



GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY  
INVESTING IN OUR PLANET

# The GEF and the Sustainable Development Goals



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS





**Naoko Ishii**  
CEO and Chairperson  
Global Environment Facility

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) hold the promise of a fresh start for our planet.

This new, universal agenda will serve as the launch pad for concerted action to promote shared prosperity and well-being for all in the 21st century.

The SDGs recognize that the health of the global commons—the planet’s finite environmental resources, from land and forests to oceans and the atmosphere—is essential for a thriving world.

This recognition could not be more timely.

The degradation of the global environment is beginning to put serious brakes on our ability to realize our development ambitions.

On an increasingly crowded planet, action is urgently needed to curb the drivers of global environmental degradation.

The SDGs provide a guide for action in the key areas where governments, the private sector and citizens will have to invest in order to transform our economies and prosper within planetary boundaries.

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) is committed to help all actors deliver on that potential.

Rooted in our role as a financial mechanism for the Rio Conventions and other multilateral environmental agreements, the GEF is uniquely placed to help buttress Earth’s life support systems.

Based on our more than two decades of experience, we increasingly recognize the importance of tackling complex interdependent issues in an integrated manner.

Our financing, holistic approach and wide network of partners help catalyze innovation and transformational change to provide the stable conditions on Earth required for the future we all want.

We are supporting multi-stakeholder alliances to take action to preserve threatened ecosystems, build greener cities, boost food security, promote clean energy and help lay the foundation of a more prosperous, climate-resilient world.

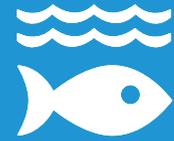
The GEF stands ready to help mobilize the means required to implement the new SDG agenda through a revitalized global partnership for sustainable development, with the participation of all countries, all stakeholders and all people.



# The GEF and the SDGs

The SDGs represent an integrated, holistic vision for development at the global, national, local and individual levels. The GEF occupies a unique space in the global partnership for sustainable development and is well placed to support the vision embodied in the SDGs. We support efforts across multiple, interlinked global environment domains that are closely aligned with the SDGs on climate, oceans and marine resources, as well as terrestrial ecosystems, forests, biodiversity and land degradation. The GEF makes innovative, catalytic and integrated investments to achieve transformational change in food security, fresh water, energy, infrastructure, cities, sustainable consumption and production, and other areas. Our investments reduce threats to the global environment consistent with multilateral environmental agreements, while achieving a range of additional impacts, including poverty reduction, gender equality and good governance.

14 LIFE  
BELOW WATER



# Oceans

## The Issue

Oceans are vital for regulating the climate, maintaining biodiversity and for global food security. More than 3 billion people depend on marine and coastal areas for their livelihood and subsistence.

Oceans are rapidly being degraded. Almost 60% of fish stocks are estimated to be fully exploited, and a further 30% are overexploited. Coral reefs—home to 25% of all marine species—are particularly threatened, both by bleaching caused by climate change and by poor fisheries management. About one-fifth of all coral reefs have already been destroyed and are unlikely to recover.

## The GEF's Role

The GEF promotes a holistic and cooperative approach to the management of oceans and seas. We recognize the need to bring in a broad range of stakeholders, including governments, the private sector and local communities in coastal areas.

## The GEF in Action

The GEF has supported actions in two thirds of the world's Large Marine Ecosystems through a range of interventions, and helped greatly expand the coverage of Marine Protected Areas around the world.

The *Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ)* program provides more than \$270 million to promote efficient and sustainable management of fisheries resources and biodiversity conservation in the high seas.

The GEF's new flagship *Coastal Fisheries Initiative (CFI)* will help ensure sustainable coastal fisheries across 3 million hectares of marine areas. The program will make available almost \$250 million from the GEF, its agencies, the private sector and other partners to support local fishing communities, traders and other stakeholders in a number of countries to reduce overfishing and support sustainable livelihoods in local communities.

GEF Additional Impacts



# Land, Water, & Food Security

2 ZERO HUNGER



6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



15 LIFE ON LAND



## The Issue

Global food production must increase by 70% by 2050 to feed a rapidly growing—and more affluent—population. Without sustainable management of our land and water resources, the prospects for achieving this goal are bleak.

Since about half of Earth's landmass is used to grow food, maintaining soil health while increasing land productivity is vital. In addition, agriculture is responsible for almost three quarters of global freshwater use, which combined with the negative impacts of climate change is leading to severe water stress in many places. Compounding the water challenge, more than 280 watersheds are shared among two or more countries, making multi-country cooperation essential.

## The GEF's Role

The GEF supports countries' effort to prevent land degradation, in line with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), through sustainable land management practices to ensure soil health that are supported by appropriate policy frameworks. In parallel, the GEF fosters multi-country cooperation on freshwater management.

## The GEF in Action

The GEF's newly-launched flagship program on food security in Africa works in 12 African countries, focusing specifically on safeguarding the natural resources—land, water, soils, trees and genetic resources—that underpin food and nutrition security. It brings a holistic perspective to the management of these resources in African agriculture and helps strengthen soil health, improve access to drought-tolerant seeds, adjust planting periods and cropping portfolios, and enhance on-farm agro-biodiversity for the benefit of smallholder farmers, both men and women. Bringing together more than \$900 million from a variety of sources, the program aims to enhance long-term sustainability and resilience of food production by reducing land degradation and biodiversity loss, recovering natural vegetation and increasing soil carbon.

GEF Additional Impacts



# Climate

13 CLIMATE ACTION



## The Issue

The amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere is higher today than at any time in human history, resulting in the rise of Earth's average surface temperature: 2015 is on track to become the warmest year on record. The implications are profound. Sea levels are rising around the globe, putting at risk small island developing states (SIDS) and coastal areas, including 11 of the world's 15 largest cities. Changing rainfall patterns along with melting snow and ice affect ecosystems and human settlements with significant social impacts. Climate change is emerging as a major threat to food security, biodiversity and energy security.

## The GEF's Role

In its capacity as a financial mechanism of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the GEF supports countries to make transformational shifts to a low emission development path. In addition, the GEF is helping countries assess their national contributions towards the global agreement that is expected to be reached at COP21 in December 2015. The GEF also supports countries to increase their resilience and adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change.

## The GEF in Action

The GEF has helped mobilize a total of \$46 billion to finance a broad spectrum of integrated, innovative and catalytic interventions to expand renewable energy, improve energy efficiency, reduce vulnerability and support technology transfer.

The GEF has helped create policy frameworks to facilitate rapid expansion of wind, solar, and other renewable energy supplies around the globe. We are catalyzing equity financing into small-scale renewable energy producers in sub-Saharan Africa. The GEF is accelerating market transformation through adoption of energy efficiency standards for lighting and other appliances, and through the deployment of innovative financial instruments to enhance access to financing for energy-efficiency investments.

GEF support to adaptation spans all least developed countries (LDCs) and 33 SIDS countries that are particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. In Samoa, for example, the GEF has helped integrate climate change risks into national development planning and enhanced resilience of the livelihoods and physical assets for 12,000 people living in vulnerable communities.

GEF Additional Impacts





# Forests

## The Issue

About 7.6 million hectares of forest are lost every year, an area about the size of the Czech Republic. Seen another way, the world is losing the equivalent of 18 football fields worth of forest per minute, year-round. Forests are a vital component of Earth's ecosystem. Deforestation is a key driver of biodiversity loss; it reduces the supply of clean water, and lowers soil productivity. In addition, forest loss accounts for about 12% of annual global greenhouse gas emissions. The drivers of deforestation vary from place to place, including expansion of agricultural lands, mining, roads, infrastructure and illegal logging.

## The GEF's Role

The GEF recognizes that forests provide a wide range of benefits to people and Earth. The GEF takes an integrated approach to sustainable forest management, working with governments, commercial actors, local communities and other stakeholders to address to underlying drivers of forest loss.

## The GEF in Action

The GEF has supported nearly 400 sustainable forest management projects, which have mobilized more than \$10 billion. They use a variety of instruments, including certification of timber and non-timber products; payments for ecosystem services; integrated watershed management; and work with local communities to develop alternative livelihoods to reduce forest lost and sequester carbon.

In Brazil, through the *Amazon Region Protected Areas Program (ARPA)*, the GEF has worked with a range of partners to create the largest forest conservation and sustainable forest use project in world, covering nearly 70 million hectares. More recently, the GEF's new flagship program, *Taking Deforestation out of Commodity Supply Chains*, will focus specifically on introducing sustainability measures throughout the supply chains of palm oil, soy and beef, which are responsible for about 80% of tropical deforestation. The program will support strengthened land-use policy, planning and governance, and encourage commodity producers to take up sustainable production practices.

GEF Additional Impacts





# Cities

## The Issue

By 2050, more than 2 billion additional people will be living in cities, a 50% increase from today. That is equivalent to adding an urban population each month the size of Washington, DC. As engines of economic growth, cities produce 80% of the world's gross domestic product. In doing so, they consume two thirds of the world's energy and account for over 70% of global greenhouse gas emissions. In a rapidly urbanizing world, how we design and build the cities of the future will be critical for sustainable development. Compact, resilient, inclusive and resource-efficient cities can become drivers of sustainable development and economic growth, contributing to both local livability and global public goods.

## The GEF's Role

The GEF collaborates with a broad spectrum of local and global institutions to support city leaders around the world strengthen urban planning, catalyze investments and share knowledge to reduce cities' global environmental footprint and make cities more resilient to the adverse effects of climate change.

## The GEF in Action

The GEF's *Sustainable Cities* program will demonstrate how innovative and focused investments in urban planning and management can start changing the trajectory of cities towards more sustainable pathways, while enhancing their climate and disaster resilience. It will provide \$1.5 billion to benefit 23 cities in 11 developing countries. The program puts strong emphasis on enabling city leaders to share knowledge and best practices in areas like low-carbon public transport, clean water, green buildings and other interventions designed to reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, and promote resource efficiency, ecosystem and biodiversity protection, and climate resilience.

## GEF Additional Impacts





# Biodiversity

## The Issue

Biodiversity is being lost at alarming rates, having declined by more than 30% since 1970 and by an astonishing 60% in tropical regions. Biodiversity loss is caused by habitat destruction, overexploitation (e.g. overfishing or harvesting), invasive alien species, particularly in island ecosystems, and pollution. In addition, climate change is emerging as a threat to biodiversity. The precipitous decline in biodiversity undermines the integrity of ecosystems and the vital goods and services that they provide for people.

## The GEF's Role

The GEF, in alignment with the Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD) Strategic Plan 2011–2020 and the associated Aichi Targets, works to address the drivers of biodiversity loss through mainstreaming biodiversity into decision making by governments and businesses, and through strengthening the global protected areas system.

## The GEF in Action

The GEF has supported the creation of more than 3,300 protected areas, covering an area larger than Brazil and supporting the conservation of some of the most diverse places on Earth. In parallel, the GEF has helped broaden the use of natural capital valuation as a means to tackle the underlying drivers of biodiversity loss.

To reduce the grave threat to some of the world's most iconic animals, many of which are key to ecosystem health, the GEF recently launched a multi-country program focusing on combating illegal wildlife trade, which is an emerging driver of biodiversity loss. In 2014 alone, over 25,000 African elephants and over 700 rhinos were killed for their tusks and horns. The program will help establish appropriate legal frameworks to punish traffickers and fight corruption, improve patrolling at national parks and support strong advocacy and action to reduce demand.

## GEF Additional Impacts





# GEF Results

## THE GEF HAS SUPPORTED

The creation of more than **3,300 protected areas** covering **860 million hectares**, an area larger than Brazil

Conservation-friendly management of more than **352 million hectares** of productive landscapes and seascapes

**790 climate change mitigation projects** contributing to **2.7 billion tonnes** of GHG emission reductions

Sustainable management of **34 transboundary river basins** in **73 countries**

Improved cooperation and governance of **one-third** of the world's large marine ecosystems

The sound management and disposal of **200,000 tons** of highly toxic Persistent Organic Pollutants

Climate change adaptation to reduce the vulnerability of more than **15 million people** in **130 countries**



**GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY**  
INVESTING IN OUR PLANET

## About the GEF

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) was established on the eve of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit to help tackle our planet's most pressing environmental problems. Since then, the GEF has provided over \$14 billion in grants and mobilized in excess of \$70 billion in additional financing for more than 4,000 projects. Today, the GEF is an international partnership of 183 countries, international institutions, civil society organizations and the private sector that addresses global environmental issues.

The GEF's 18 implementing partners are Asian Development Bank (ADB), African Development Bank (AfDB), Development Bank of Latin America (CAF), Conservation International (CI), Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), Foreign Economic Cooperation Office—Ministry of Environmental Protection of China (FECO), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Fundo Brasileiro para a Biodiversidade (FUNBIO), Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), West African Development Bank (BOAD), World Bank Group (WBG) and World Wildlife Fund U.S. (WWF-US).

[www.thegef.org](http://www.thegef.org)