund and Operational Improvements: July 2026 to June 2030 was presented and approved at the 37th LDCF/SCCF Council Meeting in November 2024,¹ with updates presented for information to the 38th and 39th LDCF/SCCF Council Meetings in June² and December 2025.³

II. Global Context

A. Scientific and Vulnerability Context

3. 2025 has been confirmed as one of the three warmest years on record, marking a continued trend of exceptionally high global temperatures. The years 2023-2025 were the three warmest years to date, and 2015–2025 includes the eleven warmest years on record.⁴ Heatwaves and extreme weather have become more frequent and intense, with disruptive impacts felt unevenly across different regions. Similarly, the rate of global sea-level rise doubled in the past decade, reaching 4.7 millimeters per year, putting millions at risk. Without climate adaptation, a 20 centimeter sea-level rise by 2050 could cause over \$1 trillion in annual flood losses for the world's 136 largest coastal cities.⁵ The 2025 updates to the Planetary Health Check analysis found that the ocean acidification boundary has been breached for the first time, posing serious risks to human well-being, particularly for small island developing States (SIDS), by

¹ GEF. 2024. [Planning Note for the Development of the GEF Programming Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change for the Least Developed Countries Fund and Special Climate Change Fund and Operational Improvements: July 2026 to June 2030](#). GEF/LDCF.SCCF.37/04.

² GEF. 2025. [Update on the Development of the GEF Programming Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change for the LDCF and the SCCF and Operational Improvements July 2026 to June 2030](#). GEF/LDCF.SCCF.38/Inf.02

³ GEF. 2025. [Update on the Development of the GEF Programming Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change for the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Special Climate Change Fund and Operational Improvements July 2026 to June 2030](#). GEF/LDCF.SCCF.39/Inf.04.

⁴ World Meteorological Organization (WMO). 2026. [“WMO Confirms 2025 Was One of the Warmest Years on Record”](#). Press release, January 14, 2026.

⁵ Stokes, Chris R., Jonathan L. Bamber, Andrea Dutton, et al. 2025. [“Warming of +1.5 °C Is Too High for Polar Ice Sheets”](#). *Communications Earth & Environment* 6: 351.

disrupting marine ecosystem functions, with potential impacts on the food chain and food security.⁶

4. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) Sixth Assessment Report (AR6)⁷ highlights that climate and weather extremes are causing pervasive and widespread impacts, and that such hazards will often interact, compounding risks across regions and sectors. Least developed countries (LDCs) and SIDS are especially vulnerable to climate change, facing severe impacts like extreme weather, sea-level rise, and declining food security, often without sufficient resources and capacity to adapt.

5. Scientific evidence indicates that the present extent, scale, and speed of adaptation are not sufficient to keep up with the increasing risks associated with climate change. More accelerated and fundamental changes are urgently needed through transformational adaptation – defined by the IPCC as adaptation that changes the fundamental attributes of a social-ecological system in response to climate change and its effects,⁸ to avoid disastrous impacts in the future. Climate risks increasingly cross national borders through shared ecosystems, supply chains, and financial flows, requiring adaptation approaches that address interconnected vulnerabilities rather than isolated national interests.

B. Climate Finance and Geopolitical Landscape

6. The 29th Conference of the Parties (COP 29) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), held in November 2024, established a new climate finance goal (the New Collective Quantified Goal, or NCQG) of at least \$300 billion per year by 2035, with developed countries taking the lead, and a call to all actors to scale up investments for climate action in developing countries from all sources to at least \$1.3 trillion per year by 2035.

7. The NCQG decision reaffirms the vital role of multilateral climate funds (MCFs) – including the GEF, LDCF, and SCCF – with a target of tripling the annual outflows from those funds from 2022 levels by 2030.⁹ In this context, the LDCF and SCCF, along with the GEF Trust Fund, are the first of the funds under the UNFCCC to undergo programming, policy, and financial negotiations, and thus the first with an opportunity to respond to the NCQG.

8. This Programming Strategy also recognizes a significant adaptation finance need, estimated at \$310 billion to \$365 billion annually by 2035. International public adaptation finance currently remains well below the Glasgow Climate Pact goal of \$40 billion per year by 2025

⁶ Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK). 2025. [Planetary Health Check 2025: A Scientific Assessment of the State of the Planet](#).

⁷ IPCC. 2023. [Climate Change 2023: Synthesis Report. Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#). Core Writing Team, H. Lee and J. Romero (eds.). Geneva: IPCC.

⁸ See Box 1, in Section VI. Theory of Change for further descriptions on transformational adaptation.

⁹ UNFCCC. 2024. [Decision 1/CMA.6: New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance](#). FCCC/PA/CMA/2024/17/Add.1.

agreed at COP 26 in 2021, with financial flows decreasing from \$28 billion in 2022 to \$26 billion in 2023.¹⁰

9. At COP 30 in November 2025, Parties further strengthened these commitments through the Global Mutirão decision,¹¹ which “recalls its decision to pursue efforts to at least triple annual outflows from the operating entities of the Financial Mechanism, the Adaptation Fund, the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Special Climate Change Fund from the 2022 level by 2030 at the latest with a view to significantly scaling up the share of finance delivered through them in delivering on the goal referred to in paragraph 8 of decision 1 of the 6th Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (1/CMA.6) and calls for enhanced efforts in this regard.” The decision also “reaffirms the doubling by 2025 in paragraph 18 of decision 1/CMA.3, calls for efforts to at least triple adaptation finance by 2035 in the context of decision 1/CMA.6, including paragraph 16 thereof, and urges developed country Parties to increase the trajectory of their collective provision of climate finance for adaptation to developing country Parties.”

10. These commitments underscore the critical importance of the LDCF and SCCF in meeting global adaptation finance targets and reinforce the urgency of the operational improvements and enhanced resource mobilization strategies outlined in this Programming Strategy.

11. The LDCF and SCCF have received financial contributions from 28 donor countries since their inception, with 19 donors contributing during the GEF-7 and GEF-8 periods. In GEF-8, 70 percent of funds came from the top five donors, which highlights the potential risks to the funds posed by changes in the financing and political priorities of these donors. Some contributors are increasingly resource-constrained due to competing demands, including post-pandemic recovery measures and global conflicts. Shifts in the geopolitical landscape are having a direct impact on climate finance, influencing both donor priorities and policy directions in recipient countries. In this challenging environment, competition for limited grants and concessional resources is growing more intense, including for LDCs and SIDS.

12. While the private sector has historically played a limited role in climate adaptation finance, its involvement is growing as climate impacts intensify.¹² Motivations now include risk management, and new business and investment opportunities related to the growing market for goods and services that enable resilience to climate impacts.¹³ This shift opens the door for the LDCF and SCCF to use public funds to encourage and leverage greater private sector participation in climate adaptation.

¹⁰ UNEP. 2025. [Adaptation Gap Report 2025: Running on Empty](#). Geneva: UNEP.

¹¹ UNFCCC. 2025. [Decision -/CMA.7: Global Mutirão: Uniting Humanity in a Global Mobilization against Climate Change](#). Advance unedited version.

¹² OECD. 2025. [“Mobilisation of Private Finance for Development”](#).

¹³ Boston Consulting Group (BCG). 2025. [The Private Equity Opportunity in Climate Adaptation and Resilience](#).

C. Increasingly Fragile and Conflict-affected World

13. Many LDCs and SIDS are increasingly affected by climate change impacts that are exacerbated by fragile and conflict-affected situations (FCS), which also compound the challenges of building climate resilience. As of 2026, 55 percent of LDCs and 29 percent of SIDS are categorized as fragile and conflict-affected.¹⁴ Climate shocks in FCS worsen food insecurity and malnutrition, as well as competition for scarce natural resources, also limiting access to safe water, healthcare, education, and other essential services. Climate change-induced displacement and irregular migration have increased the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees,¹⁵ putting additional pressures on host communities and increasing the risk of maladaptation. Climate impacts also contribute to increased violence against women, girls, and other vulnerable populations.¹⁶

14. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) estimates that 2.1 billion people, or 25 percent of the world's population, are living in contexts of high or extreme fragility in 2025, with this figure projected to grow to 3.2 billion by 2050.¹⁷ The impacts of climate change on fragile contexts are likely to increase, with significant implications for livelihoods, food security, and peace. Moreover, countries in FCS already experience higher temperatures and could see conflict deaths rise by up to 14 percent by 2060 under a high emissions scenario.¹⁸

15. Therefore, investing in climate adaptation to support resilience efforts in FCS contexts is critical, particularly for countries facing rising vulnerabilities and deepening poverty. The LDCF and SCCF are facing growing demands from countries for assistance in addressing the interlinkage of climate change, food insecurity and malnutrition, fragility, and conflict, as part of efforts to build broader resilience and sustain peace.

III. Comparative Advantages of the LDCF and SCCF

A. LDCF and SCCF Value Addition

16. The LDCF and SCCF are structured to provide grant-based support for climate change adaptation efforts in LDCs and SIDS. They therefore represent a unique and crucial component of the international climate finance architecture (Figure 1). With a successful track record of almost 25 years of support to projects on the ground, evaluations have shown the LDCF and SCCF

¹⁴ World Bank. 2026. [FY26 List of Fragile and Conflict-affected Situations](#).

¹⁵ Internal Displacement Monitor Center (IDMC). 2025. [Global Report on Internal Displacement \(GRID\)](#). Geneva: IDMC.

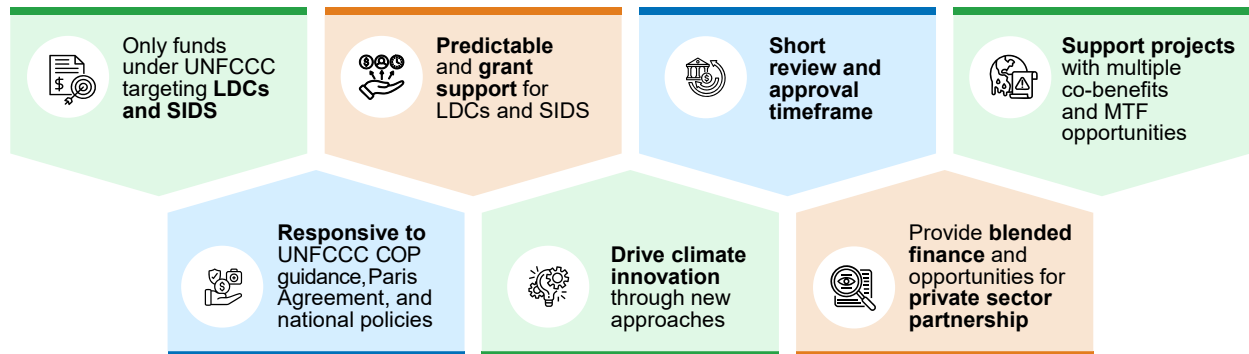
¹⁶ Cissé, et al. 2022. "Chapter 7: Health, Well-Being, and the Changing Structure of Communities". In *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.

¹⁷ OECD. 2025. [States of Fragility 2025](#). Paris: OECD.

¹⁸ Jaramillo, et al. 2023. "Climate Challenges in Fragile and Conflict-Affected States". *IMF Staff Climate Note* 2023/001. Washington, DC: IMF.

to be impactful vehicles for delivering targeted support for climate adaptation action to the frontline of the global climate crisis.

Figure 1: Comparative Advantages of the LDCF and SCCF



17. The LDCF and SCCF's distinctive value proposition stems from several core strengths:

- **The LDCF exclusively serves the world's 44 most vulnerable countries** and their 1.6 billion people, with grant financing available to all LDCs. **The SCCF acts as an incubator for adaptation innovation and is the only MCF with dedicated SIDS coverage.** Both funds' targeted support to these categories of countries makes them well suited to prioritizing support for the most vulnerable and most in need.
- **The LDCF and SCCF provide predictable funding access for LDCs and SIDS,** with the country cap model enabling governments to strengthen ambition and plan action to meet their climate adaptation priorities. This is subject to the availability of resources based on contributions from donors.
- **The LDCF and SCCF pool and program donor contributions efficiently and rapidly,** swiftly reviewing and approving projects for timely action as resources become available.
- **Both funds have a strong track record of supporting projects that deliver multiple benefits by financing Multi-Trust Fund (MTF) projects** within the GEF Family of Funds, and adaptation projects with co-benefits. This enables them to help countries address cross-cutting themes like food systems, NbS, and sustainable land management in a systematic, value-for-money manner.
- **The LDCF and SCCF are responsive and accountable to the multilateral system,** aligning with the Paris Agreement, UNFCCC COP guidance, and national policies, with transparency supported by regular reporting and evaluations.
- **The LDCF and SCCF are uniquely positioned in the multilateral climate ecosystem to foster innovation** by piloting novel approaches with non-traditional partners, with potential for scaling up through other sources of public and private finance. The LDCF and SCCF play a catalytic role, effectively building foundations for scaling up, as noted by the

LDCF and SCCF Annual Evaluation Report 2025 by the GEF Independent Evaluation Office (IEO).¹⁹

- **The SCCF can deliver blended finance to test and model new approaches through non-grant instruments (NGI)**, as well as to generate multiple climate and environmental benefits. The LDCF can support grant components of blended finance packages. This builds on the track record of the global blended finance program of the GEF Trust Fund.

18. Through these core strengths, the LDCF and SCCF occupy a unique niche in the multilateral climate finance architecture: where the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and Climate Investment Funds (CIF) channel larger-scale, broad-based finance, and the Adaptation Fund supports adaptation across developing countries, the LDCF and SCCF provide targeted, risk-tolerant, and predictable finance, exclusively serving SIDS and LDCs.

B. GEF Family of Funds Principle

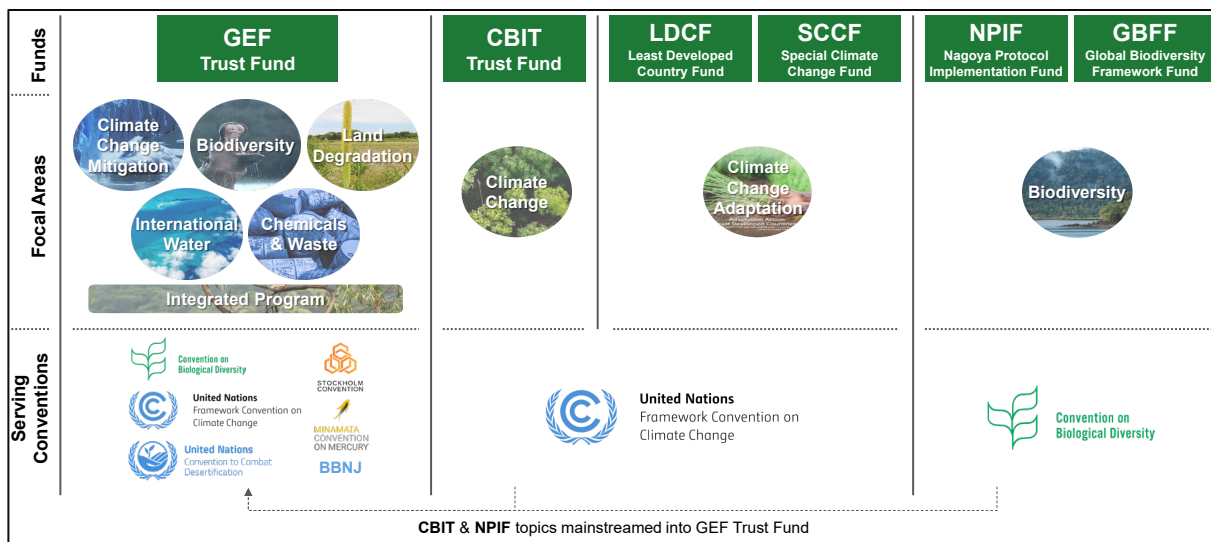
19. The GEF has evolved significantly during GEF-8 through the articulation of the "Family of Funds" approach, through which the GEF aligns funds to address the full spectrum of recipient countries' environmental challenges, with important gains in efficiency, coherence, and synergy. The GEF supports six multilateral environmental agreements with six trust funds under the GEF umbrella (Figure 2). The establishment of the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF) in 2023 and growth in LDCF and SCCF programming has enabled this strategic positioning of the Family of Funds principle as a unique GEF value proposition.

20. Together with the GEF-9 Programming Directions,²⁰ the LDCF will be positioned as a strategic entry point for GEF support to the LDCs. Based on the initial GEF-8 access cap of \$20 million, 33 countries (75 percent of 44 LDCs) receive the majority of their total GEF-8 support from the LDCF if programmed fully. Climate adaptation and resilience priorities of LDCs have become a major investment pillar for GEF programming.

¹⁹ GEF IEO. 2025. [LDCF/SCCF Annual Evaluation Report 2025](#). GEF/LDCF.SCCF.38/E/01.

²⁰ GEF. 2026. Programming Directions for GEF-9. (Footnote to be updated upon publication of document)

Figure 2: GEF Family of Funds



21. The Family of Funds principle has the following key attributes relevant to LDCF and SCCF programming:

- **Shared operational infrastructure:** Common policies, procedures, governance structure, operational focal points, GEF Portal, and reporting systems that simplify country access and reduce administrative costs.
- **MTF programming:** Countries can access different GEF funding sources through single projects/programs, enhancing efficiency and impact.
- **Coordinated programming:** Strategic alignment across funds while maintaining fund-specific priorities and enabling cross-fund learning and innovation.
- **Complementary country engagement:** The Country Engagement Strategy enables coordinated engagement across all funds, aligning programming with national priorities and strengthening Operational Focal Point (OFP) capacity building to maximize complementarity and impact. The LDCF and SCCF will allocate resources for the Country Engagement Strategy in the GEF-9 period.

C. Collaboration within Climate Finance Ecosystem

22. The LDCF and SCCF collaborate actively with other climate funds to improve coherence and complementarity across the climate finance architecture, while leveraging their unique strengths. This collaboration operates through both multilateral coordination mechanisms and targeted bilateral partnerships. The Multilateral Climate Funds Action Plan on Complementarity and Coherence²¹ is directly relevant to the LDCF and SCCF. Welcomed by the GEF Council, this

²¹ GEF. 2024. [“Annex II: The Multilateral Climate Funds Action Plan on Complementarity and Coherence”](#). In *Relations with the Conventions and Other International Institutions*. GEF/C.67/07/Rev.01.

action plan provides frameworks for coordination to reduce competition and duplication while maximizing collective impact.

23. Building on early collaborative activities to establish and define complementary roles, support for National Adaptation Plan (NAP) preparations has been channeled through the GCF Readiness Programme, while the LDCF and SCCF focus on NAP implementation. This division of labor has proven effective in practice and allows each fund to leverage its comparative advantages, which has enabled the GEF to concentrate on adaptation priorities articulated by countries. Such efforts have been further advanced under the Long-Term Vision on Complementarity, Coherence and Collaboration between the GCF and GEF.²²

24. The LDCF and SCCF stand ready to further build on the experience of supporting major initiatives between the GEF and the GCF, and collaborate on discrete projects among funds. Such efforts may have a particular focus on innovation, private sector engagement, and technology transfer, through initiatives like the Challenge Program for Adaptation Innovation. Each fund is expected to support specific elements of large-scale initiatives based on its comparative advantage and country demands and priorities

25. Partnership with the CIF focuses on leveraging its expertise in transformational programming and providing inputs on private sector engagement. There has been active collaboration across both institutions as the CIF developed its new adaptation program, Accelerating Resilience Investments and Innovations for Sustainable Economies. Collaboration with the Adaptation Fund emphasizes efforts to enhance impact through knowledge sharing, as an integral part of GEF-wide knowledge management and integration efforts, and as well as programming coordination in FCS contexts where both funds operate.

26. Cooperation with the newly established Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD) is in its initial phase, with a focus on ensuring complementarity and coherence. Based on country priorities, the LDCF and SCCF can consider aligning efforts with the FRLD on activities related to responding to climate-induced loss and damage, while maintaining an emphasis on adaptation and resilience. This coordination can help ensure that LDCF and SCCF resources complement the FRLD's mandate on responding to loss and damage, and vice versa. Collaboration to identify synergies will continue as the work of the FRLD progresses.

27. During GEF-9, the LDCF and SCCF will pursue an aspirational target of dedicating approximately 10 percent of programming resources to investments that advance MCF complementarity and coherence. This effort recognizes that meaningful coordination across the MCFs exists along a spectrum, from strategic alignment and intentional sequencing to coordinated co-investments. Rather than mandating a single model of “joint programming,” this approach embraces operational contexts where some adaptation challenges benefit from

²² GEF. 2021. [*Long Term Vision on Complementarity, Coherence, and Collaboration between the Green Climate Fund and the Global Environment Facility*](#). GEF/C.60/08.

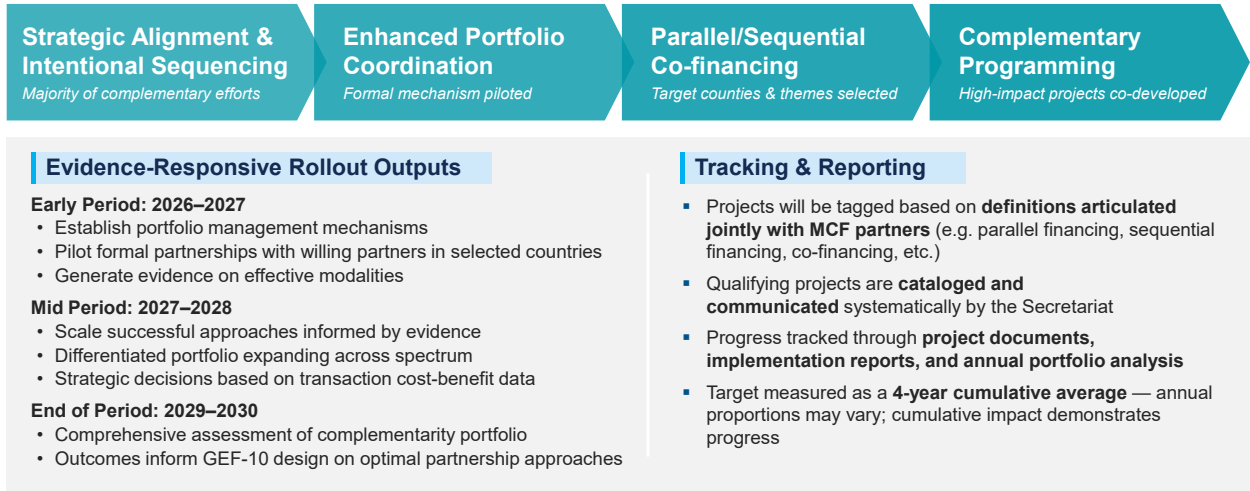
parallel engagement of multiple funds, each deploying their specialized mandates and resources without duplication, while others achieve greater impact through parallel, coordinated investments or through sequential programming. This flexibility allows the LDCF and SCCF to maximize complementarity, while respecting the diverse mandates, governance structures, and operational timelines of each fund.

28. The LDCF and SCCF will advance this aspirational 10 percent target progressively over the 2026-2030 period. Its implementation will follow an evidence-responsive pathway where the depth and scope of MCF coordination will progress as the portfolio matures and evidence accumulates on effective partnership models. Early in the programming period, coordination efforts will prioritize establishing mechanisms for enhanced portfolio management and pilot formal partnerships with willing partners in selected countries. These initial investments will generate evidence on which coordination modalities deliver the greatest value relative to transaction costs, enabling more strategic decisions as the portfolio expands.

29. Figure 3 illustrates how the aspirational 10 percent of programming resources to investments that advance MCF complementarity and coherence will operate during GEF-9. The figure represents a four-year portfolio level target, not a rigid annual quota, allowing the LDCF and SCCF to respond flexibly to country demand, partner fund readiness, and emerging evidence on effective partnership modalities.

Figure 3: Aspirational Target for MCF Collaboration

10% Aspirational Target : Advancing MCF complementarity and coherence



30. Projects will be considered as contributing toward the 10 percent aspirational target based on definitions to be articulated in collaboration with other MCFs (e.g., does the project constitute parallel financing, sequential financing, co-financing, etc.) and cataloged and communicated accordingly. The purpose of the target is to pilot and establish an evidence-based mechanism to track and quantify how MCF collaboration works in practice at the country level, generating learning that can inform more systematic approaches over time. The GEF Secretariat

will track progress toward this target through project design documentation, implementation reporting, and annual portfolio analysis.

31. While the proportion of complementary investments may vary year-to-year, the cumulative impact across the full 2026–2030 period will demonstrate meaningful progress toward the target. By 2030, the Secretariat will conduct a comprehensive assessment of the complementarity portfolio, analyzing partnership outcomes from different models and the sustainability of established coordination mechanisms. This learning will inform GEF-10 programming development with an evidence-base for optimal partnership approaches, ensuring the LDCF and SCCF's complementarity efforts remain both ambitious and operationally sustainable.

32. Beyond the MCF landscape, this Programming Strategy recognizes the growing importance of complementing climate change adaptation efforts with bilateral cooperation and major philanthropic initiatives. The LDCF and SCCF will seek to expand opportunities to partner upstream and with bilateral cooperation institutions and philanthropies to collaborate on priority initiatives and incubate innovative ventures that have potential for scale-up from other sources. During the GEF-9 period, the LDCF and SCCF will continue to deepen partnerships with these key actors in the climate adaptation finance ecosystem, including as thought partners, co-investors, and executing entities.

IV. Fund Mandates, Evolution, and Performance

A. Fund Mandates and Evolution

33. Since the inception of the LDCF and SCCF in 2001, the mandates, objectives, and priorities of the funds in supporting climate adaptation for LDCs and SIDS have steadily evolved. At COP 21 in 2015, both funds were designated as operating entities under the Paris Agreement. Subsequent COP decisions have further reinforced their roles and expanded their operational mandate, including the NCQG decision at COP 29 in 2024 and COP 30 Mutirão decision in 2025. Furthermore, COP 29 entrusted the LDCF with a new mandate to assist recently graduated LDCs as they transition, while COP 30 invited the GEF to “consider Program-based Implementation Approach” to strengthen the capacities of executing entities to improve country ownership, diversify partnerships, and sustain implementation capacity in LDCs and SIDS.²³

34. At CMA 7 in 2025, the COP, serving as the meeting of Parties to the Paris Agreement, also invited the GEF to “explore how it could support developing country Parties in their efforts towards achieving the global goal on adaptation, in accordance with its mandate.”²⁴ This

²³ UNFCCC. 2025. [Decision -/CP.30: Report of the Global Environment Facility to the Conference of the Parties and guidance to the Global Environment Facility](#). Advance unedited version.

²⁴ UNFCCC. 2025. [Decision -/CMA.7: Guidance to the Global Environment Facility](#). Advance unedited version.

Programming Strategy also responds to this decision through ensuring alignment with the GGA, while developments related to GGA indicators will continue to be monitored.

35. For the LDCF, the GEF-7 period saw notable improvements in financial support, thanks to operational enhancements such as raising the cumulative funding ceiling, streamlining the project cycle and adopting measures to eliminate project pipeline and long delays, increasing the national initial access cap for LDCs to \$10 million. This upward trend continued in GEF-8, when the initial access cap for LDCs was doubled to \$20 million, aligning with the Glasgow Climate Pact, which urged developed country Parties to double adaptation finance (from the 2019 level) by 2025. Fiscal year 2024 saw the largest approval of LDCF projects in the fund’s history, with over \$400 million in grant financing.

36. The SCCF encountered challenges from the second half of the GEF-5 and GEF-6 periods. With a strategic pivot in GEF-7, the SCCF focused its efforts on highly innovative support. Building on this experience, GEF-8 introduced significant additional changes, including a dedicated window for SIDS (SCCF-A) that set an initial access cap of \$3 million for each non-LDC SIDS. These adjustments have contributed to improving the financial stability of Window A, with eight donors supporting the SCCF in the GEF-8 period.

37. SCCF Window B (SCCF-B) sharpened its focus on technology transfer, innovation, and private sector engagement for all recipient countries in the GEF-8 period. While modest in the project sizes supported to date, Window B continues to demonstrate strong potential and plays a unique catalytic role in advancing climate adaptation finance, setting it apart from other available funding sources. Since GEF-7, technology and innovation support has primarily been provided through the competitive Challenge Program for Adaptation Innovation, financed through SCCF-B and the LDCF. Further information on the Challenge Program and the proposed way forward is detailed below in Section VII. (E) on the Global and Regional Programs and Partnerships.

B. Performance and Evaluative Evidence

38. The GEF IEO’s Eighth Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF²⁵ confirms that the LDCF and SCCF portfolio has evolved from focusing almost exclusively on targeted vulnerability reduction, to embracing integrated, system-level adaptation. Recent projects have adopted a catalytic approach to creating transformation, by leveraging external finance and partnerships, aligning with the strategic focus on scaling up finance, and delivering broader impacts.

39. The LDCF and SCCF currently have the highest multilateral development bank (MDB) and international financial institution (IFI) programming share of any of the GEF-managed funds. With the approval of the June 2025 Work Program, the LDCF will have programmed 37.4 percent of its GEF-8 resources with MDBs and IFIs, up from 26.5 percent in GEF-7 and 9 percent in GEF-6, reflecting a sustained upward trajectory across replenishment cycles. With the approval of the

²⁵ GEF IEO. 2025. [The Eighth Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF](#). GEF/E/C.70/01.

Work Program, the cumulative MDB/IFI programming share for the SCCF will be 48.5 percent, underscoring the funds' strong role in programming adaptation finance with MDB/IFI partners operating in LDCs and SIDS.

40. Nearly two-thirds of projects supported by the LDCF have been implemented in Africa, with the remaining portfolio spanning Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean. SCCF-A supports projects in non-LDC SIDS, while SCCF-B projects are evenly spread across developing countries, with a focus on technology, innovation, and private sector engagement.

41. The most recent Annual Monitoring Review (AMR) of the LDCF and SCCF for fiscal year 2025 showed that projects have achieved a historical performance rating of more than 90 percent for the Development Objective, which suggests that the projects had achieved their stated objectives by the end of implementation.²⁶ The SCCF's projects have consistently achieved high performance ratings, recently surpassing those of the GEF Trust Fund and LDCF portfolios.

42. As of the end of fiscal year 2025, LDCF projects have reached 33.16 million direct beneficiaries, brought 4.96 million hectares of land under more climate-resilient management, and trained 912,717 people in various aspects of climate change adaptation. SCCF projects have impacted over 10.75 million direct beneficiaries, brought 7.48 million hectares of land under better management to withstand the effects of climate change, and trained 156,594 people.

43. Generally, LDCF projects have received higher risk ratings than SCCF projects, as they often operate in more challenging environments. Based on the GEF risk appetite framework, LDCF and SCCF projects, on average, reported a higher risk profile than GEF Trust Fund projects across all three dimensions at the project approval stage.²⁷ The GEF IEO's 2025 Annual Evaluation Report highlighted that 88 percent of LDCF and SCCF projects had received satisfactory outcome ratings, with a notable increase in sustainability ratings compared to the 2022-2023 average.²⁸ The report highlights strong potential for scaling up and recommends improved implementation support.

V. Strategic Positioning of the LDCF and SCCF

44. For GEF-9, the following principles will guide how the GEF support to countries can be most impactful (Figure 4):

- **Position the LDCF as a strategic entry point for LDC support**, promoting MTF projects and synergy with the GEF Trust Fund, and serving as a platform for joint investments with other climate funds.

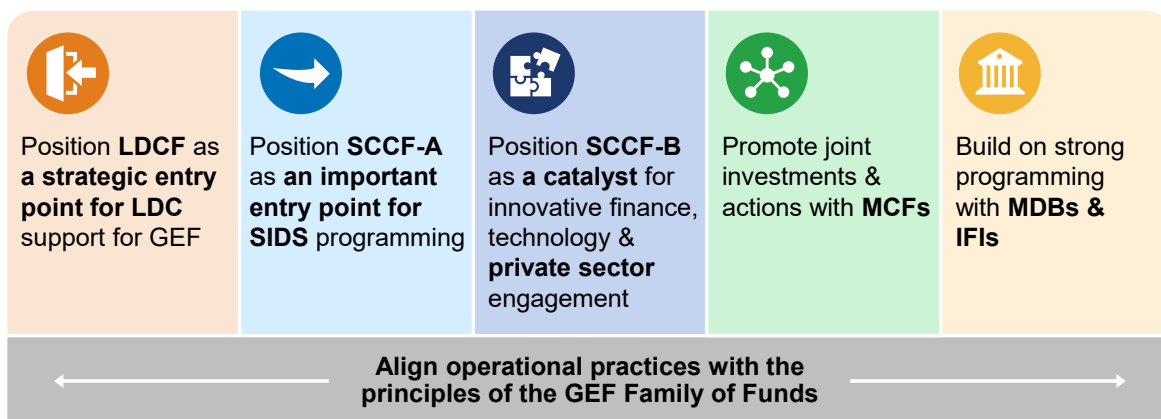
²⁶ GEF. 2025. [FY25 Annual Monitoring Review of the Least Developed Countries Fund and Special Climate Change Fund](#). GEF/LDCF.SCCF.39/04.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ GEF IEO. 2025. [LDCF/SCCF Annual Evaluation Report 2025](#). GEF/LDCF.SCCF.38/E/01.

- **Position the SCCF-A as an important entry point for SIDS programming**, enabling larger support through MTF projects and coordination across the Family of Funds.
- **Position SCCF-B as a strategic incubator and catalyst for innovative finance, technology, and private sector engagement**, addressing unmet demand and the need to model new approaches for scale-up from other sources, including both grants and NGI, for all GEF-eligible countries.
- **Build on ongoing collaboration among the MCF:** The LDCF and SCCF have specific geographic and thematic focuses and risk tolerances, and provide predictable support that can leverage additional, more risk-averse financing from other sources in partnership with sister funds.
- **Leverage strong MDB partnerships:** With the approval of the June 2026 Work Program, MDBs and IFIs will cumulatively hold 28.0 percent of LDCF programming and 48.5 percent of SCCF programming since inception. This positioning enables the funds to catalyze concessional finance opportunities led by MDBs and other IFIs to unlock larger-scale adaptation finance and private sector engagement. In the GEF-9 period, the LDCF and SCCF will continue to leverage and enhance stronger MDB and IFI programming where feasible, advancing this through the partnerships with development banks and financial institutions detailed below.

Figure 4: Comparative Advantage of the LDCF and SCCF



45. In the GEF-8 period, 33 LDCs, or 75 percent of the cohort of 44 LDCs, receive the majority of their GEF support from the LDCF if fully programmed. Accordingly, climate adaptation and resilience priorities have become a major investment pillar and priority for GEF-wide programming in LDCs, helping to inform GEF-9 positioning.

46. MTF investments are an example of the Family of Funds approach, by delivering both global environmental benefits and climate adaptation results. In addition, the LDCF and SCCF can facilitate synergies with projects and programmatic approaches for investments that support resilience-building in a comprehensive manner. Coordination with relevant GEF-9 Integrated

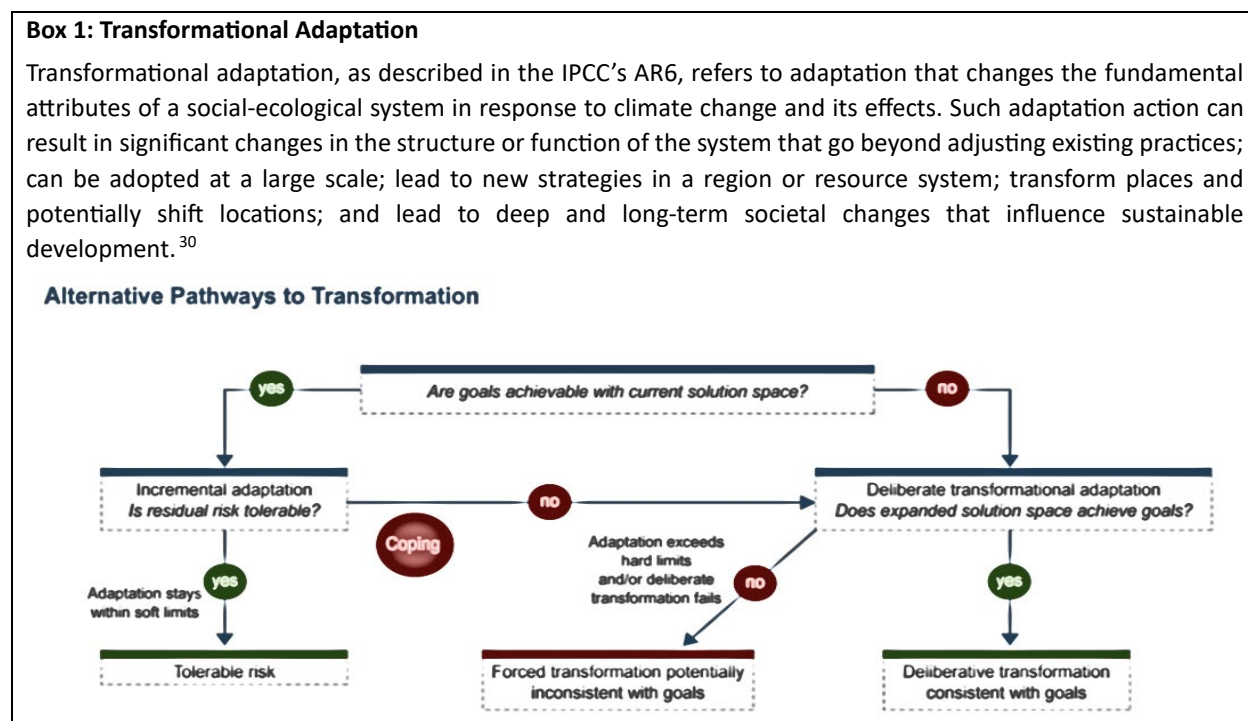
Programs, such as the Drylands and Drought Management, Blue and Green Islands, Food Systems, and Sustainable Cities programs, may be explored in a country-driven manner.

47. Both funds stand ready to promote additional joint investments among the MCFs, building on the respective mandates and advantages of each fund.

VI. Theory of Change

48. The goal of the GEF-9 Climate Change Adaptation Programming Strategy is to continue facilitating transformational adaptation in developing countries towards achieving the Paris Agreement’s GGA. In doing so, this Programming Strategy seeks to help operationalize the implementation of the UAE Framework for Climate Resilience at the national level.²⁹

49. Box 1 presents the IPCC definition of transformational adaptation. Successfully implementing transformational adaptation depends on the specific context and local conditions. In GEF-9, the LDCF and SCCF will address this goal by focusing on the thematic priority areas and applying the approaches detailed in the following sections.



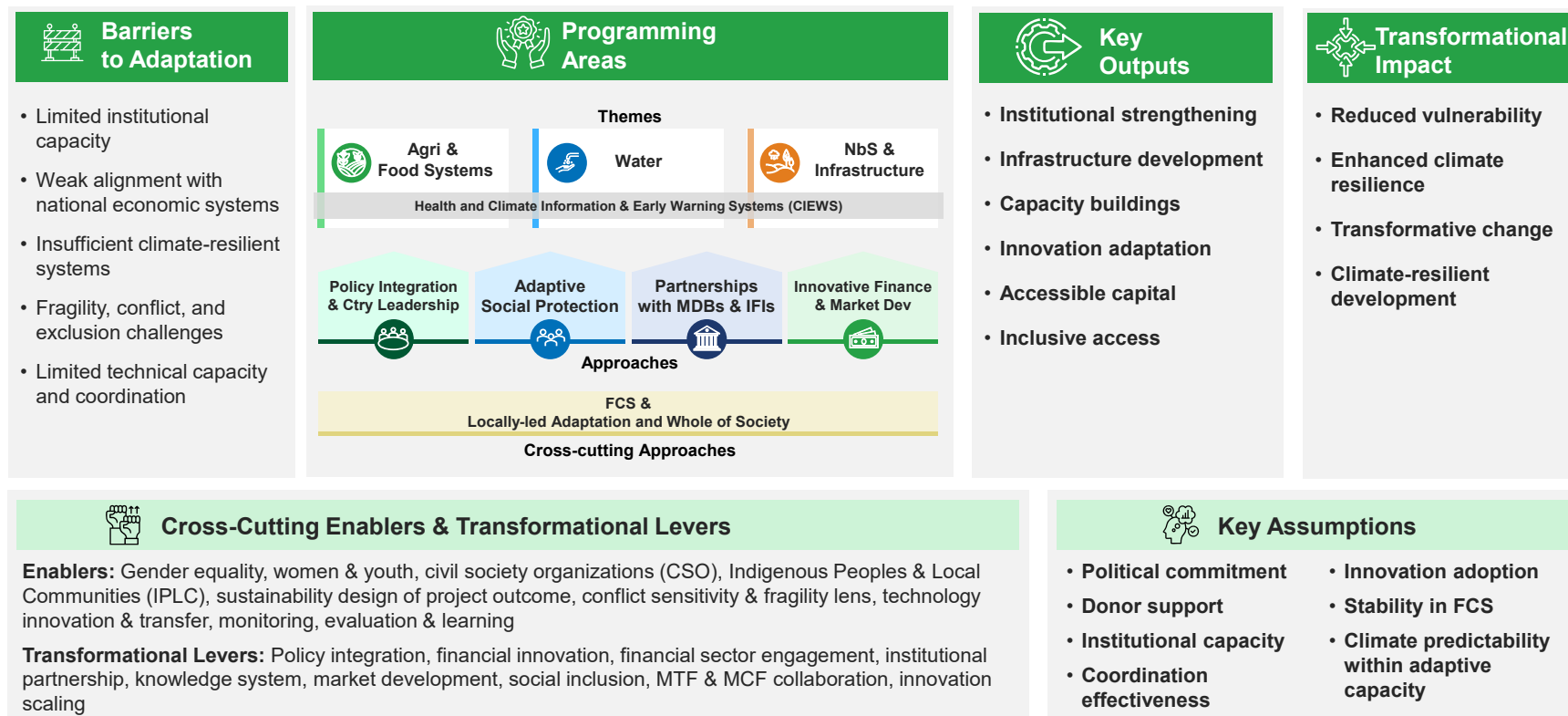
50. This Programming Strategy proposes six approaches across three interrelated thematic areas as a lever to drive a fundamental transformation within systems, ultimately achieving

²⁹ UNFCCC. 2023. [Decision 2/CMA.5: UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience](#). FCCC/PA/CMA/2023/16/Add.1.

³⁰ Begum et al. 2022. "Chapter 1: Point of Departure and Key Concepts". In *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.

adaptation outcomes. The Programming Strategy will be operationalized through the comprehensive theory of change presented in Figure 5 below, which details the specific barriers, programming areas, outputs, outcomes, and transformational levers that will drive climate adaptation in the world's most vulnerable countries.

Figure 5: LDCF SCCF Theory of Change for GEF-9 (2026-2030)



51. The theory of change for this Programming Strategy follows a logical progression from targeted interventions to transformational impact (Figure 6). At its core, the theory presents that when developing countries implement comprehensive adaptation approaches that strengthen institutional capacity, enhance policy integration, mobilize innovative financing, deploy climate-resilient solutions, foster inclusive stakeholder engagement, and advance gender equality and women's meaningful participation in adaptation governance and decision-making, they will achieve outcomes in enhanced systems, improved frameworks, and increased financial flows. These immediate outcomes then drive intermediate outcomes of systems transformation, enhanced resilience, and improved adaptive capacity, ultimately achieving the long-term impact of transformational adaptation.

Figure 6: Logic Flow of the Programming Strategy Theory of Change

<i>IF (Interventions)</i>	<i>THEN (Outcomes)</i>	<i>RESULTING IN</i>	<i>ACHIEVING (Long-term Impact)</i>
LDCs and SIDS implement adaptation approaches that:	Enhanced institutional systems with strengthened coordination mechanisms	Systems transformation in agriculture, water, and NbS and infrastructure sectors	Transformational adaptation aligned with GGA
Strengthen institutional capacity for climate adaptation governance	Improved policy frameworks integrating adaptation into national planning	Enhanced climate resilience of vulnerable communities and ecosystems	Climate-resilient development supporting sustainable development objectives
Enhance policy integration across sectors and scales	Increased financial flows toward climate-resilient development	Improved adaptive capacity at individual, institutional, and systemic levels	Enhanced economic, health, nutrition stability, and well-being of climate-vulnerable populations in LDCs and SIDS
Mobilize innovative financing including blended finance and risk instruments	Strengthened technical capacity at national and local levels	Reduced climate vulnerability through risk management and early warning	
Build adaptive social protection systems integrating climate risk management to strengthen household resilience and recovery capacity	Innovative solutions demonstrated and scaled		
Deploy climate-resilient solutions in priority sectors	Scaled locally-led and IPLC-led adaptation		
Foster inclusive approaches engaging whole-of-society stakeholders and advancing gender equality			

VII. Programming Areas of Support

A. Priority Themes

52. This Programming Strategy for the LDCF and SCCF proposes three priority themes: Agriculture and Food Systems; Water; and NbS and Infrastructure. The livelihoods, economies, and well-being of people in LDCs and SIDS rely heavily on these interconnected themes and the services they provide. These thematic areas closely align with four of the seven priority sectors identified in the UAE Framework for Climate Resilience, each of which has defined targets.

53. Guided by the principle that effective adaptation is country-owned and nationally determined, the LDCF and SCCF deploy these themes as strategic guidance for targeted, high-impact support that enhances the climate resilience of the world's most vulnerable countries and communities.

54. Within these three priority themes, the Strategy recognizes that health systems resilience and climate information/early warning systems function as critical enabling foundations that amplify adaptation effectiveness across all thematic areas. Rather than treating health and early warning systems as standalone themes, the Strategy integrates them. This integrated approach ensures that health vulnerabilities are systematically addressed within sectoral interventions, while comprehensive climate information and early warning capabilities provide the data for proactive, evidence-based adaptation decision-making across all three priority themes. Also, progress and lessons learned from efforts to address priority themes can help inform where reinforcement of climate information and early warning systems and capabilities may be warranted.³³

55. LDCF and SCCF investments are designed to strengthen the coherence between national adaptation planning processes and climate finance delivery. Building on complementarity with the GCF, including GCF support for NAP preparations through its Readiness Programme and LDCF and SCCF focus on NAP implementation since the GEF-7 period, the funds ensure that programming systematically aligns with and operationalizes countries' nationally determined adaptation priorities. All LDCF and SCCF projects are grounded in countries' NAPs, Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), and National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs), where applicable, ensuring that investments translate national-level policy commitments into concrete adaptation outcomes. This approach not only maintains country ownership and ensures adaptation interventions are nationally determined, but also creates a coherent pathway from policy formulation to implementation, enabling countries to track progress against their Paris

³³ LDCs continue to experience limited access to early warning systems. As of 2024, 44 percent of LDCs have multi-hazard early warning systems; UN Office of the High Representative for the LDCs, Landlocked Developing Countries, and SIDS (United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States [UN-OHRLLS]), and UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. 2024. [Status of Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems in the Least Developed Countries](#). New York: UN.

Agreement commitments while building institutional capacity for long-term climate resilience planning and action.

Agriculture and Food Systems

56. Agriculture and food systems are central to climate resilience and economic development in LDCs and SIDS, where they underpin livelihoods, food security, nutrition, and national economies. According to the World Bank, agriculture increases incomes among the poorest at a rate two to four times higher than other sectors.³⁴ In LDCs, agriculture represents about one-quarter of gross domestic product (GDP), highlighting its vital role in development.³⁵ Agricultural development remains one of the most powerful pathways to economic growth and poverty reduction in LDCs and SIDS, stimulating job creation and income growth. When integrated with agroecology and climate-smart practices, agriculture can enhance both ecosystem and human health, improving nutrition outcomes through diversified food systems. This approach increases access to nutritious, safe, and affordable foods while reducing the risk of food poverty and malnutrition.

57. Aligned with national adaptation priorities and the UAE Framework for Climate Resilience, GEF-9 programming will prioritize systemic, climate-smart approaches that enhance productivity, reduce vulnerability, and strengthen rural livelihoods. Programming will support integration of climate information and early warning systems into agricultural planning, helping farmers anticipate and respond to climate shocks.

58. The LDCF and SCCF will help countries develop inclusive adaptation finance mechanisms that link smallholder farmers and communities to tailored climate-smart agricultural investments that emphasize data-driven and participatory approaches, strengthen farmer organizations, leverage NbS to restore degraded landscapes, strengthen water and soil management, and enhance ecosystem-level resilience.

59. LDCs can pursue support for pioneering inclusive adaptation finance that links smallholder farmers and vulnerable rural communities to tailored climate-smart agricultural investments, occupying a unique position in the climate finance landscape. Through innovative partnerships, data-driven approaches, and participatory social inclusion, LDCs can seek support to build ecosystem-level resilience using NbS that restore degraded agricultural landscapes and strengthen soil and water management systems:

- Promoting climate-smart agricultural practices by scaling agroforestry, agroecology, regenerative agriculture, conservation agriculture, integrated pest management, and improved irrigation techniques, while investing in early warning systems that give farmers

³⁴ World Bank. 2025 *"Agriculture and Food"*.

³⁵ UNCTAD. 2025. *The Least Developed Countries Report 2025*. Geneva: UNCTAD.

timely, location-specific information on climate forecasts, pest and disease outbreaks, and market conditions;

- Promoting food systems interventions that jointly tackle climate risks and malnutrition through crop diversification, including non-timber forest products, agroecological practices, soil health improvements, reduced food loss and waste, and integrating sustainability into public food procurement and food-based dietary guidelines;
- Enhancing nutrition-sensitive value-chain development and entrepreneurship to drive income generation and employment, while supporting farmers' organizations to improve access to markets, collaboration, and policy-reform processes.

60. This Programming Strategy recognizes that agricultural sustainability in SIDS is inseparable from coastal protection, tourism resilience, and alternative livelihood development. Support to small-scale farmers' organizations will be critical for scaling these efforts and fostering innovation. In addition, the strategy notes that developing sustainable, climate-resilient food and agricultural production in SIDS, is directly linked to the efficient use of scarce water resources.

61. SIDS can pursue integrated agricultural resilience approaches that address their unique vulnerabilities. In particular, countries have opportunities to:

- Integrate land-sea food systems for climate resilience, linking coastal zone management with climate-smart agriculture – including the introduction of drought, salt- and heat-resistant crop varieties, and support to blue economy and fisheries adaptation, leveraging early warning systems and climate information services to protect livelihoods;
- Promote sustainable livelihoods by supporting entrepreneurship that boosts local food production, sustainable aquaculture and fisheries, and the use of non-timber food products to diversify incomes, strengthen local markets, and improve food security and nutrition;
- Develop inclusive, climate-resilient value chains through investment in processing, storage and market linkages, and advancing healthy soil management for adaptation through climate-smart practices, including conservation tillage, diverse crop rotations, cover crops, agroforestry, and organic matter additions.

Box 2: Enhancing the Resilience of Agricultural Ecosystems in Chad

LDCF investment aims to strengthen climate resilience in Chad's agricultural ecosystems by improving water management, intensifying resilient production systems, and supporting rural livelihoods. The project focuses on reducing vulnerability to climate change, improving food security, and enhancing the adaptive capacity of institutions and communities.

With support from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and in partnership with Chad's Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, the project targets the rehabilitation or construction of water catchment facilities and the development of 10,000 hectares of agricultural land. Climate-smart agricultural practices will be promoted through 580 Farmer Field Schools focused on cereals, legumes, and oilseeds, while a multiplier network and research into resilient crop varieties will strengthen long-term food security.

The project also supports 300 income-generating activities and the rehabilitation of 40 community storage warehouses, while offering market, technical, and economic training to rural households. These efforts aim to diversify livelihoods, create jobs, and reduce the need for climate-induced migration.

Over 22,100 individuals are to benefit from water infrastructure, 14,500 farmers are to receive training in improved crop management, and 3,000 people will benefit from livelihood support. The project emphasizes inclusive participation, job creation, and the promotion of sustainable agricultural practices to reduce climate risks and enhance resilience.

GEF ID: 5376; **Agency:** IFAD; **Executing Partners:** Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation (lead); Ministry of Environment and Fisheries; Ministry for Economy, Planning and International Cooperation; **LDCF Project Financing:** \$7,305,936; **Co-financing:** \$24,500,000; **Project Approval:** September 2013; **Project Status:** Ongoing

Water

62. Climate change is intensifying water stress in LDCs and SIDS. About 71 percent of SIDS are at risk of water shortage.³⁶ As of 2022, 63 percent of the LDC population lacked safely managed water services, compared to 27 percent of the global population.³⁷ These figures highlight the significant water-related disparities and hardships faced by LDCs and SIDS, with direct implications for public health, agriculture, and nutrition.

63. Limited infrastructure and growing demand from agriculture and industries are intensifying these pressures, underscoring the urgency for targeted climate adaptation and better water management strategies. Investing in water adaptation will reduce vulnerability through improved agriculture productivity, ecosystem resilience, and better health outcomes. It also offers both a high-return investment and a strategic entry point for adaptation finance.

64. GEF-9 programming will continue to prioritize integrated water resources management approaches, with a sharpened focus on the delivery of tangible outcomes for resilient ecosystems, livelihoods, and human health. These approaches will incorporate climate information and early warning systems to guide water use planning, storage optimization, and drought preparedness.

Box 3: Improving Water Availability in The Gambia's Rural and Peri-Urban Communities for Domestic and Agricultural Use

LDCF investment aims to build resilience to climate change and variability by enhancing water availability for domestic and agricultural use, ultimately improving livelihoods in rural and peri-urban areas of The Gambia. The project targets increased access to climate-resilient water infrastructure through solar-powered systems, rainwater harvesting, and protective measures against climate-related risks such as floods and droughts.

By leveraging the partnership with the African Development Bank (AfDB) and engaging local private sector enterprises, the LDCF project is catalyzing finance to strengthen local entrepreneurship, enhance the operation and maintenance of water supply systems, and promote sustainable water management practices. The project seeks to directly deliver adaptation benefits to over 500,000 beneficiaries, with the potential to create over 1,500 permanent and temporary jobs (at least 30 percent of which employ women and 40 percent youth). Moreover, the project actively engages private sector players through key financial instruments such as public-private

³⁶ UN-Water. 2024. [Progress on the Level of Water Stress: 2024 Update](#). Geneva: UN-Water.

³⁷ UN-OHRLS. 2024. [Least Developed Countries: Facts and Figures 2024](#). New York: UN.

partnerships, cooperatives, and small enterprises – including water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) service providers, agriculture smallholders, and agro-water meteorological information providers – to improve the operation and sustainability of WASH infrastructure. This engagement is expected to strengthen adaptive capacities and generate sustainable livelihood opportunities within the target communities.

GEF ID: 10199; **Agency:** AfDB; **Executing Partners:** Ministry of Fisheries, Water Resources and National Assembly Matters; **LDCF Project Financing:** \$8,949,766; **Co-financing:** \$10,831,500; **Project Approval:** June 2019; **Project Status:** Ongoing

65. By aligning with national adaptation priorities, this theme will deliver measurable outcomes in water security, climate-resilient infrastructure, proactive drought management, and community resilience. GEF-9 will prioritize comprehensive, climate-smart approaches that enhance water availability, improve governance, and strengthen sustainable management practices, including the use of climate information and early warning systems to inform planning.

66. LDCs can pursue support for pioneering integrated water resources management approaches that connect vulnerable communities to climate-resilient water solutions as a unique opportunity in the climate finance landscape. Through innovative partnerships with MDBs, digital innovation integration, and participatory water governance, LDCs can seek support to build watershed-level resilience using NbS that protect water sources, enhance storage capacity, and improve water quality. This support can complement large-scale water infrastructure investments financed by MDBs and other climate funds, focusing on the critical software components – governance, capacity building, and community engagement – that ensure sustainability.

67. LDCs may prioritize the following key intervention areas, among others:

- Implementing integrated water resources management approaches that enhance water storage, protect watersheds, and ensure equitable allocation across sectors for improved livelihoods and human health, while strengthening the linkages with agricultural productivity and food systems resilience;
- Enhancing access to safe and reliable water and sanitation services in households, schools, and health centers, while strengthening monitoring systems for waterborne diseases;
- Mainstreaming water governance reforms, climate information services, and digital innovations to improve efficiency and sustainability;
- Unlocking private sector opportunities and delivering co-benefits for job creation, health improvement, and ecosystem restoration through NbS.

68. This Programming Strategy recognizes that water security in SIDS is inseparable from saltwater intrusion management, tourism sector sustainability, hurricane-resilient infrastructure, and alternative water source development, including desalination powered by renewable energy. It also emphasizes the importance of integrating water and agriculture programming to support nutrition, public health, and climate resilience.

69. SIDS have the opportunity to pursue island-specific water security approaches that address their unique vulnerabilities. Through system-wide interventions, SIDS can integrate strategies for preventing ocean acidification, coastal water management, and freshwater protection, supporting blue economy sectors alongside traditional water uses to build holistic resilience across island water systems.

70. Furthermore, SIDS can prioritize interventions including:

- Protecting and diversifying water sources by safeguarding freshwater systems from saltwater intrusion through sustainable extraction limits and artificial recharge;
- Developing alternative supplies, such as renewable energy-powered desalination, rainwater harvesting, and comprehensive water recycling linked to broader coastal zone water management strategies;
- Building resilient island-adapted water systems through decentralized, hurricane-resilient water infrastructure, climate-proofed water storage and distribution, and integration of water management with tourism, fisheries, and coastal zone planning to strengthen blue economies;
- Strengthening data, early-warning systems, and monitoring that support water resources management, public health, and long-term water security.

Nature-based Solutions and Infrastructure

71. Developing countries, including LDCs and SIDS, face increasing climate and infrastructure needs under tight fiscal space. NbS provide cost-effective risk reduction and co-benefits through the restoration and protection of ecosystems, watersheds and urban green spaces that reduce the impacts of extreme weather events, reduce urban heat islands, improve livelihoods, and sustain economies. A recent study underscored the role of NbS in offering cost-effective, multifunctional, long-term solutions that can address current adaptation needs, reduce future costs, and can be rapidly deployed across sectors and scales.³⁸ The high reliance of LDCs and SIDS on nature's services makes systematic investment in NbS imperative both as a standalone adaptation priority and as an integrated foundational component of resilient development pathways to protect natural assets while creating employment and delivering better health outcomes. More than half of all jobs in LDCs are linked to nature-based sectors, with agriculture as the dominant industry.³⁹ In SIDS, tourism accounts for an average of 30 percent of GDP, making healthy coastal and marine ecosystems vital economic assets.⁴⁰ Therefore, the LDCF and SCCF will continue prioritizing NbS and climate-resilient infrastructure development in the GEF-9

³⁸ Meraj, Gowhar, and Shizuka Hashimoto. 2025. "[Bridging the Adaptation Finance Gap: The Role of Nature-Based Solutions for Climate Resilience](#)". *Sustainability Science* 20: 1093–1107.

³⁹ UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). 2022. [The Least Developed Countries Report 2022: The Low-Carbon Transition and Its Daunting Implications for Structural Transformation](#). Geneva: UN.

⁴⁰ UN. 2023. "[About Small Island Developing States \(SIDS\)](#)". *UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Sustainable Development*.

period, recognizing the increasing importance of strengthening coastal protection and urban sustainability for effective climate adaptation and resilience.

Box 4: Accelerating investment in NbS to help address climate adaptation in LDCs

To scale up the use of NbS in climate adaptation, the LDCF is supporting a two-phase global initiative led by the World Bank. Phase 1, approved under GEF-7, laid the foundation by strengthening the enabling environment for NbS through early analytical work, tool development, and stakeholder engagement in select pilot countries. Building on this momentum, Phase 2, approved under GEF-8, expands support to more LDCs with a focus on operationalizing NbS at scale.

With a \$10 million LDCF grant and over \$90 million in co-financing, the Phase 2 program aims to strengthen the business case for NbS, improve policy and regulatory frameworks, and enhance institutional and technical capacities in LDCs to design, finance, and implement ecosystem-based adaptation. The program includes three pillars: (i) generating tools, evidence, and analytics to support cost-benefit assessments and innovative financing models for NbS; (ii) integrating NbS into World Bank project pipelines and national adaptation policies (e.g., NDCs, National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans); and (iii) promoting knowledge exchange, capacity building, and gender-responsive stakeholder engagement tailored to the LDC context.

Expected outcomes include stronger national systems for NbS investment planning, an increase in NbS-integrated adaptation projects in LDCs, and enhanced readiness of public and private institutions to finance and scale up NbS.

GEF ID: 11677; **Agency:** World Bank; **Executing partners:** Global Program on Nature Based Solutions for Climate Resilience; **LDCF Project Financing:** \$8,949,766; **Co-financing:** \$92,500,000; **Project Approval:** June 2023; **Project Status:** Ongoing

72. LDCs can pursue support for pioneering landscape-level NbS that function as integrative platforms linking water management, agriculture, ecosystem restoration, and climate-resilient infrastructure. Through comprehensive watershed management, natural resource management, coastal protection systems, and urban green infrastructure, LDCs can seek support to build natural defenses that complement and protect grey infrastructure investments while restoring critical ecosystem services. This support can leverage traditional ecological knowledge, community-based management systems, and innovative financing mechanisms to ensure long-term sustainability and local ownership.

73. Countries also have opportunities to prioritize the following key intervention areas, among others:

- Implementing ecosystem-based adaptation measures, such as mangrove restoration, wetland rehabilitation, and reforestation, that buffer infrastructure from climate extremes while providing livelihood benefits;
- Developing hybrid grey-green infrastructure systems that combine engineered solutions with natural features for enhanced resilience and cost-effectiveness, as well as integrating climate information and risk assessments into infrastructure planning, design standards, and investment decisions; strengthening urban resilience through green corridors, permeable surfaces, urban forests, and sustainable drainage systems that reduce flood risk and heat island effects, while protecting and restoring critical watersheds that supply water to cities and critical facilities.

74. This Programming Strategy recognizes that infrastructure resilience in SIDS depends on healthy coastal and marine ecosystems, which provide natural breakwaters, support fisheries, sustain tourism, and maintain the structural integrity of islands themselves. SIDS can pursue integrated coastal and marine NbS, addressing extreme exposure to sea-level rise and tropical cyclones. Through reef-to-ridge approaches that integrate coastal ecosystems with built infrastructure, SIDS can create multi-layered defense systems, including:

- Restoring and managing coastal ecosystems for resilience, tourism, and blue economy growth by protecting and rehabilitating coral reefs, seagrass beds, mangroves, and coastal wetlands for coastal defense and erosion control, and embedding these efforts in integrated coastal zone and ridge-to-reef watershed management to reduce sedimentation, and diversifying the tourism sector to reduce overreliance on vulnerable coastal resources;
- Supporting the enabling environment for development of climate-resilient infrastructure, including for the use of innovative materials, nature-based design principles, modern engineering standards, and locally appropriate traditional construction methods;
- Integrating climate information, early warning systems, and risk assessments into infrastructure planning, design, and investment decisions.

B. Approaches

75. In GEF-9, the LDCF and SCCF will promote four distinct approaches, alongside two cross-cutting approaches, to drive transformational adaptation: Policy Integration and Country Leadership; Adaptive Social Protection; Partnerships with Development Banks and Financial Institutions; and Innovative Finance and Market Development.

76. In addition, whole-of-society engagement and fragility-sensitive programming are essential cross-cutting elements. As described below, these may be integrated into interventions to achieve sustainable, inclusive, and system-wide change in the world's most climate-vulnerable nations. The LDCF and SCCF are particularly well placed to support these approaches, given their mandate to serve the most climate-vulnerable countries, and their flexibility to pilot upstream systemic reforms that larger funds are equipped to scale once tested.

Policy Integration and Country Leadership

Policy Alignment

77. Achieving national climate adaptation goals depends on how well public policy supports investment and action. The extent to which national climate adaptation ambitions will be achieved is determined largely by how aligned a country's public policy framework is with incentivizing climate adaptation investment and action, and how policy misalignment can be prevented from undermining adaptation efforts.

78. Support will be provided for both creating policies that incentivize finance and action for climate adaptation and removing perverse incentives that hinder resilience. In GEF-9, this will include engagement with ministries of finance, financial regulators, and national development banks (NDB), to identify, create, and align policy incentives for public and private financial institutions, businesses, and households, to invest in and value climate resilience. The LDCF and SCCF's focus on policy alignment is complementary to efforts across the GEF Family of Funds and other sources of climate adaptation finance, including other MCF and private sector actors that are well suited to capital intensive and infrastructure-oriented investments.

Investment Taxonomies

79. Public and private financial institutions both play a crucial part in advancing transformative climate adaptation, especially when their financial support is aligned with resilience priorities. Yet, the potential for impactful investment is often lost because fiscal policies, regulatory frameworks, and green investment strategies are not consistently crafted to coordinate, monitor, or encourage investment in climate adaptation and resilience. To overcome these policy misalignments, the LDCF and SCCF will promote the development and use of reliable taxonomies and metrics for climate adaptation and resilience investments, which include the disclosure of physical climate risks as well as opportunities for investment. These tools – investment taxonomies and impact metrics – form the foundation needed to attract more public and private capital towards building resilient economies. The LDCF and SCCF will support development and use of the essential, yet complex, policies and frameworks that can unlock large-scale climate adaptation investments from a broad range of financial sources. This will include development and piloting of approaches with multilateral and national development banks, development finance institutions, and local financial intermediaries, as well as supporting development of policies to incentivize climate-resilient investments aligned with the taxonomies.

Country Platforms

80. The G20 Sustainable Finance Working Group highlighted the importance of supporting country-driven strategies over individual projects to overcome the fragmentation and inefficiencies in current climate funding mechanisms.⁴¹ Discussions at COP 29 around global financial architecture reform emphasized the urgent need to develop pipelines of climate-resilient investments grounded in country leadership. The GEF will build on successful examples that integrate climate funds into cohesive Country Platforms to ensure that financing mechanisms are efficient, scalable, and aligned with national priorities, offering a roadmap for other countries.

81. To date, the GEF Family of Funds has contributed to Country Platforms, enhanced by Climate Finance Roundtables co-convened by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the

⁴¹ G20 Independent High-Level Expert Group. 2024. [Accelerating Sustainable Finance for Emerging Markets and Developing Economies: Independent Review of the Vertical Climate and Environmental Funds.](#)

World Bank, in Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Madagascar, and Seychelles. These Country Platforms build on the Resilience and Sustainability Facilities (RSF) – financing packages associated with a set of in-depth policy reforms and the requirement to catalyze private sector investment. In each country, the Climate Finance Roundtables are jointly chaired by ministers of finance and environment and are directly linked to IMF climate policy reforms with substantial long-term concessional finance.

82. As also presented in the GEF-9 Programming Directions, the LDCF and SCCF will continue to engage in Country Platforms, including the Climate Finance Roundtables. This will strengthen engagement and coherence with the other MCFs, as well as bilateral donors, MDBs, and the private sector, at both global and country levels. Importantly, it will also enable whole-of-government-owned policy reforms and large-scale financing. In turn, GEF investments will be strategically aligned with national priorities, increasing the likelihood of performance and sustainability. This requires purposeful design to ensure equity, transparency, and minimal administrative burden on countries, particularly in LDCs, SIDS, and fragile contexts. Within the scope of the MCF collaboration, efforts will be made to explore engagement or alignment with other Country Platform initiatives, including those under development by the GCF.

83. With the right conditions, Country Platforms can also be an effective way to strengthen policy alignment, by mainstreaming climate adaptation and environment objectives with whole-of-government country ownership, including by finance ministries and others. The LDCF and SCCF will support Country Platforms as part of the Country Engagement Strategy, and through targeted programming. This includes supporting the alignment of various Country Platform efforts, coordinating the Roundtable workstreams; developing investment plans aligned with the RSFs; fostering an enabling environment for adaptation investment, including through the development of green investment taxonomies; and monitoring policy alignment progress.

84. LDCF and SCCF programming will also be informed by Country Platforms to enable whole-of-government policy reforms and mobilize private investment. Support will be delivered through global, regional, and country-specific projects based on national priorities, in complementarity with the Project/Program-based Implementation Approach (PrIA) Capacity Building Program.

Adaptive Social Protection

85. Climate change is rapidly increasing risks for poor and vulnerable populations in LDCs and SIDS, intensifying cycles where climate risks and socio-economic vulnerabilities reinforce one another. Social protection systems have the power to help break this cycle, especially when they are tied closely to climate adaptation efforts. Because these systems are designed to manage risks, they can help individuals and families adapt by boosting income security, diversifying livelihoods, and investing in health, food security, education, and skills to help individuals and households manage and recover from both extreme weather and more gradual changes.

86. Funding sources like the LDCF and SCCF can play a central role in creating inclusive, climate-resilient social protection in highly vulnerable countries. These funds can support a range

of programs, including nature-based public works, training for new types of jobs, and insurance payouts after disasters. By linking social protection with climate adaptation, these funds may also create opportunities for other MCFs, such as the FRLD, to offer more targeted assistance.

87. This Programming Strategy will support LDCs and SIDS to use effective climate-relevant social protection tools, such as social assistance, insurance and risk transfer, and labor policies. These measures aim to: (i) prevent poverty by reducing climate risks; (ii) protect people during extreme events; and (iii) support resilience and recovery from climate impacts. Social protection programs not only ease immediate hardship but also strengthen long-term adaptive capacity and drive social and economic transformation.

Social Assistance

88. In GEF-9, the LDCF and SCCF will help strengthen connections between social protection and early warning systems, building on existing investments that can offer rapid support following climate-related disasters, helping households to meet basic needs, and avoid harmful coping mechanisms, therefore minimizing losses and damage. This will allow other MCFs, especially the FRLD, to provide rapid support when necessary and feasible. This support is distinct from the data-smart and digital approaches described under the Innovative Finance and Market Development subsection below, where it focuses on improving how financial institutions and capital flows are directed toward climate resilience. The social assistance work described here focuses on delivery infrastructure, ensuring that support reaches the right people at the right time in the aftermath of climate events.

89. Such support builds on the growing recognition of the need to expand social protection, particularly in LDCs, where only 14 percent of the population is covered by at least one form of social protection, excluding healthcare.⁴² The prevalence of informal economies has limited the expansion of social safety nets to the LDC population, especially women. Ongoing efforts in various LDCs to strengthen existing social protection systems and plan for expansions offer timely and systemic opportunities to incorporate and mainstream climate adaptation considerations, including those related to holistic and psychological health.

90. The LDCF and SCCF will also continue to provide financial and technical support (e.g., improved seeds and agricultural supplies) for climate-resilient practices, promote sustainable natural resource management programs that strengthen conservation and disaster preparedness and recovery, and encourage climate-risk reducing behaviors, participation in climate smart conservation activities, and climate-disaster preparedness training.

91. Furthermore, the LDCF and SCCF will facilitate the establishment of partnerships essential for implementing anticipatory finance mechanisms for climate shocks. These efforts are designed to be expanded through various funding sources and integrated into national processes.

⁴² UN. 2024. [*Follow-up to the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries. Report of the Secretary-General. A/79/75.*](#)

Anticipatory finance initiatives promote efficient and timely recovery following climate events and support communities in enhancing long-term adaptation and resilience to climate change.

Climate Insurance and Risk Transfer Mechanisms

92. The LDCF and SCCF will support the development of climate insurance models tailored for social protection programs, test commercial insurance coverage at the program level, and explore other financing solutions for adaptation and resilience. Access to climate insurance is limited across LDCs and SIDS, even as the urgency of insuring against climate change-related risks is rapidly growing. LDCF and SCCF programming in GEF-9 will address this market failure by leveraging the capacity of the insurance markets to develop better insurance products at the customer level, as well as by addressing issues of access and affordability at the industry level. This will involve working with insurers, reinsurers, and insurtech actors on product design and business models, as well as with governments and development funders on how to improve access for vulnerable populations. Index insurance models are particularly relevant. In designing support for climate insurance, the LDCF and SCCF will prioritize approaches that operate at aggregate or meso-levels, recognizing that individual-level insurance products often face barriers of affordability, regulatory readiness, and customer accessibility in LDC and SIDS contexts.

93. Parametric insurance models that insure the ecosystem services provided by natural assets, and other risk transfer mechanisms to protect investments in climate-vulnerable regions, also have strong potential. Support will complement and strengthen relevant ongoing initiatives, including those piloted with support from the LDCF and SCCF and others, including the Global Shield against Climate Risks, Africa Disaster Risk Financing Programme (ADRIFI), Africa Risk Capacity, and the Pacific Catastrophe Risk Insurance Company. Given increasing climate risks and the rapidly evolving field of climate insurance and risk transfer, innovation and new partners are required to further identify and validate new solutions. The proposed PrIA and associated capacity building of Executing Agencies may include a focus on climate insurance and risk transfer.

94. The strategic value of LDCF and SCCF in climate insurance and risk transfer will focus on the testing and piloting of new models with potential for scale up through other sources, including domestic resources, other MCFs, and the private sector. This may include, for example, approaches to lower payout trigger thresholds, and new index or parametric-based insurance models, to address underinsured climate impacts, exploring mechanisms to reduce premiums through blended finance, and supporting local populations to improve access to climate insurance products aligned with their priorities through financial literacy initiatives. LDCF and SCCF support will not be directed toward replicating or scaling up insurance solutions or risk transfer mechanisms.

95. This LDCF and SCCF focus will be consistent with and continue to build on initial learning from GEF-7 and GEF-8 through the piloting of a set of climate adaptation and resilience insurance

and risk sharing facilities.⁴³ These include the African Climate Risk Insurance Facility regional project supported by the LDCF in partnership with the AfDB,⁴⁴ to spur the creation of new insurance products to protect farmers coping with climate-related adversity in Comoros, Djibouti, Somalia, and South Sudan. Lessons have also been learned through two projects under the Challenge Program for Adaptation Innovation: Financial Tools for Small Scale Fishers in Melanesia in partnership with Willis Towers Watson and the World Wildlife Fund,⁴⁵ and Partnerships for Coral Reefs in Asia and the Pacific implemented in partnership with the Asian Development Bank (ADB).⁴⁶ The LDCF and SCCF have a strategic role to play vis-a-vis other sources of climate finance in strengthening piloting and scaling-up of climate insurance and risk transfer mechanisms. The comparative advantages of the LDCF and SCCF include the scale of project funding, which is well suited to piloting innovative instruments of this nature, as well as the strong foundation for learning and partnerships base established through these initiatives.

Partnerships with Development Banks and Financial Institutions

Multilateral Development Banks and International Financial Institutions

96. The LDCF and SCCF have significantly expanded collaboration with MDBs and IFIs in the GEF-8 period, with programming rising substantially, from 26.5 percent for the LDCF in the GEF-7 period to 37.4 percent for the GEF-8, with the approval of the June 2026 Work Program. In the GEF-8 period, with the approval of the Work Program, the World Bank alone will account for 18.3 percent, or \$136.39 million, of LDCF programming.

97. In the GEF-8 period including the June 2026 Work Program, LDCF projects with IFIs have so far leveraged \$6.15 to each dollar of LDCF grant resources, whereas projects with non-IFIs leveraged \$3.24. For the SCCF, GEF-8 projects with IFIs leveraged \$7.80 to each dollar of SCCF support, whereas projects with non-IFIs leveraged \$4.55. Table 1 below presents co-financing by IFIs and non-IFIs under each fund in GEF-7 and GEF-8.

Table 1: Co-financing by the IFIs and Non-IFI GEF Agencies in the LDCF and SCCF Portfolio

		IFIs	Non-IFIs
LDCF	GEF-7	\$5.79	\$3.50
	GEF-8	\$6.15	\$3.24
SCCF	GEF-7	\$5.31	\$4.60
	GEF-8	\$7.80	\$4.55

98. Engagement with MDBs and IFIs presents an opportunity for the LDCF and SCCF to amplify their impact through co-finance, blended finance instruments that leverage grants and

⁴³ GEF. 2024. [“Nature Insurance: A New Safety Net for Coral and Coasts”](#).

⁴⁴ GEF. 2024. [“African Climate Risk Insurance Facility—Derisking Adaptation to Climate Change in Africa”](#).

⁴⁵ GEF. 2021. [“Financial Tools for Small Scale Fishers in Melanesia”](#).

⁴⁶ GEF. 2021. [“Partnerships for Coral Reef Finance and Insurance in Asia and the Pacific”](#).

concessional financing, and innovative financing instruments. With the approval of the June 2026 Work Program, 35.7 percent of programming by both the LDCF and SCCF in GEF-8 will be with MDBs and IFIs. The LDCF and SCCF will strive to continue to meet this baseline for GEF-9.

99. In GEF-9, the LDCF and SCCF will deepen MDB and IFI collaboration to unlock adaptation finance at scale. Enhanced collaboration will look to target and leverage MDB and IFI support for LDCs and SIDS, such as the World Bank (through the International Development Association resources), regional and sub-regional development banks (AfDB, ADB, Inter-American Development Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and others), and IFAD. As referenced above, Country Platforms with the World Bank and other partners will also be leveraged to align adaptation investment priorities, streamline financing pipelines, and ensure that national adaptation plans and investment frameworks are adequately resourced.

100. Partnerships will be pursued with a complementarity and value addition lens, ensuring the LDCF and SCCF maximize synergies with other financing sources. The convening power and technical expertise of MDBs and IFIs will be harnessed to crowd in private sector investments in GEF-9 priority themes where possible.

National Development Banks and Local Financial Institutions

101. In parallel, the LDCF and SCCF will explore opportunities to strengthen collaboration with NDBs and other local financial institutions (FIs) to unlock domestic finance solutions for adaptation. Building on their deep understanding of local investment landscapes and development priorities, NDBs can serve as critical channels for scaling up climate-resilient investments that are anchored in national and subnational development plans.

102. LDCF and SCCF resources can provide the technical assistance, capacity building, and risk mitigation tools necessary for NDBs and local FIs to integrate climate risk screening into their mandates, develop tailored adaptation-linked financial products, and mobilize local capital towards climate-resilient investment. NDBs are already active in countries such as Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Fiji, Jamaica, Rwanda, Seychelles, Tonga, and Uganda, providing a foundation of financial institutions for potential LDCF and SCCF partnerships.

103. Collaboration with NDBs and local FIs in GEF-9 will be enabled by investment taxonomy development as described within other approaches. Technical assistance combined with de-risking finance will also be used to catalyze and focus investment by a diverse set of financial service providers on climate adaptation and resilience of local vulnerable communities, as detailed in the section below on Financial Inclusion.

104. Leveraging strategic partnerships with development banks and financial institutions at a range of scales will enable the LDCF and SCCF to strengthen their catalytic role in the adaptation finance space, aligning international and in-country funding sources, promoting complementarity, and ensuring that adaptation investments are embedded in the long-term development and fiscal strategies of LDCs and SIDS.

Innovative Finance and Market Development

Private Sector Engagement

105. Large-scale and transformative adaptation to address the increasing severity of climate impacts requires the innovation, proactivity, and resources of the private sector, with a focus on micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). Private sector actors will be engaged during the GEF-9 period in three main ways: (i) as sources of private finance mobilized to scale-up and increase sustainability of project outcomes; (ii) in creating and expanding new markets to meet the increasing need for climate adaptation and resilience goods and services; and (iii) in strengthening the resilience of supply chains, and thereby economies, to physical climate risks. This approach will contribute to climate-resilient livelihoods, jobs, economic growth, and innovation. The importance of private sector engagement for project sustainability and scale-up has been highlighted by the IEO, including in the recent evaluation of LDCF and SCCF.⁴⁷

106. This engagement will especially focus on private sector actors of direct relevance to the contexts of LDCs and SIDS. Such actors include domestic MSMEs operating in formal and informal sectors; agri-food producers – including smallholder farmers and fishers – which are often a key source of jobs and livelihoods in LDCs and SIDS; commodity buyers and investors motivated to address supply chain resilience; and local and national FIs and financial intermediaries with potential to help address the shortage of capital for local producers to transition to climate adaptation and resilience.

107. To increase the scale of climate adaptation finance, GEF-9 will also engage with, and foster partnership and learning with, key networks and institutions across the traditional lines of philanthropy, public finance, and private sector investment. These may include the Climate Adaptation Innovation Funders Collective, the Climate Adaptation and Innovation Resilience (CIFAR) Alliance, and the Global Adaptation and Resilience Investment (GARI) Group.

108. It is also important to note that private sector engagement through innovative finance and market development is complementary to the Challenge Program for Adaptation Innovation and the NGI Program for Climate Adaptation, as articulated in Section VII. E on Global and Regional Programs and Partnerships below.

Blended Finance and Innovative Financing Instruments

109. At COP 29, Parties to the UNFCCC strengthened their call for the mobilization of financial resources from all sources, including the private sector, to rapidly scale-up investment and address the climate adaptation finance gap. Blended finance has proven its potential as an effective and expanding approach to mobilizing private investment in recent years, with total leverage reaching \$70 billion in 2024. However, relatively limited amounts of blended finance have been dedicated to climate adaptation. Despite significant potential, less than 2 percent of

⁴⁷ GEF IEO. 2025. [2026-2030 LDCF/SCCF Strategy: Highlights of Evaluation Findings on the LDCF and the SCCF](#). GEF/LDCF.SCCF/SM.01/02.

financing in the current global climate adaptation market is recognized as coming from the private sector.⁴⁸

110. The LDCF and SCCF are uniquely well positioned to catalyze innovation and private sector investment in climate adaptation and resilience, particularly in LDCs and SIDS. The scale of LDCF and SCCF projects, including medium-sized projects (MSPs) in the \$1 million to \$5 million range, have proven to be particularly well suited to testing and piloting innovative financing models, as has been demonstrated by the Challenge Program for Adaptation Innovation. In GEF-9, novel innovative financing models will be proactively selected and designed to have potential for scaling up through other sources of finance, including other MCF and private sector investors.

111. In GEF-9, a range of blended and innovative finance solutions will be identified, piloted, and scaled up. Support in this area will catalyze larger scale finance to support vulnerable populations, often by engaging non-traditional GEF partners. Blended finance and other innovative finance models to be considered for support include parametric and index insurance, impact bonds, and investment funds. Models will also include risk-sharing instruments such as guarantees and first-loss capital, which enable FIs both to test new approaches and to keep serving vulnerable communities as climate risks and impacts increase. Climate insurance and risk transfer mechanisms will also be supported, as detailed in the section above on Social Protection. Technical assistance will be modest in scale and tied to financial sector issues and investment, with a focus on testing and scalable models.

112. SCCF-B will include a new NGI Program for Climate Adaptation to generate climate adaptation benefits, as detailed below in Section VII. E on the Global and Regional Programs and Partnerships. Operational modalities, including calls for proposals, will be coordinated with the Blended Finance Global Program supported by the GEF Trust Fund, subject to resource availability. In addition to targeted adaptation NGI projects, opportunities will be pursued to derive multiple climate and environment benefits by combining funding in MTF projects from the SCCF-B and the Blended Finance Global Program supported by the GEF Trust Fund.

113. In GEF-9, increased emphasis will be placed on collaboration with bilateral funders, development finance institutions, and philanthropies, to strengthen catalytic capital for innovative financing instruments for climate adaptation and resilience. For example, building on recent co-investment successes through the Challenge Program for Adaptation Innovation, the LDCF and SCCF will seek to expand opportunities to partner upstream to jointly finance priority initiatives. The LDCF and SCCF will also partner with philanthropies and philanthropic investor collaboratives to capitalize on the nimbleness of philanthropic capital in incubating innovative ventures that have potential for scale up from other sources. Additionally, collaboration will be explored with relevant initiatives and partnerships.

⁴⁸ Convergence. 2024. [State of Blended Finance 2024](#).

Financial Inclusion through Accessible Microfinance for Climate Resilient Livelihoods and Jobs

114. The Programming Strategy will support entrepreneurship to drive income generation and employment as core components of climate change adaptation interventions in applicable thematic areas. This includes value chain development in agriculture and food systems to generate green jobs and support jobs-for-nature programs. Support for local micro and small businesses through entrepreneurship training and market access will boost competitiveness, while mentorship and business development services will foster innovation and job creation.

115. Entrepreneurship training will be complemented with access to inclusive microfinance. Efforts will be underpinned by support for the inclusion and access of climate vulnerable populations to appropriate, affordable, and responsible financial products and services such as savings accounts and access to credit, that contribute to climate resilience livelihoods and jobs. Financial literacy and access to financial services on just terms can be instrumental to enabling grassroots and locally-led adaptation.

116. The LDCF and SCCF will expand access to financial and non-financial products and services that strengthen the climate resilience of vulnerable smallholder farmers, rural households, micro, small and medium entrepreneurs, and other underserved vulnerable groups. Building on lessons learned, this will be achieved by catalyzing the extensive reach, proximity to vulnerable populations, and capital mobilization capacity of Inclusive Financial Service Providers (IFSPs). LDCF and SCCF projects will engage a diverse set of IFSPs – including credit unions, farmers’ cooperatives, community service organizations, and local commercial financial institutions – to strengthen the provision of training and accessible capital at just terms for climate adaptation-oriented solutions. Technical assistance will be modest in scale and linked to financial sector issues and investment, with a focus on testing and scalable models.

117. As noted in other sections, the LDCF and SCCF occupy a distinctive position in the broader climate finance architecture: few other multilateral funds systematically pilot and demonstrate scalable models for inclusive financial services in the context of climate adaptation with an emphasis on LDCs and SIDS. Importantly, support for microfinance will involve relevant market studies to avoid market distortion. Support provided will be context-specific, gender-responsive, and inclusive of marginalized populations – leveraging participatory design processes to reflect the needs, preferences, and constraints of diverse populations.

118. Guarantees and targeted de-risking will be used to unlock private capital through IFSPs, while capacity-building support will help them integrate adaptation and resilience impact and investment taxonomies into credit origination and portfolio monitoring. Linking capital access to climate-smart training and locally-validated solutions ensures that farmers and entrepreneurs can adopt practices, inputs, and technologies that are both effective in reducing climate risk and feasible in their operational context.

119. Second-tier lenders, such as NDBs and other FIs, will also be engaged to channel their wholesale finance on terms that incentivize and enable local IFSPs to develop climate adaptation

and resilience offerings for vulnerable populations. These will be directly linked to climate risk and adaptive capacity assessments, and measurable climate resilience outcomes. Certification and labeling of adaptation-aligned products and services will be promoted, in line with recognized climate investment taxonomies and resilience eligibility frameworks, to increase market transparency and attract responsible private capital.

120. The GEF will continue to engage with the Consultative Group to Assist the Poor and others in the identification of good practices and sharing of learning on financial inclusion and microfinance for climate adaptation and resilience between governments, financial institutions, and civil society. The LDCF and SCCF may support development of accessible microfinance ecosystems, where financial flows, technical expertise, and climate adaptation aligned policies converge to drive systemic grassroots resilience.

Digital and Data-smart Adaptation and Resilience Finance

121. The LDCF and SCCF will embed digital and data-smart approaches in LDCF and SCCF support. Three complementary building blocks will provide more effective, evidence-based, and people-first adaptation finance: (i) digital tools connecting capital flows with climate risk and adaptive capacity; (ii) artificial intelligence (AI) providing predictive and tailored resilience solutions; and (iii) creating public data ecosystems that enable inclusive, transparent, and scalable adaptation finance.

122. The LDCF and SCCF will promote the strategic use of digital tools, and AI-driven analytics as appropriate, to help enhance decision-making in adaptation and resilience finance. The use of digital tools to advance climate action is central to achieving the COP 29 Declaration on Green Digital Action.⁴⁹ Digital tools can provide the infrastructure necessary to connect financing with local realities of climate exposure, sensitivity, and adaptive capacity. By embedding geospatial information, client-level data, and operational taxonomies into financial decision-making, financial institutions can align credit origination and portfolio management with measurable resilience outcomes.

123. By integrating geospatial climate risk data, predictive analytics, and digital monitoring, reporting, and verification systems, financial service providers and others in the climate finance ecosystem can objectively assess the vulnerability of target populations. This can also be instrumental in strengthening the forecasting of climate impacts, as well as tailoring offerings such as climate-smart agricultural packages, efficient water systems, resilient housing, and livelihood diversification support. Digital platforms will facilitate real-time sharing of climate data and adaptation solutions across borders, enabling coordinated monitoring of transboundary climate risks and joint learning on adaptation effectiveness.

124. This approach links capital flows to data flows, creating a feedback loop for continuous learning on adaptation needs and adaptive capacity. Local adaptation data inform product

⁴⁹ UNFCCC COP 29 Presidency. 2024. ["COP 29 Declaration on Green Digital Action"](#).

features, repayment structures, and incentive mechanisms, ensuring that financing aligns with both short-term coping and long-term resilience-building. Coupled with non-financial services (e.g., training on technology, market access, and financial literacy), it channels resources toward impactful resilience investments. By embedding these practices in institutional processes, the LDCF and SCCF can catalyze evidence-based and people-first adaptation finance.

C. Cross-Cutting Approaches

125. Two cross-cutting approaches will guide the LDCF and SCCF to achieve transformational adaptation in the GEF-9 period. Initiatives supported by the LDCF and SCCF are expected to incorporate cross-cutting approaches, particularly by considering the context and specific features of each initiative to help achieve sustainable, inclusive, and system-wide change.

Fragility and Conflict-affected Situations

126. In GEF-9, the LDCF and SCCF will strengthen programming in FCS, ensuring it not only reduces vulnerability to climate impacts, but also proactively contributes to broader resilience and sustaining peace, including conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and post-conflict recovery. Such programming may include locally-led and gender-responsive adaptation, environmental peacebuilding, restoration of ecosystems and services, creation of climate-smart livelihoods, and inclusive social protection and services for impacted communities. These efforts will ensure inclusion of, and accessibility for, the most vulnerable groups, such as women, youth, displaced populations, elderly persons, and people with disabilities.

127. The LDCF and SCCF will support integrating climate resilience into infrastructure planning and design for recovery and reconstruction efforts in post-conflict countries, helping to catalyze financing at scale from MDBs and other post-conflict and reconstruction support programs. Nature-based infrastructure and valuation support are key. Finally, the LDCF and SCCF may assist policymakers, investors, and development partners in incorporating climate resilience solutions in their efforts, such as green infrastructure and sustainable urban development, which can pay multiple dividends for decades to come.

128. These efforts will be facilitated by incentivizing fragility and conflict-sensitive programming in FCS with flexibility in implementation, including provisions for adaptive management to respond to changing circumstances. LDCF and SCCF will partner with institutions that are actively engaged in humanitarian support, conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and post-conflict recovery when national entities encounter difficulties in programming and executing projects in FCS. Enhanced cross-agency learning and knowledge management will be supported as part of GEF-wide knowledge management and integration efforts, alongside strengthening engagement with local actors working on the ground. LDCF and SCCF's engagement in FCS will be coordinated within the GEF to ensure coherence, effectiveness, and sustained impact.

Whole-of-Society and Locally-led Adaptation

129. GEF-9 LDCF and SCCF programming will emphasize the significance of whole-of-society approaches. Central to this strategy is fostering cross-sector collaboration and ensuring that adaptation priorities are integrated into national initiatives, which will be advanced through the implementation of the GEF-9 Country Engagement Strategy. For the LDCF and SCCF, emphasis will be placed on a people-centered and locally-led approach to adaptation interventions. This will involve establishing or reinforcing adaptation governance structures at the local level and ensuring that these platforms include representatives from multiple sectors, thereby broadening and strengthening the participation of CSOs and IPLCs in decision-making, and ensuring that their perspectives are actively sought and reflected throughout all stages.

130. Under this approach, the LDCF and SCCF will promote engagement from a broad range of societal actors in affected communities, focusing on prioritizing women, youth, and persons with disabilities as key actors and beneficiaries. This will build on the momentum created by the GEF-8 LDCF and SCCF Programming Strategy Priority Area 3 on Fostering Partnership for Inclusion and Whole-of-Society Approach. Community service organizations will also be engaged to mainstream climate adaptation and resilience into service delivery within holistic health, community engagement, and local livelihood programs.

131. To this end, this Programming Strategy sets an aspirational target of 20 percent of GEF-9 LDCF and SCCF resources to support locally-led adaptation or adaptation actions that benefit IPLCs. Guidelines will draw on the recently developed GBFF guidelines to ensure a GEF-wide approach, and the UNFCCC Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform, and relevant civil society stakeholders will be consulted. The country-driven nature of the LDCF and SCCF will be maintained by inviting interested countries to voluntarily participate in these initiatives on a non-objection basis.

D. Funding Windows

LDCF: Climate Adaptation Priorities of LDCs

132. The LDCF provides predictable grant funding to LDCs, supporting climate adaptation efforts that are in line with the thematic priorities and approaches of this strategy. Based on the two financial scenarios presented in Section X., the initial access cap per LDC in GEF-9 is proposed to be \$20 million under Scenario A, and \$25 million under Scenario B. Countries have the flexibility to use LDCF support to address their climate adaptation priorities in the three core programming areas and six approaches presented in the previous sections. Countries are also encouraged to pursue MTF programming and foster synergy across projects and programs supported by the GEF.

133. In addition, the LDCF will respond to the COP 29 and COP 30 guidance to extend support to those countries that graduated from LDC status in the GEF-8 period, to facilitate their smooth and gradual transition. As countries that graduated in GEF-7 and GEF-8, Bhutan, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Vanuatu will be eligible to receive support in GEF-9.

134. The LDCF will also continue to support the Challenge Program for Adaptation Innovation in LDCs to effectively promote innovation and private sector participation in adaptation, develop scalable solutions, and attract new partners beyond traditional GEF channels. Resources for global and regional initiatives beyond the Challenge Program, presented in the section below, will also be made available, not exceeding 10 percent of the total financial scenarios.

135. A 25 percent cap will be applied to agency concentration in the LDCF, to be aligned with the GEF-9 Programming Directions.

SCCF Window A: Climate Adaptation Priorities of SIDS

136. SCCF-A is the only multilateral fund which is specifically designed for non-LDC SIDS. Programming will be based on country adaptation and resilience-building priorities that have been identified in national development plans, national communications, or adaptation reports, such as NAPs.

137. The focus of SCCF-A is to assist SIDS in transformational, system-wide changes that will enhance resilience through a whole-of-society approach. In addition to the thematic areas highlighted earlier in this document, the SCCF-A will support coastal zone management, resilience building in priority sectors such as fisheries, energy, and tourism, and improving relevant planning and policy options. As a result of the changing climate, there will be a need to develop alternative livelihoods in many SIDS, and SCCF resources can be used to facilitate the development of new sources of income.

138. In the GEF-9 period, the initial access cap is proposed to be maintained at \$3 million under Scenario A, and \$5 million under Scenario B, compared to the GEF-8 figure of \$3 million. Up to 10 percent of the resources can also be programmed for global and regional initiatives. A 25 percent cap will be applied to agency concentration in SCCF-A.

SCCF Window B: Technology, Innovation, and Private Sector Engagement

139. In GEF-9, SCCF-B will deepen its targeted focus on the GEF's areas of comparative advantage related to technology, innovation, and private sector engagement. This fund will provide support for all eligible developing countries. Approaches for doing so in GEF-9 are outlined above, and include inclusive microfinance, blended finance investment funds, climate insurance, and new technology deployment.

140. The scope of SCCF-B will be focused on two strategic programs: the Challenge Program for Adaptation Innovation and the NGI Program for Climate Adaptation. These programs are purposefully designed to perform a unique and strategic role in the GEF Family of Funds and broader climate finance architecture.

141. As detailed in the section below, the Challenge Program for Adaptation Innovation will provide catalytic grants for regional and global MSPs to pilot innovation models with potential for scale up from other sources.

142. As also detailed below in Figure 7, a new NGI Program for Climate Adaptation will provide catalytic-scale NGIs, including concessional guarantees, loans, and equity investments, to catalyze private sector investment in climate adaptation. SCCF-B stands as the only window in the GEF Family of Funds that can directly use NGIs to catalyze climate adaptation impact with the private sector.

Figure 7: LDCF SCCF Funding Windows

	LDCF	SCCF Window A	SCCF Window B
Countries	LDCs	Non-LDC SIDS	All countries for technology, innovation, & private sector engagement
Financial instruments	Grant only		Grant & non-grant
Country cap	YES - Predictable access		No
Catalytic finance for scale-up	Based on country demand		YES - Primary focus

← Global & Regional Programs & Partnerships →

E. Global and Regional Programs and Partnerships

Challenge Program for Adaptation Innovation

143. The Challenge Program for Adaptation Innovation has been broadly recognized as effective in piloting new and innovative technologies and approaches to catalyze climate adaptation finance and action at scale. The Challenge Program is a competitive process, in which any proponent can apply for support through an open call for concepts, and the selected concepts are matched with a GEF agency for implementation. Funded by both LDCF and SCCF, this approach has enabled the GEF to partner with a wide range of institutions with innovative concepts and approaches to climate adaptation, many of whom are from the Global South.

144. This program was created in GEF-7, under the guidance of the LDCF/SCCF Council, with an inaugural round that supported nine MSPs for a total of \$10 million in grants, followed by the second round that supported ten MSPs for a total of a further \$10 million.⁵⁰ Building on the success in GEF-7, the GEF-8 Strategy called for this program to be continued and increased. Available funding has enabled a third round, totaling \$20 million, which will support 13 MSPs,

⁵⁰ GEF. 2019. [“Winners of the GEF Challenge Program for Adaptation Innovation Announced”](#). GEF Press Release, December 10, 2019.

GEF. 2021. [“GEF Challenge Program for Adaptation Innovation Names 10 New Winners”](#). GEF Press Release, November 8, 2021.

subject to final approvals.⁵¹ This has brought the total support provided through this program to 32 MSPs, totaling \$40 million.⁵² Projects have attracted additional climate finance and engaged new partners, including the GCF and the Adaptation Fund, as well as private sector investors, adding value to the adaptation finance ecosystem.

145. The scale of GEF finance for each project supported through this program will balance the catalytic nature of the program with economies of scale. The Challenge Program will provide grants to all eligible countries, including LDCs and SIDS, with funds for this program provided by the LDCF, SCCF-A, and SCCF-B. To increase efficiency in submitting and approving MSPs through this program, as well as deepen cross-pollination and learning, options will be considered to consolidate projects within a program structure as per the GEF project cycle.

146. With a view to serving as a laboratory for innovation of practical climate adaptation solutions, the calls for concepts will focus on cutting-edge and emerging themes as aligned with the broader approaches in this document. These will include, for example, new models to accelerate micro entrepreneurs and create jobs; expand accessible climate insurance options for vulnerable communities; expand accessible microfinance and catalyze blended finance; integrate climate adaptation in social resilience programming; and develop AI technologies and literacy for climate adaptation and resilience.

147. To further capitalize on innovation and hasten its uptake, this program will deepen its ongoing focus on learning and communication, both between projects and with other partners within and beyond the GEF partnership, including other MCFs and bilateral cooperation partners. These efforts build on the Climate Adaptation Innovation learning project supported in GEF-8. The Challenge Program for Adaptation Innovation will learn from and collaborate with the increasing set of other funders who are providing incubation and catalytic finance through challenges and other approaches.

NGI Program for Climate Adaptation

148. As reflected in the NCQG decision and COP guidance, ambitiously increased investment from the private sector is necessary to meet global adaptation finance needs at the scale and pace required. The blending of public resources to catalyze private investment will be critical to achieving the \$1.3 trillion commitment made in Baku at COP 29.

149. As detailed in the Blended Finance and Innovative Financing Instruments subsection of Section VII. B on Approaches, projects through this NGI Program will be financed solely by SCCF-B. All developing countries eligible for SCCF-B may be supported through this Program, and the distinct capacity and market constraints of LDCs and SIDS will be appropriately considered. NGI

⁵¹ GEF. 2024. [“GEF Announces \\$20 Million Investment in Climate Adaptation Innovators”](#). *GEF Press Release*, November 15, 2024.

⁵² GEF. 2025. [Update on the Challenge Program for Adaptation Innovation under the Special Climate Change Fund and the Least Developed Countries Fund](#). GEF/LDCF.SCCF/INF.03.

projects will not affect the LDCF or SCCF country cap. This program will feature innovative financing instruments such as concessional guarantees, loans, and equity. Subject to availability of funds, this program will take a portfolio approach to learning with a modest diversity of partners and blended finance investment models.

150. This program will learn from, and coordinate with, the Blended Finance Global Program and NGI supported by the GEF Trust Fund. Due to the modest amount of resources (\$50 million for Scenario A and \$56 million for Scenario B) to be made available in GEF-9 based on voluntary contributions, the Secretariat will initiate the roll-out of programming and assess the scope based on timing and scale of resource availability. This program will aim to support a combination of adaptation-focused investments and MTF initiatives with the GEF Trust Fund.

151. The scale of SCCF-B in NGI projects will balance the catalytic focus of this program with the viability of achieving project outcomes. This will be conducive to risk appropriate piloting of models with potential for scale up from other sources. Investments will be open to reasonable risk, and analysis of risk thresholds will be undertaken to learn from investments made.

152. The NGI Program for Climate Adaptation will also be coordinated closely with MCFs and other sources of finance, particularly the GCF's Private Sector Facility, with a view to opportunities for replication and scale-up across contexts.

Global and Regional Initiatives

Global and Regional Projects

153. The GEF has programmed resources at the regional and global level to support Convention obligations, enabling activities, and initiatives that are more effectively addressed at the regional and global levels. Regional and global-level programming will also be used to support testing and piloting of highly innovative and risky interventions that may be considered too early for national-level implementation.

154. LDCF and SCCF support to regional and global projects and initiatives is valuable, due to the funds' flexibility and risk tolerance. Regional and global initiatives eligible for GEF-9 support include the following:

- Major initiatives with MCFs and other partners;
- Capacity building and cross-learning support and response to COP guidance;
- Incentives to integrate and accelerate adaptation and climate resilience enhancement into global and regional projects and programs;
- Innovative projects with significant climate adaptation impact, including private sector engagement;
- Incentives and support for implementation of Country Programs, in coordination with support to executing entities provided through the PIA Capacity Building Program outlined below;

- Relevant elements of the LDC Work Program and other COP guidance.

155. Modest shares of LDCF and SCCF resources will be made available for regional and global projects, as presented in Section X. on Financial Scenarios.

Strategic Partnerships and Collaboration

156. Ongoing partnership and support may continue to be provided to the LDC Group, and support for similar initiatives with other targeted regional group(s) relevant to the SCCF may be explored. Efforts will focus on developing and strengthening partnerships with global and regional organizations dedicated to climate adaptation. These collaborations are expected to produce comprehensive data, insightful analyses, and detailed assessments, which will guide the creation of practical, effective, and sustainable climate adaptation solutions. They will include working with existing partners as appropriate,⁵³ as well as exploring new and evolving partnerships including bilateral and regional entities.

157. Engagement will continue with the World Adaptation Science Programme, which the GEF is chairing until 2027, in partnership with IPCC, GCF, World Meteorological Organization (WMO), UNFCCC, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and others, to address knowledge gaps and to inform evidence-based policies, solutions, and actions for climate adaptation.

Capacity Building and Institutional Strengthening

Country Engagement Strategy

158. In GEF-9, the LDCF and SCCF will coordinate and synergize outreach to, and engagement with, key stakeholders, in line with the GEF Country Engagement Strategy. This effort will complement project-based and thematic capacity building efforts, as well as specific initiatives in response to COP guidance. Lessons learned from the GEF-8 regional training workshops for OFPs, particularly for LDCs and SIDS contexts, will be synthesized and reflected in the GEF-9 approach.

159. In particular, targeted and continued engagement of the LDCF and SCCF in Country Engagement Strategy efforts is envisaged, with a special focus on LDCs and SIDS. Such engagement will be planned and implemented in coordination with the GEF-wide Country Engagement Strategy efforts.

160. Relevant activities may include:

- In-depth consultations with countries on LDCF and SCCF programming opportunities;
- Engagement with OFPs and UNFCCC focal points on aligning national needs and priorities;

⁵³ Examples include: CIFAR Alliance, Consultative Group to Assist the Poor, GARI Group, Global Resilience Partnership; Systematic Observations Financing Facility; and the Just Sustainability Transitions Institute.

- Dialogue on GEF-relevant matters and country and regional priorities in preparation for major multilateral meetings, COPs, and GEF engagements, and responses to key decisions;
- Sharing good practices and lessons learned from adaptation programming;
- Discussions with bilateral partners active in climate adaptation;
- Facilitating MCF collaboration, including joint outreach to fund focal points;
- Maximizing engagement across the climate finance landscape;
- LDCF and SCCF-relevant engagement in Country Platforms.

161. Concerted efforts will be made to expand outreach to UNFCCC national focal points, national entities, and focal points of key MCFs, national and sub-national government institutions, IPLCs, and innovation and private sector platforms.

PriA Capacity Building Program

162. The PriA Capacity Building Program represents a strategic global initiative to strengthen the capacity of executing entities across LDCs and SIDS to access and effectively deploy climate adaptation finance. As detailed in Section VIII. A on Enhanced Access and Implementation, this program will establish a transformative support system specifically designed to prepare executing entities for enhanced access through streamlined implementation pathways, not only across the GEF Family of Funds but also across the broader multilateral climate finance system. With an estimated GEF-9 investment of \$3 million to \$4 million from LDCF and SCCF-A, the program will serve a targeted pool of approximately 50 potential executing entities through comprehensive institutional capacity building, technical assistance for meeting assessment criteria, and robust South-South learning platforms connecting entities across regions for peer-to-peer exchange and knowledge sharing of successful implementation approaches.

F. Sustainability of Project Outcomes

163. Sustaining adaptation benefits beyond the life of LDCF and SCCF projects is critical to ensuring lasting climate adaptation outcomes. The GEF IEO's Annual Evaluation Report 2025 notes that the long-term sustainability of adaptation investments in LDCs and SIDS is often constrained by financial limitations, institutional capacity gaps, and the inconsistent implementation of exit strategies. This evaluation also notes that sustainability prospects improve when projects include clear transition plans, capacity building of local actors, private sector engagement, and community participation.⁵⁴ The IEO report also draws attention to the essential complementary roles played by members of the GEF partnership during project design, review, approval, and implementation stages.

164. In GEF-9, the LDCF and SCCF will place strong emphasis on embedding financial and institutional sustainability measures from the project design phase through to implementation,

⁵⁴ GEF IEO. 2025. [LDCF/SCCF Annual Evaluation Report 2025](#). GEF/LDCF.SCCF.38/E/01.

to ensure that adaptation benefits endure beyond the life of individual projects. All projects will integrate explicit financial and institutional sustainability strategies at the design stage, including alignment with national priorities, budgets, and sectoral adaptation plans to strengthen policy coherence and secure post-project financing through public expenditure frameworks, innovative financing, and market development. Cost-sharing and co-financing commitments from governments, development partners, and the private sector will also be increasingly pursued, alongside transition strategies for handing over operations to local institutions, communities, or private sector entities.

165. Monitoring of LDCF and SCCF project implementation and impacts will be increased to the extent feasible in the GEF-9 period, subject to availability of increased human resources. Currently, project monitoring and adaptive management of project activities during the implementation phase is primarily undertaken by GEF Agencies. Increased project monitoring will enable particular attention to implementation for financial and institutional sustainability, implementation of whole-of-society approaches, and implementation of strategies to ensure scaling up of outcomes following project conclusion. Increased monitoring during implementation will also focus on actions to strengthen the capacity of national and local actors to access and manage LDCF and SCCF resources and timely identification of issues that could undermine the sustainability of project outcomes. Such increased monitoring needs to be undertaken across the GEF partnership, particularly with Agencies and in-country execution partners who are responsible for project implementation.

VIII. Operational Improvements

166. Building on the foundational governance framework established during GEF-4, the LDCF and SCCF have benefited from specific flexibility arrangements that recognize their unique operational context and mandate. As confirmed in the GEF Council's decisions on climate change fund governance, "The Council also confirms that the policies and procedures separately established for the climate change funds will not apply or be taken to establish any precedent for the operation of the GEF Trust Fund."⁵⁵

167. This recognition of the LDCF and SCCF's distinct operational requirements has enabled the development of tailored approaches that respond to the urgent adaptation needs of LDCs and SIDS while maintaining appropriate fiduciary standards. The governance flexibility established in 2006 provides the foundation for the enhanced operational improvements outlined in this strategy, ensuring that reforms can be implemented in ways that maximize effectiveness for climate-vulnerable countries without being constrained by approaches designed for different operational contexts.

⁵⁵ GEF. 2006. [Joint Summary of the Chairs Special GEF Council Meeting August 28, 2006](#). GEF/C.29/JointSummary.

168. The operational improvements outlined in this document respond to comprehensive COP guidance, which has consistently emphasized the need for enhanced access, diversified partnerships, and strengthened country ownership within GEF operations. At COP 29, Parties provided direction on expanding institutional diversity and access, urging “the Global Environment Facility to ensure that a broad range of implementing agencies are engaged in its programming in order to reduce concentration of projects among few implementing agencies” and further urging “the Global Environment Facility, in the context of its review of the Global Environment Facility partnership, to consider national and regional entities in developing countries in all regions, with a focus on underserved regions, when expanding the number of implementing agencies.”⁵⁶

169. The COP 29 decision also emphasized capacity building and country ownership, as Parties “further urge[d] the Global Environment Facility to consider ways of strengthening local capacities and country ownership in its provision of support”, while requesting “the Global Environment Facility to further streamline the processes of the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Special Climate Change Fund to simplify access for eligible countries, as appropriate.”

170. This guidance builds on consistent direction from previous COPs. At COP 28, Parties “encourage[d] the Global Environment Facility to open a targeted round of implementing agency expansion within the Global Environment Facility partnership with a focus on underserved regions, with regard to implementing agency coverage, in line with existing policies and procedures”.⁵⁷ COP 27 reinforced these themes by requesting “the Global Environment Facility to continue to foster greater diversity of its implementing agencies, building on the comparative advantages of the various agencies and taking into account recipient country priorities”.⁵⁸

171. At COP 26, the guidance from Parties took note “of the ongoing work of the Global Environment Facility in monitoring the concentration and geographical and thematic coverage, as well as the effectiveness, efficiency and engagement, of the Global Environment Facility Partnership” and encouraged “the Global Environment Facility to consider ways to enhance participation of additional national and regional entities from developing country Parties in the Partnership, including by allowing them to serve as executing agencies, as appropriate.” COP 26 further requested “the Global Environment Facility to consider ways to further enhance the role of national agencies and civil society organizations as executing agencies in order to enhance

⁵⁶ UNFCCC. 2024. [Decision 4/CP.29: Report of the Global Environment Facility to the Conference of the Parties and guidance to the Global Environment Facility](#). FCCC/CP/2024/11/Add.1.

⁵⁷ UNFCCC. 2023. [Decision 7/CP.28: Report of the Global Environment Facility to the Conference of the Parties and guidance to the Global Environment Facility](#). FCCC/CP/2023/11/Add.1.

⁵⁸ UNFCCC. 2022. [Decision 17/CP.27: Report of the Global Environment Facility to the Conference of the Parties and guidance to the Global Environment Facility](#). FCCC/CP/2022/10/Add.2.

country ownership of projects and programs funded by the Global Environment Facility and prevent implementing agencies from serving simultaneously as executing agencies”.⁵⁹

172. This COP guidance emphasized institutional diversity, enhanced access pathways, and country ownership. The proposed approach acknowledges that expanding access is not merely about increasing the number of participating organizations, but about ensuring that those organizations have opportunities to implement adaptation solutions on the same footing as traditional partners.

A. Enhanced Access and Implementation through the PrIA Capacity Building Program

173. Discussions related to enhancing access and implementation revealed participant support and provided guidance on the options of a PrIA focused on supporting the strategic role of GEF executing entities and complementarity efforts to strengthen the GEF partnership. This Strategy proposes pursuing enhanced access through a capacity-building approach that strengthens existing partnerships within the GEF operational framework. With regards to increasing access via leveraging the accreditation processes of other MCFs, work will continue to be pursued under the process for increasing the number of GEF Agencies. The Secretariat recognizes the importance of responding to COP guidance on matters of access while ensuring operational effectiveness and appropriate risk management. The proposed approach balances the objectives of enhanced country ownership, diverse partnership, and sustainable implementation capacity.

174. Building on the existing network of executing entities already engaged with LDCF and SCCF projects, the PrIA Capacity Building Program focuses on developing enhanced support specifically for executing entities in LDCs and SIDS. This program operates within the existing GEF Partnership framework where financial procedures agreements are with implementing agencies. The PrIA program provides targeted capacity development to strengthen executing entities’ ability to effectively deliver climate adaptation results, working in coordination with GEF Agencies to enhance project implementation quality and sustainability. GEF Agencies maintain their role in selecting, assessing, and supervising executing entities, while the PrIA program offers supplementary capacity building services.

175. During GEF-7 and GEF-8, LDCF and SCCF projects engaged 162 executing entities across 57 countries (43 LDCs, 17 SIDS), but not all LDCs and SIDS have had executing partners. The PrIA Capacity Building Program will prepare and strengthen executing entities for enhanced access to finance through streamlined implementation pathways across the GEF Family of Funds and other MCFs. The program maximizes complementarity among climate funds, supports MTF projects, and strengthens partnerships with GEF Agencies.

176. The program will feature robust South-South learning platforms, such as peer-to-peer exchanges, regional networks, and documented best practices. Recognizing that 55 percent of

⁵⁹ UNFCCC. 2021. [Decision 7/CP.26: Report of the Global Environment Facility to the Conference of the Parties and guidance to the Global Environment Facility](#). FCCC/CP/2021/L.13/Add.1.

LDCs and 29 percent of SIDS operate in FCS, the program will provide specialized strengthening for FCS programming. The program will serve up to approximately 50 entities through institutional capacity building, technical assistance, and knowledge sharing.

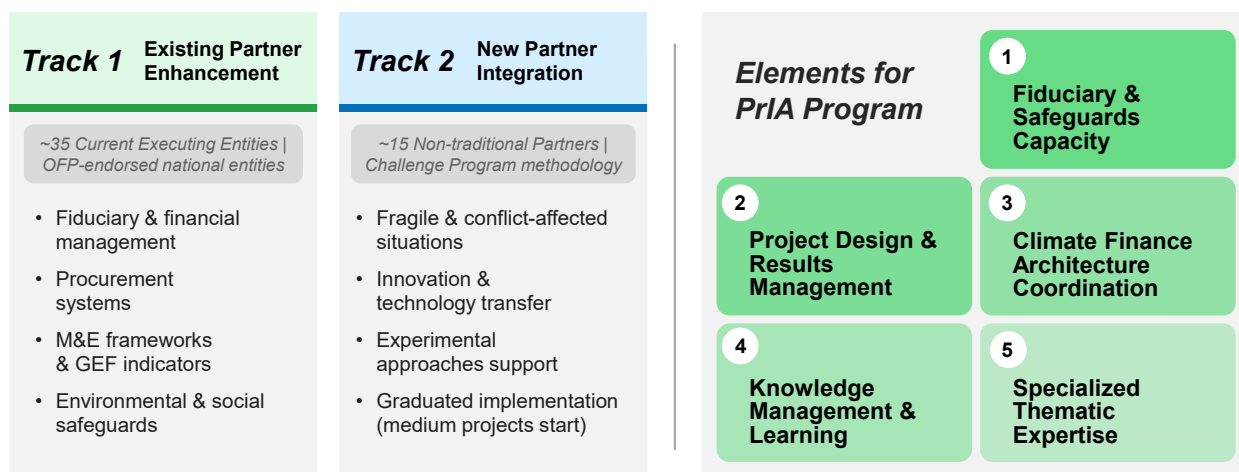
177. The program's success will be measured beyond GEF-9 through increased readiness of entities for PrIA participation, with enhanced capacity of executing entities measured through improved project approval rates under streamlined procedures and strengthened institutional sustainability. This will ultimately contribute to the LDCF and SCCF goal of tripling financial outflows by 2030 and doubling adaptation finance by 2035, while diversifying the partnership base and ensuring adaptation finance reaches the most vulnerable communities through locally-owned and nationally-driven implementation mechanisms.

Program Structure and Delivery

178. The PrIA Capacity Building Program will adopt a dual-track approach to maximize impact across the existing and emerging executing entity landscape (Figure 8).

Figure 8: PrIA Program Structure

Dual-Track Approach | \$3-4M Investment | ~50 Target Entities | Competitive RFP-based Implementation



179. **Track 1: Existing Partner Enhancement** will target approximately 35 current executing entities seeking to expand their execution roles, with selection requiring formal OFP endorsement for national entities. This track focuses on strengthening core capacities in fiduciary management, procurement systems, monitoring and evaluation frameworks, and environmental and social safeguards (ESS).

180. **Track 2: New Partner Integration** will engage approximately 15 non-traditional partners with specialized expertise, particularly in FCS, innovation, and technology transfer, using the Challenge Program methodology to enable more experimental approaches, with the GEF Secretariat facilitating the program.

181. Program delivery will follow a competitive, performance-based approach to maximize innovation and cost-effectiveness. The GEF Secretariat will issue separate requests for proposals, enabling specialized technical organizations and consortia with demonstrated capacity building expertise to compete for implementation roles.

Core Capacity Building Components

182. The program will address five interconnected capacity dimensions essential for effective climate adaptation implementation, aligned with the one-GEF approach to support countries seamlessly in meeting their specific needs under various GEF funds:

- **Fiduciary and Safeguards Capacity** will strengthen financial management systems, procurement procedures, and ESS implementation, drawing on decades of GEF Agency expertise.
- **Project Design and Results Management** will enhance executing entities' abilities to develop climate-resilient project designs, establish robust monitoring and evaluation systems, and utilize GEF core indicators for results tracking.
- **Climate Finance Architecture and MTF Programming** will equip entities with knowledge to navigate the broader climate finance landscape, design complementary investments across multiple funds, and coordinate programming with the GCF, Adaptation Fund, and bilateral sources.
- **Knowledge Management and South-South Exchange** will establish regional peer-to-peer learning networks, document and disseminate best practices from successful adaptation projects, and create digital platforms for knowledge sharing across LDCs and SIDS.
- **Specialized Thematic Expertise** will provide targeted capacity building in priority adaptation sectors, including NbS, early warning systems, climate-resilient agriculture, and water security, ensuring executing entities can deliver technically sound interventions aligned with national adaptation priorities and the Paris Agreement.

Strategic Coordination and Complementarity

183. The PrIA Capacity Building Program is designed to complement rather than duplicate existing capacity building initiatives across the climate finance architecture. While the GCF Readiness Programme supports National Designated Authorities and entities pursuing accreditation, and the Adaptation Fund focuses on organizations seeking direct access accreditation, PrIA occupies a distinct niche: strengthening executing entities already executing climate projects but requiring enhanced capacity for expanded execution responsibilities within the GEF partnership structure. This complementarity creates strategic synergies, as entities benefiting from the GCF Readiness Programme or Adaptation Fund's capacity building are well-positioned to participate in PrIA Track 1, leveraging their existing climate finance knowledge.

184. To maximize coordination and avoid duplication, including recognizing the role that GEF Agencies play in supporting executing entities, the program will establish coordination mechanisms, including consultation and regular information exchange with the GCF Readiness Programme and Adaptation Fund programs, joint capacity needs assessments where appropriate, shared training materials and methodologies, and coordinated South-South learning networks. This approach positions PrIA as a complementary element of a comprehensive, system-wide strategy to build institutional capacity for scaling climate adaptation finance in LDCs and SIDS.

Complementary Efforts to Strengthen the GEF Partnership

185. The PrIA Capacity Building Program focuses on enhancing the capacity of executing entities within the current GEF partnership framework and is distinct from the efforts of the GEF Council to strengthen the GEF partnership. Nonetheless the GEF Secretariat will continue to explore opportunities to strengthen and expand the GEF partnership itself. These efforts will be pursued as part of the ongoing work to enhance access under the GEF Trust Fund, in coordination with the broader GEF-9 Policy Directions.

186. As outlined in the GEF-9 Policy Directions document, this includes a cross-fund fast-track process to add up to three new Agencies already accredited by the GCF or Adaptation Fund. This streamlined approach aims to improve access to GEF resources and strengthen complementarity across climate funds, while reducing review time, minimizing duplication, and lowering application burdens for entities that have already undergone rigorous accreditation processes. The selection of new Agencies will be guided by clear criteria including geographic priorities (particularly underrepresented geographies such as SIDS and LDCs) and thematic expertise (including specialized areas like enabling activities, and experience in supporting IPLCs and the private sector), subject to appropriate due diligence, Trustee consultation and no-objection, and GEF Council approval. A gap analysis comparing accreditation standards and policies across the GCF, Adaptation Fund, and GEF is at an advanced stage, with early findings indicating substantial alignment between GEF accreditation requirements and those of the GCF and Adaptation Fund in fiduciary, gender equality, and ESS policies. Such efforts will leverage existing accreditation processes from partner institutions while ensuring full compliance with GEF fiduciary, environmental, and social standards.

187. These complementary partnership expansion efforts, as detailed in the GEF-9 Policy Directions paper under the Augmented Access and Empowered Countries priority area, will be developed through the main GEF Trust Fund operational framework and include a streamlined Independent Panel Assessment to be presented for consideration by the GEF Council, in accordance with established GEF policies, procedures, and Council Decision 7/2025.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ GEF. 2025. [Strengthening the GEF Partnership: Options for Agency Expansion](#). GEF/C.69/05-Rev.1.

B. Streamlined Procedures

188. Building on the GEF-9 Trust Fund Policy Directions presented in the GEF-9 Replenishment discussions, the LDCF and SCCF will benefit from a comprehensive suite of operational improvements designed to accelerate and streamline delivery across the GEF Family of Funds. These streamlining measures respond directly to stakeholder calls to shorten the project cycle to enhance efficiency and speed of disbursement to countries in need, particularly LDCs and SIDS.

189. These actions include: (i) implementation of a unified accelerated approval process for standalone projects, replacing the project identification form with a simplified project preparation grant request that enables earlier project preparation and is estimated to save three to four months in the early stage of the cycle, building on the GBFF experience and the \$5 million increased MSP ceiling; (ii) refined approval routes, with projects above \$5 million being reviewed and approved either on a rolling basis through non-objection outside formal GEF Council meetings or via intersessional work programs; (iii) streamlined procedures specifically tailored for enabling activities to accelerate Convention compliance support; (iv) harmonized Agency fees set at 9 percent, with considerations to standardized tranching, ensuring greater efficiency and predictability across implementing entities; (v) enhanced flexibility for project management costs beyond current caps in line with the proposed GEF-9 Policy Recommendation to advance work in this area, and clarified co-financing proportionality requirements applying only to joint co-financing; (vi) introduction of time standards for Agencies to submit revised projects after receiving Secretariat comments, recognizing that Agency processes account for approximately 80 percent of the project preparation timeline; (vii) enhanced upstream project tracking from early concept stages through the GEF Portal, enabling OFPs and Agency Coordinators to record when project identification begins; (viii) upgraded GEF information technology systems featuring user-centric design, automation, AI integration, and improved data accessibility; and (ix) enhanced flexibility for projects in FCS.

190. These operational improvements will provide enhanced project tracking from early concept stages through the GEF Portal, improved system performance and user experience, and strengthened portfolio management through formalized review processes and bilateral exchanges with Agencies. The enhanced monitoring and evaluation systems will ensure that efficiency gains support operational quality, with clear indicators tracking both operational efficiency and development effectiveness. The reforms align with the broader GEF-9 modernization agenda, while preserving the distinctive mandates and operational excellence of the LDCF and SCCF in supporting the world's most climate-vulnerable countries.

C. Strategic Communication and Knowledge Systems

191. Effective communication and knowledge management is essential to strengthening the visibility, impact, and influence of the LDCF and SCCF. As demand for adaptation finance grows – and competition for limited resources intensifies – the funds must continue to assert their distinct value proposition within the climate finance landscape. Enhancing strategic communication and

building a strong, evidence-based narrative around the funds' achievements are critical to securing sustained political and financial support. To address these needs, the LDCF/SCCF Council approved a Dedicated Program on Communication and Visibility Enhancement in GEF-8.

192. GEF-8 also saw the 64th GEF Council adopt a new policy on communication and visibility,⁶¹ with the aim of strengthening and ensuring consistency in communication across the GEF partnership. In GEF-9, the updated policy will be supplemented with additional guidelines focused on designing, implementing, and reporting on communications at the project level.

193. Building on these foundations, this Programming Strategy will operationalize a three-pillar approach designed to: (i) clearly define and communicate the unique value of the LDCF and SCCF; (ii) strengthen communication capacity across the portfolio; and (iii) expand targeted advocacy and outreach to deepen engagement with strategic stakeholders. The LDCF and SCCF efforts will be fully aligned with a GEF-wide knowledge management and learning approach.

194. The first pillar focuses on defining and communicating the distinct role of the LDCF and SCCF within the GEF Family of Funds. As adaptation-dedicated funds within this broader institutional architecture, the LDCF and SCCF benefit from the GEF's global reputation, operational quality, and convening power – while also requiring tailored visibility to ensure their specific contributions are understood and recognized. This includes the development of unified messaging, strengthened branding, multilingual outreach, and a consistent presence at relevant global events.

195. The second pillar aims to build communication capacity across projects, agencies, and GEF staff through training, guidance materials, and the establishment of a communication community of practice. These efforts will ensure that project-level communications are aligned with strategic goals and that the stories and successes of LDCF and SCCF-funded initiatives are more effectively captured and shared at both the national and global level.

196. The third pillar emphasizes proactive advocacy and stakeholder outreach, including media engagement, donor-targeted messaging, and the use of constructive journalism to highlight adaptation solutions and impact. These efforts will help raise awareness of adaptation as a strategic development priority and position the funds as essential delivery mechanisms under the Paris Agreement's GGA.

197. A key priority of communication efforts will be demonstrating how LDCF and SCCF investments catalyze and complement broader climate finance flows from bilateral and multilateral partners. This will include developing concrete case studies that showcase the multiplying effects of GEF investments alongside country plans and priorities, donor country programs, regional initiatives, and private sector engagement.

⁶¹ GEF. 2023. [*Improving the Visibility of the GEF: New Communication and Visibility Policy*](#). GEF/C.64.11.

198. Specific attention will be paid to building awareness of support available through the LDCF and SCCF amongst key stakeholders in beneficiary countries. Core strategic and operational documents will be made available in English, French, and Spanish to enhance accessibility across constituencies, while targeted materials will be produced in a range of languages to promote local ownership and understanding of GEF-supported initiatives in both LDCs and SIDS contexts.

199. The communication approach will amplify voices from local communities and recipient countries to substantiate cross-cutting benefits and demonstrate tangible impacts on the ground. Special emphasis will be placed on documenting innovative partnerships, including successful private sector collaborations emerging from the Challenge Program for Adaptation Innovation, philanthropic co-investments, and blended finance mechanisms that leverage LDCF and SCCF resources to unlock additional climate finance.

200. These evidence-based narratives may help donors gain a deeper understanding of how their LDCF and SCCF contributions create ripple effects that extend far beyond individual project boundaries, supporting broader development and climate resilience objectives while strengthening the case for sustained and increased financial support.

201. Knowledge management will complement these efforts by fostering systematic learning, documentation, and dissemination of insights across the LDCF and SCCF portfolio as an integral part of GEF Family of Funds knowledge management and integration efforts. This includes capturing lessons from innovation pilots, enabling peer exchange across countries and regions, and contributing to the GEF's broader knowledge agenda. The LDCF and SCCF will also explore joint knowledge-sharing and capacity-building initiatives as opportunities for complementarity and coordination with the GEF Trust Fund. The LDCF and SCCF will explore opportunities to enhance knowledge infrastructure that serves as a global public good, enabling financial institutions, development partners, and national governments to access comprehensive adaptation effectiveness data and predictive analytics to inform climate-resilient investment decisions.

202. Knowledge management and learning will be strengthened through a deep-dive analysis of the LDCF and SCCF portfolio, with the objective of strengthening future project design and learning from implementation across the GEF Partnership and following a GEF-wide knowledge management and learning approach. This analysis will examine the impacts and strategies of projects across the portfolio, consider interim and final project evaluations, and draw on the insights of relevant IEO evaluations. It will draw on state-of-the-art data analysis methodologies and apply AI tools to analyze common challenges, good practices, and lessons to be learned in order to inform future programming and ongoing implementation of LDCF and SCCF resources.

203. These efforts are expected to enable the LDCF and SCCF to further engage in the UNFCCC process, including the next Global Stocktake, capacity-building efforts, and mandated events. This includes developing intelligent knowledge platforms that integrate geospatial climate risk data, historical project performance data, and predictive analytics to enable financial institutions

and development partners to assess adaptation investment effectiveness and design climate-resilient financing products tailored to local contexts.

D. Adaptive Governance

204. Following the May 2025 LDCF and SCCF Strategy discussions in Paris, Participants identified three governance challenges: (i) inactive LDCF/SCCF Council seats due to non-participation by some members; (ii) limited representation for new contributors and emerging stakeholders; and (iii) insufficient voice for recipient countries, particularly LDCs and SIDS.

205. The governance framework for the LDCF and SCCF was reconfirmed through GEF Council Decision C.29, which stated: “The Council reconfirms that the policies and procedures and the governance structure of the GEF will apply to the climate change funds, managed by the GEF in accordance with the decisions of the COP or the COP/MOP, unless the Council decides it is necessary to modify such policies and procedures to be responsive to the guidance of the COP or COP/MOP.”⁶² This foundational decision clarifies the direct accountability relationship between these climate adaptation funds and the UNFCCC COP, allowing the LDCF/SCCF Council to adopt differentiated governance elements from GEF while ensuring alignment with the Convention’s objectives and guidance. The decision provides an institutional basis for the funds’ responsiveness to COP decisions, including recent guidance on enhanced access, institutional diversity, and streamlined procedures that inform the operational improvements outlined in this Programming Strategy.

206. Efforts during GEF-8 have enhanced governance across the GEF Family of Funds, including the GBFF governing arrangements, the 2022 Ad Hoc Working Group that addressed findings from its proceedings and improved co-chairing arrangements, and the June 2025 GEF Council constituency realignment. These initiatives demonstrate the GEF's commitment to evolving governance structures while maintaining effectiveness and inclusiveness.

207. The governance arrangements of the LDCF and SCCF follow those for the GEF Trust Fund and the GEF Council. Accordingly, GEF principles, rules, and standards apply to both funds, and a tailor-made approach is not envisioned unless based on specific COP guidance. Any reforms must be addressed within broader GEF governance discussions, while considering fund-specific needs to respond to COP guidance.

208. The governance challenges identified in the LDCF and SCCF Programming Strategy meetings reflect broader GEF issues that may require review and possible amendment of the GEF Instrument. Consistent with the GEF-9 Policy Directions, these challenges could inform broader GEF governance reforms to benefit all funds.

⁶² GEF. 2006. [Joint Summary of the Chairs Special GEF Council Meeting August 28, 2006](#). GEF/C.29/JointSummary.

Considerations for the Working Group by the Council

209. At the first LDCF and SCCF Strategy meeting in Paris, Participants confirmed that GEF governance evolution should be Council-led. Participants are considering a recommendation to establish a time-bound Working Group, with the goal of having an updated GEF architecture refined and in place for implementation by 2028. The GEF Secretariat will support this work, including investigating practicality, cost-efficiency and value of reform areas.

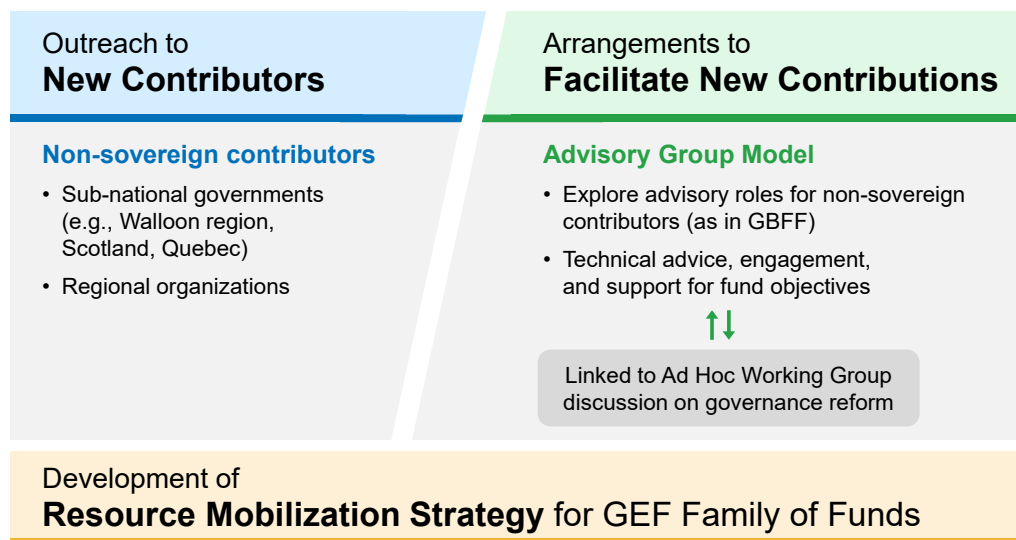
210. Without prejudging process or outcomes and consistent with the confirmed establishment of an ad hoc Working Group by the GEF Council, the following considerations could inform the working group's deliberations in addressing broader GEF governance issues that affect all funds, including specific challenges faced in LDCF and SCCF, while preserving consensus-based decision-making approaches (Figure 9).

211. Situations exist where LDCF/SCCF Council seats remain inactive due to non-participation of a constituency in a specific fund, which affects the effectiveness of the specific fund decision-making. Donor contribution patterns differ from fund to fund. The GEF Instrument states that non-recipient constituencies shall be formed through a process of consultation among interested Participants, and that it is expected that grouping of non-recipient countries will be primarily guided by total contributions⁶³, as defined in the paragraph on formal vote and voting power, which is based on the contributions to the GEF Trust Fund.⁶⁴ The GEF Instrument does not include the LDCF and SCCF contributions as a factor to guide the grouping of non-recipient constituencies or the formal vote. The GBFF Council example indicates the possibility of establishing groups to address specific concerns with a LDCF/SCCF Council decision and without an amendment to the GEF Instrument.

⁶³ GEF. 2019. [Instrument for the Establishment of the Restructured Global Environment Facility](#), Annex E, paragraph 4.

⁶⁴ GEF. 2019. [Instrument for the Establishment of the Restructured Global Environment Facility](#), Principles of Decision-making, paragraph 26.C

Figure 9: Improvements in Governance and Resource Mobilization



LDC Representation Enhancement

212. Options for creating opportunities for enhanced stakeholder engagement that may be specific to a fund may also be considered by the Working Group. Given that 75 percent of LDCs receive the majority of their GEF support from the LDCF, and that SIDS face unique climate vulnerabilities requiring specialized adaptation support, the working group could consider how broader GEF governance modifications might enhance the engagement of these constituencies in the LDCF and SCCF governance, such as by creating advisory roles to further represent the perspectives of LDCs to the LDCF/SCCF Council.

213. The LDCF has a mandate set by the COP to serve the LDCs and the LDC Work Programme. Recognizing the central importance of country ownership and the unique vulnerabilities faced by LDCs in climate adaptation, the LDC Group has been engaged in the LDCF/SCCF Council with the chair as an invited speaker, and in the LDCF and SCCF Programming Strategy development meetings as an observer since GEF-7. Acknowledging the valuable advisory role that the LDC Group can play in enhancing the effectiveness of LDCF operations, this role could be enhanced, with the LDC Group, represented by the chair, invited to provide strategic suggestions on LDC-specific adaptation priorities, facilitate dialogue between the LDC Group and the GEF Secretariat on programming directions, and offer insights into how LDCF resources can best address the most pressing climate vulnerabilities facing the world's 44 LDCs. Comparable arrangements may also be envisaged for SIDS given the targeted support for adaptation provided by SCCF-A.

Expanded Contributor Base

214. As the GEF explores broadening the donor base through the Replenishment process, with the role and representation of non-sovereign entities expected to be an important topic for future deliberation, the LDCF and SCCF could invite new contributors to participate, via

modalities similar to the GBFF. Accommodating new contributors in the governance of the Trust Funds is a matter for the Working Group to consider.

215. There are differences in the sources of support across the GEF Family of Funds, with a key example being the GBFF, which has been established to accept contributions from all sources based on Convention on Biological Diversity COP guidance. According to the Trustee, there is no prohibition on the LDCF/SCCF Council agreeing to mobilize non-sovereign funding.

216. The LDCF/SCCF Council follows the GEF Instrument, and non-sovereign contributors do not participate in the governance of the LDCF and SCCF. The current governance arrangement for the LDCF/SCCF Council mirrors that of the GEF Council. The GEF Council may have to discuss whether non-sovereign contributors can participate in the governance of the funds, including:

- **Sub-national governments:** Provinces, states, and municipalities that have demonstrated interest in supporting climate adaptation in vulnerable communities, building on precedents such as contributions from sub-national governments. The LDCF has received sub-national contributions from the Walloon region, Scotland, and Quebec in the past.
- **Regional bodies:** Organizations representing groups of countries that can pool resources for targeted adaptation support.

217. As an alternative, the GBFF has an Advisory Group of Non-sovereign Contributors, which provides technical advice to the GBFF Council and the Secretariat on the engagement of non-sovereign contributors, as requested by the GBFF Council. Specifically, the Advisory Group may provide advice and recommendations on relevant agenda items deliberated at each GBFF Council.⁶⁵ This model may be explored further by the LDCF/SCCF Council.

IX. Enhanced Resource Mobilization

218. For the GEF-9 period, the LDCF and SCCF will maintain the current voluntary contribution model, while recognizing the challenges it poses, and propose enhancements to improve predictability and effectiveness. The voluntary nature of the contribution model provides necessary flexibility for donors facing competing priorities and budget constraints, while avoiding the potential complications of formal replenishment cycles, which could create competing demands with the GEF Trust Fund.

219. Key improvements to be considered to enhance resource mobilization include:

- **Enhanced multi-year pledging mechanisms:** Encouraging contributors to make multi-annual commitments, when possible, to increase planning security for the Secretariat and enable more strategic programming, including country projects and the roll-out of the

⁶⁵ GEF. 2024. [Progress Report on the Advisory Group\(s\) and Auxiliary Body for the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund](#). GEF/GBFF.03/04.

NGI Program, while also maintaining the possibility for annual and additional contributions based on resource availability.

- **Improved coordination among donors:** Facilitating better communication and coordination to ensure a critical mass of donors commit to sustained support in terms of both the number of contributing countries and resource levels, with support from the GEF Secretariat as relevant.
- **Strategic positioning within climate finance architecture:** Clearly articulating the funds' unique comparative advantages and strengthening complementarity through joint investments and MTF projects to demonstrate value to potential contributors.
- **Proactive engagement with potential new contributors:** Actively pursuing dialogue with potential public and private contributors, including those identified through the expanded contributor base approach, learning from the experience of the GBFF.

220. This approach recognizes that even with defined replenishment cycles, contributions will remain fundamentally voluntary, as contributing countries make decisions on how to channel their international climate finance based on results, evidence, and political priorities. The enhanced voluntary model aims to provide greater predictability while preserving the flexibility that donors value.

221. In addition, the LDCF/SCCF Council may discuss and decide on the following arrangements to further advance enhanced resource mobilization:

- **Periodic review:** During the GEF-9 period, periodic reviews of progress of enhanced resource mobilization may be considered by the LDCF/SCCF Council to help enhance predictability and effectiveness. To support such a process, a GEF-9 mid-point roundtable may be organized to take stock of resource mobilization status.
- **Arrangements to facilitate new contributions:** Similar to the GBFF, the LDCF/SCCF Council may wish to consider modalities to facilitate the engagement of non-sovereign contributors, for instance through the establishment of an Advisory Group of Non-Sovereign Contributors.
- **Elaboration of a Resource Mobilization Strategy for the GEF Family of Funds:** The LDCF/SCCF Council may decide to develop an LDCF and SCCF resource mobilization strategy in the GEF-9 period, in line with comparable efforts for the GBFF. The objectives of such a strategy may be to enhance predictability, broaden and diversify the contributor base, including sovereigns, sub-nationals, philanthropy, and private sector actors, and increase overall financing to the LDCF and SCCF. The overall resource mobilization strategy for the GEF Family of Funds may then be developed, with LDCF and SCCF, GBFF, and the GEF Trust Fund as building blocks.

222. A resource mobilization strategy may position the LDCF and SCCF to deliver on countries' highest adaptation priorities. By expanding the contributor base, strengthening predictability, and leveraging innovation and partnerships, the funds can catalyze the transformational adaptation urgently needed in the world's most vulnerable regions.

223. Resource mobilization is a shared responsibility across the LDCF and SCCF partnership. While the Secretariat will facilitate engagement and provide strategic positioning materials, the success of resource mobilization efforts depends on active engagement by contributing countries, recipient countries, and the broader GEF partnership. As noted above, the Secretariat will coordinate periodic reviews of resource mobilization progress, including a GEF-9 mid-point roundtable to take stock of contributions and adjust programming approaches as needed based on actual resource availability.

X. Financial Scenarios

224. This Programming Strategy presents two financing scenarios, consistent with the approach used in the GEF-8 LDCF and SCCF Programming Strategy.⁶⁶ The scenarios take into account the progress made in programming resources through the two funds and recognize continued high demand for adaptation support, and the demonstrated absorptive capacity of eligible recipient countries.

225. Relevant decisions from COP 29 and COP 30 have informed scenario development for both the funds, and divergence in estimations arises from the timelines of different COP decisions, significant fluctuations in annual outflows from the LDCF, SCCF, and other MCFs, and the four-year cycle in resource provision by the LDCF and SCCF.

226. Two financial scenarios are presented for both the LDCF and the SCCF, as Scenario A and Scenario B. Scenario A builds on the GEF-8 Scenario A, with optimizations to support new elements included in this Programming Strategy, prioritizing the resources provided to countries. Scenario B recognizes needs for enhanced climate adaptation support and relevant COP guidance and decisions. Scenario B is better aligned with COP 29's NCQG decision, which calls for efforts to at least triple annual outflows from multilateral climate funds, including the LDCF and SCCF, from 2022 levels by 2030, and the COP 30 decision calling for at least tripling adaptation finance by 2035, based on the Glasgow Climate Pact. Furthermore, Scenario B is consistent with paragraph 11 of the COP 30 guidance to the GEF, which encourages scaled-up contributions to the LDCF and SCCF.

⁶⁶ With the approval of the June 2026 Work Program, \$744.89 million and \$68.22 million will have been programmed for the LDCF and SCCF respectively for GEF-8. Among the MSPs, the LDCF may support a limited number, and SCCF-A and -B support pending proposals by the end of the GEF-8 period, subject to clearance. With these MSPs, \$753.11 million and \$99.30 million will have been programmed the LDCF and SCCF respectively for GEF-8.

227. In addition to the resources to support adaptation priorities at the country level, the scenarios incorporate key GEF-9 innovations, including support measures for graduated LDCs, LDCF and SCCF engagement in the Country Engagement Strategy, the new PrIA Capacity Building Program, expanded innovation programming, and catalytic investments through NGI support and the Challenge Program for Adaptation Innovation.

228. The two funds propose allocating resources to support LDCF and SCCF-relevant activities to complement the Country Engagement Strategy resources from the GEF Trust Fund. Such activities are to take place primarily in LDCs and SIDS, with the overall aim of enhancing climate adaptation and resilience programming and coordination with partners and facilitating Family of Funds coordination.

A. LDCF Financing Scenarios

229. For the LDCF, Scenario A proposes total resource mobilization of \$1.0 billion over the four years of the GEF-9 period (2026–2030), consistent with the GEF-8 Scenario A. Under this scenario, the country cap for the 44 LDCs is maintained at \$20 million each.

230. Scenario B proposes total resource mobilization of \$1.3 billion, with a country cap of \$25 million per LDC. Relative to the current GEF-8 baseline, this reflects a 25 percent increase in the country cap. A summary of the two LDCF scenarios is provided in Table 2 below.

231. A distinctive element of this Programming Strategy is the introduction of measures to help support transition for recently graduated LDCs. Access caps for graduated countries are determined as a proportion of the LDC cap and adjusted based on the timing of their graduation. This arrangement responds to COP 29 guidance calling for developing further measures to help ensure a smooth transition for recently graduated LDCs, while also helping to minimize a sudden decline in adaptation support that could undermine long-term efforts.

232. Scenario A is set on the assumption that donor contributions to the LDCF would reach \$1.0 billion in the GEF-9 period, supporting all LDCs in an equitable manner with a \$20 million cap. As such, Scenario A is considered the baseline planning level for the LDCF in the GEF-9 period, and resources will be prioritized for country programming.

233. Under Scenario A, resources beyond country allocations support the Challenge Program for Adaptation Innovation (\$20 million), regional and global projects and initiatives (\$50 million), Country Engagement Strategy implementation (\$3 million), and the PrIA Capacity Building Program (\$2 million). Under Scenario B, these allocations increase to \$30 million for the Challenge Program, \$110 million for regional and global initiatives, \$5 million for Country Engagement Strategy implementation, and \$3 million for the PrIA program.

234. In the final year of GEF-9, unallocated LDCF resources under the Regional and Global Projects and Initiatives set-aside may be redirected to the Challenge Program for Adaptation Innovation or other programs, based on demonstrated needs.

235. If donor contributions reach levels between the two Scenarios, the Secretariat will adjust programming plans proportionally across country caps, with resources prioritized for those LDCs that did not have the opportunity to fully utilize their GEF-8 country resources, the Challenge Program, and regional/global initiatives, or priorities as decided by the LDCF/SCCF Council. Should donor contributions exceed Scenario B, 90 percent of additional resources will be allocated to expanding country caps, with the remaining 10 percent distributed across the Regional and Global Programs set-aside and the Challenge Program for Adaptation Innovation. The Secretariat will provide an update to LDCF/SCCF Council.

236. Administrative expenses are kept at a low level of 2 percent of the total budget for Scenario A, and 1.54 percent for Scenario B. Under both scenarios, the administrative expenses will be kept constant, at \$20 million. From the GEF-9 period, the administrative expenses will be budgeted for cost-sharing of Council meetings and Assembly organization and GEF-wide upgrading of the online program management system. Additionally, key elements of the GEF-8 Dedicated Programs, including communications and visibility enhancement, as well as organizational learning, will be included under the administrative budget. The Secretariat will continue to develop an annual business plan and administrative budget for approval by the LDCF/SCCF Council and will report on key developments and accomplishments.

Table 2: Financing Scenarios for the LDCF (2026-2030) (\$ million)

Programming and Budget Elements	Scenario A (\$1.0 billion)	Scenario B (\$1.3 billion)
Country Cap for 44 LDCs <i>\$20 million per LDC for Scenario A, \$25 million for Scenario B</i>	\$880.00	\$1,100.00
Country Cap for 2 LDCs that graduated in GEF-8 period <i>\$10 million per country for Scenario A, \$12.5 million for Scenario B</i>	\$20.00	\$25.00
Country Cap for 1 LDC that graduated in GEF-7 period <i>\$5 million per country for Scenario A, \$7 million for Scenario B</i>	\$5.00	\$7.00
Challenge Program for Adaptation Innovation	\$20.00	\$30.00
Regional and Global Projects and Initiatives	\$50.00	\$110.00
Country Engagement Strategy	\$3.00	\$5.00
PriA Capacity Building Program	\$2.00	\$3.00
Administrative Expenses	\$20.00	\$20.00
LDCF Total	\$1,000.00	\$1,300.00

237. During GEF-7, the LDCF successfully served all 47 eligible LDCs, with a 99.2 percent overall utilization rate for LDCF resources and a \$10 million cap per LDC. Total LDCF programming reached approximately \$523 million, exceeding the Scenario A figure of \$500 million.

238. For GEF-8, with the approval of the June 2026 Work Program, 43 LDCs will have accessed all or part of the \$20 million GEF-8 country cap, totaling \$713.20 million, with a utilization rate of 77.5 percent.⁶⁷

B. SCCF Financing Scenarios

239. For the SCCF, Scenario A is presented at \$200 million, and Scenario B at \$300 million, with individual window allocations reflecting their distinct mandates.

240. For SCCF-A, Scenario A establishes an initial cap of \$3 million per SIDS, while Scenario B provides a cap of \$5 million per SIDS (a 66.7 percent increase from the \$3 million cap of the GEF-8 baseline). This increase recognizes the unique vulnerabilities of small island states to climate impacts and the scale of investment needed for transformational resilience in island contexts. The SCCF will maintain flexible programming for regional and global projects and initiatives to enable comprehensive transboundary programming and enhanced engagement with regional organizations.

241. SCCF-B focuses on two strategic programs under GEF-9: the Challenge Program for Adaptation Innovation and the NGI Program for Climate Adaptation. Under Scenario A, these two programs are allocated \$36 million and \$50 million respectively. Scenario B allocates \$50 million and \$56 million, respectively. This strategic focus enables SCCF-B to invest in global innovation and blended finance programming, discontinuing national project allocations in favor of competitive Challenge Program mechanisms. This positions SCCF-B as the only window in the GEF Family of Funds that can deploy NGI to catalyze private sector investment in climate adaptation, addressing a critical gap in the current climate finance architecture.

242. Table 3 presents the indicative distribution of resources across SCCF Windows A and B, as well as for regional and global projects and initiatives, PrIA capacity building, and administrative expenses. Country Engagement Strategy support is included at \$1 million in each window. In the final year of GEF-9, any unallocated resources under the Regional and Global Projects and Initiatives set-aside may be reallocated to the Challenge Program for Adaptation Innovation and other programs, based on demonstrated needs. For SCCF-B, the reallocation also includes the NGI Program.

243. The SCCF administrative expenses are kept at a low level of 3.5 percent of the total budget for Scenario A, and 2.3 percent for Scenario B. Under both scenarios, the administrative expenses will be kept constant, at \$7 million. From the GEF-9 period, the administrative expenses will be budgeted for cost-sharing of Council meetings and Assembly organization and GEF-wide upgrading of the online program management system. Key elements of the GEF-8 Dedicated

⁶⁷ In addition, there is one national MSP pending approval by the close of the GEF-8 period. With the approval of the pending MSP, 44 LDCs will have accessed all or part of the \$20 million GEF-8 country cap, totaling \$718.20 million, out of the \$920 million allocated for national projects.

Programs, including communications and visibility enhancement, as well as organizational learning, will be part of the administrative budget. The Secretariat will continue to develop an annual business plan and administrative budget for approval by the LDCF/SCCF Council and will report on key developments and accomplishments.

244. Similar to the LDCF, Scenario A for the SCCF is considered the baseline planning level in the GEF-9 period. SCCF- A support to non-LDC SIDS is essential to ensure that the GEF can provide adaptation support to all eligible countries in line with its mandate, while SCCF-B addresses priority needs in innovation and private sector engagement that the fund is uniquely positioned to address within the climate finance architecture.

245. If donor contributions to the SCCF reach levels between the two scenarios, the Secretariat will adjust programming plans proportionally across the funding lines, or as decided by the LDCF/SCCF Council. For SCCF-A, adjustments would scale country caps proportionally between \$3 million and \$5 million. For SCCF-B, adjustments would proportionally scale the Challenge Program for Adaptation Innovation and the NGI Program for Climate Adaptation.

246. Should donor contributions exceed Scenario B for SCCF-A, 90 percent of additional resources will be allocated to expanding country caps under SCCF-A, with the remaining 10 percent allocated to the Regional and Global Programs set-aside and the Challenge Program for Adaptation Innovation. Should donor contributions exceed Scenario B for SCCF-B, adjustments will proportionally scale the Challenge Program and the NGI Program.

Table 3: Financing Scenarios for the SCCF (2026-2030) (\$ million)

Programming and Budget Elements	Scenario A (\$200 million)	Scenario B (\$300 million)
Window A (Adaptation Support for Non-LDC SIDS)		
Country Cap for 29 Non-LDC SIDS <i>\$3 million per SIDS for Scenario A, \$5 million for Scenario B</i>	\$87.00	\$145.00
Challenge Program for Adaptation Innovation		\$10.00
Regional and Global Projects and Initiatives	\$8.00	\$20.00
Country Engagement Strategy	\$1.00	\$1.00
PrIA Capacity Building Program	\$1.00	\$1.00
Window A Subtotal	\$97.00	\$177.00
Window B (Innovation, Technology, and Private Sector)		
Challenge Program for Adaptation Innovation	\$36.00	\$50.00
NGI Program for Climate Adaptation	\$50.00	\$56.00
Regional and Global Projects and Initiatives	\$10.00	\$10.00
Window B Subtotal	\$96.00	\$116.00
Window A and B (Shared Expenses)		
Administrative Expenses	\$7.00	\$7.00
SCCF Total	\$200.00	\$300.00

C. Principles to Guide Programming and Resource Mobilization

247. While scenarios provide a foundation for the GEF-9 portfolio, actual programming of resources will depend on the timing and scale of contributions received. To ensure transparency, predictability, and equitable access while maintaining the country-driven nature of the LDCF and SCCF, the following principles will guide programming and resource mobilization:

- **Project clearance and prioritization:** The Secretariat will prioritize projects for inclusion in the Work Program and MSP support based on the following considerations: (i) countries that did not access resources up to the full country cap during the GEF-8 period; (ii) proposals from MDBs and IFIs; (iii) proposals advancing locally-led adaptation and IPLC engagement; (iv) proposals responding to specific COP guidance; and (v) proposals demonstrating strong potential for catalytic impact through MTF programming. The Secretariat will also coordinate closely with those LDCs that are expected to graduate in the GEF-9 period to facilitate access. The Secretariat will report to the LDCF/SCCF Council on project submissions, technical clearance, and rationale for support, through regular portfolio updates.
- **Responsive resource mobilization:** When the technically cleared projects exceed available resources by significant margins, the Secretariat may be guided by LDCF/SCCF Council to intensify resource mobilization efforts in coordination with contributing countries, the LDC Group, SIDS representation, and potential new contributors. These targeted efforts will emphasize the adaptation needs reflected in the project proposals awaiting approvals, the readiness of countries to deploy additional resources effectively, and the opportunity for contributors to support technically sound proposals that directly serve the most vulnerable populations.
- **Mid-term review and adaptive management:** At its fall 2028 meeting, the LDCF/SCCF Council will discuss a mid-term review on: (i) cumulative contributions received relative to scenarios; (ii) programming progress across countries and programming areas; (iii) portfolio composition; and (iv) recommendations for any adjustments to portfolio management and resource mobilization needed to optimize GEF-9 outcomes. This mid-term review will provide an opportunity to LDCF/SCCF Council to assess whether additional measures are warranted.

248. Resource mobilization for the LDCF and SCCF will be further articulated in the Family of Funds Resource Mobilization Strategy, to be developed in early GEF-9 for Council deliberations.

XI. Results Framework

249. The proposed LDCF and SCCF Results Framework for the 2026-2030 period builds on the results framework of the 2022-2026 LDCF and SCCF Programming Strategy and seeks alignment with the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience and the extensive, ongoing work on the

GGA under the UNFCCC. Climate adaptation is local and context specific, and adaptation impacts are not global environmental benefits.

A. Proposed Framework

250. The proposed GEF-9 framework maintains continuity with the structures and innovations introduced in GEF-7 and refined during GEF-8, with flexibility to incorporate forthcoming outcomes to track progress towards the GGA, as described below. It is structured with core indicators to measure the aggregated impact of LDCF and SCCF investments, which are complemented by sub-indicators measuring context and stakeholder specific results. The LDCF and SCCF Results Framework for 2026-2030 retains the five core indicators from the GEF-8 period, reflecting their continued relevance to measuring adaptation outcomes, with some refinements.

251. From July 2022 to June 2025, which covers the first three years of the four-year GEF-8 period, 98.8 percent of projects approved have used at least two or more core indicators, and 72.9 percent of projects have used all core indicators. In terms of the individual indicators used by projects, the coverage is 98.8 percent for core indicator 1; 92.9 percent for core indicator 2(a) or 2(b); 91.8 percent for core indicator 3; 96.5 percent for core indicator 4; and 81.2 percent for core indicator 5.

252. Table 4 provides the list of core indicators that will be used in GEF-9. While the core indicators remain unchanged in number and main focus, refinements are introduced in indicator definition. To harmonize with other MCFs, core indicator 1 on number of adaptation beneficiaries is expanded from the practice of including only direct beneficiaries in GEF-8, to also include indirect beneficiaries. To avoid duplication of measuring indirect adaptation benefits in core indicator 4, the latter is focused on number of people trained, thereby removing the measurement of number of people with awareness raised.

253. Since GEF-6, LDCF and SCCF projects have increasingly demonstrated adaptation benefits for women, shifting from mere compliance to transformative change for women and girls. In line with GEF's Gender Equality Policy, Gender Action Plans are now standard. Core indicator 1 tracks how adaptation benefits are delivered to female direct and indirect beneficiaries, while core indicator 4 measures how women are empowered and trained for climate adaptation solutions across different stakeholder groups.

Table 4: Proposed Core Indicators for the LDCF and SCCF (2026-2030)

Core Indicators	Sex-disaggregation
1. (a) Number of direct beneficiaries (b) Number of indirect beneficiaries	Yes
2. (a) Terrestrial area of land managed for climate resilience (ha) (b) Marine and freshwater area managed for climate resilience (ha)	n/a
3. Number of policies, plans, and strategies developed, or enhanced mainstreaming climate resilience	n/a
4. Number of people trained for appropriate climate adaptation solutions	Yes

5. Number of private sector enterprises, including MSMEs, supported to engage in climate change adaptation and resilience action	n/a
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254. The sub-indicators have also been refined to increase clarity, simplicity, and alignment with this Programming Strategy for 2026-2030. Table 5 provides the list of the sub-indicators and their mapping to the core indicators. One of the major refinements in the proposed list of sub-indicators is to simplify and remove any duplicated measurements, which has resulted in the total list of sub-indicators being reduced from 41 in GEF-8 to 25 in GEF-9.

255. Importantly, a set of sub-indicators have been developed to enable more proactive monitoring and adaptive management of progress towards the financial and institutional sustainability of project outcomes after project completion. These include two new sub-indicators on partnerships and frameworks under core indicator 3, and one new sub-indicator on catalyzing private sector finance under core indicator 5. While the target setting at the project initiation will be an opportunity to embed measuring sustainability during the project implementation, the assessment at the terminal evaluation stage will provide further information about the results to be expected after project completion.

256. Additionally, two new sub-indicators are added; sub-indicator 1.3, measuring adaptation benefits to Indigenous Peoples, and 3.7, measuring adaptation support to preservation of cultural heritage and practices. Finally, finance catalyzed during project implementation will continue to be captured and reported as co-finance.

Table 5: Proposed Core and Sub-Indicators for the LDCF and SCCF (2026-2030)

Core Indicators	Sub Indicators ⁶⁸	Sex-disaggregation
1(a) Number of direct beneficiaries	1.1 (a) Number of youth (15 to 24 years of age) directly benefiting from the project	Yes
	1.1 (b) Number of youth (15 to 24 years of age) indirectly benefiting from the project	
1(b) Number of indirect beneficiaries	1.2 (a) Number of elderly people (over 60 years of age) directly benefiting from the project	Yes
	1.2 (b) Number of elderly people (over 60 years of age) indirectly benefiting from the project	
	1.3 (a) Number of Indigenous Peoples directly benefitting from the project	Yes
	1.3 (b) Number of Indigenous Peoples indirectly benefitting from the project	
2(a) Area of land managed for climate resilience (hectares)	2.1 Hectares of agricultural land	n/a
	2.2 Hectares of urban landscape	n/a
	2.3 Hectares of wetlands	n/a

⁶⁸ The sub-indicators continue the approach of being fit for purpose, to be complimentary to the core indicators as well as, where applicable, allowing to report sector and stakeholder specific disaggregation of the core indicators.

Core Indicators	Sub Indicators ⁶⁸	Sex-disaggregation
2(b) Marine and freshwater area managed for climate resilience (hectares)	2.4 Hectares of forests	n/a
	2.5 Hectares of marine area	n/a
	2.6 Hectares of freshwater area	n/a
3. Number of policies, plans, and strategies developed, implemented and/or enhanced mainstreaming climate resilience	3.1 Number of policies developed or strengthened that will mainstream climate resilience	n/a
	3.2 Number of systems and frameworks established to strengthen sustainability of project outcomes after project completion	n/a
	3.3 Number of partnerships established to strengthen sustainability of project outcomes after project completion	n/a
	3.4 Number of plans enabled, including national adaptation planning and other adaptation planning processes	n/a
	3.5 Number of institutions with increased capacity to plan, implement, monitor, and report for climate adaptation	n/a
	3.6 Number civil society organizations benefiting from and/or engaged	n/a
	3.7 Number of policies, plans and strategies supported for the preservation of cultural heritage impacted by climate change ⁶⁹	n/a
4. Number of people trained for appropriate climate adaptation solutions	Number of people trained for appropriate adaptation responses in:	
	4.1 National government	Yes
	4.2 Local government	
	4.3 Civil society organizations	
	4.4 MSMEs	
4.5 National Development Banks		
5. Number of private sector enterprises, including MSMEs, supported to engage in climate change adaptation and resilience action	5.1 Number of private sector actors engaged to strengthen sustainability of project outcomes	n/a
	5.2 Anticipated amount of investment (US\$) that will be mobilized from private sector sources for sustainability of project outcomes after project completion	n/a
	5.3 Number of MSMEs supported with technical assistance, financial matchmaking, and/or finance	n/a
	5.4 Number of new adaptation technologies supported with public and/or private sector finance	n/a

B. Coherence with Multilateral Climate Funds

257. The revised indicator framework is broadly aligned with the indicators of other MCFs. The inclusion of core indicator 1(b) measuring the number of indirect beneficiaries enables greater coherence with other MCFs, while preserving the ability to capture the distinct results of the LDCF and SCCF through use of the other LDCF and SCCF indicators. The GEF continues to actively participate in the MCF Collaboration Platform on Results, Indicators, and Methodologies, through which MCFs collaborate to identify a common set of indicators and harmonize results

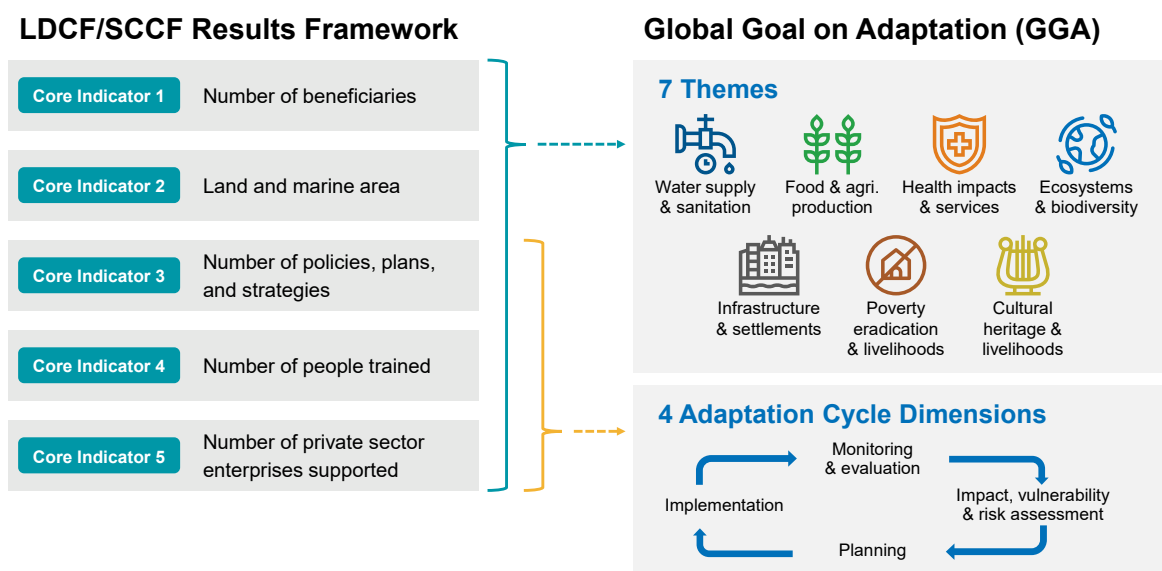
⁶⁹ Sub-indicator 3.7 is added in response to the GGA target on protecting cultural heritage and practices from the impacts of climate-related risks.

measurement and reporting to the extent possible.⁷⁰ The LDCF and SCCF are actively engaging in this process and sharing lessons from their long-standing investments in order to identify common adaptation indicators and enhance alignment of measurement and reporting approaches.

C. Alignment with the Global Goal on Adaptation

258. The GEF-9 LDCF and SCCF Results Framework has been aligned with the GGA targets and future development will be incorporated in the operationalization of the Results Framework as appropriate. The GGA targets are organized into seven thematic areas and four dimensions of the adaptation cycle. A mapping exercise presented in Figure 10 was undertaken by the GEF Secretariat to ensure that LDCF and SCCF indicators provide adequate coverage in alignment with the GGA. To enable reporting of LDCF and SCCF results to GGA, projects will provide results mapping by seven GGA themes as appropriate.

Figure 10: LDCF and SCCF Results Framework Mapping with GGA Themes and Dimensions



259. In GEF-9, all LDCF and SCCF projects for approval will continue to present expected adaptation benefits detailed based on the updated results framework.

D. Operationalizing the Results Framework

260. Supplementary guidance will be developed by the GEF Secretariat, in collaboration with the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel of the GEF and Agencies, to enhance the measurability

⁷⁰ At COP 30, four MCFs – the Adaptation Fund, CIF, GEF, and GCF – published their first joint report on results using common indicators; MCFs. 2025. [Multilateral Climate Funds Joint Results Report](#).

and use of the indicator framework across the GEF partnership. In particular, guidance will be developed for core indicator 1 on direct versus indirect beneficiaries.

261. Projects and programs will continue to be required to specify targets for all relevant core indicators in their results frameworks. A minimum of two core indicators will be required for each project. At the time of CEO endorsement or approval submission, the core indicator targets can be confirmed or updated, with targets for all relevant sub-indicators to be established at the CEO endorsement stage. These indicator timelines may be adjusted as the project cycle policy is updated for the LDCF and SCCF.

262. Projects will be monitored for delivery of the indicator targets. Reporting by Agencies to the GEF Secretariat will be undertaken through the project implementation report (PIR), mid-term review (MTR), and terminal evaluation (TE), as appropriate. The Secretariat will engage closely with Agencies to ensure compliance, providing guidance as needed, and will conduct completeness and data quality checks to strengthen the reliability and usability of reported results. Following the adoption of this Programming Strategy, supplementary guidance will be issued to Agencies by the GEF Secretariat – together with the Meta Information Sheet – to facilitate consistent and effective use of the framework and improve the quality of results reporting.

E. Monitoring and Evaluation

263. Results will be reported to the LDCF/SCCF Council as projects reach CEO endorsement, mid-term, and completion, in line with the GEF Monitoring Policy. The AMR to the LDCF/SCCF Council will remain the major vehicle to present the achieved results, portfolio performance, and project-level case studies.⁷¹ The AMR will continue to present expected and estimated results by the overall portfolio and the analysis of actual reported results to the LDCF/SCCF Council.

264. Updates will also be included in the GEF annual report to the UNFCCC COP.⁷² Additionally, the operational performance of the LDCF and SCCF portfolio will continue to be monitored and reported to the LDCF/SCCF Council on a regular basis. This information is intended to help inform the Secretariat, Agencies, LDCF/SCCF Council, and countries about portfolio-level lessons learned, success factors, and challenges.

265. MTF investments will remain a particular area of focus, as they exemplify the GEF Family of Funds approach in action. By structuring interventions to draw on different funding sources, these projects can deliver both global environmental benefits and measurable, context-specific climate adaptation results. The Secretariat will work closely with Agencies and countries during the design stage of MTF projects to ensure that adaptation objectives are fully integrated into

⁷¹ GEF. 2025. [FY25 Annual Monitoring Review of the Least Developed Countries Fund and Special Climate Change Fund](#). GEF/LDCF.SCCF.39/04.

⁷² GEF. 2025. [Report of the Global Environment Facility to the Thirtieth Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change](#).

results frameworks, and that synergies between adaptation and environmental outcomes are clearly articulated. MTF programming offers an opportunity to showcase the added value of the GEF architecture in addressing complex, interlinked environmental challenges.