

OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE FOR GEF-7'S ROLL OUT

415. This section provides a preliminary description of how the GEF-7 programming directions will be rolled out to countries, agencies and stakeholders. This section places particular emphasis to how countries will be able to seek access to Impact Programs and associated resources by making use of their STAR allocations.

416. The starting point for countries is the determination of the desired deployment of their GEF-7 STAR allocations across Focal Area Investments and Impact Programs. The GEF-7 programming directions strategy contains all eligible activities for GEF focal areas and provides initial indication of eligibility to participate in Impact Programs. Enabling activities in support of convention obligations will be funded outside of the STAR country allocations. The Secretariat will accept proposals intended to be funded through STAR allocations and destined to focal area specific investments as well as those for eligible activities in the International Waters and Chemicals and Waste focal areas, in accordance with GEF policy on the project and program cycles (OP/PL/01).

417. The Secretariat will ensure that all countries have an opportunity to consider and to apply for the Impact Programs, including by issuing announcements or requests for proposals with clear timelines. Depending on the nature of the IP, Initial consultations through conference calls with interested countries, agencies and other relevant stakeholders will be organized to allow them to better understand the overall objectives of the program and assess opportunities for engagement.

418. These Secretariat announcements will be issued to all Operational Focal Points (OFPs) prior to or at the start of the GEF-7 replenishment cycle using custom-designed processes as well as making use of the Secretariat's Country Support Program tools. Secretariat dedicated staff will be made available to address frequently asked questions to better guide countries in their initial expressions of interest.

419. Initial expressions of interest are expected to contain desired agencies for the implementation of Child Projects and the associated justification for the proposed choice, along with program objectives and the fit with the preliminary selection criteria which are consistent with GEF-7 programming directions. As it was the case with IAPs in GEF-6, user-friendly templates containing the requested information will be distributed along with the call for proposals. Country ownership will be assured by requiring that all communications are routed directly through the GEF Operational Focal Points and other interested government agencies, and that all completed templates submitted to the GEF Secretariat are signed by the OFPs.

420. At a minimum, countries seeking access to Impact Programs would need to: 1) be eligible for the respective impact program, given its geographical scope and intended outcomes; 2) provide a commitment to a network-based approach beyond national and sub-national level activities, along with a recognition of the importance of and a willingness to engage in a global platform and knowledge sharing platform; 3) demonstrate an understanding of the global-child

project linkage as a means to monitor, track, and report on a harmonized set of performance indicators; and 4) meet any additional, agreed program-specific criteria to be developed through consultation workshops facilitated by the Secretariat. Given that the IPs aim at promoting systems change, indication of commitment to a national institutional framework that has the potential to promote transformational change, opportunity and approach for scaling up interventions, and approach to monitoring and assessment of environment benefits, will also be requested from proponent countries.

421. The preliminary proposals submitted by countries should also contain the amount and nature of the STAR resources they would be committing to their respective Child Project. If full flexibility between allocations for Biodiversity, Climate Change and Land Degradation is introduced in the GEF-7 cycle, countries will be granted the option to program their STAR country allocations across all three Rio Focal Areas. Countries that end up participating in an Impact Program will receive additional, non-STAR incentive funds, at a ratio of 2 to 1.

422. On the basis of expressions of interest received by the Secretariat, follow-up workshop(s) will be called to review of proposals submitted by countries, including the proposed financial commitments originating from the respective STAR allocations. At the conclusion of this process, eligible countries will be expected to have nominated Agencies of their choice for implementation of the proposed country-specific Child Projects.

423. Facilitated by the GEF Secretariat, the consultations would also focus on the identification of a Lead Agency for each Impact Program. Agencies interested in taking a role as Lead Agency must express interest and demonstrate capability to carry out the responsibilities associated with its role, including their comparative advantage to coordinate the program, and willingness to work with participating countries and other GEF Agencies.

424. Following the consultative workshop(s), the Lead Agency, selected through a consensus-building process, will make the final recommendations based on the above criteria for the inclusion of participating countries in an Impact Program, in consultation with the Secretariat.

425. In case country demand exceeds the availability of incentive funds for a particular Impact Program, the GEF Secretariat will facilitate the process of country selection with the Lead Agency, based on Impact Program-specific criteria. The mechanism will operate similarly to the incentive mechanisms applied in GEF-5 and GEF-6 with the SFM Program, and the Sustainable Cities and Food Security in Africa IAPs in GEF-6, by which more impactful child projects were given preference.

426. Global or regional coordination and knowledge exchange components designed to provide technical assistance, quality assurance and consistency across Child Projects are considered a centerpiece of the delivery of Impact Programs, and a significant factor in their value addition vis a vis isolated projects. The Lead Agency will be responsible for developing these components in close dialogue with all agencies that will be implementing Child Projects.

427. A Lead Agency will lead the development of an IP Program Framework Document (PFD) and coordinate with implementing agencies responsible for Child Projects. Both the Lead Agencies and Agencies selected by countries for country-specific projects are expected to ensure the quality of programs and projects in a way to maximize impacts along the agreed objectives under each of IPs.

428. All consultation processes leading to the selection of countries and agencies, including their respective roles, will be documented in minutes from the meetings and workshops, annexed as part of the respective IP PFDs.

429. Upon approval of the PFD by the Council, Agencies selected by participating countries, in coordination with the Lead Agency and other participating stakeholders, will prepare their respective Child Projects for CEO Endorsement/ Approval. Consistent to existing policies, Child Projects under Impact Programs would be circulated to Council for review and comment four weeks in advance of CEO endorsement.

430. Countries that have not been deemed sufficiently competitive in securing access to Impact Programs and their incentive funds can still align their eligible project proposals with an IP, make use of their respective STAR allocations, thereby benefitting from knowledge and exchange platforms, or preparing for a future IP call.