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

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Task Team Leader: Kseniya Temnenko, ktemnenko@thegef.org
Chief Evaluation Officer: Geeta Batra
GEF IEO Director: Juha Uitto

Editing: Mary Cadette

Layout and design: Nita Congress

Cover: Rawpixel.com/Shutterstock

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Foreword

Knowledge is a strategic resource of the Global Environment Facility (GEF). At the operational level, projects and programs become more effective when they learn from their own implementation and from others, adapt in response to evidence, and identify lessons for future programming. At the strategic level, the GEF and the broader environmental community benefit through concerted efforts that support learning across interventions, Agencies, and countries, as well as when project and program knowledge is consistently integrated, easily searchable, and accessible through online repositories.

Previous evaluation of knowledge management conducted by the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) in 2017 acknowledged the GEF as a knowledge provider but noted that the GEF played less of a role as a knowledge broker—that is, systematically organizing and sharing knowledge and lessons learned by different parts of the partnership. Several initiatives were launched by the partnership to address these limitations.

This evaluation assesses the progress in the GEF in strengthening the use of knowledge since 2017 and identifies systemic issues to be considered for the next GEF replenishment phase. The evaluation was presented to the GEF Council in December 2020. The Council took note of its conclusions and endorsed its recommendations. Since then, the report findings have been shared at multiple stakeholder meetings involving the GEF Secretariat, the GEF Agencies, and implementing partners. 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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This evaluation was a collective effort. It was led by Kseniya Temnenko, Knowledge Management Officer in the Global Environment Facility Independent Evaluation Office (GEF IEO) and prepared together with Glenn O’Neil, Senior Evaluation Consultant, with oversight and guidance by the Chief Evaluation Officer, Geeta Batra, and the Director, Juha Uitto. Carlo Carugi, Senior Evaluation Officer, was the internal reviewer and provided feedback on the concept note.

Administrative support was provided by Evelyn Chihuguyu, Program Assistant, and Marie-Constance Manuella Koukoui, Senior Executive Assistant; Juan Jose Portillo, Senior Operations Officer, provided operations/administrative oversight. Mary Cadette edited the report; Nita Congress designed and laid out the publication.

The GEF IEO is grateful for the participation of the GEF Secretariat, representatives of the GEF Agencies, and members of the GEF’s Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel, country operational and political focal points, implementing partners, and civil society organizations who contributed their time and experiences to the evaluation.

The GEF IEO is grateful to all these individuals and institutions for their contributions. Final responsibility for this report remains firmly with the Office.

Abbreviations

ASGM	artisanal and small-scale gold mining	IW:LEARN	International Waters Learning Exchange and Resource Network
CEO	Chief Executive Officer		
CFI	Coastal Fisheries Initiative	PMIS	Project Management Information System
CSO	civil society organization	STAP	Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel
GEF	Global Environment Facility	UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
GOLD	Global Opportunities for Long-Term Development of ASGM Sector	WRI	World Resources Institute
GPSC	Global Platform for Sustainable Cities	WWF-US	World Wildlife Fund
IAP	integrated approach pilot		
ICLEI	Local Governments for Sustainability		
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office		

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

Executive summary

Knowledge is an important resource of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) which supports its strategic objectives to address global environmental concerns. Effective approaches to managing knowledge can help members of the GEF partnership and broader stakeholders in identifying good practices and solutions for environmental issues and in their replication and scaling up, thus increasing the GEF's impact. At the same time, lack of effective approaches to knowledge management (KM) can lead to duplication of effort, missed opportunities, and failure to learn from the experience across the GEF partnership.

This report presents the findings of an evaluation carried out by the GEF Independent Evaluation Office in 2020 to assess KM in the GEF partnership as an update to the 2017 KM evaluation. The objectives of this evaluation were (1) to assess the effectiveness of the GEF KM approach in strengthening the use of knowledge across the GEF partnership in relation to the GEF's mandate to achieve global environmental benefits, and (2) to identify any systemic issues that should be considered in KM in planning for GEF-8. The evaluation was designed to contribute to the Seventh Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF (OPS7) and identify lessons for the eighth replenishment phase.

This evaluation applied a mixed-methods approach that included the following methodological components: semistructured interviews with 51 members of the GEF partnership; an online survey that was administered across the GEF partnership and to external stakeholders and that received 658 responses; a quality-at-entry review of 69 GEF-6 and GEF-7 projects to assess the application of the GEF project cycle knowledge and learning requirements; a case study of the knowledge platform of the Sustainable Cities Integrated Approach Pilot; and a document and literature review.

KEY FINDINGS

Since 2017, progress has been made at each step of the KM process from knowledge capture to its application across the GEF partnership, but awareness and use of new initiatives and developments is a limitation.

In **knowledge capture** (collecting information from GEF projects and programs), the introduction of the GEF Portal to replace the Project Management Information System is seen by stakeholders as a positive change that improves data collection and transparency. However, the portal is not yet a KM tool, as it does not provide a functionality to aggregate and extract lessons and good practices across

projects on specific themes, focal areas, or geographic regions that would allow partners to learn from each other and scale up good practices. The World Bank Group provides the infrastructure for all technology systems at the GEF, and the timing of the development of several features may be beyond the GEF's control. A GEF IEO evaluation of the GEF Portal will examine these issues further.

In **knowledge development**, the GEF partnership has continued to transform data and information into usable products, such as Good Practice Briefs and the Kaleo "Ask the Expert" tool; and through programming approaches such as the integrated approach pilots (IAPs). However, a standard approach to or guidance on transforming data and information into usable formats that can be shared is still needed. A concern highlighted by stakeholders is the accessibility and curation of knowledge products that would allow the products to be easily searched and accessed.

In **knowledge sharing and dissemination**, the introduction of e-learning courses through the GEF Academy, the ongoing KM activities, such as Knowledge Days during the Expanded Constituency Workshops, and the use of learning and knowledge platforms in programs have supported stakeholders across the partnership. The GEF communications team also actively disseminates knowledge through events and the website; based on interviews, however, links between KM and communication could be strengthened. At the same time, awareness of knowledge products and services by key audiences, implementing partners, and country focal points is a limiting factor.

In **knowledge application**, the use of knowledge has improved with KM requirements and guidance on KM activities expected at various stages in the GEF project cycle. This has been accompanied by guidance on good practice criteria for the KM section in project documents that have been developed, discussed, and shared with GEF Agencies.

The Agencies are positive about the project-level guidance on KM, although they seek more details and examples.

GEF programmatic approaches incorporate knowledge and learning. GEF-6 and GEF-7 programs such as the IAPs and the impact programs have developed program-level approaches to KM and funded coordination projects that include learning and knowledge platforms to facilitate the sharing of knowledge across projects, countries, and Agencies. This approach was also seen in other GEF-6 and GEF-7 programs, such as the GOLD (Global Opportunities for Long-Term Development of the Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining Sector) program and the Coastal Fisheries Initiative program. The use of central learning and knowledge platforms is not new to the GEF and exists beyond programs in certain focal areas and cross-cutting themes, such as IW:LEARN (the International Waters Learning Exchange and Resource Network) and the GEF Gender Partnership.

Despite the progress observed since 2017, challenges and limitations were identified in project-level KM, the overall KM strategy, and the role of GEF Agencies and countries.

- **Capturing data and information from GEF projects and programs.** The first recommendation of the 2017 KM evaluation focused on improving the capture and availability of project-level documentation from a KM perspective, and its subsequent use. The move toward fully online management of project data and information was a positive step, together with the increased integration of KM within project proposals. However, these steps have not yet resulted in full optimization of project-level KM.
- **GEF KM strategy.** The second recommendation of the 2017 KM evaluation focused on the development of a workplan on KM and learning and an appropriate resource envelope by the GEF Secretariat and the KM Advisory Group. Since

2017, no workplan or strategy has been developed; rather, reference is made to the 2015 KM approach paper for guidance. Since November 2017, the KM Advisory Group has met only once (in June 2019). Several stakeholders who were interviewed also noted that the KM Advisory Group has not been fully used in guiding KM within the GEF partnership.

- **The KM role of GEF Agencies.** This was an issue raised in the 2017 KM evaluation, where it was found that many Agencies relied on their own KM systems and could not draw on knowledge from other GEF Agencies. As confirmed by stakeholder interviews, since 2017, progress has been made on the Agencies' role in KM within the partnership. This progress is mainly attributable to a greater emphasis on KM in project design and the new programming approaches, including IAPs and impact programs. At the same time, there are a number of areas where improvements are still needed, including the need to facilitate the integration of lessons from completed projects into new projects, both within and between GEF Agencies; stronger peer-to-peer exchange between Agencies (for example, as seen in the IAPs); the need for exchanges between staff with KM responsibilities, possibly through the KM Advisory Group; and further guidance on KM at the project level for GEF Agencies, including recent examples on how to design a good KM component in GEF projects.

At the country level, knowledge exchange and learning are taking place through participation in Knowledge Days, GEF Constituency Meetings, and related events, and through the use of GEF KM products. Based on the survey and interview results, KM initiatives since 2017 have been appreciated at the country level, although not all country-level stakeholders were aware of the available KM services and products. GEF operational and political country focal points and other

country-level stakeholders were in agreement that the following areas still needed improvement:

- Support for GEF country focal points to take a more active role in KM, such as providing examples of their potential KM role with GEF Agencies and country partners, ensuring that they have access to information on the GEF portfolio, good practices, and partners
- Continued online dialogue within and between countries, which is even more important given the COVID-19 situation
- Increased targeted promotion of existing GEF KM services and products at the country level where they have been shown to be valuable (e.g., GEF e-learning courses, Good Practice Briefs).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion 1: The GEF partnership continued to make progress in KM during GEF-7. The 2017 KM evaluation found that substantial progress in KM had been made during GEF-6. This progress has continued in GEF-7 with an increase in knowledge and learning activities, including KM in project design and implementation; recently developed KM services and products such as Good Practice Briefs; the use of KM in programs, including in the IAPs and impact programs; and outreach and training efforts in person and online. However, the stakeholder survey clearly points to gaps in the awareness of the various initiatives launched across the partnership.

Conclusion 2: The IAPs, impact programs, and new programming approaches have increased the relevance of knowledge and learning activities within the GEF partnership, though limitations exist. This evaluation confirmed that the focus on KM within the IAPs and the GOLD and Coastal Fisheries Initiative programs—along with other initiatives in focal areas and cross-cutting issues,

such as IW:Learn and the GEF Gender Partnership—have led to an increase in knowledge and learning activities with opportunities for improved exchange and learning between GEF Agencies, projects, and implementing partners. The creation of thematic platforms in the IAPs fosters cross-agency and cross-country knowledge exchange, but in the absence of an overall GEF KM system, such as the proposed GEF knowledge exchange hub, GEF knowledge and learning continue to be dispersed.

Conclusion 3: The systemic issues raised in 2017 have been partially mitigated but continue to persist. The 2017 KM evaluation found three longstanding systemic issues that were barriers to progress in KM: (1) the availability of an information management system to capture and provide access to knowledge, (2) KM project-level guidance, and (3) the capacity to connect with GEF Agency systems and platforms. These issues have been partially mitigated. The GEF Portal has improved compared with the previous Project Management Information System, although it has very limited KM capabilities so far; and KM project-level guidance has increased and is showing early results. The capacity to connect with GEF Agency systems and platforms has not changed since the previous evaluation, although the knowledge components of the IAPs demonstrate to some extent how KM can work effectively across and between Agencies and the GEF partnership.

Recommendation 1: The GEF partnership should develop a clear KM strategy. In planning for GEF-8, either the KM Advisory Group, or a new group dedicated to KM, should advise the GEF Secretariat on

developing a partnership-wide KM strategy with clear priorities and focus. The strategy would have to be supported by the necessary resources and endorsed by the GEF Council. The strategy should set out KM priorities and define roles and responsibilities across the GEF partnership including the role of the KM Advisory Group. Supported by an action plan, the strategy should set out principles and standards for the KM steps—knowledge capture, development, sharing, dissemination, and application—articulated in reinforced project-level guidelines, requirements, and common KM metrics.

Recommendation 2: The GEF partnership should invest in a technical solution that strengthens the KM system. At the operational level, a common approach is needed to guide the KM steps supported by a technical solution that can support KM needs: the ability to capture KM data, lessons, and good practices and to present them in a usable and accessible format for both GEF stakeholders and externally. This would require either enhancing the KM capabilities of the new portal or building a GEF knowledge exchange hub, as has been proposed by the GEF Secretariat. Processes should be designed to put into application the principles and standards set out in the strategy for each KM step: capture and store knowledge in a uniform and accessible form, exchange of knowledge between the GEF Secretariat and the GEF Agencies, and collation and curation of knowledge in comparable and usable formats to increase accessibility and avoid fragmentation.

Introduction

This report presents the findings of an evaluation carried out by the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to assess knowledge management (KM) in the GEF partnership as an update to the 2017 KM evaluation.

The objectives of this evaluation are to assess the effectiveness of the GEF KM approach in strengthening the use of knowledge across the GEF partnership in relation to the GEF's mandate to achieve global environmental benefits, and to identify any systemic issues that should be considered in KM in planning for GEF-8. The evaluation will contribute to the Seventh Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF (OPS7) and identify lessons for the next replenishment phase.

1.1 Methodology

The methodology for the evaluation included the following major components:

- **Semistructured interviews** were held with 51 members of the GEF partnership: 11 staff of the GEF Secretariat; 17 staff from 10 GEF Agencies' coordination units; 4 GEF country political or operational focal points; 1 representative of the GEF–Civil Society Organization (CSO) Network; 15 implementing partners of the Sustainable Cities Integrated Approach Pilot (IAP); the project manager of the International Waters Learning Exchange and Resource Network (IW:LEARN); and 1 staff member and the chair of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP).
- An **online survey** was administered in English to GEF stakeholders (GEF national focal points, country focal points of multilateral environmental conventions, representatives of CSOs, project partners and staff, GEF Agency country and regional staff, the GEF Secretariat, and the STAP); 658 responses were received.
- A **quality-at-entry review** of project documentation of 69 projects covering GEF-6 and GEF-7 was conducted. The review included mainly the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) endorsement and approval documents and available project documentation, including project proposals and project implementation reports. The review was based on seven criteria previously developed by the KM team of the GEF Secretariat with two additional criteria:
 - An overview of existing lessons and best practices that informs the project concept

with proper references and links to relevant documents

- Plans to learn from existing relevant projects, programs, initiatives, and evaluations with proper references and links to relevant documents
 - Proposed processes to capture, assess, and document information, lessons, best practices, and expertise generated during implementation
 - Proposed tools and methods for knowledge exchange, learning, and collaboration (at both the program and project levels if a program)
 - Proposed knowledge outputs to be produced and shared with stakeholders (at both the program and project levels if a program was concerned)
 - A brief discussion of how knowledge and learning will contribute to overall project or program impact and sustainability
 - Plans for strategic communications
 - Proposed budget for KM activities
 - Proposed timeline for KM.
- A case study on the knowledge platform of the Sustainable Cities IAP was conducted based on interviews, document reviews, and a quality at entry analysis of all Sustainable Cities IAP projects (14 projects).
 - Reviews of documents and literature relevant to KM within the GEF partnership were undertaken. Reviewed items included previous KM studies and reports of the GEF Secretariat, IEO, and STAP; IEO reports; GEF Council documents; and GEF Secretariat guidelines and policies.

Annex A lists the persons interviewed for this evaluation. Annex B presents the responses to the online survey. The sampling and criteria for the quality-at-entry review are discussed in annex C.

1.2 Background: 2017 KM evaluation

The 2017 IEO KM evaluation (GEF IEO 2017) acknowledged the progress made in KM during GEF-6 based on the GEF 2020 Strategy (GEF 2015a), which emphasizes “strategically generating knowledge” as a priority for the future of the partnership. A higher priority was given to KM during GEF-6, with the establishment and funding of a dedicated KM work stream within the Secretariat that rolled out a range of KM activities guided by a 2015 KM approach paper (GEF 2015b) and the KM Advisory Group.

The 2017 KM evaluation noted that the GEF partnership fulfilled the role of a **knowledge provider** within the broader international environmental community but played a smaller role as a **knowledge broker** that would systematically organize and share knowledge produced by different parts of the partnership.

The 2017 evaluation also noted that within the GEF partnership, KM was found to have a particular complementary role, considering that many members of the partnership (notably GEF Agencies) already have KM systems, policies, and approaches in place. Compared with four similar partnerships, the GEF partnership has placed less emphasis on a common approach to managing knowledge and on leveraging the potential of all members, including Agencies, countries, and civil society.

The 2017 KM evaluation concluded that systemic issues were barriers to knowledge sharing, including the limited availability of an information management system to capture and provide access to project-level documentation; the absence of guidance on KM for GEF-supported projects and programs throughout the project cycle; and the limited capacity within the GEF Secretariat to connect with GEF Agencies’ knowledge systems and platforms. These issues make it difficult to create

an enabling environment for partnership-level learning and collaboration across the GEF portfolio.

The 2017 KM evaluation made two recommendations:

- To the GEF Secretariat: to place a higher priority on improving the quality and availability of project-level documentation from a KM perspective, including lessons learned during design and implementation
- To the GEF Secretariat and KM Advisory Group: to develop a workplan to connect across GEF Agency KM systems, generate knowledge products, and organize learning activities across focal areas, Agencies, and cross-cutting themes with a proposed resource envelope and mechanisms to disseminate knowledge.

Findings

2.1 Progress since the 2017 KM evaluation

Since the most recent IEO evaluation in 2017, the GEF Secretariat has launched several new learning and KM initiatives: the [GEF Academy](#), which currently includes two e-courses; the [Good Practice Briefs](#) (as a pilot project); the launch of the GEF Portal; the strengthening of KM guidance for project proposals and the project cycle; and the [Kaleo “Ask the Expert” tool](#).

Other initiatives were continued from the previous replenishment phase, such as greater integration of KM in programmatic approaches, including the IAPs and the Knowledge Days during the Expanded Constituency Workshops. These recent initiatives were guided by the 2015 KM approach paper and roadmap (GEF 2015b) and not by a KM strategy or plan.

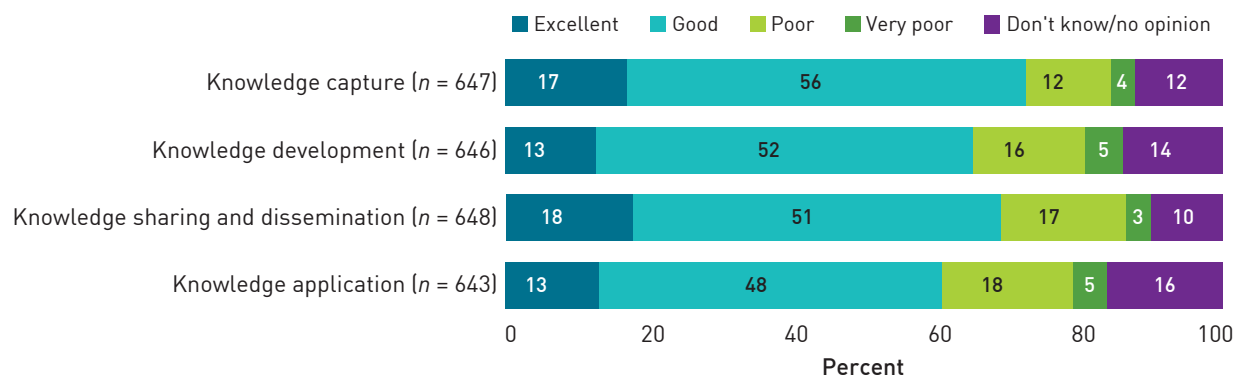
To assess the current pulse of KM performance across the GEF partnership, an online survey asked stakeholders to rate the performance of the GEF partnership on the various steps in the KM process. The steps were described as follows.

- **Knowledge capture:** collecting data and information from GEF projects and programs through planning, monitoring, reporting, evaluation, and other processes
- **Knowledge development:** transforming GEF data and information into usable formats that can then be shared
- **Knowledge sharing and dissemination:** activities to communicate knowledge to audiences and make it accessible, through events, publications, and platforms
- **Knowledge application:** the use of available GEF knowledge in current and future GEF and non-GEF projects and programs and policies and elsewhere.

The survey results show that 70 percent of respondents perceived knowledge capture and dissemination as strong areas of performance ([figure 2.1](#)). About one-quarter of the respondents perceived the application of knowledge from GEF projects as the weakest area.

The stakeholders interviewed and surveyed for this evaluation broadly agreed that progress has been made since 2017 in strengthening KM across the partnership and expressed appreciation for the initiatives and developments. Although progress was

Figure 2.1 Stakeholder perceptions of current KM performance in the GEF partnership



Source: Stakeholder survey question: “How would you rate the current performance of the GEF partnership in the following areas?”

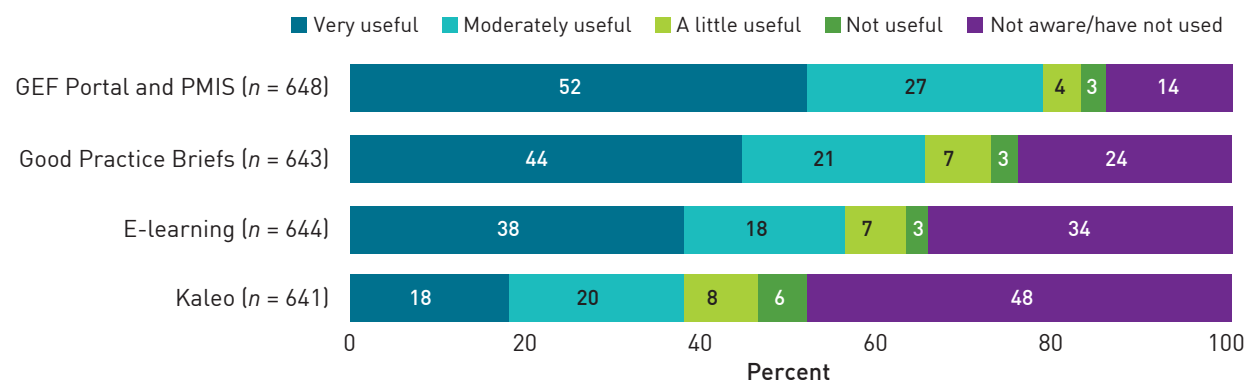
highlighted at each step of the KM process, awareness and use of these initiatives was identified as a limitation.

KNOWLEDGE CAPTURE

The 2017 KM evaluation reported on the limitations in the GEF on capturing data and information from GEF projects and programs. In mid-2018, the GEF Portal was introduced as a replacement for the existing Project Management System (PMIS). As seen in [figure 2.2](#), 86 percent of survey respondents were using the GEF Portal or the PMIS, with 52 percent rating the portal as very useful. Based

on interviews and comments in the survey, stakeholders saw the GEF Portal as an improvement over the PMIS, given that it helped the GEF move from an email-based approval and review system to a system that supports direct entry and review of proposals and other relevant documents, with the capability of managing documents and data on GEF-supported projects and programs. They noted that the GEF Portal improved data collection and transparency. However, stakeholders were consistent in their view that it was not yet a KM tool, because it did not provide the functionality to aggregate findings and extract good practices across projects. Such capability, focused on specific

Figure 2.2 Stakeholder perceptions of usefulness of GEF KM products and services



Source: Stakeholder survey question: “How would you rate the usefulness of the following new GEF knowledge products and services?”

themes, focal areas, or geographic regions, would allow countries and Agencies to learn from each other and scale up good practices. In addition, stakeholders experienced some difficulties in logging in and navigating the portal. The World Bank Group provides the infrastructure for all technology systems at the GEF, and the timing of the development of several features may be beyond the control of the GEF. The GEF IEO evaluation on the portal will examine these issues further.

KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT

In the interest of transforming GEF data and information into usable formats that can be shared, the GEF Secretariat piloted Good Practice Briefs to share good practices from GEF projects and programs in collaboration with GEF Agencies. To date, five briefs have been produced; they are available on the GEF [Knowledge & Learning](#) web page. As shown in [figure 2.2](#), 44 percent of stakeholders surveyed found them very useful, although 24 percent responded that they were not aware of or had not used the briefs.

The [Kaleo “Ask the Expert” tool](#) was launched in mid-2018 and, to date, has had 310 active users, with 2,052 answers provided by the GEF Kaleo knowledge base.¹ As shown in [figure 2.2](#), although appreciated by those surveyed stakeholders who have used it, Kaleo was not known or used by approximately half of the respondents.

The 2017 KM evaluation found that the GEF partnership was prolific in producing knowledge products. One concern highlighted by stakeholders both in 2017 and 2020 was the accessibility and curation of products; these would ideally be easily accessed, searched, and highlighted from a platform or a portal that would not necessarily store all

this information, but would provide an easy-to-use gateway to the available knowledge products and services.

KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND DISSEMINATION

A new initiative of the GEF Secretariat to communicate knowledge was the introduction of the GEF Academy. This product currently includes two e-courses, “Introduction to the GEF” and “Gender and Environment” (available in English, French, and Spanish). As shown in [figure 2.2](#), 38 percent of stakeholders surveyed found the courses very useful, although about a third (34 percent) responded that they were not aware of or had not used the courses. According to the GEF Secretariat, as of November 2020, 2,367 participants had registered and 822 had completed the “Introduction to the GEF” e-course. Several stakeholders interviewed found the introductory course useful for themselves or colleagues, particularly those new to the partnership (e.g., a new implementing project manager or a country focal point). According to the GEF Secretariat, 15,526 participants had registered, and 1,324 participants had completed the “Gender and Environment” e-course, as of June 2020.

Other ongoing KM activities for sharing knowledge included Knowledge Days during the Expanded Constituency Workshops, as well as other targeted training workshops, such as GEF Introduction Seminars. The Communications and Outreach team of the GEF Secretariat also supports knowledge sharing and dissemination through the publication of knowledge products, the GEF website, dissemination during events such as conference of the parties’ meetings, and a variety of channels, including social media. Based on interviews, links between KM and communication within the GEF could be strengthened.

¹ Source: user statistics provided by the GEF Secretariat to the GEF IEO in October 2020.

KNOWLEDGE APPLICATION

Several initiatives aim at using available knowledge in current and future GEF projects. A KM section has been included in project templates since GEF-6; this was reinforced in mid-2017 with the specification that KM-related projects and program expenditures were eligible for GEF funding (GEF 2017a). In 2020, guidance on KM activities was required at various stages in the GEF project cycle (GEF 2020). This has been accompanied by guidance on good practice criteria for the KM section of the documents which have been developed, discussed, and shared with GEF Agencies. Agency staff interviewed were positive about this increased guidance on KM at the project level, although they sought more detailed guidance (see discussion below on [challenges and limitations](#)).

GEF PROGRAMMATIC APPROACHES INCORPORATING KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING

New programmatic approaches have been introduced during GEF-6, such as the IAPs during GEF-6 and the impact programs during GEF-7. The IAPs and the impact programs developed program-level approaches to KM and funded coordination child projects that include learning and knowledge platforms to facilitate the sharing of knowledge across participating projects, countries, cities, and Agencies. This approach was not limited to the IAPs and the impact programs (discussed in more detail in [section 2.2](#)), but was also seen in other programs such as the GOLD (Global Opportunity for Long-Term Development of the ASGM Sector) program ([box 2.1](#)) and the Coastal Fisheries Initiative (CFI) program.

The use of central learning and knowledge platforms is not new to the GEF; it existed prior to GEF-6 in certain focal areas and cross-cutting themes, such as IW:LEARN (the International Waters Learning Exchange and Resource Network)

Box 2.1 The GOLD program

A good example of project- and program-level KM is found within the GEF's interventions in the artisanal and small-scale (ASGM) gold mining sector with the GOLD program (GEF ID 9602). GOLD has seven child projects plus a global KM "hub" project, active in eight countries. The GEF IEO's recent evaluation of GEF interventions in ASGM highlighted the following findings on KM:

- GOLD responded to lessons learned from completed GEF projects in the ASGM sector. The global KM hub responded to the lesson (from previous interventions) that knowledge and lessons were not shared between ASGM projects within and between countries.
- Common KM activities were seen within each child project and linked to the global KM hub, with appropriate adaptation to contexts.
- The focus on global KM is leading to good collaboration among child projects and to the inclusion of a more diverse group of stakeholders in the gold supply chain than previous initiatives. Child project implementation teams were able to point to specific examples of learning and constructive sharing with their peers.

Areas were identified where more KM collaboration was needed between GOLD and other GEF programs. For example, the World Bank-implemented Africa Environmental Health and Pollution Management Program (GEF ID 9444) had a major ASGM component and a global KM project with a very similar goal: creating a knowledge platform on ASGM issues. At the same time, according to the GEF Secretariat, the GOLD global project is actively engaged in the knowledge hub that has been in development by the Africa Environmental Health and Pollution Management Program since that program was CEO-endorsed in 2020. The Africa Environmental Health and Pollution Management Program is designed for a broader range of artisanal and small-scale mining, beyond gold mining.

Source: GEF IEO 2022.

and the GEF Gender Partnership. [Box 2.2](#) discusses IW:LEARN, the KM initiative of the international waters focal area.

Surveyed stakeholders were asked to assess their use and satisfaction with KM within the GEF partnership ([figure 2.3](#)). By stakeholder group, satisfaction and use were highest with country focal points, implementing partners, GEF Council members or alternates (including staff), and international environmental conventions (secretariats and others). However, the highest levels of “not aware/have not used” responses (excluded from the figure) were seen with external stakeholders and implementing partners. Despite the progress observed since 2017, challenges and limitations were identified in this evaluation in project-level KM, overall KM strategy, and the role of GEF Agencies and countries.

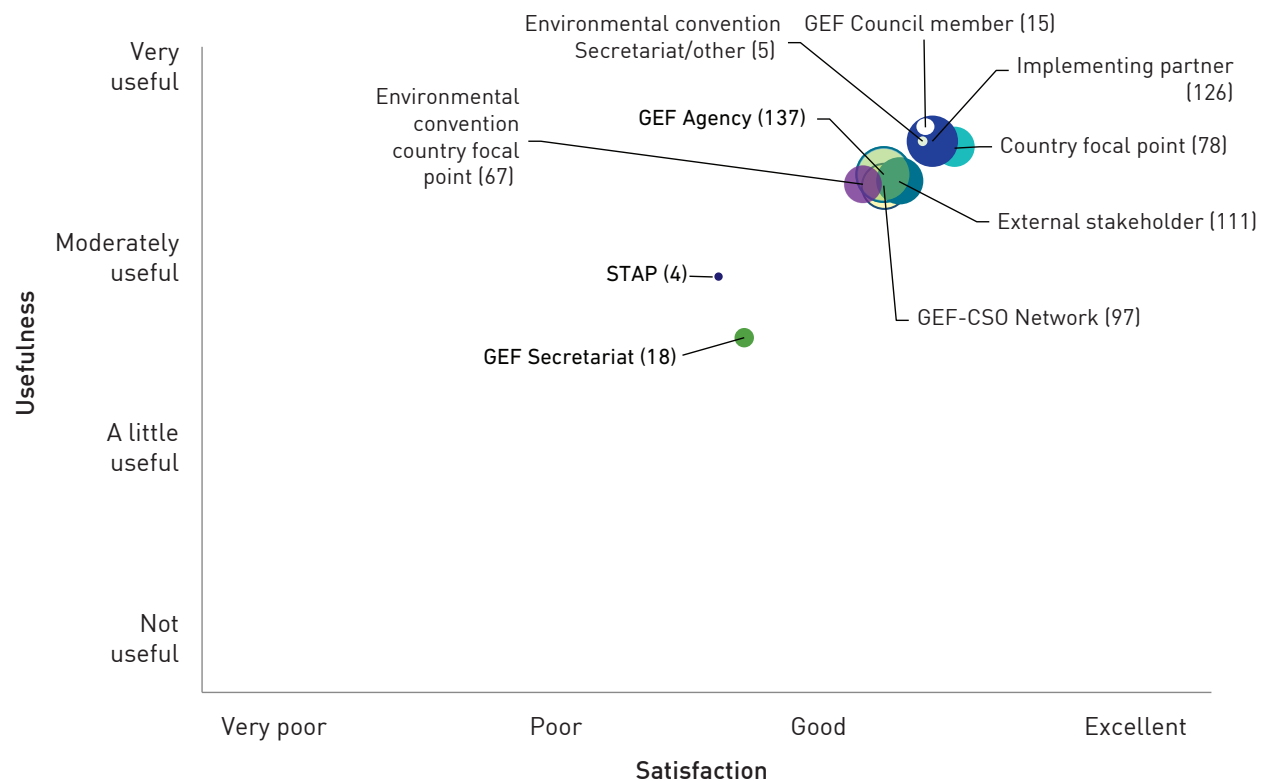
CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

Despite the progress observed since 2017, challenges and limitations were identified in this evaluation in project-level KM, overall KM strategy, and the role of GEF Agencies and countries.

Capturing and using program/project data

The first recommendation of the 2017 KM evaluation focused on improving the capture and availability of project-level documentation, from a KM perspective, and its subsequent use. The Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network’s 2017–18 assessment of the GEF (MOPAN 2019) also noted: “Much of [the] GEF’s knowledge is fragmented, difficult to access and underutilized... project knowledge [is]

Figure 2.3 Usefulness of KM products and services and satisfaction with KM initiative by stakeholder group



Note: $n = 658$ respondents; numbers in parentheses indicate number of responses per group.

Box 2.2 IW:LEARN

Several evaluations (GEF 2002; GEF OME 2005; GEF IEO 2010, 2014, 2018b) have recognized IW:LEARN, the unique KM initiative which has been supported by the GEF since 1999. It was established to help improve transboundary water management across the globe by collecting and sharing good practices, lessons learned, and innovative solutions across the GEF's international waters portfolio.

The [IW:LEARN](#) website gathers data and deliverables from individual projects and makes available case studies, guidance, and tools for better management of transboundary waters. IW:LEARN hosts the biannual GEF international waters conference to facilitate cross-sectoral and portfolio-wide learning and knowledge sharing. It also supports practitioners through trainings, regional and global dialogues and workshops, project twinning, and exchanges.

The latest (fourth) phase of IW:LEARN (GEF ID 5729) was implemented from 2016 to 2020 and co-executed with a sister project that had a special focus on large marine ecosystems and their coasts (LME:LEARN). During the fourth phase, IW:LEARN scaled up its partnership by closely collaborating with GEF Agencies and other international organizations as implementing partners. It expanded its thematic coverage to include cross-cutting themes such as economic valuation of marine and freshwater ecosystems, benefits sharing, and transboundary legal and institutional frameworks. It also sought to strengthen efforts on private sector engagement—for example, by organizing a series of regional dialogues involving representatives of the business community.

IW:LEARN has developed blended learning approaches that combine massive open online courses and in-person workshops. According to the IW:LEARN team, as of November 2020, 8,421 people had registered for the large marine ecosystems course and 110 people for the transboundary freshwater security course. Following regional training workshops and two international waters conferences in 2016 and in 2018, 47 projects reported adopting or replicating at least one new approach

or concept. As a result of twinning exchanges, 12 GEF international waters projects adopted new management approaches or replicated practices (Elliott 2020).

The terminal evaluation of the two projects (Elliott 2020) and interviews conducted within this current evaluation identified the following lessons:

- Explicit minimum KM requirements and products that each project must produce and share (such as results and experience notes) facilitate portfolio-level knowledge sharing and learning.
- The IW:LEARN website is one of the key services (together with the GEF's international waters conferences, targeted training workshops, twinning exchange, guidance, and tools) that has been valued by its stakeholders as reported in several evaluations and surveys.
- Preparing and implementing such projects in a flexible manner, involving IW:LEARN project managers, country officials, implementing Agencies and partners in project design, steering committee, and implementation (e.g., as trainers and knowledge providers) ensured the responsiveness of IW:LEARN to stakeholder needs.
- Results frameworks for knowledge events, such as the results framework of the Ninth International Waters Conference, support the transparency and accountability of these events.
- Breaks in continuity between successive phases (there was a gap of nearly 23 months between the third and fourth phases) can have a negative effect, particularly on the website. A permanent solution is needed for hosting and maintaining the website so it continues to function and maintain its relevance between IW:LEARN phases.

A new phase is currently in the planning stage (IW:LEARN 5, GEF ID 10374) with the objective to facilitate replication of good practices across GEF international waters projects, including projects across all focal areas in small island developing states.

inconsistently integrated in repositories, thereby limiting accessibility...”

The move toward fully online management of project data and information was a positive step, together with the increased integration of KM within project proposals. However, these steps have not yet resulted in full optimization of project-level KM. A 2018 study by the GEF STAP reiterated its recommendations from an earlier STAP study that KM needs to be embedded more systematically into the project cycle, offering guidance on improving this aspect in project preparation (GEF STAP 2015, 2018). The quality-at-entry review of project documentation found that most projects did explain their KM tools and outputs in their project documentation (table 2.1). The STAP 2018 study found that, although this information remains superficial, significantly more KM information was available in the project documentation of GEF-6 compared with that in GEF-5. The quality-at-entry study of GEF-6 and GEF-7 projects confirmed that information on KM does vary in project documentation, and that stronger KM is seen in projects where the parent project sets out a clear KM strategy and

roles for child projects. This was noted in several programs—for example, the GOLD and CFI programs—in addition to the IAPs.

As shown in table 2.1), the integration of lessons learned and good practices from past projects in project documentation was satisfactory, with 85 percent of projects in compliance. The 2019 MOPAN assessment had found that “sharing of lessons learned and their incorporation into new intervention designs [occurs] on a more informal basis.”

On the issue of further guidance on KM at the project level for GEF Agencies, the GEF Agencies recognized that guidance had gradually improved, notably with the addition of KM guidance to the 2020 Guidelines on the Project and Program Cycle Policy (GEF 2020). GEF Agencies commented that they thought the guidance could be more developed and cited the guidance on terminal evaluations and the soft guidelines on climate screening as examples of the level of detail needed. Based on the survey and interviews, the following information would be helpful if it were further specified in project- and program-level guidance on KM:

Table 2.1 Quality-at-entry study of GEF-6 and GEF-7 project documentation: compliance with nine KM criteria

Criterion	% of projects in compliance
Lessons learned/good practices integrated	85
Plans to learn from knowledge	94
Processes to capture knowledge	99
Tools/methods for knowledge exchange/learning	100
Knowledge outputs	96
KM contribution to project sustainability	81
Communications plans	62
KM budget	66
KM timeline	26

Note: n = 69 projects.

- **The “what”(focus):** Acknowledgment that a project or program’s KM should be focused on clear issues (often technical in nature) to help specific target beneficiaries that face a specific challenge
- **The “why” (connection to objectives):** Recognition that KM is meant to contribute to program and project objectives and, in some instances, also to broader learning about experimental and innovative approaches; examples of how projects included KM in their theory of change
- **The “who” (target audiences):** Guidance on and examples of target audiences, including country or local and global audiences

- **Sustainability:** Guidance and examples on how knowledge products and services can be sustained after project or program completion
- **Examples:** Recent examples on how to design a good KM component in GEF projects.

Stakeholder comments on the survey further reinforced the need for improving project-level KM, as illustrated by the following quotations:

- Implementing partner: “With each GEF activity/project we implement we have not had an opportunity to learn of how/which GEF knowledge and lessons have informed project implementation or future project designs. The GEF knowledge/lessons probably stay at higher project coordination level and do not trickle down to on-the-ground implementers.”
- Noted at an international environmental convention: “A lot more could be done to improve the ongoing capture and exchange of good practices and lessons learned along the entire

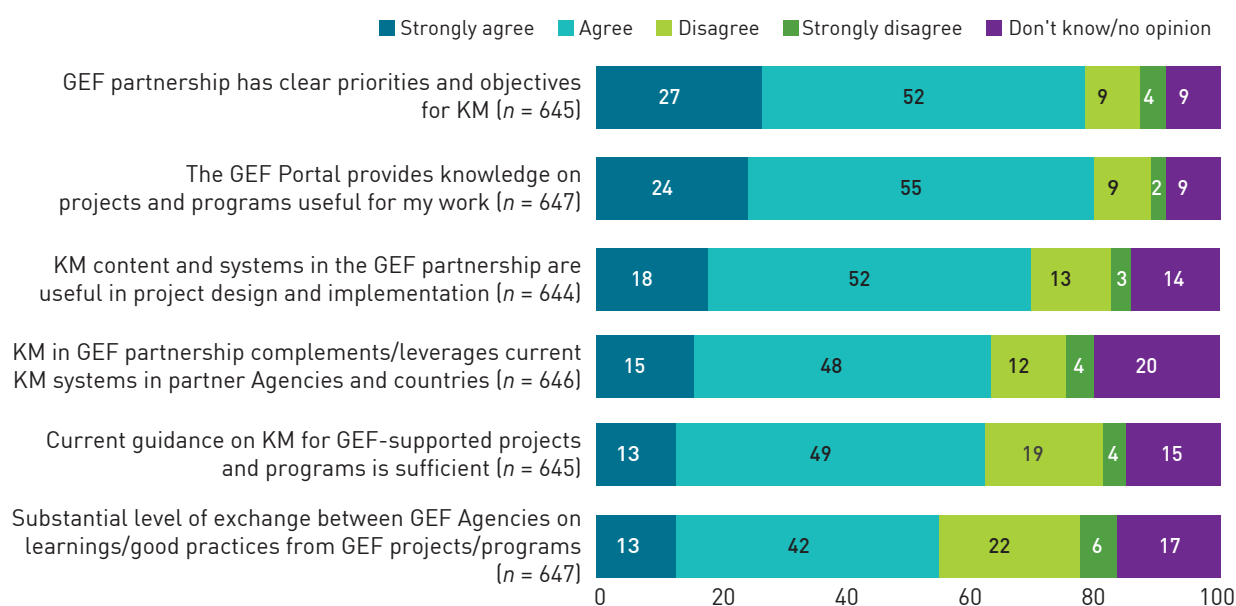
project cycle and not only at the end-of-project evaluation.”

- GEF Council member: “An idea would be to add a question in the PIF [project identification form] where Agencies are asked if knowledge/lessons learned from previous projects were used in developing this new project and if so, how, and what knowledge/lessons.”

Interviewed stakeholders anticipated that the GEF Portal would play a large role in project-level KM. Seventy-nine percent of stakeholders surveyed agreed that the GEF Portal did provide them with project knowledge useful for their work; 70 percent agreed that the KM content and systems in the GEF were useful in project design and implementation (figure 2.4). At the same time, stakeholders also recognized that the GEF Portal was currently not functioning as a KM tool, as described earlier in the section on [knowledge capture](#).

The GEF Secretariat had previously recognized this limitation in accessing project-level lessons

Figure 2.4 Strategic issues and support for KM within the GEF partnership



Source: Stakeholder survey question: “Please indicate to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements.”

and good practices. In its status report on KM to the GEF Council in May 2017, the GEF Secretariat proposed a solution with the development of a GEF knowledge exchange hub, “a Collaboration and Learning Platform accessed via the GEF website, linked to PMIS and partner KM platforms, and providing a home for thematic and cross-cutting GEF communities of practice” (GEF 2017b). To date, these proposals have not been implemented. The 2017 KM evaluation also found that four similar public partnership organizations—the Climate Investment Funds, the Green Climate Fund, the Global Partnership for Education, and the Global Vaccine Alliance—had focused and invested more in their KM technical solutions than had the GEF.

GEF KM strategy

The second recommendation of the 2017 KM evaluation focused on the development of a workplan and an appropriate resource envelope on KM and learning by the GEF Secretariat and the KM Advisory Group. The absence of a workplan or higher-level strategy was noted in the MOPAN 2017–2018 assessment of the GEF (MOPAN 2019) and the 2015 STAP study. Since 2017, no workplan or strategy has been developed; rather, reference is made to the 2015 KM approach paper for guidance. Based on the 2015 approach paper, an action plan and roadmap were developed that guided the GEF Secretariat in its KM activities (GEF 2015). However, a KM workplan or strategy has not been discussed in detail by the KM Advisory Group since 2017.²

Between October 2015 and November 2017, the KM Advisory Group meeting was usually held following the GEF Council meetings. Since November 2017, the KM Advisory Group has met only once (June 2019), and meetings were not held adjacent to the

four GEF Council meetings (the 54th, 55th, 57th, and 58th meetings). This lack of activity by the KM Advisory Group was commented on by several GEF stakeholders, who also noted that the KM Advisory Group was not fully being used in guiding KM within the GEF partnership.

The 2017 KM evaluation found that the GEF Secretariat had fewer staff members dedicated to KM compared with four similar partnership organizations (GEF IEO 2017). The KM budget was lower (in real figures, about \$2 million annually), but within the range of the other organizations as a percentage of total administrative budget (9 percent). In 2020, the KM team consisted of one dedicated full-time and three part-time staff members at the Secretariat. The Secretariat emphasized leveraging KM know-how and resources across the GEF partnership to carry out its KM mandate. More recent budget figures for KM were not made available for this evaluation.

The 2017 KM evaluation found that the current KM approach did not place sufficient focus on ensuring some standardization in creating, storing, categorizing, and organizing the knowledge generated (GEF IEO 2017). The increased KM guidance was seen as a positive development in this area but the trend toward distinct knowledge platforms for programs, focal areas, and themes suggests a further fragmentation of storage of knowledge generated by the GEF partnership.

Seventy-nine percent of stakeholders agreed that the GEF partnership does have clear priorities and objectives for KM (figure 2.4). In general, interviewed stakeholders thought that, despite the many recent and ongoing KM initiatives, a common approach to and strategy for KM was lacking, and that at the minimum there was a need to update the 2015 KM approach paper. Development and planning for GEF-8 were cited by several stakeholders as an opportunity to reset the KM approach and strategy of the GEF partnership.

²This statement is based on a review of topics and presentations of the KM Advisory Group since 2017 (May 25, 2017; November 30, 2017; and June 13, 2019), as per the GEF website's [Public Events](#) listings.

GEF Agency role in KM

As shown in [figure 2.4](#), 28 percent of respondents noted that the level of exchange between GEF Agencies on learning and good practices from GEF projects and programs was not substantial. There was a higher level of agreement on the leveraging of the current systems of KM in partner Agencies and countries (63 percent).

The KM role of GEF Agencies was an issue raised in the 2017 KM evaluation, where it was found that many Agencies relied on their own KM systems and could not draw on knowledge from other GEF Agencies (GEF IEO 2017). In 2017, some examples were identified where there was a cross-Agency exchange, notably through knowledge and learning platforms such as IW:LEARN. Since 2017, additional examples have been observed, notably with the inclusion of stronger KM approaches in several programs (such as the GOLD and CFI programs) and the IAPs, which facilitated an exchange between Agencies.

Interviewed GEF Agencies' staff members agreed that progress had been made on their KM role within the partnership since 2017; they mainly attributed this to a greater emphasis on KM in project design and the new programming approaches, including the IAPs and the impact programs. Although Agencies differed widely in their own KM capacities, needs, and systems, there was general agreement on the areas in which they felt improvements were still needed (verified with the 35 comments from GEF Agency staff surveyed on improvements), notably including the following:

- Facilitating the integration of lessons learned and good practices from completed GEF projects into new projects, both within and between GEF Agencies
- Strengthening peer-to-peer and South-South exchanges between Agencies at both the national and regional levels, as seen in the IAPs

- Enhancing exchanges between KM staff with KM responsibilities within GEF Agency teams, possibly through the KM Advisory Group
- Adding more guidance on KM at the project level for GEF Agencies—although 62 percent of stakeholders surveyed agreed that current guidance on KM for GEF projects was sufficient, nearly one-quarter (23 percent) disagreed ([figure 2.4](#)).

KM role at the country level

At the country level, knowledge exchange and learning is taking place through participation in Knowledge Days, GEF Constituency Days, related events, and consulting and using GEF KM products. Based on the survey and interview results, the new KM initiatives since 2017 were appreciated at the country level, although interviews confirmed that not all country-level stakeholders were aware of the available KM services and products ([figure 2.2](#)). At the same time, country-level stakeholders, such as GEF country focal points and implementing partners, were some of the highest users of GEF KM products and services.

Country focal points and other country-level stakeholders were in agreement on the following areas in which they thought improvements were still needed in country-level KM practices (verified with the 30 comments from stakeholders surveyed on country-level KM):

- A more active role and support for GEF country focal points in KM, such as providing examples and good practices of their potential KM role with GEF Agencies and country partners and ensuring that they have access to information and an exchange with country partners
- More sharing and exchange at the country and local levels, including between projects and GEF Agencies

- Continued online dialogue within and between countries (this has been increased because of COVID-19)
- Increased promotion of existing GEF KM services and products at the country level where they have been shown to be valuable (e.g., GEF e-learning courses, Good Practice Briefs).

2.2 KM embedded in GEF programs

Three IAPs were introduced in GEF-6. They were designed to implement integrated programming as a means of achieving systematic change at scale by addressing the major drivers of global environmental degradation in a holistic way. The three IAPs were on sustainable cities (Sustainable Cities IAP), food security in Sub-Saharan Africa (Resilient Food Systems IAP), and commodity supply chains (Good Growth Partnership IAP). The IAPs were followed in GEF-7 by impact programs in the areas of food, land use and restoration, sustainable cities, and sustainable forest management (GEF 2018). This evaluation focuses on the IAPs, as they were being implemented at the time of the evaluation (April–November 2020) whereas the impact programs were in the planning stage.

A major difference between the IAPs and previous GEF programming was the integration of special projects that serve as central hubs, functioning as capacity-building, coordination, and knowledge support platforms or networks for the child projects. The IEO's formative review of the IAPs reports that many stakeholders interviewed thought the hub-supported knowledge platforms were the most innovative feature of the IAPs, as they supported learning and exchanges on innovations, ideas and projects (GEF IEO 2018a). Further, 71 percent of stakeholders surveyed by the formative review indicated that the IAPs had more potential for knowledge exchange between projects than

past GEF programmatic approaches with which they had been involved.

The present evaluation confirmed these previous findings—that the inclusion of knowledge platforms within the IAPs did result in greater knowledge and learning activities compared with past GEF programmatic approaches. It should be recognized, however, that previous GEF approaches in certain focal areas and cross-cutting themes where a priority had been placed on KM had also resulted in comparable KM activities. Further, several other GEF-6 and GEF-7 programs, including the GOLD and CFI programs, were found to have strong and consistent KM integrated across their programs.

Drawing mainly on the in-depth review of the Sustainable Cities IAP ([box 2.3](#)), here are early impressions of the knowledge and learning components of the IAPs compared with previous GEF approaches, based on ongoing activities:

- A better integration of KM within the overall IAP program-level and child project designs, as seen by referring, in child projects, to the central knowledge platforms and activities, and by making the necessary links between the central platforms and child projects
- Greater opportunities for exchange and sharing between child projects, GEF Agencies, implementing partners, and country-level stakeholders, as seen, for example, in the learning events organized within countries and at the regional and global levels by the Resource Team of the Sustainable Cities IAP
- Increased capacity in knowledge development through transforming data and information into usable formats for sharing—for example, the creation of central knowledge platforms such as the [Global Platform for Sustainable Cities](#) (GPSC), the online portal that centralized,

Box 2.3 Sustainable Cities IAP

The Sustainable Cities IAP comprised a parent project (GEF ID 9077), 11 child projects at the country level, a child project for the Global Platform for Sustainable Cities knowledge hub (GEF ID 9162)—and a stand-alone project, Resource Team (GEF ID 9666). The IAP supported 28 cities across 11 countries and reached a broader global network of cities and stakeholders.

In their design, the projects showed good compliance with the KM criteria in their project documentation, as seen in summary of the study of the 14 projects' quality at entry (table B2.3.1). The majority make a reference to the central Sustainable Cities platform (GPSC). The program framework document of the parent project sets out the role of the GPSC but does not describe an overall KM strategy or approach for the IAP in depth. This point had been raised by the GEF's STAP in its review of project documentation.

Table B2.3.1 Quality-at-entry study of Sustainable Cities IAP project documentation: compliance with nine KM criteria

Criterion	% of projects in compliance
Lessons learned/good practices integrated	86
Plans to learn from knowledge	100
Processes to capture knowledge	100
Tools/methods for knowledge exchange/learning	100
Knowledge outputs	100
KM contribution to project sustainability	92
Communications plans	43
KM budget	86
KM timeline	43

Note: $n = 14$ projects.

The GPSC, with its online portal, functioned as the central knowledge hub of the Sustainable Cities IAP. The platform had three main activity areas: providing

knowledge and tools to the cities, facilitating training and targeted support to the cities, and connecting cities through networking and events. The Resource Team project, comprising the World Resources Institute, the Cities Climate Leadership Group, and Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI) supported the Sustainable Cities platform, mainly in the “connecting cities” area. The project focused on facilitating peer-to-peer exchanges between cities through different formats including workshops, in-person and online events, and training.

Within the 11 countries, knowledge and learning activities were mainly carried out at the city level, where the project activities were implemented. Knowledge and learning activities varied per project and included training and capacity building for city partners, documenting and sharing of lessons learned and good practices, development of national online platforms (in China, India, and Brazil), national-level and regional exchanges (e.g., participating cities and nonparticipating cities) and global-level exchanges. Many projects also produced mapping and diagnostic tools that they shared (or planned to share) with other child projects (and more widely).

The interaction for knowledge and learning between projects and stakeholders occurred in four main directions:

- **From the central level to the projects and stakeholders (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 for topics relevant to sustainable cities, with the main audience being project and city partners.
- **From the project to the central level (upward):** Projects and city partners shared their good practices, lessons, and tools that were published on the GPSC platform or presented in Sustainable Cities IAP or external events, or both.

(continued)

Box 2.3 Sustainable Cities IAP *(continued)*

- **From projects to projects (sideways):** Exchanges and sharing between projects—for example, for United Nations Industrial Development Organization child projects, some city and project officials of Dakar, Senegal, had an exchange visit with their counterparts in Malacca, Malaysia.
- **From the Sustainable Cities IAP to external audiences (“outwards”):** The GPSC platform resources and some events were open to external audiences; at the country level, learning events were held for nonparticipating cities and national online platforms were extended to include all cities.

The overall feedback from virtually all Sustainable Cities IAP stakeholders was that the approach taken did lead to greater knowledge and learning activities compared with other programmatic approaches (those of the GEF or other organizations). One city official commented: “The learning and exchange opportunities of the Cities IAP were better than any other multilateral project I have been involved in; it had a range of partners, participants and cross-cutting issues that I have not seen elsewhere.”

The project and city partners were very positive about the opportunities that were available sideways and upward to participate in regional and global events. The project stakeholders also saw value in being able to exchange views and present their projects externally—for example, to nonparticipating cities. This was seen as important for extending the reach and impact of the Sustainable Cities IAP. The usefulness of the downward knowledge and learning depended on both the topics or subjects and the stakeholders. For example, an urban planning official

would find relevance in most subjects; a specialist in air pollution would have very specific interests.

Sustainable Cities IAP stakeholders also identified limits of the KM approach:

- Priority actions and topics had to be adjusted as the IAP progressed, in the absence of a planned KM approach. This implied that some of the downward events, approaches, and resources were not always what the projects and city partners would have prioritized. For example, a city official explained that their colleagues needed more specific support in applying a given guideline rather than the more generic briefing that was offered. This has been integrated into the Sustainable Cities Impact Program, where there will be more applied learning laboratories offered by the Resource Team.
- There were differences in the KM approaches, activities, and indicators across child projects, as described in the documentation (CEO endorsement), making it difficult to establish a clear link to the overall Sustainable Cities IAP objectives, to aggregate KM performance, and to obtain budgets for joint knowledge and learning activities.
- The IAPs were pilot programs and offer lessons for the impact programs. One such lesson is on timing. The varying start and end dates of the Sustainable Cities IAP projects meant that opportunities were lost for knowledge sharing and learning. For example, when the Resource Team started their learning events in 2018, not all child projects were fully set up; consequently, a key audience was missed.

curated, and disseminated knowledge from the Sustainable Cities IAP

- Greater opportunities for child projects and implementing partners to present and share their project tools and innovations at regional and global levels for potential scaling-up and replication, as seen in the annual global

meetings of the Sustainable Cities IAP, where projects presented their successes, challenges, and innovations

- Increased ability of the central knowledge platform and Resource Team to reach child projects and implementing partners with global concepts, tools, and learnings, encouraging

potential efficiencies and common approaches, through the Sustainable Cities IAP promoting a common urban sustainability framework among cities

- More outreach to external stakeholders to share knowledge and learnings generated by the IAPs, such as within the Sustainable Cities IAP, holding sharing and learning events at the national level with nonparticipating cities and opening up their national knowledge platforms to nonparticipating cities.

Recognizing that the IAPs were pilot projects, a few limitations were also identified within the knowledge and learning approaches of the IAPs, primarily the Sustainable Cities IAP, which provided useful lessons for future impact programs:

- There were variations in KM approaches used in the child projects, pointing to the absence of an overall KM strategy for the IAP.
- The IAPs had positive integration of KM across their projects, but lacked common metrics on knowledge and learning, making it challenging to demonstrate their contribution to overall project objectives.
- The varying start and end times of the parent, child, and stand-alone projects meant that the opportunities to share knowledge and learning could not be fully capitalized upon.
- The online knowledge platforms developed for the IAPs provide a rich collection and collation of knowledge resources in their thematic area,

consolidated across projects and Agencies. These include the Global Platform for Sustainable Cities for cities, Resilient Food Systems for food security in Africa, and the Good Growth Partnership for commodities. However, in the absence of a central GEF knowledge exchange hub or a similar solution that would provide a central gateway and links to various products and services, the potential for GEF-wide knowledge sharing and learning is limited.

The question of the sustainability of knowledge platforms and communities developed during the IAPs was raised by interviewed stakeholders, who were concerned about their continuation once the IAPs conclude. In the case of the Sustainable Cities IAP, there was a natural successor with the cities impact program, where involved stakeholders confirmed that the IAP platform and community would be integrated within the new impact program.

2.3 Overall assessment of the current state of KM in the GEF partnership

Based on these findings and those of the 2017 KM evaluation, [table 2.2](#) summarizes the IEO assessment of the current state of KM within the GEF partnership, illustrating the progress observed since 2017 on KM steps and key aspects.

Table 2.2 Key aspects of assessed state of KM within the GEF partnership, 2017–20

Aspect	2017 status	2020 status	Progress to date	Gaps identified
Common KM strategy for the partnership	Medium	Low	The 2015 KM approach paper and roadmap provided guidance for KM activities	Comprehensive KM strategy with definition, priorities, roles and responsibilities, action plan are missing
KM integration within programs	Low	Medium	New programming approaches such as IAPs and select programs have shown increased KM integration	Systematic KM approaches and consistent set of KM indicators are absent in some programs
Knowledge capture	Low	Medium	Ability to capture basic project data and information has improved with move toward an online system	Ability to capture KM data, lessons, good practices, and outputs is missing; common approach to storing knowledge is lacking
Knowledge development	Medium	Medium	The GEF has continued to transform data and information into usable products; new programming approaches such as the IAPs have led to more transformation	Standard approach and guidance on transforming GEF data and information into usable formats that can be shared are missing
Knowledge sharing and dissemination	Medium	High	The KM sharing and dissemination of the GEF Secretariat and new programming approaches have led to increased sharing	Awareness of KM products and services by key audiences within partnership—implementing partners and country focal points—is lacking; increased collaboration with GEF communications team to enhance outreach is needed
Knowledge application	Low	Medium	Use of knowledge has improved with KM requirements and project cycle guidance	Detailed KM guidance and examples of project-level KM are needed
KM technology	Low	Low	Current technology to support KM is insufficient; GEF Portal has very limited KM features	Technical solutions to support KM needs are lacking

Note: ■ = low; ■ = medium; ■ = high.

Conclusions and recommendations

3.1 Conclusions

Conclusion 1: The GEF partnership continued to make progress in KM during GEF-7. The 2017 KM evaluation found that substantial progress in KM had been made during GEF-6. This progress has continued in GEF-7 with an increase in knowledge and learning activities, including KM in project design and implementation; recently developed KM services and products such as Good Practice Briefs; the use of KM in programs, including in the IAPs and impact programs; and outreach and training efforts in person and online. However, the stakeholder survey clearly points to gaps in the awareness of the various initiatives launched across the partnership.

Conclusion 2: The IAPs, impact programs, and new programming approaches have increased the relevance of knowledge and learning activities within the GEF partnership, though limitations exist. This evaluation confirmed that the focus on KM within the IAPs and the GOLD and Coastal Fisheries Initiative programs—along with other initiatives in focal areas and cross-cutting issues, such as IW:Learn and the GEF Gender Partnership—have led to an increase in knowledge and learning activities with opportunities for improved

exchange and learning between GEF Agencies, projects, and implementing partners. The creation of thematic platforms in the IAPs fosters cross-agency and cross-country knowledge exchange, but in the absence of an overall GEF KM system, such as the proposed GEF knowledge exchange hub, GEF knowledge and learning continue to be dispersed.

Conclusion 3: The systemic issues raised in 2017 have been partially mitigated but continue to persist. The 2017 KM evaluation found three long-standing systemic issues that were barriers to progress in KM: (1) the availability of an information management system to capture and provide access to knowledge, (2) KM project-level guidance, and (3) the capacity to connect with GEF Agency systems and platforms. These issues have been partially mitigated. The GEF Portal has improved compared with the previous Project Management Information System, although it has very limited KM capabilities so far; and KM project-level guidance has increased and is showing early results. The capacity to connect with GEF Agency systems and platforms has not changed since the previous evaluation, although the knowledge components of the IAPs demonstrate to some extent how KM can

work effectively across and between Agencies and the GEF partnership.

3.2 Recommendations

Recommendation 1: The GEF partnership should develop a clear KM strategy. In planning for GEF-8, either the KM Advisory Group, or a new group dedicated to KM, should advise the GEF Secretariat on developing a partnership-wide KM strategy with clear priorities and focus. The strategy would have to be supported by the necessary resources and endorsed by the GEF Council. The strategy should set out KM priorities and define roles and responsibilities across the GEF partnership including the role of the KM Advisory Group. Supported by an action plan, the strategy should set out principles and standards for the KM steps—knowledge capture, development, sharing, dissemination, and application—articulated in reinforced project-level guidelines, requirements, and common KM metrics.

Recommendation 2: The GEF partnership should invest in a technical solution that strengthens the KM system. At the operational level, a common approach is needed to guide the KM steps supported by a technical solution that can support KM needs: the ability to capture KM data, lessons, and good practices and to present them in a usable and accessible format for both GEF stakeholders and externally. This would require either enhancing the KM capabilities of the new portal or building a GEF knowledge exchange hub, as has been proposed by the GEF Secretariat. Processes should be designed to put into application the principles and standards set out in the strategy for each KM step: capture and store knowledge in a uniform and accessible form, exchange of knowledge between the GEF Secretariat and the GEF Agencies, and collation and curation of knowledge in comparable and usable formats to increase accessibility and avoid fragmentation.

Concept note

This annex has been lightly edited for style and consistency.

A.1 Background

Knowledge is an important resource of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) that supports its strategic objectives to address global environmental concerns. Knowledge management (KM) is the process by which organizations within the GEF partnership generate value and improve performance from their intellectual and knowledge-based assets (GEF IEO 2019).

Over the years, the GEF has facilitated generation and sharing of knowledge through its projects and programs, as well as through its corporate strategies and initiatives. Many GEF Agencies have their own systems for managing knowledge. However, sharing knowledge across the partnership has been a challenge due to differences in systems, processes, and procedures of member organizations. Many evaluations and studies, GEF Council sessions, and replenishment meetings have discussed the risks of such duplication of effort,

missed opportunities, and failure to learn from the experience across the GEF partnership.¹

The current approach to managing knowledge in the GEF was set up during the previous replenishment phase (GEF-6, 2014–18) due to demand by the participants of the replenishment negotiations who requested the GEF Secretariat improve the uptake of the lessons learned in the GEF through the establishment of a learning platform and a comprehensive workplan for building a KM system (GEF 2014). In response, the GEF Secretariat created a KM work stream and the KM Advisory Group consisting of representatives of various parts of the partnership, including GEF Agencies, member countries, civil society organizations, the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel, and the GEF Independent Evaluation Office (IEO). The KM Advisory Group was expected to serve as an informal vehicle for collaboration and consultation on planning and implementation of the KM approach across the GEF partnership.

¹ See, for example, the earliest independent overall performance studies of the GEF: UNDP, UNEP, and World Bank (1994); Porter et al. (1999); and Ramankutty (2002).

The approach paper to GEF KM was approved by the GEF Council in 2015 and outlined the following objectives for KM in the GEF partnership: (1) inform global, regional, and national policy dialogues on options and approaches to reverse the course of action of environmental degradation; and (2) improve the impact of GEF-supported projects and programs (GEF 2015b). Since the Council's approval of the approach paper, the GEF Secretariat organized semi-annual meetings of the Advisory Group and launched a number of KM-related activities, including the following:

- A series of knowledge assessments and surveys that informed the KM roadmap for the GEF
- KM pilot initiatives:
 - A study on lessons learned and best practices from completed multifocal area projects, followed by the inclusion of the functionality for entering the results information into the GEF's Project Management Information System (PMIS)²
 - GEF Kaleo, an online "Ask the Expert" tool to provide answers to common questions about the GEF, such as its policies and procedures
 - Inclusion in the GEF's Expanded Constituency Workshops of a Knowledge Day, learning and knowledge exchange events that target recipient country stakeholders
- GEF knowledge products, including videos and publications, as well as the "Art of Knowledge Exchange" guidebook and training that aimed to enhance country and GEF partnership members' capacity on knowledge exchange and learning
- Introduction of knowledge and learning requirements for project concepts and project proposals—beginning from GEF-6, the project

²This system has been replaced by the GEF Portal, a new platform to share, manage, and retrieve data on GEF projects and programs.

identification form and project request form for CEO endorsement have included KM questions; project concepts and proposals have been required to include activities to learn from other relevant initiatives, as well as activities to assess, document, and share lessons and experience generated during implementation; and starting from 2017, the Guidelines on the Project and Program Cycle Policy (GEF 2017a) have specified that KM-related projects and program expenditures are eligible for GEF funding

- KM-focused brown bag lunches and webinars, inviting GEF partnership members and external organizations to share their KM experiences
- A renewed focus on information technology: inclusion of KM in the redesign of the GEF website, creation of a GEF intranet, work on redesign of the PMIS as a GEF online platform to improve the availability and accessibility of project-level information and knowledge as a basis for developing a larger GEF knowledge and learning platform.

The Evaluation of Knowledge Management in the GEF (GEF IEO 2017) acknowledged the progress made in KM during GEF-6, but concluded that systemic issues continued to be barriers to knowledge sharing, including the availability of an information management system to capture and provide access to project-level documentation; guidance on KM for GEF-supported projects and programs throughout the project cycle; capacity within the GEF Secretariat to connect with GEF Agencies' knowledge systems and platforms and to create the enabling environment for corporate-level learning and collaboration across the GEF portfolio. The evaluation recommended the GEF Secretariat place a high priority on improving the quality and availability of project-level documentation from a KM perspective, including lessons learned during design and implementation. The evaluation also recommended the GEF Secretariat and KM Advisory Group develop a workplan on learning activities

and knowledge products along with a proposed resource envelope and mechanisms to disseminate knowledge.

Similarly, in its 2017–18 assessment of the GEF, the Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) concluded that new efforts were required in KM, including the synthesis, access, use, and dissemination of knowledge and lessons learned from GE projects and programs (MOPAN 2019). The report also characterized most of the GEF’s knowledge as fragmented, difficult to access, and underutilized.

During the replenishment negotiations for GEF-7 (2018–22), the participants reiterated the role of knowledge as a critical asset of the GEF partnership and requested the GEF Secretariat make use of information technology–based solutions to capture, analyze, and share lessons learned and best practices from GEF projects and programs in collaboration with GEF partners, and encourage efforts to foster peer learning and South-South exchange across GEF projects and programs (GEF 2019).

Although during GEF-7, KM is guided by the 2015 approach paper (GEF 2015b), there has been some evolution in activities, and new initiatives have been introduced:

- **The GEF Academy.** This learning initiative provides online and face-to-face courses to enhance the capacity of GEF partners and stakeholders to engage with the GEF and deliver global environmental benefits. So far, two online courses have been developed: “Introduction to the Global Environment Facility” and “Gender and Environment.”
- **GEF Portal.** This replacement of the GEF PMIS is a new platform to share, manage, and retrieve data on GEF projects and programs. Although the GEF Portal is not a KM initiative, it is

expected to contribute to sharing knowledge and lessons across GEF interventions.

- **Good practice briefs.** This initiative is currently a pilot that aims to identify and share good practices from GEF projects and programs in line with current strategic priorities, as outlined in the GEF 2020 Strategy, the GEF-7 Programming Directions, and policy recommendations. The identification and preparation of briefs have been done in collaboration with GEF Agencies.

Other ongoing KM initiatives continue from previous replenishment phases:

- **Further development of knowledge and learning requirements for project concepts and project proposals (first introduced during GEF-6).** The good practice criteria for assessment of KM in project identification forms and requests for CEO endorsement have been developed and shared with GEF Agencies. The examples of how these requirements had been addressed by projects were discussed during inter-Agency retreats.
- **Targeted projects to support knowledge generation and sharing, including knowledge platforms.** Since its early years, the GEF has funded specialized knowledge and learning projects (such as research projects, projects that document and share good practices and lessons on promising global environmental solutions, and communities of practice). More recently, the GEF has introduced knowledge platforms to support learning in its integrated programs—i.e., the integrated approach pilots during GEF-6 and the impact programs during GEF-7). These platforms are designed to coordinate sharing of knowledge across participating projects, countries, cities, and Agencies.
- **Web-based tools.** These include as Kaleo (“Ask the Expert” question and answer platform) and the KM webpage at the GEF website.

- **Events.** These include GEF Knowledge Days, held during Expanded Constituency Workshops, as well as other targeted training workshops, such as GEF introduction seminars.
- **Other.** These include publications and videos, presentations at global environmental forums, use of social media tools (blogs, Twitter).

A.2 Objectives, scope, and key questions

The objectives of this review are to update the 2017 IEO KM evaluation, to assess the effectiveness of the GEF KM approach in strengthening the use of knowledge across the GEF partnership in relation to the GEF's mandate to achieve global environmental benefits, and to identify any systemic issues that need to be addressed in planning for GEF-8. The review will contribute to the Seventh Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF (OPS7) and will identify lessons for the next replenishment phase.

There is a range of activities that support KM in the GEF partnership, including those implemented by GEF Agencies and member countries. The main focus of this review will be on the recently launched initiatives after the last review and the KM approach implemented by the GEF Secretariat across the GEF partnership since GEF-6. The effectiveness of these KM activities, including those by the GEF Agencies and member countries, will be assessed. In addition, the KM elements such as the knowledge platforms of the integrated programs (integrated approach pilots and impact programs), will be evaluated.

The review will seek to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent have the recommendations of the 2017 KM evaluation been implemented?
2. To what extent have the recent GEF KM initiatives been effective in strengthening knowledge

generation and sharing across the partnership? What has been the role of the GEF Agencies and member countries in KM initiatives?

3. To what extent have the knowledge platforms been effective in supporting learning in integrated programs (integrated approach pilots and impact programs)?
4. What are the lessons and implications for future policy, strategy, and management decisions to further enhance KM in the GEF partnership?

A.3 Methodological approach

The review will apply a mixed-methods approach and will use several information sources.

- **Document and literature review.** This will synthesize key lessons and systemic issues on KM and learning in the GEF partnership from the previous IEO evaluations, as well as progress in implementation of the GEF KM approach. The study will review in detail the documents on the current KM approach led by the GEF Secretariat (starting from GEF-6), including relevant Council documents, activity reports, meeting notes, and knowledge outputs and products. The study will also review available documents on the relevant KM activities of GEF Agencies and member countries.
- **Key informant interviews and online survey.** Members of the GEF partnership (GEF Agencies, GEF Secretariat, Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel, GEF-Civil Society Organization Network) will be interviewed on their experience and perspectives on the effectiveness of KM in the GEF partnership. Questions relevant to perspectives of broader stakeholder groups (GEF operational and political focal points, executing agencies, project/program staff and consultants, external partners) will be integrated in an online stakeholder survey for OPS7. This will be done to avoid respondent fatigue as the same

respondents might need to answer questions on other topics covered in OPS7. A separate brief survey will be considered if necessary for GEF Agencies on their related KM initiatives.

- **Quality-at-entry review.** A sample of GEF-6 and GEF-7 projects and programs will be reviewed to assess the implementation of the GEF project cycle knowledge and learning requirements and their relevance to enabling knowledge sharing and learning within projects and programs, across the GEF partnership, and with broader audiences.
- **Case study analysis.** An in-depth analysis of knowledge platforms introduced in the integrated approach pilots and impact programs will be conducted to identify early lessons on their effectiveness in coordinating. A case study

on the KM platform will be conducted in synergy with the integrated approach pilot and impact program formative evaluation.

- **Usage statistics.** An analysis of statistics on KM tools and initiatives will be conducted to assess their use.
- **Triangulation.** The information gathered will be triangulated at the completion of the data gathering and analyzed to determine trends, and identify main findings, lessons, and conclusions.

A.4 Activity calendar

The review will be conducted between April and December 2020. The initial workplan ([table A.1](#)) adapted as a result of further preparations.

Table A.1 Workplan

Activity	Time frame	Milestone
Document and literature review	April–May 2020	End May 31, 2020
Development of data collection protocols and templates	April–May 2020	End May 31, 2020
Key informant interviews	May–June 2020	End June 30, 2020
Quality-at-entry review	June–September 2020	End September 15, 2020
Case study analysis	June–September 2020	End September 15, 2020
Online survey (targeted questions as part of OPS7 survey)	September 2020	End September 30, 2020
Triangulation	September	October 10, 2020
Draft report	October 2020	October 20, 2020
Final report	November 2020	November 8, 2020
Dissemination and outreach	Post-November 2020	Post-November 2020

Evaluation matrix

Key question	Indicator	Source	Method
1. To what extent have the recommendations of the 2017 KM Evaluation been implemented?	Evidence of the implementation of the two recommendations of the 2017 KM evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central-level stakeholders (GEF Secretariat, STAP, Agencies, CSO Network) Progress reports and other documentation of GEF Secretariat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews Document review
2. To what extent have the recent GEF KM initiatives been effective in strengthening knowledge generation and sharing across the partnership? What has been the role of the GEF Agencies and member countries in KM initiatives?	Evidence of contribution to knowledge generation and sharing of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New KM initiatives: GEF Academy, GEF Portal & Good practice briefs Ongoing KM initiatives: project KM requirements, targeted KM projects, web-based tools, Knowledge Days, publications and other tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central-level stakeholders (GEF Secretariat, STAP, Agencies, CSO Network) Country-level stakeholders (GEF focal points, Agencies, project staff) Online platforms/tools (GEF Portal and website) GEF-6/7 project/program documentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews OPS7 online survey Usage statistics Quality-at-entry review
	Evidence/examples of GEF agencies and member countries in KM initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GEF Agency staff Country-level stakeholders (GEF focal points, Agencies, project staff, country counterparts) Available KM and relevant Agencies' project/program documentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews OPS7 online survey Document review
3. To what extent have the knowledge platforms been effective in supporting learning in integrated programs (Integrated Approach Pilots and Impact Programs (IAP/IP))?	Evidence/examples of knowledge platforms of IAP/IP supporting learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IAP/IP staff Central-level stakeholders (GEF Secretariat, STAP, Agencies, CSO Network) Country-level stakeholders (GEF focal points, Agencies, project staff, country counterparts) Available IAP/IP documentation 	Case study (informed by): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews OPS7 online survey Document review
4. What are the lessons and implications for future policy, strategy, and management decisions to further enhance knowledge management in the GEF partnership?	Identification of KM lessons with implication for (1) future policy, (2) strategy, and (3) management decisions	KM lessons will be drawn from data analysis of all sources	Not applicable

Interviewees

The interviews were held between July and November 2020.

GEF AGENCIES

Alexandra Ortega, Inter-American Development Bank–GEF Technical Specialist, Inter-American Development Bank

Annette Killmer, Project Team Leader, Inter-American Development Bank

Arunkumar S. Abraham, Senior Environment Specialist, Asian Development Bank

Ayanleh Daher Aden, Senior Environment and Climate Finance Officer–African Development Bank–GEF Coordinator, African Development Bank

Cecilia Guerra, Senior Executive, Sustainability and Climate Change, Development Bank of Latin America

Guirane Ndiyare, Economist, African Development Bank

Herve Lefeuvre, Senior Director, GEF Relations and GEF Coordinator, World Wildlife Fund

Jonky Tenou, Task Manager, Food Security IAP, International Fund for Agricultural Development

Julia Guarino, Coordinator, GEF Project Agency, Conservation International

Lucy Martins, Communications Consultant, International Fund for Agricultural Development

Nancy Bennet, Results Management and Evaluation Advisor, United Nations Development Programme

Nina Zetsche, Industrial Development Officer, Partnerships Coordination Division, United Nations Industrial Development Organization

Orissa Samaroo, Senior Director, GEF Policy and Project Management, GEF Project Agency, Conservation International

Pradeep Kurukulasuriya, Executive Director and Coordinator, Global Environmental Finance, United Nations Development Programme

Rosario Catalina Narciso, Portfolio Management Officer, Asian Development Bank

Shaanti Kapila, Senior Operations Officer, World Bank Group

Vannia Rodríguez Chávez, Executive, Directorate of Development Cooperation Funds, Development Bank of Latin America

GEF SECRETARIAT AND GEF STAP

Aloke Barnwal, Senior Climate Change Specialist; Sustainable Cities; Programs Unit

Alua Kennedy, Communications Officer, Front Office

Christian Severin, Senior Environmental Specialist; International Waters Coordinator, Programs Unit

Gustavo Fonseca, Director of Programs, Programs Unit

Ikuko Matsumoto, Knowledge and Policy Officer, Policy, Partnerships, and Operations Unit

Jean-Marc Sinnassamy, Senior Environmental Specialist; Food Security IAP, Programs Unit

Mohamed Imam Bakarr, Lead Environmental Specialist; Strategic Programming Initiatives (IAPs and Major Programs), Programs Unit

Paul Hartman, Senior Environmental Specialist; Commodities IAP, Programs Unit

Robert Bisset, Head of Communications, Front Office
Sonja Teelucksingh, Senior Environmental Specialist,
Policy, Partnerships, and Operations Unit
Yasemin Biro, Knowledge Management Coordinator,
Policy, Partnerships, and Operations Unit
Guadalupe Duron, Program Officer, STAP
Rosina Bierbaum, Chair, STAP

GEF-CSO NETWORK

Sano Akhteruzzaman, Chair

GEF COUNTRY FOCAL POINTS

Enzo Ronald Aliaga Rossel, Alternate Operational Focal Point, Ministry of Environment and Water, Bolivia
Graciela Soledad Miret Martinez, Operational Focal Point, Director of Strategic Planning, Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, Paraguay
Jakhongir Talipov, Operational Focal Point, Chief Specialist, International Cooperation and Projects Department, State Committee for Ecology and Environment Protection, Republic of Uzbekistan
Tran Hong Ha, Political Focal Point, Minister, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Viet Nam

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

Mish Hamid, Project Manager, IW:LEARN
Alejandra Kemper, Project Manager, UNDP (Paraguay Sustainable Cities Project)
Alessandra Péres, Deputy Secretary (former), Brasilia Federal District, Brazil (Brazil Sustainable Cities project)
Alexia Cujus, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (Senegal Sustainable Cities project)

Beth Olberding, Research Analyst, WRI Ross Center for Sustainable Cities, World Resources Institute (Resource Team project)

Clara Fernandez, Project Manager, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (Côte d'Ivoire Sustainable Cities project)

Fatin Ali Mohamed, Industrial Development Officer, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (Côte d'Ivoire Sustainable Cities project)

Katarina Barunica, Project Manager, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (Malaysia and India Sustainable Cities projects)

Liana Strydom, Assistant-Director: Development Planning and Facilitation, City of Johannesburg Municipality, South Africa (South Africa Sustainable Cities project)

Lincoln Landon Lewis, Urban Development Analyst, World Bank Group (GPSC project)

Mariana Orloff, Senior Manager, Global Platform for Sustainable Cities—Urban Development, WRI Ross Center for Sustainable Cities, WRI (Resource Team project)

Marie Houffouet, Project Coordinator, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (Côte d'Ivoire Cities Sustainable project)

Mark Draeck, Industrial Development Officer, Department of Energy, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (Senegal Cities project)

Nicholas Dehod, Project Associate, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (Senegal Sustainable Cities project)

Tomasz Pawalec, Consultant, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (Malaysia and India Cities projects)

Xueman Wang, Senior Urban Specialist, World Bank Group (GPSC project and China Cities project)

Survey responses

The survey was open between September 9 and 27, 2020, and was sent to 4,312 respondents: GEF partnership members, including GEF Agencies, GEF Council members and alternates, GEF country operational and political focal points, the GEF-CSO Network, the GEF Secretariat, the GEF Trustee, implementing partners and projects, international environmental conventions (secretariats and national focal points), and the GEF STAP (panel members and secretariat). It was also sent to 9,030 external stakeholders not directly involved in GEF programming and operations, including national and local government officials, CSOs, private sector entities, and media organizations, whose contacts were obtained from the GEF Secretariat.

Q1. What best describes the type of organization where you work? (If several categories apply, choose the main one.)

	Total	%
Governmental organization	228	35
Nongovernmental organization/CSO/ community-based organization	213	32
Multilateral/bilateral organization (UN, etc.)	165	25
Education/academic institution	24	4
Other	11	2
Private for-profit	11	2
Media	6	1
Total	658	100

Q2. What best describes the part of the GEF partnership where you work/are a member? (If several categories apply, choose the main one.)

	Total	%
GEF Agency	137	21
Implementing partner for GEF project/ program	126	19
External stakeholder	111	17
GEF-CSO Network	97	15
GEF country operational/political focal point (including members of staff)	78	12
International environmental convention—country focal point (including members of staff)	67	10
GEF Secretariat	18	3
GEF Council member or alternate (including members of staff)	15	2
International environmental convention—other (including convention secretariat)	5	1
STAP	4	1
Total	658	100

Q3. Please indicate the region where you currently live:

	Total	%
Sub-Saharan Africa	175	27
Latin America and the Caribbean	132	20
East Asia and the Pacific	88	13
North America	69	10
South Asia	60	9
East Europe and Central Asia	49	7
Western Europe	48	7
Middle East and North Africa	37	6
Total	658	100

Q4. How would you rate the usefulness of the following new GEF knowledge products and services?

	Percent					Total
	Not useful	A little useful	Moderately useful	Very useful	Not aware/ have not used	
GEF project-level information as found in the GEF Portal and previously in the Project Management Information System (PMIS)	3	4	27	52	14	648
E-learning courses of the GEF Academy (Introduction to the GEF; Gender and the Environment)	3	7	18	38	34	644
Kaleo "Ask the Expert" tool on the GEF website	6	8	20	18	48	641
GEF Good Practice Briefs (e.g., Green Infrastructure for a Climate Resilient Society in Vietnam; Integrated Coastal Watershed Conservation in Mexico)	3	7	21	44	24	643

Q5. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Percent					Total
	Strongly disagree	Dis-agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know/ no opinion	
The GEF partnership has clear priorities and objectives for knowledge management	4	9	52	27	9	645
The GEF Portal provides me with knowledge on projects and programs useful for my work	2	9	55	24	9	647
Current guidance on knowledge management for GEF-supported projects and programs is sufficient	4	19	49	13	15	645
There is a substantial level of exchange between GEF Agencies on learnings and good practices from GEF projects and programs	6	22	42	13	17	647
The content and the systems for knowledge management in the GEF partnership are useful in project design and implementation	3	13	52	18	14	644
Knowledge management in the GEF partnership complements and leverages the current systems of knowledge management in the partner Agencies and countries	4	12	48	15	20	646

Q6. Since 2017, have you seen any improvements in how the GEF partnership meets the knowledge needs of the following stakeholders?

	Percent					Total
	None at all	A little	Some	A lot	Don't know/ no opinion	
Civil society partners	6	14	34	24	22	618
Environmental stakeholders in general	4	15	38	28	16	625
GEF Agency staff	4	11	25	21	38	626
GEF Council members and alternates and their staff	4	11	22	18	45	627
GEF Country focal points and staff	5	10	28	26	32	638
GEF Project staff	5	11	29	20	35	621
GEF Secretariat staff	4	9	21	19	47	619
International environmental conventions—country focal points and staff	5	12	28	21	34	634
International environmental conventions—secretariats	4	9	28	20	39	629
STAP (panel and Secretariat)	6	9	25	14	47	628

Q7. How would you rate the current performance of the GEF partnership in the following areas?

	Percent					Total
	Very poor	Poor	Good	Excellent	Don't know/ no opinion	
Knowledge capture: collecting data and information from GEF projects and programs through planning, monitoring, reporting, evaluation and other processes	4	12	56	17	12	647
Knowledge development: transforming GEF data and information into usable formats that can then be shared	5	16	52	13	14	646
Knowledge sharing and dissemination: activities to communicate knowledge to audiences and making it accessible, including events, publications and platforms	3	17	51	18	10	648
Knowledge application: the use of available GEF knowledge in current and future GEF and non-GEF projects and programs, policies and elsewhere	5	18	48	13	16	643

Q8. This survey has been on how knowledge and lessons—related to GEF projects and programs—are shared and used by environmental actors in countries and regions. Please add here any comments or suggestions for strengthening knowledge management in the GEF partnership (open-ended):

Methodology for quality-at-entry review

Quality-at-entry review of a sample of GEF-6 and GEF-7 projects and programs was done to assess implementation of the GEF project cycle knowledge and learning requirements. This annex describes the selection process and the criteria used for the assessment. Sampling for the quality-at-entry review of GEF-6 and GEF-7 programs was treated separately, as only GEF-6 programs had child projects that had been CEO-approved or -endorsed at the time of analysis (April 2020). The criteria for program selection (including program framework documents and corresponding child projects) aimed to secure a representative sample of their diversity. The criteria used were (1) focal area, (2) regional mix, and (3) Agency mix.

In GEF-6, 5 out of 15 programs were selected based on the distribution shown in [table E.1](#). In GEF-7, 4 out of 11 programs were selected based on the distribution shown in [table E.2](#). [Table E.3](#) shows the summary of programs analyzed.

As for stand-alone projects, there were 14 GEF-7 and 365 GEF-6 projects that had achieved CEO approval or endorsement as of April 2020. The criteria for selection of stand-alone projects were the same as for programs for a representative sample

of focal areas, regional mixes, and Agency mixes. Twenty-eight projects were selected based on the distribution shown in [table E.4](#). In total, 41 program framework documents and child projects and 28 stand-alone projects were analyzed, for a grand total of 69.

The following documents were analyzed as part of the quality-at-entry review of each sampled project: requests for CEO endorsement or approval and available project documentation, including project proposals (Agency project documents) and project implementation reports. In requests for CEO endorsement or approval, the main data were drawn from the KM section; other sections were also reviewed for any relevant information. As was pointed out in the 2017 STAP review, information on KM is spread throughout the document (GEF STAP 2017). Available additional documents, such as project proposals, were also reviewed. Based on the GEF Secretariat's good practice criteria for projects, the criteria in [table E.5](#) were used (with the addition of two extra criteria on budget and timeline).

On this basis, an overall score (out of 9) was given to each project that was reviewed, with a cumulative score made for each of the nine criteria.

Table E.1 GEF-6 programs

Focal area	No.	Regional mix	No.	Agency mix	No.
Multifocal	2	Global and 4 regions	1	7–8 Agencies	1
Biodiversity	1	Global and 3 regions	1	6 Agencies	1
Climate change	1	Global and 2 regions	1	3–4 Agencies	2
Chemicals and waste	1	2 regions	1	2 Agencies	1
		1 region	1		

Table E.2 GEF-7 programs

Focal area	No.	Regional mix	No.	Agency mix	No.
Multifocal	2	Global and 4 regions	1	8 Agencies	1
Climate change	1	Global and 3 regions	2	4 Agencies	2
Chemicals and waste	1	2 regions	1	2 Agencies	1

Table E.3 Summary of programs analyzed

Program	GEF-6	GEF-7	No.
Program framework documents	5	4	9
Child projects	32	0	32
Total	37	4	41

Table E.4 GEF-6 and GEF-7 stand-alone projects

Focal area	No.	Regional mix	No.	Agency mix	No.
Climate change	10	1 region	20	Single Agency	26
Multifocal	8	2 regions	4	Multiple Agencies	2
Biodiversity	4	3 regions	2		
Chemicals and waste	2	4 regions	2		
International waters	2				
Land degradation	2				

Table E.5 Assessment criteria

Criterion	Y/N
1. Overview of existing lessons and best practices that inform project concept with proper references and links to relevant documents	
2. Plans to learn from existing relevant projects, programs, initiatives, and evaluations with proper references and links to relevant documents	
3. Proposed processes to capture, assess, and document information, lessons, best practices, and expertise generated during implementation	
4. Proposed tools and methods for knowledge exchange, learning, and collaboration (at both program and project levels if a program)	
5. Proposed knowledge outputs to be produced/shared with stakeholders (at both program and project levels if a program)	
6. Brief discussion of how knowledge and learning will contribute to overall project/program impact and sustainability	
7. Plans for strategic communications	
8. Proposed budget for KM activities	
9. Proposed timeline for KM activities	

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The Office undertakes independent evaluations that involve a set of projects and programs implemented by more than one GEF Agency. These evaluations are typically at the strategic level, on focal areas, or on cross-cutting themes. We also undertake institutional evaluations, such as assessing the GEF resource allocation mechanism or GEF governance.

Within the GEF, the Office facilitates cooperation on evaluation issues with professional evaluation networks; this includes adopting evaluation guidelines and processes consistent with international good practices. We also collaborate with the broader global environmental community to ensure that we stay on the cutting edge of emerging and innovative methodologies.

To date, the Office has produced over 100 evaluation reports; explore these on our website: www.gefio.org/evaluations.



Independent Evaluation Office, Global Environment Facility
1818 H Street, NW Washington, DC 20433, USA
www.gefio.org  /gefio_tweets  /gefio