

58th GEF Council
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Virtual Meeting

Agenda Item 04

**WORK PROGRAM AND BUDGET OF THE
INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OFFICE: MAY 2020**

(Prepared by the Independent Evaluation Office of the GEF)

Recommended Council Decision

The Council, having reviewed the “Work Program and Budget Report of the GEF Independent Evaluation Office: May 2020,” acknowledges the progress made by the Independent Evaluation Office in the reporting period, and approves the IEO budget for FY21.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report presents the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) budget for FY20, and the proposed budget for FY21. It also provides an update on the Office's completed and ongoing evaluations and knowledge management activities during the reporting period of January–May 2020. The Approach Paper for the Seventh Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF (OPS7) is included as a separate working document (GEF/ME/C.58/02). The completed evaluations of the strategic country cluster evaluations (SCCEs) of the African Sudan and Sahel-Guinea biomes and the least developed countries (LDCs), and the Annual Performance Report 2020 are included as separate information documents. In light of the current circumstances, which have limited the opportunity for discussion on the conclusions of the evaluations, the findings and recommendations from the completed evaluations will be discussed with various stakeholders and included as part of OPS7. The peer review of the IEO was also completed during the reporting period; its recommendations will be discussed with the Council in the fall of 2020. The IEO has prepared an action plan in response to the recommendations of the peer review; this is presented with the peer review in GEF/ME/C.58/Inf.04. The Evaluation Policy was revised in response to the recommendations of the peer review and will be submitted to the GEF Council in December 2020 as a working document.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This report provides an update on completed and ongoing evaluations and knowledge management activities of the GEF Independent Evaluation Office during the reporting period of January–May 2020. The IEO completed three evaluations during the reporting period and launched several evaluations. The completed reports for the strategic country cluster evaluations of the African Sahel and Sudan-Guinea savanna biomes and of the least developed countries, and the Annual Performance Report 2020 are presented to the Council as information documents. The Office prepared the approach paper for the Seventh Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF through a consultative process across the partnership and with oversight from an external review panel. The approach paper is included as a separate working document (GEF/ME/C.58/02). The external peer review of the IEO was also completed during the reporting period; its report, as well as the IEO action plan developed in response to the recommendations of the review, is presented as an information document. The Evaluation Policy was revised to reflect gaps identified by the peer review and will be submitted for Council approval in December 2020.

II. COMPLETED EVALUATIONS

2. Three evaluations were completed during the reporting period and are being presented to the Council as information documents. Under the current circumstances, there was limited opportunity for in-depth discussion of conclusions and recommendations with a broad group of stakeholders. The recommendations will thus be discussed in the context of and included in OPS7.

Annual Performance Report 2020: Special Thematic Focus on Quality of Reporting

3. This report is completed and is presented as an information document (GEF/ME/C.58/Inf.01). Eighty-three percent of the projects in the APR 2020 cohort are rated satisfactory on outcomes, and 71 percent are in the likely range for sustainability. There has been an improvement in sustainability ratings in the projects designed from GEF-4 onwards. Average cofinancing for the APR 2020 cohort was higher than the promised amount: \$7.98 materialized compared to \$7.58 promised per dollar of GEF grant.

4. The evaluation finds that the quality of terminal evaluation reports improved between 1997 and 2010, but the gains have slowed. Reporting on various terminal evaluation quality dimensions such as project financing and monitoring and evaluation has improved. In general, the level of compliance with terminal evaluation guidelines for full-size projects shows compliance gaps. Compliance is high in areas such as general project information and reporting on monitoring and outcomes but is lower in reporting on implementation of social and environmental safeguards. In general, the outcome ratings in terminal evaluations and project implementation reports are 6–10 percentage points higher than IEO validations, with the discrepancy in ratings higher for project implementation reports.

5. The GEF Management Action Record (MAR) tracks the level of adoption of GEF Council and Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF)/ Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF) Council

decisions that are based on the recommendations of the evaluations conducted by the GEF IEO. MAR 2020 reports on level of adoption of GEF IEO recommendations included in eight evaluations, including two that pertain to the LDCF/SCCF Council. The IEO and the GEF Secretariat agreed on their ratings of substantial levels of adoption for all recommendations for all eight evaluations tracked. Only one recommendation, from the Joint GEF–United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Small Grants Programme (SGP) Evaluation, was rated as only having medium adoption. The Council decision had called for reconsideration of the upgrading criteria for participating countries. Management reports that it has reconsidered these criteria, but is using them without any changes for the GEF-7 period.

Strategic Country Cluster Evaluation: African Biomes

6. The African Biomes SCCE has been completed. This evaluation aimed to provide a deeper understanding of the factors contributing to and/or hindering the sustainability of GEF outcomes in the Sahel and Sudan-Guinea savanna biomes. It also assessed the relevance of the GEF toward the targeted countries' main environmental challenges, which include deforestation, land degradation, desertification, and biodiversity loss. Gender, resilience, and fragility in the operational context of GEF projects implemented in the biomes have also been assessed. Over the last two and a half decades, the GEF has invested \$2.48 billion in grants, accompanied by \$16.37 billion in co-financing, through 794 national and regional projects in the 23 countries in the two biomes. Findings and conclusions from this SCCE will feed into OPS7.

7. The evaluation concluded that:

- (a) GEF support addresses the main environmental challenges in the two biomes, and there are no major gaps in coverage;
- (b) relevance has not been affected by the GEF move toward integrated programming;
- (c) there has been an expansion of coverage with new GEF Agencies in the biomes, which affords more choice for countries and greater diversity in expertise;
- (d) projects in the two biomes specifically and in Africa overall have lower performance ratings compared with the overall GEF portfolio, which is consistent with previous findings;
- (e) while 85 percent of multifocal projects in the biomes were rated as having satisfactory outcomes, only 38 percent were rated as having outcomes likely to be sustained;
- (f) demonstrating sustainability takes time, as projects tend to show higher observed sustainability of outcomes at post-completion than at the terminal evaluation stage;
- (g) financial sustainability is an issue in Sub-Saharan Africa overall, and is particularly challenging in the biomes;
- (h) context-sensitive, technologically appropriate project design positively affects the sustainability of outcomes in the two biomes;

- (i) designing profitable beneficiary-relevant alternative livelihood activities and working with existing institutions to include environmental considerations in local development plans emerged as key project-related sustainability factors in the biomes;
- (j) limited consideration has been given at project design to the influence synergies and trade-offs between socioeconomic and environmental objectives have on the prospects for sustainability in the biomes;
- (k) gender considerations are increasingly incorporated within GEF interventions in the two biomes;
- (l) resilience to climate risks is addressed in climate change adaptation projects mostly in the form of climate risk management and as a co-benefit; and
- (m) fragility has affected the timely delivery of GEF support but has mostly not affected project outcomes and sustainability in the two biomes.

8. Specific lessons can be derived from the above findings and conclusions to inform future GEF programming in the Sahel and Sudan-Guinea savanna biomes. These include (1) giving due consideration to sustainability factors in project design and tracking them during implementation, (2) paying attention to financial sustainability, and (3) fostering synergies and mitigating trade-offs between the environment and development. The full range of lessons generated by this evaluation will feed into OPS7. The completed report is presented as an information document (GEF/ME/C.58/Inf.02).

Strategic Country Cluster Evaluation: Least Developed Countries

9. The LDC SCCE has been completed and is being presented to this Council session as an information document (GEF/ME/C.58/Inf.03). The overarching objectives of this SCCE are to provide a deeper understanding of the determinants of sustainability of outcomes of GEF support in LDCs. It also assesses the relevance and performance of GEF support toward LDCs' main environmental challenges, of which the most common are deforestation and land degradation and biodiversity loss. Gender, resilience, and fragility have been assessed as cross-cutting issues. Evaluative evidence is based on the LDC portfolio, terminal evaluations of completed projects, and field visits to four LDCs, plus eight field visits conducted in LDCs by the SIDS and African biomes SCCEs. Overall, since its pilot phase, the GEF has invested \$4.68 billion in grants accompanied by \$25.81 billion in cofinancing through 1,435 national and regional projects in LDCs. Twenty percent of this total funding came from the LDCF.

10. The evaluation reached the following conclusions:

- (a) GEF support to LDCs has increased consistently since the pilot phase;
- (b) GEF interventions are relevant to national environmental challenges facing LDCs;

- (c) the relevance of GEF support has not been affected by the GEF's move toward integrated programming;
- (d) the expansion of GEF Agencies has led to more options for most LDCs;
- (e) the performance of projects in LDCs has been lower than in the overall GEF portfolio;
- (f) climate change adaptation projects performed better than other focal area projects in LDCs;
- (g) demonstrating sustainability takes time, as projects tend to show maintained or higher observed sustainability of outcomes at post-completion rather than at completion;
- (h) financial sustainability is a challenge in most LDCs;
- (i) profitable income-generating activities play a vital role in the sustainability of outcomes in LDCs;
- (j) the inclusion of gender considerations in GEF interventions has increased in LDCs;
- (k) climate resilience is addressed in climate change adaptation projects, but rarely in other focal area projects; and
- (l) fragility has affected the timely delivery of GEF support but mostly not outcomes nor sustainability of GEF support in LDCs. Peer Review of the Independent Evaluation Function.

III. THE THIRD PEER REVIEW

11. The third peer review of the IEO commenced in June 2019, based on the terms of reference approved by the Council in June 2019. These terms of reference were updated by the peer review panel at its first meeting in June 2019 to focus on three priority areas for in-depth analysis. The revised terms of reference are included in annex A. The peer review panel has completed its assessment, and its final report, including the recommendations, are included in the information document (GEF/ME/C.58/Inf.04). The IEO has prepared an action plan to implement the recommendations of the peer review, which is also included in the information document. The conclusions and recommendations of the IEO peer review, along with the IEO Action Plan, will be discussed with Council members in the fall of 2020. A summary presentation by the peer review chair is available on the IEO [website](#).

IV. EVALUATION WORK IN PROGRESS

12. Evaluation work is in full swing to meet the timelines of the OPS7, assuming similar timelines as were followed in the previous replenishment process. Due to the current pandemic, field missions to conduct post-completion verifications or additional case studies have not been possible since March 2020. The IEO is using other quantitative and qualitative approaches, such as satellite data analysis and existing survey data collected by other

organizations (including the World Bank). The evaluations presented below are currently under way and will all feed into OPS7. The approach papers/concept notes are available on the [IEO website](#).

Third Joint GEF-UNDP Small Grants Programme Evaluation

13. The SGP is being evaluated jointly by the independent evaluation offices of the GEF and UNDP. The main objective of this evaluation is to build on the findings of, and evaluate progress made since, the 2015 joint SGP evaluation and the extent to which the SGP is achieving the objectives set out in its strategic and operational directions under GEF-6 and GEF-7. The evaluation is also assessing the relevance and strategic positioning of the SGP within the GEF and will provide recommendations on the way forward. The approach paper for the evaluation is available on both the [GEF IEO](#) and UNDP IEO websites. The evaluation will be submitted to the GEF Council in December 2020 and presented to the UNDP Executive Board in January 2021.

Evaluation of GEF Engagement in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations

14. The main objective of this evaluation is to assess conflict sensitivity in GEF strategy, project design, and implementation. Based on an assessment of GEF programming directions and GEF projects in conflict-affected settings, the evaluation will consider the overlap of conflict situations and areas of conservation importance, the extent to which GEF projects in conflict-affected situations considered the conflict context in their design and implementation, the extent to which GEF strategy and projects reflected convention guidance on conflict, the factors that influenced whether project proponents considered the conflict context, and the implications of considering (or not considering) conflict context in designing and implementing GEF projects on the stated objectives of the projects. The evaluation report will be presented to the Council in December 2020.

Evaluation of GEF Support to SFM and REDD+ Projects

15. The objective of this evaluation is to assess the performance and impact of GEF interventions in sustainable forest management (SFM) and provide insights and lessons for future forest-related interventions. The study will employ a mixed-methods approach. It will complement the value-for-money analysis of GEF support to SFM interventions that was presented to the 56th Council. The evaluation is currently ongoing and will involve assessing the relevance, effectiveness, results, and impacts of SFM/REDD+ initiatives, and will synthesize the results and progress toward impact of SFM/REDD+ projects. It will also include evaluating the multiple benefits and co-benefits from SFM projects, identifying good practices and lessons, and assessing the role of the private sector in forestry/SFM. The evaluation will include a formative review of the related integrated approach and impact programs. The evaluation will be completed by March 2021.

Evaluation of GEF Medium-Size Projects

16. The GEF medium-size project (MSP) modality has provided an expedited mechanism for execution of smaller projects by simplifying processing steps together with review and approval

procedures, thereby shortening the project cycle relative to GEF full-size projects. MSPs have allowed a broader representation of stakeholders to directly access GEF funds, including government agencies, international and national nongovernmental organizations, academic and research institutions, and private sector companies. The last MSP evaluation took place in 2001 as an input into OPS2. This evaluation will provide evidence on the recent GEF experience (GEF-4 to GEF-6) in designing and implementing MSPs as well as the impact of MSP projects. We will be drawing on project case studies from previous evaluations and will conduct field work in at least 2 countries with the help of local consultants. The final report will be presented to the Council at the December 2020 meeting.

Evaluation of GEF Institutional Policies and Stakeholder Engagement

17. This evaluation will look at a set of three policies (stakeholder engagement, gender, and safeguards) to assess how they have been applied over time and the extent to which there is evidence that their application has affected how the GEF identifies, designs, and implements GEF-financed activities. The evaluation's key questions include the following: To what extent is there both internal and external coherence and consistency between the three policies?; To what extent is there buy-in across the GEF partnership and support for implementing these policies?; and To what extent does the application of the policies matter for achievement of GEF objectives? Is there any evidence that these policies have led to benefits beyond the GEF environmental objectives? The evaluation will cover GEF-5 through the present period. The findings will be presented to the GEF Council in December 2020.

Formative Review of the GEF Integrated Approach to Address the Drivers of Environmental Degradation

18. This review, undertaken as an input to OPS7, will provide a critical assessment of the design and process of the GEF integrated approach and its potential for enhanced learning compared with GEF focal area-based support. The objectives are to evaluate the relevance of this new approach to the conventions, the GEF comparative advantage, program additionality, and internal coherence. The review will assess the efficiency in launching the GEF-7 Impact Programs, gender, resilience of target geographies to climate risks, and private sector involvement in terms of alignment with new GEF policies. A specific focus of the review will be on the application of lessons from the GEF-6 Integrated Approach Pilot experience in designing the GEF-7 Impact Programs. The GEF-6 Integrated Approach Pilots, the GEF-7 Impact Programs and related child projects are included in the scope of the review. The review will be conducted between June 2020 and June 2021. Preliminary findings will be available in the first quarter of 2021.

Evaluation of the Economic and Social Impacts of GEF Support on MSMEs and the Informal Sector

19. As the GEF has shifted into more integrated approaches, it has also increasingly engaged the private sector not only as a source of sustainable financing, but as a critical partner in scaling up the generation of global environmental benefits. The private sector covers all profit-oriented, nongovernment stakeholders across an entire value chain. This includes micro, small,

and medium-size enterprises (MSMEs), farmers, fishers, artisanal workers, and households—many of which may not be formally organized or registered and are therefore considered part of the informal sector. This evaluation looks at the economic and social impacts of GEF support to the private sector at the beginning of the value chain—usually comprised of MSMEs and the informal sector—closest to where interactions between human and natural systems take place. It aims to assess the impacts of GEF support on MSMEs and the informal sector through their participation in environmental initiatives that generate global environmental benefits. This will be the first GEF IEO evaluation that will attempt to quantify the economic and social impacts generated by GEF support through a theory-based, quasi-experimental approach. The evaluation will be completed in April 2021.

Innovation in the GEF: Findings and Lessons

20. Innovation has been regarded as an essential mechanism for the GEF since its inception to achieve its objectives and catalyze greater environmental benefits. More recently, the GEF 2020 Strategy and GEF-7 Programming Directions called for the GEF to continue to be an innovator while actively seeking to effect transformational change. The objective of this evaluation is to assess GEF efforts in promoting innovation, the outcomes and sustainability of innovative interventions, the factors that have influenced innovation in the GEF, and identify lessons for GEF-8. A framework for evaluating innovation will be developed drawing on the existing literature. The evaluation will identify major innovations at the strategic and portfolio levels and will use a mixed-methods and multi-case study design approach to determine the lessons and implications for future policy, strategy, and management decisions to further enhance innovations in the GEF. This is primarily a desk-based study. The evaluation report will be ready by March 2021.

Evaluation of GEF Interventions in Artisanal Gold Mining

21. The evaluation of the GEF's artisanal small-scale gold mining portfolio includes both completed projects and the ongoing planetGOLD Programme, a set of seven projects in eight countries designed to respond to the Minamata Convention and reduce mercury emissions in the sector. The objectives of the evaluation are to evaluate in a formative manner the ongoing interventions, chiefly the planetGOLD Programme, perform post-completion evaluation of completed projects, and evaluate the progression of GEF's artisanal small-scale gold mining strategy over time. The evaluation will look at relevance to the convention and the GEF strategies of the interventions, coherence with other GEF and non-GEF initiatives in the areas of interest, and the sustainability over time of completed project outcomes. The evaluation is due to be completed by December 2020.

Evaluation of the International Waters Program: Focus on Fisheries and Freshwater

22. Two studies are being carried out to fill the gaps in the previous focal area study on international waters conducted by the IEO in 2016. These studies, primarily desk based, will mainly focus on the fisheries and freshwater portfolios of the GEF.

23. **Fisheries.** As noted in the 2016 international waters focal area study, marine fisheries are the dominant theme for interventions in this focal area. However, the relevance and effectiveness of GEF investments in fisheries management have yet to be reviewed. This study aims to present a synthesis of the GEF's continuous support for global fisheries based on a review of the terminal evaluations of completed fishery projects. This review will identify contributing and hindering factors that affect the magnitude and quality of project outcomes to inform better design and implementation of future interventions. This will primarily be a desk-based study and will be presented to the Council in December 2020.

24. **Freshwater.** Freshwater plays a significant role in sustaining life on earth, and the findings from OPS6 indicated a slight imbalance between marine/ocean and freshwater projects in the GEF international waters portfolio. This study will provide evidence on the effectiveness and impacts of the GEF freshwater portfolio based on a desk review. It will be presented to the Council in December 2020.

Evaluation of Agency Self-Evaluation Systems

25. The Agency self-evaluation systems are expected to facilitate learning and accountability across the GEF partnership. The expectations from the self-evaluation systems of the Agencies are outlined in several GEF policy documents and policies of the GEF Agencies. The GEF IEO is undertaking this evaluation to assess the extent to which Agency self-evaluation systems meet GEF requirements and provide information that is sufficient, timely, credible, and useful. The evaluation seeks to answer the following questions:

- (a) How do GEF Agencies address self-evaluations through their policy frameworks?
- (b) What arrangements are in place in Agencies to conduct self-evaluations?
- (c) To what extent are the Agency self-evaluation systems meeting the needs of the GEF partnership in terms of accountability and learning?
- (d) What are the factors that affect the effectiveness of the self-evaluation systems?

26. The evaluation's draft approach paper has been shared across the GEF partnership, and the feedback is being addressed to finalize the approach. The evaluation will be completed by April 2021.

Evaluation of the GEF's Results-Based Management System

27. The GEF's approach to results-based management (RBM) has evolved. Emphasis has shifted from tracking a wide range of indicators through tracking tools during the GEF-4 to GEF-6 periods to the present approach of focusing on a smaller set of core indicators. During GEF-7, the GEF shifted to a new platform—the GEF Portal—to manage data on its activities and make these accessible to a wide range of GEF partners and other stakeholders. The rollout of the portal is still ongoing, and it has yet to achieve full functionality. The evaluation, an input to OPS7, seeks to answer following questions:

- (a) To what extent have OPS6 recommendations related to the GEF RBM system been implemented?
- (b) To what extent have the changes in the results architecture been effective?
- (c) To what extent does the new GEF Portal meet the expectations of the GEF partnership?
- (d) To what extent does the RBM system contribute to good knowledge management?

The evaluation has commenced and will be completed in March 2021.

Evaluation of the GEF's Knowledge Management Approach

28. The purpose of this review is to assess progress made in implementation of the GEF knowledge management approach since GEF-6 and to identify any systemic issues that need to be addressed in planning for GEF-8. The review will assess the effectiveness of the GEF knowledge management approach in strengthening the use of knowledge as a primary resource that supports the GEF's strategic objectives in addressing global environmental concerns. The review will apply a mixed-methods approach, encompassing document and literature review, perceptions gathering through the key informant interviews and an online survey, project and program review, and a case study analysis. The final report will be presented to the Council in December 2020.

Program Evaluation of the Least Developed Countries Fund

29. The IEO is conducting a program evaluation of the LDCF. The main objective of this evaluation is to assess the progress made by the LDCF since the 2016 program evaluation and the extent to which the LDCF is achieving the objectives set out in the GEF Programming Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change for LDCF/SCCF (2018-2022). The evaluation will also follow up on conclusions and recommendations of the 2016 evaluation and will provide the LDCF/SCCF Council with evaluative evidence of the fund's relevance and emerging results. Evaluative evidence will be based on a portfolio review of project and program documentation, interviews with key stakeholders, and field visits to two countries including two post-completion evaluations. The approach paper for the LDCF program evaluation is available on the GEF IEO website. The evaluation will be presented to the LDCF/SCCF Council in December 2020.

V. UPDATES ON KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

Knowledge and Learning

30. At the beginning of the calendar year, the IEO developed new content for the evaluation session for the Expanded Constituency Workshops to share findings relevant to countries attending the workshop. In addition, separate consultative sessions on OPS7 were held to discuss issues related to GEF additionality, innovation, scaling-up, and GEF processes and

policies. The first session incorporating this new content was held in the East African constituency meeting in Kenya in February 2020.

31. In February, the IEO presented the evaluation findings relevant to the Convention on Biodiversity at the convention's Thematic Consultation on Transparent Implementation, Monitoring, Reporting and Review. In collaboration with the Green Climate Fund, UNICEF, and the EvalSDGs network, the IEO organized a webinar on Evaluating at the Nexus of Environment, Climate, and Development. The IEO also participated in a special session on Evaluation and the COVID Response organized by the Evaluation Cooperation Group of International Financial Institutions in April 2020. The IEO has also presented evaluation evidence of relevance to the pandemic, available on the [website](#).

32. IEO staff continue to contribute as peer reviewers and advisers on evaluations conducted by other entities such as the Green Climate Fund and the International Fund for Agricultural Development, as well as those conducted by evaluation units of donor agencies (Finland, Norway).

Communication and Dissemination

33. The IEO website contains the latest information on evaluations, events, knowledge products, data, and methods. As of March 31, 2020, the GEF IEO website had been visited close to 20,000 times, mainly for OPS-related documents and the 2019 Evaluation Policy (annex B). Web traffic rose 18 percent in March. Changes to the website layout are under way in advance of OPS7 so as to better categorize information and make it more accessible. The approach papers/concept notes for 16 studies related to OPS7 are now available on the [website](#).

34. Participation in events during 2020 has largely been affected by travel restrictions due to COVID-19. In February, the IEO presented at two events: the Expanded Constituency Workshops in Nairobi, and EvalFest 2020 in New Delhi. In March, a webinar was organized between the IEO, the GEF Secretariat, and the World Bank's Amazon Sustainable Landscapes Program, at which the Amazon Conservation Association discussed its satellite-based Monitoring of the Andean Amazon Project (MAAP) and efforts to link it to effective policy action. The event drew over 200 participants online.

35. On the Earth-Eval Community of Practice [site](#), the book *Evaluating Climate Change Action for Sustainable Development* was selected as part of Springer Nature's Academic Book Week (March 9–13, 2020). Published in 2016, the book was developed on the basis of key presentations and discussions at the 2nd International Conference on Evaluating Climate Change and Development. A similar volume of papers and presentations from the 2019 Third International Conference on Evaluating Environment and Development is currently in preparation. IEO staff have contributed blogs which are published on the Earth-Eval [website](#). The IEO has also prepared relevant lessons for the COVID-19 pandemic drawing on previous and ongoing evaluation findings, made available to the Council as a learning note.

VI. BUDGET AND HUMAN RESOURCES

IEO Budget FY20

36. For the GEF-7 cycle, the GEF Council approved a four-year budget for the GEF IEO of \$24.5 million, allowing the Office to execute the GEF IEO work program for GEF-7.

37. For FY20, the Council approved an annual operations budget of \$4.917 million and a multiannual evaluation budget of \$1.300 million, for a total amount of \$6.217 million for the Office to execute the approved work program.

38. The annual operations budget for FY20 was approved in the amount of \$4.917 million; it covers benefits, salaries, and fixed costs, plus other operating costs. The projected amount of fixed costs to be disbursed is \$4.585 million, about 6 percent below budget. The reduced amount is the result of a lower cost of office space due to a new lease agreement negotiated by the World Bank with the owners of the building.

39. The variable costs were calculated at \$300,000 and include the following items: (1) professional development, (2) participation in networks, and (3) IEO management. The projected amount of variable costs to be disbursed is \$270,000. The reduced amount is a direct result of cancelled travel during the third and fourth quarters of FY20 related to networks and training, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Note that the relatively higher costs for the IEO management budget item are attributable primarily to two important activities organized by the Office this fiscal year: The Third International Conference: Evaluating Environment and Development in Prague in November 2019; and the professional peer review of the IEO.¹

40. The multiannual budget for evaluations for FY20 was approved for \$1.3 million. This amount has allowed the Office to conduct the evaluations proposed and approved by the GEF Council for the GEF-7 cycle.²

41. The projected amount to be disbursed by the end of FY20 is close to \$850,000 or approximately 65 percent of the approved budget. It was expected that the Office would have fully disbursed the evaluation budget for FY20, but all planned trips for the third and fourth quarters of this fiscal year have been postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic; these travel funds are expected to be disbursed when the travel restrictions have been lifted.

42. During FY20, the Office has continued its practice of hiring consultants to work with the Office staff in conducting evaluations. The approved budget for FY20 has made this possible. In

¹ Both activities were reported to the GEF Council during its 57th meeting, and were included in the document [Semi-Annual Evaluation Report of the Independent Evaluation Office: December 2019 GEF/ME/C.57/01](#). November 18, 2019.

² See [Four Year Work Program and Budget of the Independent Evaluation Office – GEF-7. GEF/ME/C.56/03/Rev.01](#). June 4, 2019.

hiring its consultants, the Office follows a very strict selection process consistent with World Bank human resources policies.

43. Based on the multiannual nature of the evaluation budget, any undisbursed funds from the FY20 evaluation budget will be rolled over into the FY21 budget, thus continuing and completing the evaluations currently under way presented in the previous sections and beginning new evaluations (table 1).

Table 1: IEO Budget for FY20

<i>Expense Category</i>	<i>FY20 Approved Budget</i>	<i>FY20 Estimated Expenses</i>
<i>Fixed Cost</i>		
IEO Salaries and Benefits Cost	4,095	4,095
General Operations Cost	522	490
<i>Total (A)</i>	4,617	4,585
<i>Variable Cost</i>		
Professional Development	20	15
Participations in Networks	20	15
IEO Management Operations	260	240
<i>Total (B)</i>	300	270
<i>Total Annual Budget (A+B)</i>	4,917	4,855
<i>Evaluations</i>		
Performance	300	175
Corporate Issues	300	150
Impact	300	200
Overall Performance Studies	400	325
<i>Total Evaluations (C)</i>	1,300	850
<i>Total IEO Budget (A+B+C)</i>	6,217	5,705

IEO Budget FY21

44. For FY21, the Office is requesting a total amount of \$6.63 million, which is within the approved envelope for the GEF-7 period. This includes an operations budget of \$4.825 million to cover salaries and benefits, fixed costs, and general operating costs. The increase of approximately 4.5 percent in salaries and benefits is needed to cover the costs of two new evaluation officers who have joined the Office, replacing one senior evaluation officer. The remainder of the increase is accounted for by the annual increase in salaries and benefits in accordance with World Bank practice.

45. The estimated evaluation budget for FY21 has been calculated at \$1.7 million. This amount guarantees the delivery of the work program, especially of OPS7, which is a significant document informing the replenishment discussion of the GEF; preparation of this evaluation report is expected to begin in the first quarter of 2021 (table 2).

Table 2: IEO Budget Request for FY21

<i>Expense Category</i>	<i>FY21 Budget Request (million)</i>
<i>Fixed Cost</i>	
IEO Salaries and Benefits Cost	4,296
General Operations Cost	529
<i>Total (A)</i>	4,825
<i>Variable Cost</i>	
Professional Development	20
Participations in Networks	20
IEO Management Operations	65
<i>Total (B)</i>	105
<i>Total Annual Budget (A+B)</i>	4,930
<i>Evaluations</i>	
Performance	390
Corporate Issues	390
Impact	390
Overall Performance Studies	530
<i>Total Evaluations (C)</i>	1,700
<i>Total IEO Budget (A+B+C)</i>	6,630

Human Resources

46. During FY20, the IEO continued to operate with 19 staff; one senior evaluation officer moved on to the World Bank and this position was replaced with two evaluation officers. The current staff composition of the IEO is shown in table 3. The IEO proposes to continue with the same staff complement for FY21. The senior evaluation officer who was hired under the Donor Funded Staffing Program will return to Japan during this fiscal year on completion of the four year assignment. In response to the peer review, the IEO, together with the human resources team of the World Bank and an external consultant, will review the current organization and staffing structure and discuss the findings and implications with the Council in June 2021.

Table 3: IEO Staff Composition FY20

	IEO Staff
1	Director
1	Chief Evaluation Officer
4	Senior Evaluation Officer
1	Senior Operations Officer
4	Evaluation Officer
1	Knowledge Management Officer
3	Evaluation Analyst
1	Information Analyst
1	Research Assistant
1	Senior Executive Assistant
1	Program Assistant