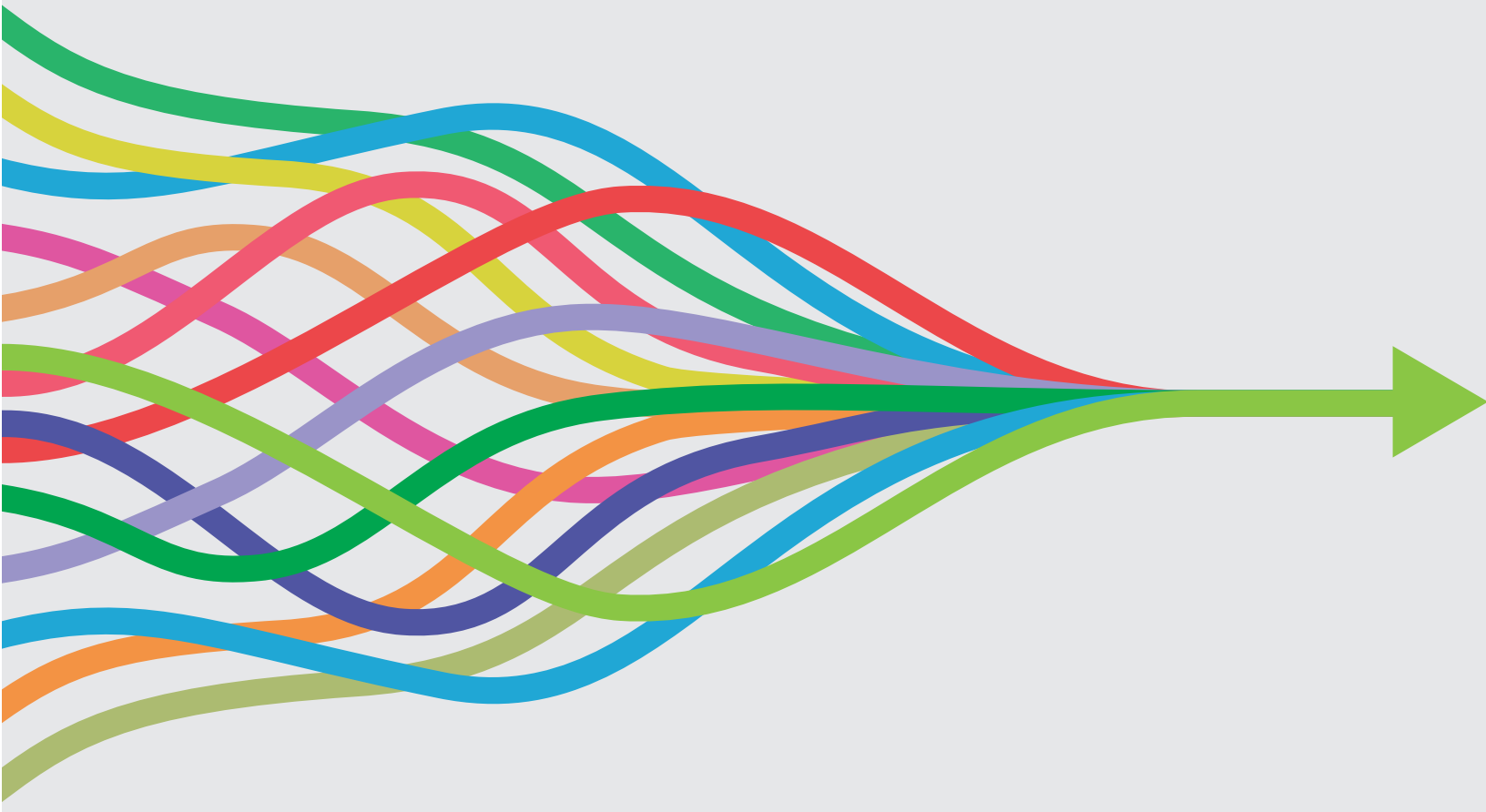
Independent Evaluation Office
GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY

GEF Integrated Approach to Address Drivers of Environmental Degradation



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GEF Integrated Approach to Address Drivers of Environmental Degradation

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1818 H Street, NW, Washington, DC 20433
Internet: www.gefieo.org/; email: gefevaluation@thegef.org

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Task Team Leader: Carlo Carugi, ccarugi@thegef.org
Chief Evaluation Officer: Geeta Batra
GEF IEO Director: Juha Uitto

Editing: Karen Holmes
Layout and design: Nita Congress
Cover: Eva Kristin Almqvist/Shutterstock

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Foreword

In 2014, building on its long and evolving history on integration, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) introduced the integrated approach to address the main drivers of global environmental degradation. This reform was designed to deliver multiple benefits across multilateral environmental agreements using the GEF programmatic approach modality. In 2017, the GEF Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) reviewed three integrated approach pilots—one focusing on resilient food systems, one on commodities, and one on sustainable urban development. The GEF-7 programming documents built on the early lessons from these pilots to fully roll out the GEF integrated approach in five impact programs—one focusing on sustainable urban development; one on transforming food and land use systems; and three focusing on sustainable forest management in the Amazon, the Congo Basin, and selected drylands around the world.

With the integrated approach gaining increasing prominence in the GEF portfolio, this formative evaluation assessed the integrated approach pilots' early results and lessons and how these are informing the evolution of the integrated approach in the impact programs. Clarification of aggregate program-level reporting requirements for lead Agencies, demonstration of programmatic value added to integration, and greater diversification of countries included in GEF integrated approaches emerged as issues to consider in future GEF integrated programming.

The analyses for this evaluation contributed to the findings of the GEF IEO's Seventh Comprehensive Evaluation (OPS7). The evaluation was presented to the GEF Council in June 2021. The Council took note of its conclusions and endorsed its recommendations. Through this report, the GEF IEO intends to share the lessons from the evaluation with a wider audience.

Juha I. Uitto
Director, GEF Independent Evaluation Office

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Administrative support was provided by Evelyn Chihuguyu, Program Assistant; Marie-Constance Manuella Koukoui, Senior Executive Assistant; and Juan Jose Portillo, Senior Operations Officer. Karen Holmes edited the report, and Nita Congress designed the publication.

The GEF Secretariat, as well as many of the GEF Agencies, provided information, data, and insights during interviews and meetings. Critical information was provided during the country case study work by the GEF focal points; national and local government staff; GEF Agencies; and civil society organizations in Brazil, China, and Kenya.

The GEF IEO is deeply grateful to all these individuals and institutions for their contributions, which were critical to the success of the evaluation. Final responsibility for this report remains firmly with the Office.

Abbreviations

CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBO	city-based organization
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
COP	Conference of the Parties
EOI	expression of interest
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FOLUR	Food Systems, Land Use, and Restoration
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GGP	Good Growth Partnership
GHG	greenhouse gas
GPSC	Global Platform for Sustainable Cities
ha	hectare
IAP	integrated approach pilot
ICLEI	Local Governments for Sustainability
ICRAF	World Agroforestry
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
LDN	land degradation neutrality
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
$MtCO_2eq$	million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent
MTR	midterm review
NBS	nature-based solutions
NGO	nongovernmental organization
OFP	operational focal point
PFD	program framework document
PIF	project identification form
PIR	project implementation report
REDD+	Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries

The GEF replenishment periods are as follows:

Pilot phase: 1991–94	GEF-1: 1995–98	GEF-2: 1999–2002	GEF-3: 2003–06
GEF-4: 2006–10	GEF-5: 2010–14	GEF-6: 2014–18	GEF-7: 2018–22

RFS	Resilient Food Systems
SFM	sustainable forest management
SHARP	Self-evaluation and Holistic Assessment of Climate Resilience of Farmers and Pastoralists
SIDS	small island developing states
STAP	Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel
STAR	System for Transparent Allocation of Resources
TOD	transit-oriented development
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
WRI	World Resources Institute
WWF-US	World Wildlife Fund-US chapter

Executive summary

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) introduced the integrated approach in 2014, building on its long and evolving history on integration. This major reform aimed to address the main drivers of global environmental degradation and deliver multiple benefits across multilateral environmental agreements using a programmatic approach. In 2017, the GEF Independent Evaluation Office (GEF IEO 2018c) reviewed its three integrated approach pilots (IAPs)—one focusing on food security, one on commodities, and one on sustainable urban development. The GEF-7 programming documents built on the early lessons these pilots generated to fully roll out the GEF integrated approach in a set of full-scale impact programs. Nearly a fifth (18 percent) of GEF-7 funding is invested in five impact programs—one focusing on sustainable urban development, one on transforming food and land use systems, and three focusing on sustainable forest management in the Amazon, the Congo Basin, and selected drylands around the world. In total, 56 countries and 14 Agencies have participated in the IAPs and impact programs.

This evaluation assesses the GEF integrated approach applied through the GEF-6 IAPs and GEF-7 impact programs to address the drivers of environmental degradation. The GEF IEO has adopted a formative approach to this evaluation, as the programs are still in the early stages of implementation. This approach included an assessment of IAPs' early results and lessons (drawing on midterm reviews and other evidence), and an assessment of how the results and lessons from the pilots are informing the evolution of the integrated approach in the impact programs. The purpose and objectives of the evaluation translated into key questions on the relevance and coherence of the design of the GEF integrated approach and the efficiency and effectiveness of its implementation. Mixed methods for the evaluation included a quality-at-entry analysis of IAP and impact programs program and child project documents; portfolio and timeline analyses; semi-structured, central-level interviews with 151 representatives from the GEF Secretariat, Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel, and GEF Agencies; an online survey administered to 633 country stakeholders with a 42.3 percent response rate; three country case studies (Brazil, China, and Kenya); and a geospatial analysis on the spatial relevance of food systems-related programs.

KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Overall, GEF-7 integrated programming represents an improvement over the GEF-6 IAPs on several dimensions. The GEF-7 impact programs

show evidence of learning and evolution from the pilot phase, including in design relevance and coherence, process, knowledge platforms, and results.

Integrated programming is largely targeting relevant countries and drivers of environmental degradation with a few exceptions. Integrated programs show synergies primarily among biodiversity, climate change, and land degradation focal areas. There is scope for stronger integration with international waters and chemicals and waste. GEF integrated approaches also intersect with socioeconomic considerations, including in interventions focused on urban development, rural livelihoods, and commodity value chains. The strategy to ensure relevant countries participated in the GEF-7 impact programs to address drivers of environmental degradation—in terms of geographic targeting, incentives, and working with relevant Agencies and countries—has been largely successful. Only one small island developing state is participating in IAPs or impact programs, however, which represents a missed opportunity.

Integrated programming is widely seen as a strategic innovation of the GEF. It draws on the GEF's institutional comparative advantages. Chief among these comparative advantages is the GEF's role in serving multiple conventions and multilateral environmental agreements. IAPs and impact programs address the objectives of multiple conventions and country priorities in an integrated manner. Integrated programming does not substantially affect the ability of countries to report to the conventions. The GEF's comparative advantages of convening power and partnerships are also linked to the integrated approach's potential for transformational impact.

The design of the GEF-7 impact programs improved since the GEF-6 IAPs, with areas identified for further improvement. Impact program child projects show good alignment with broader impact program objectives and main components outlined in program framework documents. Theories of change have improved in GEF-7 impact programs, showing stronger evidence of systems thinking. However, insufficient consideration is given to the roles and responsibilities for linkages between program and country projects' theories of change in the programs that focus on value chains.

To date, program-level reporting in the GEF-6 IAPs has not yet demonstrated the value addition of taking a programmatic approach to integration. While the design of GEF-7 impact programs' monitoring and evaluation systems have improved, important issues remain. Common results frameworks across program and child projects, derived from the program theory of change, were not well developed for all IAPs, hindering program-level aggregate reporting. In the GEF-7 impact programs, lead Agencies have started to work more strenuously and interactively to develop common program results and reporting frameworks earlier in the design process. Remaining challenges include coordination projects' approaches to measure global environment benefits and aggregate results across child projects within programs. A main issue is that while the 2019 GEF monitoring and evaluation policies help clarify roles and responsibilities, program-level monitoring and evaluation has still to be reflected in project cycle practices.

Substantial process improvements have been realized in the rollout of GEF-7 impact programs. The competitive expression-of-interest process has involved open access, clear selection criteria, and strong interest among countries in participating in GEF-7 impact programs. The GEF also used a competitive procurement process to select the lead Agency. Sequencing of program design improved in GEF-7, with child projects generally designed in parallel with the global or regional coordination projects (rather than before them, as in the IAPs). Country stakeholders, including operational

focal points, viewed program design processes as inclusive. In terms of efficiency, the rollout of the integrated programs has followed a timeline similar to the IAPs, and the timeline for IAP child projects' progress to implementation is similar to the rest of the GEF portfolio.

The design of GEF integrated approaches places considerable responsibility on the lead Agency to deliver program results and demonstrate added value. GEF-7 appropriately expands the lead Agency's critical role to cover program coordination, integration, and reporting—with slightly more funding for coordination projects than in GEF-6 IAPs. Child projects also now allocate funds to interact with the coordination project. Managing internal and external coordination; integrating across scales, countries, and Agencies; and monitoring and reporting on the value the program adds are all important, substantial tasks for lead Agencies. During GEF-6, a lack of Agency cooperation hampered these tasks at times, given that the incentives for working in a coordinated manner are unclear and the rules of engagement are also still unclear.

Lead Agency annual program reports, midterm reports, project implementation reviews, and country case studies demonstrate some progress toward results with variation across programs, and it is still early to observe many global environment benefits. The Resilient Food Systems and Good Growth Partnership IAPs reported on some program-aggregated global environment benefits (including hectares of land restored or protected). However, the Sustainable Cities IAP has lagged far behind in program reporting. Results are uneven among the Sustainable Cities IAP child projects and Agencies. About half of IAP child projects indicate progress toward achieving concrete environmental outcomes, and two-thirds show progress toward policy or legal results. Few socioeconomic and household resilience outcomes have been reported. All IAP programs are establishing (or supporting existing) multistakeholder platforms or mechanisms. The country case studies showed that the primary implementation challenges relate to using the integrated approach, including working across government ministries, agencies, or departments, and implementation arrangements that involve multiple agencies and executing partners to support integration.

At midterm, the GEF-6 IAPs knowledge platforms are playing their intended key role in supporting learning and capacity building across projects, with areas for improvement. The IAP knowledge platforms have resulted in greater knowledge and learning activities than many past GEF programmatic approaches. Partnerships with major institutions and networks show promise to amplify the effects of these knowledge platforms. A main challenge has been that few child projects allocated funds or staff time for knowledge management. Producing country-relevant information and interactions has also been challenging given diverse country contexts. Ineffective sequencing among platforms and child projects has limited the platforms' influence. While the Global Platform for Sustainable Cities is an effective online hub, the situation of the duplicative GEF-6 and GEF-7 knowledge platforms, which will run in parallel for the next two years, presents a risk of confusion among platform participants and inefficiencies that the GEF Secretariat and Agencies are working to minimize. Although not all designs are final, the GEF-7 impact program knowledge platforms show evidence of lessons learned from the GEF-6 pilots, such as closer partnerships with child projects, plans for more offers of technical assistance, and use of regional clustering.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To make the ongoing efforts in aggregate program-level reporting effective, the GEF Secretariat must clarify program-level reporting

requirements for lead Agencies. The value-added potential of integrated programming is there but must be measured. Program-level monitoring and reporting requirements must be better codified in project cycle practices. Global and regional coordination projects should not be required to report on global environment benefits in all cases. Some relevant intermediate results linked to the program theory of change—not just global environment benefits—should be aggregable across child projects.

The GEF Secretariat and lead Agencies should work to further catalyze and demonstrate the value addition of a programmatic approach to integration. Specific actions include the following:

- The GEF Secretariat should ensure that global and regional coordination projects are designed before child projects or at least with some logical staging so they are not designed fully in parallel to ensure value addition from the start. Lead Agencies' coordination and integration role during design may require funding beyond the normal project preparation grant. Depending on program objectives and scope, additional funds should be available.
- Lead Agencies should consider implementation activities that support systems-based thinking—such as midterm systems-based workshops to review drivers and barriers—and adapt accordingly.
- In design and throughout implementation, the lead Agency, under the guidance of the GEF Secretariat, should clarify operational roles and responsibilities for working with the private sector entities involved in value chains on multinational, national, and subnational scales.

The GEF should ensure a greater diversification in the countries included in integrated programs. While programs have addressed relevant environmental issues in major countries, the GEF should be more inclusive of smaller countries, such as small island developing states.

Introduction

Unique among the international environmental financing institutions, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) provides support to address multiple global environmental concerns in biodiversity, climate change, land degradation, international waters, and chemicals and waste. Since its inception in 1991, the GEF has given developing countries and countries with economies in transition more than $21.1 billion in grants and mobilized an additional $114 billion in cofinancing for more than 5,000 projects in 170 countries. Implemented through single or multiple focal area interventions, GEF support helps signatory countries address their commitments to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and a few other multilateral environmental agreements, such as the Stockholm Convention on persistent organic pollutants and the Minamata Convention on mercury.

In 2014, the GEF introduced the integrated approach, a major reform aimed at addressing the main drivers of global environmental degradation. It began with three integrated approach pilots (IAPs)—one focusing on food security, one on commodities, and one on sustainable urban development. The GEF Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) reviewed these initiatives in 2017 (GEF IEO 2018c). The GEF-7 programming documents build on the early lessons generated by the three pilots and the GEF IEO 2018 formative review to fully roll out the GEF integrated approach with a sizable investment in a set of discrete impact programs.

This evaluation assesses the GEF integrated approach applied through GEF-6 IAPs and GEF-7 impact programs to address the drivers of environmental degradation. The GEF IEO has adopted a formative approach to this evaluation, as the programs are still in early stages of implementation. This includes a midterm assessment of the IAPs' early results and lessons and an assessment of how the results and lessons from these pilots are informing impact programs. To capture the evolution of the integrated approach from GEF-6 to GEF-7 programs, this evaluation looks at the links between the GEF-6 pilots and GEF-7 impact programs for three major pillars, based on three common themes: (1) Sustainable Cities IAP and Impact Program (sustainable urbanization theme); (2) Food Systems, Land Use, and Restoration (FOLUR) Impact Program and Food Security and Commodities IAPs (food systems theme); and

(3) sustainable forest management (SFM) and Amazon, Congo, and Drylands impact programs (SFM theme).

1.1 Background on integration and the GEF approach

Integrated approaches for development and the environment are not new. They emerged in the 1960s as systems theory was introduced into development theory and practice, intentionally linking design and delivery of programs across core sectors. One of the first applications was in integrated rural development. Although the massive and often simplistically designed multisectoral integrated rural development projects soon gave way to more focused and collaborative interventions, integrated approaches were maintained as a useful concept for development that can have long-lasting effects (Ahner-McHaffie et al. 2018). The notion that environmental problems can be dealt with in individual silos has long expired. The United Nations resolution for the 2030 Agenda emphasizes the importance of interlinkages and the integrated nature of the Sustainable Development Goals across economic, social, and environmental dimensions. According to Bierbaum et al. (2018, 4):

> [a]ddressing the interconnected and interacting environmental and social challenges requires systems thinking; this is fundamental to better integration. Integrated approaches and systems thinking are also the only way to deal with new and complex risks. Integrated approaches can also untangle complexity, so that root causes can be identified and managed through focused interventions.

Integration has been central in the GEF since its inception, although the approach has evolved substantially. Integration was built into the design of the GEF in 1992: the GEF is tasked with integrating global environmental concerns with national socioeconomic objectives (Bierbaum et al. 2018). One of the original GEF operational programs was integrated land and water operational program 9. In 2000, the GEF began to implement cross-cutting initiatives operational program 12 on integrated ecosystem management, emphasizing socioeconomic benefits. The GEF has supported a multifocal area portfolio since 2002 and has increasingly adopted cross-focal area integration. The introduction of the GEF's programmatic approach in 2008 expanded support of integrated Multifocal area interventions. A 2017 IEO evaluation showed projects under programmatic approaches outperformed stand-alone projects (GEF IEO 2018b). They were better and more coherently designed, although their efficiency declined as complexity increased. The IEO's 2018 Multifocal area evaluation found integration can enhance synergies when project design integrates additional types of benefits (e.g., socioeconomic benefits) and when joint decision making among sectors and actors is in place (GEF IEO 2018a). Integration also supports mitigation of trade-offs between environmental and socioeconomic objectives.

The GEF introduced a reform in 2014, at the onset of its sixth replenishment phase (GEF-6)—a set of pilot programs to address the main global environmental challenges using an integrated approach under the existing programmatic approach modality. The evolution from the previously predominant manner of support—single focal area interventions—to a more systemic approach is motivated by the overarching strategic objective to support transformational change and achieve global environmental benefits on a larger scale (GEF 2015a). This new approach includes programming GEF funds to help recipient countries meet their commitments to more than one global environmental convention or thematic area by addressing the underlying drivers of environmental degradation. The GEF-6 Programming Directions set out a rationale for these pilots to address discrete, time-bound global environmental challenges in

line with the targets and goals of the multilateral environmental agreements the GEF serves (GEF 2014).

In 2017, the GEF IEO assessed the relevance and alignment of the design of IAP programs with GEF-6 focal area strategies, their alignment with convention guidance, and their capacity to reflect synergies in delivering focal area strategies while accounting for country needs and ownership (GEF IEO 2018c). This formative review also looked at the IAP programs' initial uptake in participating countries and the efficiency of the launching process. The review concluded:

- The IAPs' integrated programming to tackle the main drivers of environmental degradation enables programs to address the objectives of multiple conventions while allowing participating countries to address national environmental priorities.
- The IAPs have pursued innovative and flexible design to address the drivers of environmental degradation but use a wide variety of indicators and tracking tools, hindering aggregation in each IAP and for the three IAPs together.
- The IAPs draw on the comparative advantages of a variety of GEF Agencies and specialized think tanks, but the involvement of several Agencies and institutions in each IAP has increased programs' organizational complexity.
- Insufficient clarity on rules of engagement between Agencies, transparency of selection processes, the role of the Secretariat, and insufficient communications among some participating GEF Agencies and countries on technical design hindered the IAPs' design and launch process.
- Based on these conclusions, the 2018 formative review recommended assessing the value of knowledge platforms at midterm to ensure they support program implementation by sharing lessons across countries on child projects and support coordination of programs. The review also recommended standardizing indicators, tracking tools, and metrics across the IAPs to demonstrate program additionality through monitoring and evaluation (M&E).

1.2 Overview of GEF-6 IAPs and GEF-7 impact programs

The three IAPs launched during GEF-6 introduced a new dimension of programming that emphasized integration as a key organizing principle for GEF financing (box 1.1). These programs were structured around major drivers of global environmental degradation. Two programs were global, one focusing on urbanization, the Sustainable Cities IAP; and one on commodity-driven deforestation, the Taking Deforestation out of Commodity Supply Chains program—referred to in this report as the Good Growth Partnership (GGP) IAP. A third centered on sustainability and resilience for food security in Sub-Saharan Africa drylands—the Fostering Sustainability and Resilience for Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa program, referred to in this report as the Resilient Food Systems (RFS) IAP. The GEF did not provide silo financing for these programs by focal area, but designed them for coherent investment to promote synergies in generating multiple global environmental benefits, while ensuring that progress in any dimension of the global environment does not negatively affect related socioeconomic objectives.

About a fifth of GEF-7 funding (18 percent) is invested according to the new integrated approach in a series of impact programs (table 1.1).[1] These

[1] Total impact program funding from Council-approved program framework documents is $705.4 million or 18 percent of total GEF-7 replenishment programming. Thirty-six percent of Chief Executive Officer (CEO)–endorsed funding has been for GEF-7 impact program child projects, from the GEF data portal as of February 3,

Box 1.1 GEF IAP objectives

The **Sustainable Cities IAP** aims "[t]o promote among participating cities an approach to urban sustainability guided by evidence-based, multidimensional, broadly inclusive planning processes that balance economic, social, and environmental resource considerations." This program includes tools, knowledge products, and services to support local planning activities (Sustainable Cities IAP program framework documents [PFDs]).

The **Resilient Food Systems IAP** is intended to "[s]upport countries in target geographies for integrating priorities to safeguard and maintain ecosystem services into investments improving smallholder agriculture and food value chains." This incorporated direct engagement with smallholders to preserve "land, water, soils, trees, and genetic resources." (RFS IAP PFD)

The **Good Growth Partnership IAP** (also known as the Taking Deforestation Out of Commodity Supply Chains IAP) is focused on "[reducing] the global effects of agriculture commodities expansion on greenhouse gas emissions and biodiversity by meeting the growing demand for palm oil, soy, and beef through supplies that do not lead to deforestation." This is accomplished through support for sustainable land-use planning and government policymaking, private investor and corporate commitments, and consumer awareness (GGP IAP PFD).

Source: Program framework documents.

are an evolution of this approach, applied full scale, and focused on the main themes and drivers addressed by GEF-6 pilots. Building on the themes in the RFS and GGP IAPs, the Food, Land Use, and Restoration Impact Program (FOLUR Impact Program) seeks to transform food and land use systems and help countries reconcile competing social, economic, and environmental interests by moving away from unsustainable sectoral approaches (box 1.2). The Sustainable Cities Impact Program builds on the GEF-6 Sustainable Cities IAP, seeking to promote sustainable urbanization in more cities and countries. It further incorporates biodiversity conservation and nature-based solutions (NBS) on a metropolitan scale. Three sustainable forest management (SFM) impact programs expand GEF support from individual countries, an approach applied to precedent SFM programs in GEF-4 and GEF-5 and REDD+[2] projects under the climate change mitigation focal area, in three biomes: the Amazon, the Congo Basin, and selected drylands around the globe, where comprehensive SFM could preserve these ecosystems and their services to humanity.

Fifty-six countries have participated in the IAPs and impact programs—16 are least developed countries and 40 are middle-income nations (table 1.2). Twenty countries have participated in multiple integrated programs. Fourteen Agencies have participated in the IAPs and impact programs, with the World Bank, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) together implementing nearly 80 percent of integrated programming resources (table 1.3). The complete list of programs and related child projects is in the approach paper in annex C.

GEF-7 programs incorporate three main features. These are the incentive funding for country participation and a dedicated funding envelope for a coordination or platform project to be the knowledge hub for selected countries. The coordination

2021. Impact program project cofinancing only includes CEO-endorsed child projects as of February 3, 2021.

[2] REDD+ refers to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries.

Table 1.1 Basic information on IAPs and impact programs

IAP/impact program	Lead Agency	No. of Agencies in overall program	No. of child projects	No. of countries	Financing (million $)	
					GEF Trust Fund	Cofinancing
IAPs						
Resilient Food Systems	IFAD	7	13	12	116	786
Good Growth Partnership	UNDP	5	5	4	44	263
Sustainable Cities	World Bank	8	12	11	150	2,419
Impact programs						
FOLUR	World Bank	8	28	27	346	2,794
Sustainable Cities	UNEP	4	10	9	160	1,689
Amazon Sustainable Landscapes	World Bank	8	8	7	96	509
Congo Basin Sustainable Landscapes	UNEP	4	7	6	62	387
Drylands Sustainable Landscapes	FAO	4	12	11	104	809

Source: GEF Portal, accessed February 3, 2021.

Note: IFAD = International Fund for Agricultural Development. IAP financial figures are based on child project financing data, including Agency fees. Total impact program funding is from each program's Council-approved program framework document.

Box 1.2 GEF impact program objectives

The **Sustainable Cities Impact Program** aims "to support cities pursuing integrated urban planning and implementation that delivers effective development outcomes with global environmental benefits." This will include support for policy development, innovative financing, and capacity building for sustainable and integrated low-carbon, resilient, conservation and land restoration investments in cities.

The **Food Systems, Land Use, and Restoration Impact Program** is intended to "promote sustainable, integrated landscapes and efficient food value and supply chains at scale." The program will use a system-wide approach that includes interventions with actors in landscapes, policy reform, governance, and vertical food-value and supply-chain commitments and financing.

The **Amazon Sustainable Landscapes Impact Program** is intended to "improve integrated landscape management and conservation of ecosystems in targeted areas in the Amazon region." This program aims to improve management of protected landscapes, while supporting landscape restoration.

The **Congo Basin Sustainable Landscapes Impact Program** is intended to "catalyze transformational change in conservation and sustainable management of the Congo Basin through landscape approaches that empower local communities and forest-dependent people, and through partnerships with the private sector." This program aims to improve forestland management and restore forestlands using improved land management practices.

The **Drylands Sustainable Landscapes Impact Program** is intended to "avoid, reduce, and reverse further degradation, desertification, and deforestation of land and ecosystems in drylands through the sustainable management of production landscapes." This includes activities to benefit biodiversity and protect high-conservation-value forests.

Source: Program framework documents.

Table 1.2 Country participation in IAPs and impact programs

Country	RFS IAP	GGP IAP	Sustainable Cities IAP	FOLUR IP	Sustainable Cities IP	Amazon IP	Congo Basin IP	Drylands IP
Angola[a]								●
Argentina					●			
Bolivia						●		
Botswana								●
Brazil		●	●	●	●	●		
Burkina Faso	●							●
Burundi	●			●				
Cameroon							●	
China			●	●	●			
Central African Republic							●	
Colombia						●		
Congo, Dem. Rep.							●	
Congo, Rep.							●	
Costa Rica					●			
Côte d'Ivoire			●	●				
Ecuador						●		
Equatorial Guinea							●	
Eswatini	●							
Ethiopia	●			●				
Gabon							●	
Ghana	●			●				
Guatemala				●				
Guinea				●				
Guyana						●		
India			●	●	●			
Indonesia		●		●	●			
Kazakhstan				●				●
Kenya	●			●				●
Liberia				●				
Madagascar				●				
Malawi	●							●
Malaysia			●	●				
Mexico				●				
Mongolia								●
Morocco					●			
Mozambique								●
Namibia								●
Nicaragua				●				
Niger	●							
Nigeria	●			●				
Papua New Guinea				●				
Paraguay		●	●	●				
Peru			●	●		●		
Rwanda					●			
Sierra Leone					●			
Senegal	●		●					
South Africa			●					
Suriname						●		
Tanzania	●			●				●
Thailand				●				
Uganda	●			●				
Ukraine				●				
Uzbekistan				●				
Vietnam			●	●				
Zimbabwe								●

Source: GEF Portal, accessed February 3, 2021.

Note: ■ = least developed country; all others are middle-income countries.

a. In February 2021, Angola's effective graduation from least developed country status was postponed for three years (UNGA 2021).

Table 1.3 Agency participation in IAPs and impact programs (million $ of programming)

Agency	RFS IAP	GGP IAP	SC IAP	FOLUR IP	SC IP	Amazon IP	Congo Basin IP	Dry-lands IP	Total funding	% of total
World Bank	14	5	52	113	63	50	30	30	356	33.0
United Nations Development Programme	23	27	8	94	22	6	0	0	179	16.6
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	12	0	0	94	0	8	0	59	173	16.0
United Nations Environment Programme	0	2	29	25	68	0	16	0	140	13.0
International Fund for Agricultural Development	63	0	0	4	0	3	0	0	70	6.5
World Wildlife Fund–US	0	10	0	8	0	9	10	3	41	3.8
United Nations Industrial Development Organization	4	0	21	0	0	6	0	0	31	2.8
Inter-American Development Bank	0	0	22	0	0	0	0	0	22	2.0
Asian Development Bank	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	13	19	1.8
International Union for the Conservation of Nature	0	0	9	0	8	0	0	0	17	1.5
Conservation International	0	0	0	8	0	4	0	0	11	1.0
Development Bank of Latin America	0	0	0	0	0	11	0	0	11	1.0
African Development Bank	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	5	0.4
Development Bank of South Africa	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	4	0.4
Total	116	44	150	346	160	96	62	104	1,078	100.0

Sources: GEF Portal, accessed February 3, 2021; program PFDs.

Note: IP = impact program; SC = sustainable cities. IAP financial figures are based on child project financing data, including Agency fees. Total impact program funding is from each program's Council-approved program framework document. Agency totals may not add up to program totals because of independent rounding.

project aims to extend the reach of the impact program beyond selected countries and ensure that overall delivery of the impact program achieves transformational change central to the GEF-7 strategy. A third feature is a competitive selection process among countries through preparation and evaluation of expressions of interest (EOIs).

1.3 Methodology

The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the GEF integrated approach piloted in GEF-6 with three IAPs and fully rolled out in GEF-7 with a discrete set of impact programs to address the major drivers of environmental degradation. The two core objectives are to (1) evaluate progress in IAPs' implementation and report on intermediary results achieved to date, and (2) evaluate the design of the impact programs and the extent to which lessons from the GEF-6 pilot experience and the "Formative Review of the Integrated Approach Pilot Programs" (GEF IEO 2018c) have been applied in the design of GEF-7 impact programs. This evaluation also assessed how IAPs and impact programs have been affected by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, with a focus on Sustainable Cities IAP projects, as COVID-19 affects urban areas more acutely.[3]

[3] According to the 2020 edition of *The Sustainable Development Goals Report* (UN 2020), more than 90 percent of COVID-19 cases are in urban areas.

The evaluation purpose and objectives translate into key questions about the relevance and coherence of the GEF integrated approach design, the extent to which underlying child projects are consistent with overall program objectives, and the efficiency and effectiveness of the GEF integrated approach implementation (see annex A). Issues explored include: the integrated approach alignment with multilateral environmental agreements; comparative advantage in addressing drivers of environmental degradation; additionality and innovation; internal coherence of objectives, theories of change, and M&E systems; governance; consideration of sustainability factors, gender, resilience, and private sector at design; start-up and early implementation efficiency and how these were affected by the current COVID-19 crisis; IAP child projects results; and program knowledge-sharing through knowledge platforms.

The evaluation applied a mixed-methods approach using qualitative and quantitative data and information gathering and analyses (see annex B). The evaluation team conducted a quality-at-entry analysis on all IAPs' program and child project documents ($n = 31$). This analysis built on a similar analysis conducted for the 2017 IAP formative review, covering a wider range of topics selected based on the new areas this evaluation investigates. The analysis included all 5 GEF-7 impact programs' program framework documents (PFDs) and 43 of 63 impact program child projects that were either Chief Executive Officer (CEO) endorsed or the request for CEO endorsement had been submitted by the cut-off date of February 3, 2021 (see volume 2).[4] A geospatial analysis focused on the relevance of the food systems-related interventions (RFS and GGP IAPs, and FOLUR Impact Program). It offers one source of evidence—to be assessed alongside other sources that can reflect non-geospatial considerations such as socio-economic and legal-political factors—of whether program locations at the national and subnational levels correspond to critical areas of environmental degradation the GEF targets (see volume 2).

The team conducted a portfolio analysis to describe in aggregate form the portfolio under review in terms of Agencies involved, source of funds, focal areas covered, implementation statuses, and main intervention typologies. It also conducted a timeline analysis of the GEF activity cycle applied to GEF program approaches to assess the timeliness and efficiency of the programs and related child projects' design, start-up, and implementation phases, including comparison with the overall GEF portfolio.

The team conducted comprehensive, semistructured interviews to gather insight and perspectives from all relevant stakeholders and key informants involved in these programs and related child projects. These included 151 representatives from the GEF Secretariat, the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP), and GEF Agencies involved in the design and implementation of these programs and child projects, as well as representatives of the external international institutions and think tanks involved in providing services related to knowledge sharing, M&E, and coordination (annex D). The study team conducted pattern analysis to identify the main themes across interview notes, which were coded in Dedoose.[5] The team administered an online survey to 633 country stakeholders to learn their perceptions of the IAPs in general and the child project in which they are participating, with a 42.3 percent response rate (annex E). Statistical analysis was performed to identify

[4] As of February 3, 2021, 9 impact program child projects have been officially endorsed, and 34 have submitted the initial CEO endorsement requests and are under review by the GEF Secretariat.

[5] Dedoose Version 8.0.35, web application for managing, analyzing, and presenting qualitative and mixed-method research data (SocioCultural Research Consultants, LLC, 2018).

statistically significant differences among categories of respondents and geographical regions for select questions.

The team conducted country case studies in Brazil, China, and Kenya (see volume 2). These countries were selected because they had both (ongoing) IAP and (planned) impact program child projects. Other considerations included coverage across geographical regions and different GEF Agencies, maturity of child projects, and logistical and safety concerns related to the COVID situation. A major focus was capturing any early IAP midterm results and assessing the similarities and differences between GEF-6 IAPs and GEF-7 impact program child projects. Country stakeholders reviewed each case study for factual accuracy, including GEF focal points and Agencies, prior to finalization. In Kenya, the team also conducted a virtual closing meeting to review findings the designated representative of the Kenya GEF operational focal point (OFP) presented, joined by all relevant project stakeholders.

1.4 Limitations

This formative evaluation faced two interlinked limitations: the COVID-19 pandemic and related travel restrictions, and the early stages of development of impact program child projects and IAP child projects. The latter limitation is compounded by the former. Owing to extraordinary events or circumstances beyond the control of the parties (the COVID-19 pandemic fits this definition), the GEF CEO decided to extend by six months the deadlines for CEO endorsements and approvals for all projects approved to date. This decision continues to affect development and submission of impact program child projects for CEO endorsement.

Given the travel restrictions and safety concerns arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, in-country fieldwork was only conducted in the Kenya case study by a local consultant who traveled according to national guidelines and regulations and visited one project site. As no other field visits could be conducted, in-country data were collected remotely by phone, through online surveys, or other appropriate means by local consultants in the three countries, who could use their knowledge of the national context and their own networks of stakeholder contacts. The team also used evaluative evidence and other national data and information to the extent possible to supplement primary data collection.

Findings

This chapter summarizes the main findings of the evaluation. They are organized under four main sections: design of the GEF integrated approach, processes and institutional arrangements, progress toward results (including knowledge platforms), and cross-cutting issues in design and implementation, building on the findings of the 2018 formative review.

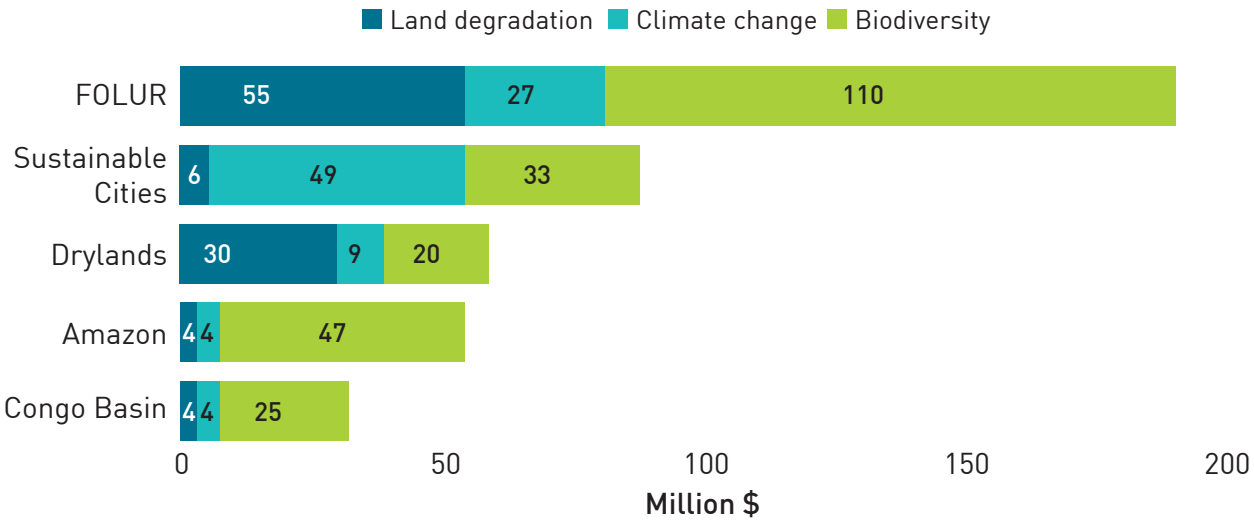
2.1 Design of the GEF integrated approach

This section addresses GEF-7 impact program design. It considers the extent to which the GEF integrated approach is responsive to convention guidance and aligns with country priorities and other donor programs. It also addresses the comparative advantage of the GEF in integrated programming, and the extent to which GEF-7 impact programs are relevant in design to the drivers of environmental degradation. It further considers the internal coherence of the impact programs, in terms of objectives, theories of change, and M&E systems—drawing on lessons learned from the IAPs in these areas. Finally, this section assesses key elements of the design of impact program child projects, including additionality, innovation, and sustainability.

ALIGNMENT WITH CONVENTIONS

In GEF-7, integrated programming continues to address the objectives of multiple conventions and GEF focal area strategies. As shown in figure 2.1, for each of the impact programs, System for Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR) funding has been allocated from the three focal areas of the CBD, UNFCCC, and UNCCD. The GEF's ability to address multiple conventions (and focal areas) through a single integrated project or program is a significant comparative advantage. Convention secretariat interviewees and others think GEF-7 impact programs align with the objectives and guidance of the CBD, UNFCCC, and UNCCD. The Sustainable Cities Impact Program aims to generate multiple global environmental benefits from decarbonization, improved biodiversity conservation, and reduced land degradation by promoting innovative business models for integrated solutions and investments in cities. This is supplemented by strengthening cities' knowledge exchange and learning about integrated urban sustainability planning and investments. The FOLUR Impact Program expects to promote sustainable food systems, deforestation-free commodity supply chains, and landscape-scale restoration for production and ecosystem services, generating global

Figure 2.1 Impact program funding by convention



Source: Program PFDs.

environmental benefits for land degradation, biodiversity, and climate change. The Drylands, Amazon, and Congo Basin impact programs target improved landscape management in their biomes with benefits for land degradation and deforestation, biodiversity, and climate change.

The impact program child projects also show good alignment with convention objectives. Ninety-four percent of country-level survey respondents agreed that the UN conventions' major objectives are well considered in the design of the child projects; 93 percent agreed that the child projects will help the country address the convention at local, national, and regional levels. All GEF-7 impact program child project documents identify the convention objectives they aim to address, including frequent mention of contributions to Aichi and land degradation neutrality (LDN) targets, as well as contributions to UNFCCC Paris Agreement nationally determined contribution commitments.

Interviewees at the CBD stated that an integrated approach addresses the needs and priorities of the convention, including by addressing direct and indirect root causes of biodiversity loss. The post-2020 global biodiversity framework under preparation is expected to take an integrated view—one that is coherent and reinforces synergies with the two Rio conventions, as well as other multilateral environmental agreements (CBD 2019). The UNCCD remains a strong advocate for the GEF integrated approach, as the 2018 formative review found, that land is central to environmental issues. In GEF-7, the Drylands Impact Program is strongly aligned with helping countries achieve LDN targets and commitments under the UNCCD. UNCCD Secretariat interviewees said land degradation objectives are not sufficiently integrated into the Sustainable Cities Impact Program, but noted progress from the Sustainable Cities IAP. At the UNFCCC, interviewees pointed to somewhat more tempered language in Conference of the Parties (COP) decisions on integrated approaches. The use of NBS in the Sustainable Cities Impact Program has gained momentum in the broader climate finance community.

In addition to climate change, biodiversity, and land degradation, impact programs are expected to have secondary benefits for other GEF focal areas. The Amazon Impact Program, for example, aims to address the major problem of degradation

and overexploitation of the Amazon freshwater system, in addition to the forest system. The 2018 review found the lack of focus on freshwater systems in the predecessor program to be a gap and this is now included in the impact program. The Congo Basin Impact Program expects its work on conservation and sustainable management of forests and peatlands through integrated land use planning to reduce sedimentation flowing to the Congo River. Both the Amazon and Congo Basin impact programs anticipate benefits for wetlands of global importance (Ramsar sites). Conversely, interest and intentions to integrate the objectives of the Stockholm Convention in the impact program have not materialized. GEF-7 Programming Directions signaled that impact programs would address the Stockholm Convention the objectives in the Sustainable Cities and FOLUR impact programs, and convention guidance and interviews indicate an interest in integrated approaches (GEF 2018a). PFDs do not deal with these objectives explicitly, although the PFD for the Sustainable Cities Impact Program refers to management of urban wastes, which are a major source of persistent organic pollutants. Of the 43 impact program child projects submitted for or receiving CEO endorsement to date, only 1 sets a target for a core indicator for chemicals and waste.

Interviews and country survey data confirm that implementation of the GEF integrated approach has not hindered countries' ability to report to the UN conventions. A low share of country-level survey respondents (20 percent) identified a main challenge faced in implementing the GEF-6 IAPs was difficulties in communicating "to different UN conventions on results achieved through an integrated approach." In fact, for the CBD, the Secretariat has noticed improved reporting on agricultural effects since the launch of the IAPs. Moving into GEF-7, the Drylands Impact Program is an example of a GEF program tracking progress using indicators that will be usable for the impact program as well as the convention; the Drylands Impact Program is using the UNCCD's LDN approach to measure national progress against child project targets. UNFCCC Secretariat interviewees raised questions about potential complications in tracking climate finance since the set-aside incentive funding is not focal-area-specific—although this is a minor issue as set-aside funding is a very small proportion of overall climate finance flows.[1]

Convention interviewees issued a call for attention as to whether the increased focus on the integrated programming approach will compromise delivery against countries' commitments to the conventions. Interviews with convention secretariats raised concerns about the implications if the integrated approach results in decreased funding for individual focal areas, acknowledging at the same time the potential of the impact program to contribute to those commitments.

ALIGNMENT WITH COUNTRY PRIORITIES AND PROGRAMS AND OTHER DONOR PROGRAMS

GEF-7 impact program child projects are aligned with national environmental priorities, programs, and initiatives including those of other donors in the environment sector. More than 90 percent of country-level survey respondents agreed that child projects align with national priorities and other donor initiatives. The quality-at-entry analysis also showed that all 43 impact program child projects are aligned with national governments' environmental priorities.

[1] Global climate finance flows totaled $681 billion in 2016, according to the 2018 Biennial Assessment and Overview of Climate Finance Flows by the UNFCCC Standing Committee on Finance (UNFCCC 2018). The GEF-7 replenishment allocated $334 million set-asides for integrated programming.

Interviews and the three in-depth country case studies confirmed alignment with country priorities (box 2.1). In Brazil, for example, the Amazon Impact Program child project builds on a long history of GEF engagement. The project is an extension of the Amazon Sustainable Landscapes Project–ASL I (GEF Project ID 9664, World Bank), approved in 2017, and incorporates the Amazon Region Protected Areas Program (ARPA; GEF Project ID 771, World Bank), which started in 2000. The FOLUR Impact Program proposed child project in Brazil aligns with national policies and other donor programs in the Cerrado, especially the national investment plan developed in collaboration with the World Bank and Forest Investment Program (impact program)—a funding window of the Climate Investment Funds. The GGP Demand Project in Brazil has practiced effective adaptive management to ensure its activities complement other donor-funded initiatives, such as the Collaboration for Forests and Agriculture,[2] with good results (see Brazil country case study in volume 2).

The overall alignment of the Sustainable Cities Impact Program with country priorities and donor initiatives is strong, as all countries have articulated policies to address urban sustainability, as well as ones to mitigate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The program has enabled countries to develop projects that combine local and global environmental benefits, making GEF grants potential catalysts for change. Because donor Agencies—both multilateral development banks and UN agencies—have been supporting the urban environmental agenda as well as strategies for GHG abatement, Sustainable Cities child projects have found synergies with infrastructure loans, such as World Bank loans for transit-oriented development (TOD) in Chinese cities.

[2] A joint effort of the National Wildlife Federation, the Nature Conservancy, World Wildlife Fund, and the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation.

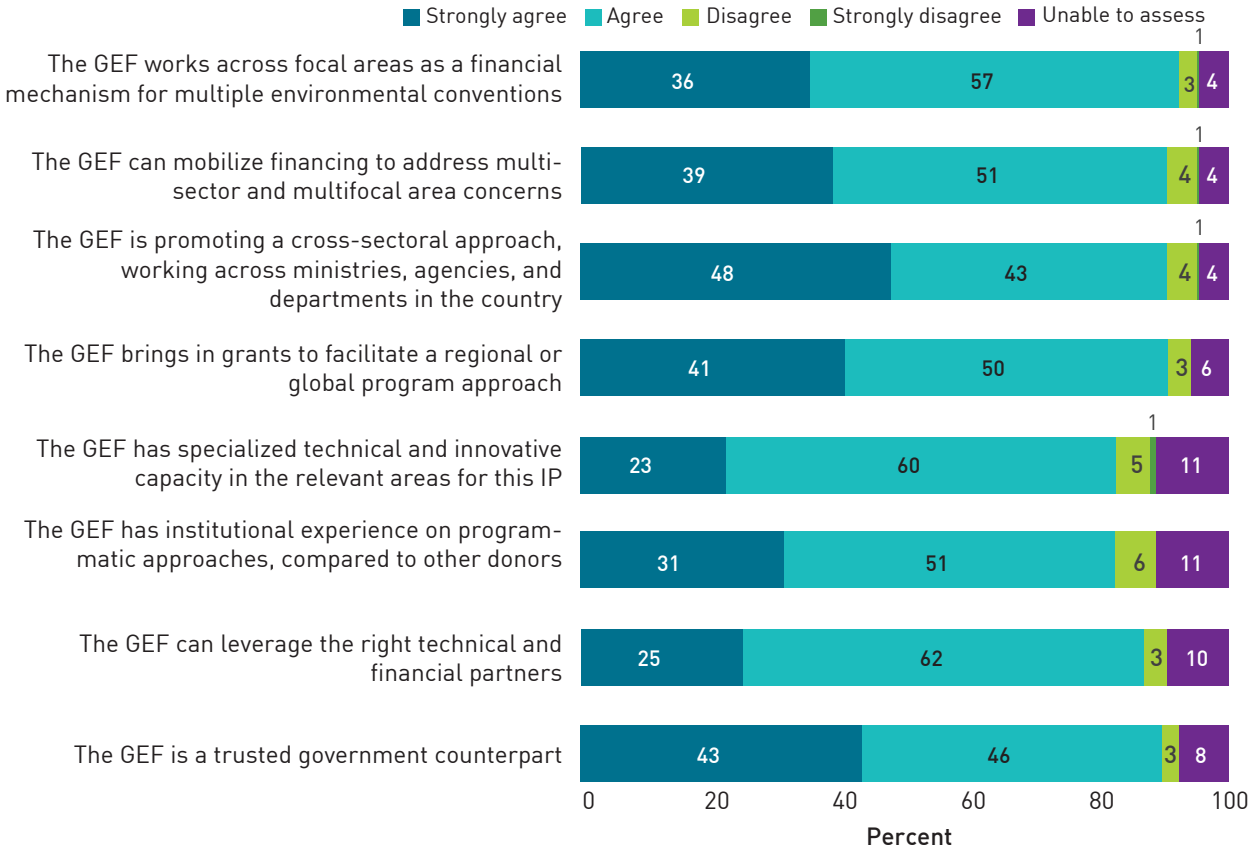
Box 2.1 Alignment of impact programs with priorities in China

Central government directives to provincial authorities, and down to municipal authorities, reflect a long-term vision of low-carbon city development, community livability, biodiversity conservation, and development of financial and business models to generate green urban infrastructure. This aligns with convention guidance and the GEF Sustainable Cities programs. These principles are in China's five-year plans (the main framework for investment decisions) and long-term vision to 2060.

In the words of a city stakeholder: "The GEF-7 programs fit well with international green development trends, China's 14th Five-Year Plan, 15th Five-Year Plan, and even China's plans for the next 30 years. China has placed a very high priority on ecological green development and has also put forward a vision for the year 2060. So, the GEF-7's emphasis on high-quality development and low-carbon development is perfectly in line with China's national development strategy. From the city side, Chengdu's development must first serve China's development. President Xi Jinping also clearly proposed that Chengdu should build a park city. A park city is not just about building parks, but also about the spatial layout, industrial layout and lifestyle of the city. To build a park city we have to achieve high quality development and low carbon development. I think GEF-7 also fits very well with Chengdu's development plan."

China also has an ambitious vision for an ecological civilization, in accordance with the concept of coordinated development of production, ecology, and life. This is documented in its 13th Five-Year Plan (2016–2020) and National Plan for Sustainable Development of Agriculture (2015–2030). According to Chinese interview partners, the FOLUR child project (GEF ID 10246, FAO and World Bank) is aligned with the ecological transformation of farmland and restoration of agricultural soil quality that Chinese policy advocates.

Figure 2.2 GEF comparative advantages in integrated programming from country survey



Source: Country-level survey data.

COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE

Integrated programs are a strategic innovation of the GEF that draws on the GEF's institutional comparative advantages. Country-level survey respondents (90 percent, see figure 2.2), central-level interviewees (e.g., Agencies, STAP, GEF Secretariat), and program documentation point to the GEF's ability to address multiple conventions through a single project or program as a primary comparative advantage compared to other multilateral and bilateral donors active in the environmental sector. The GEF's integrated approach is helping countries think beyond sectoral silos and center on plans to work across ministries, Agencies, and departments through multistakeholder platforms in all programs. Sustainable Cities has demonstrated this in its integrated planning efforts. The COVID-19 global pandemic has shown the interconnectedness of economic, social, and environmental systems, underlining the importance of systemic approaches such as the GEF integrated approach.

Another commonly identified comparative advantage of the GEF impact programs is their convening power with governments and their conduciveness to building partnerships and securing broad sources of technical expertise. Country-level survey respondents (89 percent) agreed that the GEF is a trusted government counterpart that can leverage the right technical and financial partners (87 percent) and that has specialized technical and innovative capacity in areas relevant to the impact programs (83 percent). In the Amazon,

for example, interviewees said the GEF's long-standing engagement brings a convening power, and that the architecture of GEF partnerships (bringing together multiple Agencies) and relationship with the conventions puts the GEF in a unique position to incentivize collaboration on such an important biome. Agency interviewees said the GEF integrated approach is helping encourage governments to incorporate elements into investments that they would not otherwise, such as NBS in urban settings. In the Brazil country case study, for example, interviewees said institutional support from the GEF is a key comparative advantage that opens doors with governments and large private sector organizations. Agency interviewees pointed to the technical expertise of the STAP and GEF Secretariat staff as highly useful in designing the GEF-7 impact programs. As the approach evolves from its pilot phase to fully rolled out impact programs, country-level survey respondents find the GEF brings stronger institutional experience in programmatic approaches compared to other donors (82 percent agree).

RELEVANCE OF COUNTRIES AND DRIVERS

The GEF-7 impact programs ensured that relevant countries are selected to address drivers of environmental degradation. The GEF Secretariat appropriately identified priority regions and landscapes for the impact programs where addressing drivers of environmental degradation show strong potential for generating global environmental benefits. For example, FOLUR's design targeted the major drivers of degradation related to commodity and food production, which are largely seen in the tropical forests and peatlands of Southeast Asia, Africa, and Latin America. This was supported by a GEF Secretariat spatial analysis to inform internal prioritization (since all countries were eligible for the program).[3] FOLUR's design addresses the critical need to "planet-proof" the global food system, as discussed in the academic literature (Rockstrom et al. 2020). The Drylands Impact Program's design focused on the Miombo, Mopane, and Fynbos woodlands in Africa; the savanna tropical grasslands and open woodlands of Africa; the Gran Chaco ecoregion of South America; the Dry Central Andes grassland and shrublands; Cerrado, Caatinga, and Mato Grosso seasonal forests in South America; and the Central Asian rangelands and steppe forests.[4] Some countries and geographies have not yet benefited from the GEF's integrated approach—such as small island developing states (SIDS),[5] where a history of regional cooperation and whole-of-island approaches seem well aligned with the GEF integrated approach.

The competitive EOI process rolled out in GEF-7 was inclusive and used a criteria-based approach to select countries. The GEF Secretariat notified all GEF OFPs by email of the timeline for programming impact programs in November 2018, followed by a call for submission of EOIs by January 2019. Eligibility for the regional Amazon and Congo Basin impact programs was based on geographic bounds. Both programs successfully attracted nearly all countries within their geographic bounds (the six major countries in the Congo Basin and seven of

[3] This analysis ranked countries based on areas under production of various commodities and staples, weighted those scores by emission reduction commitments, and compared those weighted scores to deforestation rates and biodiversity hotspots.

[4] The intended geographical scope of the Drylands Impact Program could not be fully met due to the level of funding available for the program, and eventually child projects in only three of the five prioritized geographies were funded. Seven of the 11 Drylands country child projects are concentrated in the Miombo/Mopane ecoregion in Southern Africa.

[5] With the exception of Papua New Guinea in the FOLUR Impact Program.

the eight countries in the Amazon,[6] covering 92 percent of the basin) in the first round of calls for EOIs.

All countries could apply for the Sustainable Cities, FOLUR, and Drylands impact programs. For the latter two, the GEF established criteria for the suitability of landscapes to ensure that selected countries could contribute to intended program outcomes. For instance, for the FOLUR Impact Program, the GEF Secretariat and World Bank managed the EOI process to ensure the program covered a substantial market share for each targeted commodity. Interviewees explained that this pointed to the need for the portfolio of selected countries to include larger players in the commodity chains with substantial experience, as well as frontier landscapes with anticipated future increases in production. In the first round, FOLUR received 48 EOIs, of which the selection committee accepted 18.[7] Interviewees said most proposals lacked the connection between a landscape approach and international commodity chains. Many countries were rejected because they had relatively small markets and little experience. At the end of the first round, FOLUR was missing certain commodities, such as soy, and larger players. These gaps were not specifically articulated in subsequent calls for EOIs, but the five countries selected by the committee in the second round included larger players covering soy (such as Brazil and Paraguay) as well as India for rice. A further 4 countries were selected in the third round, and 1 in the final round—for a total of 27 countries.

In this evaluation we assessed relevance through various criteria, including geospatial analysis combined with other factors such as countries' interest, readiness, and commitment to participate in an integrated approach; pre-existing priorities for use of their STAR funds; ability to link up with an interested and technically qualified Agency; and ability to prepare a high-quality project concept and proposal, and influence selection of country sites. Our results show that these considerations were well managed in country selection. The geospatial analysis is presented in volume 2.

Several of the countries with the highest spatial relevance have child projects in the GEF's three food-systems integrated programs but there are some gaps. Countries such as Brazil, China, Colombia, India, and Mexico had the highest deforestation, forest biomass, and presence of commodities leading to very high spatial relevance, especially in the GGP IAP and FOLUR impact programs. Some smaller countries with child projects, such as Guatemala and Nicaragua, also had high spatial relevance owing to a high concentration of environmental drivers or high food insecurity and climate vulnerability. Four countries in the FOLUR Impact Program have very low spatial relevance such as Burundi, Kazakhstan, Peru, and Uganda (representing 7 percent of the total program value); other countries with high spatial relevance do not have child projects. This was especially true for the RFS IAP, where countries such as Chad and the Democratic Republic of Congo had no child projects. A concentration in Sub-Saharan Africa meant other high spatial-relevance countries such as Haiti and Bangladesh were not considered for child projects (box 2.2 provides details).

Geospatial analysis results at the subnational level further confirm that the project areas focus on key drivers of environmental degradation. The GEF Secretariat identified criteria for selecting relevant landscapes, which were assessed as part of the EOI with other considerations, such as the potential for applying a comprehensive land-use approach linking production, biodiversity conservation, and restoration at scale (FOLUR). In Brazil, for example, the FOLUR Impact Program (GEF ID 10468)

[6] Only Venezuela did not participate. The overseas territory of French Guiana lies in the Amazon Basin but is ineligible for GEF resources.

[7] Ten met the criteria and eight were satisfactory with critical issues still to be addressed.

Box 2.2 Findings from the global geospatial analysis on food systems integrated programs

FOLUR Impact Program. With more countries than the RFS or GGP, FOLUR has many child project countries with high spatial relevance and several with low spatial relevance. Many of the large countries with child projects have high total spatial relevance owing to their large number of environmental drivers. These include Brazil, China, Colombia, India, Indonesia, Mexico, and Colombia, all in the top 10 for total spatial relevance. Guatemala, Malaysia, Nicaragua, and Paraguay, all with child projects, are in the top five in the normalized spatial relevance index. Three countries with child projects have very low spatial relevance for both indices—Kenya, Papua New Guinea, and Uzbekistan. They have a mix of relatively small amounts of forest and therefore relatively smaller areas of deforestation, including areas suitable for reforestation (Uzbekistan and to a lesser extent Kenya), and relatively small areas of commodity production (Papua New Guinea), although the spatial data did not enable analysis of potential frontier landscapes where commodity production is growing with risks to future deforestation, as in Papua New Guinea. Four other countries—Burundi, Kazakhstan, Peru, and Uganda—have low spatial relevance in one of the indices (total or normalized) and very low in the other

RFS IAP. The global analysis reinforces the program's decision to work in Sub-Saharan Africa, with 5 of the top 10 countries in total spatial relevance and 7 of the top 10 in normalized spatial relevance in the region. Burundi and Malawi are the countries with child projects that have the highest spatial relevance. However, some countries with the highest spatial relevance in Sub-Saharan Africa do not have child projects, including Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, and Zimbabwe. Ghana and Senegal have low spatial relevance but have child projects.

GGP IAP. While the GGP IAP's child projects are organized by components of the supply chain, projects have substantial activities in certain countries. The program has child project activities in two of the largest countries with highest total spatial relevance in the world—Brazil and Indonesia, which have high numbers of key environmental drivers and significant area of commodity production. The other two countries with child project activities, Liberia and Paraguay, have high normalized spatial relevance despite being small because of their high rates of deforestation and soy farming (Paraguay) and biodiversity hotspot area (Liberia). Large countries with high spatial relevance but no child project activities include China, India, and Russia. Cambodia, El Salvador, and Malaysia are smaller countries with high normalized spatial relevance but no child project activities.

plans to work in the southern part of the Cerrado ecosystem, where a mix of biodiversity hotspots and sites of high deforestation, potential reforestation, and significant commodity production lead to high spatial relevance. In Brazil, Bahía state, primary location of the GGP child project (GEF ID 9167, UNDP) has very high total spatial relevance owing to a large area of smallholder agriculture mixed with considerable deforestation, some soy production, and biodiversity hotspot areas. Interviewees and other documentation point to the GGP focus on soy in the Maranhão, Tocantins, Piauí, and Bahía (MATOPIBA) region of the Cerrado as highly relevant. This region has been considered Brazil's new agricultural frontier in the last decade, with a rapid expansion of soy and cattle production that threatens the remaining native vegetation. This expansion is partly associated with the low enforcement of legal protections in the Cerrado. There is also evidence that initiatives such as the soy moratorium have displaced soy plantations from the Amazon into the MATOPIBA (Dou et al. 2018). In the Kenya subnational study, the two western counties near Mt. Elgon where the FOLUR Impact Program child project (GEF ID 10598) plans to work have generally moderate spatial relevance owing to high

amounts of maize production but low deforestation and area of potential reforestation.[8]

PROGRAM INTERNAL COHERENCE IN DESIGN

To observe program-level effects, child projects must be consistent or coherent within and across the program. This includes prioritized objectives, project components and activities, and coverage of similar focal areas and landscapes. Coherence also helps in learning, testing, and scaling up innovative approaches. Coherence relies on the lead Agency's coordinating function, the cooperation and alignment of other Agencies, and the effectiveness of the coordination project.

Based on the quality-at-entry review, interviews, and STAP feedback, GEF-7 impact program design has improved over that of GEF-6 IAPs, with consistency between child projects and the overall program. Program-level theories of change have been more clearly articulated in the GEF-7 impact programs, with long-term goals, direct and intermediate outcomes, and barriers to scaling and transformational change generally well described. GEF-7 impact programs show more evidence of systems thinking. They analyze drivers and root causes of environmental degradation. GEF-7 child projects are broadly coherent with program-level design, as evidenced by the survey, quality-at-entry analysis, and interviews. Ninety-two percent of country-level survey respondents agreed there was coherence between child projects and the impact program in design, objectives, and results. The quality-at-entry analysis shows that all 43 of the impact program child projects described how they contribute to overall program impact, referring to program-level objectives, components, and expected outcomes.

Impact pathways in the aggregate PFD theories of change are not yet sufficiently specific to guide coherence and contextual alignment in child projects. Interviews and document analysis suggest that more work is required to "unpack'" the impact program theories of change and their assumptions to better operationalize them at disaggregated levels (e.g., country, commodity). For instance, the STAP and interviewees do not see sufficient attention paid in theories of change to the nuances of change pathways specific to each commodity and food-staple value chain (FOLUR Impact Program), to specific impact pathways, enablers of transformation, and ways to scale up (Drylands Impact Program), or to better linking interventions to root causes, threats, and forest conditions and governance (Congo Basin Impact Program). These challenges can affect the relevance, alignment, and coherence of child project interventions.

Structuring and aligning child projects around impact program PFD objectives and main components is necessary, but not always sufficient, for coherence and alignment of child project interests. As most impact program thematic priorities and components (and commodities in the case of FOLUR) are broadly defined, the array of possible interventions that fit the PFD theory of change is quite large. To address child project alignment with PFD objectives and components in the Drylands Impact Program, for example, the lead Agency provided guidance on design aspects that went beyond broader coherence with PFD components, such as on common strategies for coordinating public and private investment to support ecosystem services. The RFS program already learned the lesson that child projects are more interested in cooperating and interacting when they cover similar thematic areas and activities. For this reason, the RFS hub project mapped specific intervention areas for its child projects to determine overlapping interests and the potential demand for knowledge and other support services.

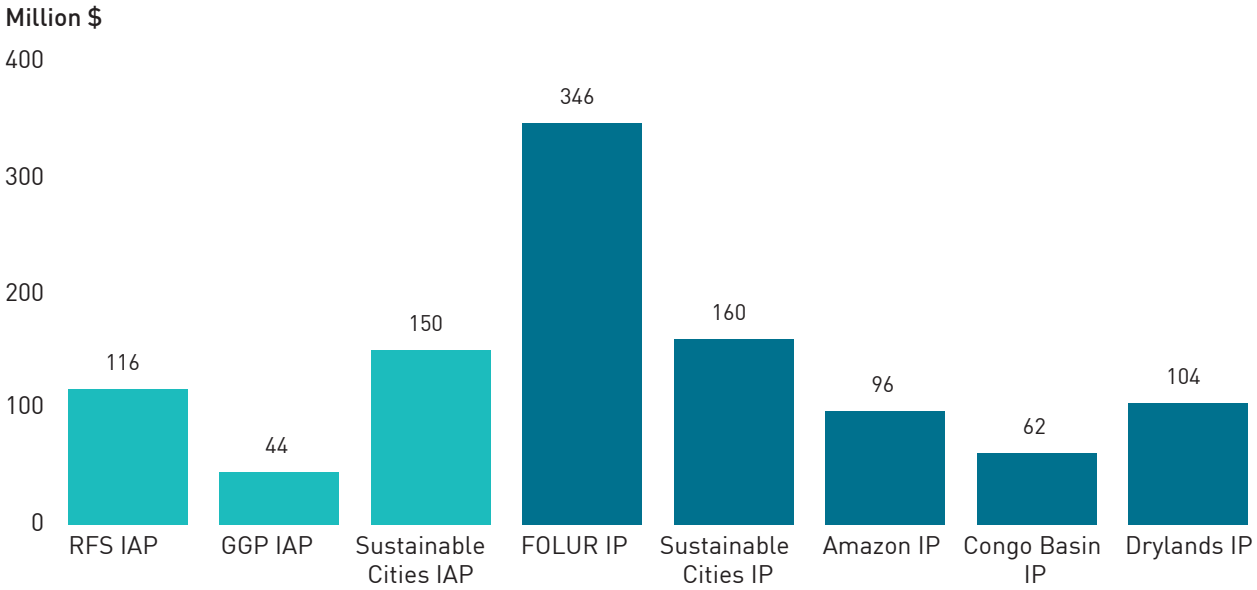
[8] This contrasts with the northern areas of Kenya, where the project does not work, which have the highest food insecurity and climate change vulnerability but almost no smallholder agriculture.

Program theories of change should be comprehensive and enable program focus. Numerous interviewees across all impact programs point to attempts made to find balance in program design between (1) broad, holistic systemic thinking and (2) applying selectivity in program design to ensure focus. For example, one interviewee noted, "...we have to maintain a focus on certain key issues. Pushing the agenda on land use planning and indigenous peoples—that's the simplification of the Congo theory of change. [We] don't want to get pulled in too many directions. Focusing on a small number of drivers was really key for the Congo." Another interviewee described the Congo Basin Impact Program as "a relatively compact program with a common purpose, rather than trying to find the common purpose in a larger global program."

As shown in figure 2.3, FOLUR is the largest program the GEF funds, followed by the Sustainable Cities Impact Program, with less than half the overall funding volume and a third the number of child projects. Transformational change requires ambition, and the FOLUR Impact Program is ambitious. While this is laudable, interviewees raised concerns about the breadth and multidimensionality of issues FOLUR must handle (working across 8 Agencies in 27 countries with 8 commodities and food crops, all of with implications for maintaining program internal coherence, coordination, and focus through child project implementation). The FOLUR and Global Platform PFDs make general references to lessons learned in the GGP, but do not refer to the operational challenges that the GGP experiences in integrating supply, demand, and other activities in commodity chains at subnational, national, and global scales (box 2.3; GEF 2019e; World Bank 2020).

Regional clustering of child projects can strengthen program internal coherence and common interests. Many of the GEF impact programs have learned this lesson. The FOLUR Impact Program design points to regional clusters. Regional clusters are a natural consequence of the

Figure 2.3 IAPs and impact programs by program size



Source: GEF Portal, accessed February 3, 2021.

Note: IAP program funding is based on GEF funding for CEO-endorsed child projects, including Agency fee. Impact program (IP) funding is based on amounts identified in the project identification form (PIF) stage, including Agency fees.

Box 2.3 Implementing a systems-based approach: experience from GGP

The GGP has been very systems focused from its inception as it did not include STAR resources and was driven by its theory of change, built around commodity supply chains. The GGP is comprehensive in covering the supply, demand, finance transactions, and knowledge aspects of these chains. But the program has found it difficult to work in an integrated way across the various child projects and agencies toward systems change, despite good personal relationships among task team leaders. This was partly because of different institutional program relevance, timetables, metrics, organizational structures, and processes in these Agencies. Another reason was the underestimation of cost, time, and sequencing requirements to interact with the program's many partners and with countries where implementation and political support for conservation were often changing and not always as forthcoming as expected.

Following its child projects' midterm reviews (MTRs), the program has been holding systems workshops to reexamine its theory of change, drivers, and activities. At the beginning of its fourth year of implementation, the GGP is starting to show some evidence of integration driving results—demonstrating the longer timetable for delivering on the objectives of coherent design.

geographically bounded design in the Amazon and Congo. The Drylands Impact Program initially intended to work in four clusters. These were reduced owing to funding that led to regional imbalances, with the bulk of support going to southern Africa (Miombo, Mopane).

Program internal coherence is affected by the tendency of child projects to look first at national priorities; this is a familiar tension in program approaches. The country case studies showed evidence of child projects that had been well designed for country context. The challenge, according to interviewees involved in child project design, is that some projects were not sufficiently linked with global or regional projects (including FOLUR designs in some first-round countries). Countries do not automatically feel they are part of a larger program. Lead Agencies and child project Agencies play a key role at the design stage in reconciling child project priorities and program priorities. For some programs, such as FOLUR, this happened by sharing guidance material and templates, which helped with alignment of CEO endorsement documents. FOLUR also relied on a docking concept where much of the responsibility for dealing with the child projects was delegated to the Agencies. Others assembled country child-project representatives to design workshops to discuss common approaches (Drylands Impact Program). Some impact program lead Agencies worked closely with child-project country teams for projects implemented by Agencies new to GEF, which helped with coherence (Amazon Impact Program).

PROGRAM INTERNAL COHERENCE IN MONITORING AND EVALUATION SYSTEMS

Overall, the internal coherence of the design of program monitoring and evaluation systems has improved in GEF-7 impact programs, with evidence of lessons learned from the IAPs. Lingering challenges related to program-level M&E have not yet been codified in GEF practices, including those related to the approaches for determining global environmental benefits from global/regional coordination projects and for aggregating results across the programs. The evolution in program M&E systems from IAPs to impact programs is explained below, with a discussion of lessons learned from GEF-6 IAPs followed by a discussion of M&E systems design in GEF-7 impact programs.

GEF-6 IAPs

One important lesson learned is that common results frameworks across program and child projects—derived from the program theory of change—are critical for program reporting. These were not well developed for all IAPs. Among GEF-6 IAPs, only the RFS developed a detailed program-wide results framework. It includes program output or outcome indicators to be accomplished by the country child projects and a separate results framework for the hub project. Developing a program results framework and tracking RFS's overall impact was a complex undertaking that required considerable time and interactive work with child projects (box 2.4). The need to transition to GEF-7 core indicators midway through development was a complicating factor. The RFS IAP took until 2020 to complete the results framework. The GGP global coordination project has not fully operationalized a program-level results framework, although efforts are under way. No common results framework has yet been finalized for the Sustainable Cities IAP, and this is work in progress. Interviews indicated that the aggregation of higher-level results (including global environmental benefits) for the program has thus been extremely challenging. The Sustainable Cities IAP provides separate outcomes for the World Bank-led Global Platform for Sustainable Cities (GPSC), for the World Resources Institute (WRI)-led

Box 2.4 Developing a program-level results framework for the RFS IAP

The RFS developed its program results framework (2019–2020) in a participatory way. It includes synchronized and updated new indicators (including the latest GEF-7 indicators), updated targets, M&E tools, and data aggregation methods. Ten of 12 country child projects follow this framework. Led by the RFS hub project coordination unit, this involved the following:

- Constitution of an M&E technical advisory group for overall technical and scientific guidance
- Production of background studies and reports, including an overview of ICRAF-led approaches taken by the 12 child projects to monitor food security resilience, and Conservation International–led monitoring of ecosystem services, socioeconomic benefits, and resilience of food security
- Development of monitoring tools (Conservation International Resilience Atlas) and promotion of existing tools (SHARP, FIES, Diversity Assessment Tool for Agrobiodiversity and Resilience, LDSF, MPAT, EO4SD), including through tool bazaars and country clinics during annual workshops
- Informing country teams of the outcome mapping methodology and its possibilities
- Extensive interviews and bilateral engagements with all country projects and partners to assess capacity needs, discrepancies in targets and baselines, and monitoring challenges
- Organization of a dedicated M&E workshop, bringing together program experts and representatives from all child projects to discuss how to overcome hurdles to harmonize indicators, targets, and tools at country and regional levels
- Development of an online platform, building on results-based management principles to facilitate monitoring, access to information, and visualization of data and results at project and program levels
- Support to country teams to revise their project results frameworks, ensuring they have regional-level assessments of clear linkages and contributions to global environmental benefits and other targets
- Preparation and validation of a new program-level results framework and M&E plan adopting a coherent approach to tracking RFS outcomes and effects on the African continent.

resource team in the GPSC, and country child projects.

In the GEF-6 pilot phase, lead Agencies were not required to submit IAP annual program-level reports. Still, the RFS and GGP IAPs reported aggregated outputs and outcomes annually, primarily through annual highlights reports based on combining project implementation reviews (PIRs) for child and coordination projects.[9] These latest RFS and GGP reports included aggregated reporting on a few global environmental benefits, including hectares of land restored (RFS GEB 3), hectares of high conservation-value land protected (GGP GEB 4) GHG emissions mitigated (GGP GEB 6), and number of direct beneficiaries (RFS GEB 11) as further illustrated in the section on progress toward results in this report. The Sustainable Cities IAP only produced an annual report in 2018. It has not yet reported on global environmental benefits.[10] Annual reports were not part of the original program design or lead Agency terms of reference. Reports have highlighted program and child project achievements, lessons learned, and some aggregated results. By aggregating some child project results in annual reports, the RFS and GGP IAPs linked IAP program and project reporting. There is room for better and more systematic program results reporting for all child projects and the coordination project (including against targets to assess and analyze the effects and interrelations of program and child-project intermediate outcomes for global environmental benefits, and to review synergistic interactions between coordination and country child projects.

A related challenge in aggregating program results is the prevalence of different ways of interpreting and measuring key indicators in and across programs. The 2018 formative review (GEF IEO 2018b) identified this issue. It remains a challenge in IAP implementation. This complicates a meaningful aggregation of outcomes and reporting across child projects at the program level. The GGP, for instance, added up independent indicators from its child projects but the indicators, particularly those on impact from institutional, policy, and behavioral changes, were not measuring the same thing. RFS child projects interpreted and reported global environmental benefit indicators very differently, particularly land-based global environmental benefits. Achievements range from relatively small pilot plots covered intensively by child projects (Eswatini, Malawi, Senegal, and Uganda) to larger landscape tracts where intensity and attribution of change to GEF interventions were less obvious or not well demonstrated (Ethiopia, Kenya, and Niger). In Kenya, for instance, it was not clear how many farmers adopted the whole package of sustainable land management technologies promoted and on what acreage. Efforts to standardize approaches to indicators, such as that undertaken by RFS for measuring resilience, have been time intensive. All GEF-6 projects, including child projects of programs, now have to report on the GEF-7 indicators.

The IEO's 2018 formative review reported on issues in calculating GHG emission reductions that persisted in implementation. While coordination projects (such as the RFS) have increasingly supported and trained child projects in this task, few midterm reviews (MTRs) have reliably reported GHG reductions, although it may be too early. Few Sustainable Cities IAP child projects are making clear attempts in their results frameworks to track or present a methodology for a reliable measurement of this indicator. Guidelines now accompany

[9] All IAPs did some program-level reporting for the GEF Secretariat's useful lessons learned exercise in 2020. Lessons had nine common themes, such as program value-add, dealing with complexity, progress on systemic shifts, cross-cutting issues, knowledge management, and learning. The "GEF Monitoring Report of 2020" summarized progress and results in a "deep-dive" into IAPs, based on a Secretariat review of child project PIRs and communication with lead Agencies and hub projects.

[10] Interviews indicate a subsequent annual report is being completed.

the GEF-7 core indicators, including guidelines for GHG emission calculations.

GEF-7 impact programs

The design of M&E systems improved in GEF-7 impact programs, with evidence of IAP lessons learned and applied. All impact program child projects identify contributions to global environmental benefits core indicators and project-level M&E plans and budgets, based on the quality-at-entry analysis. Each child project has described how it contributes to overall program impact, referring to program-level objectives, components, or expected outcomes.[11] Fifteen of the 38 (39 percent) reviewed non-coordination impact-program child projects present specific (not global environmental benefits) indicators that contribute directly to global impact programs. Baseline data are in the results framework for the CEO-endorsed child projects. More than 80 percent of country-level survey respondents said they received good common indicators developed on time to inform GEF-7 child project design.

Clarification of responsibilities for program-level M&E supported this evolution in 2019 GEF M&E policies (GEF IEO 2019; GEF 2019a) and in the terms of reference for impact program lead Agencies. They stated that global and regional coordination projects are responsible for two aspects of program reporting: (1) as child projects, they must report on their own results framework, including global environmental benefits; and (2) they must report on program-level activities and achievements beyond those of individual child projects, including progress toward program-level outcomes. The GEF monitoring policy identifies the GEF Secretariat as responsible for aggregating and synthesizing results and performance by child project. The ability of the lead Agency and GEF Secretariat to fulfill these responsibilities depends on the existence of a program-level results framework with common outcome-level indicators mainstreamed into child projects—a necessity unmet in the GGP and Sustainable Cities IAP programs.

Lead Agencies have started working interactively with country projects in impact programs to develop common program results and reporting frameworks earlier in the design process than in IAPs. GEF-7 impact programs have built better program theories of change, using the coordinating and support functions of impact program coordination projects to align and assist country child projects, emphasizing the value addition of coordination projects for the programs themselves (through reporting on additional global environmental benefits). The Amazon Impact Program benefited from an existing community of practice of networked M&E focal points established in the former ASL1. In the Drylands Impact Program, this process is somewhat supported because the lead Agency implements most country child projects. Still, across almost all impact programs, preliminary plans for describing and monitoring intermediate outcomes that tackle the root causes and drivers of environmental degradation rather than global environmental benefits alone are insufficient.

Still, challenges for program-level reporting remain—including related to the approaches for determining the main results from coordination projects and aggregating results across the projects within the programs. A contributing factor is that while the 2019 policies help to clarify roles and

[11] Of the 11 GEF core indicators, child projects consistently report 5: Indicator 1—Terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use (hectares); Indicator 3—Area of land restored (hectares); Indicator 4—Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectares; excluding protected areas); Indicator 6—GHG emissions mitigated (metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent); Indicator 11—Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment. One FOLUR child project has targets for the chemicals-and-waste-related core indicator.

responsibilities in program- and child-project-level M&E reporting, program-level M&E has yet to be standardized in project cycle practices, according to the GEF Secretariat.

As the diversity of approaches taken by impact programs illustrates, there are no agreed-upon indicators and methodology for determining the outcomes or contributions from coordination projects. To measure and attribute global environmental benefits generated indirectly through the policy, institutional, and knowledge work that dominates these projects requires a clear theory of change, and interviewees pointed out, is intrinsically difficult. GEF-7 impact program coordination **projects tend to report on core indicators in different ways, depending on how they refer to and separate their benefits from those in country child projects, as shown by the quality-at-entry review.** Three impact programs (Sustainable Cities, Amazon, and Congo Basin) set core indicator targets for the coordination project (global and regional impact program platforms and technical assistance projects) that exclude core indicator targets from country child projects. The Cities coordination project will measure core indicator achievements of additional cities (beyond those covered by child projects) that benefit from coordination project services. The Amazon and Congo Basin impact programs' coordination projects will report on their nondirectly attributable influencing effects. The Drylands Impact Program coordination project will take a similar approach by estimating contributions of the three geographic subclusters to scaling out, facilitated by their respective Regional Exchange Mechanisms.[12]

[12] These incremental contributions are assumed to apply only to core indicators 4.1, 4.3, 6.1, and 11. For the Drylands Impact Program, this approach replaces a previous proposal to calculate its own platform targets as 5 or 10 percent on top of the total aggregate of individual child project targets, with the percentage depending on core indicators.

The FOLUR Impact Program coordination project plans to measure and report its incremental global environmental benefits in two ways: first, through the contribution of the coordination project itself and its leveraging of global and regional policy changes and mobilization of additional cofinancing on five GEF-7 core indicators globally; and second, through direct efforts in coordinating, facilitating, advising, and helping child projects bring about changes in policies, practices, and knowledge that affect outcomes. The FOLUR Impact Program coordination project also plans to work closely with child projects' M&E focal points and Agency partners to verify the internal validity of monitoring data that child projects submit in their regular reporting to the GEF Secretariat (PIR and MTR)—to ensure a comparable, aggregable approach to results reporting (World Bank 2020).

Another ongoing challenge is the amount of work needed to develop comparable indicators and measurements across child projects for meaningful aggregation. RFS has done this and FOLUR intends to. There are institutional limits to collaboration since Agencies have their own processes and requirements. Lead Agencies' facilitating role requires child projects' voluntary collaboration to share information and follow common frameworks. Yet it is the GEF Secretariat, not the lead Agency, that is responsible for aggregating program results across child projects, according to the GEF's monitoring policy (GEF 2019a). PIRs, for example, are submitted to the GEF Secretariat and are not required to be shared with lead Agencies.

ADDITIONALITY, INNOVATION, AND SUSTAINABILITY IN DESIGN

Environmental and institutional additionality feature prominently in the GEF-7 impact programs. As table 2.1 and box 2.5 illustrate, 81 percent of child projects demonstrate the incremental reasoning for environmental and institutional

Table 2.1 Quality-at-entry review of additionality and broader adoption in impact programs

Area of additionality/broader adoption	No. of child projects	% of child projects
Environmental additionality	35	81
Legal or regulatory additionality	10	23
Institutional additionality	31	72
Financial additionality	12	28
Socioeconomic additionality	18	42
Scaling up of interventions or outcomes	19	44
Mainstreaming of interventions or enabling conditions	12	28
Replication of interventions or enabling conditions	7	16
Deep changes	15	35

Source: Quality-at-entry analysis (see volume 2).
Note: *n* = 43.

Box 2.5 Environmental and institutional additionality in impact program child projects

GEF funding of the second phase of the Sustainable Cities Impact Program's Rwanda Urban Development Project (GEF ID 10530, World Bank) brought environmental additionality. Phase I focused primarily on traditional slum upgrading. Phase II focuses on integrated urban planning with new investments in: solid waste management; flood risk management; NBS; wetland rehabilitation and protection; GHG accounting and mitigation; and innovative financing to promote private sector investment in sustainable urban development.

In Mongolia, GEF incremental funding through the Drylands Impact Program child project (GEF ID 10249, FAO and World Wildlife Fund–US) is expected to enhance the capacity of local stakeholders and institutions in sustainable drylands management and biodiversity conservation, including for landscape planning and monitoring and for linking value chains and market access to sustainable land management.

Source: Project documents.

additionality. Country-level survey responses echo these findings. Most respondents (90 percent) agree that the GEF-7 child projects will generate global environmental benefits that are not likely to happen without GEF intervention and 95 percent agree that child projects will strengthen institutions to deliver and measure environmental impact. Survey respondents are optimistic (90 percent) about the potential for child projects to lead to improvement in the living standards of groups affected by environmental conditions, although fewer child projects (42 percent) are confident about socioeconomic additionality according to the quality-at-entry analysis.

GEF-7 impact program child projects address institutional, and to a lesser extent, financial factors to support sustainability. All impact program child projects consider institutional sustainability of outcomes, according to the quality-at-entry analysis. Seventy-nine percent of projects report stakeholder engagement in designing and implementing project activities, as well as a focus on how social inclusion influences outcome sustainability. In the Congo Basin Impact Program child project in Central African Republic (GEF ID 10347, World Bank), for instance, one component focuses on strengthening the fiscal and governance framework, recognizing that improving management of the ecological corridor between two protected areas is crucial for their long-term sustainability. The Amazon Impact Program child project in Ecuador (GEF ID 10259, World Wildlife Fund–US [WWF-US]) plans to engage diverse stakeholders in the design and management of connected corridors to empower them to sustain these corridors.

The quality-at-entry analysis showed that most impact program child projects (60 percent) also focus on financial sustainability, including developing sustainable financing mechanisms for post-project outcome delivery and enhancing public and private investments. The Kenya country case study illustrated this in its Water Fund

model in the RFS child project (GEF ID 9139, International Fund for Agricultural Development [IFAD]). This model supports financial sustainability by collecting private sector contributions from downstream water users at the tap to pay for watershed protection and incorporating payment for ecosystem services to provide incentives for communities and farmers to protect the watershed. While this is an innovative design element, interviewees and the project MTR noted that a private sector financial model for sustainability is insufficient; public sector guidance and policy support are required.

Innovations are widely incorporated into the GEF-7 impact programs. Ninety percent of country-level survey respondents agreed that impact program child projects will introduce innovation. The country case studies also provided evidence of innovation (box 2.6). As shown in table 2.2, the most frequently reported innovation in the quality-at-entry analysis for child project design is institutional innovation (81 percent, by strengthening decision-making capacities, supporting multistakeholder participation, and promoting cross-sectoral planning processes). The FOLUR, Amazon, and Congo Basin impact programs emphasize institutional innovation. Among child projects, 37 percent mention innovative technology, including use of technologies for production or resources management, access to markets, monitoring natural resources, traceability, and communication. Financial innovation (33 percent of projects) refers to financial and private sector engagement, as well as innovative incentive mechanisms, such as payment for agroecological services in the China FOLUR child project (GEF ID 10246, FAO and World Bank).

Table 2.2 Quality-at-entry review of types of innovation child projects reported

Type of innovation	No. of child projects	% of child projects
Institutions	35	81
Technology	16	37
Financial mechanism	14	33
Business models	11	26
Policy change	7	16

Source: Quality-at-entry analysis (see volume 2).
Note: *n* = 43.

Integrated programming show evidence of transformational change at the program level. A global survey of GEF stakeholders found respondents identified impact programs among GEF programming offerings as best designed to enable transformational change at global, regional, and local levels (GEF IEO 2021). Consistent with the IEO's framework for transformational interventions, these programs show strong evidence of relevance to multiple GEF focal areas and focus on systemic changes and root causes of environmental problems (see subsection on coherence in impact program objectives) (GEF 2018b). Interviews and documentation point to the integrated programs' structure and partnership strategies as key internal and external factors in supporting scaling up and depth of change. For example, the global coordination project in the Drylands Impact Program is expected to scale up innovations. For the FOLUR Impact Program, interviewees said transformation depends on having a critical mass of

Box 2.6 Innovation in China's Sustainable Cities projects

The China Sustainable Cities case study showed that IAP and impact program grants (GEF ID 9223, World Bank; impact program ID pending) are introducing TOD and NBS innovations in integrated sustainable urban planning. Both concepts were not known or practiced before the China child. The World Bank's management of the child projects supports their uptake by participating cities, coupled with investment and Asian Development Bank and local and central government funding for some participating cities.

countries for a leverage effect on buyers and producers in green value chains. The GEF plays a key role in this process by helping to build partnerships with private companies that work across child project countries (see subsection on private sector engagement below). The role of global coordination projects is critical in this regard, especially since the quality-at-entry analysis found less evidence of attention to broader adoption of program outcomes in country child projects (see table 2.1).

2.2 Processes

This section addresses the extent to which integrated approach programs' country access and selection processes, along with lead Agency selection processes, have been transparent and inclusive. It considers institutional arrangements and the role of the lead Agency in integrated programming. Finally, it reviews the efficiency of the impact program rollout and IAP implementation.

COUNTRY ACCESS AND SELECTION PROCESS

The GEF Secretariat notified all GEF OFPs by email of the timeline for impact programs in November 2018, followed by a call for submission of EOIs by January 2019. The FOLUR, Sustainable Cities, and Drylands impact programs were open to all countries. Eligibility for the regional Amazon and Congo Basin impact programs included all GEF-eligible countries in those basins. For any country to trigger the incentive mechanism, it had to allocate at least $4 million from STAR.

GEF-7 impact programs have realized substantial improvements in country child project selection through clearer criteria and processes, which included calls for expressions of interest in participation. These improvements contrast with the findings of the 2018 Formative Evaluation, which found country and city selection processes were not always clear, and participants thought decisions were not based on a set of universal and agreed-upon criteria. The GEF Secretariat introduced a competitive selection process for participation in GEF-7 impact programs through preparation and evaluation of EOIs. The selection committee expanded beyond the GEF Secretariat (as was done in the IAPs) to also include representatives from the lead Agency, the STAP, and an external expert on a committee that scored EOIs (lead Agencies were appropriately recused from scoring or voting on EOIs for which they were the GEF Agency). The UNCCD Secretariat was engaged in the Drylands country selection process. About two-thirds of country stakeholders agreed (only 8 percent disagreed) that the process for selecting impact program countries and child projects was transparent, and interviewees raised no significant concerns about this process.

Countries expressed strong interest in the EOI process for participating in impact programs. The GEF accepted only a quarter to a half of EOIs for the FOLUR, Drylands, and Sustainable Cities impact programs. A single round attracted enough high-quality EOIs for Drylands and Sustainable Cities impact programs to use the entire available set-aside incentive funding. Countries expressed stronger interest in the FOLUR program, which did not require STAR resource allocation, than the GGP IAP. FOLUR held several rounds of EOIs to ensure quality of design and coverage of key commodities and countries among the EOIs received. Countries were interested in the Amazon and Congo regional programs because they belong to the same geographical biome and saw an opportunity to address common environmental challenges through existing regional institutions.

The GEF incentivized participation, since countries were willing to allocate 57–63 percent of total resources of their STAR allocations to the programs (table 2.3). Although interviews suggested that the set-aside incentive funding was a strong incentive,

Table 2.3 Impact program STAR allocation and set-asides

Impact program	STAR allocation (million $)			Set-aside (million $)	STAR as % of total program value	STAR: set-aside country ratio[a]
	Climate change	Biodiversity	Land degradation			
FOLUR	29	119	60	137	60	1.98
Sustainable Cities	53	36	7	63	60	2.11
Amazon	5	51	4	36	63	2.21
Congo Basin	4	27	4	27	57	2.00
Drylands	10	22	33	40	62	2.01
Total	102	256	108	303	61	2.03

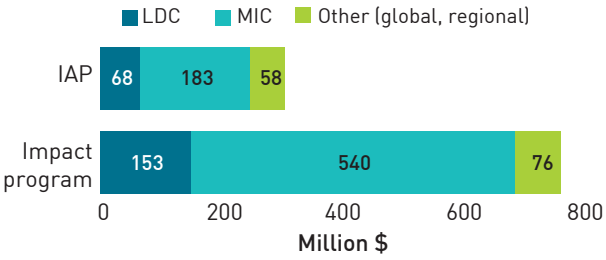
Source: Program PFDs.

a. All participating impact program countries allocate greater STAR resources compared to set-aside resources for each program.

survey and case study data suggest that an integrated approach is an increasing draw for country partners. The primary motivators for country participation were learning and piloting an integrated approach and developing models for replication, scaling up, or mainstreaming, according to survey responses. Less than 30 percent of respondents identified incentive funding as a top-three motivator for participation. The Kenya case study, for example, showed that the government was motivated to participate in the GEF integrated approach programming because of its concerted focus on the nexus of environment, agricultural productivity, sustainable land management, and livelihoods enhancement. Interviewees said past GEF projects did not perform as well because they focused too exclusively on the environment, without sufficient consideration for income-earning opportunities.

Overall, 56 countries are participating in GEF integrated programming (IAPs and impact programs). Of these, 16 are least-developed countries and 40 are middle-income countries—67 percent of total integrated program financing to date (figure 2.4). The top five recipients of integrated programming resources are middle-income countries, led by Brazil, China, and India (table 2.4). Brazil has the most child projects (five), followed by a five-way tie for China, India, Kenya, Peru, and Tanzania (three each). Twenty countries have participated in more than one integrated program. Some countries and geographies have not yet benefited from the GEF's integrated approach; this includes SIDS, where a history of regional cooperation and whole-of-island approaches seem well aligned with the GEF integrated approach. SIDS have pointed to the need for a more integrated approach to managing natural resources and ecosystems, including through the United Nations resolution on the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway (UNGA 2014).

Figure 2.4 Total value of integrated programming by country category



Sources: GEF Portal, accessed February 3, 2021; program PFDs.

Note: IAP financial figures are based on child project financing data, excluding Agency fees. Total impact program funding is from each program's Council-approved PFD. Other programming is exclusively for global and regional programming, which is not disaggregated by country. Least developed country (LDC) determination is based on United Nations classification; middle-income country (MIC) determination is based on World Bank income classification.

Table 2.4 Leading recipients of IAP and impact program programming (million $)

Country	RFS IAP	GGP IAP	Sustainable Cities IAP	FOLUR IP	Sustainable Cities IP	Amazon IP	Congo Basin IP	Drylands IP	Total funding
Brazil[a]	0	7	23	27	14	21	0	0	91
China	0	0	33	15	29	0	0	0	77
India	0	0	12	22	19	0	0	0	53
Peru	0	0	6	15	0	17	0	0	38
Indonesia[a]	0	0	0	18	17	0	0	0	35

Sources: GEF Portal, accessed February 3, 2021; program PFDs.

Note: IAP financial figures are based on child project financing data, excluding Agency fees. Total impact program (IP) funding is from each program's Council-approved PFD. Program results may not equal Agency totals owing to independent rounding.

a. Brazil and Indonesia have also benefited from global GGP IAP projects, although per-country breakdowns are not provided.

LEAD AGENCY SELECTION PROCESS

A competitive procurement process was also employed for selection of the lead Agency. This process was guided by Operational Guidance and Criteria and Terms of Reference for lead Agency and was later documented in an update to the GEF Council (GEF 2018c, 2018d, 2018e). At least two Agencies expressed interest in each impact program; the exception was the Sustainable Cities Impact Program, in which only the World Bank initially expressed interest. The GEF completed selection of lead Agencies for the FOLUR and SFM impact programs in October 2018, applying a standard screening template that included qualitative assessment and quantitative scoring. Key elements included Agencies' comparative advantages, particularly their ability to leverage partnerships (including through existing participation in influential initiatives), engage stakeholders and the private sector, and, in the case, of the Amazon Impact Program, provide leadership continuity from the predecessor program.

The process for selecting the lead Agency for the Sustainable Cities Impact Program played out differently. World Bank interviewees expressed concern that the GEF Secretariat's efforts to ensure a major role for city-based organizations (CBOs)—seen as critical for engaging with city leaders and bringing in expertise and knowledge beyond GEF Agencies—influenced selection. The GEF Secretariat's initial request for proposals for lead Agency resulted in only one, from the World Bank, given its ongoing equivalent role for the Sustainable Cities IAP and the expectation of continuity between the two programs. However, negotiations over the proposed governance of the program did not result in an award to the World Bank. Consistent with the GEF-7 Programming Directions (GEF 2018a), the GEF Secretariat expected CBOs to play an integral role in the GPSC, to provide continuity in the knowledge management activities of WRI, C40, and Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI), which operated as a separate resource team under a separate GEF grant for the Sustainable Cities IAP program (implemented by the World Bank). The GEF Secretariat viewed this as important to ensure that cities were engaged closely in the program. Interviewees said World Bank management refused to delegate major functions to executing entities such as the CBOs, which they perceived as a "pass-through" arrangement.

The GEF Secretariat issued a second call for proposals for lead Agency, specifying that the GPSC lead Agency would mobilize a consortium of CBOs, defined as "a set of city-focused organizations working closely with mayors and national governments to advance an urban sustainability agenda"

to "deliver the functions of the GPSC." The call for proposals stated: "Their engagement is critical to deliver functions of the GPSC, as they have inherent strengths in engaging closely with city leaders and facilitating the urban sustainability agenda globally."

Two GEF Agencies, UNEP and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), submitted proposals. The GEF selected UNEP as the lead Agency based on its commitment and experience in engaging CBOs; its connection to high-level, city-focused programs; and its support for integrating natural resource management into sustainable urban development. While initial feedback on UNEP's role as lead Agency has been positive (see below), efficiency risks exist with a change of lead Agency. These include the risk of non-continuity between the Sustainable Cities IAP and Sustainable Cities Impact Program, creating confusion among local and global participants, and the parallel implementation of both programs for another two years (see subsection on knowledge platforms).

LEAD AGENCY ROLE

The design of the integrated approach has improved in GEF-7 with an expanded role for the lead Agency. This important role involves program coordination (monitoring and ensuring coherence among child projects and facilitating collaborative engagement with partners to advance transformational change) and program integration (linking child projects to the global or regional coordination project and its knowledge platform for countries to access innovations, tools, good practices, and technical assistance). It includes terms of reference with a clearer lead role in program reporting. This builds on an IAP lesson that ensuring clarity of roles and responsibilities between global or regional coordination projects and country child projects is critical to good program governance.

GEF-7 impact programs recognized the value of coordination projects by increasing allocation from an average of 8 percent of total funding for IAPs to 10 percent for impact programs. Interviews with IAP lead Agencies indicated that the allocation for these projects was insufficient to meet coordination expectations in GEF-6. Impact program child projects also allocated incentive funds accordingly to benefit from and support that interaction, which was lacking in the IAPs. In addition to a strong lead Agency role, fewer Agencies are involved per impact program, normalized to the number of child projects (table 2.5), which has potential to address the organizational complexity issues raised by the 2018 formative review.

Lead Agencies are facilitating engagement in the design of impact programs, even more so than in some of the IAPs. Survey respondents found Agencies and country-level stakeholders inclusive during the design process. More than three-quarters of country-level survey respondents (77 percent) agreed that country stakeholders provided input on the design of the impact program global or regional coordination project. Eighty-one percent of respondents agreed that in design, other partners were engaged with innovative ideas, institutional mechanisms

Table 2.5 Number of child projects and Agencies by program

	IAP			Impact program				
	Sustainable cities	GGP	RFS	Sustainable cities	FOLUR	Amazon	Congo	Drylands
Child projects	12	5	13	10	28	8	7	12
Agencies	8	5	7	4	8	8	4	4

Source: GEF Portal, accessed February 3, 2021.

and partnerships, M&E, and scaling-up. Program documentation across impact programs points to highly consultative processes that involve Agencies, partners, and OFPs. Some interviewees, however, thought FOLUR's consultation was more focused on Agencies and partners than on countries—a situation partly attributed to the size of the program and its four phases of country participation. Overall, Agencies and countries viewed the GEF-7 lead Agencies positively in the design phase.

Sequencing of program design in GEF-7 is a clear improvement over GEF-6 IAPs. It followed a program-to-project logic with child projects generally designed in parallel with the global or regional coordination projects (rather than earlier, as in the IAPs). The Amazon Impact Program benefited enormously from having a coordination project in place from the previous phase (ASL1) able to convene stakeholders earlier to inform program design. Across the impact programs, interviewees suggested that the next phase of integrated approaches in the GEF could benefit from even earlier design and endorsement of coordination projects to better support child project development and coherence. A related challenge is that project preparation grants for the coordination projects are, according to Agencies, insufficient for the wide-ranging early tasks of the project—not only for design, but also to champion coherence of child project design. As one interviewee said, "leading at design is not so much about coordination, but rather about integration and concrete identification of interventions that can be truly collaborative and integrative, a process that takes time and resources."

Interviewees raised some concern that the FOLUR and Sustainable Cities impact programs (box 2.7) engaged a significant number of executing partners in their global coordination projects. The benefit is increasing the reach of the program, leveraging relationships with external entities and initiatives. However, the experience of the RFS regional hub project suggests that sorting out and agreeing on well-defined partner roles and financial management can take the lead Agency considerable time and effort and lead to substantial delays. This is especially true when partners have thematically overlapping responsibilities or are engaged in subcontracting arrangements. Efficiency of internal program management and external engagement is a balancing act.

Lead Agency performance is rated positively for IAP implementation. Around three-quarters of

Box 2.7 Institutional global coordination in the Sustainable Cities Impact Program

UNEP's design of the global child project allocates more than 90 percent of GEF finances to three co-executing Agencies (led by WRI with C40 and ICLEI) for major delivery elements of the Sustainable Cities Impact Program Global Platform. Under agreements for the implementation of the Sustainable Cities Impact Program, UNEP holds fiduciary responsibility for management of the entire program, including coordination of all country child projects and of the global platform. WRI is responsible for overall knowledge management and capacity building and for coordination with child projects in Latin and South America to provide additional technical support to those projects; C40 promotes climate finance and coordinates with child projects in Africa; ICLEI promotes national dialogues and coordinates with child projects in Asia; and UNEP oversees global advocacy.

Some interviewees raised concerns that the delegation of such substantial functions to WRI, C40, and ICLEI could fragment management of the global component, presenting a possible reputation risk for the GEF. However, under the RFS IAP, IFAD, as the implementing Agency, shared responsibilities with ICRAF, hub-project executing coordinator for the RFS, and that has been working quite well, according to available evidence. The project's two partners have clearly defined agreements and contracts.

country survey respondents agree that the lead Agency has performed well in coordinating the IAP (77 percent) and that the IAP steering committees have played an important role (73 percent). Lead Agency challenges are largely associated with the absence of established rules of the game and midstream changes. For example, lead Agencies did not anticipate a GEF Secretariat request for aggregated reporting and did not have adequate systems to respond. According to interviewees, not all Agencies are equally cooperative in engaging in program coordination, given limited institutional incentives. A few Agency interviewees had limited awareness of the broader integrated program context of their child project. Interviewees also emphasized the importance of individual champions—particularly in lead Agencies—in holding programs together. Lead Agency roles in implementation (such as program-level M&E, maintaining program coherence, and knowledge platforms) are assessed in other subsections of this report.

EFFICIENCY

The rollout of the impact programs has followed a similar timeline to the IAPs. Nearly four years have passed since the GEF Secretariat notified Agencies and OFPs of the process and timeline for the impact program rollout in July 2018. As with the IAPs, much of the work of the impact programs is front loaded, occurring before Council approval of the PFDs. Interviews and documentation point to extensive consultations. Twenty months after Council approval of impact program PFDs (except Sustainable Cities Impact Program), 14 percent of child projects ($n = 9$) achieved CEO endorsement (table 2.6). Another 34 impact program child projects have CEO endorsement pending, while a further 20 were approved as part of the PFDs. By comparison, the 2018 formative review found it took 26 months to bring all IAP child projects to the stage of CEO endorsement after Council PFD approval.

Interviewees see the impact program design and launch process as relatively efficient, especially given the complications of the COVID-19 global pandemic, which started just as many child projects were in active design. Most Agencies and countries adapted to remote preparation, including communication via email, videoconference, and phone, adjusting project workplans and stakeholder engagement plans, and evaluating the need for design modification with decreased cofinancing. Added delays in Brazil and China were associated with internal governance decisions.

Timelines for the IAPs' start of implementation and first disbursement are consistent with the overall GEF-6 portfolio. The ambition and multidimensionality of these programs has generally not slowed the achievement of these first milestones. On average, IAP child projects and all other GEF-6 projects took five months from receiving CEO endorsement to the actual project start date (table 2.7). First disbursements came within four months of IAP child project start dates, compared to five months for all other GEF-6 projects. Sustainable Cities IAP child projects had the longest average time between CEO endorsement and actual project starts and between starts and first disbursements. After project start and first disbursement, however, most IAP child projects experienced challenges or delays that slowed project and activity implementation. Seventy-one percent of IAP child projects indicated some type of delay in their PIRs or MTRs. (See section below on progress toward results and associated challenges.)

2.3 Progress toward results

This section focuses on the IAPs' overall progress toward achieving results and the factors enabling and challenging that progress. This includes environmental outcomes and global environmental benefits; policy and institutional outcomes,

Table 2.6 Approval timeline for impact program child projects

IAP/impact program	Months since Council PFD approval	CEO-endorsed child projects		Child projects with request submitted for CEO endorsement	
		%	No.	%	No.
GEF-7 impact programs	**0**	**14**	**9**	**54**	**34**
Sustainable Cities	16	25	2	0	0
FOLUR	22	11	3	46	13
Amazon	22	13	1	75	6
Congo Basin	22	14	1	71	5
Drylands	22	17	2	83	10
Total for GEF-6 IAPs	**26**	**100**	**31**	**0**	**0**

Source: GEF Portal, accessed February 3, 2021.

Table 2.7 Implementation timeline for IAP child projects (months)

IAP	Average time from CEO endorsement to start date	Average time from start date to first disbursement
Sustainable Cities IAP	7	6
GGP IAP	5	1
RFS IAP	4	4
All IAP child projects	5	4
Other GEF-6 projects[a]	5	5

Source: GEF Portal, accessed February 3, 2021.

a. Does not include projects whose actual start date as recorded in the GEF Portal is earlier than their CEO endorsement date, or whose first disbursement as recorded in the GEF Portal is earlier than their actual start date.

including platforms and partnerships; socio-economic outcomes; and broader adoption. This section also addresses the effectiveness and sustainability of IAP knowledge platforms and the extent to which the design of the GEF-7 impact program knowledge platforms reflects these lessons.

PROGRAM AND PROJECT RESULTS

Lead Agency annual program highlights reports, MTRs, PIRs, and country case studies demonstrate progress, although it is still early to report on many global environmental benefits, and results vary across programs. Only 9 of 31 IAP child projects have MTRs so far.[13] Many are delayed because of COVID-19, although most IAP child projects have at least two PIRs (this analysis reviewed 67 PIRs). PIRs and MTRs most commonly reported delays (71 percent) and COVID (77 percent) as the most common challenges. They are interrelated, with delays in project governance and operational challenges, changes in partner governments, and stakeholder engagement often affected by COVID-19. Cumulative disbursement is about 20 percent for Sustainable Cities IAP, 40 percent for RFS IAP, and 60 percent for GGP IAP (GEF 2020a). IAP child projects receive ratings for implementation progress comparable to the rest of the GEF

[13] Four MTRs for GGP, three MTRs for Sustainable Cities, and two MTRs for RFS.

portfolio (84 percent in the satisfactory range for both groups), and slightly higher ratings for development objective (94 percent in the satisfactory range for IAPs, compared to 88 percent in the overall GEF portfolio; GEF 2020a).

Among reporting IAP child projects, about half indicate progress toward concrete environmental outcomes in PIRs and MTRs, confirmed by country survey responses. Progress is most common for RFS projects (77 percent) and less for GGP (40 percent) and Sustainable Cities (23 percent) projects, according to an analysis of PIRs and MTRs. Program-level reporting refers to concrete global environmental benefits (GEF-7 core indicators) that have been achieved at midterm or are on track to be achieved by project completion. For the RFS IAP, nearly 151,000 ha of previously degraded land have been restored, according to program data for 2020. The Kenya case study illustrates some of these results (box 2.8). RFS project linkages to existing and sometimes cofinanced baseline projects helped child projects deliver these results faster, in part because projects did not have to take the time to establish new project management structures.

For the GGP IAP, program-level reporting indicates that 744,077 $MtCO_2e$ emissions have been avoided and 43,000 ha of high-conservation-value land have been protected through 2020. Activities that contributed to these results include support for a conservation agreement in Liberia, extensive work on landscapes under improved management, and high-conservation-value set-asides in Indonesia. This work is ongoing. GEF Agencies helped achieve early progress. However, the program has had to adapt to political changes and the challenges of sustained buy-in at all administrative levels, along with the complexities of land use designation.

Results are uneven among the Sustainable Cities IAP child projects and Agencies. Some projects show evidence of mainstreaming innovations

Box 2.8 Establishing a water fund and payment for environmental services in Kenya (RFS IAP)

One year before completion, the Kenya Water Fund project (GEF ID 9139, IFAD) has made significant progress. It is already achieving multiple direct benefits—payment for environmental services for more than 23,000 farmers on 17,000 ha through promoting sustainable land management and water conservation measures; restoring environmentally sensitive lands; linking farmers to alternative value chains, such as avocados; and adapting to climate change. Many project outputs are close to targets, or exceed them, such as water pans/reservoirs (68 percent), biogas installations (115 percent), and successful planting of tree seedlings with high survival rates (372 percent). Less information is available, however, on how many farmers effectively adopted all three core sustainable land management technologies the project promoted for terracing, agroforestry, and grass strips. Still, the project is on track to achieve its global environmental benefit core indicators for landscapes under improved practices, area of land restored, and GHG emissions mitigated, as well as for number of direct beneficiaries. But planned interaction with a cofinanced IFAD project has not materialized, partly because extension models and coverage areas are different. This limits GEF scale-up and sustainability.

The Water Endowment Fund is the project's strongest, most innovative contribution to environmental governance in Kenya. It collects private sector contributions from water users downstream to protect the watershed upstream in catchment areas. Water Fund bylaws and institutional framework enabling stakeholder engagement were put in place efficiently, but private sector capitalization of the fund has been slow (29 percent of plan). Resource mobilization suffered setbacks due to COVID-19. The fund's successful continuation is likely to depend on more support from public sector organizations.

and bridging the divide between conventional urban infrastructure and service delivery considerations and global environmental benefits, while other projects are substantially delayed, in part due to the particularly severe consequences of COVID-19 in urban areas as well as the complexity of multiscale (e.g., national and local) implementation arrangements. Three years into implementation, the Sustainable Cities IAP program, as noted above, has not yet fully operationalized its program-level results framework, nor has it reported any aggregated, higher-order results or global environmental benefits.

The Sustainable Cities IAP child projects mainly report outputs intended to lead to environmental outcomes, especially GHG emissions and chemicals and waste reduction. Examples are solid waste management plans under development in Paraguay, smart-grid projects being prepared in Malaysia, remedial activities of contaminated soil at waste dumps under way in Brazil, and persistent organic pollutant reduction strategies being introduced in Senegal. Many Sustainable Cities activities focus on developing integrated operational plans that deliver benefits in the longer term, implemented with complementary infrastructure investments.

Few socioeconomic and household resilience outcomes have been reported. This is partly because, at this stage of implementation, projects have done relatively little follow-up on baseline household surveys. While about half of country-level survey respondents reported that child projects are already leading to improvements in the living standard of groups affected by environmental conditions, only a third of IAP child projects report concrete evidence of socioeconomic outcomes in PIRs and MTRs. This is much higher (62 percent) among RFS child projects, where income-generating activities for diversified livelihoods in the most vulnerable communities are supported through microprojects in Burkina Faso and Uganda, and beekeeping projects in eight RFS child projects. Waste-pickers, agroforestry farmers, and urban farmers have new income-generating activities under the Cities child project. Although socioeconomic outcomes are still emerging across the IAPs, reporting on numbers of beneficiaries already benefiting from activities (a global environmental benefits core indicator) are included in the annual program self-reporting of RFS (1.4 million beneficiaries engaged) and GGP (6,400 farm and other households directly benefiting).

About two-thirds of IAP child projects show progress toward policy or legal results. More than a third of country-level survey respondents reported that these legal or regulatory reforms would not have occurred without the GEF project. The GGP reported it had supported 39 policies, policy framework strategies, and action plans. These include finalizing the national action plan for palm oil in Indonesia and helping the Central Bank in Paraguay create a regulation to require environmental, social, and governance risk management in the financial sector. For critical environmental and other outcomes, however, policies often must work through different administrative levels, as in Indonesia, where the GGP followed up on the national action plan for palm oil by developing provincial and district–level action plans.

The RFS program reported that it influenced nine policies, policy instruments, and regulatory frameworks. It gave critical support to prioritizing land degradation in Burkina Faso to achieve the country's LDN targets by 2030, set up the legal and institutional framework for the Kenya Water Fund, and influenced regional and international policy processes by placing key IFAD program staff at the African Union in Addis Ababa and participating in regional and international events such as the UNCCD COP 13. Although the Sustainable Cities IAP does not report aggregate policy results, the program was instrumental in developing several

municipal integrated plans, such as the Melaka Smart City Policy (Malaysia) and TOD strategies for integrated spatial planning in five cities in China (box 2.9). In Senegal, the program helped develop national strategies for integrated urban planning including resilience and management of industrial parks. All IAPs faced challenges to achieve outcomes in policy and strategic plans: long processes for legislative initiatives, multiple stakeholders buy-in and national agencies' differing interests, frequent political changes, and follow-up and enforcement.

All three IAP programs have been establishing (or supporting existing) multistakeholder platforms and institutional mechanisms and capacity to underscore policy initiatives and support sustainability. Partnerships play an important role in driving results in this area. Two-thirds of survey respondents reported that child projects are already contributing to strengthening institutions and processes. RFS program reporting for 2020 identified 19 national and 51 subnational multistakeholder platforms established. This includes developing 11 sustainable agricultural-value chains through public-private partnership platforms, cost-sharing financing mechanisms, catalytic grants from UNDP–Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa, and social responsibility schemes (Ethiopia, Niger, Nigeria). Farmer field schools and innovative rural advisory models support institutional sustainability (Burundi, Eswatini, Malawi, Nigeria). Many platforms reach local levels offering local communities opportunities for sustainable participation in design and implementation (Eswatini chiefdom development committees; Malawi, Burundi, and Tanzania local village committees). At the program level, strategic partnerships with the Nature Conservancy and regional and international research institutions provide essential knowledge, experience, and networks (Burkina Faso, Burundi, Kenya, Uganda).

Box 2.9 Integrating transit-oriented development and land use planning in China (Sustainable Cities IAP)

At midterm, the China Sustainable Cities IAP child project (GEF ID 9223, World Bank) is making good progress. All but one cumulative target value for implementation at midpoint were reached or extensively surpassed. The innovative TOD concept is based on concentrating compact urban development around transit lines, enabling pedestrian and other nonmotorized access to stations, and reducing the use of cars and their local pollution and GHG emissions. All participating cities (Tianjin, Beijing, Shijiazhuang, Nanchang, Shenzhen, Ningbo, and Guiyang) have begun preparation of their city-level and corridor-level TOD strategies, with Shenzhen adding district and station–level plans. Tianjin is also exploring private sector TOD financing.

The Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development has launched the preparation of the National Platform, which will codify TOD approaches to later issue-related guidelines for all Chinese cities. This is expected to support replication. Capacity-building activities have included participation in GPSC global meetings and city academies, technical workshops, and training sessions organized by the World Bank task team, a Tokyo Development Learning Center deep-dive learning week, and study tours and webinars organized by the project management offices. Twelve quarterly project newsletters have been produced in English and Chinese to document implementation progress, and more important, to share TOD trends in policy reforms, academic and professional activities, private sector engagement, and best practices in China. The GPSC disseminates the newsletters globally.

GGP program results identified 18 multistakeholder commodity platforms and forums established, enabled, and supported. Program reporting and interviews noted the Cerrado Manifesto for soy (although not yet financially equipped to start payments for environmental services) and

the Trase Platform for global supply chain transparency as platforms with demonstrated results. GGP engages with global buyers and traders and major national traders of oil, palm, soy, and beef to encourage adoption of deforestation- and conversion-free standards (box 2.10). Examples of operational mechanisms that the Sustainable Cities IAP child projects support include establishment of the Autonomous Planning Institute for the Asunción metropolitan region in Paraguay, the National Platform for Sustainable Cities in India, and bus rapid transit and cycle network design in Paraguay.

The challenges of operational support through platforms and institutions are their actual functionality, conflicting stakeholder interests, financial and institutional sustainability, and assessment of concrete contributions to program objectives and global environmental benefits. To demonstrate contribution to program outcomes, some IAPs started to monitor these aspects (RFS) and try to mitigate them or work with institutions with some track record (GGP).

PROGRESS TOWARD BROADER ADOPTION

Some IAP PIRs and MTRs report progress toward broader adoption of project outcomes in the project period, mainly through institutional sustainability of interventions (71 percent), supporting scale-up (39 percent), enabling conditions for replication (29 percent), and mainstreaming (32 percent). Programs report less progress toward market change, systemic change, behavioral change, and addressing the root cause of environmental problems, which typically take longer (13 percent). Compared to project reporting, survey respondents see more evidence of broader adoption among GEF-6 IAP child projects, with approximately half of respondents stating that child projects are already making contributions toward replication, mainstreaming, and scaling up. This could also reflect progress since last reporting, given lag time.

Interviewees said the global and regional coordination project and strategic partnerships are important ways to encourage broader adoption

Box 2.10 Progress addressing drivers of soy-related deforestation in Brazil (GGP IAP)

At midterm, substantial progress has been made on the demand end of the supply chain in the GGP Demand Project (GEF ID 9182, WWF-US and UNDP) through corporate engagement with buyers and traders. For example, Cargill and Amaggi, two major soy traders in Brazil, used the project-funded Soy Toolkit to update their corporate environmental policies. Another major achievement to protect the Cerrado biome has been the Cerrado Manifesto, an agreement signed by 64 global buyers in February 2019 (box 2.17).

On the supply side, the GGP Brazil Production Project (GEF ID 9617, UNDP) has achieved significant institutional outcomes. For example, the project contributed to the creation of a consortium of secretaries of agriculture in the MATOPIBA interested in promoting sustainable soy production to support joint planning in the region, and regional governments have publicly expressed support for sustainable soy production. The project has also strengthened the states of Tocantins and Bahía's regional environment-registry validation processes. At the midterm, however, the project was found to have missed important political, social, and institutional drivers of change in its theory of change. The MTR raised "serious concerns as to the achievement of the targeted decrease of the deforestation rate by 1,000 km^2," given the issues with compliance with the Forest Code and despite substantial efforts to adapt to obstacles. A soy systems workshop was held in Brazil in the wake of these MTR findings to better understand the levers of change in the current political context and align partners' work around those.

in the IAPs, along with achieving policy and institutional outcomes, such as improved land use planning and subnational farmer support strategies and platforms (GGP and RFS). Mobilization of cofinancing and spill-over finance resources is also critical for broader adoption and even initial environmental outcomes, particularly for the Sustainable Cities IAP where infrastructure investment will be needed to implement new integrated plans for urban sustainability. Interviewees suggested that cofinancing has not materialized in some cases or was poorly connected to GEF objectives.

CHALLENGES FOR RESULTS ACHIEVEMENT

The top three challenges faced so far in implementing the GEF-6 integrated approach have been (1) changes in government administration or priorities; (2) implementation arrangements; and (3) overcoming sectoral mandates or coordinating among ministries and Agencies—the heart of the integrated approach. Broader adoption findings indicate slow progress in systemic and behavioral change, although it is still early in many IAP implementation timelines. Continuity and a multisectoral approach are needed for these changes to occur but take time to materialize. In several IAP countries, politics and political changes have mattered. For the Sustainable Cities IAP, it has sometimes not been easy to get political support and broad municipality buy-in on the sustainability concept. Several vertical bureaucratic layers in the country child project can separate the execution layer in cities from the intentions of higher-level government authorities that may plan the project. In Brazil, federal, state, and local elections have had significant implications for Sustainable Cities IAP and GGP IAP implementation (box 2.11). In the GGP IAP, for example, Agencies and partners have adapted by moving to work with states after changes in federal government priorities. In the GGP, it was challenging to find a common position among ministries and government agencies in Indonesia. Some interviewees said insufficient attention is paid to these political drivers in the GEF integrated approaches and child projects in planning for systemic changes. In many countries, COVID-19 has shifted attention and resources toward recovery efforts, with lower priority for environmental or conservation issues (box 2.12).

Complex implementation arrangements in the IAPs (including joint implementation by multiple Agencies and execution by multiple national and international entities) have also affected implementation. For the Sustainable Cities IAP, a major difficulty and cause for delay has been the multidimensionality of its multilevel executing structure and decision making in countries. In municipalities, especially when the project works with a broad range of city official and stakeholders, the lack of dedicated staff and high staff rotations in several municipalities make continuity of work and capacity building difficult. In the GGP, coordinating the work of multiple Agencies in a single country across different child projects (Paraguay, Brazil) was both challenging and time intensive (see box 2.11). Some interviewees said the idea that the child projects could come together in GGP to create synergistic outcomes in four years is unrealistic.

KNOWLEDGE PLATFORMS

The IEO's 2018 formative review found that the most important innovative feature in the IAPs was the knowledge platforms designed into global and regional coordination projects. The IEO recommended a review at midterm to assess whether these platforms generate the necessary traction and provide overall support to program implementation, recognizing that they would require a strong commitment and support from all participating entities to provide the services and benefits for which they have been designed. This subsection responds to this recommendation, focusing

Box 2.11 Examples of implementation challenges from the Brazil country case study

National and state elections in late 2018 affected implementation of the Sustainable Cities IAP and the GGP IAP in Brazil. For the Sustainable Cities IAP child project, most focal points at national and state levels were replaced through a lengthy process. Some local governments also experienced changes in January 2021, which is likely to result in an extended procedure to identify and engage new focal points for both the Sustainable Cities IAP and the Sustainable Cities impact program projects. The Sustainable Cities projects differ from other GEF projects as municipal governments as well as national or state governments are actively engaged. This requires greater coordination and alignment of agendas. In the GGP IAP child project, changes at the federal level have necessitated adaptive management. For example, establishment of a biodiversity corridor, an expected project output that interviewees see as fundamental to conservation of the Cerrado biome, is unlikely in the current political situation and with producer associations' position. Instead, Conservation International Brasil has been working with municipal governments to create municipal protected areas and promote private reserves.

Both the Sustainable Cities IAP and GGP IAP child projects in Brazil have struggled with implementation arrangements. In the Sustainable Cities IAP project, interviewees said partners worked separately for the first two years. This included the two entities—one nonprofit, the other for profit—contracted for knowledge management activities including national knowledge platforms. In late 2019, the executing entity began to increase its project team and coordination efforts. This has helped advance implementation over the last year. The GGP IAP Brazil project has complex implementation arrangements with output dependencies and high transaction costs for coordinating among implementing partners. UNDP implements the project, with Conservation International taking management responsibility for the entire project. The International Finance Corporation and WWF are responsible for execution of component 4, on supply chain integration, but are funded and monitored under different GGP IAP child projects. This arrangement has made it challenging to coordinate efforts among the implementing partners toward a common approach based on the GGP's integrated perspective.

on how effectively knowledge has been shared within programs through the knowledge platforms and whether they will be sustained after program close. The report looks first at the effectiveness of IAP knowledge platforms, then assesses platform design in the impact programs.

GEF-6 IAPs' knowledge platform effectiveness

The IAP knowledge platforms have resulted in greater knowledge and learning activities compared to past GEF programmatic approaches.[14] The IAP knowledge platforms have been effective in sharing best practices and facilitating exchange among child projects. Interviews, the country-level survey, and program documentation indicate that all three IAP knowledge platforms are sharing information most strongly from child projects up to the global and regional platforms and among projects. Partnerships are critical to share knowledge from the programs with external audiences. Country-level stakeholders reported largely positive perceptions of the role of the IAP knowledge platforms in their survey responses, shown in figure 2.5. The figure also shows two less-certain positives—funding allocation and sustainability. IAP knowledge platforms adapted to the global pandemic in 2020, shifting to online meetings and events.

[14] Such as the Global Opportunities for Long-term Development (GOLD) and Coastal Fisheries Initiative (CFI) programs.

Box 2.12 Sustainable Cities IAP and the implications of COVID-19 for implementation

Sustainable Cities IAP projects are experiencing challenges with COVID-19 owing to demands on city authorities. In response to COVID-19, 61 percent of IAP child projects modified public project activities (workshops, trainings, and public consultations) and corresponding schedules. Other adaptations included changes to internal governance (26 percent) and project objectives (10 percent).

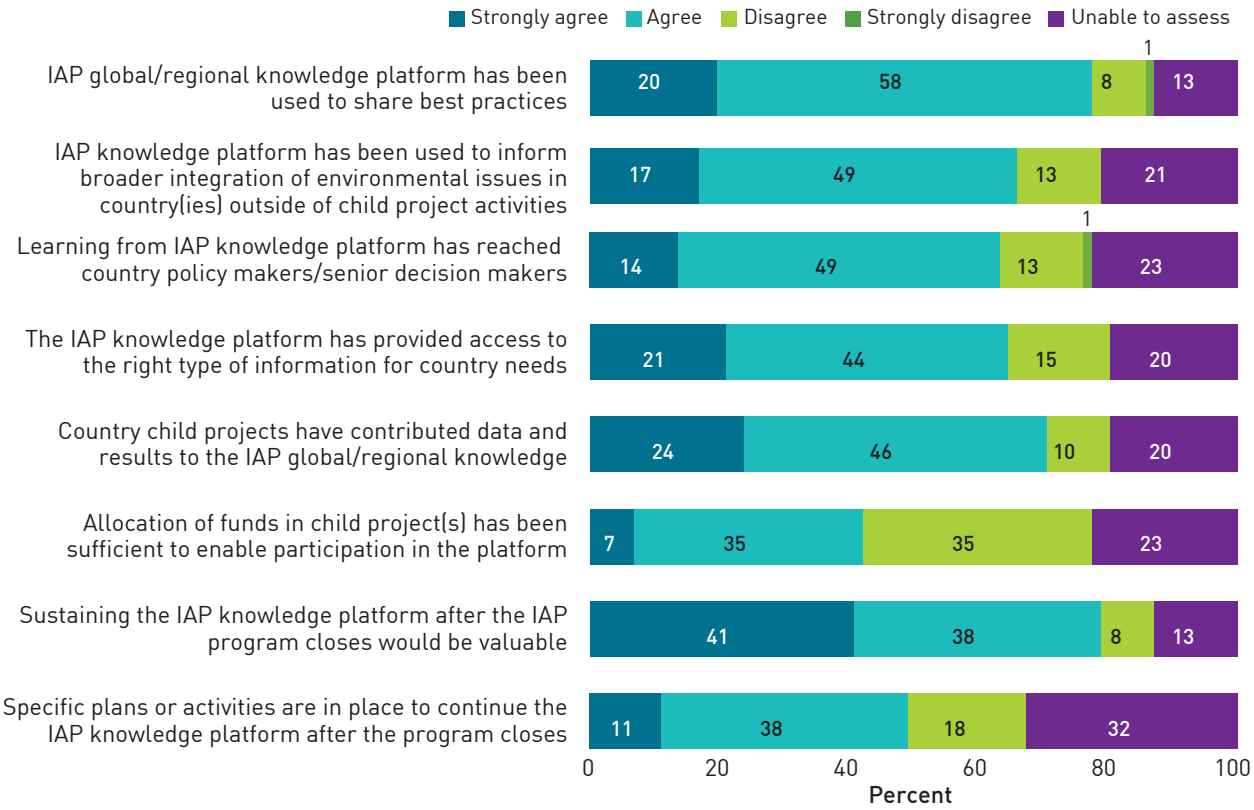
In Brazil, where the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have been particularly severe, Sustainable Cities IAP project implementation (GEF ID 9142, UNEP) was deeply affected in 2020 and 2021 and this is expected to continue in 2022. In Brasília, monthly project coordination meetings were interrupted in March 2020 and training of local farmers and planting were put off until the next rainy season. In Recife, consultants refused to submit proposals, fearing COVID-19 exposure. Field actions and activities such as workshops, training, and public consultations have been adapted to virtual formats or postponed. In Malaysia (GEF ID 9147, UNIDO), COVID-19 caused delay in the installation of smart meters and of the municipal control room to integrate renewable energy resources into the grid.

In China, the effects of COVID-19 on both Sustainable Cities child projects (GEF ID 9223, World Bank; impact program ID pending) during 2020 included: a shift to online meetings for supervision; cancellation of by international experts' travel to China; withdrawal of some international bidders from open tenders for consulting services; and cancellation of an international study tour to the Netherlands, which took one year to prepare. However, China's relatively quick control of the pandemic points to the likely resumption of normal activities for project stakeholders.

The **GGP IAP** contributed to a global community of practice—the Green Commodities Community—to facilitate learning on effective interventions to address deforestation in commodity supply chains as well as cross-cutting issues, which has provided an excellent learning environment. Connectivity among members is a primary objective of the community, supported through an annual conference, participatory sessions, and workshops (held remotely in 2020 owing to COVID-19). The community has almost 200 members from 51 organizations, including partners such as the Tropical Forest Alliance. Executing partner ISEAL Alliance launched an online information hub called Evidensia in 2020 to synthesize and disseminate global evidence on sustainable production and voluntary sourcing initiatives and commitments. While Evidensia represents good practice on scoping, consultation, and platform infrastructure, its function is relatively new. Interviews indicated that the extent to which GGP partners rely on this tool is not yet clear.

The **RFS IAP** regional hub established a knowledge platform, including through the RFS website, that serves as a well-populated repository of knowledge as well as an exchange mechanism for digital communication among child projects. For instance, the Kenya Water Fund child project worked closely with the platform to showcase and raise awareness in other countries about this innovative model of financing ecosystem service payments. The platform function for digital communication has been less dynamic and is undergoing refinements. A challenge in the platform has been to identify commonalities among child projects, given the wide diversity of themes and activities each covers. Where commonalities have been identified, peer-to-peer learning has been well received (such as work and exchanges between Kenya and Uganda in 2018 after the 2018 Nairobi workshop, Ghana–Nigeria interactions on organic fertilizer after the 2019 Ghana workshop, and Burkina Faso–Niger–Senegal

Figure 2.5 Perceptions of the IAP knowledge platforms from the country-level survey



Source: Online survey (see annex E).

subregional workshops). Another work stream of the RFS platform is the Science-Policy Interface, which interviewees said took longer to establish because Agencies' different visions had to be reconciled on how to approach linking country projects to broader scientific and policy processes at the regional and international level.

The **Sustainable City IAP**'s GPSC has become a highly visible and well referenced knowledge platform in three years. Urban practitioners around the world consult it for resources and online learning events. In the Sustainable Cities IAP, the IEO's 2020 "Evaluation of Knowledge Management in the GEF" found better integration of knowledge management in overall IAP program-level and child project designs and greater opportunities for exchange and sharing among child projects, Agencies, partners, and country-level stakeholders, than in previous GEF programs (GEF IEO 2020). The annual global events GPSC organized for all Sustainable Cities IAP program stakeholders and participating cities (New Delhi, São Paulo, and Singapore) have been key opportunities for city stakeholders to compare their performance and approaches with each other and to benchmark them against the best practices presented. The GPSC has also liaised with the national platforms being developed or reinforced in three country child projects—Brazil, China (box 2.13), and India. The GPSC adapted well to the challenge of COVID-19 for urban sustainability, with a weekly Global Online Series in 2020 exploring how cities leveraged the pandemic's radical disruption to facilitate a more environmentally and socially sustainable recovery and a weekly speaker series, "Sharing Knowledge to Respond with Resilience" to COVID-19. Interviewees said these were well received.

Box 2.13 Linking global and national knowledge platforms in the China Sustainable Cities IAP

Knowledge management is central to the design of both the Sustainable Cities IAP and the Sustainable Cities impact program child projects in China. Each child project has a component dedicated to the development of a national-scale knowledge platform, to be accessible beyond project participants. For the Sustainable Cities IAP (GEF ID 9223, World Bank), the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development manages the national platform, focusing on transit-oriented development and integrated urban planning. The China Center for Urban Development is preparing the Sustainable Cities impact program (GEF ID pending). It will focus on incorporating biodiversity conservation and NBS in urban planning and development. Project stakeholders see the platforms as resources to contribute to and draw from, with a combination of international, national, and local experiences.

Cities participating in the Sustainable Cities IAP can already draw on a common set of TOD references and adapt them to the design of local project activities. For instance, in Chongqing, the World Bank mobilized an additional Energy Sector Management Assistance Program grant to explore the compact urban form opportunities that TOD offered the city, and the outcomes were shared on the national platform, offering insights to all users. The Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development and the China Center for Urban Development are expected to maintain and expand the platforms after the completion of the GEF grants, ensuring the long-term effects of the Sustainable Cities program.

The role of the World Bank as the GEF Agency for GPSC as well as for the two China child projects has facilitated seamless integration of the knowledge generated from the Sustainable Cities IAP and Sustainable Cities impact program with the GPSC.

The IEO's 2020 Evaluation of Knowledge Management in the GEF identified GPSC knowledge and learning achievements in four directions:

- **Downward.** The platform disseminated and shared centrally produced resources such as the Urban Sustainability Framework, and the resource team conducted training and briefings on good practices, guidance, and lessons on sustainable cities topics for the main audience of project and city partners.
- **Upward.** Projects and city partners shared their good practices, lessons, and tools, publishing them on the GPSC platform or presenting them in Sustainable Cities IAP or external events.
- **Sideways.** This involved exchanges and sharing between projects. For example, UNIDO child projects, city, and project officials of Dakar, Senegal had an exchange visit with their counterparts in Malacca, Malaysia.
- **Outward.** GPSC platform resources and some events were open to external audiences. At the country level, learning events were held for non-participating cities and national online platforms were extended to include all cities (GEF IEO 2020).

The most effective knowledge platform activities combined global knowledge services with tailored assistance to the countries. This approach has been limited in the IAPs, as few child projects allocated funds for this purpose. When it was done successfully, the benefits of local-to-global collaboration were the strongest. For example, in the Malaysia Sustainable Cities IAP child project (GEF ID 9147, UNIDO), the World Bank team was able to mobilize additional technical expertise through the global project to prepare the full-fledged outlook diagnostic report "Pathway to Urban Sustainability." The RFS hub project shared this dual intention—to deliver applied knowledge services to country projects and to connect them to other sources of learning. Examples include the

peer-to-peer exchanges in West and East Africa and Conservation International's in-country training in Nigeria, requested by the child project (GEF ID 9143, UNDP), on how to use the Conservation International Resilience Atlas in Nigeria. The knowledge platform organized a partnership of the Global Farmer Field School Platform with a civil society organization that produces high-quality agricultural education videos. This should improve countries' and farmers' access to video material on sustainable agricultural practices that agricultural extension would use. Another example is an initial regional training workshop Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa and UNDP hosted for participants from several RFS child projects on greening agricultural value chains.

The knowledge platforms are playing a key role in supporting program internal coherence. Interviews and program documentation make clear the important role the IAP knowledge platforms have played in supporting overall program implementation. All three platforms have developed global concepts, tools, and learning that have been shared with child projects to encourage common approaches and efficiencies. In the GPSC, for example, the Urban Sustainability Framework has been applied to Sustainable Cities IAP child projects to support program coherence. In the RFS regional hub, substantial work on common approaches to M&E, measuring resilience, and identifying commonalities across child projects acted as glue. One challenge that delayed delivery of these services to RFS child projects was program governance. The intricate, multi-agency structure of the regional hub project meant that Agencies took considerable time to agree on substantive priorities for common strategies and finalizing administrative agreements. This affected the science-policy interface, as well as value chain development and platform support.

The knowledge platform for GGP IAP, because of its unique program design, faced perhaps a greater challenge in coordinating both the program and knowledge management and fostering integration among global child projects to drive transformational change in global commodity supply chains. Interviewees said GGP events supported a sense of community and trust among partners—although this took substantial time to establish—but did not support integration or a "coherent sense of commonality," in the words of one. The MTR supported this finding. It found that GGP's global coordination project has struggled with integrating program activities that could drive systemic change and resistance from country partners to investing limited time and resources in integration efforts.

Partnerships with major relevant institutions and networks show promise to amplify the effects of knowledge platforms in integrated programs. In the GGP, the Tropical Forest Alliance's participation in the global community of practice is seen as critical to bring learnings to the community and share them outside the community. For the RFS IAP, Agencies and technical partners (World Agroforestry [ICRAF], Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa, Biodiversity, and World Agroforestry Center) are linking the regional hub with regional entities and initiatives, including the African Union and New Partnership for Africa's Development. These could influence policies and approaches for smallholder agriculture. In the Sustainable Cities IAP, the resource team is bringing key city networks and partners together to spread the program's influence beyond participating cities. Collaboration of additional institutions beyond the original program partners has expanded technical assistance to participating cities. For example, the European Space Agency supported urban satellite mapping, and the Economist Intelligence Unit supported a full Sustainability Outlook Diagnostic for the Malaysian city of Melaka.

Several challenges are common across the IAP knowledge platforms. A main challenge has been insufficient budgetary allocations and low priority

given to knowledge management in child projects. More than a third of country-level survey respondents said child projects had insufficient funds for knowledge management (see figure 2.5). Knowledge management is not a priority nor a staffed function for many child projects, resulting in low engagement at times. A contributing factor was that most RFS and Sustainable Cities IAP child projects did not have targets or metrics for knowledge management that could drive engagement. GGP child projects each had identified knowledge products and activities, although interviews indicated these were not always shared with the knowledge platform. Interviewees said budgets for knowledge platforms are insufficient for the coordination and level of integration required to drive systems change. In GGP, for example, participation has sometimes been limited in Green Commodities Community events (20 people or fewer). Interviews and program documentation point to underresourcing the entire platform run by 1.5 people) as the cause.

IAP knowledge platforms have struggled at times to deliver demand-driven information tailored to country child projects. For example, in the GPSC, the topics selected for capacity building often reflected the complexity of the emerging economies of Asia but were sometimes overwhelming for the less developed countries of Africa. The breadth of city-level activities in the child projects was also a challenge for aligning the learning agenda, pointing to the need for greater focus on key drivers and regional clustering. In interviews, some city-level respondents had limited interaction with the GPSC.[15] In the RFS regional hub, ICRAF had limited contact with country child project staff, which made it difficult to offer demand-driven learning. The RFS IAP is now attempting to remedy this with a tailored, dual-language knowledge center with information available by theme to address country project needs.

Sequencing was a challenge from several perspectives. In the design phase, IAP knowledge platforms would have been better positioned to support country projects if they had been designed earlier and engaged in country projects' design. Because many child projects were designed before global and regional knowledge platforms, there was insufficient budget set-aside in child projects to fully participate in learning opportunities. More than a third (35 percent) of country-level survey respondents disagreed that the funding child projects allocated has been sufficient to participate in the platform. A quarter of respondents thought cost-sharing responsibilities to cover participation in platform activities, such as trainings, was unclear. Sequencing was also a challenge because all three knowledge platforms took significant time to establish themselves and attract broader participation. For RFS, this was partly caused by the organizational complexity of their multi-agency executing structure. A result was that materials were not always available to inform preparation and implementation of activities in child projects that would have benefited from that knowledge. In the Sustainable Cities IAP, sequencing was an issue in timing resource team activities, conducted in parallel with the GPSC. These ended in October 2020, before most child projects had reached midterm.

GEF-7 impact programs' design of knowledge platforms

Although not all designs are finalized, the knowledge platforms being devised for the GEF-7 impact programs show evidence of lessons learned from the GEF-6 pilots. These lessons include the importance of closer partnerships with

[15] These interviews were conducted as part of an ongoing collaboration between the GEF IEO and Rutgers University, building capacity among students to integrate their course instruction with real-world experiences. The IEO reviewed the emerging evidence from this work prior to its inclusion in this report.

child projects, technical assistance, and use of regional clustering.

The **Sustainable Cities Impact Program**, interviewees said, is making efforts to more closely partner with child projects to make the global platform offerings more demand led, tailor made, and hands on for cities. It is also trying to work with regional clusters (through WRI, ICLEI, and C40 regional coordinators) and through national dialogues. These changes reflect learning from the GPSC. Child projects have been asked to allocate budget for these activities, and the global platform project has received input from them during design on their interest in collaborating with the platform. CBOs will operate as part of the overall global platform, rather than as a separate resource team as in GEF-6.

For the **FOLUR Impact Program**, the global platform design reflects lessons from the IAPs, such as the importance of offering both knowledge sharing and country-specific technical assistance, as well as the value of working with existing roundtable platform institutions. FOLUR plans to foster knowledge exchange, often through global and regional commodity platforms, to support child projects with knowledge, technical assistance, and training that will support their efforts to influence public policy and private actions. This exchange will also leverage policies, practices, and investments, including by working with key corporate and financial–sector actors at multiple levels (global, regional, and country). What is less clear is how FOLUR will adopt lessons learned from GGP about integrating global and country projects to support green value chains.

Among the **SFM impact programs**, the Amazon and Congo impact programs plan to organize their knowledge platforms around the biome. The Amazon impact program extends and builds on the existing knowledge platform from the first phase program, which program participants view as highly successful and demand driven. In contrast, the Congo Basin impact program platform design has yet to be worked out, according to interviews. One challenge has been that designing virtually appears to have been more difficult than in other impact programs. Another is finding the right niche for the platform. Interviewees pointed to the plethora of existing knowledge and learning platforms in the Congo Basin from projects larger than the GEF-funded impact program, such as the Congo Basin Forest Partnership. The lead Agency has been consulting with the Amazon impact program to learn lessons from its platform and consider its approach to adding programmatic value through a knowledge platform (what information and knowledge would help the program achieve impact, what is already happening in the region, and what gaps the GEF-funded platform could fill).

The **Drylands Impact Program** has focused its approach on regional exchange mechanisms with the global coordination project as facilitator to capture supranational aspects and shared themes, such as LDN monitoring. Interviewees said they realized in designing the approach to a knowledge platform that most issues in drylands are regional (specific to the woodlands of the Miombo–Mopane or the central Asian steppes, often connecting to shorter, regional value chains). The regional exchange mechanism has been well articulated for Southern African countries (and will also include the Mozambique child project). Lead Agency FAO will implement all six child projects and the regional exchange mechanism. But interviewees were less clear on how the regional exchange mechanism idea would work in East and West Africa (two and one child projects in each subregion) or in Asia (two projects). They pointed to a lack of resources for this. Several interviewees suggested that if GEF-7 child projects demonstrate success in these subregions, that could set the stage for stronger knowledge exchange in GEF-8.

Sustainability of knowledge platforms

The extent to which the IAP knowledge platforms are expected to be sustained after program close varies by program and largely relies on GEF, Agency, and partner funding. Interviewed partners and 79 percent of country-level survey respondents agree that sustaining the IAP knowledge platforms after program close would be valuable. This view also recognizes that the platforms have taken substantial time and effort to build credibility and robust participation.

Some key functions of the GGP, including the community of practice and Evidensia, are planned to be sustained through GEF funding from the FOLUR impact program at a level comparable to the GGP IAP coordination project (approximately $4 million). Despite this, multiple interviewees said the role for GGP was insufficient in the FOLUR global project (although GGP partner Agencies are also recipients of additional grant financing for implementation of country child projects). The GGP (led by UNDP with the International Finance Corporation, UNEP-Financial Initiative, Conservation International, and WWF) is a core partner of the FOLUR Global Platform working across the three pillars. The global platform design envisions GGP building on its existing community of practice to engage and link up the child projects and global platform. New learning tracks will focus on gender in landscapes, restoration, and investment mobilization. The GGP is expected to contribute to the global platform's training agenda and deliver training and workshops to address needs raised by child projects. Other GGP roles are to: promote engagement with the private sector, building on its strong relationships with companies, coalitions, and commodity roundtables; expand the collaborative digital learning platform; and advance Evidensia.

The future is less certain for the RFS IAP's regional hub and will be considered in the upcoming MTR. One interviewee pointed to the possibility of technical partner ICRAF using its own funding to sustain some features of the regional platform, but no formal decision has been made.

The World Bank plans to sustain the GPSC under its own branding and funding after the child project closes, a unique situation that presents a risk of two GEF-funded knowledge platforms running in parallel for two years. The two platforms are the current GPSC, managed by the World Bank, and the new one soon to be launched by UNEP as the lead Agency in partnership with executing agencies WRI, C40, ICLEI, and UNEP Cities Division. Both platforms are funded by the GEF, both address issues of urban sustainability, and both have the mandate to support Sustainable Cities program stakeholders and the broader community of practice. All involved parties (including the GEF Secretariat, World Bank, UNEP, and WRI) are aware of the situation and agreed it was less than ideal. Consultations are ongoing to work out practical issues, such as how to avoid confusing city stakeholders and manage branding at international events such as the UNFCCC COP. World Bank is fundraising to stabilize future maintenance of the GPSC and make it permanent.

2.4 Cross-cutting issues

This section assesses the lessons learned and results from cross-cutting issues of gender, resilience, private sector, and environmental governance from the implementation of the GEF-6 IAPs to date. It also examines the extent to which the GEF-7 impact programs address these issues.

GENDER

Overall, GEF-7 impact program child projects show improvement in the systematic inclusion of gender considerations, compared to the IAPs. Across the three IAPs, some gender-related results have been reported in the RFS and GGP IAPs. The

major challenges IAPs face in implementation are insufficient resourcing for delivery of the activities envisioned in gender action plans and low capacity among project staff. The evolution in consideration of gender in integrated programming is described below.

GEF-6 IAPs

Among the IAPs, RFS and GGP show the most evidence of gender-related results. The RFS and GGP IAP child projects provided stronger gender-related reporting than the Sustainable Cities IAP, as evidenced by annual program reports and the quality-at-entry review (table 2.8). Gender-responsive results included mainstreaming women's participation in stakeholder platforms, workshops, and consultative bodies, and adoption of gender-responsive tools and interventions (e.g., decision support tools, agriculture livelihood interventions) that directly benefited women.

Document review and country case studies confirmed the divergence among programs on gender considerations. RFS and GGP coordination projects included activities focused on gender issues, while Sustainable Cities IAP gave less attention to gender. The **RFS** regional hub project developed a program-level gender monitoring framework in consultation with country child projects and the GEF Secretariat. It shifts from gender indicator lists to a best-practice model, emphasizing empowerment through secured access and rights to lands, water, forests, financial services, and technology; increased incomes; improved capacities in literacy and market and economic activities; and better daily time management. The regional hub project developed training guidelines on gender transformative approaches and trained country teams on the distinction between reaching women with project interventions and realizing tangible benefits for women from those interventions. In addition, the regional hub provided gender-related support to country child projects, including in Eswatini, Nigeria, and Uganda.

The **GGP** coordination project developed four learning pieces on gender mainstreaming; organized virtual workshops on gender; included a gender agenda item in quarterly country-focused calls; and featured a gender session in the Good Growth Conference, building on issues raised in gender workshops held by the GGP community of practice. In 2020, the GGP partnership released a publication on gender mainstreaming in agricultural supply chains, with relevant guidance for stakeholders involved in commodities-related projects, including under FOLUR. The **Sustainable Cities IAP** global coordination project and resource team have had fewer activities with a strong gender focus. The Sustainable Cities IAP did not set up a program-level framework to track gender across the program, although such a system was mentioned in the PFD.

Across all three IAPs, common challenges to integrating gender considerations in implementation are insufficient resourcing for delivery of

Table 2.8 Quality-at-entry review of gender considerations in IAPs during implementation

Gender consideration reported in IAP child project PIRs and MTRs	Sustainable Cities (*n* = 13)		RFS (*n* = 13)		GGP (*n* = 5)	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Gender-disaggregated indicators	6	46	12	92	4	80
Gender-specific results (demonstrated progress toward achieving gender equality or women's empowerment)	4	31	10	77	4	80

Source: Quality-at-entry analysis (see volume 2).

the activities envisioned in gender action plans, low capacity among project staff, and short time frames for delivering concrete results (especially when the first year or two is used to develop gender analyses and action plans). The MTR for the GGP coordination project noted, for example, that the project has suffered from a lack of interest on gender issues among organizations working with the GGP. The RFS experience illustrates the important contributions a coordination project can make in addressing at least the first and second constraints. The FOLUR impact program global platform plans to give particular attention to providing specific knowledge management and communications support on gender to child projects, a positive evolution from the pilots.

Trends in gender responsiveness in IAP coordination projects carried through to the child projects. RFS program reporting on child projects shows good attention to gender equity, as do the two RFS projects with MTRs (box 2.14). Among the GGP child projects, progress has been uneven (box 2.15). A key lesson from the GGP experience on gender is that while there are some similarities among countries and commodities, gender inequalities and appropriate measures to address them are highly context, culture, and commodity specific. Some Sustainable Cities IAP child projects lack clear intentions to address gender considerations, and several Sustainable Cities IAP child projects focus weakly on their gender reporting and representation of women in project teams and organizations involved in implementation.[16] The value of representation should not be discounted; however, the

Box 2.14 Examples of gender results from RFS projects at midterm

The Ethiopia country project (GEF ID 9135) followed through on mainstreaming gender issues in food security and livelihood diversification activities in implementation. It provided gender inclusiveness training to nearly 6,400 community members and developed a gender-sensitive decision support tool used in community conservations and decision making. Although not originally planned, 12 district-level and 58 community-level gender teams were established and are responsible for mainstreaming gender in district development plans, conducting gender equality and family planning trainings, and holding community conservation meetings. An important outcome of these activities was the development of gender action plans in each of the project districts. The Ethiopia project also targeted women's groups to support income-generating activities through the establishment of self-help groups working to establish small-scale, high-value businesses.

In Kenya, progress toward gender inclusion was under way in the Upper Tana Nairobi Water Fund project (GEF ID 9139, IFAD). As of 2020, 40 percent of project beneficiaries were women, against an appraisal target of 50 percent. The project improved women's control and access to productive resources and their decision-making role. It also reduced their workloads. Women as well as men were able to grow horticultural crops with the help of more water pans, fruit seedlings (such as avocado), and training. Three of four extension workers are women, and the project provides a 50 percent subsidy on all materials for drip kits and biogas for women-led households. Still, the MTR found more gender sensitization is needed for project staff and implementation partners.

[16] For example, Sustainable Cities Initiative Senegal (GEF ID 9123, World Bank and UNIDO), Promoting Sustainable Cities in Brazil through Integrated Urban Planning and Innovative Technologies Investment (GEF ID 9142, UNEP), Sustainable City Development in Malaysia (GEF ID 9147, UNIDO), and National Platform for Sustainable Cities and Climate Change (GEF ID 9698, Inter-American Development Bank).

Box 2.15 Gender results in GGP projects at midterm

The Demand project (GEF ID 9182, WWF-US and UNDP) faced challenges to understand how to integrate gender into activities and was delayed in analyzing these issues given dependence on the Production and Brazil projects. One key outcome has been the briefing note in the Soy Toolkit (for global buyers and traders) on incorporating gender considerations into sustainable soy sourcing. The Production project (GEF ID 9180) developed gender action plans for each of the three participating countries, which led to measures to increase women's participation in commodity platform meetings and working groups and address the different needs of women and men in farmer support activities. To date, 1,694 women have been trained on sustainable agriculture practices or otherwise benefited from the project. In the Brazil project, gender actions were still a pending task at midterm and difficult to complete, partly owing to changes in the political environment. Similarly, the Transaction project (GEF ID 9696, World Bank and UNEP) intended to integrate gender through balanced participation in training, but this has proved difficult in the finance sector.

GEF Gender Policy aims higher (GEF 2017). Some attention has been given to enhancing women's mobility. For example, in Paraguay (GEF ID 9127, UNDP), the Ministry of Women participated in creating a good-practice manual for designing bicycle paths with a gender lens. In China, the child project (GEF ID 9223, World Bank) developed a study on the accessibility of public transportation for seniors, people with disabilities, and women, to make design improvements to increase these groups' use of public transportation.

GEF-7 impact programs

GEF-7 impact program child projects show improvement in terms of the systematic inclusion of gender-disaggregated indicators, gender analysis, and gender action plans, in line with the overall GEF-7 portfolio. The quality-at-entry analysis showed that all the impact program child projects ($n = 43$) have conducted gender analysis and developed gender action plans during project preparation. Gender-sensitive indicators and interventions are considered in the logical frameworks, and all impact program child projects include gender-disaggregated indicators in terms of number of female beneficiaries. These findings are reinforced by the country-level survey, in which 91 percent of respondents agreed that impact program child projects include gender elements in their design to help achieve broader environmental impact. Eighty-eight percent also agreed that child projects include elements that specifically seek to close gender gaps and empower women. As an example, the Amazon impact program child project in Colombia (GEF ID 10300, World Bank) intends to promote gender equality in the management of protected areas; empower women's indigenous organizations; design activities that recognize women's central role in safeguarding traditional knowledge related to biodiversity, food safety, and family; and build capacity of female producer organizations, among other actions.

RESILIENCE

Overall, resilience has been considered in the GEF-7 impact programs from both climate and nonclimate risk perspectives. In the GEF-6 IAPs, the RFS IAP offers a good practice example of how to consistently consider and measure resilience across a program. The evolution of the consideration of resilience in GEF integrated programming is described below.

GEF-6 IAPs

Among IAPs, evidence of resilience has been strongest in the RFS IAP, perhaps not unsurprisingly given the focus of the program. The quality-at-entry analysis found that 10 out of

13 (77 percent) RFS child projects reported on resilience-focused indicators in their PIRs/MTRs, with a predominant focus on climate resilience (table 2.9). The inclusion of resilience-focused indicators was supported by work by the RFS regional hub, which undertook a study on the different approaches of assessing resilience for enhanced food security and of measuring project impact on resilience by the 12 IAP country projects. The study found a diversity of focuses around resilience, including on ecosystem regeneration, agrobiodiversity, and community-level resilience. The regional hub has since engaged extensively with country teams to consolidate approaches to monitoring resilience through tools such as the Self-evaluation and Holistic Assessment of Climate Resilience of Farmers and Pastoralists (SHARP) and the Diversity Assessment Tool for Agrobiodiversity and Resilience (DATAR), used by seven projects. A holistic framework now tracks resilience through changes in assets and capacities, stressors and shocks, and contextual factors across the program.

None of the GGP IAP projects and just 3 of 13 (23 percent) of Sustainable Cities IAP projects report on resilience-focused indicators, based on the results of the quality-at-entry analysis. Less than a third of GGP and Sustainable Cities IAP child projects address resilience to climate risks in their PIRs and MTRs. For the GGP IAP, no clear activities were identified on how resilience could be integrated into project implementation; in practice, resilience was integrated as a consideration through risk analysis and adaptive management, particularly for shocks such as natural disasters, disease, market changes, and political changes.

For the Sustainable Cities IAP, although the program's design did not highlight the importance of climate resilience in the context of integrated sustainable urban planning, some focus on resilience has emerged in implementation. Urban resilience has been understood to relate to climate resilience (e.g., climate-induced flooding), as well as shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic and its socioeconomic repercussions for cities. In the China Sustainable Cities IAP child project, for example, although resilience was not an expected outcome given the project's focus on transit-oriented development, the issue of resilience of transport infrastructure is being considered during project implementation. The forthcoming Sustainable Cities impact program project also has a clearly identified output around resilient development and will disseminate urban resilience references through the national platform. At the global level, resilience is mainstreamed through the GPSC's knowledge pillars, such as integrating climate resilience into city planning and a focus on financial resilience, such as through the Urban Sustainability Framework.

GEF-7 impact programs

Resilience considerations are included in the design of GEF-7 impact programs and their child

Table 2.9 Quality-at-entry analysis of resilience in IAPs (% of child projects)

Resilience consideration in IAP child project PIRs and MTRs	RFS (*n* = 13)	GGP (*n* = 5)	Sustainable Cities (*n* = 13)	All IAPs (*n* = 31)
Resilience related to climate risks is referenced	85	20	31	52
Resilience related to nonclimate risks is referenced	31	40	15	26
Resilience-focused indicators are reported	77	0	23	42

Source: Quality-at-entry analysis (see volume 2).

projects. GEF-7 impact programs consider resilience in the overall program design (box 2.16). Although more than 80 percent of country-level survey respondents agreed that the concept of resilience was well understood in child project design, interviews and quality-at-entry analysis show a wide diversity in how GEF stakeholders and projects conceptualize resilience. This understanding ranges, for example, from resilience at the individual, household, or community level to much broader landscape or agroecosystem resilience,[17] and from resilience to climate and nonclimate risks and shocks.

Most impact programs take a systems, landscape, and household perspective on resilience. Only the Congo impact program PFD makes mention of a Resilience Adaption Pathways and Transformation Assessment (RAPTA). At CEO endorsement, all impact program child projects considered resilience both related to climate and nonclimate risks and shocks, based on the quality-at-entry analysis. Eighty-eight percent of country-level survey respondents agreed that child projects address resilience related to climate risks, and 77 percent agreed for resilience related to nonclimate risks. All impact program child projects ($n = 43$) include elements designed to build local capacity to adapt to climate change, in particular with regard to implementing locally appropriate climate-smart practices (such as for agriculture), developing early warning systems, and improving disaster management. Resilience related to climate risks has also been reported in the impact program child projects' risk management plans, which have specified mitigation actions at the design and implementation stages. Compared to the Sustainable Cities IAP, climate resilience has a higher profile in the GEF-7 Sustainable Cities Impact Program child projects, with most reporting it prominently. NBS for adaptation and resilience are found in both the Sustainable Cities IAP and Sustainable Cities Impact Program child projects, as in the cases of Asunción (Paraguay) and San José (Costa Rica), demonstrating the value of integrating biodiversity conservation with sustainable urban planning.

A common theme for nonclimate-related resilience among impact program child projects was resilience to COVID-19 impacts. Mitigation measures are identified in all impact program child project documents at the CEO endorsement stage, according to the quality-at-entry analysis. Short-term responses include adopting remote communication via email, video conference, and phone; adjusting project work plans and stakeholder engagement plans; and evaluating the need for design modification from a decreased availability of cofinancing. The mitigation measures aim to support countries' COVID-19 responses and contribute to building the resilience of local livelihoods by providing necessary inputs, technical assistance, and diversification opportunities. In the medium term, projects intend to contribute to countries' recovery plans by improving management of natural resources.

PRIVATE SECTOR

Private sector engagement plays a more prominent role overall in the GEF-7 impact programs, with evidence of some lessons from the GEF-6 pilots having been identified and incorporated to varying degrees in each of the GEF-7 impact programs. The evolution of the GEF approach to private sector engagement in integrated programming is addressed below.

[17] This systems-level understanding of resilience is consistent with the definition put forward in the Resilience, Adaptation Pathways and Transformation Assessment framework developed by the GEF STAP: "the capacity of a social–ecological system to absorb shocks and trends (like drought) and to reorganize so as to retain the same functions, structure, and feedbacks (the same identity)" (O'Connell et al. 2016, 1).

Box 2.16 Resilience considerations in GEF-7 impact program design

The **FOLUR Impact Program** PFD expects country projects to "catalyze more resource-efficient and effective production practices in more sustainable and resilient landscapes and agricultural production value chains." Resilience is also an expected outcome in the FOLUR theory of change, that is, the increased resilience and diversity of commodity and food production systems. Component 2 of the impact program specifically includes activities to promote resilience and increased productivity through sustainable intensification.

Resilience is clearly stated as a program goal in the **Sustainable Cities Impact Program** PFD, as part of all four components. It is part of component 1 focused on integrated urban planning, of component 2 focused on investments in sustainable, integrated, low-carbon and resilient conservation or land restoration investments in cities. Resilience is also referred to under the innovative financing mechanisms of component 3 and as part of the knowledge platform topics of component 4.

The **Drylands Impact Program** also considers resilience in its theory of change from the perspectives of (1) program outcomes related to climate change resilience and (2) resilience as a core feature of drylands landscape sustainability. Resilience is also linked to the LDN approach that guides child project development; one objective of LDN is to "increase resilience of the land and populations dependent on the land." FAO is already using its resilience assessment and planning tool, Self-evaluation and Holistic Assessment of Climate Resilience of Farmers and Pastoralists (SHARP), which was previously used by many child projects in the RFS, to measure baseline resilience of farmers to climate change and other farm-level impacts (UNCCD 2018).

The **Amazon Impact Program** PFD designates resilience as a critical outcome of the program, that is, to "improve the resilience of the Amazonian biome to climate change" and to "maintain and restore the ecological resilience of the Amazon biogeographical region." The theory of change also aims at improved resilience and livelihoods for local communities and indigenous populations.

Resilience features somewhat less prominently in the **Congo Basin Impact Program** PFD. Interviewees explained that while resilience was recognized as important, it has not been a strongly guiding principle for the program so far. The Congo impact program PFD explains that program/project development will be guided by the STAP's recommendation to increase systems thinking including by measuring the system's "resilience to expected and unexpected shocks and changes" and that the impact program will use a tool "such as the RAPTA [Resilience Adaption Pathways and Transformation Assessment] guidelines" to do so.

GEF-6 IAPs

Several lessons have been learned in the GEF-6 pilots related to private sector engagement that are relevant for the GEF-7 impact programs. A partnership approach to working with the private sector, seeking to build on and amplify existing multistakeholder platforms and initiatives, showed success in the GGP and RFS (see, for example, box 2.17, on the success of corporate collective engagement in soy). Both the RFS and GGP have also illustrated the importance of making a convincing business case for private sector investment in NBS (see box 2.17 for the Kenya Water Fund experience), an activity which features in the FOLUR Impact Program design for its global platform.

Another important lesson relates to the importance and challenge of identifying and aligning global and local entry points for working with the private sector to support sustainable value chain development—and the critical role of the global coordination project in this. The insufficient integration of systems thinking was a stumbling block at times for private sector engagement in the GGP and RFS. At design, for example, the RFS did not specifically

Box 2.17 Case study examples of private sector engagement and results in GEF-6 IAPs

RFS IAP in Kenya. Private sector engagement by Kenyan companies was an important cornerstone of the theory of change, environmental governance, and sustainability of the IAP Water Fund project (GEF ID 9139, IFAD). Results of private sector participation were only partly reached in the project. Private sector capitalization of the Endowment Fund is behind at midterm, due to the lack of a convincing business case, companies' short-term interests and alternative mandatory payments for conservation, political changes, and policies and regulations governing private sector contributions.

GGP IAP in Brazil. The GGP Demand Project (GEF ID 9182, WWF-US and UNDP) has been substantially focused on engagement with the local and international private sectors to support sustainable soy in the Cerrado region. The project has made excellent progress in terms of corporate engagement with buyers and traders. The agreement signed by 64 global buyers as Signatories of Support for the Cerrado Manifesto in February 2019 is a major milestone for protection of the Cerrado biome, and one that the project has contributed to according to interviewees and project reporting. Interviewees explained that this initiative is perceived by signatory companies as one that truly seeks real positive impacts on the ground, rather than promoting mere declarations of intent. With contribution from WWF's involvement in the Cerrado Working Group (Grupo de Trabalho do Cerrado, GTC[1]), a further agreement has been reached between the GTC and the Cerrado Manifesto signatories that would serve to eliminate the conversion of native Cerrado vegetation for soy production. This accomplishment illustrates the effectiveness of the corporate engagement approach through platforms and pressure on traders, as orchestrated through nonpublic letters signed by 160 buyers and 43 investors (responsible for $7 trillion of investment), making clear the risk of divestment if traders do not take action in relation to the deforestation associated with products they market. The success of the agreement, however, depends on finding donors to fund the financial mechanism for compensating producers to conserve biodiversity above the legal requirements—a process being led by the Collaboration for Forests and Agriculture.

The Soy Toolkit is another significant accomplishment of the project, aimed at increasing the capacity of key buyers and traders of Brazilian soy. The toolkit contributed toward prompting some large companies to revise their sourcing policies and helped Proforest engage with the Soft Commodities Forum (supported by a complementary donor-funded initiative). Members of the Soft Commodities Forum—a global platform of leading commodity companies including Cargill, Bunge, Louis Dreyfus Company, Archer Daniels Midland, Glencore Agriculture, and COFCO International—have agreed to monitor and publish data concerning trading company soy supply chains from 25 Cerrado municipalities facing the highest risk of conversion of native vegetation to soy. With International Finance Corporation support under the Demand Project, progress has been made in better understanding the Chinese market for Brazilian soy, but interviewees noted that it has been challenging to connect this the production side—to bring farmers with whom Conservation International Brasil is working through the Brazil Production Project into the COFCO supply chain.

[1] The GTC includes large soybean trading companies (representing 80 percent of the Brazilian soy market), producers' organizations, Brazilian consumer goods companies, civil society organizations, financial institutions, and government representatives.

plan to work with multinational corporations at the regional level through the coordination project; this shortcoming was to be addressed midway through implementation through a regional facilitation platform to mobilize private sector actors and link local producers with the global market. The GGP has also struggled through its coordination project to create sufficient buy-in and incentive for integration of its Demand, Production, and Transaction child

projects, working across the global to the national and subnational levels.

One challenge for supporting alignment of private sector engagement across local and global scales for GGP and RFS was the lack of understanding of value chain development and systems approaches among country partners. In RFS, for example, country partners had difficulties in identifying or expressing their needs for support in this area from the regional hub project. Another factor is extent of time and resources needed to support private sector integration across value chains, and the fact that neither the IAP coordination projects nor the child projects had sufficient budget for these purposes. A final, and important, contributing factor relates to the GEF partnership model. The GGP has demonstrated the importance of entry points for private actors at the global or multinational level. However, interviews indicated that it is not entirely clear how the responsibilities for leveraging and managing these entry points divide between the GEF Secretariat, lead Agencies, and child project Agencies.

From the Sustainable Cities IAP, limited lessons are drawn for private sector engagement. The Sustainable Cities IAP's private sector engagement has focused primarily on procurement of goods and services from the private sector in country child projects. The Malaysia child project, implemented by UNIDO, offers a good-practice example of private sector engagement during implementation, with significant involvement of the private sector in energy efficiency and renewable energy actions, and the installation of smart meters for energy distribution. Municipal finance is also one of the three knowledge pillars of the GPSC, and multiple resources and events have been developed to strengthen cities' capacities to mobilize finance including through public-private partnerships and improved creditworthiness to encourage access to capital markets.

GEF-7 impact programs

Private sector engagement plays a more prominent role overall in the design of the GEF-7 impact programs. This aligns with the GEF-7 Programming Directions identifying the impact programs as an important pathway for the GEF to work more with the private sector as an agent for market transformation (GEF 2018a).[18] All 43 impact program child projects provide specific information regarding private sector engagement in their project documents. According to the quality-at-entry analysis (table 2.10), 23 out of 43 (53 percent) impact program child projects plan to engage private sector actors to adopt or implement global environmental benefit-producing interventions, while nearly a third of impact program child projects will engage private sector actors through multistakeholder platforms (an increase compared to IAP child projects)—an approach that is consistent with the GEF Private Sector Strategy (GEF 2020b). The impact programs also have a higher expectation for private sector cofinance than the IAPs; at the project identification form (PIF) stage, the impact programs anticipated 12 percent of child project cofinancing to be provided by the private sector, compared to 1 percent in the IAPs. Interviews suggested that these higher contributions are associated with child projects that are more tailored to private sector engagement, as well as an approach focused on partnering with existing private sector funds and initiatives.

The private sector has been more engaged upfront in design of the PFDs and knowledge platforms in GEF-7, as demonstrated by the PFDs, documentation from the PFD design phase, and interviews. The impact program PFDs—especially the FOLUR Impact Program, as described below—take a partnership approach to working with the private sector, seeking to build on and amplify existing

[18] No IAP or impact program child projects have used nongrant instruments to date.

Table 2.10 Quality-at-entry analysis of private sector engagement plans in impact program and IAP child projects (%)

Type of private sector engagement	Impact program child projects planning engagement type at CEO endorsement (*n* = 43)	IAP child projects reporting engagement in PIRs/MTRs (*n* = 31)
Public-private partnership	47	26
Multistakeholder platform	30	19
Member of project steering committee	5	0
Adopt, implement global environmental benefit–producing interventions	53	45
Receiving direct social benefits	40	19
Source of innovative technology and approaches	9	23
Ensure institutional, technical capacity for global environmental benefit–producing interventions beyond project	21	16
Fund interventions beyond project	2	3

Source: Quality-at-entry analysis (see volume 2).

multistakeholder platforms and initiatives. This approach reflects the lesson from the IAPs about the effectiveness of this strategy.

The **FOLUR Impact Program** plans to engage coalitions of private sector actors at national, regional, and global levels in the commodity and crop value chains, and leverage partnerships and investments. Private sector engagement is integral to the program theory of change. Global outcomes include leveraged action through partnerships, increased corporate commitments, and catalyzed private sector investments. The coalition partnerships and private sector engagements are expected to help FOLUR scale up. The global platform is envisioned as having a central role in engaging private sector value chain actors at national and multinational scales, and in leveraging important partnerships, such as with the Food and Land Use Coalition (FOLU) and the GGP from GEF-6. The private sector is also prevalent in child projects. In China, for example, the private sector is expected to be a key player, including medium-scale enterprises and major conglomerates such as Alibaba Company, to expand digital agriculture (e.g., precision farming).

In the case of the **Sustainable Cities Impact Program**, the goal of involving the private sector in a programmatic fashion is stated in the PFD, particularly in component 3, Innovative Financing and Scaling-up, where the involvement of the private sector is described as part of the accelerator model. In a policy-conducive environment, private sector collaboration is combined with the contributions of financial institutions and extended knowledge sharing. Six of the nine country child projects intend to involve the private sector, such as the China child project, which mentions pilots in biodiversity conservation, ecotourism, urban green infrastructure, and circular economy. The India child project refers to private sector engagement in redeveloping seafront areas, and the Sierra Leone child project with reference to sustainable waste management operations.

The **SFM impact programs** also plan to engage value chain actors and financial sector partners to deliver on their outcomes. A key outcome of the Drylands Impact Program is to engage resource managers, government, and private sector in strengthening green value chains for sustainable drylands management. The program will engage

with producers, intermediaries (including multinational commodity traders in some cases), processors, and retailers, as well as with financial service providers to promote the availability of financial instruments to productive enterprises. In Mongolia, for example, the child project (GEF ID 10249, FAO and WWF-US) aims to develop partnerships with financing institutions such as XacBank to enable access to affordable financing for herders (in particular, women) and to engage meat and cashmere processing companies to link them with herder cooperatives that will be supported in meeting codes of sustainable practice and certifications. The Amazon Impact Program targets private sector engagement in sustainable productive value chains through a range of activities, including technologies to support better decision making, and partnerships with the financial sector for innovative financing schemes. The Congo Impact Program includes partnerships with private sector as one of the drivers of the transformational change envisioned nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) its program objective; this engagement includes official commitments from companies to deforestation-free or peatland-friendly production practices and increased private investment in conservation in the Congo Basin. Interviews and project documents indicate, however, that while the private sector is featured prominently, the entry points have not yet been solidified.

The **FOLUR and SFM Impact Programs** plan to engage value chain actors and financial institutions across multiple scales—from subnational to national to multinational. The coordination project will play a significant role in this, especially for FOLUR. Interviewees stated that the challenge of aligning global and local entry points for working with the private sector to support sustainable value chain development—as experienced in the IAPs—is likely to be amplified under FOLUR, which is working across many more countries and commodities than GGP. For instance, interviewees pointed out that a multinational, multicommodity buyer may not want to have to coordinate across multiple Agencies representing multiple country child projects. The FOLUR global project document suggests that the global coordination project will play a role in brokering such relationships, but whether that will be done by a single partner, in coordination with the national-level activities of multiple child projects, is not yet articulated.

ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE

Across both the IAPs and impact programs, aspects of good environmental governance are widely considered and incorporated in child project activities but are not reported as such. Environmental governance considers the role of all institutional systems and actors that impact the environment. Good governance exists when processes and institutions produce results that meet the needs of society and the environment while making the best use of resources at their disposal. It is participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, equitable, and inclusive, among other attributes. From governments to NGOs, private sector, and civil society, cooperation is critical to achieving effective governance and a more sustainable future. For this evaluation, environmental governance was considered from the perspectives of activities that (1) engage stakeholders; (2) influence the country environmental legal framework to promote good environmental governance; and (3) build capacity among relevant actors and institutions for this purpose.

GEF-6 IAPs

IAP child projects show robust evidence of activities to build institutional and individual capacity and enhance interministerial and inter-Agency interactions for environmental governance, through the quality-at-entry review, survey, interviews, and country case studies (box 2.18). Eighty-one percent of IAP child projects

Box 2.18 Case study examples of environmental governance results

The **Kenya** case study shows actual accomplishments of environmental governance and community benefits through GEF IAP/impact program projects. This includes the pioneering Upper Tana Nairobi Water Fund (GEF ID 9139, IFAD)—a first in Sub-Saharan Africa—established to collect private sector contributions downstream to pay farmers for protection of ecosystem services in the catchment areas. Kenya also concentrates on devolving environmental governance and related awareness and institutional capacity building to county (district) levels. Securing community ownership, rights, and access to natural resources is a cornerstone of the two Kenya impact program projects.

In **China**, the Cities impact program project (GEF ID pending) engages environment departments of municipal and provincial governments to promote conservation and NBS in urban management. All this is made possible through synergy with cofinancing partners. For the FOLUR impact program project in China (GEF ID 10246, FAO and World Bank), environmental governance will build heavily on mainstreaming environment in agriculture and provincial governments through institutional mechanisms.

The GGP **Brazil** Production Project (GEF ID 9617, UNDP) addresses stakeholder engagement in environmental governance through support for Coalition MATOPIBA, a multistakeholder forum created by Conservation International Brasil under another initiative that facilitates dialogue between government, academia, farmers, civil society, and the private sector. Discussions have brought together representatives of farmers' organizations, traders, and financial institutions to coordinate actions under a shared vision of sustainable production in the region. These discussions have considered policy proposals. For Sustainable Cities, the extension from municipal to metropolitan jurisdictions in impact program reinforces the environmental local governance of integrated natural resource management and urban planning, including planned participation of environmental institutions.

reported relevant activities. About two-thirds of country-level survey respondents reported that GEF-6 IAP child projects are already contributing to these areas. Another quarter to a third of respondents expects the project to contribute later to implementation. Activities include shared knowledge platforms and stakeholder working groups, online trainings, and targeted technical assistance and analyses to support environmental governance. Slightly less attention is given to activities to influence the legal framework for environmental governance, with two-thirds (68 percent) of IAP child projects reporting on such activities and slightly more than half of survey respondents (56 percent) perceiving a contribution already achieved. Stakeholder engagement has been strong in the IAPs, with four-fifths of child projects documenting a role for civil society organizations in implementation, as demonstrated by the quality-at-entry analysis.

Interview partners emphasized the important role of multistakeholder platforms and integrated planning and decision-making processes—at national, subnational, and local scales—in supporting good environmental governance. For the RFS IAP, for example, one of the main objectives of the program has been to bring together officials and other stakeholders from environment and agriculture for common environmental governance. In countries such as Malawi (GEF ID 9138, IFAD), project contributions reach from the village to the district to the national level. The Sustainable Cities program broadened the urban agenda to encompass global environmental benefits, including considerations such as biodiversity conservation, NBS, land restoration, and landscape management. It now targets collaboration of institutions in charge of urban planning and infrastructure with those in charge of environmental protection. This has translated into the sometimes cumbersome coordination of departments that traditionally remained siloed, adding a layer of complexity to decision making, but setting the stage for more sustainable

urban futures. The Paraguay child project (GEF ID 9127, UNDP), for example, overcame initial resistance to broadening the coordination platform to include environmental agencies. The India Sustainable Cities IAP child project (GEF ID 9323, UNIDO) faced similar resistance to a national multistakeholder platform but succeeded in institutionalizing it. The platform is now providing important inputs into municipal planning processes. Experience from Malaka, Malaysia (GEF ID 9147, UNIDO) shows the urgency but also inherent challenge of interministerial and inter-Agency cooperation as ministries of natural resources or environment offices tend to be marginalized but can fulfill critical tasks in informing an integrated and sustainable agenda.

Interviewed partners from several child projects and Agencies commented on the importance of promoting inclusion and environmental governance with governments. The reality of putting together effective participatory multistakeholder platforms for integrated landscape management is considered more difficult in practice than on paper in Indonesia, but experience with multistakeholder platforms has shown that traditional top-down approaches can be mitigated. In Tanzania (GEF ID 9132, IFAD), lessons have been learned for land use planning. Local environmental governance is now considered much more effective than top-down land use plans.

GEF-7 impact programs

The country-level survey and interview partners showed high expectations for impact program child projects in terms of supporting better environmental governance. More than 90 percent of respondents expected that the impact program child projects would build individual and institutional capacity for environmental governance, enhance mechanisms among government entities, and influence the country's environmental legal framework. In the Sustainable Cities Impact Program, for example, broadening the urban scope to the metropolitan scale will include regional natural resource management agencies in project coordination and environmental governance decision making. The Drylands Impact Program sees a critical role for well-designed environmental governance in landscape management and draws attention to the need for the GEF and Agencies to carefully monitor to what extent established and supported environmental governance institutions have decision-making powers. Among the impact program child projects that have submitted project documents, somewhat fewer projects show evidence of environmental governance activities (table 2.11). Because the impact program portfolio is still under development, these percentages may change as project documents are finalized.

Stakeholder engagement, including civil society organizations, has also been strong in the impact programs, as demonstrated by the quality-at-entry analysis. Every impact program child project has developed a stakeholder engagement plan. The Amazon impact program has paid particularly strong attention to participatory approaches, with projects designed in close collaboration with indigenous communities and directors of national protected areas.

Table 2.11 Quality-at-entry review of environmental governance–related activities in impact program child projects

Environmental governance-related activity self-reported by child project	No.	%
Influence country environmental legal framework to promote good environmental governance	23	53
Enhance interactions or mechanisms between different government ministries or agencies	18	42
Related to capacity building that targets enhancing environmental governance mechanisms, processes, or institutions	17	40
Target building capacity of actors involved in environmental governance	28	65

Source: Quality-at-entry analysis (see volume 2).

Conclusions and recommendations

3.1 Conclusions

Overall, GEF-7 integrated programming represents an improvement over the GEF-6 IAPs across several dimensions. The GEF-7 impact programs show evidence of learning and evolution from the pilot phase, including in the areas of relevance and coherence of design, process, and results, as described in the specific conclusions below. The design of GEF-7 impact programs remains relevant to conventions, national priorities, and drivers of environmental degradation. Compared to the IAPs, impact programs have been designed with stronger theories of change, and lead Agencies are engaging earlier and more intensively to develop common program-level results frameworks. In terms of processes, the rollout of the GEF-7 impact programs was more transparent and inclusive. A stronger role for lead Agencies is envisioned in GEF-7 and shows promise for supporting continued program internal coherence and results achievement. The design of knowledge platforms in GEF-7 impact programs also reflects lessons learned from the IAPs in terms of better tailoring platform offerings for country needs. Finally, cross-cutting issues have received more emphasis in GEF-7 impact programs, especially on private sector engagement.

RELEVANCE OF DESIGN

Conclusion 1: **Integrated programming is largely targeting relevant countries and drivers of environmental degradation, with a few exceptions.** Integrated programs are designed to address root causes of environmental degradation. They show synergies primarily among biodiversity, climate change, and land degradation focal area objectives, but there is scope for stronger integration with international waters and chemicals and waste. Although the Amazon and Congo Basin impact programs consider freshwater systems, virtually no global environmental benefits related to marine systems are anticipated from the IAPs or impact programs[1]—an absence that is all the more notable considering the long history of integration in the international waters focal area, from OP9 on integrated land and water to the GEF's International Waters Learning Exchange and Resource Network (IW:LEARN) program. The limited participation of SIDS in IAPs/impact programs is also a missed opportunity, given the relevance of

[1] One exception is the Sustainable Cities impact program child project in Indonesia (GEF ID 10494, World Bank), which targets over 38,000 ha of marine habitat under improved practices under core indicator 5.

whole-island approaches and history of the Integrating Watershed and Coastal Area Management (IWCAM) program (GEF ID 1254, UNEP and UNDP) in the Caribbean SIDS. In addition to environmental considerations, GEF integrated approaches also intersect with socioeconomic factors, including those associated with interventions focused on urban development, rural livelihoods, and commodity value chains. The GEF Secretariat's strategy for the GEF-7 impact programs to ensure that relevant countries participated in addressing drivers of environmental degradation—in terms of geographical targeting, putting incentives in place, and working with Agencies and countries—has been largely successful.

Conclusion 2: **Integrated programming is widely seen as a strategic innovation of the GEF and one that draws on the GEF's institutional comparative advantages.** Chief among these is the GEF's role in serving multiple conventions and multilateral environmental agreements. IAPs and impact programs address the objectives of multiple conventions and country priorities in an integrated manner. Integrated programming does not substantially impact the ability of countries to report to the conventions. The GEF's comparative advantages of convening power and partnerships are also linked to the integrated approach's potential for transformational impact.

COHERENCE OF DESIGN AND M&E SYSTEMS

Conclusion 3: **The design of the GEF-7 impact programs has improved since the GEF-6 IAPs, with areas identified for improvement.** Impact program child projects show good alignment with broader impact program PFD objectives and main components. Theories of change have improved in the GEF-7 impact programs, showing stronger evidence of systems thinking. However, insufficient consideration is given to the roles and responsibilities for linkages between program and country project theories of change in the integrated programs that focus on value chains. For example, global/regional coordination projects may engage with multinational companies through multiple Agencies and partners, which will need to link with other Agencies implementing child project-specific activities at national and subnational levels. The GGP IAP experience showed this value chain integration work requires substantial time and effort and clearer roles and responsibilities among the GEF Secretariat, lead Agencies, other Agencies, and partners.

Conclusion 4: **Program-level reporting in the GEF-6 IAPs has still to demonstrate the value addition of taking a programmatic approach to integration; while improvements are noted in the design of GEF-7 impact program M&E systems, important challenges remain.** An important lesson learned is that common results frameworks across program and child projects—derived from the program theory of change—are critical for program reporting. These were not well developed for all IAPs, hindering program-level aggregate reporting. While the RFS IAP has undertaken substantial work to develop such a framework and transition to the GEF-7 core indicators, these preparations have taken until mid-2020. The GGP IAP and Sustainable Cities IAP are still in the process of finalizing their program-level reporting systems for some of the GEF-7 core indicators. In the GEF-7 impact programs, lead Agencies have started to work more strongly and interactively to develop common program results and reporting frameworks earlier in the design process; in addition, all impact program child projects will report on GEF-7 core indicators. However, several challenges remain which complicate program-level reporting for lead Agencies in the impact programs, including related to the approaches for determining the results from coordination projects and aggregating intermediate results. A main issue is that while the 2019 GEF

Monitoring and Evaluation policies help to clarify roles and responsibilities in program- and child project-level M&E reporting, program-level M&E has still to be implemented in project cycle practice.

PROCESS

Conclusion 5: **Substantial process improvements have been realized in the rollout of GEF-7 impact programs.** The new competitive EOI process has provided open access, involved clear selection criteria, and demonstrated strong interest among countries in participating in GEF-7 impact programs. A competitive procurement process was also employed for selection of the lead Agency, although interviewees raised concerns about how the GEF Secretariat's efforts to ensure a major role for CBOs—seen as critical for engaging with city leaders and "crowding in" expertise and knowledge that goes beyond GEF Agencies—influenced the lead Agency selection process for the Sustainable Cities Impact Program. The process led to a change in the lead Agency between the Sustainable Cities IAP and Sustainable Cities Impact Program, a situation that has potential efficiency risks as the implementation of the two programs (and their associated knowledge platforms) will occur in parallel for another two years—although the implications of this change for program results is still to be known.

An improvement over the GEF-6 IAPs has also been in the sequencing of program design in GEF-7. This followed a program-to-project logic with child projects generally designed in parallel with the global/regional coordination projects (rather than before them, as in the IAPs). Program design processes were seen by country stakeholders as being adequately inclusive, including of operational focal points. In terms of efficiency, the rollout of the impact programs has followed a similar timeline to the IAPs, and the progress of IAP child projects into implementation has followed similar timelines to the rest of the GEF portfolio.

Conclusion 6: **The design of the GEF integrated approaches places considerable responsibility on the lead Agency to deliver programmatic results and value added.** The design of the GEF-7 approach better recognizes the critical role of the lead Agency and global/regional coordination project in this regard. GEF-7 expands the role for the lead Agency to involve program coordination, program integration, and program reporting—building on an important lesson from the IAPs that ensuring clarity of roles and responsibilities between the global/regional coordination projects and country child projects is a critical aspect of good program governance. Some additional funding follows this expansion; GEF-7 impact programs have a slightly higher funding allocation for coordination projects, and child projects also now allocate funds for interacting with the coordination project. Managing internal and external coordination; integrating across scales, countries, and Agencies; and monitoring and reporting on the program value-add of it all are important and substantial tasks for the lead Agencies. If the experience of the GGP IAP coordination project is telling in its struggle to integrate across value chains for a smaller number of commodities and countries, then the FOLUR Impact Program faces a massive task—requiring strong technical, partnership management, and leadership capabilities—in doing so across a wider-ranging program.

This positive evolution is held back in part by unaddressed aspects of the GEF-6 design that interact with the systemic characteristics of the GEF as an institution that is based on partnerships. While the GEF partnership model clearly allows Agencies to bring their comparative advantages into integrated programming, some Agencies are more cooperative than others in a setting in which the incentives for working in a coordinated manner are not clear and the rules of engagement are not fully codified.

The experience of the GGP IAP, for example, has shown that establishing a foundation of trust among Agencies and partners upon which the benefits of integration can be built is a time-intensive process—one that has taken fully three years. A lack of cooperation from some Agencies has also hampered lead Agencies' efforts to establish program-level reporting systems, as mentioned above, in part because Agencies are not required to share PIRs.

RESULTS

Conclusion 7: **Lead Agency annual program reports, MTRs, PIRs, and country case studies demonstrate progress toward results, although it is still early to observe many global environmental benefits.** While the RFS and GGP IAPs have reported on some program-aggregated global environmental benefits to date (including hectares of land restored or protected), the Sustainable Cities IAP has not yet reported global environmental benefits. Among the IAP child projects, about half of projects indicate progress toward achieving concrete environmental outcomes, and two-thirds of IAP child projects show progress toward policy or legal results. Few socioeconomic and household resilience outcomes have been reported so far, in part because programs have only just established baselines for these indicators. Consistent with the findings of the IEO 2018 evaluation on multifocal area benefits, all IAP programs are establishing (or supporting existing) multistakeholder platforms and institutional mechanisms and capacity to underscore policy initiatives and support sustainability. In implementation, the country case studies showed that the main challenges faced are related to the use of an integrated approach, including working across government ministries, agencies, or departments and implementation arrangements that involve multiple Agencies and executing partners to support integration.

Conclusion 8: **At midterm, the GEF-6 IAPs knowledge platforms are playing their intended key role in supporting learning and capacity building across projects, with areas for improvement.** The IAP knowledge platforms have resulted in greater knowledge and learning activities than many past GEF programmatic approaches and other programs where knowledge was given priority. Partnerships with major relevant institutions and networks show promise to amplify the effects of knowledge platforms in integrated programs. Across the IAPs, the most effective activities combined global knowledge activities with specific assistance to the countries. A main challenge has been that few child projects allocated funds or staff time for knowledge management. Other key tasks for the IAP knowledge platforms have related to delivering country-relevant information, especially in the Sustainable Cities IAP with diverse participation from less developed cities in Africa to much more developed cities in Asia, and to ineffective sequencing among platforms and child projects. Although not all designs are finalized, the knowledge platforms being devised for the GEF-7 impact programs show some evidence of lessons learned from the GEF-6 pilots, such as closer partnerships with child projects, plans for more offers of technical assistance, and use of regional clustering.

3.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the evaluation makes three recommendations for future integrated approach programming.

Recommendation 1: **To make ongoing efforts in aggregate program-level reporting effective, the GEF Secretariat must clarify program-level reporting requirements for lead Agencies.** The GEF community is eager to learn whether integrated programming delivers on its promise of the "whole being more than the sum of its parts." The GEF IEO 2017 Programmatic Approaches

evaluation has demonstrated the program value added over comparable stand-alone interventions. The value-added potential is there but must be measured. Current program-level reporting for the IAPs is insufficient to measure this value added. This must be improved in the GEF-7 impact programs to support the rationale for integrated programming. Program-level monitoring and reporting requirements must be better codified in project cycle practices. Global and regional coordination projects should not be required to report on global environmental benefits in all cases. Some relevant intermediate results that are linked to the program theory of change—not just global environmental benefits—should be aggregable across child projects. This will take substantial work on the part of the lead Agency, as the RFS experience has demonstrated.

Recommendation 2: **The GEF Secretariat and lead Agencies should work to further catalyze and demonstrate the value addition of a programmatic approach to integration.** Specific actions include the following:

- The GEF Secretariat should ensure that global and regional coordination projects are designed before child projects or at least with some logical staging so that they are not designed fully in parallel. Lead Agencies' coordination and integration role during design is intensive and may require funding beyond the normal project preparation grant. Depending on program objectives and scope, additional funds should be available.
- In implementation, lead Agencies should consider activities that support systems-based thinking—such as the midterm systems-based workshops to review drivers and barriers—and adapt accordingly. Such reflection and agility are important processes for supporting progress toward transformational change.
- In design and throughout implementation, the lead Agency, under the guidance of the GEF Secretariat, should clarify operational roles and responsibilities for working with the private sector entities involved in value chains that span from multinational to national and subnational scales. This will be critical for value chain integration across those scales and with Agencies and child projects.

Recommendation 3: **The GEF should ensure greater diversification in the set of countries included in the integrated programs.** While the programs have addressed relevant environmental issues in major countries, they should be more inclusive of smaller countries, such as SIDS.

Approach paper

This annex has been lightly edited for style and consistency. Its original annexes have been appended to this final evaluation report and the references updated accordingly.

A.1 Background

One of the main reforms introduced by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) during GEF-6 consisted of a set of pilot programmatic approaches aimed at addressing the main global environmental challenges through an integrated approach. This new approach includes programming of GEF funds to help recipient countries meet their commitments to more than one global convention or thematic area by addressing the underlying drivers of environmental degradation. The GEF-6 Programming Directions set out a rationale for the pilots to address discrete, time-bound global environmental challenges in line with the targets and goals of the multilateral environmental agreements that the GEF serves (GEF 2014).

Three integrated approach pilot (IAP) programs were launched during GEF-6, introducing this new dimension of programming that emphasized "integration" as a key organizing principle for GEF financing. These programs were structured around major drivers of global environmental degradation. Two programs were global, one focusing on urbanization (the Sustainable Cities IAP) and one on commodity-driven deforestation (the Commodities IAP); a third program centered on sustainability and resilience for food security in Sub-Saharan Africa drylands (the Food Security IAP). GEF financing for these programs was not "siloed" by focal area, but rather designed with the intention of being invested in a coherent manner to promote synergies in generating multiple global environmental benefits, while ensuring that progress in any dimension of the global environment does not negatively affect other related socioeconomic objectives.

In 2017, the GEF Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) assessed the relevance and coherence of the design of IAP programs with GEF-6 focal area strategies, their alignment with convention guidance, and their capacity to reflect synergies in delivering focal area strategies while accounting for country needs and ownership (GEF IEO 2018c). This formative review also looked at the IAP programs' initial uptake in participating countries and the efficiency of the launching process. The review concluded the following:

- 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 IAPs have pursued an innovative and flexible design to address the drivers of environmental degradation, but use a wide variety of indicators and tracking tools, hindering aggregation within each IAP and for the three IAPs all together.
- The IAPs draw on the comparative advantages of a variety of GEF Agencies and specialized think tanks, but the involvement of several Agencies and institutions in each IAP has added to the programs' organizational complexity.
- The IAPs' design and launch process were affected by insufficient clarity in terms of rules of engagement between Agencies, transparency of selection processes, clarity on the role of the Secretariat, and insufficient communications between some participating GEF Agencies and countries on technical design.

Based on these conclusions, the 2018 formative review recommended assessing the value addition of the knowledge platforms at midterm to ensure they fulfill the objective of providing overall support to program implementation through sharing lessons across countries on child projects' experience and provide coordination support to the programs. The review also recommended standardization of indicators, tracking tools, and metrics across the IAPs to demonstrate program additionality through monitoring and evaluation (M&E).

The GEF-7 programming documents build on the early lessons generated by the three pilots—including those generated by the 2018 formative review mentioned above—to fully roll out the GEF integrated approach through a sizable investment in a set of discrete impact programs. Building on the Food Security and the Commodities IAPs, the Food, Land Use and Restoration (FOLUR) Impact Program seeks to transform food and land use systems and help countries reconcile competing social, economic, and environmental interests by moving away from unsustainable sectoral approaches. The Sustainable Cities Impact Program, which builds upon its eponymous GEF-6 predecessor, the Sustainable Cities IAP, promotes sustainable urbanization to more cities and countries. Three sustainable forest management impact programs shift GEF support focus from individual countries, an approach applied to precedent REDD+ (reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries) projects under the climate change mitigation focal area, to three specific biomes: the Amazon, the Congo Basin, and selected drylands around the globe, where comprehensive sustainable forest management intends to preserve these ecosystems and their services to humanity.

These programs incorporate three unique innovations, based on the experience with the IAPs in GEF-6 and previous programmatic approaches: (1) incentive funding for country participation; (2) a competitive selection process among countries (through the preparation and evaluation of expressions of interest); and (3) dedicated funding for a coordination or platform project to act as the knowledge "glue" between selected countries, extending the reach of the impact program beyond selected countries, as well as to ensure that overall delivery of the impact program achieves the ambitions of transformational change central to the GEF-7 Strategy.

As part of its work program for GEF-7, the GEF IEO has been tasked to evaluate both the IAPs and impact programs. Building on the formative review conducted in 2017, and as information on results is not yet available for GEF-7 impact programs, the IEO plans to adopt a formative approach

to this evaluation. As implementation of the activities supported by the three GEF-6 IAPs in the field has reached midterm, some intermediary results should possibly be observed. GEF-7 impact programs have only recently been approved, and project preparation for design of child projects is currently ongoing. This formative evaluation will therefore include a midterm assessment of implementation of the GEF-6 IAPs, early results and lessons, and an assessment of how the lessons from these pilots are informing the impact programs. The evaluation will also include an assessment of the design of the GEF-7 impact programs, focusing on inter alia, relevance, coherence, the theory of change, results matrices and indicators, program additionality and innovation, addressing risks, and the GEF's adaptability to help build back better with greater sustainability.

In order to capture the evolution of the integrated approach from GEF-6 to GEF-7 programs by looking at the links between GEF-6 pilot initiatives and GEF-7 impact programs, this formative evaluation will be structured around three major pillars, based on common themes dealt with by both GEF-6 pilots and GEF-7 impact programs: (1) sustainable urbanization (Sustainable Cities IAP and Impact Program), (2) food systems (FOLUR Impact Program and Food Security and Commodities IAPs), and (3) sustainable forest management (sustainable forest management and Amazon, Congo and Drylands Impact Programs). The main features of GEF-6 IAPs and GEF-7 impact programs are described in annex F.

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected almost every country in the world, from the more industrialized nations to the developing ones. At the virtual GEF Council meeting held in early June 2020, several Council members expressed concern about the COVID-19 crisis and requested monitoring its impacts on GEF programs, especially in developing countries. As COVID-19 affects urban areas more acutely,[1] the Sustainable Cities IAP and Impact Program are an opportunity to understand how implementation of these programs is being affected by the crisis in the short term and how program teams are responding to it. In addition to evaluating midterm results of the IAPs and design elements of the impact programs, this formative evaluation will also shed light on the strengths and weaknesses of the integrated approach in the presence of a newly emerged crisis.

A.2 Purpose and objectives

The purpose of this formative evaluation is to critically assess the GEF integrated approach piloted in GEF-6 with the IAPs and fully rolled out in GEF-7 with the impact programs to address the major drivers of environmental degradation. The two core objectives are (1) to evaluate the progress made in the IAPs' implementation and report on the intermediary results achieved to date, and (2) to evaluate the design of the impact programs and the extent to which lessons from the GEF-6 pilot experience and the 2018 formative review of the IAPs have been applied in the design of GEF-7 impact programs. The evaluation will also seek to understand how the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has affected the Sustainable Cities IAP and Impact Program.

The formative evaluation of the GEF integrated approach is being conducted as an input to the Seventh Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF (Overall Performance Study—OPS7).

[1] According to the latest Sustainable Development Goals Report (UN 2020), over 90 percent of COVID-19 cases are in urban areas.

A.3 Scope, issues, and key questions

This formative evaluation will cover the GEF integrated approach experience and evolution from the GEF-6 pilot phase to full rollout in GEF-7. The GEF-6 IAPs, GEF-7 impact programs, and related child projects are included in the evaluation scope (annex C). Issues to be looked at fall in three main categories—design, process, and cross-cutting issues—described in the following paragraphs.

Design issues to be assessed include the continued relevance of this new approach to multilateral environmental agreements, GEF additionality and comparative advantage, and innovations, especially the knowledge platforms. This analysis will look at program internal coherence in terms of program and child project objectives and theories of change, as well as standardization and alignment of metrics and indicators in both program and child project M&E systems. Quality of design will also be assessed for consideration given to sustainability factors at the program level and in child projects. Governance and transparency of decision making will be assessed from both a design and a process perspective.

In terms of **process**, this formative evaluation will assess the progress of IAPs' implementation as well as the efficiency of impact programs' launching process and will include an assessment of how the current COVID-19 pandemic is affecting these programs. **Cross-cutting issues** to be looked at include gender, resilience of the impact programs' targeted geographies to climate and nonclimate risks, and private sector engagement, particularly with respect to alignment with the new GEF policies. Knowledge management and stakeholder engagement will be looked at closely when assessing the effectiveness and functioning of the multistakeholder knowledge platforms.

The evaluation purpose and objectives translate into the following key questions, divided in two main clusters:

- **Relevance and coherence of the GEF integrated approach design**
  - Does the new GEF integrated approach applied to GEF-7 impact programs continue to be responsive to convention guidance and consistent with multilateral environmental agreements?
  - Do the integrated programs draw on the GEF's comparative advantage to address drivers of environmental degradation, and how do they demonstrate the GEF's additionality and innovation?
  - To what extent are these programs internally coherent in terms of objectives, theories of change, and M&E systems, demonstrating progress along credible scaling pathways to achieve transformational change?
  - Have important factors such as governance (including environmental governance and related institutions),[2] financial and other sustainability factors been considered in the design of both IAPs and impact programs, and if yes, how?
  - Have the cross-cutting issues of gender, resilience to climate and nonclimate risks, and engagement with the private sector been

[2] **Good governance** in a social system exists when processes and institutions produce results that meet the needs of society while making the best use of resources at their disposal. Good governance is participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive, and follows the rule of law. **Good environmental governance** considers the role of all actors that affect the environment. From governments to nongovernmental organizations, the private sector, and civil society, cooperation is critical to achieving effective governance and move toward a more sustainable future.

considered in the design of both IAPs and impact programs, and if yes, how?

- **Efficiency and effectiveness of the GEF integrated approach implementation**
  - Have these programs' internal governance systems and decision-making processes been transparent and inclusive both at design and during implementation?
  - How efficient have the start-up of the impact programs and implementation of the IAPs been, and how have programs been affected by the current COVID-19 crisis?
  - To what extent have the IAPs' child projects achieved their planned outcomes at midterm?
  - How effectively has knowledge been shared within programs through the knowledge platforms?
  - To what extent has program-level reporting been systematized and enables establishing a clear and demonstrated link between program and project results?

An evaluation matrix will be developed as a result of a detailed evaluability assessment. The matrix will be structured around the above key evaluation questions and include specific quantitative and qualitative indicators as well as methods and sources of data for each of them.

A.4 Approach

The evaluation will apply a mixed-methods approach, encompassing both qualitative and quantitative data and information gathering and analyses, including the following:

- A **quality-at-entry analysis** on all the IAPs and impact programs' program and child project documents to assess the responsiveness to United Nations conventions of these interventions; program–child project internal coherence (objectives, theories of change, and M&E systems); consideration of gender, resilience, and private sector engagement; governance and sustainability; institutional arrangements for knowledge sharing and other program coordination mechanisms (with a focus on the knowledge platforms); among others. The quality-at-entry analysis will be based on the latest available official project document and will use an adapted version of a formative assessment tool developed by the IEO.
- A **geospatial analysis** focusing on the relevance of the design of the food systems–related interventions (Food Security and Commodities IAPs, and FOLUR Impact Program). This analysis will assess whether the targeted locations at the national and subnational levels correspond to the critical areas of environmental degradation targeted by the GEF. Global and regional geospatial data sets showing the locations where the IAP/impact program target commodities and crops are grown and also where environmental degradation is occurring or is vulnerable to occurrence due to key environmental characteristics (deforestation, areas of high biodiversity) will be used. Data sets showing areas that could be prioritized for restoration will also be considered, given the focus of the Food Security IAP and the FOLUR Impact Program on integrated landscape management and restoration of natural habitats. Overlaying these data sets with areas where the IAPs/impact programs have chosen to work will allow a spatial assessment of how well the programs have chosen target countries and subnational regions where they would have the most impact addressing key environmental issues associated with the target commodities and crops.
- A **portfolio analysis** aimed at describing in aggregate form the portfolio under review in terms of Agencies involved, source of funds,

focal areas covered, implementation status, and main intervention typologies.

- A **timeline analysis** relative to the GEF activity cycle applied to GEF programmatic approaches, to assess the efficiency of the programs' and related child projects' design, start-up, and implementation phases. This analysis will complement similar analyses conducted in the 2018 formative evaluation aimed at providing an important metric contributing to the understanding of the time needed to set up these investments and informing the discussion on the need to manage their organizational complexity.
- A comprehensive set of **central-level interviews** and selected **focus groups** to gather insight and perspectives from all the relevant stakeholders and key informants involved in these programs and related child projects. These will include representatives from the GEF Secretariat, the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP), and GEF Agencies that have been involved in the design and implementation of these programs and child projects; as well as representatives of the various external international institutions and think tanks involved in providing services related to knowledge sharing, M&E, and coordination.
- An **online survey** specifically designed to gather country stakeholder perceptions on the IAPs in general and the child project in which they are participating. This survey will be administered to GEF and UN convention focal points, GEF Agencies' representatives, and other involved national stakeholders. The survey will be designed to shed light on the level of understanding among the GEF focal points and within governments of recipient countries more generally of what these programs were (or are, in the case of impact programs) intended to accomplish, and whether there should in future be some mechanism to account for country demand for participation in this type of programming.
- A limited number of **country case studies** purposively selected based on the presence of both (ongoing) IAP and (planned) impact program child projects in the country (potential country candidates include Brazil, India, and China, among others). A focus of these studies will be on assessing the similarities and differences between GEF-6 IAPs and GEF-7 impact programs' child projects and capture any eventual links and interconnections in order to understand how the GEF integrated approach to address the drivers of environmental degradation has evolved in a given country from GEF-6 to GEF-7. The total number of cases will depend on access to and availability of information, given the constraints placed by the current COVID-19 pandemic, among others. If travel to selected countries is not allowed, the studies will be conducted remotely.

Data and information for the environmental governance analysis will be gathered in the review of documents in the quality-at-entry analysis, central-level interviews, country case studies, and online survey. This analysis will be based on (1) an assessment of stakeholder engagement that considers the role of all actors involved in these programs and child projects, from governments to nongovernmental organizations, the private sector, and civil society; (2) an assessment of how these programs and child projects plan to influence the country environmental legal framework to promote good environmental governance; and (3) an assessment of the capacity-building components targeting environmental governance of these programs and child projects.

Triangulation of the information and qualitative as well as quantitative data collected will be conducted at completion of the data gathering and analysis to determine trends and identify the main findings, lessons, and conclusions.

A.5 Synergies

This evaluation will explore synergies with other evaluations being conducted in the context of OPS7. One such synergy will be with the Evaluation of GEF Support to Sustainable Forest Management and REDD+ projects. While that evaluation covers the three GEF-7 sustainable forest management impact programs with the aim of tracing the history and evolution of SFM interventions to provide insights and lessons on GEF support for future forest-related interventions, this evaluation will focus on the new GEF integrated approach applied to these interventions with the aim of assessing the advantages and limitations of the GEF integrated approach as a new GEF typology of support.

A formative quality-at-entry review of the portfolio will be conducted in synergy with the Evaluation of GEF Support to Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and have a special focus on the interventions that engage the private sector—especially MSMEs—and the economic and social outcomes intended to benefit this sector. This evaluation will also collaborate with the OPS7 Knowledge Management Review on a case study focusing on knowledge management applied in IAPs (including hub projects, knowledge platforms, networks, and services) to identify early lessons on their effectiveness and functioning, and prospects for their continuation postcompletion.

A.6 Limitations and mitigation measures

This evaluation will face two interlinked limitations, namely the COVID-19 pandemic and related travel restrictions, and the early stages of development of impact programs' child projects. The latter limitation is compounded by the former. In three subsequent email communications (March 1, April 23, and June 1, 2020), due to extraordinary events or circumstances beyond the control of the parties (the COVID-19 pandemic fits within this definition), the GEF Chief Executive Officer (CEO) decided to extend by six months the deadlines for CEO endorsements and approvals for all projects approved to date. This decision is affecting the development and submission for CEO endorsement of impact programs' child projects. As not all child projects may receive official CEO endorsement by the end of 2020, the quality-at-entry analysis will be based either on CEO endorsement documents or child project concepts, whichever is most updated. As child project concepts are not intended to be used as stand-alone documents, they will be considered within their respective program framework documents.

Given the travel restrictions and safety concerns arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, in-country fieldwork will be considered on a case-by-case basis to be undertaken by local consultants according to guidelines and regulations applicable to the respective case study countries and specific project sites. If field visits cannot be completed, in-country data will be collected remotely by phone, through online surveys, or other appropriate means. Local consultants will still be able to contribute without traveling to project sites and will be helpful for their knowledge of the national context and their own networks of stakeholder contacts in the respective country. Available evaluative evidence and other national data and information will also be used to the extent possible to supplement primary data collection.

A.7 Stakeholder engagement

Different stakeholders will be consulted during the process to verify preliminary findings. A reference group will be established, composed of representatives from the GEF Secretariat, the GEF Agencies, and the STAP, to (1) provide feedback and comments on the approach paper, the preliminary findings, and the evaluation report; (2) help ensure

evaluation relevance to ongoing as well as future operations; (3) help in identifying and establishing contact with appropriate individuals for interviews/focus groups; and (4) facilitate access to data and information.

A.8 Resources and timeline

This formative evaluation will be conducted by an IEO team led by a senior evaluation officer, with oversight by the Chief Evaluation Officer and the Director of the IEO. The team is composed of an evaluation analyst and specialized subject matter experts. IEO staff with specific skills (i.e., geospatial analysis) will also contribute to the evaluation. The skills mix required includes evaluation experience and knowledge of the IEO's methods and practices; familiarity with the policies, procedures, and operations of the GEF and its Agencies; knowledge of the GEF and external information sources; demonstrated skills and long-term experience in food systems, food security, commodities value chains, and sustainable urban development; as well as practical, policy, and/or academic expertise in key GEF focal areas of the programs under analysis (i.e., land degradation, climate change, biodiversity, and sustainable forest management).

This formative evaluation is being conducted between June 2020 and June 2021 with early findings formulated within the first quarter of 2021. The initial workplan presented in table A.1 will be adapted as a result of further preparations.

Table A.1 Timetable

Task	2020												2021					
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Background, scoping, draft approach paper	x	x	x															
Finalize approach paper and upload on IEO website				x	x	x	x	x										
Documentation review								x	x									
Geospatial analysis								x	x	x	x							
Portfolio and timeline analyses									x	x	x							
Interviews, focus groups and country case studies									x	x	x	x						
Quality-at-entry analysis											x	x	x					
Online survey											x	x	x					
Preliminary findings													x					
Gap filling/additional analyses													x	x	x			
Draft Report														x	x			
Due diligence (gathering feedback and comments)															x	x		
Final Report																x	x	
Presentation to Council																		x
Edited report																		x
Dissemination and outreach																		x

Evaluation matrix

Key question	Data/indicator	What to look for	Source of information	Method/tool
Relevance and coherence of the GEF integrated approach design				
Does the new GEF integrated approach applied to GEF-7 impact programs continue to be responsive to convention guidance, and consistent with multilateral environmental agreements?	Alignment with convention guidance and GEF strategy documents	• PFDs and child projects have clear references to the conventions and MEAs • PFDs and child projects have objectives that clearly align with GEF-7 strategies • PFDs and child projects clearly focus on major drivers of environmental degradation in a way that promotes synergy; and target multiple global environmental benefits	• Relevant guidance documents from the conventions served by the GEF as a financial mechanism • GEF programming docs, Focal Area Strategies • Program/child project docs (PIFs, CEO Endorsement, PIRs and MTRs) • 2018 review for IAPs	• Document review • Quality-at-entry review for impact programs
	Perceptions on stakeholder incentives and/ or disincentives to participate in GEF impact programs	• Respondents are motivated to participate in the IAP/impact programs because of the integrated nature and focus on drivers of environmental degradation • Respondents are committed to implement activities and generate multiple global environmental benefits across the relevant conventions • Countries are motivated by the additional GEF impact program incentive funds • Countries perceive disincentives to participation, such as heavy or complex reporting requirements, different national plans for using STAR, or country issues with lead Agency or with child project Agency, among others	• GEF Secretariat, Agencies and UN convention staffs (both in HQs and in country), OFPs and other key informants involved in these programs and related child projects • 2018 review for IAPs	• Document review • Central interviews and focus groups • Case studies • Online survey

Key question	Data/indicator	What to look for	Source of information	Method/tool
Does the new GEF integrated approach applied to GEF-7 impact programs continue to be responsive to convention guidance, and consistent with multilateral environmental agreements? *(continued)*	Alignment of GEF program support with national priorities and other donor programs	• PFDs and child projects align to national environmental priorities • Respondents perceive that programs and child projects align with national priorities and engage relevant government and non-government actors • PFDs and child projects have clear references to other donor programs and clearly articulate the program/project position vis-à-vis others	• Program/child project docs (PFD, PIFs, CEO Endorsement) for impact programs • Documents from other donors' programmatic support • National strategic, programmatic and budget documents • OFPs and national UN conventions focal points, GEF Agencies staffs (in country) and other key informants involved in these programs and related child projects • 2018 review for IAPs	• Quality-at-entry review for impact programs • Case studies • Online survey
Do the integrated programs draw on GEF's comparative advantage to address drivers of environmental degradation and how do they demonstrate the GEF's additionality and innovation?	Evidence that IAPs/impact programs draw on GEF comparative advantage	• Respondent perceptions of the comparative advantage of the GEF in IAPs/impact programs (a) as an environmental finance mechanism; (b) in leveraging the right partners; (c) as an institution with experience on programmatic approaches; and (d) as a trusted Government counterpart, particularly of environmental ministries and agencies • GEF capacity to mainstream issues in projects when they are cofinanced/blended finance • Relevant Agencies lead hub projects and other child projects, based on their comparative advantage • Access to finance for multiple environmental issues; evolution of STAR and non-STAR focal areas allocations and utilization in GEF programs	• GEF Secretariat, Agency, and STAP staffs, OFPs, other country stakeholders • GEF PMIS and portal • 2018 review for IAPs	• Document review • Central interviews and focus groups for impact programs • Online survey • Case studies • Portfolio analysis
	Program additionality in food systems and value chains (i.e., locating impact programs in areas where they can have the most impact in achieving the global environmental benefits)	• Level of agreement between impact program site locations and areas of high environmental importance or impact (geospatial) • Level of agreement between impact program site locations and areas of high importance to global supply chains of key commodities (geospatial)	• Program/child project docs • Online data repositories • Geospatial data layers	• Geospatial analysis for impact programs

Key question	Data/indicator	What to look for	Source of information	Method/tool
Do the integrated programs draw on GEF's comparative advantage to address drivers of environmental degradation and how do they demonstrate the GEF's additionality and innovation? *(continued)*	• Expected additionality at completion • Expected transformational change	• Clear articulation and typology of how additionality is expected to manifest itself at completion • Clear articulation of how programs and child projects will achieve broader impact beyond project completion • Mechanisms for broader adoption (mainstreaming, scale-up, replication, market transformation) mentioned in PFD and child projects • Depth of change and scale of change targeted by the programs and child projects (relevance and sustainability are addressed elsewhere in this matrix)	• Program/child project docs for impact programs • OFPs and national UN conventions focal points, GEF Agencies staffs (in country) and other key informants involved in these programs and related child projects • 2018 review for IAPs	• Document review • Quality-at-entry review for impact programs • Case studies • IEO evaluation method for additionality
	Evidence that IAP/ impact programs are helping to introduce innovations	• Frequency and typology of references to innovations (consistent with the definition in the IEO's Approach Paper for the study on Innovation in the GEF) in PDF and child project (e.g., innovative approach, institutional arrangement, technology, business model/financial structure) • Evidence of impact program partnerships with specialized technical regional and global organizations that promote innovative thinking, technologies and activities	• Program/child project docs for impact programs • GEF Secretariat, Agency, and STAP staffs, OFPs, other country stakeholders • 2018 review for IAPs	• Document review • Quality-at-entry review for impact programs • Central interviews and focus groups • Online survey

Key question	Data/indicator	What to look for	Source of information	Method/tool
To what extent are these programs internally coherent in terms of objectives, theories of change and M&E systems demonstrating progress along credible scaling pathways to achieve transformational change?	Coherence and consistency in objectives and design across child projects, and in the evolution of IAPs to impact programs	Extent of alignment of child projects with PFD and hub project programmatic theory of change, priorities, innovative propositions, and partnership objectives	• Program/child project docs for impact programs • 2018 review for IAPs	• Document review • Quality-at-entry review for impact programs • 2018 review for IAPs • Portfolio analysis
		Impact program PFDs and child projects reference and incorporate lessons learned from previous projects and programs, including IAPs	• Program/child project docs for impact programs • GEF Secretariat, Agency, and STAP staffs • 2018 review for IAPs	• Document review • Implementation analysis for impact programs • Central interviews and focus groups
	Coherence in M&E systems demonstrating progress toward transformational change (at design)	• Clear guidance issued by the GEF Secretariat to support coherence • Common standards developed for program and child project M&E (aligned tools, common indicators, relevant gender and resilience indicators) • M&E baselines established or planned for child projects and PFDs • M&E systems enable tracking at multiple and aggregate scales, including the program level and relevant environmental scales (e.g., ecosystem)	• Program/child project docs for impact programs and IAPs • GEF Secretariat internal governance documents • GEF Secretariat, Agency, and STAP staffs • 2018 review for IAPs	• Document review • Quality-at-entry review for impact programs • Central interviews and focus groups
Have important factors such as governance (including environmental governance and related institutions),[a] financial and other sustainability factors been considered in the design of both IAPs and impact programs, and if yes, how?	Extent of consideration of governance	• Role of all actors involved in the programs and child projects, from governments to NGOs, the private sector, and civil society • Types and intensity of child project activities (advocacy, capacity building, generation of information, etc.) aimed at influencing the country environmental legal framework to promote good environmental governance	• Available country data • OFPs and national UN conventions focal points, GEF Agencies staffs (in country) and other key informants involved in these programs and related child projects	• Case studies
	Extent of consideration of financial and other sustainability factors	• Existence and typology of financial sustainability measures in program and project design • Existence and typology of measures supporting institutional, political and environmental sustainability in program and child project design	• Program/child project docs for impact programs • 2018 IAP review	• Document review • Quality-at-entry review for impact programs

Key question	Data/indicator	What to look for	Source of information	Method/tool
Have the cross-cutting issues of gender, resilience to climate and nonclimate risks and engagement with the private sector been considered in the design of both IAPs and impact programs, and if yes, how?	Extent of gender analysis, inclusion and participation of women, gender indicators and targets	• Clear consideration of gender equality and women's empowerment and agency in PFDs • Share of women and men targeted as direct project beneficiaries in child projects • Proportion of child projects that: • Conduct gender analysis at design • Consider gender (e.g., in project description or in specific gender objectives/ activities) • Have gender responsive program and project results framework and M&E • Have a gender mainstreaming strategy or action plan • Include gender experts	• GEF corporate scorecard (gender) • Program/child project docs • 2018 review for IAPs	• Document review • Quality-at-entry review for impact programs • Online survey
	Extent of strategic resilience analysis, indicators, and targets	• Whether resilience is clearly included in the theory of change • Frequency of resilience specific M&E indicators and targets • Frequency of mention of RAPTA or other resilience framework in impact program child projects • Perceptions on the usefulness and clarity of resilience as a concept, its understanding in countries etc. • Whether design of risk mitigation mechanisms is sufficient for dealing with COVID-19 in the Sustainable Cities IAPs/impact programs; whether other features would be needed	• Program/child project docs for impact programs • 2018 IAP review • GEF Secretariat, Agency, and STAP staffs	• Document review • Quality-at-entry review for impact programs • Central interviews and focus groups • Online survey
	Extent of private sector engagement	• Funds raised from private sector for cofinance and parallel finance • Proportion of child projects (including hub) that include private sector actors in steering committees • Proportion of child projects with clear reference to role of private sector in PFD and child projects; nature of that role (e.g., consultation, governance, execution, role in replication, scaling up, or market transformation) • Contributions of private sector entities at national, regional, and global levels	• Program/child project docs for impact programs • 2018 IAP review • GEF PMIS and portal	• Document review • Quality-at-entry review for impact programs • Online survey • Portfolio analysis

Key question	Data/indicator	What to look for	Source of information	Method/tool
Efficiency and effectiveness of the GEF integrated approach implementation				
Have these programs' internal governance systems and decision-making processes been transparent and inclusive both at design and during implementation?	Level of response from countries to the requests for Expression of Interest (EOI) to participate in the impact programs with respect to available incentive funding, by program	• Process for allocating incentive funding among the impact programs and requesting EOIs for each of the impact programs • Whether demand as expressed via EOIs exceeded available incentive funding for each impact program, and perceptions of why • Perceptions of whether process for selecting among EOIs was criteria-based and transparent • Changes in level of interest from countries from IAPs to impact programs and lessons learned	• GEF Secretariat, Agency, and STAP staffs, OFPs and other country stakeholders • GEF Secretariat records and internal governance documents	• Central interviews and focus groups • Document review • Case studies
	Transparency and inclusivity in governance, and GEF Secretariat and lead Agency role	• GEF Secretariat expectations have been clearly communicated for IAP/impact program design • Availability of meeting minutes to demonstrate governance and decision-making • Evidence of the program steering committee providing strategic direction and taking decisions for adaptive management during implementation • Perceptions of whether lead Agency shows good practice in coordination and partnerships, in support of the common components of child projects, capacity, and partnership building; effects of changes in lead Agencies from IAPs to impact programs • Whether programs and child projects were designed in a consultative and participatory way	• GEF Secretariat and Agencies • Coordination meeting minutes • GEF Secretariat records and internal governance documents • PIRs and MTRs of hub projects • IEO KM Evaluation—case study	• Document review • Central interviews and focus groups • Document review • Implementation analysis for impact programs • Case studies
How efficient have the start-up of the impact programs and implementation of the IAPs been, and how have programs been impacted by the current COVID-19 crisis?	Elapsed time between various phases in the project cycle	• Approval and implementation status of child projects • Comparison of elapsed time between project cycle milestones for IAPs and impact programs, and benchmarked to other GEF projects and programs • Perceptions on the factors influencing elapsed times between various phases in the project cycle • Reasons for delay, if experienced • Effect and implications of COVID-19 for the Sustainable Cities IAP/impact program	• GEF PMIS and Portal • GEF Secretariat, Agency, and STAP staffs, OFPs, other country stakeholders • PIRs and MTRs	• Timeline analysis for IAPs and impact programs • Central interviews and focus groups • Case studies

Key question	Data/indicator	What to look for	Source of information	Method/tool
To what extent are the IAP programs and their child projects achieving outcomes at midterm?	Evidence of progress toward outcomes	• Results reported against outcomes in IAPs • Frequency and typology of challenges and lessons in implementation learned from project and program reporting • Evidence of how governance, including environmental governance, has been performing during implementation • Evidence of progress toward additionality in PIRs or MTRs • Evidence of progress toward transformational change in PIRs or MTRs • Evidence of environmental changes in project locations for food security and commodity IAPs (geospatial analysis)	• PIRs and MTRs of IAP child projects • GEF Secretariat and Agency progress reports and lessons learned reports • OFPs, GEF Agencies staffs (in country) and other key informants involved in these programs and related child projects	• Implementation analysis for IAPs • Case studies • Geospatial analysis
How effectively has knowledge been shared within programs through the knowledge platforms?	Effectiveness of knowledge sharing	• Extent to which knowledge platforms provide access to global best practices, and evidence that this evidence feeds into child project implementation and adaptive management of child projects • Perceptions on whether platforms reflect the comparative advantage and value addition of the GEF; comparison to "comparator" programs/initiatives	• PIRs and MTRs of IAP child projects • GEF Secretariat and Agency progress reports and lessons learned reports • GEF Secretariat, Agency, and STAP staffs; staff of "comparator" programs/initiatives • OFPs, GEF Agencies staffs (in country) and other key informants involved in these programs and related child projects • IEO KM Evaluation—case study	• Document review • Implementation analysis for IAPs • Central interviews and focus groups • Case studies
	Evidence of adaptive management (i.e., changes at midterm)	• Evidence of impact program knowledge platforms incorporating lessons learned from IAP platforms • Perceptions on the effect of changes in agencies responsible for platforms from IAPs to impact programs	• PIRs and MTRs of IAP child projects • GEF Secretariat and Agency progress reports and lessons learned reports • OFPs, GEF Agencies staffs (in country) and other key informants involved in these programs and related child projects	• Document review • Implementation analysis for IAPs • Central interviews and focus groups • Case studies
	Sustainability	• Proportion of hub impact program child projects that describe actions to ensure sustainability of knowledge platforms • Evidence of IAP knowledge platforms implementing or adapting their plans for financial and institutional sustainability (or appropriate exit or sunsetting strategies)	• Program/child project docs • PIRs and MTRs of IAP child projects • GEF Secretariat and Agency progress reports and lessons learned reports • GEF Secretariat, Agency, and STAP staffs	• Document review • Quality-at-entry analysis for impact programs • Implementation analysis for IAPs • Central interviews and focus groups

Key question	Data/indicator	What to look for	Source of information	Method/tool
To what extent has program level reporting been systematized and enables establishing a clear and demonstrated link between program and project results?	IAP program and project reporting is clearly linked	• IAP reporting to date shows clear linkages between child project and program results • Responsibilities for program-level reporting are clearly understood and fulfilled • Common standards adopted and used in IAP reporting to date (PIRs, MTRs); global environmental benefit tracking tools applied	• PIRs and MTRs of IAP child projects • GEF Secretariat and Agency progress reports and lessons learned reports • GEF Secretariat and Agencies staff	• Document review • Implementation analysis for IAPs • Central interviews and focus groups

a. Good governance in a social system exists when processes and institutions produce results that meet the needs of society while making the best use of resources at their disposal. Good governance is participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive, and follows the rule of law. Good environmental governance considers the role of all actors that impact the environment. From governments to NGOs, the private sector, and civil society, cooperation is critical to achieving effective governance and move toward a more sustainable future.

Impact program child projects

C.1 FOLUR Impact Program

GEF ID	Title	Status	Country	Lead Agency	GEF amount (million $)					Agency fee	Total
					BD	CC	LD	Set-aside	Subtotal	Million $	
10232	Reducing deforestation from palm oil and cocoa value chains	P	Liberia	CI	3.16	0	0	3.98	7.14	0.64	7.78
10237	Integrated Landscape Management of Heart of Borneo Landscapes in Sabah and Sarawak	A	Malaysia	UNDP	3.57	0.46	0.82	2.52	7.37	0.66	8.03
10238	Strengthening Sustainability in Commodity and Food-Crop Value Chains, Land Restoration and Land Use Governance through Integrated Landscape Management for Multiple Benefits in Indonesia	P	Indonesia	UNDP	8.06	1.78	0.87	5.50	16.21	1.46	17.67
10239	Establishing System for Sustainable Integrated Land-use Planning Across New Britain Island in Papua New Guinea	P	Papua New Guinea	UNDP	5.35	0.84	0.84	3.67	10.71	0.96	11.67
10243	Preventing forest loss, promoting restoration and integrating sustainability into Ethiopia's coffee supply chains and food systems	P	Ethiopia	UNDP	8.97	0	4.49	6.88	20.34	1.83	22.17
10245	Integrated Sustainable Landscape Management in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam	P	Vietnam	FAO	1.34	0.99	1.24	1.78	5.35	0.48	5.84
10246	Innovative transformation of China's food production systems and agroecological landscapes	C	China	FAO	3.59	4.49	0.90	4.49	13.46	1.21	14.67
10247	Scaling up Cocoa-based Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration/Transformative Innovations in Côte d'Ivoire (SCOLUR-CI)	P	Côte d'Ivoire	FAO	0.45	0	3.12	1.78	5.35	0.48	5.84
10262	Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration in Tanzania's Forest Landscapes	P	Tanzania	WWF-US	3.58	0	1.34	2.46	7.37	0.66	8.03

GEF ID	Title	Status	Country	Lead Agency	GEF amount (million $)					Agency fee	Total
					BD	CC	LD	Set-aside	Subtotal	Million $	
10263	Promoting sustainable landscapes in the Motagua River watershed	P	Guatemala	UNDP	5.64	0.87	0.87	3.79	11.16	1.00	12.17
10264	Promoting sustainable livestock management and ecosystem conservation in Northern Ukraine	P	Ukraine	UNDP	1.36	0.45	2.69	2.25	6.76	0.61	7.36
10265	Promotion of sustainable food systems and improved ecosystems services in Northern Kazakhstan Landscape	P	Kazakhstan	UNDP	2.94	0	4.04	3.49	10.47	0.94	11.41
10268	Inclusive Sustainable Rice Landscapes in Thailand	P	Thailand	UNEP	1.80	0.44	1.45	1.85	5,54	0.50	6.03
10306	FOLUR Global Knowledge to Action Platform to Support Transformational Shifts In Food and Land Use Systems	C	Global	World Bank	0	0	0	29.13	29.13	2.62	31.76
10307	Deforestation Free Commodity Supply Chains in the Peruvian Amazon	P	Peru	UNDP	8.06	0	0.921	4.59	13.56	1.22	14.78
10348	Landscape Restoration and Ecosystem Management for Sustainable Food Systems	P	Ghana	World Bank	3.83	0.88	3.77	4.28	12.76	1.15	13.91
10463	Promoting integrated landscape management approach for conservation of the Mount Elgon ecosystem in Eastern Uganda	A	Uganda	UNEP	3.16	1.33	1.78	3.16	9.43	0.85	10.28
10464	Paraguay FOLUR	A	Paraguay	UNEP	2.41	0	3.05	2.72	8.19	0.74	8.93
10468	Sustainable Multiple Use Landscape Consortia—Vertentes Project	A	Brazil	World Bank	9.98	0	6.40	8.19	24.58	2.21	26.79
10480	Transforming Rice-Wheat Food Systems in India	A	India	FAO	9.05	2.72	1.81	6.79	20.37	1.83	22.20
10481	Promoting Integrated Landscape Management and Sustainable Food Systems in the Niger Delta Region in Nigeria	A	Nigeria	FAO	0.41	1.33	1.78	1.83	5.35	0.48	5.84
10594	Burundi Landscape Restoration and Resilience Project	C	Burundi	World Bank	0.39	0.39	3.21	2.00	6.00	0.54	6.54
10598	Integrated Landscape Management for conservation and restoration of the Mt. Elgon Ecosystem in Western Kenya	A	Kenya	FAO	2.18	0	1.34	1.83	5.35	0.48	5.84
10599	Transforming Food Systems and Reducing Deforestation in the Protected Areas and Biological Corridors landscapes from the Southern Caribbean Coast and San Juan River autonomous region	A	Nicaragua	FAO	1.78	0.89	0.89	1.78	5.35	0.48	5.84
10600	Integrated management of degraded landscapes for sustainable food systems and livelihoods in Guinea Forest Region and Upper Guinea	A	Guinea	FAO	3.29	1.33	1.71	3.17	9.50	0.85	10.35
10601	Food System, Land Use and Restoration Impact Program in Uzbekistan	A	Uzbekistan	FAO	0.44	3.11	0.44	2.00	5.99	0.54	6.53
10735	Connecting Watershed Health with Sustainable Livestock and Agroforestry Production	P	Mexico	World Bank	4.59	2.75	1.83	4.59	13.76	1.24	15.00

GEF ID	Title	Status	Country	Lead Agency	GEF amount (million $)					Agency fee	Total
					BD	CC	LD	Set-aside	Subtotal	Million $	
10750	Integrated Landscape Management for a zero-deforestation coffee and rice value chains in the Central South and Eastern coast of Madagascar	A	Madagascar	FAO	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	9.87	0.89	10.76

Sources: GEF Portal, accessed April 13, 2021; program PFDs.

Note: CI = Conservation International; n.a. = not applicable. All projects are multifocal. For status, A = included in Council-approved PFD; C = CEO endorsement cleared; P = CEO endorsement pending.

C.2 Sustainable Cities Impact Program

GEF ID	Title	Status	Country	Lead Agency	GEF amount (million $)					Agency fee	Total
					BD	CC	LD	Set-aside	Subtotal	Million $	
10452	Sustainable Cities Impact Program Global Platform	C	Global	UNEP	0	0	0	16.21	16.21	1.46	17.67
10465	Promoting integrated metropolitan planning and innovative urban technology investments in Brazil	A	Brazil	UNEP	2.68	5.81	0	4.07	12.55	1.13	13.68
10466	Integrated low-carbon and conservation investments in Argentinian cities	A	Argentina	UNEP	5.99	8.10	1.80	7.55	23.45	2.11	25.56
10467	Transitioning to an urban green economy and delivering global environmental benefits	A	Costa Rica	UNDP	6.21	0.78	0	3.33	10.32	0.93	11.25
10484	Livable Cities in India: Demonstrating Sustainable Urban Planning and Development through Integrated Approaches	A	India	UNEP	0.90	10.75	0	5.56	17.22	1.55	18.77
10486	Strengthening Marrakesh's sustainable development through innovative planning and financing	A	Morocco	UNDP	1.22	3.06	2.10	3.04	9.42	0.85	10.26
10494	Indonesia Sustainable Cities Impact Program	A	Indonesia	World Bank	7.16	3.58	0	5.14	15.87	1.43	17.30
10530	Rwanda Urban Development Project II	C	Rwanda	World Bank	2.75	1.38	1.38	2.57	8.07	0.73	8.80
10768	Resilient Urban Sierra Leone Project	P	Sierra Leone	World Bank	2.75	0.92	0.92	2.14	6.73	0.61	7.33

Sources: GEF Portal, accessed April 13, 2021; program PFDs.

Note: n.a. = not applicable. All projects are multifocal. For status, A = included in Council-approved PFD; C = CEO endorsement cleared; P = CEO endorsement pending.

C.3 Amazon Impact Program

GEF ID	Title	Status	Country	Lead Agency	GEF amount (million $)					Agency fee	Total
					BD	CC	LD	Set-aside	Subtotal	Million $	
10248	Building human well-being and resilience in Amazonian forests by enhancing the value of biodiversity for food security and bio-businesses, in a context of climate change	P	Peru	FAO	8.91	0.90	0.90	4.89	15.60	1.40	17.00
10252	Strengthening management of protected and productive landscapes in the Surinamese Amazon	P	Suriname	UNDP	1.77	0.88	0.88	1.63	5.17	0.46	5.63
10259	Connectivity corridors in two priority landscapes of the Ecuadorian Amazon Region	P	Ecuador	WWF-US	3.47	0	0.92	2.04	6.42	0.58	7.00
10288*	Securing a Living Amazon through Landscape Connectivity in Central Guyana	A	Guyana	WWF-US	3.52	0	0	1.63	5.15	0.46	5.62
10295	Amazon sustainable landscape approach in the Plurinational System of Protected Areas and Strategic Ecosystems of Bolivia	P	Bolivia	CAF	6.90	0	0	3.16	10.06	0.91	10.96
10300	Forest Conservation and Sustainability in the Heart of the Colombian Amazon (AF2)	C	Colombia	World Bank	9.04	2.71	0.90	5.71	18.37	1.65	20.02
10737	Amazon Regional Technical Assistance	C	Regional	World Bank	0	0	0	8.26	8.26	0.74	9.00
10749	Brazil Amazon Sustainable Landscapes Project- Phase 2	P	Brazil	World Bank	13.58	0	0	5.71	19.28	1.74	21.02

Sources: GEF Portal, accessed April 13, 2021; program PFDs.

Note: CAF = Development Bank of Latin America; n.a. = not applicable. All projects are multifocal, except where indicated with * (biodiversity). For status, A = included in Council-approved PFD; C = CEO endorsement cleared; P = CEO endorsement pending.

C.4 Drylands Impact Program

GEF ID	Title	Status	Country	Lead Agency	GEF amount (million $)					Agency fee	Total
					BD	CC	LD	Set-aside	Subtotal	Million $	
10249	Promoting Dryland Sustainable Landscapes and Biodiversity Conservation in the Eastern Steppe of Mongolia	C	Mongolia	FAO	1.78	0	1.78	1.78	5.35	0.48	5.84
10250	Integrated Landscape Management in Dry Miombo Woodlands of Tanzania	P	Tanzania	FAO	0.89	0	4.02	2.46	7.37	0.66	8.03
10251	Integrated landscape management to reverse degradation and support the sustainable use of natural resources in the Mopane-Miombo belt of Northern Namibia	P	Namibia	FAO	0	0.44	3.64	2.04	6.13	0.55	6.68

GEF ID	Title	Status	Country	Lead Agency	GEF amount (million $)					Agency fee	Total
					BD	CC	LD	Set-aside	Subtotal	Million $	
10253	Global coordination project for the SFM Drylands Impact Program	P	Global	FAO	0	0	0	8.06	8.06	0.73	8.78
10254	Transforming landscapes and livelihoods: A cross-sector approach to accelerate restoration of Malawi's Miombo and Mopane woodlands for sustainable forest and biodiversity management	P	Malawi	FAO	2.81	0	1.42	2.12	6.35	0.57	6.92
10255	Integrated sustainable and adaptive management of natural resources to support land degradation neutrality and livelihoods in the Miombo-Mopane landscapes of North-east Botswana	P	Botswana	FAO	0	0	3.57	1.78	5.35	0.48	5.84
10256	Land and natural resource degradation neutrality and community vulnerability reduction in selected Miombo and Mopane Ecoregions of Angola (Okavango and Cunene river basin)	P	Angola	FAO	0	1.78	1.81	1.77	5.36	0.48	5.84
10257	A cross-sector approach supporting the mainstreaming of sustainable forest and land management to enhance ecosystem resilience for improved livelihoods in the Save and Runde Catchments of Zimbabwe	P	Zimbabwe	FAO	0.89	0.71	5.35	3.48	10.43	0.94	11.37
10291	Sustainable management of dryland landscapes in Burkina Faso	P	Burkina Faso	IUCN	1.34	0.45	2.67	2.23	6.68	0.60	7.28
10292	Strengthening forest management for improved biodiversity conservation and climate resilience in the Southern rangelands of Kenya	P	Kenya	IUCN	2.23	0.45	0.89	1.78	5.35	0.48	5.84
10299	Kazakhstan Resilient Agroforestry and Rangeland Management Project	P	Kazakhstan	World Bank	0	3.49	0.64	2.16	6.28	0.57	6.85
10583	Conservation Areas for Biodiversity Conservation and Development II-Additional Financing	C	Mozambique	World Bank	9.94	1.91	4.10	7.17	23.12	2.08	25.20

Sources: GEF Portal, accessed April 13, 2021; program PFDs.

Note: n.a. = not applicable. All projects are multifocal. For status, A = included in Council-approved PFD; C = CEO endorsement cleared; P = CEO endorsement pending.

C.5 Congo Basin Impact Program

GEF ID	Title	Status	Country	Lead Agency	GEF amount (million $)					Agency fee	Total
					BD	CC	LD	Set-aside	Subtotal	Million $	
10269	Transformational Change in Sustainable Forest Management in Transboundary Landscapes of the Congo Basin	P	Regional	UNEP	0	0	0	8.20	8.20	0.74	8.93
10287	Integrated management of Cameroon's forest landscapes in the Congo Basin	P	Cameroon	WWF-US	6.41	0	0	3.20	9.61	0.86	10.47
10293	Transforming and scaling up results and lessons learned in the Monte Alen and Rio Campo Landscapes through an inclusive Landscape-scale approach, effective land use planning and promotion of local governance	P	Equatorial Guinea	IUCN	1.82	0.93	0.93	1.67	5.35	0.48	5.84
10298	Integrated Community-Based Conservation of Peatlands Ecosystems and Promotion of Ecotourism in Lac Télé Landscape of Republic of Congo—ICOBA child project E/PELATEL	P	Congo	UNEP	2.28	0.90	0.89	2.04	6.11	0.55	6.66
10314	Community-based forested landscape management in the Grand Kivu and Lake Tele-Tumba	P	Congo DR	UNEP	9.17	0	0	4.59	13.76	1.24	15.00
10347	Scaling up ecological corridors and transboundary connectivity through integrated natural resources management in the Ngotto Forest landscape and Mbaéré-Bodingué National Park	C	Central African Republic	World Bank	2.54	1.20	1.33	2.54	7.61	0.68	8.30
10729	Transforming Forest Landscape Governance in the Lower Ogooué—Lower Nyanga Landscape Corridor	A	Gabon	UNDP	0.80	2.77	0.80	2.19	6.57	0.59	7.16

Sources: GEF Portal, accessed April 13, 2021; program PFDs.

Note: n.a. = not applicable. All projects are multifocal. For status, A = included in Council-approved PFD; C = CEO endorsement cleared; P = CEO endorsement pending.

Interviewees

CONVENTIONS

Neil Pratt, CBD

Yibin Xiang, CBD

Frank Moser, Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions

Melchiade Bukuru, UNCCD

Louise Baker, UNCCD

Phillip Eyre, UNFCCC

Noah Kim, UNFCCC

Jenny Wong, UNFCCC

Debapriya Roy, UNFCCC

GEF SECRETARIAT, GEF STAP, AND GEF–CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATION NETWORK

Carlos Manuel Rodriguez, GEF Secretariat

Ulrich Apel, GEF Secretariat, Drylands Impact Program

Sonja Teelucksingh, GEF Secretariat

Paul Hartman, GEF Secretariat, GGP; FOLUR Impact Program

Pascal Martinez, GEF Secretariat, GGP; FOLUR Impact Program

Mohamed Bakarr, GEF Secretariat

Matthew Reddy, GEF Secretariat

Mark Zimsky, GEF Secretariat, Amazon Impact Program; FOLUR Impact Program

Jean-Marc Sinnassamy, GEF Secretariat, RFS; Congo Impact Program

Gustavo Alberto Fonseca, GEF Secretariat

Claude Gascon, GEF Secretariat

Aloke Barnwal, GEF Secretariat, Sustainable Cities -IAP

Rosina Bierbaum, GEF STAP

Guadalupe Duron, GEF STAP

Christopher Whaley, GEF STAP

Blake Ratner, GEF STAP, FOLUR Impact Program

Maria Leichne, GEF–Civil Society Organization Network

GEF AGENCIES

Phillippe Munyaruyenzi, AfDB, Sustainable Cities IAP and Impact Program

Arunkumar S. Abraham, Asian Development Bank, Sustainable Cities IAP and Impact Program

Alexander D. Nash, Asian Development Bank, Sustainable Cities IAP and Impact Program

Cecilia Guerra, Development Bank of Latin America, Amazon impact Program

Miguel Morales, Conservation International, GGP

John Buchanan, Conservation International, GGP

Jessica Furmanski, Conservation International, GGP

Amanda Sennert, Conservation International, GGP

Peter Alele, Conservation International, RFS

Monica Noon, Conservation International, RFS

Everline Ndenga, Conservation International, RFS

Alex Zvoleff, Conservation International, RFS

Neila Maria Cavalcante, Conservation International Brasil, GGP

Mariana Parra, Conservation International Brasil, GGP

Karine Barcelos, Conservation International Brasil, GGP

Valeria Gonzalez Riggio, FAO, Amazon Impact Program; FOLUR Impact Program

Thomas Hammond, FAO, Drylands Impact Program

Stefano Mondovi, FAO, RFS

Maria Hernandez Lagana, FAO, RFS

Marcelo Rezende, FAO, Drylands Impact Program

Fritjof Boerstler, FAO, RFS; Drylands Impact Program

Anne Sophie Poisot, FAO, RFS

Alex Nyarko Badohu, FAO, RFS

Adrian Barrance, FAO, Drylands Impact Program

Angela Joehl, FAO, China, FOLUR Impact Program

Patricio Zambrano-Barragán, Inter-American Development Bank, Conservation International—IAP and Impact Program

Liza Leclerc, IFAD, RFS

Jonky Tenou, IFAD, RFS

Edith Kirumba, IFAD, RFS

Sheila Agarwal-Khan, IUCN, Drylands Impact Program

Jonathan Davies, IUCN, Drylands Impact Program

Kenneth Angu, IUCN, Congo Basin Sustainable Landscapes Impact Program

Tomas Sales, UNDP, RFS; FOLUR Impact Program

Phemo K. Kgomotso, UNDP, RFS

Pascale Bonzom, UNDP, RFS

Ludmilla Diniz, UNDP, Sustainable Cities IAP and Impact Program

Frederico Machado, UNDP, GGP

Charles O'Malley, UNDP, GGP

Andrew Bovarnick, UNDP, GGP; FOLUR Impact Program

Andrea Bina, UNDP, GGP

Aline da Silva, UNDP, GGP

Alexandra Fischer, UNDP, GGP; Amazon Impact Program

Ruth Coutto, UNEP, Sustainable Cities IAP and Impact Program

Margaret Oduk, UNEP, RFS

Lara Yacobo, UNEP, GGP

Jonathan Gheyssens, UNEP, GGP

Johan Robinson, UNEP, Congo Impact Program

Jacinto Coello, UNEP, GGP

Ivo Mulder, UNEP, GGP

Geordie Colville, UNEP, Sustainable Cities IAP and Impact Program

Doreen Robinson, UNEP, Congo Impact Program

Charles Sebukeera, UNEP, RFS

Asher Lessels, UNEP, Sustainable Cities IAP and Impact Program

Martina Otto, UNEP-Cities, Sustainable Cities IAP and Impact Program

Katarina Barunica Spoljaric, UNIDO, Sustainable Cities IAP and Impact Program

Jianwen Liu, World Bank, China, FOLUR Impact Program

Xueman Wang, World Bank, Sustainable Cities IAP and Impact Program

William Sutton, World Bank, FOLUR Impact Program

Wanli Fang, World Bank, Sustainable Cities IAP

Timothy H. Brown, World Bank, FOLUR Impact Program

Tanya Lisa Yudelman, World Bank, Amazon Impact Program

Sameh Naguib Wahba, World Bank, Sustainable Cities IAP and Impact Program

Nyaneba Nkrumah, World Bank, Congo Impact Program

Lindsey Knowles Larson, World Bank, FOLUR Impact Program

Gayatri Kanungo, World Bank, RFS; FOLUR Impact Program

Bernadete Lange, World Bank, GGP

Angela Armstrong, World Bank, GGP

Ana María Gonzalez, World Bank, Amazon Impact Program

Adriana Moreira, World Bank/GEF Secretariat, Amazon Impact Program

Rachel Kaplan, WWF-US, FOLUR Impact Program

Margaret Arbuthnot, WWF, GGP

Isabel Filiberto, WWF, Amazon Impact Program

Gino Bianco, WWF, GGP

OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Diego Riaño, C40, Sustainable Cities IAP and Impact Program

Andrea Fernandez, C40, Sustainable Cities IAP and Impact Program

Nazaré Lima Soares, CGEE, Sustainable Cities IAP and Impact Program

Rose Nankya, CGIAR/Bioversity, RFS

Debra Jarvis, CGIAR/Bioversity, RFS

Ana Maria Paez, CGIAR, RFS

Marco Aurelio Lóbo, CGEE, Sustainable Cities IAP and Impact Program

He Xin, Chengdu, Sustainable Cities IAP and Impact Program

He Xingyu, Chengdu PMO, Sustainable Cities IAP and Impact Program

Bai Wei, China Center for Urban Development, Sustainable Cities IAP and Impact Program

Zhao Lihua, China Hubei Province Project Management Office, FOLUR Impact Program

Shi Shangbai, China Hubei Province Project Management Office, FOLUR Impact Program

Zhang Yanping, China Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, FOLUR Impact Program

Chen Fu, China Team Leader of Chinese Expert Team, FOLUR Impact Program

Zhou Tao, Chongqing PMO, Sustainable Cities IAP and Impact Program

Xu Wei, Chongqing PMO, Sustainable Cities IAP and Impact Program

Li Heng, Guiyang PMO, Sustainable Cities IAP and Impact Program

He Li, Guiyang PMO, Sustainable Cities IAP and Impact Program

Sasha Mentz, ICRAF, RFS; FOLUR Impact Program

Sabrina Chesterman, ICRAF, RFS; FOLUR Impact Program

Rodrigo Ciannella, ICRAF, RFS

Lucy Martin, ICRAF, RFS; FOLUR Impact Program

Dieter Fischer, International Finance Corporation, GGP

Vidya Rangan, ISEAL Alliance, GGP

Karin Kreider, ISEAL Alliance, GGP

Charles Oluchina, Kenya, Southern Rangelands Project, Drylands Impact Program

Philip Kisoyan, Kenya, Mt. Elgon Conservation and Restoration Project, FOLUR Impact Program

Patrick Mugi, Kenya, Mt. Elgon Conservation and Restoration Project, FOLUR Impact Program

Meshack Muga, Kenya, Mt. Elgon Conservation and Restoration Project, FOLUR Impact Program

Agnes Yobteric, Kenya Min. of Environment and Forestry, RFS; FOLUR Impact Program

Roger White, Kenya GEF Water Fund Project, RFS

Loice Abende, Kenya GEF Water Fund Project, RFS; FOLUR Impact Program

Anthony Kariuki, Kenya GEF Water Fund Project, RFS; FOLUR

Marcela Aboim, MCTI, Sustainable Cities IAP

Zulkiffle Mohamad, MIGHT, Sustainable Cities IAP and Impact Program

Ir. Qaharuddin Abdullah, MIGHT, Sustainable Cities IAP and Impact Program

Anusha Magendram, MIGHT, Sustainable Cities IAP and Impact Program

Otavio Ferrarini, MMA

João Arthur Soccal Seyffarth, MMA

Zhang Wanjun, Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development child project, Sustainable Cities IAP and Impact Program

Wang Yao, MoHURD child project, Sustainable Cities IAP and Impact Program

Zhou Huining, Ningbo child project/PMO, Sustainable Cities IAP and Impact Program

Zuleica Goulart, PCS, Sustainable Cities IAP

Isadora Freire, Porto Digital/ARIES, Sustainable Cities IAP

Jane Lino, ProForest, GGP

Isabella Freire, ProForest, GGP

Wang Jie, Shenzhen child project, Sustainable Cities IAP and Impact Program

Luo Xianwu, Tsinghua University, Sustainable Cities IAP and Impact Program

Viviane Romero, WRI Brasil, Sustainable Cities IAP and Impact Program

Luiza de Oliveira Schmidt, WRI Brasil, Sustainable Cities IAP

Rogier Van den Berg, WRI, Sustainable Cities IAP

Mariana Orloff, WRI, Sustainable Cities IAP and Impact Program

Survey results

The online survey for this evaluation was open between January 20 and February 22, 2021, and was sent to 633 country-level respondents, including representatives from country governments (all GEF operational and political focal points and convention national focal points for the CBD, the UNCCD, and the UNFCCC, as well as project staff), GEF Agencies, the private sector, and civil society organizations.

The survey had 268 responses in total, for a response rate of 42.3 percent.

Q1. Which have you been involved in?

	No.	%
None of the above	23	9
GEF-6 IAP only	76	28
GEF-7 impact program only	114	43
Both IAP and impact program	55	21
Answered	268	100
Skipped	0	0

Q2. Which GEF-6 IAP have you been involved in? (select all that apply)

	No.	%
None of the above	13	25
Sustainable Cities	11	21
Food Security (Resilient Food Systems)	24	46
Commodities (Good Growth Partnership)	7	13
Answered	52	19
Skipped	216	81

Q3. Which GEF-7 impact program have you been involved in? (select all that apply)

	No.	%
None of the above	5	10
Sustainable Cities	10	19
FOLUR	26	50
Amazon Sustainable Landscapes	6	12
Congo Basin Sustainable Landscapes	0	0
Drylands Sustainable Landscapes	13	25
Answered	52	19
Skipped	216	81

Q4. Which type of organization do you belong to?

	No.	%
Government	78	35
GEF Agency	88	39
Private sector	9	4
Civil society	13	6
Other (please specify)	38	17
Answered	226	84
Skipped	42	16

Q5. As a government actor, which of the following options describe your function? (select all options that apply)

	No.	%
GEF operational focal point	29	38
GEF political focal point	1	1
Convention focal point (CBD, UNCCD, UNFCCC)	20	26
Project contact point	31	40
Other (please specify)	10	13
Answered	77	29
Skipped	191	71

Q6. As a GEF Agency actor, which of the following options describe your function? (select all options that apply)

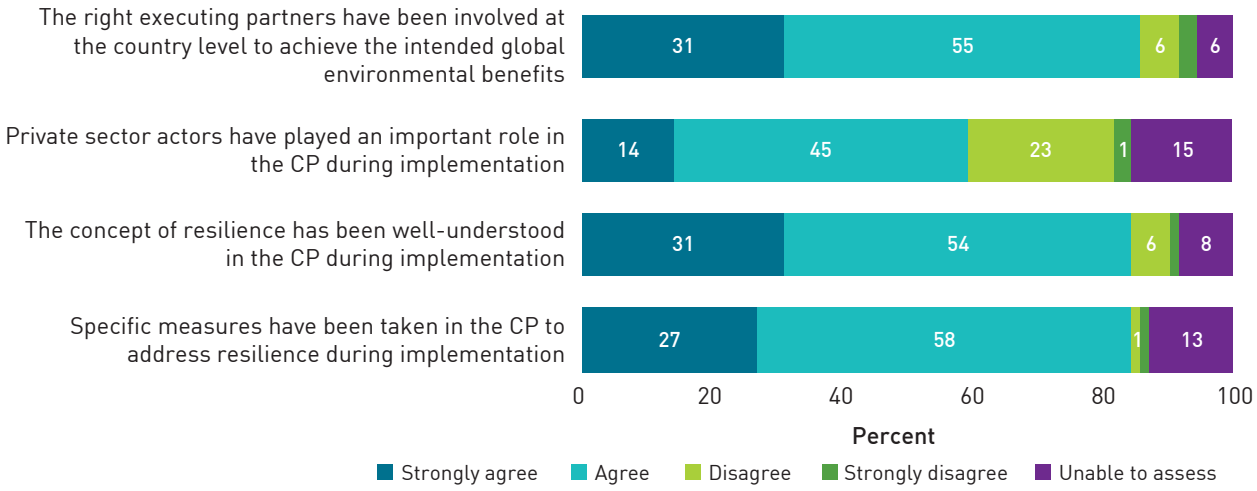
	No.	%
Technical staff	49	56
Country representative	5	6
Program/project contact point	42	48
Other (please specify)	12	14
Answered	88	33
Skipped	180	67

Q7. What do you see as the main contributions that the GEF-6 IAP child project is expected to make, or is already making, compared to baseline or business or usual (i.e., without the GEF's intervention)? (indicate your agreement with the following statements) (*n* = 71)

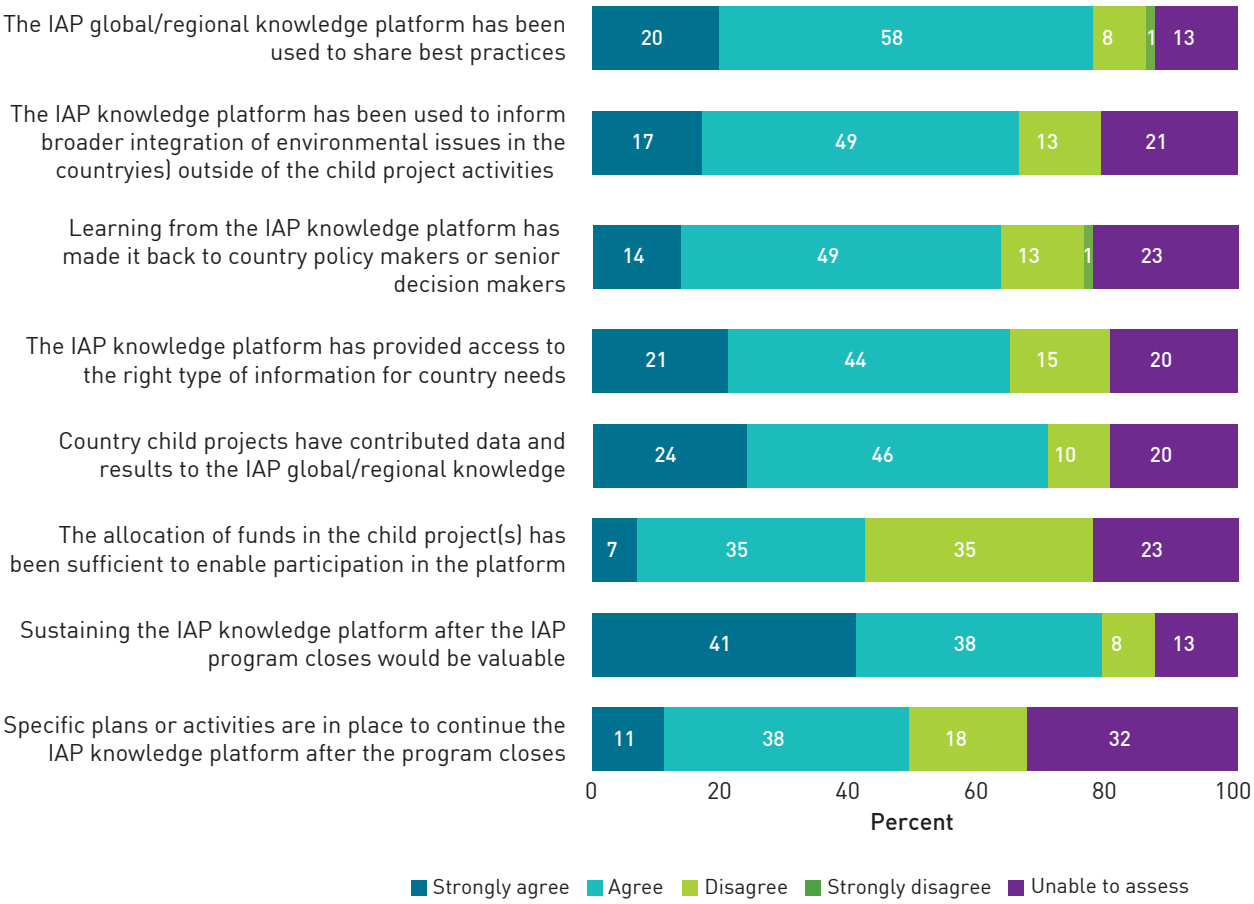
Q8. Please provide specific examples of these contributions that the child project is already making.

	No.	%
Answered	39	15
Skipped	229	85

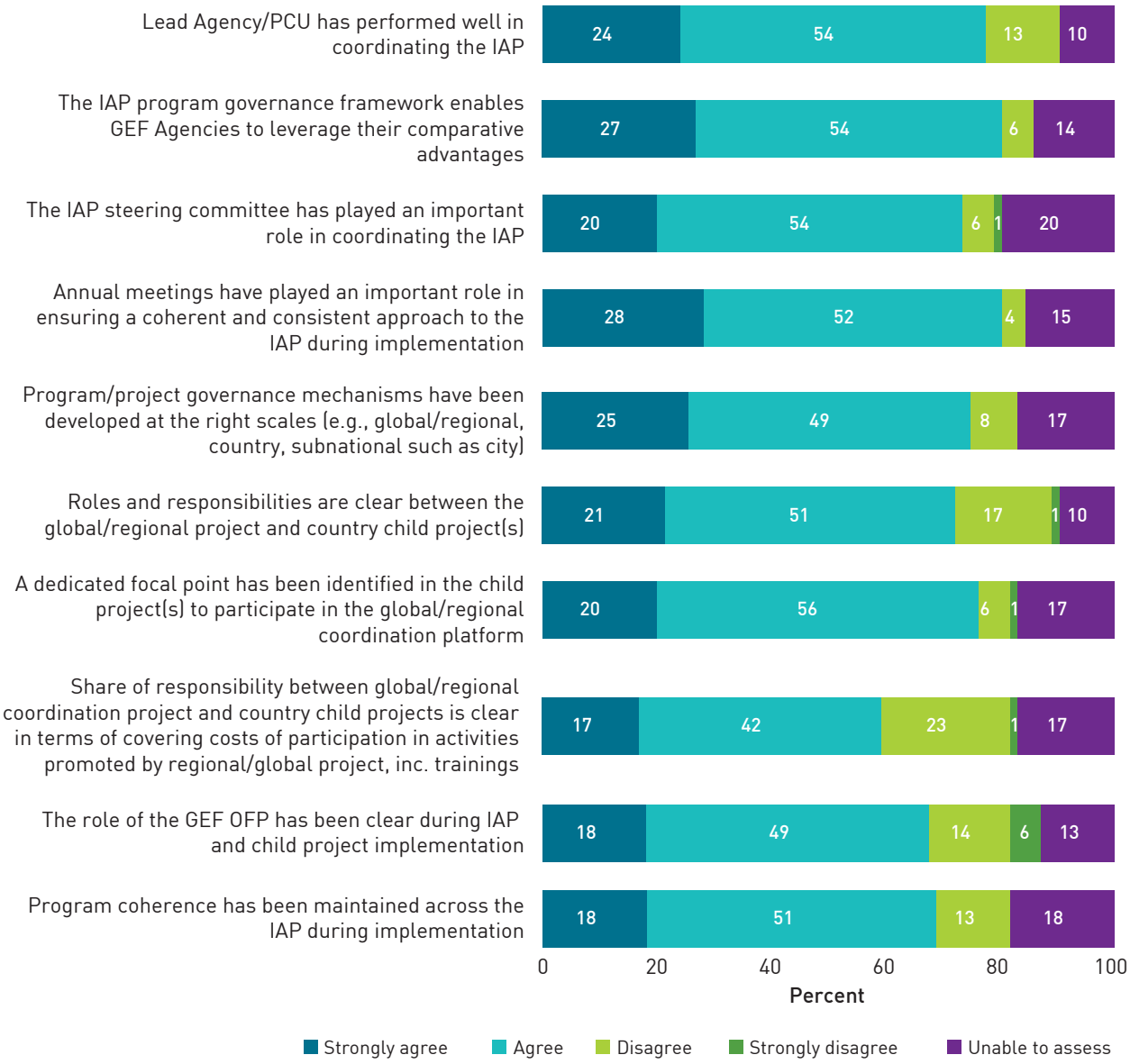
Q9. To what extent do you agree with these cross-cutting statements? (indicate your agreement with the following statements) (*n* = 71)



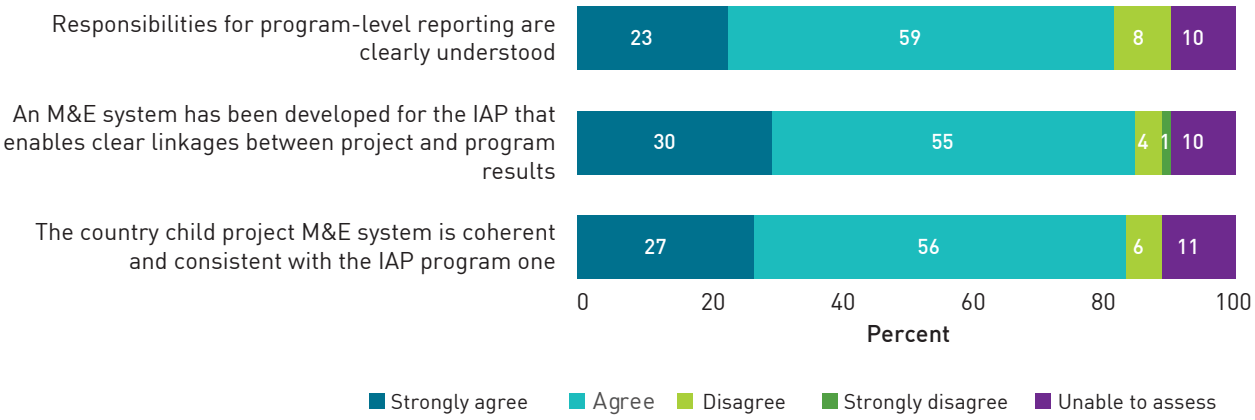
Q10. How effectively has knowledge been shared within the GEF-6 IAPs through the knowledge platforms led by the global/regional project? (indicate your agreement with the following statements) (*n* = 71)



Q11. Have the IAPs' internal governance and coordination systems been transparent and effective during implementation? (indicate your agreement with the following statements) (*n* = 71)



Q12. To what extent has a clear and demonstrated link been established between program and project results? (indicate your agreement with the following statements) (*n* = 71)



Q13. What have been the main challenges faced so far in implementing the GEF-6 IAP child projects? (select up to 3) (*n* = 71)

	No.	%
Lack of knowledge and/or institutional capacity to advance the integrated approach at national and/or local levels	19	27
Difficulties to communicate to different UN conventions on results achieved through an integrated approach	14	20
Challenges to overcome sectoral mandates or coordinate among ministries and agencies	27	38
Changes in government administration and/or priorities	30	42
Challenges engaging with the hub or global/regional coordination project	15	21
Limited flexibility to respond to emerging or changing priorities or requirements	8	11
Expected cofinancing did not materialize or is delayed	12	17
Challenges related to adoption of new practices and approaches	8	11
Challenges related to implementation arrangements (e.g., joint implementation by multiple Agencies, execution by multiple national agencies)	30	42
Unexpected trade-offs between project objectives	3	4
Operational challenge (such as procurement, contractual issues, quality of work)	10	14
Other—explain	10	14
Answered	71	26
Skipped	197	74

Q14. What has been your main motivation for participating in this GEF-7 impact program? (select up to 3) (*n* = 115)

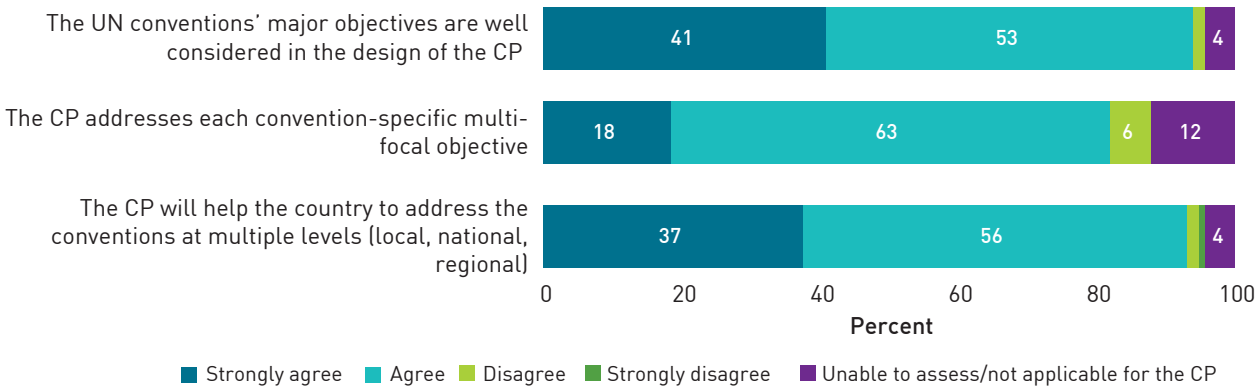
A t-test was conducted for Questions 16 and 17 to determine if responses from Government respondents were statistically different between all other respondents. T-test results indicate that there is not a statistically significant difference in responses for Questions 16 ($p = 0.83$) and 17 ($p = 0.75$) at $p<0.05$.

	No.	%
Learning and piloting integrated approaches to address drivers of environmental degradation	78	68
Developing models for replication, upscaling or mainstreaming in future (emerging) projects or programs	67	58
Participating in regional or global platforms for engagement and interaction with other partners on the issues	57	50
Accessing funds beyond available GEF STAR resources	32	28
Expanding funding resources for other ongoing or planned projects or programs (both GEF and non GEF)	28	24
Potential for leveraging higher cofinancing as compared with previous and current GEF projects	24	21
Other—explain	6	5
Answered	115	43
Skipped	153	57

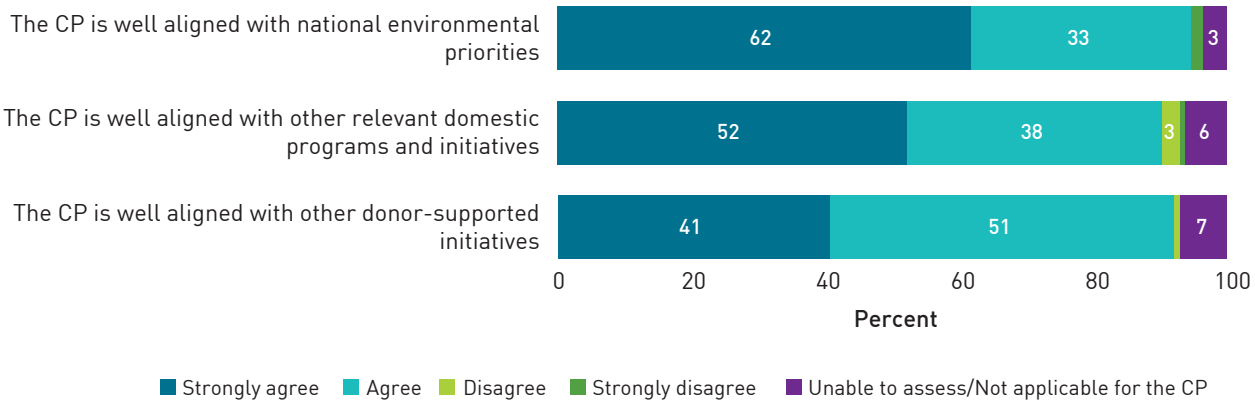
Q15. What challenges or concerns, if any, did you anticipate in deciding to participate in the GEF-7 impact program? (select up to 3) (*n* = 115)

	No.	%
The need to set aside budget for participation in and coordination with the regional or global platforms	47	41
Heavy or complex monitoring and reporting requirements	55	48
Challenges working across different ministries, agencies, and other stakeholders for an integrated approach	74	64
Issues with lead Agency or other GEF Agencies	20	17
Other—explain	18	16
Answered	115	43
Skipped	153	57

Q16. To what extent is the impact program child project intended to help to implement multiple UN conventions in an integrated way? (indicate your agreement with the following statements) (*n* = 115)



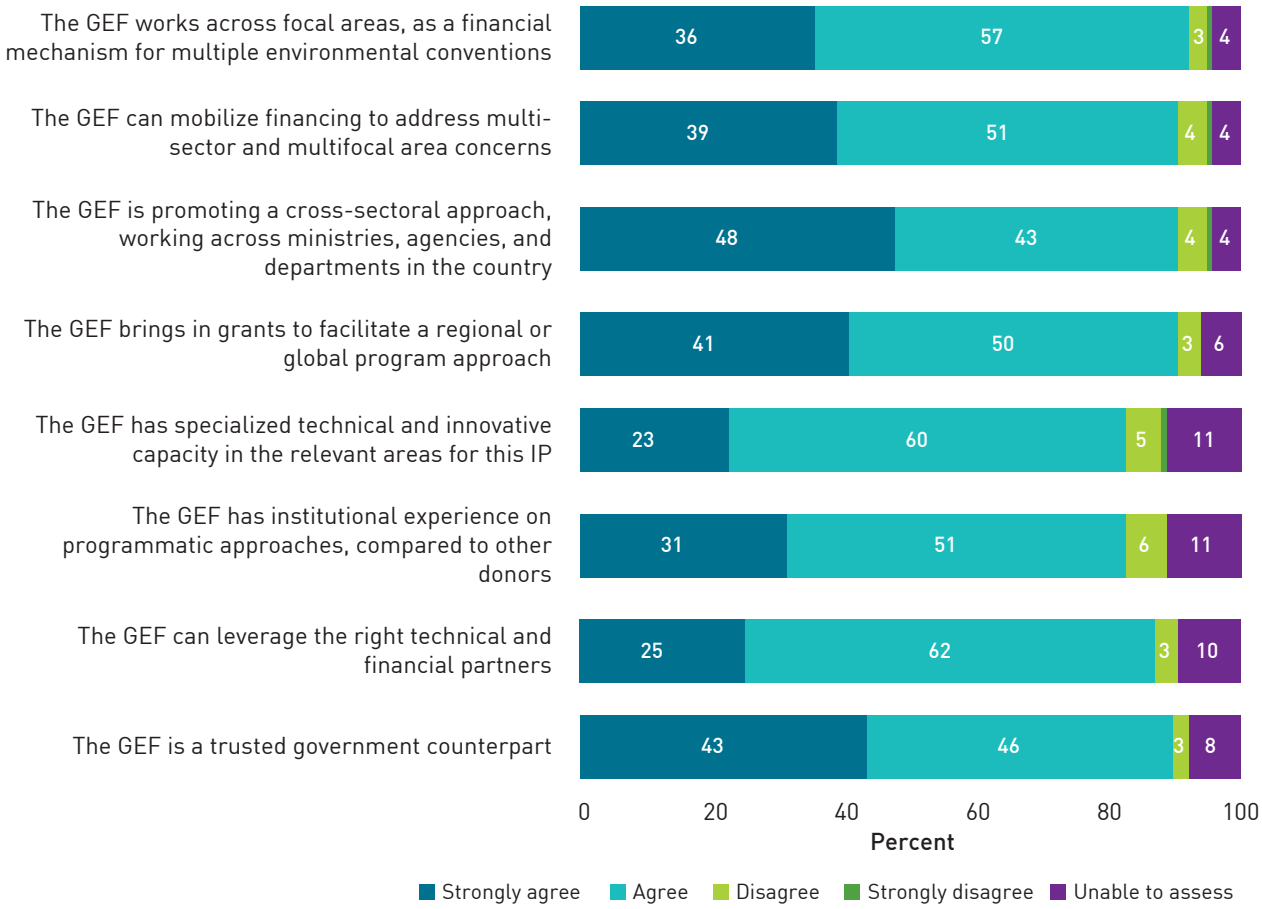
Q17. To what extent does this GEF-7 impact program child project align with national priorities and other initiatives? (indicate your agreement with the following statements) (*n* = 115)



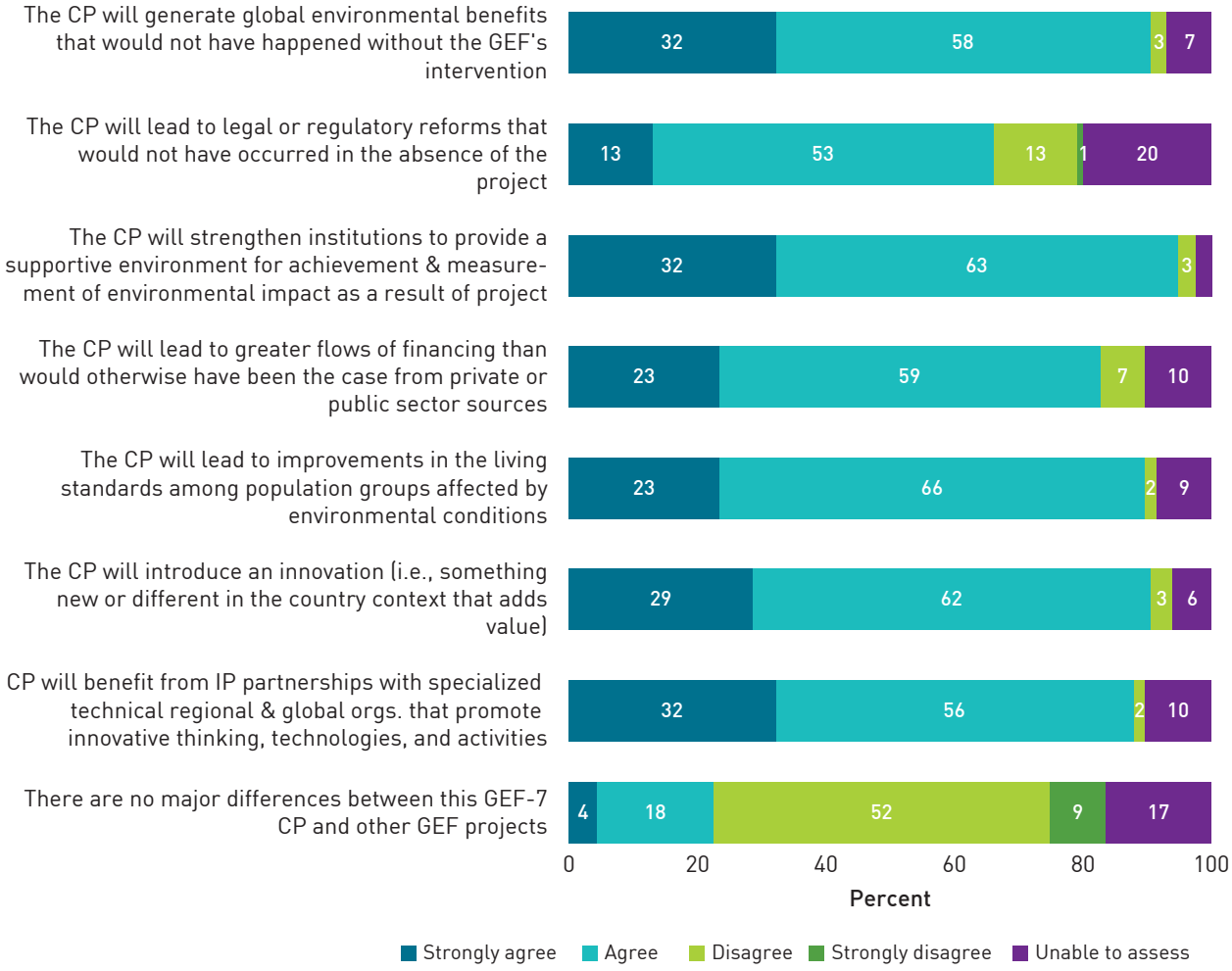
Q18. Why was/were this particular GEF Agency/ies selected to implement the impact program in your country? (select up to 3) (*n* = 115)

	No.	%
Agency/ies has/have extensive technical experience in the relevant themes	90	78
Agency/ies is/are particularly active in targeted subnational areas	24	21
Agency/ies is/are trusted by governments, regional institutions and non-government agencies to mobilize and coordinate institutional support	65	57
Agency/ies has/have the resources and connections to promote scaling up (leverage and catalytic potential; # of staff in the field)	28	24
Agency/ies can help secure larger amounts of cofinancing funds	13	11
Agency/ies worked successfully with GEF in other projects and programs before	57	50
Agency/ies is/are implementing GEF-6 IAP child project(s)	11	10
Other—please explain	6	5
Answered	115	43
Skipped	153	57

Q19. What do you see as the main contributions that the GEF is making through the GEF-7 impact programs, as compared to other donors active in the environmental sector in your country? (indicate your agreement with the following statements) (*n* = 115)



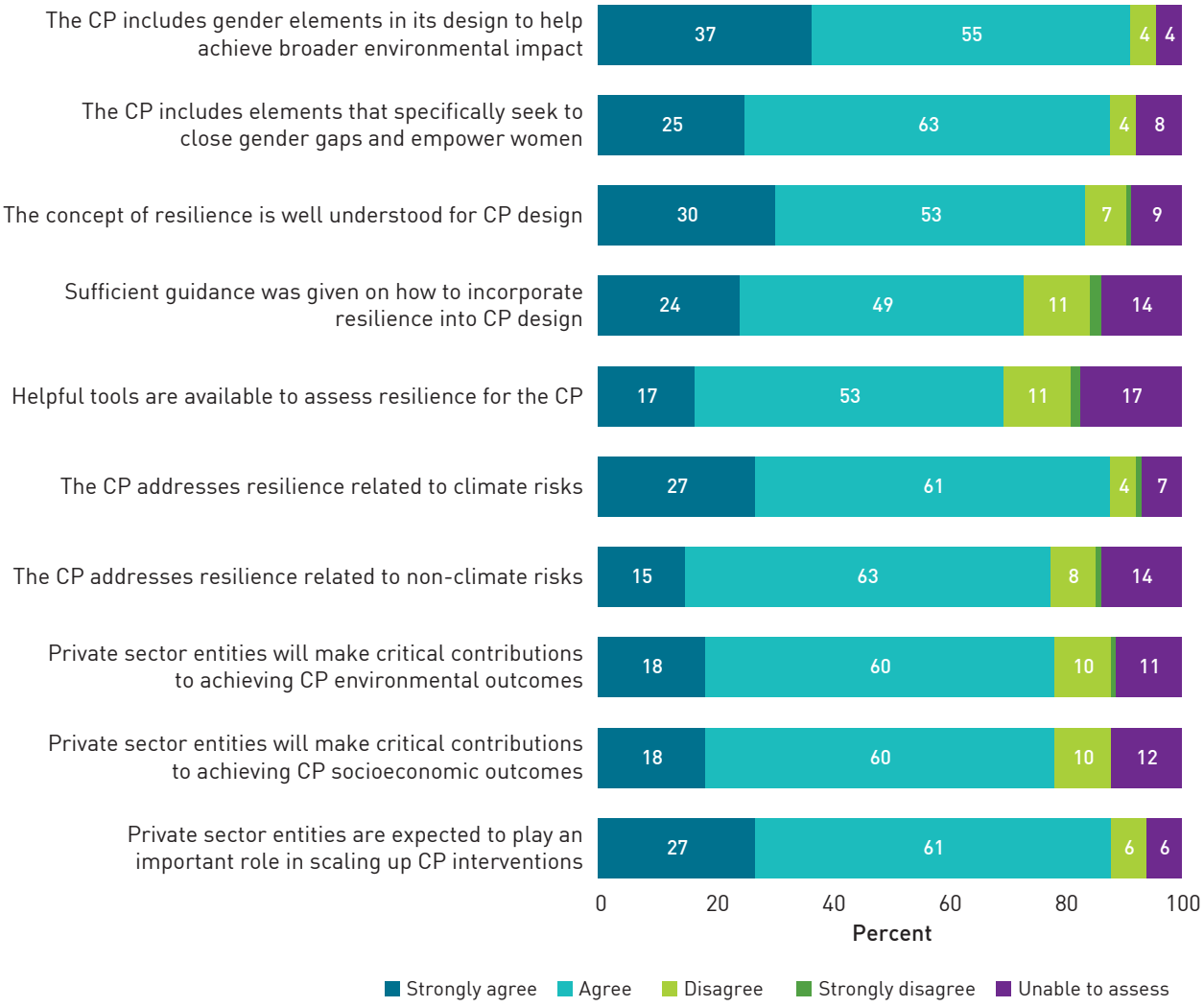
Q20. What do you see as the main contributions that the GEF-7 impact program child project is expected to make, compared to baseline or business or usual (i.e., without the GEF's intervention)? (indicate your agreement with the following statements) (*n* = 115)



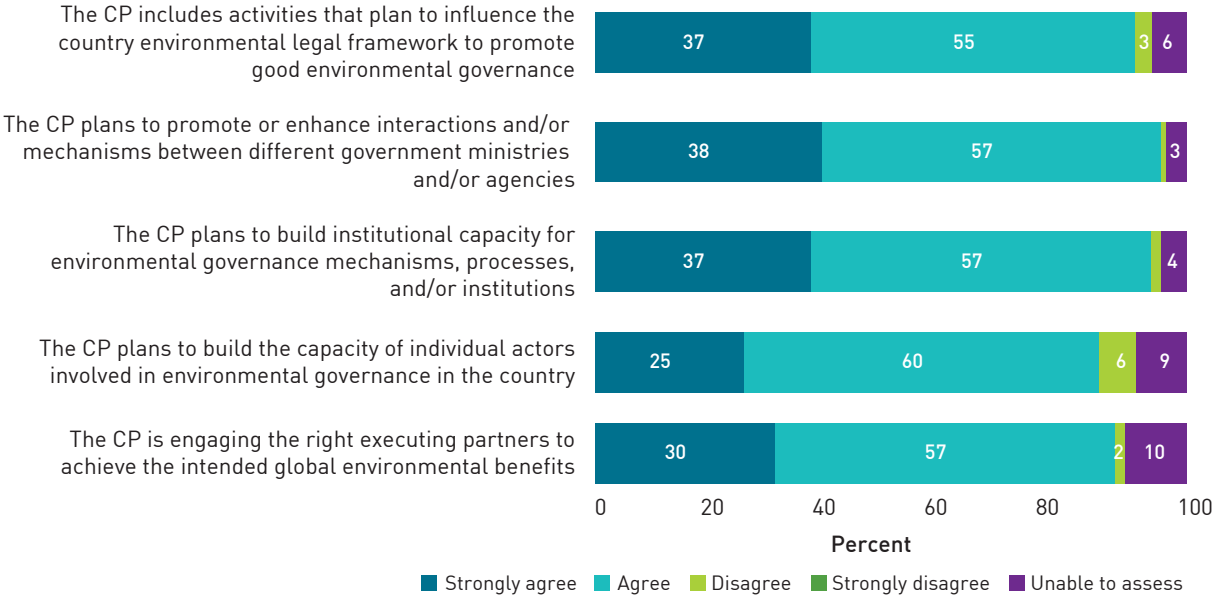
Q21. Please provide specific examples of expected contributions.

	No.	%
Answered	41	15
Skipped	227	85

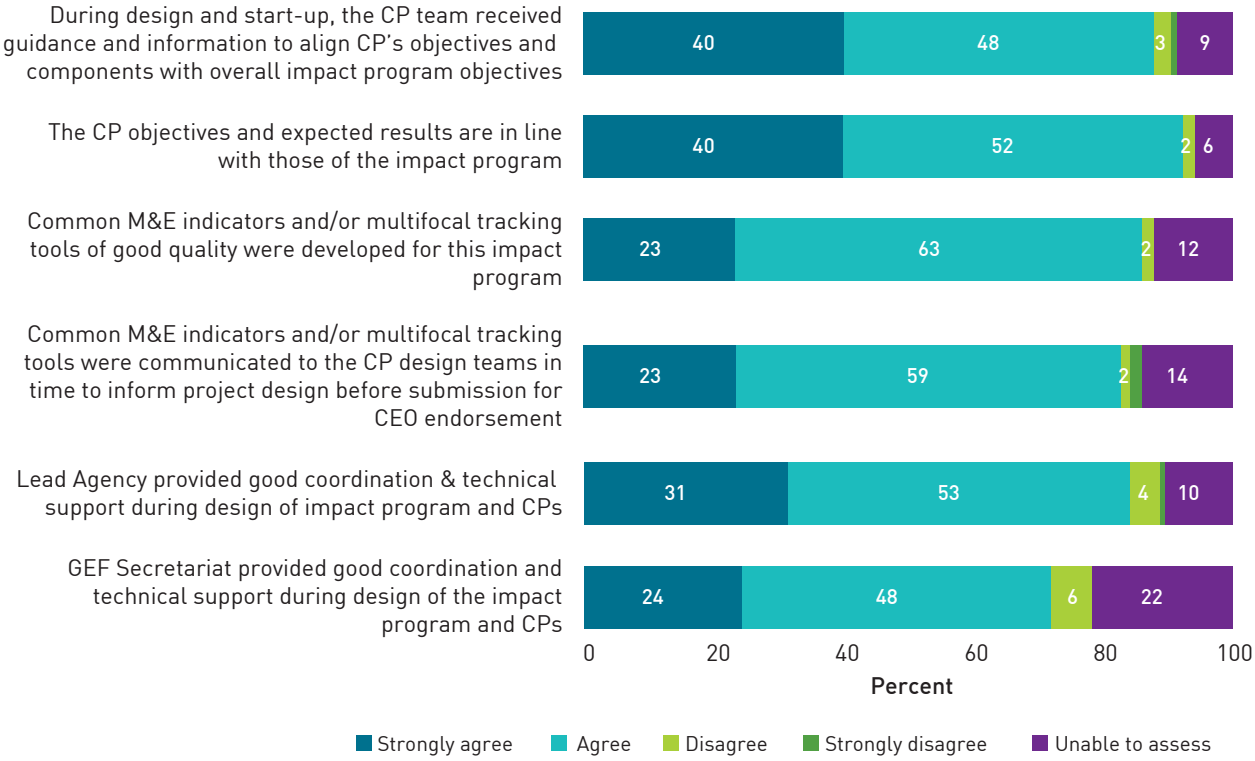
Q22. To what extent have gender, private sector, and resilience been taken into account in the child project design? (indicate your agreement with the following statements) (*n* = 115)



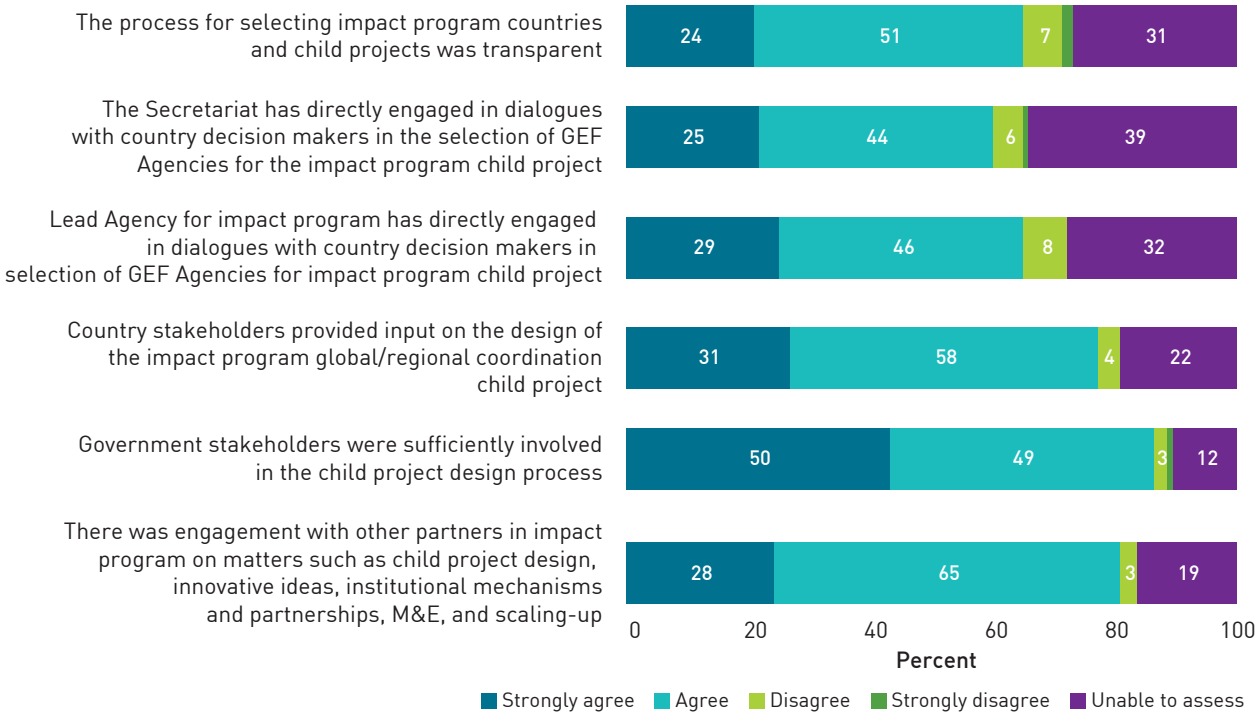
Q23. To what extent has good environmental governance been taken into account in the child project design? (indicate your agreement with the following statements) (*n* = 115)



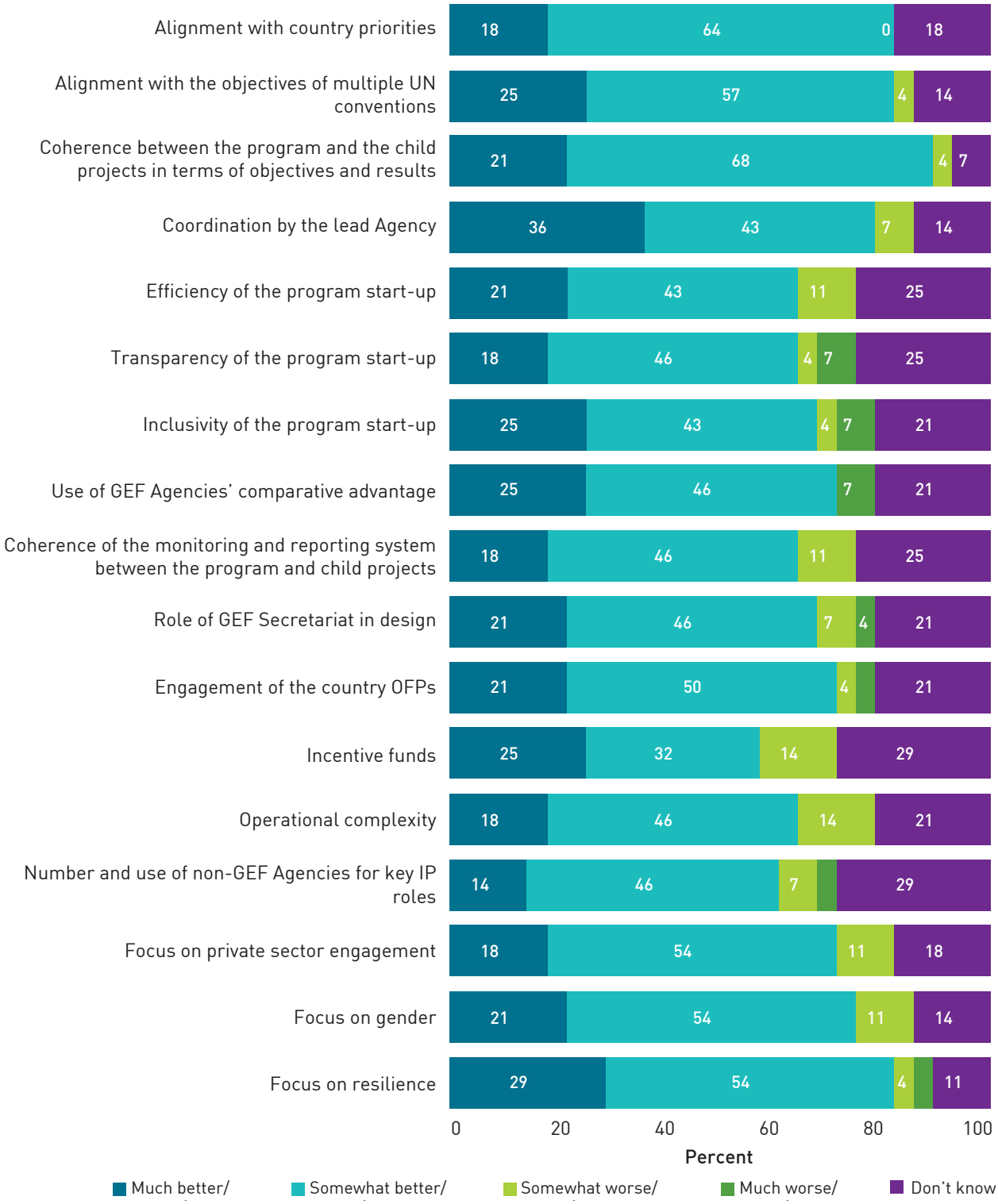
Q24. Is the GEF-7 impact program child project coherent with the impact program? (indicate your agreement with the following statements) (*n* = 115)



Q25. How transparent and inclusive have the decision-making processes been for the impact program? (indicate your agreement with the following statements) (*n* = 115)



Q26. How does the GEF-7 impact program compare to the previous GEF-6 IAP? (tick the appropriate box) (*n* = 28)



Main features of IAPs and impact programs

F.1 GEF-6 integrated approach pilots

FOOD SECURITY IAP

Objective and targets. The Food Security IAP aims at supporting countries in target geographies for integrating priorities to safeguard and maintain ecosystem services into investments improving smallholder agriculture and food value chains. The program targets 10 million ha of production landscapes with 2–3 million beneficiary households in drylands ecosystems of 12 Sub-Saharan African countries with a long record of concerns about food security and environmental sustainability.

Rationale/theory of change. The Food Security IAP seeks to tackle one of the major drivers of environmental degradation—food production—by advancing a holistic and integrated approach to enhancing agricultural productivity in smallholder systems where food insecurity is directly tied to agricultural output. By focusing on safeguarding those natural resources—land, water, soils, trees, and genetic resources—that underpin food and nutrition security in Sub-Saharan African drylands, the program aims at strengthening soil health, improving farmers' access to drought-tolerant seeds, adjusting planting periods and cropping portfolios, and enhancing on-farm agrobiodiversity. This, in turn, is expected to foster sustainability and resilience of food production systems while at the same time reducing land degradation and biodiversity loss, recovering natural vegetation and increasing soil carbon. The program adopts a three-pronged approach that (1) engages stakeholders across the public and private sectors, and across the environment and agriculture to foster collective action and coherent policies; (2) acts to scale up, diversify, and adapt practices for large-scale transformation of agroecosystems; and (3) tracks ecosystem services and resilience to enable more informed decision making on agriculture and food security at multiple scales (GEF 2015b).

Funding sources and allocations versus multilateral environmental agreements. According to the PFD, the GEF resource envelope for the IAP is roughly $106 million. The program budget cuts across three GEF-6 programming resources through STAR country allocations for the GEF focal areas of land degradation (28 percent), biodiversity (15 percent), and climate change (11 percent), supplemented by set-aside regional incentives funds (46 percent). The program is geared to contribute to global environmental benefits in the respective

focal areas, as well as implicitly contribute to country capacity to implement MEAs. It tries to achieve synergies in generating multiple global environmental benefits addressing guidance from three UN environmental conventions—the UNCCD, the CBD, and the UNFCCC.

Countries and Agencies. The Food Security IAP is designed to be implemented over five years in Burkina Faso, Burundi, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania, and Uganda. The program involves five GEF Agencies (IFAD as the lead Agency and FAO, UNDP, UNIDO, and the World Bank).

SUSTAINABLE CITIES IAP

Objective and targets. The overall objective of the Sustainable Cities IAP program is to promote among participating cities an approach to urban sustainability that is guided by evidence-based, multidimensional, and broadly inclusive planning processes that balance economic, social, and environmental resource considerations. By promoting sustainable urban development through better integrated models of urban design, planning, and implementation, the program is contributing toward avoiding or reducing more than 100 $MtCO_2e$ in GHG emissions.

Rationale/theory of change. Rapid urbanization and climate change add to the urgency of sustainable urban planning and management. At the same time, a unique window of opportunity comes with rapid urbanization: if managed well, compact, resilient, inclusive, and resource-efficient cities could become drivers of sustainable development. The Cities IAP seeks to promote the creation and implementation of comprehensive sustainability planning and management initiatives. It will primarily do so by supporting local strategic planning processes and implementation efforts in selected cities and countries. The value added by the GEF through the Cities IAP is to enhance integrated urban planning and strengthen global support and coordination.

Funding source. The Cities IAP consists of an allocation of approximately $137 million in GEF resources during the GEF-6 programming period. Of this sum, $53 million is directed to a limited number of child projects applying through (and with the endorsement of) their GEF country focal point. Applicants were required to match the IAP allocation on a dollar-for-dollar basis out of their STAR allocation, although most applicants ultimately opted to match at a higher ratio. In addition, child projects use their joint IAP-STAR allocation to leverage other public or private funds for use on these projects. The program includes a $9 million resource allocation to the World Bank for creation of a global coordination and knowledge-sharing platform, the Global Platform for Sustainable Cities (GEF ID 9162). Another $2 million is allocated to the World Bank to work collaboratively with the WRI, C40, and ICLEI as a resource team for city-to-city and network knowledge-sharing services under the GPSC (called Urban Networking to Complement and Extend the Reach of the Sustainable Cities IAP, GEF ID 9666). Of the total GEF funding allocated to the program, 61 percent is from the STAR allocations for climate change (55 percent), biodiversity (5 percent), and land degradation (1 percent). The IAP cities set-asides contribute 36 percent of the program funding, and GEF grants from the chemicals and waste focal area account for 3 percent.

Countries and Agencies. The Sustainable Cities IAP was designed to be implemented over five years in Brazil, China, Côte d'Ivoire, India, Malaysia, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Senegal, South Africa, and Vietnam. The program involves eight GEF Agencies—the African Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the Development Bank of Southern Africa, the Inter-American Development Bank, UNDP, UNEP, UNIDO, and the World Bank as the lead Agency.

COMMODITIES IAP

Objective and targets. The objective of the Commodities IAP program is to reduce the global impacts of agricultural commodities' expansion on GHG emissions and biodiversity by meeting the growing demand of palm oil, soy, and beef through supply that does not lead to deforestation. The program aims to bring 23 million ha of land under sustainable management practices and mitigate 80 $MtCO_2e$ of GHG emissions through its support for transformational shifts toward low-emissions and resilient commodity production.

Rationale/theory of change. Soy, beef, and palm oil are a key part of the global commodities trade. Together, they are responsible for about 70 percent of the approximately 7.6 million ha of tropical forest that are lost every year. The Commodities IAP attempts to harness the power of the market to move commodity production away from its current unsustainable path and remove deforestation from commodity supply chains. The program promotes a holistic approach that encompasses entire commodity supply chains for each of the three commodities. It is designed to have four main components, including support for more sustainable production, generating responsible demand, enabling sustainable financial transactions for trading in commodities, and adaptive management and learning for broader knowledge dissemination.

Funding source. Total GEF financing for the Commodities IAP Program reaches $40.3 million, all of which comes from IAP-dedicated focal area set-asides. The program is not reliant on STAR allocations. It aims to leverage a total of $443.2 million cofinancing in the design.

Countries and Agencies. The Commodities IAP aims to support activities in four producing countries (Brazil, Paraguay, Liberia, and Indonesia) and in-demand markets, including local consumption and emerging economies. UNDP is acting as the lead Agency of the program. Several GEF Agencies are involved as partners and executors—Conservation International, the Inter-American Development Bank, the UNEP Finance Initiative, WWF, and, collaboratively, the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation.

F.2 GEF-7 impact programs

FOOD SYSTEMS, LAND USE, AND RESTORATION

Objective and targets. The objective of the FOLUR Impact Program is to promote sustainable, integrated landscapes and efficient food value and supply chains at scale. The FOLUR Impact Program outlines how GEF-7 financing will support a systemwide approach that brings together strategies and stakeholders through both horizontal (interventions with actors within landscapes, policy reform, governance strengthening, etc.) and vertical (food value and supply chain commitments and financing) dimensions. The program targets include the following:

- Indicator 3, area of land restored: increase by more than 83,000 ha to a total of more than 2.387 million ha
- Indicator 4, area of landscapes under improved practices: increase by more than 1.134 million ha to a total of more than 42.954 million ha
- Indicator 6, GHG emissions mitigated: increase by 16.7 $MtCO_2e$ to a total of 304.6 $MtCO_2e$
- Indicator 11, direct beneficiaries: increase by 105,000 to a total of more than 7.105 million

Rationale/theory of change. The FOLUR Impact Program will help transform food production system and land use, which is cited by scientific reports as major causes of global environmental degradation. It takes on commodities supply chains around the world to remove deforestation

as well as other externalities related to food crops from their practice and become environmentally sustainable. This will be achieved through a systemwide approach that brings together strategies and stakeholders through both horizontal and vertical dimensions. The program aims to push these supply chains toward tipping points, where the costs of sustainable production are internalized into the market transactions and accepted by the global markets where production and consumption is taken up. The FOLUR Impact Program is structured into four main components: development of integrated landscape management systems, promotion of sustainable food production practices and responsible commodity value chains, restoration of natural habitats, and global platform (program coordination, collaboration and capacity building). The program will also build a global coalition that engages key stakeholders in the major food systems and supply chains, including existing platforms such as the Food and Land Use Coalition, the Tropical Forest Alliance, the Consumer Goods Forum, the Bonn Challenge, and others, to work collectively with countries toward achieving sustainability.

Funding source.[1] The total GEF financing approved for the FOLUR Impact Program and its two addendums is $437.6million ($401.5 million in GEF grant money and $36.1 million in Agency fees), with cofinancing reaching $3.7 billion at design. The Council has approved $437.6 million in GEF grant funds, including STAR allocations from biodiversity (34 percent), climate change (9 percent), and land degradation (19 percent). The rest is from impact program set-asides (38 percent).

Countries and Agencies. Twenty-seven countries will address environmental degradation caused by unsustainable production of key commodities in a variety of landscapes around the world, including Brazil, Burundi, China, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Liberia, Malaysia, Mexico, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Tanzania, Thailand, Uganda, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam. Eight GEF Agencies are involved in implementation; they are the World Bank, UNDP, IFAD, WWF-US, Conservation International, UNIDO, UNEP, and FAO.

SUSTAINABLE CITIES

Objective and targets. The Sustainable Cities Impact Program seeks to promote a transformational shift in urban development by supporting cities in pursuing integrated urban planning for impactful development outcomes with global environmental benefits. The main targets of the Sustainable Cities Impact Program are as follows:

- Terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use: over 900,000 ha
- Area of land restored: close to 25,000 ha
- Area of landscapes under improved practices (excluding protected areas): over 280,000 ha
- Area of marine habitat under improved practices to benefit biodiversity (excluding protected areas): more than 38,000 ha
- GHG emissions mitigated: more than 184.8 $MtCO_2e$
- Direct beneficiaries: more than 58 million

Rationale/theory of change. The Sustainable Cities Impact Program builds on the GEF-6 Sustainable Cities IAP and emphasizes a holistic approach to tackling systemic drivers of environmental degradation in cities for long-term sustainability and resilience. The Sustainable Cities Impact Program maintains a two-tiered approach that brings together investments for more integrated sustainable cities in 24 cities in nine countries, with a global knowledge-sharing and learning platform

[1] The financial figures were retrieved from the GEF Portal on August 3, 2020.

to build momentum, raise ambitions, secure commitments, and implement integrated solutions that require new behaviors. A virtuous and reinforcing circle emerges from these two tiers: capacity development informs implementation of more innovative, inclusive, gender-sensitive, sustainable, and integrated projects, which sets an example for replication in the city, country, and beyond.

Funding source. GEF financing approved for the Sustainable Cities Impact Program reaches $159.9 million ($146.7 million GEF grant amount and $13.2 million Agency fee), including STAR allocations from biodiversity (23 percent), climate change (33 percent), and land degradation (4 percent). The rest is from impact program set-asides (40 percent). Promised cofinancing resources are estimated at $1.7 billion.

Countries and Agencies. In the Sustainable Cities Impact Program, nine countries will promote a transformational shift in urban development by supporting cities to pursue integrated urban planning for impactful development outcomes. The countries are Argentina, Brazil, China, Costa Rica, India, Indonesia, Morocco, Rwanda, and Sierra Leone. UNEP is the lead Agency; the Asian Development Bank, UNDP, and the World Bank are the implementing Agencies. Built on experience from the GEF-6 Sustainable Cities IAP, the Sustainable Cities Impact Program will bring together three leading global organizations working with cities to fulfill their climate and sustainability targets, including the WRI, ICLEI, and the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group. The three-organization consortium, known as CBOs, will be co-executing partners of the Sustainable Cities Impact Program. Each CBO brings a different and complementary set of strengths to the program, from cutting-edge knowledge and tools to political leadership and advocacy, and regional networks and experience in capacity building.

AMAZON SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPES

Objective and targets. The Amazon Sustainable Landscapes 2 (ASL2) Impact Program aims to improve integrated landscape management and conservation of ecosystems in targeted areas in the Amazon region. The ASL2 program seeks to bring about 32 million ha of protected lands and over 16 million ha of landscapes under improved management, restore more than 18,000 ha of land, and reduce more than 29.8 $MtCO_2e$ in GHG emissions. The direct beneficiaries of this program are estimated at 32,000 people.

Rationale/theory of change. The GEF has made significant investments in innovative approaches to advance the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and sustainable management of international waters in the Amazon Basin. Most of the previous investments are associated with conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity at the national level, while less efforts have been made to address the root causes of deforestation that require collaboration across borders. The ASL2 program seeks to help the region move away from a business-as-usual scenario characterized by forest conversion into low-productivity cattle ranching and other unsustainable land uses to forest and freshwater–friendly landscapes. It builds upon GEF-6 ongoing efforts carried out by the Amazon Sustainable Landscapes (ASL1) program, expanding the geographic scope, improving protected area systems including for wetlands/freshwater ecosystems, implementing integrated forest landscape approaches, and helping reinforce and improve coordination of actions on the ground. In this program, seven countries that account for 92 percent of the Amazon Basin territory will work together with a joint vision to maintain and improve the ecological health and integrity of the Amazon biome. The long-term goal is to implement a landscape mosaic made up of well-managed protected areas and indigenous territories, with sustainable use

in the surrounding landscapes that will ultimately ensure maintenance of the ecological integrity and resilience of the Amazon biogeographical region.

Funding source. GEF financing approved for the ASL2 program reaches $96.3 million ($88.3 million GEF grant amount and $7.9 million Agency fee), including STAR allocations from biodiversity (53 percent), climate change (5 percent), and land degradation (4 percent). The rest is from impact program set-asides (37 percent). The promised cofinancing resources are estimated at $509.5 million.

Countries and Agencies. The ASL2 program added Bolivia, Ecuador, Guyana, and Suriname to the original three countries in the first phase (ASL1), namely, Brazil, Colombia, and Peru. The World Bank is the lead Agency; Conservation International, FAO, IFAD, UNDP, UNIDO, the Development Bank of Latin America, and WWF-US are involved in the implementation.

CONGO BASIN SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPES

Objective and targets. The Congo Basin Sustainable Landscapes Impact Program seeks to catalyze transformational change in conservation and sustainable management of the Congo Basin through landscape approaches that empower local communities and forest-dependent people, and through partnerships with the private sector. In terms of global environmental benefits, the program will improve the management effectiveness of 20 protected areas covering more than 7.0 million ha, create 600,000 ha of new protected areas, restore 500,000 ha of forest and forest lands, and improve land management practices on more than 4.3 million ha of landscapes. All these activities will result in GHG emissions reductions of 121 $MtCO_2e$. More than half of the 358,000 direct beneficiaries are females targeted by the program.

Rationale/theory of change. The Congo Basin is globally important for climate regulation, rainfall patterns, carbon storage, biodiversity conservation, and the provision of multiple services for human communities and forest-dependent people. With the support of the Congo Basin Sustainable Management Impact Program, actions will address immediate problems related to biodiversity loss and lack of tenure and land rights for forest-dependent people, but also aim to prepare the region for dealing with increasing threats in the near future, such as the development of infrastructure and large-scale agribusiness plantations with the risks of irreversible damage to the integrity and functioning of the Congo Basin forest ecosystem. The program comprises four components: enabling integrated transboundary landscape planning for countries to implement sustainable land management plans that are based on maintaining the ecological integrity of the Congo Basin, maintaining and strengthening the conservation of critically high-conservation-value forest providing important habitat to endangered species and critical ecosystem services, integrating local communities and forest-dependent people in the sustainable use of forests through the strengthening of land tenure and production sector activities, and building national and regional capacity for regional cooperation. Together, these components will help address the four main barriers: conflicting and isolated sectoral development; poor governance of protected areas; lack of engagement of communities, forest-dependent people, and private sector in conservation and sustainable use; and weak cross-border implementation of conservation actions and learning.

Funding source. GEF financing approved for the Congo Basin Sustainable Landscapes program reaches $62.3 million ($57.2 million GEF grant amount and $5.1 million Agency fee), including STAR allocations from biodiversity (44 percent), climate change (7 percent), and land degradation (7 percent). The rest is from impact program set-asides

(40 percent). The promised cofinancing resources are estimated at $387.4 million.

Countries and Agencies. The program will catalyze transformational change through six critical transboundary landscapes in six countries: Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, and Gabon. UNEP is the lead Agency; and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the World Bank, and WWF-US are the implementing Agencies. Close coordination with the Central African Forest Initiative is planned to identify and capitalize on synergies such the impact program builds on Central African Forest Initiative activities.

DRYLANDS SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPES

Objective and targets. The objective of the Drylands Sustainable Landscapes Impact Program is to avoid, reduce, and reverse further degradation, desertification, and deforestation of land and ecosystems in drylands through the sustainable management of production landscapes. In terms of global environmental benefit targets, the program will bring 12 million ha under sustainable land management, including 1.2 million ha primarily benefiting biodiversity; and avoiding deforestation of 240,000 ha of high-conservation-value forests. In addition, the program will improve the management effectiveness in 1.6 million ha of protected areas and restore 1.2 million ha of degraded land in the drylands. All these activities will result in GHG emissions reductions totaling 81 $MtCO_2e$.

Rationale/theory of change. The program will transform the management of drylands in selected regions (the Miombo and Mopane ecosystems of southern Africa; the savannas of west Africa; and the temperate grasslands, savannas, and shrublands of Central Asia), establishing the basis for the scaling of sustainable drylands management to regional and global levels. This will be of major significance given that drylands extend over more than 40 percent of the Earth's land mass, are affected by some of the world's most pressing environmental and development challenges, and have been historically neglected in terms of coordinated investments. The program consists of three components: strengthening the enabling environment for the sustainable and inclusive management of drylands; implementing and scaling up sustainable drylands management; and programmatic coordination, monitoring, and scaling. The components of each child project will mirror those of the program as a whole; within each child project, the three components will be mutually interdependent and complementary. The global coordination project will play a vital role in ensuring that the potential for value-added offered by the programmatic approach, in terms of effectiveness and scaling, is realized.

Funding source. GEF financing approved for the Drylands Sustainable Landscapes Impact Program reaches $104.5 million ($95.8 million GEF grant amount and $8.6 million Agency fee), including STAR allocations from biodiversity (21 percent), climate change (10 percent), and land degradation (31 percent). The rest is from impact program set-asides (40 percent). The promised cofinancing resources are estimated at $809.1 million.

Countries and Agencies. The program covers 11 countries in three drylands regions, namely, the Miombo and Mopane ecosystems of southern Africa (participating countries: Angola, Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe); the savannas of west Africa (Burkina Faso); and the temperate grasslands, savannas, and shrublands of Central Asia (Kazakhstan and Mongolia). FAO is the lead Agency; the World Bank, IUCN, and WWF-US are the implementing Agencies.

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