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Item 6 of the provisional agenda*

FINANCIAL MECHANISM - PRELIMINARY REPORT OF THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY

Note by the Executive Secretary

INTRODUCTION

1. In the memorandum of understanding between the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Council of the Global Environment Facility, it was agreed that the Council would prepare and submit a report for each ordinary meeting of the Conference of the Parties (see decision III/8, annex, para. 3).
2. In decision [XII/30](#), paragraph 8(e), the Conference of the Parties invited the Global Environment Facility to “make available a preliminary draft of its report to the Conference of the Parties, particularly focusing on the response of the Global Environment Facility to previous guidance from the Conference of the Parties, to the Subsidiary Body on Implementation prior to the meeting of the Conference of the Parties at which the report will be formally considered, with a view to promoting effective and timely consideration of the information provided in the report”.
3. Pursuant to the above, the Executive Secretary is circulating herewith the preliminary report of the Council of the Global Environment Facility to the Subsidiary Body on Implementation at its third meeting. The report, in English, French and Spanish, is reproduced as it was received by the Secretariat, except for the annexed list of projects and programmes approved during the reporting period, which is issued separately as an information document (CBD/SBI/3/INF/7). The present document will also be made available in Arabic, Chinese and Russian.

* CBD/SBI/3/1.



GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY
INVESTING IN OUR PLANET

Naoko Ishii
CEO and Chairperson

March 2, 2020

Ms. Elizabeth Maruma Mrema
Executive Secretary
Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity
Montreal, Canada

Dear Ms. Mrema:

It is with great pleasure that I submit to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Report of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to the Third Meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI) to be held in Montreal, Canada from May 25-30, 2020.

The GEF is submitting this report to SBI-3 in response to the invitation by the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Global Environment Facility to provide a preliminary draft of its official report to the COP with a focus on the response of the GEF to previous guidance from the Conference of the Parties (decision XII/30, para. 8 (e)).

This draft report covers the period from July 1, 2018 to December 31, 2019 given the formal submission date to the SBI-3. The final report to COP 15 will cover the period from July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2020.

Attached is the full English version.

As a courtesy, and consistent with our past practice, we will provide Spanish and French versions of this document shortly.

Sincerely yours,

Naoko Ishii

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**DRAFT CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES 15 REPORT OF THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT
FACILITY PRESENTED TO THE THIRD MEETING OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODY ON
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

February 14, 2020

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This draft report to the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) provides information on the activities of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in the biodiversity focal area in response to the COP 14 guidance to the GEF, received in November 2018. The draft report covers the period from July 1, 2018 to December 31, 2019. The final report, to be presented to COP 15, will cover the period from July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2020, corresponding to the first two years of the seventh GEF replenishment period (GEF-7) of July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2022.

2. The goal of the GEF-7 biodiversity focal area strategy is to maintain globally significant biodiversity in landscapes and seascapes. To achieve this goal, GEF investments help countries meet the three objectives identified in the COP 13 guidance to the GEF, from December 2016, as presented in the four-year framework on program priorities:

- Mainstream biodiversity across sectors as well as landscapes and seascapes;
- Address direct drivers to protect habitats and species; and
- Further develop biodiversity policy and institutional frameworks.

3. The GEF-7 biodiversity strategy is composed of nine programming investment lines that directly contribute to implementing the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2010-2020 and achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets through a continuum of measures that address the most critical drivers of biodiversity loss across entire landscapes and seascapes.

4. In addition, programming options include investments through Impact Programs capable of delivering more returns per unit of investment by seeking systemic responses to problems that emerge from more than one sector. They will make significant and synergistic contributions to the GEF-7 Four-year Framework of Program Priorities and the associated expected outcomes as agreed at COP 13.

5. For the GEF-7 period, a total of \$1.292 billion has been allocated to the biodiversity focal area, of which \$1.031 billion is provided to countries through the System for Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR).

6. The total amount of GEF biodiversity focal area resources programmed in the reporting period was \$638 million (49 percent) of the total GEF-7 resources allocated to the biodiversity focal area. Of this total amount, \$468 million (45 percent) of the STAR resources allocated to biodiversity have been programmed.

7. These resources supported 38 biodiversity focal-area projects and 99 multi-focal area projects. Six programmatic approaches, including the Impact Programs, have included 75 of these projects. Eighty-three countries have benefitted from these investments. These figures include agency fees and Project Preparation Grants (PPGs).

8. The total value of investments from all GEF resources to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets from all the relevant programming lines in GEF-7 (biodiversity focal area strategy, GEF-7 Impact Programs, the International Waters Focal Area, the Least Developed Countries Fund for climate change adaptation, the Non-grant Instrument, and the Small Grants Programme) in the first 18 months of GEF-7 was \$1.056 billion, which leveraged co-financing of \$8.955 billion for a total investment of \$10.01 billion.

9. In COP 14, Parties provided guidance to the GEF on a variety of topics.¹ Specific guidance on GEF operations and on specific biodiversity thematic topics have been duly addressed and a progress report on GEF’s response is provided in the report.

10. Eighty-four percent of the biodiversity project cohort currently under implementation during the reporting period has been rated as satisfactory in achieving implementation progress and the project’s development objective. In addition, 84 percent of the multi-focal area project cohort has been rated as satisfactory in achieving implementation progress and 90 percent have been rated satisfactory in achieving the project’s development objective.

11. As part of the GEF-7 Replenishment Agreement, a series of corporate targets were agreed.² The report includes the cumulative targets presented in GEF Council approved concepts) from July 1, 2018 to December 31, 2019 that are related to the CBD and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2010-2020. The cumulative targets represent key expected outcomes from these projects. Achievement progress of the key targets for the CBD are summarized in the Table below.

Achievement Progress of the Key CBD-related GEF-7 Core Indicator Targets³

Core Indicator Target	Target achievement (number)	Target achievement (percent)
Core Indicator 1 Target: 200 million hectares of terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use	78.6 million hectares	39.3
Core Indicator 2 Target: 8 million hectares of marine protected areas created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use	>8 million hectares	>100
Core Indicator 3 Target: 6 million hectares of land restored	5.7 million hectares	94.5
Core Indicator 4 Target: 320 million hectares of landscapes under improved practices excluding protected areas	97.5 million hectares	30.5

¹ See Decision XIV/23.

² GEF, 2018, [Updated Results Architecture for GEF-7](#), GEF/C.54/11/Rev.02.

³ GEF, 2019, [Work Program for GEF Trust Fund](#), GEF/C.57/07.

Core Indicator Target	Target achievement (number)	Target achievement (percent)
Core Indicator 5 Target: 28 million hectares of marine habitat under improved practices to benefit biodiversity excluding protected areas	5.5 million hectares	19.6
Core Indicator 7 Target: 32 shared water ecosystems (fresh or marine) under new or improved cooperative management	14 shared water ecosystems	43.8
Core Indicator 8 Target: 3,500,000 metric tons of globally over-exploited fisheries moved to more sustainable levels	127,000 metric tons	3.6

12. During the reporting period, the Independent Evaluation Office of the GEF (IEO) conducted four evaluations and reviews that are of relevance to the biodiversity focal area. They include: 1) Evaluation of GEF's Support to Mainstreaming Biodiversity; 2) Formative Review of the Integrated Approach Pilot Programs; 3) Evaluation of GEF Support for Transformational Change; 4) Evaluation of GEF Support to Scaling up Impact. The key messages from these evaluations are summarized by the IEO in this report.

I. PROJECT ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CBD

1. This draft report to the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) provides information on the activities of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in the biodiversity focal area in response to the COP 14 guidance to the GEF received in November 2018. The draft report covers the period from July 1, 2018 to December 31, 2019. The final report presented to COP 15 will cover the period from July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2020, corresponding to the first two years of the seventh GEF replenishment period (GEF-7) of July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2022.

The GEF-7 Biodiversity Strategy

2. The goal of the GEF-7 biodiversity focal area strategy is to maintain globally significant biodiversity in landscapes and seascapes. To achieve this goal, GEF investments help countries meet the three objectives identified in the COP 13 guidance to the GEF, from December 2016, as presented in the four-year framework on program priorities:

- Mainstream biodiversity across sectors as well as landscapes and seascapes;
- Address direct drivers to protect habitats and species; and
- Further develop biodiversity policy and institutional frameworks.

3. The Biodiversity Focal Area Strategy and the focal area programming lines, the Food Systems, Land Use, and Restoration Impact Program, the Sustainable Cities Impact Program, the Sustainable Forest Management Impact Program, and the International Waters Focal Area Investments collectively contribute to achieving this GEF-7 goal and the three objectives as presented below in Table 1 below.

Table 1. CBD Guidance and Delivery Mechanism in GEF-7

CBD COP 13 Guidance: Four-Year Framework of Program Priorities	Delivery Mechanism
<p>I. Mainstream biodiversity across sectors as well as landscapes and seascapes</p> <p>A) Improve policies and decision-making, informed by biodiversity and ecosystem values</p> <p>B) Manage biodiversity in landscapes and seascapes</p> <p>C) Harness biodiversity for sustainable agriculture</p>	<p>Biodiversity Focal Area Investments and Programming Lines</p> <p>Biodiversity Mainstreaming in Priority Sectors</p> <p>Global Wildlife Program (preventing the extinction of known threatened species, and wildlife for sustainable development)</p> <p>Natural Capital Assessment and Accounting</p> <p>Sustainable Use of Plant and Animal Genetic Resources</p> <p>Inclusive Conservation</p>

CBD COP 13 Guidance: Four-Year Framework of Program Priorities	Delivery Mechanism
	<p>Impact Programs</p> <p>Food systems, Land Use, and Restoration Impact Program</p> <p>Sustainable Cities Impact Program</p> <p>Sustainable Forest Management Impact Program (Amazon, Congo Basin, Dryland Sustainable Landscapes)</p> <p>Other Focal Areas</p> <p>International Waters/Sustainable Fisheries</p>
<p>II. Address direct drivers to protect habitats and species</p> <p>D) Prevent and control invasive alien species</p> <p>E) Reduce pressures on coral reefs and other vulnerable coastal and marine ecosystems</p> <p>F) Enhance the effectiveness of protected area systems</p> <p>G) Combat illegal and unsustainable use of species, with priority action on threatened species</p>	<p>Biodiversity Focal Area Investments and Programming Lines</p> <p>Prevention, Control and Management of Invasive Alien Species (focus on islands)</p> <p>Improving Financial Sustainability, Effective Management, and Ecosystem Coverage of the Global Protected Area Estate</p> <p>Other Focal Areas</p> <p>International Waters/Coastal and Marine Protected Areas</p>
<p>III. Further develop biodiversity policy and institutional framework</p> <p>H) Implement the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety</p> <p>I) Implement the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit-sharing</p> <p>J) Improve biodiversity policy, planning, and review</p>	<p>Biodiversity Focal Area Investments and Programming Lines</p> <p>Implementing the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety</p> <p>Implementing the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing</p> <p>Support for national reporting and NBSAP development</p>

GEF-7 Programming Usage

4. For the GEF-7 period, a total of \$1.292 billion has been allocated to the biodiversity focal area, of which \$1.031 billion is provided to countries through the System for Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR).

5. Table 2 below provides a summary of resource usage from the biodiversity focal area from the start of the GEF-7 period of July 1, 2018, to December 31, 2019.
6. As of December 31, 2019, \$468 million, or 45 percent, of the total biodiversity resources allocated to countries through the STAR in the GEF-7 period have been programmed.
7. The total amount of GEF biodiversity focal area resources programmed was \$638 million, which is 49 percent of the GEF-7 resources for the focal area.
8. These resources supported 38 biodiversity focal-area projects and 99 multi-focal area projects. Six programmatic approaches, including the Impact Programs, have included 75 of these projects. Eighty-three countries have benefitted from these investments. These figures include agency fees and Project Preparation Grants (PPGs).

Table 2. Summary of Programming Usage of the GEF-7 Biodiversity Focal Area (July 1, 2018 to December 31, 2019)⁴

Biodiversity Focal Area	GEF-7 Programming Targets (\$ million)	GEF-7 Programming (\$ million)	GEF-7 Programming (%)
<i>STAR Country Allocations</i>	<i>1,031</i>	<i>468</i>	<i>45</i>
<i>STAR Set-aside</i>			
Enabling activities	46	0	0
Global and Regional Biodiversity Projects and Programs	55	36	65
Integrated Programming	160		
• Food, Land Use and Restoration	92	70	76
• SFM Major Biomes (Amazon, Congo, Drylands)	53	50	100
• Sustainable Cities	15	15	100
Total Resources	1,292	638	49

GEF-7 Programming Contributions to Achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets

9. As depicted in Table 3 below, the GEF-7 biodiversity strategy is composed of nine programming investment lines and programs that directly contribute to implementing the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2010-2020 and achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets through a

⁴ The figures include agency fees and project preparation grants.

continuum of measures that address the most critical drivers of biodiversity loss across entire landscapes and seascapes. In their entirety, the set of programming options included in the strategy respond directly to the GEF-7 four-year framework of program priorities as well as the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, 2011-2020, particularly with regards to the increasingly important biodiversity mainstreaming agenda.

10. In addition, programming options include investments through Impact Programs capable of delivering more returns per unit of investment by seeking systemic responses to problems that emerge from more than one sector. They will make significant and synergistic contributions to the GEF-7 four-year framework of program priorities and the associated expected outcomes as agreed at COP 13.

Table 3. Biodiversity Strategy Objectives and Programming Lines

Biodiversity Strategy Objectives and Programming Lines	
Objective 1. Mainstream biodiversity across sectors as well as landscapes and seascapes	
1-1	Biodiversity Mainstreaming in Priority Sectors
1-2a	Global Wildlife Program-Preventing the Extinction of Known Threatened Species
1-2b	Global Wildlife Program-Wildlife for Sustainable Development
1-3	Natural Capital Assessment and Accounting
1-4	Sustainable Use of Plant and Animal Genetic Resources
1-5	Inclusive Conservation
Other related FAs	International Waters Focal Area/Sustainable Fisheries
Impact Programs	Food Systems, Land Use & Restoration Impact Program (FOLUR)
	Sustainable Cities Impact Program
	Sustainable Forest Management Impact Program
Objective 2. Address direct drivers to protect habitat and species	
2-6	Prevention, Control and Management of Invasive Alien Species
2-7	Improving Financial Sustainability, Effective Management, and Ecosystem Coverage of the Global Protected Area Estate
Impact Programs	Sustainable Forest Management Impact Program
Other related FAs	International Waters Focal Area/Coastal and Marine Protected Areas
Objective 3. Further develop biodiversity policy and institutional frameworks	
3-8	Implement the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety
3-9	Implement the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing
Enabling Activities	Improve Biodiversity Policy, Planning, and Review

11. Whereas some GEF biodiversity investments have a one-to-one relationship to Aichi biodiversity targets, such as Target 11 on protected areas, others contribute to multiple Aichi targets making the reporting of resource allocation per target very challenging. This is particularly true in the realm of biodiversity mainstreaming where an analysis of the resources invested on a dollar basis in biodiversity mainstreaming projects revealed that GEF project

activities often contribute to more than one Aichi biodiversity target given the integrated nature of these investments and the description of the targets themselves.

12. For the sake of the presentation of programming resources in the following tables, some targets are clustered together and have not been disaggregated by the total amount of resources invested on a target by target basis.

13. Table 4 below presents the totality of cumulative direct programming contributions from all GEF resources to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets from all the relevant programming lines in GEF-7 (biodiversity focal area strategy, GEF-7 Impact Programs, the International Waters Focal Area, the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) for climate change adaptation, the Non-grant Instrument, and the Small Grants Programme. The total value of the GEF investment in the first 18 months of GEF-7 was \$1.056 billion, which leveraged co-financing of \$8.955 billion for a total investment of \$10.01 billion.

Table 4. Cumulative Direct Programming Contribution of all GEF Resources to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets (July 1, 2018 to December 31, 2019)⁵

Funding Source	GEF Project Financing (\$ million)	% of GEF Total Project Financing	Co-financing (\$ million)	% of Co-financing	Total (GEF Project Financing and Co-financing) (\$ million)	% of Total (GEF Project Financing and Co-financing)
Biodiversity STAR allocations ⁶	201.3	19%	1,428.6	16%	1,629.9	16%
Food, Land Use, Restoration Impact Program	281.2 (\$95.3 million of biodiversity STAR allocations)	27%	2,515.4	28%	2796.6	28%
Sustainable Forest Management	241.3 (\$92.0 million of biodiversity STAR allocations)	23%	1,706.0	19%	1,947.3	19%

⁵ These figures do not include agency fees or PPGs.

⁶ The STAR allocations reported in this row represent biodiversity focal area projects and multi-focal area projects using biodiversity resources that are not part of the Impact Programs.

Funding Source	GEF Project Financing (\$ million)	% of GEF Total Project Financing	Co-financing (\$ million)	% of Co-financing	Total (GEF Project Financing and Co-financing) (\$ million)	% of Total (GEF Project Financing and Co-financing)
Impact Program	STAR allocations)					
Sustainable Cities Impact Program	146.7 (\$33.3 million of biodiversity STAR allocations)	14%	1,689.8	19%	1836.5	18%
Biodiversity Set Aside	33.4	3%	90.4	1%	123.8	1%
Least Developed Countries Fund	26.3	2%	66.8	1%	93.1	1%
International Waters Focal Area	90.5	9%	664.4	7%	754.9	8%
Non-grant Instrument	15.0	1%	773.3	9%	788.3	8%
Small Grants Programme	21.0	2%	21.0	0%	42.0	0%
Totals	1,056.7		8,955.7		10,012.4	

14. The following sections further describe how the investments summarized in Table 4 have contributed to the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

GEF-7 Biodiversity Focal Area Strategy Contributions to Achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets

15. Table 5 depicts biodiversity STAR allocations that have supported biodiversity focal area projects and multi-focal area projects that are not part of the GEF-7 Impact Programs. The data show a continuing trend of GEF-recipient countries prioritizing the biodiversity mainstreaming agenda.

16. Objective one of the strategy which is focused on mainstreaming has been the priority of countries with \$165.6 million, or 69 percent, directed towards implementing this objective. Objective two of the strategy which is focused on protected areas management and species protection is a secondary priority of countries with \$65.7 million or 28 percent, being invested. Objective three of the strategy, which aims to support implementation of the two protocols and support reporting obligations of the convention, has been a very low priority of countries with only \$7.8 million, or three percent being invested to implement the Nagoya Protocol.

17. It is important to note, and as further described in this report, that \$220.6 million of biodiversity STAR allocations were programmed through the Impact Programs, which are predominantly aligned with the biodiversity mainstreaming agenda.

Table 5. Biodiversity Focal Area Projects and Multi-focal Area Projects Contribution to Achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets (*these are projects that are not part of the Impact Programs*) (July 1, 2018 to December 31, 2019)⁷

BD Strategy Objectives and Programming Lines	Aichi Targets	GEF Project Financing (\$ million)	Co-financing (\$ million)	Total (\$ million)
Objective 1. Mainstream biodiversity across sectors as well as landscapes and seascapes				
1-1 Biodiversity Mainstreaming in Priority Sectors	3,5,6,7,14,15	84.9	623.0	707.8
1-2a Global Wildlife Program- Preventing the Extinction of Known Threatened Species	12	27.5	156.5	184.1
1-2b Global Wildlife Program- Wildlife for Sustainable Development	12	27.3	199.9	227.2
1-3 Natural Capital Assessment and Accounting	2 and 20	3.4	9.7	13.0
1-4 Sustainable Use of Plant and Animal Genetic Resources	7 and 13			

⁷ These figures do not include agency fees or PPGs.

BD Strategy Objectives and Programming Lines	Aichi Targets	GEF Project Financing (\$ million)	Co-financing (\$ million)	Total (\$ million)
1-5 Inclusive Conservation	11	22.5	68.5	91.0
Objective 2. Address direct drivers to protect habitat and species				
2-6 Prevention, Control and Management of Invasive Alien Species	9			
2-7 Improving Financial Sustainability, Effective Management, and Ecosystem Coverage of the Global Protected Area Estate	11	65.7	418.6	484.3
Objective 3. Further develop biodiversity policy and institutional frameworks				
3-8 Implement the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety	No associated Aichi Target			
3-9 Implement the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing	16	7.8	43.3	51.1
EA: Improve Biodiversity Policy, Planning, and Review	17			
Totals		239.1	1,519.5	1,758.5

Project Preparation Grants

18. As a first step in project development, the GEF provides financing as PPGs to assist recipient countries to develop a project concept (PIF) into a project proposal for CEO endorsement. One hundred twelve (112) PPGs were approved in the reporting period amounting to \$24.3 million.⁸

Support for the Implementation the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity

19. During the reporting period, no country-based projects were presented for supporting the implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

⁸ These figures include the full amount of the PPGs for programmatic approaches that include biodiversity resources.

Support to Ratification and Implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity

20. During the reporting period, the GEF approved three country-based projects (Madagascar, Panama, Sudan) to strengthen the required technical, legal, and institutional capacities to implement the Nagoya Protocol. GEF invested \$3.9 million and leveraged \$24.2 million in co-financing.

Impact Program Contributions to Achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets

Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration

21. The Impact Program on Food Systems, Land Use, and Restoration (FOLUR) addresses the underlying drivers of unsustainable food systems and land use change through supporting countries to take a more holistic and system-wide approach. A coordinated, rational, and more environmentally sustainable land-use framework at a national or jurisdictional level is key to ensure efficient food production and commodity supply chains, protect the environment, and support human prosperity. The Impact program focuses on achieving three objectives: (1) Promoting sustainable food systems to meet growing global demand, (2) Promoting deforestation-free agricultural commodity supply chains to slow loss of tropical forests, and (3) Promoting restoration of degraded landscapes for sustainable production and to maintain ecosystem services.

22. Table 6 below depicts the contribution of GEF FOLUR Impact Program resources to achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets as prioritized by countries. Of the \$281.2 million of GEF project financing in the FOLUR Impact Program, \$95.3 million came from the biodiversity focal area allocations under the STAR.

Table 6. Cumulative Distribution of GEF-7 Resources by the FOLUR Impact Program and Contributions to Achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets (July 1, 2018 to December 31, 2019)⁹

	Aichi Biodiversity Targets	GEF Project Financing (\$ million)	Co-financing (\$ million)	Total resources (\$ million)
FOLUR	5, 7, 14, 15	281.2	2,515.4	2796.6

⁹These figures do not include agency fees or PPGs.

Sustainable Forest Management

23. The Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) Impact Program focuses on sustainably managing and protecting forests in three key biomes: Amazon Basin, Congo Basin, and Dryland forests. The project investments seek to maintain the ecological integrity of entire biomes as well as ensuring strong regional cross-border coordination.

24. Past SFM investments were often isolated and mainly focused on integrating SFM principles in land management projects at the project scale only. The SFM Impact Program addresses the drivers of forest loss and degradation through strategies aimed at creating a better enabling environment for forest governance; supporting rational land use planning across mixed-use landscapes; strengthening the management and financing of protected areas; clarifying land tenure and other relevant policies; supporting the management of commercial and subsistence agriculture lands to reduce pressure on adjoining forests; and utilizing financial mechanisms and incentives for sustainable forest management.

25. Table 7 below depicts the contribution of GEF SFM Impact Program resources to achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets as prioritized by countries. Of the \$241.3 million of GEF project financing in the SFM IP, \$92.0 million came from the biodiversity focal area allocations under the STAR.

Table 7. Cumulative Distribution of GEF-7 Resources by SFM Impact Programs and contributions to achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets during the Reporting Period (July 1, 2018 to December 31, 2019)¹⁰

SFM Impact Programs	Aichi Biodiversity Targets	GEF Project Financing (\$ million)	Co-financing (\$ million)	Total Resources (\$ million)
Amazon Sustainable Landscapes Program	7, 11, 14, 15 and 19	88.3	509.5	597.8
Congo Sustainable Landscapes Program	7, 11, 14, 15 and 19	57.2	387.4	444.6
Dryland Sustainable Landscapes Program	7, 11, 14, 15 and 19	95.8	809.1	904.9
Totals		241.3	1,706	1,947.3

¹⁰ These figures do not include agency fees or PPGs.

Sustainable Cities

26. The Sustainable Cities Impact Program builds on the experience of GEF-6 Sustainable Cities Integrated Approach Pilot. The main thrust of the program remains the same, namely, to support sustainable and integrated urban planning by enhancing policy and financing environments to promote innovations for improved urban infrastructure, and to revamp how cities operate at all levels and for all stakeholders. The Impact Program supports sustainable urban planning thru spatially integrated solutions in energy, buildings, transport, urban food systems, management of municipal solid waste and wastewater, and utilization of green space and infrastructure.

27. The Program will deliver results through two interlinked components: a) promoting innovative business models for integrated solutions and investments at city-level, and b) strengthening knowledge exchange on urban sustainability planning and investments. The program will contribute multiple global environmental benefits through decarbonization, reducing land degradation, and elimination of hazardous chemicals. With regards to the CBD, the focus of the program on evidence-based spatial planning will generate the most biodiversity benefits.

28. Table 8 below depicts the contribution of GEF Sustainable Cities Impact Program resources to achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets as prioritized by countries. Of the \$146.7 million of GEF project financing in the Sustainable Cities Impact Program, \$33.3 million came from the biodiversity focal area allocations under the STAR.

Table 8. Cumulative Distribution of GEF-7 Resources by the Sustainable Cities Impact Program and Contributions to Achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets (July 1, 2018 to December 31, 2019)¹¹

	Aichi Biodiversity Targets	GEF Project Financing (\$ million)	Co-financing (\$ million)	Total resources (\$ million)
Sustainable Cities Impact Program	2, 14, 15	146.7	1,689.8	1,836.5

Other GEF Contributions to Achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets

Climate Change Adaptation

29. The GEF manages two separate trust funds with a priority on climate change adaptation, namely the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF) and the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF). These funds were established to address the special needs of developing countries

¹¹ These figures do not include agency fees or project preparation grant amounts as these amounts cannot be associated with specific Aichi Targets.

under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Some of the projects approved during the reporting period contribute to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

30. Table 9 below depicts the contribution of LDCF resources to achieving Aichi Biodiversity Target 7 and 14 respectively as prioritized by countries.

Table 9. Cumulative Distribution of GEF Resources by the LDCF in GEF-7 and Contributions to Achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets (July 1, 2018 to December 31, 2019) ¹²

Aichi Biodiversity Targets	LDCF Project Financing (\$ million)	Co-financing (\$ million)	Total resources (\$ million)
Target 7	16.3	58.3	74.6
Target 14	10.0	10.5	20.5
Totals	26.3	68.8	93.01

International Waters Focal Area

31. The International Waters focal area (IW) focal area helps countries jointly manage their transboundary surface water basins, groundwater basins, and coastal and marine systems to enable the sharing of benefits from their utilization. Complex transboundary water ecosystems cut across a myriad of sectoral needs and themes while not being bound by political boundaries. Consequently, setting effective policy goals, coupled with investments, requires working at all scales, with a range of stakeholders, in the public and private sectors and across the watershed from source-to-sea and beyond. These principles are fundamental to the GEF-7 investments in International Waters. Three key objectives will be the target of GEF-7 IW investments: 1) strengthening national Blue Economy opportunities to reduce threats to marine and coastal waters; 2) improving management in the Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ), and 3) enhancing water security in freshwater ecosystems.

32. Table 10 below depicts the contribution of IW resources to achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets as prioritized by countries.

¹² These figures do not include agency fees or PPGs. .

Table 10. Cumulative Distribution of GEF Resources by International Waters Focal Area Objectives and Programs for GEF-6 and contributions to achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets (July 1, 2018 to December 31, 2019)¹³

International Waters Objective and Program	Aichi Biodiversity Targets	GEF Project Grant (\$ million)	Co-financing (\$ million)	Total Resources (\$ million)
Objective 1: Blue economy	6, 8, 11	52.1	273.4	325.5
Objective 2: ABNJ	6 and 11	0	0	0
Objective 3: Freshwater Ecosystems	6,11, 14	38.4	391.0	429.4
Totals		90.5	664.4	754.9

Non-grant Instrument

33. GEF stakeholders are increasingly attracted to the use of non-grant instruments for blended finance as a mechanism to enhance private sector engagement. Blended finance aims to use scarce public resources to unlock large multiples of private sector finance, and therefore has attracted significant interest in recent years, including a private sector window for International Development Assistance IDA and added emphasis on catalyzing private investment by many bilateral and multilateral funds. The GEF experience using non-grant instruments shows that blended finance can be a potent instrument.

34. Under GEF-7, GEF is accelerating the use of non-grant instruments for blended finance in support of delivering Global Environmental Benefits and to catalyze investments from capital markets at global and national levels aligned with focal area objectives.

35. One NGI project has been approved during the reporting period that make direct contributions to Aichi Biodiversity Targets 2 and 5 as presented in Table 11 below.

¹³ These figures do not include agency fees or PPGs.

Table 11. Cumulative Distribution of GEF Resources by the NGI and Contributions to Achieving the Aichi Targets (July 1, 2018 to December 31, 2019)¹⁴

NGI Project	Aichi Biodiversity Targets	GEF Project Support (\$ million)	Co-financing (\$ million)	Total Resources (\$ million)
The Food Securities Fund: A fund to finance sustainable supply chains at scale in Emerging Markets	2, 5	15.0	773.3	788.3
Totals		15.0	773.3	788.3

Small Grants Programme

36. During the reporting period, GEF approved the first phase of the GEF-7 SGP for a total of \$64 million. This includes a component on biodiversity of \$21 million of GEF resources, which has been matched with an equal amount of co-financing. In addition, GEF approved seven Upgraded SGP Country Programme concepts (Brazil, Costa Rica, Egypt, India, Kenya, Malaysia and Philippines) and one MSP (Ecuador) with STAR resources with biodiversity components amounting to total of approximately \$18.8 million in GEF resources with expected co-financing for the biodiversity components of \$29.3 million.

37. According to the SGP Annual Monitoring Report for fiscal year (FY) 2018 covering July 2018 to June 2019, the active portfolio of grant projects funded by GEF funds amounted to 3,182 projects for \$108.5 million with co-financing leveraged of \$99.5 million. Focal area distribution of all SGP projects under implementation continued to remain strongly focused on biodiversity as primary focal area, which accounted for the largest share of the portfolio of 40 percent.

38. With 408 SGP biodiversity projects completed during FY18, SGP has helped to maintain or improve conservation status of at least 859 species, and positively influenced 172 Protected Area (PAs) and 244 Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas (ICCAs), covering total of 5.8 million hectares. In addition, a total of 162 target landscapes/seascapes were under improved community-based conservation and sustainable use. With regards to the sustainable use of biodiversity, a total of 471 biodiversity-based products have been supported by SGP projects.

39. SGP's biodiversity focal area portfolio has focused its support on improvements in management effectiveness of protected areas, and mainstreaming biodiversity conservation and sustainable use into production landscapes/seascapes and sectors. Under GEF-7, SGP aims to further its integrated and multi-focal area approach in supporting community-led projects.

¹⁴These figures do not include agency fees or project preparation grant amounts as these amounts can't be associated with specific Aichi Targets.

The GEF-7 SGP Strategic Initiatives that address biodiversity focal area benefits include: community-based conservation of threatened ecosystems and species; sustainable agriculture and fisheries management; local to global coalition on chemical and waste management; and sustainable urban solutions. These SGP Strategic Initiatives as well as each of the SGP Country Programme Strategy aligns with the overall GEF-7 Programming Directions, including reporting on GEF results framework and indicators related to biodiversity.

40. With regards to the implementation of the Strategic Plan on Biodiversity and Aichi Targets, SGP also continues to work with range of other donors and leveraging co-financing to the GEF fund, including from the governments of Germany (ICCAs), Australia (ecosystem resilience), and Japan (socio-ecological resilience of production landscapes, SEPLs) in the following key areas:

- the recognition of the traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs) as addressed by the CBD Working Group on the Implementation of Article 8j (traditional knowledge) and 10c (customary use), including through partnerships with the Indigenous Women’s Biodiversity Network (IWBN), such as the Red de Mujeres in Latin America, and Asia Indigenous Peoples’ Pact (AIPP);
- contribution by IPLCs to pollination services and ‘land-sharing’ models of ecosystem connectivity and corridor conservation as recommended by the Global Assessment report of the Inter-governmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) in April 2019;
- shared governance of government-managed protected areas (IUCN Type A and B), privately-run protected and/or conserved areas (IUCN Type C), including towards the targeted focusing of landscape-level clusters of small grants in and around UNESCO World Heritage Sites, Biosphere Reserves, Ramsar Sites, Geoparks, and marine protected areas, including Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMAs);
- the role of indigenous peoples’ and community conserved territories and areas (ICCAs) towards the achievement of Aichi target 11, including through active collaboration with the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) Task Force on “other effective area-based conservation measures” (OECMs) recognised by Decision CBD/COP/DEC/14/8 of the CBD COP14 held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, as a contribution to the emerging post-2020 CBD strategic framework and New Deal for Nature.

II. GEF RESPONSE TO GUIDANCE FROM CBD COP 14

41. At COP14, Parties provided guidance to the GEF on a variety of topics.¹⁵ Specific guidance on GEF operations and on specific biodiversity thematic topics have been duly addressed and a progress report on GEF’s response is provided in Table 12 below.

¹⁵ See decision XIV/23.

Table 12: Decision Adopted by CBD COP 14 (Decision 14/23) and GEF Responses

CBD COP 14 Decision	GEF's Response
<p><i>Welcomes</i> the successful conclusion of the seventh replenishment of the Global Environment Facility Trust Fund, and <i>expresses its appreciation</i> for the continuing financial support from Parties and Governments for carrying out the tasks under the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 in its remaining years, and for supporting the implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework in its first two years;</p>	<p>No response needed.</p>
<p><i>Notes</i> that the biodiversity programming directions for the seventh replenishment of the Trust Fund reflect the guidance adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its thirteenth meeting, which includes the consolidated guidance to the financial mechanism and the four-year framework of programme priorities (July 2018 to June 2022), as well as further guidance;¹⁶</p>	<p>No response needed.</p>
<p><i>Welcomes</i> the Global Environment Facility's process to review and upgrade its environmental and social safeguards and the related systems of its agencies, as well as its guidance to advance gender in its new gender implementation strategy, noting that the results will be applicable to all projects funded by the Facility, and <i>invites</i> the Facility to inform the Conference of the Parties about how it is taking into account the Convention's voluntary guidelines on safeguards in biodiversity financing mechanisms in this important process;</p>	<p>The GEF Council approved the updated Policy on Environmental and Social Safeguards in December 2018.¹⁷ The updated policy is substantially consistent with the Voluntary Guidelines. The Secretariat is currently facilitating a process to review Agencies' compliance with the minimum standards contained in the updated policy.</p>
<p><i>Notes</i> the ongoing review and updating against criteria of best practice of the Global Environment Facility's policy on safeguards and rules of engagement with indigenous peoples;</p>	<p>The GEF Council approved the updated Policy on Environmental and Social Safeguards in December 2018.¹⁸ The updated policy is aligned with international best practice, including with respect to engagement with indigenous peoples</p>

¹⁶ See decision XIII/21.

¹⁷ GEF, 2018, [Updated Policy on Environmental and Social Safeguards](#), Council document GEF/C.55/07/Rev.01.

¹⁸ Ibid.

CBD COP 14 Decision	GEF's Response
	and the application of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC).
<p><i>Invites</i> the Global Environment Facility to continue its support for national implementation activities under the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 in an efficient manner, with a view to enabling Parties to enhance progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets by 2020;</p>	<p>The GEF continues to support country driven projects in GEF-7 to implement the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 consistent with the GEF-7 Programming Directions and the GEF-7 biodiversity strategy. During the reporting period, the GEF approved three country-based projects (Madagascar, Panama, Sudan) to strengthen the required technical, legal, and institutional capacities to implement the Nagoya Protocol. GEF invested \$3.9 million and leveraged \$24.2 million in co-financing.</p>
<p><i>Invites</i> the Global Environment Facility, in line with the consolidated guidance provided in decision XIII/21, to continue to provide all eligible Parties with support for capacity-building:</p> <p>(a) On issues identified by the Parties to facilitate further implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing, including regional cooperation projects, with a view to facilitating the sharing of experiences and lessons learned and harnessing associated synergies;</p> <p>(b) On the use of the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House, on the basis of experiences and lessons learned during the Project on Continued Enhancement of Building Capacity for Effective Participation in the Biosafety Clearing-House and using resources under the biodiversity focal area;</p>	<p>The GEF continues to support country driven projects that aim to build capacity in GEF-7 to implement the Nagoya and Cartagena Protocols as described in the GEF-7 biodiversity strategy including the ABS Clearing House taking into account the current use of the Portal housed at the CBD Secretariat.</p>
<p><i>Invites</i> the Global Environment Facility to continue making funds available to assist eligible Parties in implementing the Cartagena Protocol, in particular:</p>	<p>The GEF will continue to support country driven projects in GEF-7 to implement the Cartagena Protocol as described in the GEF-7 biodiversity strategy, including the fourth national reports. In the reporting period no proposals have been submitted.</p>

CBD COP 14 Decision	GEF's Response
<p>(a) To assist eligible Parties that have not yet done so in fully putting in place measures to implement the Protocol;</p> <p>(b) To support eligible Parties in fulfilling their reporting obligations under the Protocol, including the preparation and submission of their fourth national reports under the Protocol;</p> <p>(c) To support Parties in implementing compliance action plans regarding the achievement of compliance with the Protocol;</p>	
<p><i>Invites</i> the Global Environment Facility and other relevant funding agencies to provide funds for regional projects to support the implementation of the Cartagena Protocol, including projects aimed at building scientific capacity that could support countries' actions towards detection and identification of living modified organisms, and in particular that could promote North-South and South-South sharing of experiences and lessons;</p>	<p>The GEF will continue to support country driven projects in GEF-7 to implement the Cartagena Protocol as described in the GEF-7 biodiversity strategy. In the reporting period, no proposals have been submitted.</p>
<p><i>Expresses its appreciation</i> for the financial support provided by the Global Environment Facility for a number of eligible Parties to support the preparation of their interim national reports on the implementation of their obligations under the Nagoya Protocol, and notes the importance of timely availability of financial resources to support the preparation and submission of national reports by the reporting deadline;</p>	<p>No response needed.</p>
<p><i>Invites</i> the Global Environment Facility to continue to assist eligible Parties to implement the Nagoya Protocol, including the establishment of legislative, administrative and policy measures on access and benefit-sharing and related institutional arrangements, and to make funds available to this end;</p>	<p>The GEF continues to support country driven projects in GEF-7 to implement the Nagoya Protocol as described in the GEF-7 biodiversity strategy. During the reporting period, the GEF approved three country-based projects (Madagascar, Panama, Sudan) to strengthen the required technical, legal, and institutional capacities to implement the Nagoya Protocol.</p>

CBD COP 14 Decision	GEF's Response
	GEF invested \$3.9 million and leveraged \$24.2 million in co-financing.
<p><i>Considers</i> the sixth overall performance study of the Global Environment Facility, conducted by the Facility's Independent Evaluation Office and completed in December 2017, as a good basis for the fifth review of the effectiveness of the financial mechanism, as well as the related submissions received from Parties, and <i>invites</i> the Council of the Global Environment Facility to take the following action in order to further improve the effectiveness of the financial mechanism:</p> <p>(a) Continue to improve the design, management, and performance of the sixth-replenishment Integrated Approach Pilots, the seventh-replenishment impact programmes, other programmatic approaches, and multi-focal area projects in addressing drivers of environmental degradation;</p> <p>(b) Promote awareness to the existing processes under the Conflict Resolution Commissioner to address complaints related to the operations of the financial mechanism;</p> <p>(c) Further improve the sustainability of funded projects and programmes, including sustainable financing of protected areas;</p> <p>(d) Continue to improve the efficiency and accountability of the Global Environment Facility partnership;</p> <p>(e) Include the following information in its report to the Conference of the Parties at its fifteenth meeting:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(i) Progress in implementing the new co-financing policy;</p>	<p>As part of its ongoing support to the implementation of the GEF-6 Integrated Approach Pilots and the formulation, development and implementation of the GEF-7 IPs, and other programmatic approaches, the GEF remains committed to improving all elements of design, management and implementation performance.</p> <p>The GEF continues to make GEF-eligible countries aware of the processes and procedures that fall under the responsibility of the Conflict Resolution Commissioner.</p> <p>The GEF remains committed to ensure sustainability of all its projects and programs, and in particular GEF's support to sustainable financing of protected area systems, which remains a priority investment area in the GEF-7 biodiversity strategy.</p> <p>The GEF continues to improve the efficiency and accountability of the GEF partnership using existing accounting and management mechanisms.</p> <p>Section III of this report summarizes: a) Progress in implementing the new co-financing policy; and b) Performance of the GEF's network of agencies.</p>

CBD COP 14 Decision	GEF's Response
(ii) Performance of the Global Environment Facility's network of agencies;	
<i>Encourages</i> the Executive Secretary to work closely with the Global Environment Facility in the transition to the post-2020 global biodiversity framework;	Since COP 14, the GEF has been actively engaged with the CBD on the transition to the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and GEF aims to continue this collaboration. GEF Secretariat staff have participated in the Regional Consultation on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework for Asia-Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean sharing GEF's experiences in supporting implementation of the CBD. In addition, GEF Secretariat staff have attended the first and second meetings of the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. The Acting Executive Secretary attended the 57 th GEF Council in December 2019 and presented to Council an overview of the post-2020 framework discussions. One of the co-chairs of the OEWG also presented a summary of progress to date by the OEWG in developing the zero draft of the Global Biodiversity Framework at the 57 th GEF Council. GEF Secretariat communicates and collaborates on an ongoing basis with the CBD Secretariat and the Executive Secretary in the context of this process.

III. PORTFOLIO IMPLEMENTATION

Achieving Project Development Objectives and Implementation Progress

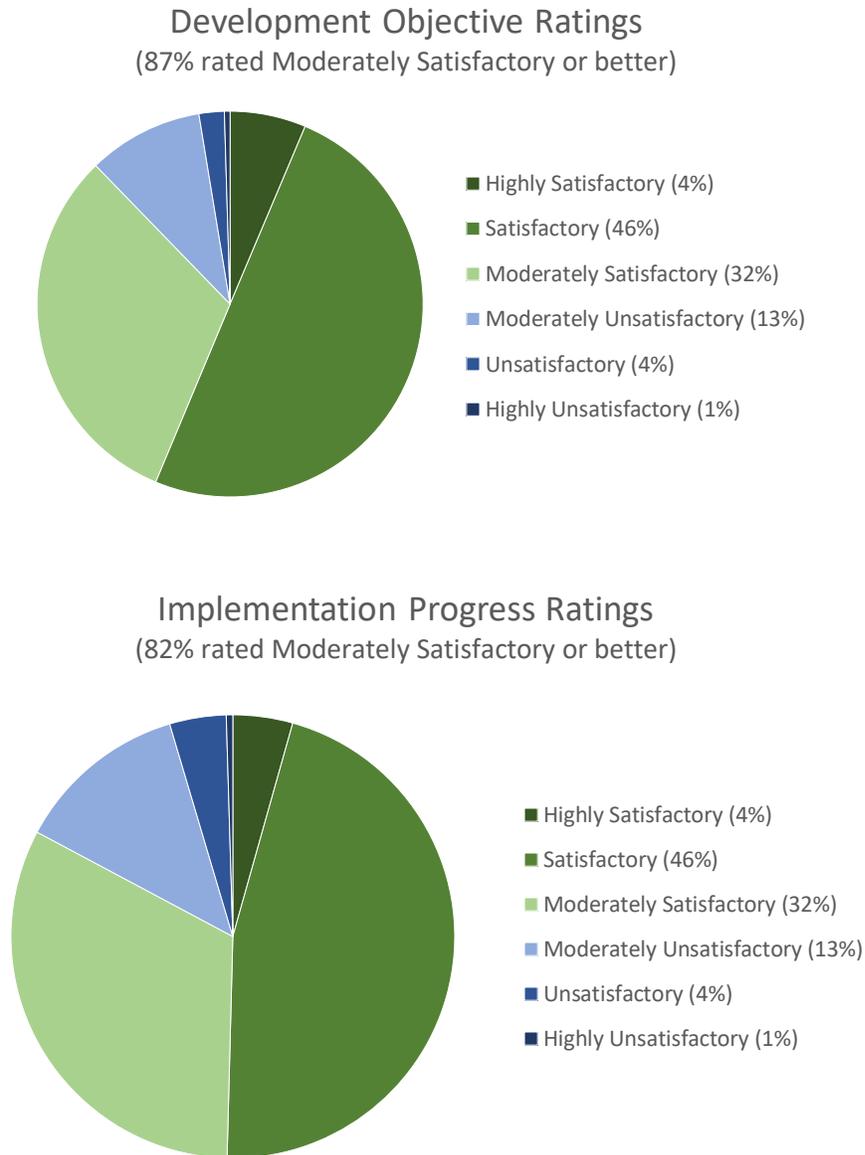
42. Agencies self-rate the dimensions of achieving *project development objectives* and *implementation progress* each year in Project implementation reports (PIR), in line with the 2010 GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy, followed by the recent GEF Monitoring Policy¹⁹. While following GEF Policy, agencies also use their own standards and guidelines when rating projects.

¹⁹ GEF, 2019, [GEF Policy on Monitoring](#), Council document GEF/C.56/03/Rev.01.

The following information in all tables and figures is derived from the GEF's active portfolio in fiscal year 2019, which consists of 923 projects from GEF3-GEF6, unless noted otherwise. The active portfolio is composed of projects that are currently under implementation.

43. Performance of GEF operations across *all focal areas* is depicted in Figure 1 below.

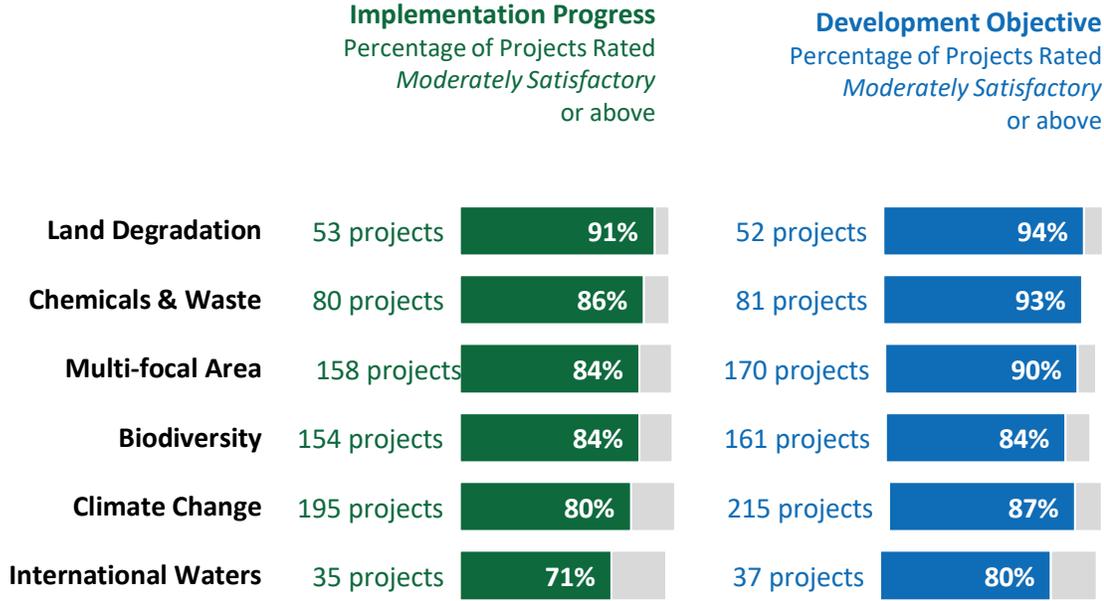
Figure 1. Development objective and implementation progress ratings for Active GEF Portfolio across all focal areas (fiscal year 2019)



44. Figure 2 presents the share of focal area projects achieving satisfactory performance. Eighty-four percent of the biodiversity project cohort currently under implementation during

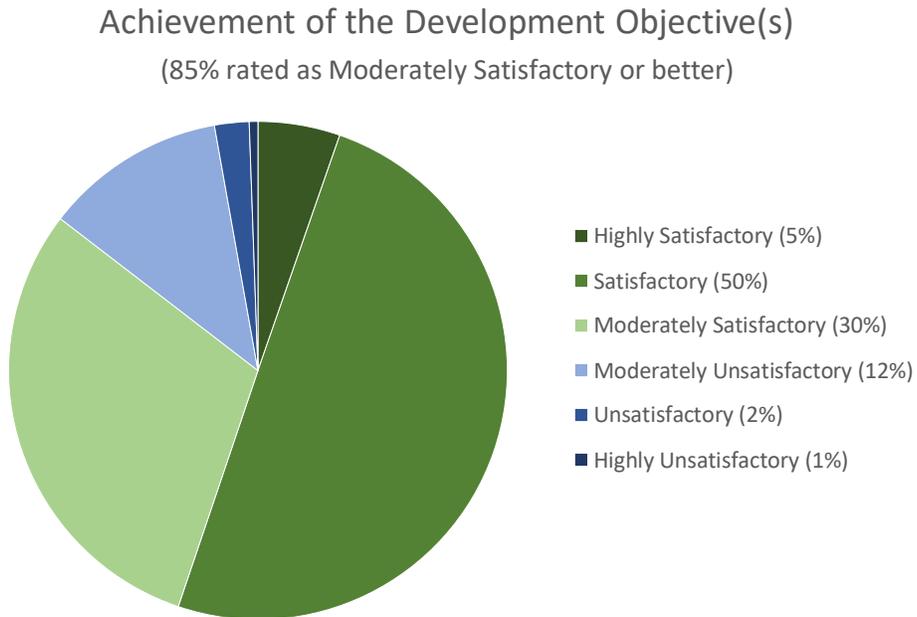
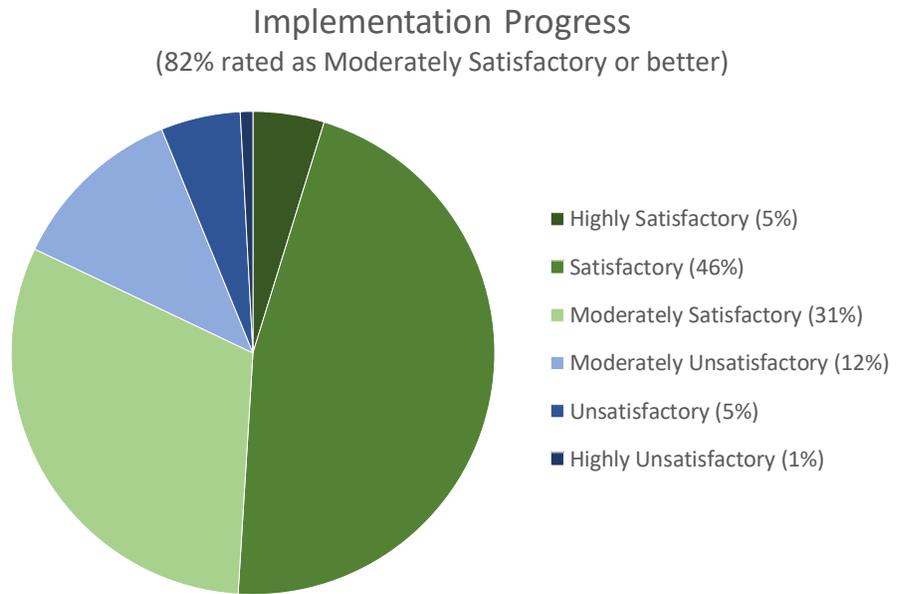
the reporting period have been rated as moderately satisfactory or better in achieving implementation progress and the project’s development objective. In addition, eighty-four percent of multi-focal area projects, which often include biodiversity resources, have been rated as moderately satisfactory or better in achieving implementation progress and 90 percent have been rated moderately satisfactory or better in achieving the project’s development objective.

Figure 2. Share of projects under implementation rated satisfactorily by focal area (fiscal year 2019)



45. Figure 3 below presents performance data of biodiversity focal area projects as well as multi-focal area projects using biodiversity resources. Eighty-two percent of the cohort of projects have been rated as moderately satisfactory or better.

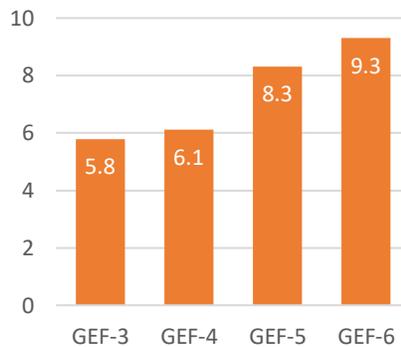
Figure 3. Ratings for Biodiversity Projects and Multi-focal area Projects Using Biodiversity Resources (fiscal year 2019)



Increasing Co-Financing across the Portfolio

46. Under the resources provided by its sixth replenishment, the GEF has reached its highest co-financing ratio, at \$9.3 of co-financing for every dollar provided for GEF-6 projects that have been endorsed by December 31, 2019. This is measured by dividing the total co-financing amount by the GEF grant for each MSP and FSP under a given GEF period, and expressed as a ratio.

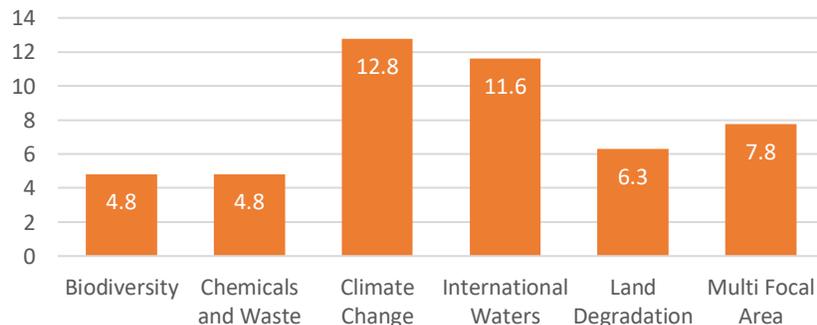
Figure 4. Co-financing across GEF replenishment periods²⁰



47. Co-financing contributes to the effectiveness, impacts and sustainability of GEF projects and programs, particularly by enabling the GEF to achieve longer-lasting and larger-scale global environmental benefits, and by strengthening partnerships.

48. As depicted in Figure 5 below, specific focal areas are attracting more co-financing than others. This is the case of the climate change and international waters that have respectively a \$1 to \$12.8 and a \$1 to \$11.6 ratios.

Figure 5. Co-financing ratio by focal area for the active portfolio (fiscal year 2019)



²⁰ GEF, 2019, [The GEF Monitoring Report](#), Council document, GEF/C.57/03.

49. Co-financing for child projects that are part of the ongoing portfolio is higher than for standalone FSPs. It reaches a ratio of 1:10.1 for projects under a program, and 1:7.8 for standalone FSPs.

50. The co-financing ratio for all GEF projects endorsed during the fiscal year 2019 reached 1:6.7. This level of co-financing is close to the target set for the *entire GEF portfolio* during the GEF-7 period which is 1:7. Of the \$2.2 billion in co-financing, \$380 million came from private sector entities. The co-financing ratio for all GEF biodiversity projects endorsed during the fiscal year 2019 reached 1: 5.2, a slight increase over the active portfolio.

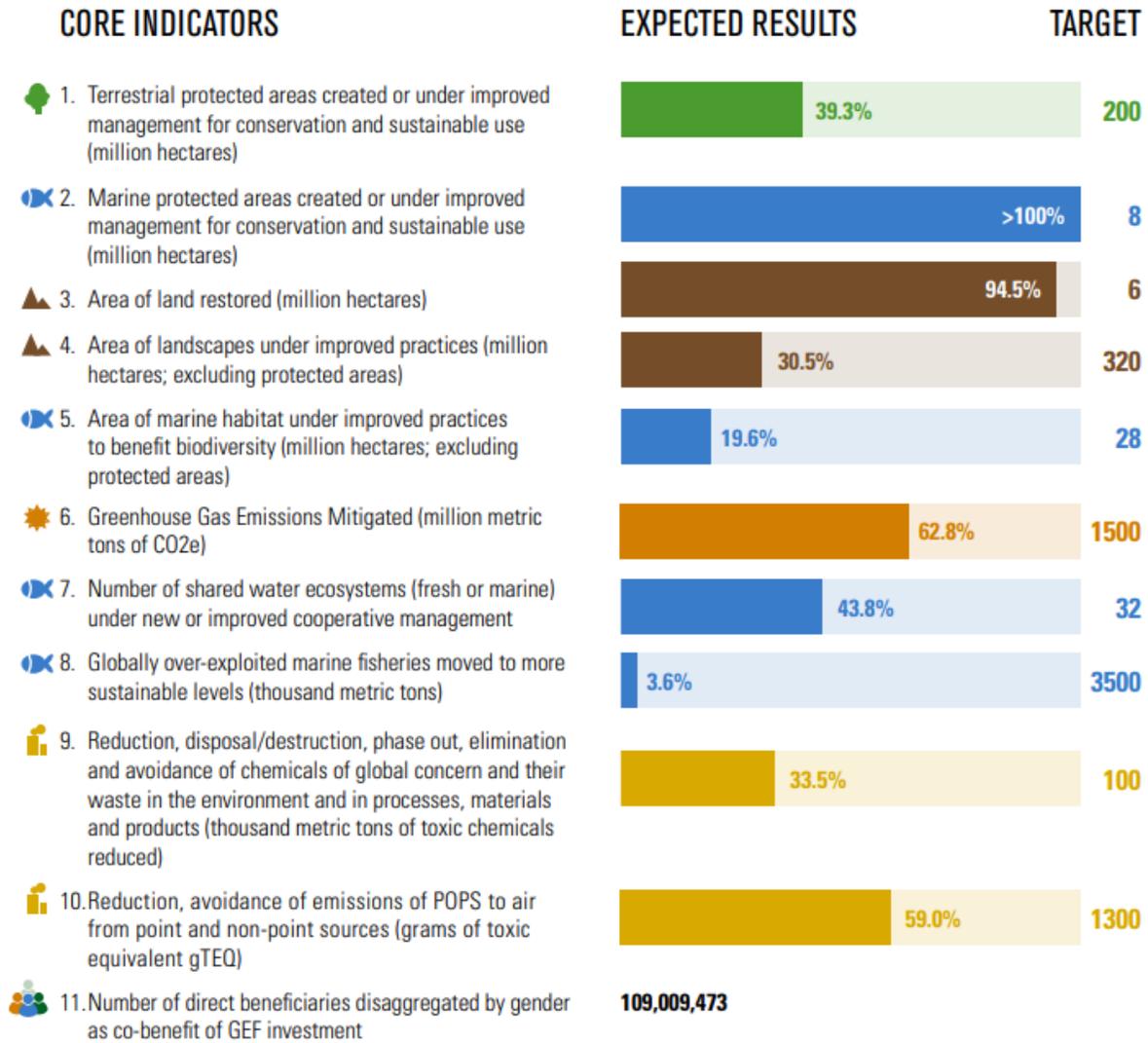
IV. PROGRESS REPORT ON GEF-7 CORPORATE RESULTS AND TARGETS

51. As part of the GEF-7 Replenishment Agreement, a series of corporate targets were agreed.²¹ GEF-7 introduced an upgraded results framework with eleven core indicators that span all five focal areas, all of which are relevant to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets given the breadth and comprehensive of the Aichi Targets. The core indicators, along with associated sub-indicators and methodologies, are expected to significantly enhance the GEF's ability to capture, monitor, analyze and report on results. At the same time, by replacing focal area-specific tracking tools and results frameworks, the core indicators will enable a substantial simplification of the GEF's results architecture, and significantly reduce the monitoring and reporting burden at the project and program level.

52. Figure 6 below provides the cumulative targets presented in GEF Council approved concepts (Project Information Forms-PIFs) from July 1, 2018 to December 31, 2019 that are related to the CBD and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2010-2020. The cumulative targets represent key expected outcomes from these projects.

²¹ GEF, 2018, [Updated Results Architecture for GEF-7](#), Council document GEF/C.54/11/Rev.02.

Figure 6.

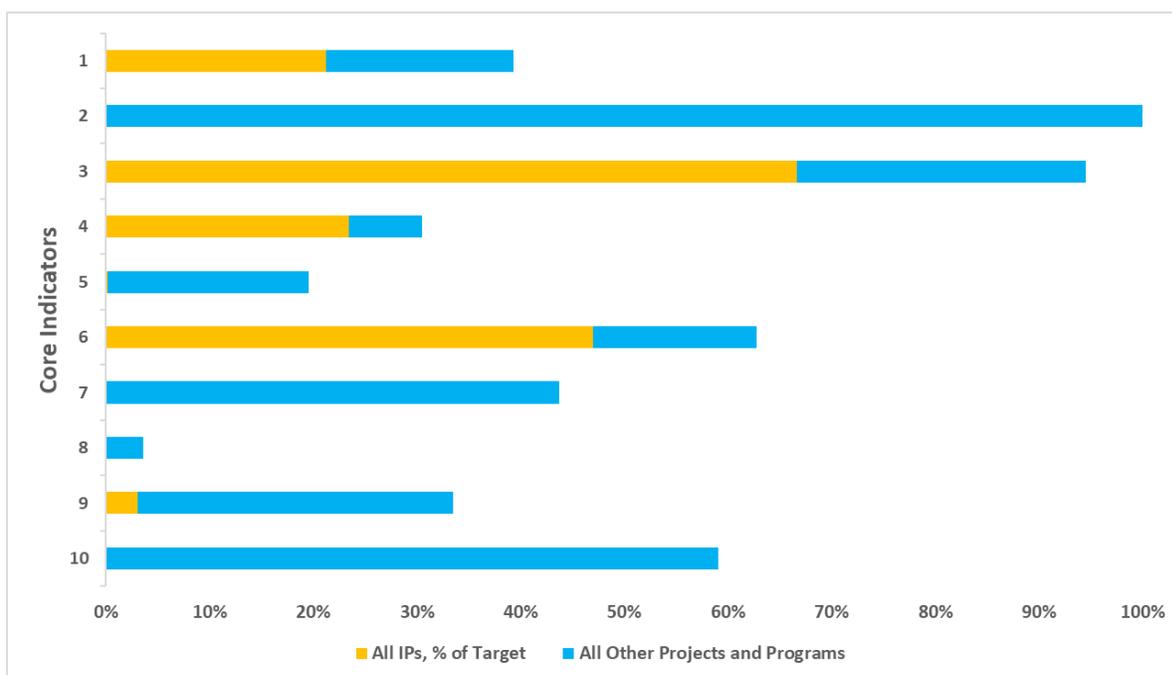


1 The GEF's new four-year investment cycle, known as GEF7, runs from July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2022.

53. As presented in the GEF-7 Programming Directions and Results Framework, the Impact Programs deliver results on indicators 1 (terrestrial protected areas), 3 (area of land restored), 4 (landscapes with improved practices), and 6 greenhouse gas emissions mitigated).

54. To date, the contribution of all Impact Programs to these 4 core indicators varies from 21% to close to 70% of the entire GEF-7 targets (Figure 7), whereas the total STAR resources programmed in the IPs only represent 23% of GEF-7 STAR target allocations.

Figure 7. Results to date in GEF-7 and the contribution of Impact Programs to each core indicator, including the December 2019 Work Program



Key for Figure 7:

Core Indicator 1: Terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use (hectares)

Core Indicator 2: Marine protected areas created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use (hectares)

Core Indicator 3: Area of land restored (hectares)

Core Indicator 4: Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectares; excluding protected areas)

Core Indicator 5: Area of marine habitat under improved practices to benefit biodiversity (hectares; excluding protected areas)

Core Indicator 6: Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated (metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent)

Core Indicator 7: Number of shared water ecosystems (fresh or marine) under new or improved cooperative management

Core Indicator 8: Globally over-exploited fisheries moved to more sustainable levels (metric tons)

Core Indicator 9: Reduction, disposal/destruction, phase out, elimination, and avoidance of chemicals of global concern and their waste in the environment and in processes, materials, and products (metric tons of toxic chemicals reduced)

Core Indicator 10: Reduction, avoidance of emissions of POPs to air from point and non-point sources (grams of toxic equivalent gTEQ)

V. RESULTS FROM THE GEF INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OFFICE

55. During the reporting period, the Independent Evaluation Office of the GEF (IEO) conducted four evaluations and reviews that are of relevance to the biodiversity focal area. The key messages from these evaluations are summarized below.

Evaluation of GEF's Support to Mainstreaming Biodiversity 2018²²

56. The evaluation was undertaken to assess the overall performance and effectiveness of GEF biodiversity mainstreaming–related projects, drawing on the portfolio of 471 projects, and three country case studies conducted in Colombia, India, and South Africa capturing the experiences from GEF-3 through GEF-6.

57. At the time of the evaluation, the biodiversity mainstreaming portfolio composed of 471 projects totaling \$2.34 billion in grants and \$12.73 billion in co-financing. The evaluation reported that the mainstreaming portfolio increased substantially in GEF-6 from previous replenishment periods, comprising 51 percent of projects and 55 percent of the funding. It also noted that mainstreaming biodiversity was the GEF's largest portfolio, surpassing the size of the protected areas and protected area systems portfolio in GEF-6.

58. The evaluation stated that the regional distribution of biodiversity mainstreaming support was generally consistent with patterns of globally significant biodiversity. Through the various replenishment periods, GEF biodiversity mainstreaming support has appropriately focused on Asia and the Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean regions, followed by Africa. The report noted that almost three-quarters of mainstreaming interventions focus on encouraging the inclusion of biodiversity-friendly activities in production practices, and over half of the projects with mainstreaming biodiversity objectives are implemented in the forestry and agriculture sectors.

59. GEF mainstreaming projects are explicitly designed to address recognized threats to biodiversity to mitigate their effects on the biodiversity of global importance. Projects pursued this objective through diverse approaches which included the extension of landscape management practices, agroforestry and sustainable production systems, and biological connectivity linking vulnerable forests to protected areas. Implementation strategies were integrative and multitiered.

60. The evaluation stated that project experiences validate the GEF's theory of change model for biodiversity mainstreaming in diverse contexts, it is reflected in programming trends over successive cycles, and the model recognizes the dynamic and nonlinear process of

²²GEF, 2018, GEF's Support to Biodiversity Mainstreaming, <https://www.gefio.org/evaluations/evaluation-gefs-support-mainstreaming-biodiversity-2018>

mainstreaming. However, the evaluation notes the need for a more systematic application of the theory of change in project implementation.

61. The evaluation reports that GEF's biodiversity mainstreaming portfolio has been very relevant and has played a significant role in the implementation of the mandate of the global Convention on Biological Diversity and its member countries. The GEF has been instrumental in supporting national policy reform and planning frameworks that promote biodiversity considerations across sectors and territories. In terms of performance, GEF projects have successfully elevated²³ biodiversity conservation to targeted sectors, institutions, policies, and territories with globally significant biodiversity. The report also highlighted how a smaller cohort of projects and national partners were successfully accelerating²⁴ biodiversity mainstreaming across sectors, institutions, and territories. Mainstreaming processes are gaining in scale and momentum and have started to affect systemic levels.

62. Positive features that facilitated mainstreaming include the presence of preconditions including well-developed policy and regulatory frameworks for biodiversity conservation, recognized and capable scientific research institutions and expertise, and favorable political contexts. The progress achieved in mainstreaming biodiversity was directly influenced by intervening factors that were both directly related to the project's implementation performance—efficiency, timely output delivery, monitoring, and adaptive management—as well as external to the immediate project context—national capacities and institutional commitment, governance cycles, and political and policy conditions.

63. The GEF biodiversity mainstreaming portfolio has contributed to legal-environmental, regulatory, governance, and socioeconomic additionalities that go beyond incremental cost benefits. These include innovative approaches based on multi-stakeholder partnerships linking grassroots organizations to regional research institutions, advocacy platforms, and national environmental authorities. However, the evaluation also mentioned the challenges of capturing additionalities—such as socioeconomic and environmental impacts deriving from GEF's support.

64. The evaluation points to the need for greater focus on quantitative measures particularly for outcomes and impacts. The evaluation observed that the GEF-7 core indicators and sub-indicators are a step in the right direction but are not adequate to capture the socioeconomic benefits, financial flow, and policy and regulatory reforms influenced by GEF interventions.

65. The evaluation had 3 main recommendations (1) design mainstreaming interventions with a longer-term perspective and a resource envelope to ensure sustainability (2) improve and strengthen M&E design and implementation to capture environmental, socioeconomic,

²³ Elevation, by which the conservation sector becomes more effective at working with economic sectors; and biodiversity is taken up by a broader range of sectors, institutions, and actors. For details see GEF IEO [Evaluation Report No. 134](#)

²⁴ Transformation, where conservation moves from protected areas to the wider landscape, reflecting changes in the perception of biodiversity conservation as it applies to society; For details see GEF IEO [Evaluation Report No. 134](#)

financial, and policy and regulatory outcomes to assess performance, benefits, and trade-offs; and for adaptive management (3) the GEF should continue to leverage its convening power to improve policy design and process and strengthen inter-ministerial and intersectoral collaboration for mainstreaming biodiversity.

Formative Review of the IAPs, July 2018²⁵

66. The formative review of the three integrated approach pilots (IAPs) - Sustainable Cities IAP, Fostering Sustainability and Resilience for Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa - An Integrated Approach, and Taking Deforestation Out of Commodity Supply Chains - introduced in GEF-6 provided lessons and highlighted key good practices and areas for improvement to inform future GEF programs.

67. The review reported observation of positive examples of alignment with country priorities through adequate entry points while noting that the strategy risks sidelining some focal areas. The review found that the commodities IAP child projects aligned with specific government priorities while the Food Security IAP showed synergies across biodiversity, climate change, and land degradation, with financial allocations clearly favoring the latter as an entry point. The report indicated that the biodiversity and climate change focal areas were included as more of an afterthought in project design. The review found that the drivers of the Cities IAP connect local urban sustainability priorities to climate change mitigation, biodiversity, and chemicals. It mentioned that the initial ambition of the Cities IAP was for a greater synergy, which was not pursued later in design. As per the review, taking deforestation out of commodity supply chains is addressed through interventions in the focal areas of biodiversity and climate change, as well as support for sustainable forest management.

68. The review highlighted that integrated programming to tackle the main drivers of environmental degradation through the IAPs enables addressing the objectives of multiple conventions while allowing participating countries to address national environmental priorities. The report observed that all child projects of the IAPs responded to the multilateral environmental agreements and convention decisions referenced in the GEF-6 Programming Directions. The initiatives were mainly in support of biodiversity, land degradation, sustainable forest management, and climate change adaptation. The review highlighted that although the IAPs could respond across the focal areas, each convention has different demands and mandates, so the mediation and sidelining of some objectives occurred, and opportunities for stronger integration of focal areas were missed. Also, according to the review the degree to which programs aligned with national environmental priorities helped to increase program ownership at the country level through adequate entry points. The report noted that the GEF ensured that the IAPs were relevant to the participating countries while meeting the requirements of the conventions.

²⁵ GEF, 2017, Formative Review of the GEF Integrated Approach Pilot Programs, http://www.gefio.org/sites/default/files/ieo/evaluations/files/iaps-2017_0.pdf

Evaluation of GEF Support for Transformational Change²⁶

69. Supporting transformational change is one of the strategic priorities of the GEF, including the GEF's biodiversity focal area. The evaluation reviewed GEF experience in promoting transformational change and identified contributing factors. The purpose was to disseminate the findings for learning and to help the GEF and partner organizations to assess project and program concepts in advance to determine their probability for supporting their transformational change and how their designs could be strengthened.

70. The evaluation was based on a purposive sample of completed projects that were screened for meeting the criteria²⁷ for transformational change and verified through independent project-level evaluations. Out of an initial set of 156 projects nominated by GEF Agencies, eight illustrative cases were selected taking into account their diversity in focus, regional distribution, and agency. The final sample included four cases with financing from the biodiversity focal area: Sanjiang Plain Wetlands Protection Project (China), Strengthening the Protected Area Systems in Namibia, Amazon Regional Protected Areas Program, Phase I (ARPA-I) (Brazil), and Promoting Payments for Environmental Services and Related Sustainable Financing Schemes in the Danube Basin (Bulgaria, Romania).

71. The evaluation identified several factors contributing to transformational change that are relevant to biodiversity interventions. First, the interventions that achieved transformational change had ambitious objectives in terms of aiming at fundamental changes in addressing a market distortion or a systemic bottleneck that was a root cause for an environmental issue of global environmental concern. Second, the adequacy of the policy environment had an important impact on the depth and scale of reforms promoted by all transformational interventions. Third, the interventions that achieve transformation establish a mechanism for financial sustainability by integrating within government budgetary systems or by leveraging market forces and key stakeholders' economic interests. Fourth, another common feature of interventions that achieved transformational change is that they all had good quality of project design, supervision by GEF Agency, and the effectiveness of implementation and execution. Some salient features that drive the quality include comprehensive diagnostic assessments to identify barriers to be addressed; coherent designs to target all identified barriers; early involvement of strong executing agencies that own project objectives and are willing to learn, adjust, and adapt the design, scope, and management as needed to ensure success. Lastly, transformation can be achieved by projects of different sizes.

²⁶ GEF, 2017, Evaluation of GEF Support for Transformational Change, <http://www.gefio.org/sites/default/files/ieo/evaluations/files/transformational-change-2017.pdf>

²⁷ The evaluation used four criteria to differentiate transformational interventions from those that are "merely" highly successful, complex, or large in size: (i) relevance; (ii) depth of change; (iii) scale of change; and (iv) sustainability.

Evaluation of GEF Support to Scaling up Impact 2019²⁸

72. This evaluation aimed to understand better and draw lessons on the processes through which scaling up occurs and the conditions under which it is effectively achieved. The evaluation drew evidence from the previous experiences of the GEF in scaling up. The evaluation assessed a total of 20 cases wherein positive quantitative scaling up outcomes were reported and influencing factors could be identified. Also, the evaluation included 40 additional cases with varying degrees of quantitative and qualitative information. Visits to completed GEF-supported projects were carried out in three countries: Costa Rica, Macedonia and Mauritius.

- In the biodiversity focal area, the report found that the standardized outcomes were as much as 74.5 times higher in the scaling-up stage than in the piloting stage within the same case. The report noted that all biodiversity cases aimed to increase biodiversity conservation through various types of interventions.
- The evaluation found that the median time period over which the GEF provided support was ten years, with some scaling-up outcomes achieved in as short a time as 3.5 years and some in as long as 18 years. Other cases reviewed by the evaluation received GEF support for as long as 25 years or more, with higher targets for the scale of outcomes and geographic area. The evaluation highlighted that successful scaling-up takes about 10 to 15 years of sustained effort also confirmed by the broader experience in literature and stakeholder interviews.

²⁸ GEF, 2019, Evaluation of GEF Support to Scaling up Impact, <https://www.gefio.org/evaluations/evaluation-gef-support-scaling-impact-2019>