

60th GEF Council Meeting
June 14 – 18, 2021
Virtual Meeting

Agenda Item 09

**FORMATIVE EVALUATION OF THE GEF INTEGRATED APPROACH TO ADDRESS THE
DRIVERS OF ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION**

(Prepared by the Independent Evaluation Office of the GEF)

Recommended Council Decision

The Council, having considered document GEF/E/C.60/04, Formative Evaluation of the GEF integrated Approach to Address the Drivers of Environmental Degradation, and the Management Response, takes note of the related evaluation recommendations and endorses the management response to address them.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

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

Key Findings and Conclusions

3. **Overall, GEF-7 integrated programming represents an improvement over the GEF-6 IAPs on several dimensions.** The GEF-7 impact programs show evidence of learning and evolution from the pilot phase, including in design relevance and coherence, process, knowledge platforms, and results, as described in the findings and conclusions below.

4. **Integrated programming is largely targeting relevant countries and drivers of environmental degradation with a few exceptions.** Integrated programs show synergies primarily among biodiversity, climate change, and land degradation focal areas. There is scope for stronger integration with international waters and chemicals and waste. GEF integrated approaches also intersect with socioeconomic considerations, including in interventions focused on urban development, rural livelihoods, and commodity value chains. The strategy to

ensure relevant countries participated in the GEF-7 impact programs to address drivers of environmental degradation—in terms of geographical targeting, incentives, and working with relevant Agencies and countries—has been largely successful. Only one small island developing state is participating in IAPs or impact programs, however, which represents a missed opportunity.

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

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

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

8. Substantial process improvements have been realized in the roll-out of GEF-7 IPs. The competitive expression of interest process has involved open access, clear selection criteria, and strong interest among countries to participate in GEF-7 impact programs. The GEF also used a competitive procurement process to select the Lead Agency. Sequencing of program design improved in GEF-7, with child projects generally designed in parallel with the global or regional coordination projects (rather than before them, as in the IAPs). Country stakeholders, including operational focal points, viewed program design processes as inclusive. In terms of efficiency, the roll-out of the integrated programs has followed a timeline similar to the IAPs,

and the timeline for IAP child projects' progress to implementation is similar to the rest of the GEF portfolio.

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

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

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

Recommendations

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

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

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

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary.....	ii
Key Findings and Conclusions	ii
Recommendations.....	v
1 Introduction	1
1.1 Background on integration and the GEF approach.....	1
1.2 Overview of GEF-6 IAPs and GEF-7 impact programs.....	3
1.3 Methodology.....	8
1.4 Limitations.....	10
2 Findings	10
2.1 Design of the GEF integrated approach.....	10
2.1.1 Alignment with conventions	11
2.1.2 Alignment with country priorities and programs and other donor programs.....	14
2.1.3 Comparative advantage	15
2.1.4 Relevance of countries and drivers.....	16
2.1.5 Program internal coherence in design	20
2.1.6 Program internal coherence in monitoring and evaluation systems.....	23
2.1.7 Additionality, innovation, and sustainability in design	27
2.2 Processes.....	30
2.2.1 Country access and selection process.....	30
2.2.2 Lead Agency selection process	33
2.2.3 Lead Agency role	34
2.2.4 Efficiency	36
2.3 Progress toward results	38
2.3.1 Program and project results	38
2.3.2 Progress toward broader adoption.....	42
2.3.3 Challenges for results achievement.....	43
2.3.4 Knowledge platforms	45
2.4 Cross-cutting issues.....	53
2.4.1 Gender	53
2.4.2 Resilience	56
2.4.3 Private sector	59
2.4.4 Environmental governance	64

3	Conclusions and Recommendations	67
3.1	Conclusions	67
3.2	Recommendations	71
	References	73
	Annex I: Approach paper	76
	Annex II: Evaluation Matrix.....	105
	Annex III: Quality at Entry Analysis	113
	Annex IV: Geospatial analysis	124
	Annex V: List of interviewees.....	153
	Annex VI: Survey results	159
	Annex VII: Country case studies.....	177
	BRAZIL Country Case Study Report	180
	KENYA Country Case Study Report.....	216
	CHINA Country Case Study Report	247

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

TABLES

Table 1. IAP and impact program basic information	6
Table 2. IAP and impact program country participation.....	7
Table 3. IAP and impact program Agency participation	7
Table 4. Quality-at-entry review of additionality and broader adoption in impact programs.....	28
Table 5. Quality-at-entry review of types of innovation child projects reported	29
Table 6. Impact program STAR allocation and set-asides.....	31
Table 7. Leading IAP and impact program programming recipients	32
Table 8. Number of child projects and Agencies by program.....	34
Table 9. Impact program child project approval timeline	37
Table 10. IAP child project implementation timeline	37
Table 11. Quality-at-entry review of gender considerations in IAPs during implementation.....	53
Table 12: Quality-at-entry analysis of resilience in IAPs.....	57
Table 13. Quality-at-entry analysis of private sector engagement plans in impact program and IAP child projects	62
Table 14. Quality at entry review of environmental governance related activities in impact program child projects	67
Table 15. IAP and Impact Program Projects by Program	113
Table 16. Impact Program Child Project Status	114
Table 17. IAP Child Project Ratings	115
Table 18. Types of outcomes reported by IAP child projects	116
Table 19. Types of expected outcomes reported by impact program child projects.....	116
Table 20. Types of additionality reported as expected by impact program child projects	118
Table 21. Types of innovation reported by child projects	119
Table 22. Most frequently mentioned contributing factors for sustainability of outcomes.....	119
Table 23. Environmental governance related interventions reported by IAP and planned by impact program child projects.....	120
Table 24. Impact program child project preparation phase stakeholder engagement.....	121
Table 25. IAP child project private sector engagement.....	122
Table 26. Impact program child project planned private sector engagement	122

Table 27. Data layers used to create the spatial relevance indices for the three food systems programs	125
Table 28. Main differences in data sources between the GEF Secretariat ex-ante geospatial prioritization analysis and the FOLUR spatial relevance index.....	130
Table 29. Countries with the highest GGP IAP spatial relevance index scores.....	133
Table 30. Countries with the highest FOLUR impact program spatial relevance index scores.	134
Table 31. Countries with the highest RFS IAP spatial relevance index scores.....	136
Table 32. Countries with the highest RFS IAP spatial relevance scores, showing sub-Saharan African countries only.	137
Table 33. Kenyan counties with the highest RFS IAP spatial relevance scores.....	142
Table 35. Kenyan counties with the highest FOLUR impact program spatial relevance scores.	144
Table 36. Brazilian states with the highest GGP IAP spatial relevance index scores.....	149
Table 37. Brazilian states with the highest FOLUR impact program spatial relevance scores.	151
Table 38: Countries selected for case studies and key attributes	178

FIGURES

Figure 1. Impact program funding by convention	12
Figure 2. GEF comparative advantages in integrated programming from country survey	16
Figure 3. IAPs and impact programs by program size.....	21
Figure 4. Integrated programming by country category	32
Figure 5. Perceptions of the IAP knowledge platforms from the country-level survey	46
Figure 6. Geospatial data processing steps to create the spatial relevance indices	129
Figure 7. Relative spatial relevance index scores for all included countries for all three food systems programs	133
Figure 8. Input layers representing food security (upper left), climate change vulnerability (upper right) and smallholder agriculture (lower left—very small field size only) into the Kenya RFS IAP spatial relevance index.	140
Figure 9. Relative spatial relevance index scores for all counties in Kenya for the RFS IAP and the FOLUR impact program.....	141
Figure 10. Spatial results for the RFS IAP total (left) and normalized by county area (right) spatial relevance index for the Kenya case study.	141
Figure 11. Input layers representing deforestation (upper left, commodity-driven and shifting cultivation only), area suitable for reforestation (upper right), area of maize farms and area of coffee farms, into the Kenya FOLUR impact program spatial relevance index.	143

Figure 12. Spatial results for the FOLUR impact program total (left) and normalized by county area (right) spatial relevance index for the Kenya case study.	144
Figure 13. Input layers representing forest biomass (top left), deforestation (top right, commodity-driven only), area of soy farms (middle left), area of smallholder farms (middle right, small and very small field sizes only) and biodiversity hotspots (lower left) into the Brazil Commodity IAP spatial relevance indices.	147
Figure 14. Relative spatial relevance index scores for all states in Brazil for the GGP IAP and the FOLUR impact progra.....	148
Figure 15. Spatial results for the GGP total (left) and normalized by county area (right) spatial relevance indices for the Brazil case study.....	148
Figure 16. Input layers representing deforestation (top left, commodity-driven and shifting cultivation only), area suitable for reforestation (upper right), area of soy farms (lower left) and location of cattle (lower right) into the Brazil FOLUR impact program spatial relevance indices.	150
Figure 17. Spatial results for the FOLUR impact program total (left) and normalized by county area (right) spatial relevance index for the Brazil case study.	151

LISTS OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGRA	Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBO	city-based organizations
CCUD	China Center for Urban Development
COP	community of practice
CSO	civil society organization
DATAR	Diversity Assessment Tool for Agrobiodiversity and Resilience
EOI	Expression of interest
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FOLUR	Food Systems, Land Use, and Restoration
GEB	global environmental benefit
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GGP	Good Growth Partnership
GHG	greenhouse gas
GPSC	Global Platform for Sustainable Cities
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
IAP	integrated approach pilot
ICLEI	Local Governments for Sustainability
ICRAF	World Agroforestry
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
LDC	Least developed countries
LDN	land degradation neutrality
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MFA	multifocal area
MOHURD	China Ministry of Housing and Urban–Rural Development
MSME	micro, small, and medium enterprises
MTR	midterm review
NBS	nature-based solutions
NDC	nationally determined contribution

NGO	nongovernmental organization
OFP	operational focal point
PFD	program framework document
PIF	project identification gorm
PIR	project implementation review
POP	persistent organic pollutants
PPG	project preparation grant
PPP	public-private partnership
QAE	Quality-at-entry
RAPTA	Resilience Adaption Pathways and Transformation Assessment
REM	regional exchange mechanism
REDD+	Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SFM	sustainable forest management
SHARP	Self-evaluation and Holistic Assessment of Climate Resilience of Farmers and Pastoralists
SIDS	small island developing states
SLM	sustainable land management
SME	small or medium enterprise
STAP	Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel
STAR	System for Transparent Allocation of Resources
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
TOD	transit-oriented development
TOR	terms of reference
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UTNWFP	Upper Tana Nairobi Water Fund Project
WRI	World Resources Institute

1 INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

1.1 Background on integration and the GEF approach

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

integrated nature of the Sustainable Development Goals across economic, social, and environmental dimensions. According to Bierbaum et al. (2018), “addressing the interconnected and interacting environmental and social challenges requires systems thinking; this is fundamental to better integration. Integrated approaches and systems thinking are also the only way to deal with new and complex risks. Integrated approaches can also untangle complexity, so that root causes can be identified and managed through focused interventions.”

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

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

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

- (a) The IAPs' integrated programming to tackle the main drivers of environmental degradation enables programs to address the objectives of multiple conventions while allowing participating countries to address national environmental priorities.
- (b) The IAPs have pursued innovative and flexible design to address the drivers of environmental degradation but use a wide variety of indicators and tracking tools, hindering aggregation in each IAP and for the three IAPs together.
- (c) The IAPs draw on the comparative advantages of a variety of GEF Agencies and specialized think tanks, but the involvement of several agencies and institutions in each IAP has increased programs' organizational complexity.
- (d) Insufficient clarity on rules of engagement between agencies, transparency of selection processes, the role of the Secretariat, and insufficient communications among some participating GEF Agencies and countries on technical design hindered the IAPs' design and launch process.

8. Based on these conclusions, the 2018 Formative Review recommended assessing the value of knowledge platforms at midterm to ensure they support program implementation by sharing lessons across countries on child projects and support coordination of programs. The review also recommended standardizing indicators, tracking tools, and metrics across the IAPs to demonstrate program additionality through monitoring and evaluation (M&E).

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

9. The three IAPs launched during GEF-6 introduced a new dimension of programming that emphasized integration as a key organizing principle for GEF financing (Box 1). These programs were structured around major drivers of global environmental degradation. Two programs were global, one focusing on urbanization (the Sustainable Cities IAP) and one on commodity-driven deforestation (the Taking Deforestation out of Commodity Supply Chains program, also called the Good Growth Partnership [GGP] IAP),¹ a third centered on sustainability and resilience for food security in Sub-Saharan Africa drylands (the Fostering Sustainability and Resilience for Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa program, also called the Resilient Food Systems [RFS] IAP).² GEF did not silo financing for these programs by focal area, but designed it to be invested coherently to promote synergies in generating multiple GEBs, while ensuring that progress in any dimension of the global environment does not negatively affect related socioeconomic objectives.

¹ For the sake of conciseness, this program is referred to as the GGP IAP throughout the remainder of this report.

² For the sake of conciseness, this program is referred to as the RFS IAP throughout the remainder of this report.

Box 1: GEF IAP objectives

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

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

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

10. About a fifth of GEF-7 funding (18 percent) is invested according to the new integrated approach in a series of impact programs (Table 1).³ These are an evolution of this approach, applied full-scale, and focused on the main themes and drivers addressed by GEF-6 pilots. Building on the themes in the Resilient Food Systems (RFS) and GGP IAPs, the Food, Land Use, and Restoration Impact Program (FOLUR Impact Program) seeks to transform food and land use systems and help countries reconcile competing social, economic, and environmental interests by moving away from unsustainable sectoral approaches (Box 2). The Sustainable Cities Impact Program builds on the GEF-6 Sustainable Cities IAP, seeking to promote sustainable urbanization in more cities and countries. It further incorporates biodiversity conservation and nature-based solutions (NBS) on a metropolitan scale. Three sustainable forest management (SFM) impact programs expand GEF support from individual countries, an approach applied to precedent SFM programs in GEF-4 and GEF-5 and REDD+⁴ projects under the climate change mitigation focal area, in three biomes: the Amazon, the Congo Basin, and selected drylands around the globe, where comprehensive SFM could preserve these ecosystems and their services to humanity.

11. Fifty-six countries have participated in the IAPs and impact programs—16 are least-developed countries (LDCs); 40 are middle income nations (Table 2). Twenty countries have participated in multiple integrated programs. Fourteen agencies have participated in the IAPs and impact programs, with World Bank, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and UNEP together implementing nearly 80 percent

³ Total impact program funding from the Council-approved program framework documents is \$705.4 million or 18 percent of total GEF-7 replenishment programming. Thirty-six percent of CEO-endorsed funding has been for GEF-7 impact program child projects, from the GEF data portal as of February 3, 2021. Impact program project cofinancing only includes CEO-endorsed child projects as of February 3, 2021.

⁴ REDD+ refers to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries.

of integrated programming resources (Table 3). The complete list of programs and related child projects is in annex I.

Box 2: GEF impact program objectives

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

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

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

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

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

Table 1. IAP and impact program basic information

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

Source: GEF Portal website, <https://gefportal.worldbank.org/App/>; accessed February 3, 2021.

Note: IAP financial figures are based on child project financing data, including Agency fees. Total impact program funding is from each program's Council-approved PFD.

*IFAD=International Fund for Agricultural Development.

Table 2. IAP and impact program country participation

Angola, ⁵ Burkina Faso,* Burundi,* Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia,* Guinea, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi,* Mozambique, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal,*+ Uganda*	Argentina, Brazil**+, Bolivia, Botswana, Cameroon, China,** Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire,* Ecuador, Equatorial Guinea, Eswatini, Gabon,+ Ghana,* Guatemala, Guyana, India**+ Indonesia,** Kazakhstan,+ Kenya,** Malaysia,* Mexico,* Mongolia, Morocco, Namibia, Nicaragua, Nigeria,* Papua New Guinea, Paraguay,** Peru,** Senegal,+ South Africa, Tanzania,** Suriname, Thailand, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Vietnam,* Zimbabwe

Source: GEF Portal website, <https://gefportal.worldbank.org/App/>; accessed February 3, 2021.

Note: (*) indicates countries that have participated in both the IAP and impact program. (+) indicates countries with more than one child project in the IAP or impact programs. Country-program overlaps are: Brazil (Sustainable Cities IAP, Sustainable Cities Impact Program, GGP IAP, FOLUR Impact Program, and Amazon Impact Program); Burkina Faso (RFS IAP, Drylands Impact Program); Burundi (RFS IAP, FOLUR Impact Program); China (Sustainable Cities IAP, Sustainable Cities Impact Program, FOLUR Impact Program); Côte d'Ivoire (Sustainable Cities IAP, FOLUR Impact Program); Ethiopia (RFS IAP, FOLUR Impact program); Ghana (RFS IAP, FOLUR impact program); India (SC-IAP, Sustainable Cities Impact Program, FOLUR Impact Program); Indonesia (GGP Impact Program, FOLUR Impact Program, Sustainable Cities Impact Program); Kazakhstan (FOLUR Impact Program, Drylands Impact Program); Kenya (RFS IAP, Drylands impact Program, FOLUR Impact Program); Malawi (RFS IAP, Drylands Impact Program); Malaysia (Sustainable Cities IAP, FOLUR Impact Program); Nigeria (RFS IAP, FOLUR Impact Program); Peru (Sustainable Cities IAP, FOLUR Impact Program, Amazon Impact Program); Paraguay (GGP IAP, Sustainable Cities IAP, FOLUR Impact Program); Senegal (Sustainable Cities IAP, RFS IAP); Tanzania (RFS IAP, FOLUR Impact Program, Drylands Impact program); Uganda (RFS IAP, FOLUR Impact Program); and Vietnam (Sustainable Cities IAP, FOLUR Impact Program).

Table 3. IAP and impact program Agency participation

Agency	Programming (\$ million)								Total
	Resilient Food Systems IAP	Good Growth Partnership IAP	Sustainable Cities IAP	FOLUR Impact Program	Sustainable Cities Impact Program	Amazon Impact Program	Congo Basin Impact Program	Drylands Impact Program	
World Bank	14	5	52	113	63	50	30	30	356 (33%)
UNDP	23	27	8	94	22	6	-	-	179 (16.6%)
FAO	12	-	-	94	-	8	-	59	173 (16%)
UNEP	-	2	29	25	68	-	16	-	140 (13%)
IFAD	63	-	-	4	-	3	-	-	70 (6.5%)

⁵ In February 2021, Angola's effective graduation from Least Developed Country status was postponed for three years (UNGA 2021)

WWF-US	-	10	-	8	-	9	10	3	41 (3.8%)
UNIDO	4	-	21	0	-	6	-	-	31 (2.8%)
IADB	-	-	22	-	-	-	-	-	22 (2.0%)
Asian Development Bank	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	13	19 (1.8%)
IUCN	-	-	9	-	8	-	-	-	17 (1.5%)
Conservation International	-	-	-	8	-	4	-	-	11 (1%)
Development Bank of Latin American (CAF)	-	-	-	-	-	11	-	-	11 (1%)
African Development Bank	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	5 (0.4%)
Development Bank of S. Africa	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	4 (0.4%)
Total	116	44	150	346	160	96	62	104	1,078

Source: GEF Data Portal, accessed February 3, 2021 (GEF 2019c, GEF 2019d, GEF 2019e, GEF 2019f, GEF 2019gz)

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

12. GEF-7 programs incorporate three main features. These are the incentive funding for country participation and a dedicated funding envelope for a coordination or platform project to be the knowledge hub for selected countries. The coordination project aims to extend the reach of the impact program beyond selected countries and ensure that overall delivery of the impact program achieves transformational change central to the GEF-7 strategy. A third feature is a competitive selection process among countries through preparation and evaluation of expressions of interest (EOIs).

1.3 Methodology

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

14. The evaluation purpose and objectives translate into key questions about the relevance and coherence of the GEF integrated approach design the extent to which underlying child projects are consistent with overall program objectives, and the efficiency and effectiveness of the GEF integrated approach implementation (see Approach Paper in annex I). Issues explored include: the integrated approach alignment with multilateral environmental agreements;

⁶ According to the latest Sustainable Development Goals Report (UN 2020), more than 90 percent of COVID-19 cases are in urban areas.

comparative advantage to address drivers of environmental degradation; additionality and innovation; internal coherence of objectives, theories of change, and M&E systems; governance; consideration of sustainability factors, gender, resilience, and private sector at design; start-up and early implementation efficiency and how these were affected by the current COVID-19 crisis; IAP child projects results; and program knowledge-sharing through knowledge platforms.

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

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

17. The team conducted comprehensive, semi-structured interviews to gather insight and perspectives from all relevant stakeholders and key informants involved in these programs and related child projects. These included 151 representatives from the GEF Secretariat, Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP), GEF Agencies involved in the design and implementation of these programs and child projects, as well as representatives of the external international institutions and think tanks involved in providing services related to knowledge sharing, M&E, and coordination (see annex V). The study team conducted pattern analysis to identify the main themes across interview notes, which were coded in Dedoose.⁸ The team administered an online survey to 633 country stakeholders to learn their perceptions of the IAPs in general and

⁷ As of February 3, 2021, nine impact program child projects have been officially endorsed, and 34 have submitted the initial CEO endorsement requests and are under review by the GEF Secretariat.

⁸ Dedoose Version 8.0.35, web application for managing, analyzing, and presenting qualitative and mixed method research data (2018). Los Angeles, CA: SocioCultural Research Consultants, LLC www.dedoose.com.

the child project in which they are participating, with a 42.3 percent response rate (see annex VI). Statistical analysis was performed to identify statistically significant differences among categories of respondents and geographical regions for select questions.

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

1.4 Limitations

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

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

2 FINDINGS

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

2.1 Design of the GEF integrated approach

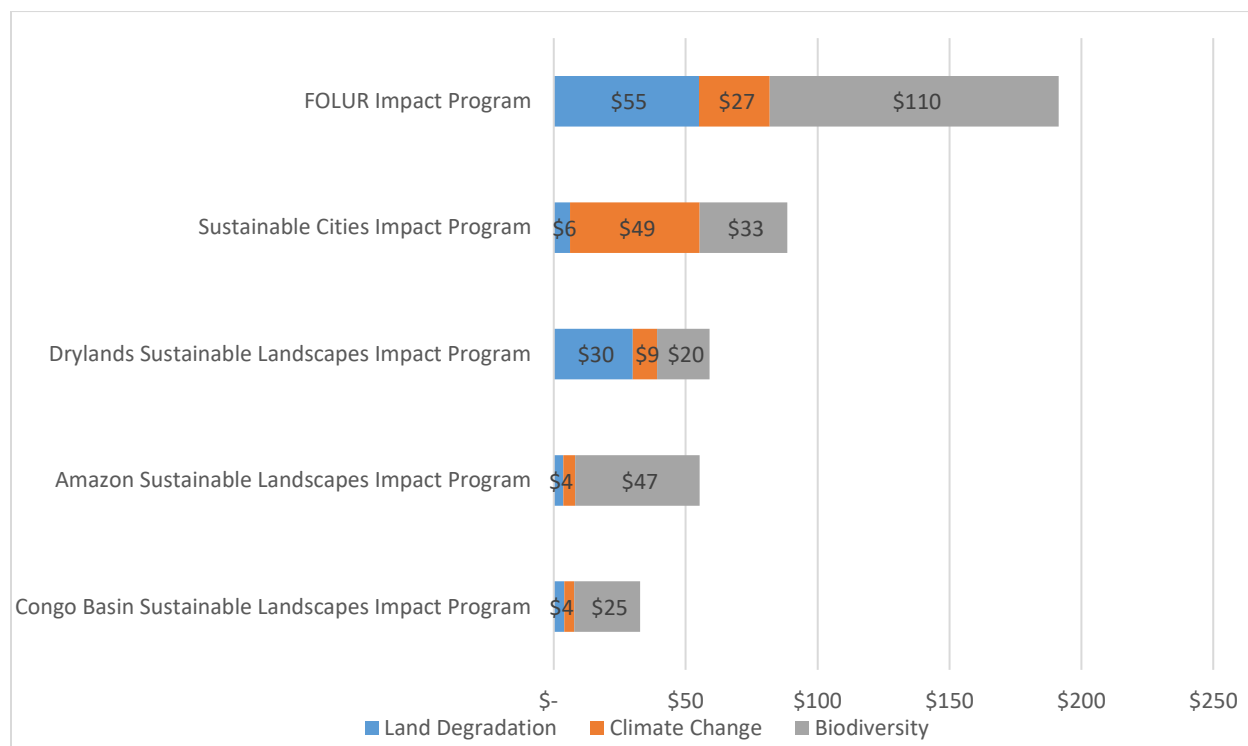
22. This section addresses GEF-7 impact program design. It considers the extent to which the GEF integrated approach is responsive to convention guidance and aligns with country priorities and other donor programs. It also addresses the comparative advantage of the GEF in

integrated programming, and the extent to which GEF-7 impact programs are relevant in design to the drivers of environmental degradation. It further considers the internal coherence of the impact programs, in terms of objectives, theories of change, and M&E systems—drawing on lessons learned from the IAPs in these areas. Finally, this section assesses key elements of the design of impact program child projects, including additionality, innovation, and sustainability.

2.1.1 Alignment with conventions

23. In GEF-7, integrated programming continues to address the objectives of multiple conventions and GEF focal area strategies. As shown in Figure 1, for each of the impact programs, System for Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR) funding has been allocated from the three focal areas of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), CBD, and UNCCD. The ability of the GEF to address multiple conventions (and focal areas) through a single integrated project or program is a significant comparative advantage. Convention Secretariat interviewees and others think GEF-7 impact programs align with the objectives and guidance of the UNFCCC, CBD, and UNCCD. The Sustainable Cities Impact Program aims to generate multiple GEBs from decarbonization, improved biodiversity conservation, and reduced land degradation by promoting innovative business models for integrated solutions and investments in cities. This is supplemented by strengthening cities' knowledge exchange and learning about integrated urban sustainability planning and investments. The FOLUR Impact Program expects to promote sustainable food systems, deforestation-free commodity supply chains, and landscape-scale restoration for production and ecosystem services, generating GEBs for land degradation, biodiversity, and climate change. The Drylands, Amazon, and Congo Basin impact programs target improved landscape management in their biomes with benefits for land degradation and deforestation, biodiversity, and climate change.

Figure 1. Impact program funding by convention



Source: GEF 2019c; GEF 2019d; GEF 2019e; GEF 2019f; GEF 2019g

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

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

26. In addition to climate change, biodiversity, and land degradation, impact programs are expected to have secondary benefits for other GEF focal areas. The Amazon Impact Program, for example, aims to address the major problem of degradation and over-exploitation of the Amazon freshwater system, in addition to the forest system. The 2018 review found the lack of focus on freshwater systems in the predecessor program a gap and is now included in the impact program. The Congo Basin Impact Program expects its work on conservation and sustainable management of forests and peatlands through integrated land use planning to reduce sedimentation flowing to the Congo River. Both the Amazon and Congo Basin impact programs anticipate benefits for wetlands of global importance (Ramsar sites). Conversely, interest and intentions to integrate the objectives of the Stockholm Convention in the impact program has not materialized. GEF-7 programming directions signaled that impact programs would address the Stockholm Convention the objectives in the Sustainable Cities and FOLUR impact programs, and convention guidance and interviews indicate an interest in integrated approaches. PFDs do not deal with these objectives explicitly, although the PFD for Sustainable Cities Impact Program refers to management of urban wastes, which are a major source of POPs. Of the 43 impact program child projects submitted for or receiving CEO endorsement to date, only one sets a target for a core indicator for chemicals and waste.

27. Interviews and country survey data confirm that implementation of the GEF integrated approach has not hindered countries' ability to report to the UN conventions. A low share of country-level survey respondents (20 percent) identified a main challenge faced in implementing the GEF-6 IAPs was difficulties in communicating “to different UN conventions on results achieved through an integrated approach.” In fact, for the CBD, the Secretariat has noticed improved reporting on agricultural effects since the launch of the IAPs. Moving into GEF-7, the Drylands Impact Program is an example of a GEF program tracking progress using indicators that will be usable for the impact program as well as the convention; the Drylands Impact Program is using the UNCCD’s LDN approach to measure national progress against child project targets. UNFCCC Secretariat interviewees raised questions about potential complications in tracking climate finance since the set-aside incentive funding is not focal-area-specific—although this is a minor issue as set-aside funding is a very small proportion of overall climate finance flows.⁹

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

⁹ Global climate finance flows totaled \$681 billion in 2016, according to the 2018 Biennial Assessment and Overview of Climate Finance Flows by the UNFCCC Standing Committee on Finance. The GEF-7 replenishment allocated \$334 million set-asides for integrated programming.

2.1.2 Alignment with country priorities and programs and other donor programs

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

30. Interviews and the three in-depth country case studies confirmed alignment with country priorities (Box 3). In Brazil, for example, the Amazon Impact Program child project builds on a long history of GEF engagement—the project is an extension of the Amazon Sustainable Landscapes Project–ASL I (GEF Project ID 9664, approved in 2017)—and incorporates the Amazon Region Protected Areas Program (ARPA) (GEF Project ID 771), which started in 2000. The FOLUR Impact Program proposed child project in Brazil aligns with national policies and other donor programs in the Cerrado, especially the national investment plan developed in collaboration with the World Bank and Forest Investment Program (impact program)—a funding window of the Climate Investment Funds. The GGP Demand Project in Brazil has practiced effective adaptive management to ensure its activities complement other donor-funded initiatives, such as the Collaboration for Forests and Agriculture (CFA)¹⁰, with good results (see Brazil country case study in annex VII).

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

¹⁰ A joint effort of the National Wildlife Federation, The Nature Conservancy, World Wildlife Fund, and the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation.

Box 3: Alignment of impact programs with priorities in China

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

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

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

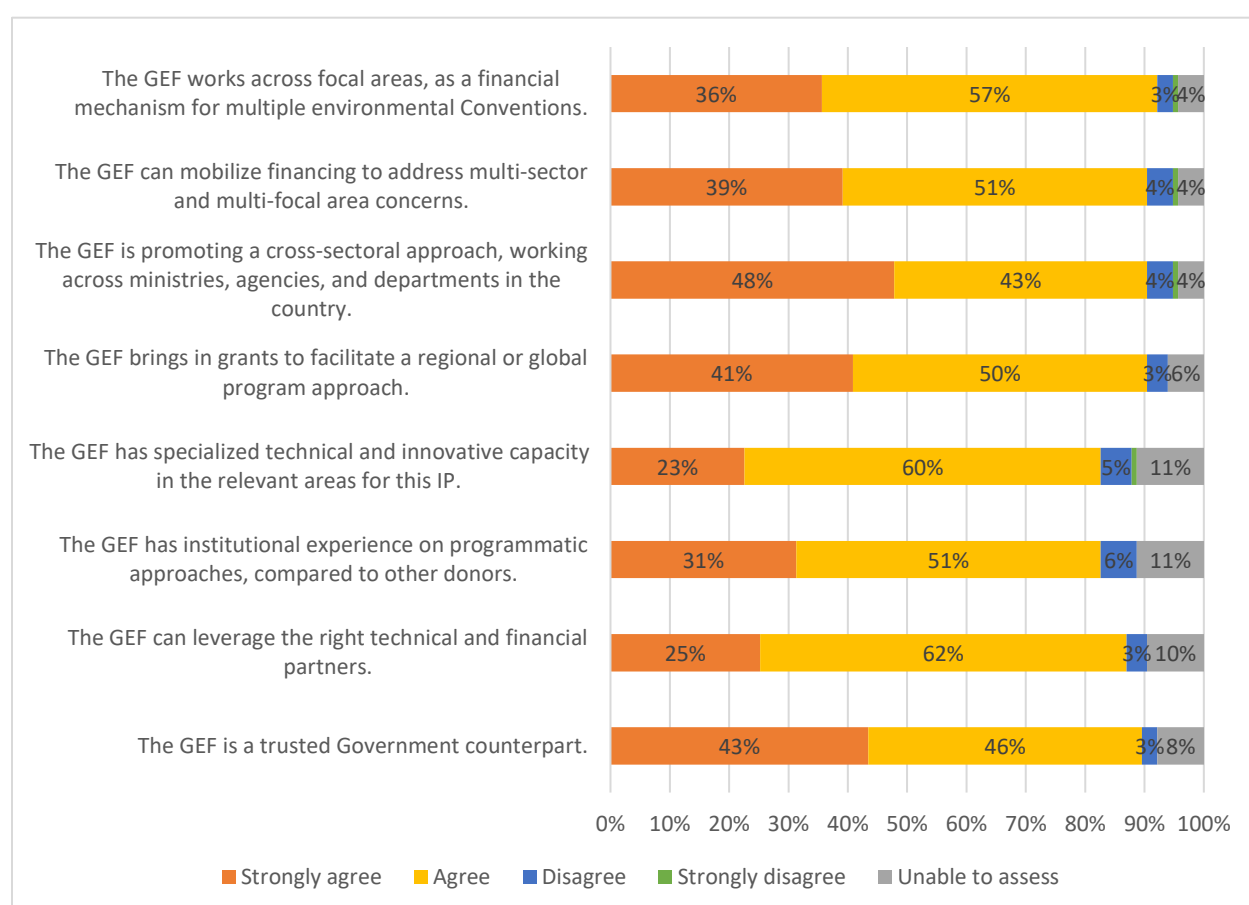
2.1.3 Comparative advantage

32. **Integrated programs are a strategic innovation of the GEF that draws on the GEF's institutional comparative advantages.** Country-level survey respondents (90 percent, see Figure 2), central-level interviewees (e.g., Agencies, STAP, GEF Secretariat), and program documentation point to the GEF's ability to address multiple conventions through a single project or program as a primary comparative advantage compared to other multilateral and bilateral donors active in the environmental sector. The GEF's integrated approach is helping countries think beyond sectoral silos and plan to work across ministries, agencies, and departments through multi-stakeholder platforms in all programs. Sustainable Cities has demonstrated this in its integrated planning efforts. The COVID-19 global pandemic demonstrated the interconnectedness of economic, social, and environmental systems, underlining the importance of systemic approaches such as the GEF integrated approach.

33. Another commonly identified comparative advantage of the GEF impact programs is its convening power with governments and for partnerships and technical expertise. Country-level survey respondents (90 percent) agreed the GEF is a trusted government counterpart that can leverage the right technical and financial partners (87 percent) and that have specialized technical and innovative capacity in areas relevant to the impact programs (83 percent). In the Amazon, for example, interviewees said the GEF's longstanding engagement brings a convening power, and that the architecture of GEF partnerships (bringing together multiple agencies) and

relationship with the conventions puts the GEF in a unique position to incentivize collaboration on such an important biome. Agency interviewees said the GEF integrated approach is helping encourage governments to incorporate elements into investments that they would not otherwise, such as NBS in urban settings. In the Brazil country case study, for example, interviewees said institutional support from the GEF is a key comparative advantage that opens doors with governments and large private sector organizations. Agency interviewees pointed to the technical expertise of STAP and GEF Secretariat staff as highly useful in designing the GEF-7 impact programs. As the approach evolves from its pilot phase to fully rolled out impact programs, country-level survey respondents find the GEF brings stronger institutional experience in programmatic approaches compared to other donors (83 percent agree).

Figure 2. GEF comparative advantages in integrated programming from country survey



Source: Country-level survey data.

2.1.4 Relevance of countries and drivers

34. The GEF-7 impact programs ensured that relevant countries are selected to address drivers of environmental degradation. The GEF Secretariat appropriately identified priority regions and landscapes for the impact programs where addressing drivers of environmental degradation show strong potential for generating GEBs. For example, FOLUR's design targeted

the major drivers of degradation related to commodity and food production, which are largely seen in the tropical forests and peatlands of Southeast Asia, Africa, and Latin America. This was supported by a GEF Secretariat spatial analysis to inform internal prioritization (since all countries were eligible for the program).¹¹ FOLUR's design addresses the critical need to "planet-proof" the global food system, as discussed in the academic literature (Rockstrom et al., 2020). The Drylands Impact Program's design focused on the Miombo, Mopane, and Fynbos woodlands; the Savanna tropical grasslands and open woodlands of Africa; the Gran Chaco ecoregion; the Dry Central Andes grassland and shrublands; Cerrado, Caatinga, and Mato Grosso seasonal forests in South America; and the Central Asian rangelands and steppe forests.¹² Some countries and geographies have not yet benefitted from the GEF's integrated approach—such as small island developing states (SIDS)¹³, where a history of regional cooperation and whole-of-island approaches seem well-aligned with the GEF integrated approach.

35. The competitive EOI process rolled out in GEF-7 was inclusive and used a criteria-based approach to select countries. The GEF Secretariat notified all GEF OFPs by email of the timeline for programming impact programs in November 2018, followed by a call for submission of EOIs by January 2019. Eligibility for the regional Amazon and Congo Basin impact programs was based on geographic bounds. Both programs successfully attracted nearly all countries within their geographic bounds (the six major countries in the Congo Basin and seven of the eight¹⁴ countries in the Amazon, covering 92 percent of the basin) in the first round of calls for EOIs.

36. All countries could apply for the Sustainable Cities, FOLUR, and Drylands impact programs. For the latter two, the GEF established criteria for the suitability of landscapes to ensure that selected countries could contribute to intended program outcomes. For instance, for the FOLUR Impact Program, the GEF Secretariat and World Bank managed the EOI process to ensure the program covered a substantial market share for each targeted commodity. Interviewees explained that this pointed to the need for the portfolio of selected countries to include larger players in the commodity chains with substantial experience, as well as frontier landscapes with anticipated future increases in production. In the first round, FOLUR received 48 EOIs, of which the selection committee accepted 18.¹⁵ Interviewees said most proposals

¹¹ This analysis ranked countries based on areas under production of various commodities and staples, weighted those scores by emission reduction commitments, and compared those weighted scores to deforestation rates and biodiversity hotspots.

¹² The intended geographical scope of the Drylands Impact Program could not be fully met due to the level of funding available for the program, and eventually child projects in only three of the five prioritized geographies were funded. Seven of the 11 Drylands country child projects are concentrated in the Miombo/Mopane ecoregion in Southern Africa.

¹³ With the exception of Papua New Guinea in the FOLUR Impact Program.

¹⁴ Only Venezuela did not participate. The overseas territory of French Guiana lies in the Amazon Basin but is ineligible for GEF resources.

¹⁵ Ten met the criteria and eight were satisfactory with critical issues still to be addressed.

lacked the connection between a landscape approach and international commodity chains. Many countries were rejected because they had relatively small markets and little experience. At the end of the first round, FOLUR was missing certain commodities, such as soy, and larger players. These gaps were not specifically articulated in subsequent calls for EOIs, but the five countries selected by the committee in the second round included larger players covering soy (such as Brazil and Paraguay, as well as India for rice). A further four countries were selected in the third round, and one in the final round—for a total of 27 countries.

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

38. **Several of the countries with the highest spatial relevance have child projects in the GEF's three food systems integrated programs but there are some gaps.** Countries such as Brazil, Indonesia, China, India, Mexico, and Colombia had the highest deforestation, forest biomass, and presence of commodities leading to very high spatial relevance, especially in the GGP IAP and FOLUR impact programs. Some smaller countries such as Nicaragua and Guatemala with child projects also had high spatial relevance owing to a high concentration of environmental drivers or high food security and climate vulnerability. Four countries in the FOLUR Impact Program have very low spatial relevance such as Burundi, Kazakhstan, Peru, and Uganda (representing 7 percent of the total program value); other countries with high spatial relevance do not have child projects. This was especially true for the RFS IAP, where countries such as Chad and the Democratic Republic of Congo had no child projects. A concentration in Sub-Saharan Africa meant other high spatial relevance countries such as Haiti and Bangladesh were not considered for child projects (Box 4 provides details).

39. Geospatial analysis results at the subnational level further confirm that the project areas focus on key drivers of environmental degradation. The GEF Secretariat identified criteria for selecting relevant landscapes, which were assessed as part of the EOI with other considerations, such as the potential for applying a comprehensive land use approach linking production, biodiversity conservation, and restoration at scale (FOLUR). In Brazil, for example, the FOLUR Impact Program (GEF ID 10468) plans to work in the southern part of the Cerrado ecosystem, where a mix of high biodiversity hotspot, deforestation, potential reforestation, and commodity area lead to high spatial relevance. In Brazil, Bahia state, primary location of the GGP child project (GEF ID 9167) has very high total spatial relevance owing to a large area of smallholder agriculture mixed with plenty of deforestation, some soy production, and biodiversity hotspot area. Interviewees and other documentation point to the GGP focus on soy in the MATOPIBA¹⁶ region of the Cerrado as highly relevant. This region has been considered

¹⁶ MATOPIBA is an acronym for the states of Maranhão, Tocantins, Piauí, and Bahia.

Brazil's new agricultural frontier in the last decade, with a rapid expansion of soy and cattle production that threatens the remaining native vegetation. This expansion is partly associated with the low enforcement of legal protections in the Cerrado. There is also evidence that initiatives such as the soy moratorium have displaced soy plantations from the Amazon into the MATOPIBA (Dou et al. 2018). In the Kenya subnational study, the two western counties near Mt. Elgon where the FOLUR Impact Program child project (GEF ID 10598) plans to work have generally moderate spatial relevance owing to high amounts of maize production but low deforestation and area of potential reforestation.¹⁷

Box 4: Findings from the global geospatial analysis on food systems integrated programs

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

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

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

¹⁷ This contrasts to the northern areas of Kenya, where the project does not work, that have the highest food insecurity and climate change vulnerability but almost no smallholder agriculture.

2.1.5 Program internal coherence in design

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

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

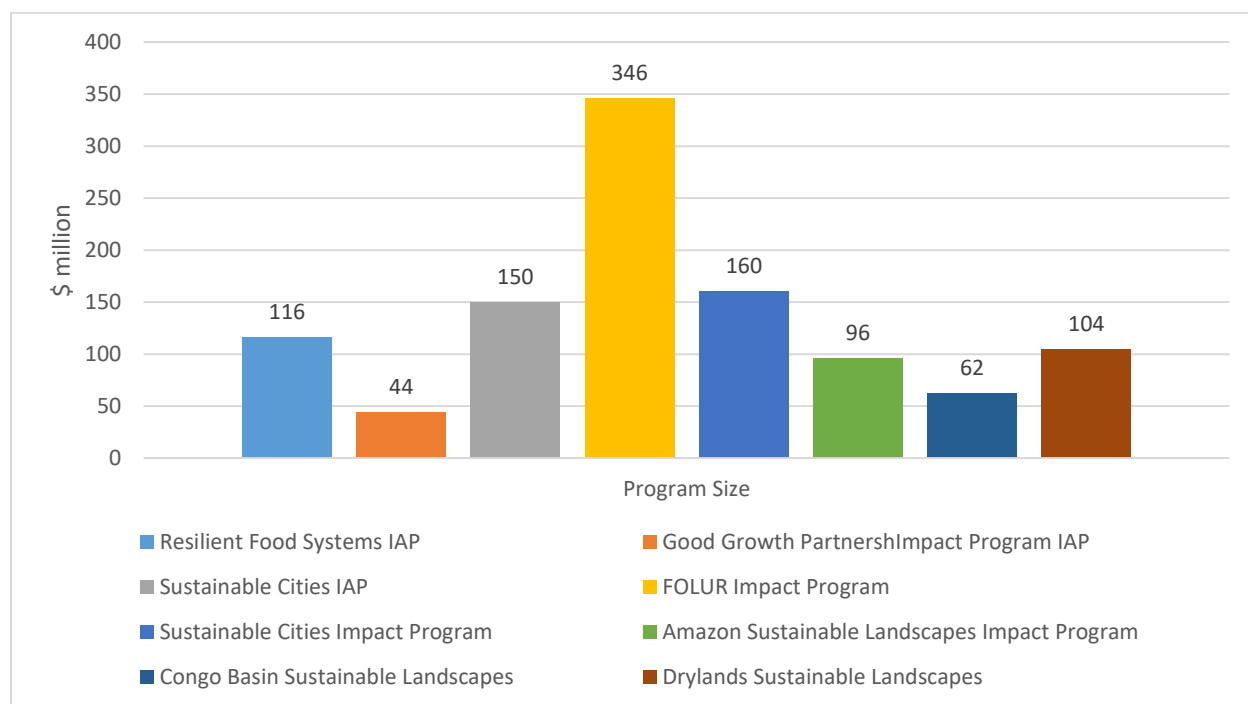
42. **Impact pathways in the aggregate PFD theories of change are not yet sufficiently specific to guide coherence and contextual alignment in child projects.** Interviews and document analysis suggest that more work is required to “unpack” the impact program theories of change and their assumptions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

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

projects to determine overlapping interests and the potential demand for knowledge and other support services.

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

Figure 3. IAPs and impact programs by program size



Source: GEF Portal website, <https://gefportal.worldbank.org/App/>; accessed February 3, 2021.

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

45. As shown in Figure 3, FOLUR is the largest program the GEF funds, followed by the Sustainable Cities Impact Program (\$159.9 million), with less than half the overall funding volume and a third the number of child projects. Transformational change requires ambition, and the FOLUR Impact Program is ambitious. While this is laudable, interviewees raised concerns about the breadth and multi-dimensionality of issues FOLUR must handle (working across eight agencies in 27 countries with eight commodities and food crops, all of with implications for maintaining program internal coherence, coordination, and focus through child project implementation. The FOLUR and Global Platform PFDs make general references to lessons learned in the GGP, but do not refer to the operational challenges of integrating supply,

demand, and other activities in commodity chains at subnational, national, and global scales the GGP experiences (Box 5) (GEF 2019f; World Bank 2020).

46. Regional clustering of child projects can strengthen program internal coherence and common interests. Many the GEF impact programs have learned this lesson. The FOLUR Impact Program design points to regional clusters. Regional clusters are a natural consequence of the geographically bounded design in the Amazon and Congo. The Drylands Impact Program initially intended to work in four clusters. These were reduced owing to funding that led to regional imbalances, with the bulk of support going to southern Africa (Miombo, Mopane).

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

Box 5: Implementing a systems-based approach: experience from GGP

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

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

2.1.6 Program internal coherence in monitoring and evaluation systems

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

GEF-6 IAPs

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

50. In the GEF-6 pilot phase, Lead Agencies were not required to submit IAP annual program-level reports. Still, the RFS and GGP IAPs reported aggregated outputs and outcomes annually, primarily through annual highlights reports based on combining project implementation reviews (PIRs) for child and coordination projects.¹⁸ These latest RFS and GGP reports included aggregated reporting on a few GEBs, including hectares of land restored (GEB 3, RFS), hectares of high conservation-value land protected (GEB 4, GGP) GHG emissions mitigated (GEB 6, GGP), and number of direct beneficiaries (GEB 11, RFS) as further illustrated in the section on progress toward results in this report. The Sustainable Cities IAP only

¹⁸ All IAPs did some program-level reporting for the GEF Secretariat's useful *lessons learnt exercise* in 2020. Lessons had nine common themes, such as program value-add, dealing with complexity, progress on systemic shifts, cross-cutting issues, knowledge management, and learning. The "GEF Monitoring Report of 2020" summarized progress and results in a "deep-dive" into IAPs, based on a Secretariat review of child project PIRs and communication with Lead Agencies and hub projects.

produced an annual report in 2018. It has not yet reported on GEBs.¹⁹ Annual reports were not part of the original program design or Lead Agency terms of reference (TOR). Reports have highlighted program and child project achievements, lessons learned, and some aggregated results. By aggregating some child project results in annual reports, the RFS and GGP IAPs linked IAP program and project reporting. There is room for better and more systematic program results reporting for all child projects and the coordination project (including against targets to assess and analyze the effects and interrelations of program and child project intermediate outcomes for GEBs, and to review synergistic interactions between coordination and country child projects.

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

52. The IEO's 2018 Formative Review reported on issues in calculating GHG emission reductions that persisted in implementation. While coordination projects (such as the RFS) have increasingly supported and trained child projects in this task, few MTRs have reliably reported GHG reductions, although it may be too early. Few Sustainable Cities IAP child projects are making clear attempts in their results frameworks to track or present a methodology for a reliable measurement of this indicator. Guidelines now accompany the GEF-7 core indicators, including guidelines for GHG emission calculations.

¹⁹ Interviews indicate a subsequent annual report is being completed.

Box 6: Developing a program-level results framework for RFS IAP

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

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

GEF-7 Impact Programs

53. The design of M&E systems improved in GEF-7 impact programs, with evidence of IAP lessons learned and applied. All impact program child projects identify contributions to GEB core indicators²⁰ and project-level M&E plans and budgets, based on the QAE. Each child project has described how it contributes to overall program impact, referring to program-level objectives, components, or expected outcomes. Fifteen of the 38 (39 percent) reviewed non-coordination impact program child projects present specific (non-GEB) indicators that contribute directly to global impact programs. Baseline data is in the results framework for the

²⁰ Of the 11 GEF core indicators, child projects consistently report five : Indicator 1: Terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use (hectares). Indicator 3: Area of land restored (hectares). Indicator 4: Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectares; excluding protected areas). Indicator 6: GHG emissions mitigated (metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent). Indicator 11: Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment. One FOLUR child project has targets for the chemicals and waste related core indicator.

CEO-endorsed child projects. More than 80 percent of country-level survey respondents said they received good common indicators developed on time to inform GEF-7 child project design.

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

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

56. **Still, challenges for program-level reporting remain—including related to the approaches for determining the main results from coordination projects and aggregating results across the projects within the programs.** A contributing factor is that while the 2019 policies help to clarify roles and responsibilities in program and child project level M&E reporting, program-level M&E has yet to be standardized in project cycle practices, according to the GEF Secretariat.

57. As the diversity of approaches impact programs illustrates, there are no agreed-on indicators and methodology for determining the outcomes or contributions from coordination projects. To measure and attribute GEBs generated indirectly through the policy, institutional, and knowledge work that dominates these projects requires a clear theory of change, and interviewees pointed out, is intrinsically difficult. GEF-7 impact program coordination projects tend to report on core indicators in different ways, depending on how they refer to and separate their benefits from those in country child projects, as shown by the QAE review. Three impact programs (Sustainable Cities, Amazon, and Congo Basin) set core indicator targets for the coordination project (global and regional impact program platforms and technical

assistance projects) that exclude core indicator targets from country child projects. The Cities coordination project will measure core indicator achievements of additional cities (beyond those covered by child projects) that benefit from coordination project services. The Amazon and Congo Basin impact programs' coordination projects will report on their non-directly attributable influencing effects. The Drylands Impact Program coordination project will take a similar approach by estimating contributions of the three geographic sub-clusters to scaling out, facilitated by their respective Regional Exchange Mechanisms.²¹

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

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

2.1.7 Additionality, innovation, and sustainability in design

60. **Environmental and institutional additionality feature prominently in the GEF-7 impact programs.** As Table 4 illustrates, 81 percent of child projects demonstrate the incremental reasoning for environmental and institutional additionality (Box 7). Country-level survey responses echo these findings. Most respondents (90 percent) agree that the GEF-7 child projects will generate GEBs that are not likely to happen without GEF intervention and 95 percent agree that child projects will strengthen institutions to deliver and measure environmental impact. Survey respondents are optimistic (90 percent) about the potential for child projects to lead to improvement in the living standards of groups affected by

²¹ These incremental contributions are assumed to apply only to core indicators 4.1, 4.3, 6.1, and 11. For the Drylands Impact Program, this approach replaces a previous proposal to calculate its own platform targets as 5 or 10 percent on top of the total aggregate of individual child project targets, with the percentage depending on core indicators.

environmental conditions, although fewer child projects (42 percent) are confident about socioeconomic additionality according to the QAE analysis.

Table 4. Quality-at-entry review of additionality and broader adoption in impact programs

Area of additionality or broader adoption	Impact program child projects (n=43)	
	(#)	(%)
Environmental additionality	35	81%
Legal or regulatory additionality	10	23%
Institutional additionality	31	72%
Financial additionality	12	28%
Socioeconomic additionality	18	42%
Scaling up of interventions or outcomes	19	44%
Mainstreaming of interventions or enabling conditions	12	28%
Replication of interventions or enabling conditions	7	16%
Deep changes	15	35%

Source: QAE analysis (see annex III).

Box 7: Environmental and institutional additionality in impact program child projects

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

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

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

62. The QAE analysis showed that most impact program child projects (60 percent) also focus on financial sustainability, including developing sustainable financing mechanisms for post-project outcome delivery and enhancing public and private investments. The Kenya

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

63. Innovations are widely incorporated into the GEF-7 impact programs. Ninety percent of country-level survey respondents agreed that impact program child projects will introduce innovation. The country case studies also provided evidence of innovation (Box 8). As shown in Table 5, the most frequently reported innovation in the QAE analysis for child project design is institutional innovation (81 percent by strengthening decision-making capacities, supporting multi-stakeholder participation, and promoting cross-sectoral planning processes). The FOLUR, Amazon, and Congo Basin impact programs emphasize institutional innovation. Among child projects, 37 percent mention innovative technology, including use of technologies for production or resources management, access to markets, monitoring natural resources, traceability, and communication. Financial innovation (33 percent of projects) refers to financial and private sector engagement, as well as innovative incentive mechanisms, such as payment for agroecological services in the China FOLUR child project (GEF ID 10246).

Table 5. Quality-at-entry review of types of innovation child projects reported

Types of innovation	Institutions	Technology	Financial mechanism	Business models	Policy change
No. of impact program projects	35	16	14	11	7
Percentage of impact program projects (n=43)	81%	37%	33%	26%	16%

Source: QAE analysis (see annex III).

Box 8: Innovation in China's Sustainable Cities projects

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

64. Integrated programming shows evidence of transformational change at the program level. A global survey of GEF stakeholders found respondents identified impact programs among GEF programming offerings as best designed to enable transformational change at

global, regional, and local levels.²² Consistent with the IEO's framework for transformational interventions, these programs show strong evidence of relevance to multiple GEF focal areas and focus on systemic changes and root causes of environmental problems (see sub-section on coherence in impact program objectives) (GEF 2018b). Interviews and documentation point to integrated programs' structure and partnership strategies as key internal and external factors in supporting scaling up and depth of change. For example, the global coordination project in the Drylands Impact Program is expected to scale up innovations. For the FOLUR Impact Program, interviewees said transformation depends on having a critical mass of countries for a leverage effect on buyers and producers in green value chains. The GEF plays a key role in this process by helping build partnerships private companies that work across child project countries (see sub-section on private sector engagement below). The role of global coordination projects is critical in this regard, especially since the QAE analysis found less evidence of attention to broader adoption in country child projects (see Table 4).

2.2 Processes

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

2.2.1 Country access and selection process

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

67. **GEF-7 impact programs have realized substantial improvements in country child project selection through clearer criteria and processes, which included calls for expression of interest for participation.** These improvements contrast with the findings of the 2018 Formative Evaluation, which found country and city selection processes were not always clear, and participants thought decisions were not based on a set of universal and agreed-on criteria. The GEF Secretariat introduced a competitive selection process for participation in GEF-7 impact programs through preparation and evaluation of EOIs. The selection committee expanded beyond the GEF Secretariat (as was done in the IAPs) to also include representatives from the Lead Agency, STAP, and an external expert; this committee scored EOIs. (Lead Agencies were appropriately recused from scoring or voting on EOIs for which they were the GEF Agency). The UNCCD Secretariat was engaged in the Drylands country selection process.

²² GEF IEO, 2021. Evaluation Findings 2018–21: Highlights.

About two-thirds of country stakeholders agreed (only 8 percent disagreed) that the process for selecting impact program countries and child projects was transparent, and interviewees raised no significant concerns about this process.

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

69. The GEF incentivized participation, since countries were willing to allocate 57 to 63 percent of total resources of their STAR allocations to the programs (Table 6). Although interviews suggested that the set-aside incentive funding was a strong incentive, survey and case study data suggest that an integrated approach is an increasing draw for country partners. The primary motivators for country participation were learning and piloting an integrated approach and developing models for replication, upscaling, or mainstreaming, according to survey responses. Less than 30 percent of respondents identified incentive funding as a top-three motivator for participation. The Kenya case study, for example, showed that the government was motivated to participate in the GEF integrated approach programming because of its concerted focus on the nexus of environment, agricultural productivity, sustainable land management, and livelihoods enhancement. Interviewees said past GEF projects did not perform as well because they focused too exclusively on the environment, without sufficient consideration for income-earning opportunities.

Table 6. Impact program STAR allocation and set-asides

IAP/Impact Program	Climate Change STAR (\$ million)	Biodiversity STAR (\$ million)	Land Degradation STAR (\$ million)	Set-aside (\$ million)	STAR as a % of total program value	STAR: set-aside country ratio, by program²³
FOLUR Impact Program	\$29	\$119	\$60	\$137	60%	1.98
Sustainable Cities Impact Program	\$53	\$36	\$7	\$63	60%	2.11
Amazon Impact Program	\$5	\$51	\$4	\$36	63%	2.21

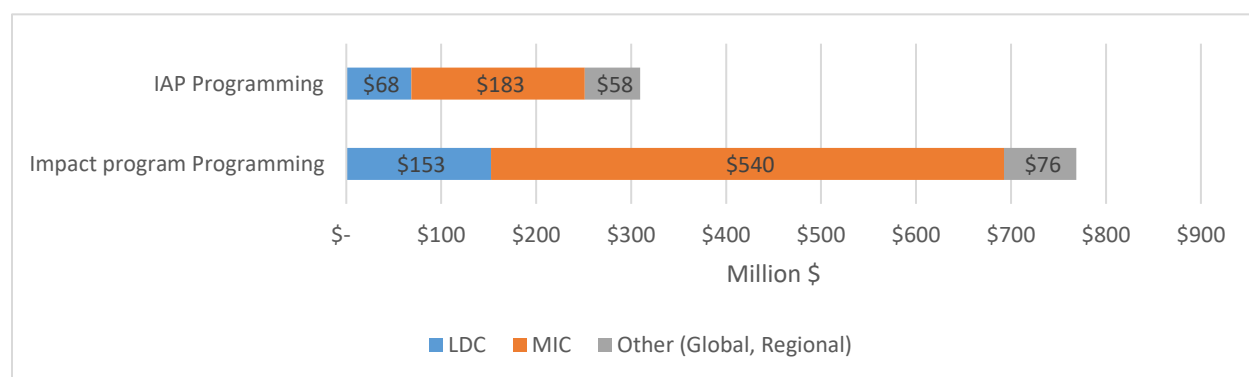
²³ All participating impact program countries allocate greater STAR resources compared to set-aside resources for each program.

Congo Basin Impact Program	\$4	\$27	\$4	\$27	57%	2.00
Drylands Impact Program	\$10	\$22	\$33	\$40	62%	2.01
Total	\$102	\$256	\$108	\$303	61%	2.03

Source: GEF 2019c; GEF 2019d; GEF 2019e; GEF 2019f; GEF 2019g

70. Overall, 56 countries are participating in GEF integrated programming (IAPs and impact programs). Of these, 16 are least-developed countries and 40 are middle-income countries—67 percent of total integrated program financing to date (Figure 4). The top five recipients of integrated programming resources are middle-income countries, led by Brazil, India, and China (Table 7). Brazil has the most child projects (five), followed by a five-way tie for India, China, Peru, Kenya, and Tanzania (three each). Twenty countries have participated in more than one integrated program. Some countries and geographies have not yet benefitted from the GEF’s integrated approach—such as SIDS—where a history of regional cooperation and whole-of-island approaches seem well-aligned with the GEF integrated approach. SIDS have pointed to the need for a more integrated approach to manage natural resources and ecosystems, including through the United Nations resolution on the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (the Samoa Pathway) (UNGA 2014).

Figure 4. Integrated programming by country category



Source: GEF Portal website, <https://gefportal.worldbank.org/App/>; accessed February 3, 2021; GEF 2019c; GEF 2019d; GEF 2019e; GEF 2019f; GEF 2019g. LDC=least developed countries; MIC= middle-income countries

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

Table 7. Leading IAP and impact program programming recipients

Country	Programming (\$ million)
---------	--------------------------

	Resilient Food Systems IAP	Good Growth Partnership IAP	Sustainable Cities IAP	FOLUR Impact Program	Sustainable Cities Impact Program	Amazon Impact Program	Congo Basin Impact Program	Drylands Impact Program	Total
Brazil*	-	\$7	\$23	\$27	\$14	\$21	-	-	\$91
China	-	-	\$33	\$15	\$29	-	-	-	\$77
India	-	-	\$12	\$22	\$19	-	-	-	\$53
Peru	-	-	\$6	\$15	-	\$17	-	-	\$38
Indonesia*	-	-	-	\$18	\$17	-	-	-	\$35

Source: GEF data portal, accessed February 3, 2021; GEF 2019c; GEF 2019d; GEF 2019e; GEF 2019f; GEF 2019g

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

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

2.2.2 Lead Agency selection process

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

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

functions to executing entities such as the CBOs, which they perceived as a “pass-through” arrangement.

73. The GEF Secretariat issued a second call for proposals for Lead Agency, specifying that the GPSC Lead Agency would mobilize a consortium of CBOs, defined as “a set of city-focused organizations working closely with mayors and national governments to advance an urban sustainability agenda” to “deliver the functions of the GPSC.” The call for proposals stated: “Their engagement is critical to deliver functions of the GPSC, as they have inherent strengths in engaging closely with city leaders and facilitating urban sustainability agenda globally.”

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

2.2.3 Lead Agency role

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

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

Table 8. Number of child projects and Agencies by program

	IAPs			Impact programs				
	Sustainable cities	GGP	RFS	Sustainable cities	FOLUR	Amazon	Congo	Drylands

No. of child projects	12	5	13	10	28	8	7	12
No. of Agencies in overall program	8	5	7	4	8	8	4	4

Source: GEF Portal website, <https://gefportal.worldbank.org/App/>; accessed February 3, 2021.

77. Lead Agencies are facilitating engagement in the design of impact programs, even more so than in some of the IAPs. Survey respondents found Agencies and country-level stakeholders inclusive during the design process. More than three-quarters of country-level survey respondents (77 percent) agreed that country stakeholders provided input on the design of the impact program global or regional coordination project. Eighty-one percent of respondents agreed that in design, other partners were engaged with in child project design, innovative ideas, institutional mechanisms and partnerships, M&E, and scaling-up. Program documentation across impact programs points to highly consultative processes that involve Agencies, partners, and OFPs. Some interviewees, however, thought FOLUR's consultation was more focused on Agencies and partners than on countries—a situation partly attributed to the size of the program and its four phases of country participation. Overall, Agencies and countries viewed the GEF-7 Lead Agencies positively in the design phase.

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

79. Interviewees raised some concern that the FOLUR and Sustainable Cities impact programs (Box 9) engaged a significant number of executing partners in their global coordination projects. The benefit is increasing the reach of the program, leveraging relationships with external entities and initiatives. However, the experience of the RFS Regional Hub project suggests that sorting out and agreeing on well-defined partner roles and financial management can take the Lead Agency considerable time and effort and lead to substantial delays. This is especially true when partners have thematically overlapping responsibilities or are engaged in subcontracting arrangements. Efficiency of internal program management and external engagement is a balancing act.

80. Lead Agency performance is rated positively for IAP implementation. Around three-quarters of country survey respondents agree that the Lead Agency has performed well in

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

Box 9: Institutional global coordination in Sustainable Cities Impact Program

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

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

2.2.4 Efficiency

81. The roll out of the IMPACT programs has followed a similar timeline to the IAPs.

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

82. Interviewees see the impact program design and launch process as relatively efficient, especially given the complications of the COVID-19 global pandemic which started just as many

child projects were in active design. Most Agencies and countries adapted to remote preparation, including communication via email, videoconference, and phone, adjusting project workplans and stakeholder engagement plans, and evaluating the need for design modification with decreased cofinancing. Added delays in Brazil and China were associated with internal governance decisions.

Table 9. Impact program child project approval timeline

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

Source: GEF Portal website, <https://gefportal.worldbank.org/App/>; accessed February 3, 2021.

83. Timelines for IAPs' start of implementation and first disbursement are consistent with the overall GEF-6 portfolio. The ambition and multidimensionality of these programs has generally not slowed the achievement of these first milestones. On average, IAP child projects and all other GEF-6 projects took five months from receiving CEO endorsement to the actual project start date (Table 10). First disbursements came within four months of IAP child project start dates, compared to five months for all other GEF-6 projects. Sustainable Cities IAP child projects had the greatest average time between CEO endorsement and actual project starts and between starts and first disbursements. After project start and first disbursement, however, most IAP child projects experienced challenges or delays that slowed project and activity implementation. Seventy-one percent of IAP child projects indicated some type of delay in their PIRs or MTRs. (See section below on progress toward results and associated challenges).

Table 10. IAP child project implementation timeline

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

Source: Analysis based on data from GEF Portal, <https://gefportal.worldbank.org/App/>; accessed February 3, 2021.

Note: Average time elapsed for “Other GEF-6 projects” does not include projects showing in the GEF Portal actual start dates that are earlier than the CEO endorsement date, or projects showing earlier first disbursement dates than actual start dates.

2.3 Progress toward results

84. This section focuses on the IAPs’ overall progress toward achieving results and the factors enabling and challenging that progress. This includes environmental outcomes and GEBs; policy and institutional outcomes, including platforms and partnerships; socioeconomic outcomes; and broader adoption. This section also addresses the effectiveness and sustainability of IAP knowledge platforms and the extent to which the design of the GEF-7 impact program knowledge platforms reflects these lessons.

2.3.1 Program and project results

85. **Lead Agency annual program highlights reports, MTRs, PIRs, and country case studies demonstrate progress, although it is still early to report on many GEBs, and results vary across programs.** Only nine of 31 IAP child projects have MTRs so far.²⁴ Many are delayed because of COVID-19, although most IAP child projects have at least two PIRs (this analysis reviewed 67 PIRs). PIRs and MTRs most commonly reported delays (71 percent) and COVID (77 percent) as the most common challenges. They are interrelated, with delays in project governance and operational challenges, changes in partner governments, and stakeholder engagement often affected by COVID-19. Cumulative disbursement is about 20 percent for Sustainable Cities IAP, 40 percent for RFS, and 60 percent for GGP (GEF 2020a). IAP child projects receive ratings for implementation progress comparable to the rest of the GEF portfolio (84 percent in the satisfactory range for both groups), and slightly higher ratings for development objective (94 percent in the satisfactory range for IAPs, compared to 88 percent in the overall GEF portfolio) (GEF 2020a).

86. **Among reporting IAP child projects, about half indicate progress toward concrete environmental outcomes in PIRs and MTRs, confirmed by country survey responses.** Progress is most common for RFS projects (77 percent) and less for GGP (40 percent) and Sustainable Cities (23 percent) projects, according to a PIRs and MTRs analysis. Program-level reporting refers to concrete GEBs (GEF-7 core indicators) that have been achieved at midterm or are on track to be achieved by project completion. For the RFS IAP, nearly 151,000 hectares of previously degraded land have been restored, according to program data for 2020. The Kenya case study illustrates some of these results (see Box 10). RFS project linkages to existing and sometimes cofinanced baseline projects helped child projects deliver these results faster, in part because projects did not have to take the time to establish new project management structures.

²⁴ GGP four MTRs, Sustainable Cities three MTRs, RFS two MTRs.

Box 10: Establishing water fund, payment for environmental services in Kenya (RFS IAP)

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

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

87. For the GGP IAP, program-level reporting indicates that 744,077 MtCO₂eq emissions have been avoided and 43,000 hectares of high conservation value land have been protected through 2020. Activities that contributed to these results include support for a conservation agreement in Liberia, extensive work on landscapes under improved management, and high conservation value set-asides in Indonesia. This work is ongoing. GEF Agencies' earlier helped with early progress. However, the program has had to adapt to political changes and the challenges of sustained buy-in at all administrative levels, along with the complexities of land use designation.

88. Results are uneven among the Sustainable Cities IAP child projects and Agencies. Some projects show evidence of mainstreaming innovations and bridging the divide between conventional urban infrastructure and service delivery considerations and GEBs, while other projects are substantially delayed, in part due to the particularly severe consequences of Covid-19 in urban areas as well as the complexity of multi-scale (e.g., national and local) implementation arrangements. Three years into implementation, the Sustainable Cities IAP program, as noted above, has not yet fully operationalized its program-level results framework, nor has it reported any aggregated higher-order results or GEBs.

89. The Sustainable Cities IAP child projects mainly report outputs intended to lead to environmental outcomes, especially GHG emissions and chemicals and waste reduction. Examples are solid waste management plans under development in Paraguay, smart-grid projects being prepared in Malaysia, remedial activities of contaminated soil at waste dump

underway in Brazil, and POP reduction strategies being introduced in Senegal. Many Sustainable Cities activities focus on developing integrated operational plans that deliver benefits in the longer term, implemented with complementary infrastructure investments.

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

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

92. The RFS program reported it influenced nine policies, policy instruments, and regulatory frameworks. It gave critical support to prioritizing land degradation in Burkina Faso to achieve the country's LDN targets by 2030, set up the legal and institutional framework for the Kenya Water Fund, and influenced regional and international policy processes by placing key International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) program staff at the African Union in Addis Ababa and participating in regional and international events such as the UNCCD COP 13. Although Sustainable Cities IAP does not report aggregate policy results, the program was instrumental in developing several municipal integrated plans, such as the Melaka Smart City Policy (Malaysia) and TOD strategies for integrated spatial planning in five cities in China (see Box 11). In Senegal, the program helped develop national strategies for integrated urban planning including resilience and management of industrial parks. All IAPs faced challenges to achieve outcomes in policy and strategic plans: long processes for legislative initiatives, multiple stakeholders buy-in and national agencies' differing interests, frequent political changes, and follow-up and enforcement.

Box 11: Integrating Transit-oriented development and land-use planning in China (Sustainable Cities IAP)

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

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

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

94. GGP program results identified 18 multi-stakeholder commodity platforms and forums established, enabled, and supported. Program reporting and interviews noted the Cerrado Manifesto for soy (although not yet financially equipped to start payments for environmental services) and the Trase Platform for global supply chain transparency as platforms with demonstrated results. GGP engages with global buyers and traders and major national traders of oil, palm, soy, and beef to encourage adoption of deforestation- and conversion-free standards, (see Box 12). Examples of operational mechanisms the Sustainable Cities IAP child

projects support include establishment of the Autonomous Planning Institute for the Asunción metropolitan region in Paraguay, the National Platform for Sustainable Cities in India, and bus rapid transit and cycle network design in Paraguay.

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

Box 12: Progress addressing drivers of soy-related deforestation in Brazil (GGP IAP)

At midterm, substantial progress has been made on the demand end of the supply chain in the GGP Demand Project (GEF ID 9182) through corporate engagement with buyers and traders. For example, Cargill and Amaggi, two major soy traders in Brazil, used the project-funded Soy Toolkit to update their corporate environmental policies. Another major achievement to protect the Cerrado biome has been the Cerrado Manifesto, an agreement signed by 64 global buyers in February 2019. (See box 19.)

On the supply side, the GGP Brazil Production Project (GEF ID 9617) has achieved significant institutional outcomes. For example, the project contributed to the creation of a consortium of secretaries of agriculture in the MATOPIBA interested in promoting sustainable soy production to support joint planning in the region, and regional governments have publicly expressed support for sustainable soy production. The project has also strengthened the states of Tocantins and Bahia's regional environment registry validation processes. At the midterm, however, the project was found to have missed important political, social, and institutional drivers of change in its theory of change. The MTR raised "serious concerns as to the achievement of the targeted decrease of the deforestation rate by 1,000 km²," given the issues with compliance with the Forest Code and despite substantial efforts to adapt to obstacles. A soy systems workshop was held in Brazil in the wake of these MTR findings to better understand the levers of change in the current political context and align partners' work around those.

2.3.2 Progress toward broader adoption

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

97. Interviewees said the global and regional coordination project and strategic partnerships are important ways to encourage broader adoption in the IAPs, along with

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

2.3.3 Challenges for results achievement

98. **The top three challenges faced so far in implementing the GEF-6 integrated approach have been: (1) changes in government administration or priorities; (2) implementation arrangements; and (3) overcoming sectoral mandates or coordinating among ministries and agencies—the heart of the integrated approach.** Broader adoption findings indicate slow progress in systemic and behavioral change, although it is still early in many IAP implementation timelines. Continuity and a multisectoral approach are needed for these changes to occur but take time to materialize. In several IAP countries, politics and political changes have mattered. For the Sustainable Cities IAP, it has sometimes not been easy to get political support and broad municipality buy-in on the sustainability concept. Several vertical bureaucratic layers in the country child project can separate the execution layer in cities from the intentions of higher-level government authorities that may plan the project. In Brazil, federal, state, and local elections have had significant implications for Sustainable Cities IAP and GGP IAP implementation (Box 13). In the GGP IAP, for example, Agencies and partners have adapted by moving to work with states after changes in federal government priorities. In the GGP, it was challenging to find a common position among ministries and government agencies in Indonesia. Some interviewees said insufficient attention is paid to these political drivers in the GEF integrated approaches and child projects in planning for systemic changes. In many countries, COVID-19 has shifted attention and resources toward recovery efforts, with lower priority for environmental or conservation issues (Box 14).

99. Complex implementation arrangements in the IAPs (including joint implementation by multiple Agencies and execution by multiple national and international entities) have also affected implementation. For the Sustainable Cities IAP, a major difficulty and cause for delay has been the multidimensionality of its multi-level executing structure and decision making in countries. In municipalities, especially when the project works with a broad range of city official and stakeholders, the lack of dedicated staff and high staff rotations in several municipalities make continuity of work and capacity building difficult. In the GGP, coordinating the work of multiple Agencies in a single country across different child projects (Paraguay, Brazil) was both challenging and time intensive (see Box 13). Some interviewees said the idea that the child projects could come together in GGP to create synergistic outcomes in four years is unrealistic.

Box 13: Examples of implementation challenges from the Brazil country case study

National and state elections in late 2018 affected implementation of Sustainable Cities IAP and GGP IAP in Brazil. For the Sustainable Cities IAP child project (GEF ID 9142), most focal points at national and state levels were replaced through a lengthy process. Some local governments also experienced changes in January 2021, which is likely to result in a lengthy process to identify and engage new focal points for both the Sustainable Cities IAP and the Sustainable Cities impact program projects. The Sustainable Cities projects differ from other GEF projects as municipal governments as well as national or state governments are actively engaged. This requires greater coordination and alignment of agendas. In the GGP IAP child project (GEF ID 9167), changes at the federal level have necessitated adaptive management. For example, establishment of a biodiversity corridor, an expected project output that interviewees see as fundamental to conservation of the Cerrado biome, is unlikely in the current political situation and with producer associations' position. Instead, Conservation International Brasil has been working with municipal governments to create municipal protected areas and promote private reserves.

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

Box 14: SC-IAP and the implications of COVID-19 for implementation

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

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

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

2.3.4 Knowledge platforms

100. The IEO's 2018 Formative Review found that the most important innovative feature in the IAPs was the knowledge platforms designed into global and regional coordination projects. The IEO recommended a review at midterm to assess whether these platforms generate the necessary traction and provide overall support to program implementation—recognizing that they would require a strong commitment and support from all participating entities to provide the services and benefits for which they have been designed. This subsection responds to this recommendation, focusing on how effectively knowledge has been shared within programs through the knowledge platforms and whether they will be sustained after program close. The report looks first at the effectiveness of IAP knowledge platforms, then assesses platform design in the impact programs.

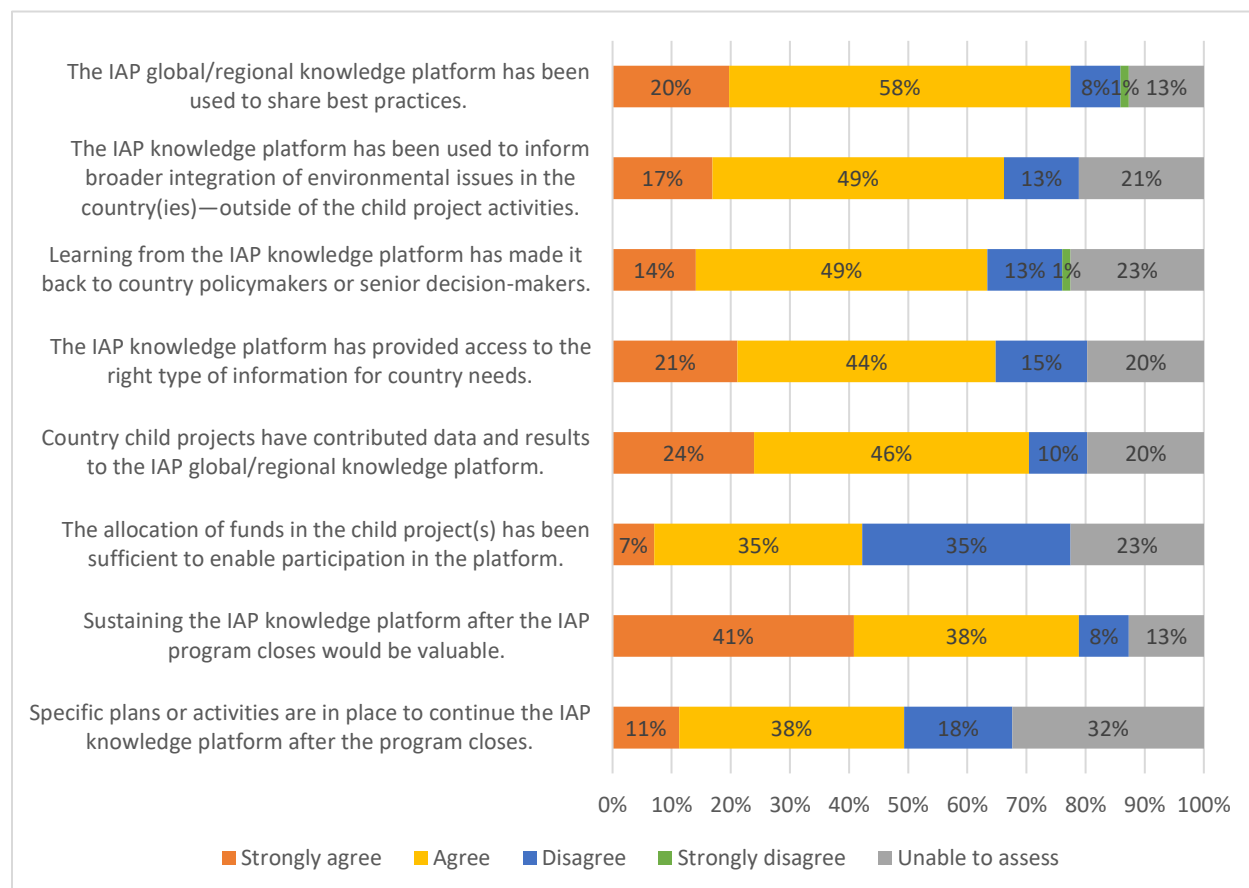
GEF-6 IAPs knowledge platform effectiveness

101. **The IAP knowledge platforms have resulted in greater knowledge and learning activities compared to past GEF programmatic approaches.**²⁵ The IAP knowledge platforms have been effective in sharing best practices and facilitating exchange among child projects. Interviews, the country-level survey, and program documentation indicate that all three IAP

²⁵ Such as the Global Opportunities for Long-term Development (GOLD) and Coastal Fisheries Initiative (CFI) programs.

knowledge platforms are sharing information most strongly from child projects up to the global and regional platforms and among projects. Partnerships are critical to share knowledge from the programs with external audiences. Country-level stakeholders reported largely positive perceptions of the role of the IAP knowledge platforms in their survey responses, shown in Figure 5. The figure also shows a couple of less certain positives—funding allocation and sustainability. IAP knowledge platforms adapted to the global pandemic in 2020, shifting to online meetings and events.

Figure 5. Perceptions of the IAP knowledge platforms from the country-level survey



Source: Online survey (see annex VI).

102. The **GGP IAP** contributed to a global COP—the Green Commodities Community—to facilitate learning effective interventions to address deforestation in commodity supply chains and on cross-cutting issues, which has provided an excellent learning environment. Connectivity among members is a primary objective of the community, supported through an annual conference, participatory sessions, and workshops (held remotely in 2020 owing to COVID-19). The community has almost 200 members from 51 organizations, including partners such as the Tropical Forest Alliance. Executing partner ISEAL Alliance launched an online information hub called Evidensia in 2020 to synthesize and disseminate global evidence on sustainable production and voluntary sourcing initiatives and commitments. While Evidensia represents good practice on scoping, consultation, and platform infrastructure, its function is relatively

new. Interviews indicated that the extent to which GGP partners rely on this tool is not yet clear.

103. The **RFS IAP** regional hub established a knowledge platform, including through the RFS website, that serves as a well-populated repository of knowledge as well as an exchange mechanism for digital communication among child projects. For instance, the Kenya Water Fund child project worked closely with the platform to showcase and raise awareness in other countries about this innovative model of financing ecosystem service payments. The platform function for digital communication has been less dynamic and is undergoing refinements. A challenge in the platform has been to identify commonalities among child projects, given the wide diversity of themes and activities each covers. Where commonalities have been identified, peer-to-peer learning has been well received (such as work and exchanges between Uganda and Kenya in 2018 after the 2018 Nairobi workshop, Ghana–Nigeria interactions on organic fertilizer after the 2019 Ghana workshop, and Burkina Faso–Niger–Senegal sub-regional workshops). Another workstream of the RFS platform is the Science-Policy Interface, which interviewees said took longer to establish because Agencies’ different visions had to be reconciled on how to approach linking country projects to broader scientific and policy processes at the regional and international level.

104. The **Sustainable City IAP's** GPSC (www.thegpsc.org) has become a highly visible and well referenced knowledge platform in three years. Urban practitioners around the world consult it for resources and online learning events. In the Sustainable Cities IAP, the IEO’s 2020 Evaluation of Knowledge Management in the GEF found better integration of knowledge management in overall IAP program-level and child project designs and greater opportunities for exchange and sharing among child projects, Agencies, partners, and country-level stakeholders, than in previous GEF programs (GEF IEO 2020a). The annual global events GPSC organized for all Sustainable Cities IAP program stakeholders and participating cities (Singapore, New Delhi, and São Paulo) have been key opportunities for city stakeholders to compare their performance and approaches with each other and to benchmark them against the best practices presented. The GPSC has also liaised with the national platforms being developed or reinforced in three country child projects (China [Box 15], India, and Brazil). The GPSC adapted well to the challenge of COVID-19 for urban sustainability, with a weekly Global Online Series in 2020 exploring how cities leveraged the pandemic’s radical disruption to facilitate a more environmentally and socially sustainable recovery and a weekly speaker series, “Sharing Knowledge to Respond with Resilience” to COVID-19. Interviewees said these were well received.

105. The IEO’s 2020 Evaluation of Knowledge Management in the GEF identified GPSC knowledge and learning achievements in four directions: a) *downward*: The platform disseminated and shared centrally produced resources such as the Urban Sustainability Framework, and the resource team conducted training and briefings on good practices, guidance, and lessons on sustainable cities topics for the main audience of project and city partners; b) *upward*: Projects and city partners shared their good practices, lessons, and tools, publishing them on the GPSC platform or presenting them in Sustainable Cities IAP or external events; c) *sideways*: Exchanges and sharing between projects. For example, UNIDO child

projects, city, and project officials of Dakar, Senegal had an exchange visit with their counterparts in Malacca, Malaysia; and d) *outward*: GPSC platform resources and some events were open to external audiences. At the country level, learning events were held for non-participating cities and national online platforms extended to include all cities (GEF IEO 2020a).

Box 15: Linking global and national knowledge platforms in China SC-IAP

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

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

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

106. **The most effective knowledge platform activities combined global knowledge services with tailored assistance to the countries.** This approach has been limited in IAPs, as few child projects allocated funds for this purpose. When it was done successfully, the benefits of local-to-global collaboration were the strongest. For example, in the Malaysia Sustainable Cities IAP child project (GEF ID 9147), the World Bank team was able to mobilize additional technical expertise through the global project to prepare the full-fledged outlook diagnostic report “Pathway to Urban Sustainability.” The RFS hub project shared this dual intention—to deliver applied knowledge services to country projects and to connect them to other sources of learning. Examples include the peer-to-peer exchanges in West and East Africa and Conservation International’s in-country training in Nigeria, requested by the child project (GEF ID 9143), on how to use the Conservation International Resilience Atlas in Nigeria. The knowledge platform organized a partnership of the Global Farmer Field School Platform with a CSO that produces high-quality agricultural education videos. This should improve countries’ and farmers’ access to video material agricultural extension would use on sustainable agricultural practices. Another example is an initial regional training workshop AGRA and UNDP hosted for participants from several RFS child projects on greening agricultural value chains.

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

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

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

110. **Several challenges are common across the IAP knowledge platforms.** A main challenge has been insufficient budgetary allocations and low priority given to knowledge management in child projects. More than a third of country-level survey respondents said child projects had insufficient funds for knowledge management (see Figure 5). Knowledge management is not a priority nor a staffed function for many child projects, resulting in low engagement at times. A contributing factor was that most RFS and Sustainable Cities IAP child projects did not have targets or metrics for knowledge management that could drive engagement. GGP child projects

each had identified knowledge products and activities, although interviews indicated these were not always shared with the knowledge platform. Interviewees said budgets for knowledge platforms are insufficient for the coordination and level of integration required to drive systems change. In GGP, for example, participation has sometimes been limited in Green Commodities Community events (20 people or fewer). Interviews and program documentation point to under-resourcing the entire platform run by 1.5 people) as the cause.

111. IAP knowledge platforms have struggled at times to deliver demand-driven information tailored to country child projects. For example, in the GPSC, the topics selected for capacity building often reflected the complexity of the emerging economies of Asia but were sometimes overwhelming for the less developed countries of Africa. The breadth of city-level activities in the child projects was also a challenge for aligning the learning agenda, pointing to the need for greater focus on key drivers and regional clustering. In interviews, some city-level respondents had limited interaction with the GPSC.²⁶ In the RFS regional hub, ICRAF had limited contact with country child project staff, which made it difficult to offer demand-driven learning. The RFS IAP is now attempting to address this with a tailored, dual-language knowledge center with information available by theme to address country project needs.

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

GEF-7 impact programs' design of knowledge platforms

113. **Although not all designs are finalized, the knowledge platforms being devised for the GEF-7 impact programs show evidence of lessons learned from the GEF-6 pilots.** These lessons include the importance of closer partnerships with child projects, technical assistance, and use of regional clustering.

²⁶ These interviews were conducted as part of an ongoing collaboration between the GEF IEO and Rutgers University, building capacity among students to integrate their course instruction with real-world experiences. The IEO reviewed the emerging evidence from this work prior to its inclusion in this report.

Sustainable Cities Impact Program

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

FOLUR Impact Program

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

SFM impact programs

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

117. The Drylands impact program has focused its approach on regional exchange mechanisms (REM) with the global coordination project as facilitator to capture supra-national aspects and shared themes, such as LDN monitoring. Interviewees said they realized in designing the approach to a knowledge platform that most issues in drylands are regional (specific to the woodlands of the Miombo–Mopane or the central Asian steppes, often connecting to shorter, regional value chains). The REM has been well articulated for Southern

African countries (and will also include the Mozambique child project). Lead Agency FAO will implement all six child projects and the REM. But interviewees were less clear on how the REM idea would work in East and West Africa that has two and one child projects in each sub-region respectively or in Asia (two projects). They pointed to a lack of resources for this. Several interviewees suggested that if GEF-7 child projects demonstrate success in these sub-regions, that could set the stage for stronger knowledge exchange in GEF-8.

Sustainability of knowledge platforms

118. The extent to which the IAP knowledge platforms are expected to be sustained after program close varies by program and largely relies on GEF, Agency, and partner funding.

Interview partners and 79 percent of country-level survey respondents agree that sustaining the IAP knowledge platforms after program close would be valuable. This view also recognizes that the platforms have taken substantial time and effort to build credibility and robust participation.

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

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

121. The World Bank plans to sustain the GPSC under its own branding and funding after the child project closes, a unique situation that presents a risk of two GEF-funded knowledge platforms running in parallel for two years. The two platforms are the current GPSC, managed by the World Bank, and the new one soon-to-be launched by UNEP as the Lead Agency in partnership with executing agencies WRI, C40, ICLEI, and UNEP Cities Division. Both platforms are funded by GEF, both address issues of urban sustainability, and both have the mandate to support Sustainable Cities program stakeholders and the broader community of practice. All involved parties (including the GEF Secretariat, World Bank, UNEP, and WRI) are aware of the

situation and agreed it was less than ideal. Consultations are ongoing to work out practical issues, such as how to avoid confusing city stakeholders and manage branding at international events such as the UNFCCC COP. World Bank is fundraising to stabilize future maintenance of the GPSC and make it permanent.

2.4 Cross-cutting issues

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

2.4.1 Gender

123. **Overall, GEF-7 impact program child projects show improvement in the systematic inclusion of gender considerations, compared to the IAPs.** Across the three IAPs, some gender-related results have been reported in the RFS and GGP IAPs. The major challenges IAPs face in implementation are insufficient resourcing for delivery of the activities envisioned in gender action plans and low capacity among project staff. The evolution in consideration of gender in integrated programming is described below.

GEF-6 IAPs

124. **Among the IAPs, RFS and GGP show the most evidence of gender-related results.** The RFS and GGP IAP child projects provided stronger gender-related reporting in than the Sustainable Cities IAP, as evidenced by annual program reports and the QAE review (Table 11). Gender-responsive results included mainstreaming women's participation in stakeholder platforms, workshops, and consultative bodies, and adoption of gender-responsive tools and interventions (e.g., decision support tools, agriculture livelihood interventions) that directly benefited women.

Table 11. Quality-at-entry review of gender considerations in IAPs during implementation

	Sustainable Cities IAP		RFS IAP		GGP IAP	
	%	#	%	#	%	#
Child projects report gender-disaggregated indicators in PIRs and MTRs	46	6	92	12	80	4
Child projects report gender-specific results (demonstrated progress toward achieving gender equality or women's empowerment) in PIRs and MTRs	31	4	77	10	80	4
Total	(n=13)		(n=13)		(n=5)	

Source: QAE analysis (see annex III).

125. Document review and country case studies confirmed the divergence among programs on gender considerations. RFS and GGP coordination projects included activities focused on

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

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

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

128. Trends in gender responsiveness in IAP coordination projects carried through to the child projects. RFS program reporting on child projects shows good attention to gender equity, as do the two RFS projects with MTRs (Box 16). Among the GGP child projects, progress has been uneven (Box 17). A key lesson from the GGP experience on gender is that while there are some similarities among countries and commodities, gender inequalities and appropriate measures to address them are highly context-, culture-, and commodity-specific. Some Sustainable Cities IAP child projects lack clear intentions to address gender considerations, and several Sustainable Cities IAP child projects focus weakly on their gender reporting on representation of women in project teams and organizations involved in implementation (e.g., GEF IDs 9142, 9123, 9147, 9698). The value of representation should not be discounted, however, the GEF Gender Policy aims higher (GEF 2017). Some attention has been given to enhancing women's mobility. For example, in Paraguay (GEF ID 9127), the Ministry of Women participated in creating a good-practice manual for designing bicycle paths with a gender lens.

In China, the child project (GEF ID 9223) developed a study on the accessibility of public transportation for seniors, people with disabilities, and women, to make design improvements to increase these groups' use of public transportation.

Box 16: Examples of gender results from RFS projects at mid-term

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

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

Box 17: Gender results in GGP projects at mid-term

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

GEF-7 impact programs

129. GEF-7 impact program child projects show improvement in terms of the systematic inclusion of gender-disaggregated indicators, gender analysis, and gender action plans, in line with the overall GEF-7 portfolio. The QAE analysis showed that all the impact program child

projects (n=43) have conducted gender analysis and developed gender action plans during project preparation. Gender-sensitive indicators and interventions are considered in the logical frameworks, and all impact program child projects include gender-disaggregated indicators in terms of number of female beneficiaries. These findings are reinforced by the country-level survey, in which 91 percent of respondents agreed that impact program child projects include gender elements in their design to help achieve broader environmental impact. 88 percent also agreed that child projects include elements that specifically seek to close gender gaps and empower women. As an example, the Amazon impact program child project in Colombia (GEF ID 10300) intends to promote gender equality in the management of protected areas, empower women's indigenous organizations, design activities that recognize women's central role in safeguarding traditional knowledge related to biodiversity, food safety, and family, and build capacity of female producer organizations, among other actions.

2.4.2 Resilience

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

GEF-6 IAPs

131. Among IAPs, evidence of resilience has been strongest in the RFS IAP, somewhat unsurprisingly given the focus of the program. The quality at entry analysis found that ten out of 13 (77 percent) RFS child projects reported on resilience-focused indicators in their PIRs/MTRs, with a predominant focus on climate resilience (Table 12). The inclusion of resilience-focused indicators was supported by work by the RFS Regional Hub, which undertook a study on the different approaches of assessing resilience for enhanced food security and of measuring project impact on resilience by the 12 IAP country projects. The study found a diversity of foci around resilience, including on ecosystem regeneration, agrobiodiversity, and community-level resilience. The Regional Hub has since engaged extensively with country teams to consolidate approaches to monitor resilience through tools such as Self-evaluation and Holistic Assessment of Climate Resilience of Farmers and Pastoralists (SHARP) and the Diversity Assessment Tool for Agrobiodiversity and Resilience (DATAR), used by seven projects. A holistic framework now tracks resilience through changes in assets and capacities, stressors and shocks, and contextual factors across the program.

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

Table 12: Quality-at-entry analysis of resilience in IAPs

	All IAPs (n=31)	RFS IAP (n=13)	GGP IAP (n=5)	SC IAP (n=13)
Resilience related to climate risks is referenced	52%	85%	20%	31%
Resilience related to non-climate risks is referenced	26%	31%	40%	15%
Resilience-focused indicators are reported	42%	77%	0%	23%

Source: QAE analysis (see annex III).

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

GEF-7 impact programs

134. **Resilience considerations are included in the design of GEF-7 impact programs and their child projects.** GEF-7 impact programs consider resilience in the overall program design (see Box 18). Although more than 80 percent of country-level survey respondents agreed that the concept of resilience was well-understood in child project design, interviews and quality at entry analysis show a wide diversity in how GEF stakeholders and projects conceptualize resilience. This understanding ranges, for example, from resilience at the individual, household, or community level to much broader landscape or agroecosystem resilience,²⁷ and from resilience to climate and non-climate risks and shocks.

135. **Most impact programs take a systems, landscape, and household perspective on resilience.** Only the Congo impact program PFD makes mention of Resilience Adaption Pathways and Transformation Assessment (RAPTA). At CEO endorsement, all impact program child projects considered resilience both related to climate and non-climate risks and shocks, based on the quality at entry analysis. Eighty-eight percent of country-level survey respondents agreed that child projects address resilience related to climate risks, and 77 percent agreed for resilience related to non-climate risks. All impact program child projects (n=43) include

²⁷ This systems-level understanding of resilience is consistent with the definition put forward in the Resilience, Adaptation Pathways and Transformation Assessment framework developed by GEF STAP: "the capacity of a social-ecological system to absorb shocks and trends (like drought) and to reorganize so as to retain the same functions, structure, and feedbacks (the same identity)" (O'Connell et al. 2016).

elements designed to build local capacity to adapt to climate change, in particular with regard to implementing locally appropriate climate-smart practices (such as for agriculture), developing early warning systems, and improving disaster management. Resilience related to climate risks has also been reported in the impact program child projects' risk management plans, which have specified mitigation actions at the design and implementation stages. Compared to the Sustainable Cities IAP, climate resilience has a higher profile in the GEF-7 Sustainable Cities-impact program child projects, with most reporting it prominently. NBS for adaptation and resilience are found in both Sustainable Cities IAP and Sustainable Cities Impact Program child projects, as in the cases of Asunción (Paraguay) and San José (Costa Rica), demonstrating the value of integrating biodiversity conservation with sustainable urban planning.

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

Box 18: Resilience considerations in GEF-7 impact program design

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

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

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

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

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

2.4.3 Private sector

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

GEF-6 IAPs

138. Several lessons have been learned in the GEF-6 pilots related to private sector engagement that are relevant for the GEF-7 impact programs. A partnership approach to working with the private sector, seeking to build on and amplify existing multi-stakeholder platforms and initiatives, showed success in the GGP and RFS (see, for example, Box 19, on the

success of corporate collective engagement in soy). Both the RFS and GGP have also illustrated the importance of making a convincing business case for private sector investment in NBS (see Box 19 for the Kenya Water Fund experience)—an activity which features in the FOLUR Impact Program design for its global platform.

139. Another important lesson relates to the importance and challenge of identifying and aligning global and local entry points for working with the private sector to support sustainable value chain development—and the critical role of the global coordination project in this. The insufficient integration of systems thinking was a stumbling block at times for private sector engagement in GGP and RFS. At design, for example, the RFS did not specifically plan to work with multi-national corporations at the regional level through the coordination project; this shortcoming was planned to be addressed midway through implementation through a regional facilitation platform to mobilize private sector actors and link local producers with the global market. The GGP has also struggled through its coordination project to create sufficient buy-in and incentive for integration of its Demand, Production, and Transaction child projects, working across the global to the national and subnational levels.

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

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

Box 19: Case study examples of private-sector engagement and results in GEF-6 IAPs

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

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

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

* The Grupo de Trabalho do Cerrado (GTC) includes large soybean trading companies (representing 80% of the Brazilian soy market), producers' organizations, Brazilian consumer goods companies, civil society organizations, financial institutions, and government representatives.

GEF-7 impact programs

142. Private sector engagement plays an overall more prominent role in the design of the GEF-7 impact programs. This aligns with the GEF-7 Programming Directions identifying the

impact programs as an important pathway for the GEF to work more with the private sector as an agent for market transformation.²⁸ All 43 impact program child projects provide specific information regarding private sector engagement in their project documents. According to the quality at entry analysis (Table 13), 23 out of 43 (53 percent) impact program child projects plan to engage private sector actors to adopt or implement GEB-producing interventions, while nearly a third of impact program child projects will engage private sector actors through multi-stakeholder platforms (an increase compared to IAP child projects)—an approach that is consistent with the GEF Private Sector Strategy (GEF 2020b). The impact programs also have a higher expectation for private sector co-finance than the IAPs; at the project identification form (PIF) stage, the impact programs anticipated 12 percent of child project co-financing to be provided by the private sector, compared to 1 percent in the IAPs. Interviews suggested that these higher contributions are associated with child projects that are more tailored to private sector engagement, as well as an approach focused on partnering with existing private sector funds and initiatives.

Table 13. Quality-at-entry analysis of private sector engagement plans in impact program and IAP child projects

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

Source: QAE analysis (see annex III).

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

²⁸ No IAP or impact program child projects have used nongrant instruments to date.

amplify existing multi-stakeholder platforms and initiatives. This approach reflects the lesson from the IAPs about the effectiveness of this strategy.

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

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

146. The **SFM Impact Programs** also plan to engage value chain actors and financial sector partners to deliver on their outcomes. A key outcome of the Drylands Impact Program is to engage resource managers, government, and private sector in strengthening green value chains for sustainable dryland management. The program will engage with producers, intermediaries (including multinational commodity traders in some cases), processors, and retailers, as well as with financial service providers to promote the availability of financial instruments to productive enterprises. In Mongolia, for example, the child project (GEF ID 10249) aims to develop partnerships with financing institutions such as XacBank to enable access to affordable financing for herders (in particular, women) and to engage meat and cashmere processing companies to link them with herder cooperatives that will be supported in meeting sustainable codes of practice and certifications. The Amazon Impact Program targets private sector engagement in sustainable productive value chains through a range of activities, including technologies to support better decision-making, and partnerships with the financial sector for innovative financing schemes. The Congo Impact Program includes partnerships with private sector as one of the drivers of the transformational change envisioned in its program objective; this engagement includes official commitments from companies to deforestation-free or peatland-friendly production practices and increased private investments in conservation in the

Congo Basin. Interviews and project documents indicate, however, that while the private sector is featured prominently, the entry points have not yet been solidified.

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

2.4.4 Environmental governance

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

GEF-6 IAPs

149. **IAP child projects show robust evidence of activities to build institutional and individual capacity and enhance inter-ministerial and -agency interactions for environmental governance,** through the quality at entry review, survey, interviews, and country case studies (Box 20). Eighty-one percent of IAP child projects reported relevant activities. About two thirds of country-level survey respondents reported that the GEF-6 IAP child project is already contributing to these areas. Another quarter to a third of respondents expects the project to contribute later to implementation. Activities include shared knowledge platforms and stakeholder working groups, online trainings, and targeted technical assistance and analyses to support environmental governance. Slightly less attention is given to activities to influence the legal framework for environmental governance, with two thirds (68 percent) of IAP child projects reporting on such activities and slightly more than half of survey respondents (56 percent) perceiving a contribution already achieved. Stakeholder engagement has been strong

in the IAPs, with four fifths of child projects documenting a role for civil society organizations in implementation, as demonstrated by the quality at entry analysis.

150. Interview partners emphasized the important role of multi-stakeholder platforms and integrated planning and decision-making processes—including at national, subnational, and local scales—in supporting good environmental governance. For the RFS IAP, for example, one of the main objectives of the program has been bringing together officials and other stakeholders from environment and agriculture for common environmental governance. In countries such as Malawi (GEF ID 9138), project contributions reach from the village to the district to the national level. The Sustainable Cities program broadened the urban agenda to GEBs to include considerations such as biodiversity conservation, NBS, land restoration, and landscape management. It now targets collaboration of institutions in charge of urban planning and infrastructure with those in charge of environmental protection. This has translated into the sometimes cumbersome coordination of departments that traditionally remained siloed, adding a layer of complexity to decision making, but setting the stage for more sustainable urban futures. The Paraguay child project (GEF ID 9127), for example, overcame initial resistance to broadening the coordination platform to include environmental agencies. The India Sustainable Cities IAP child project (GEF ID 9323) faced similar resistance to a national multi-stakeholder platform but succeeded in institutionalizing it. The platform is now providing important inputs into municipal planning processes. Experience from Malaka, Malaysia (GEF ID 9147) shows the urgency but also inherent challenge of inter-ministerial and -agency cooperation as ministries of natural resources or environment offices tend to be marginalized but can fulfill critical tasks in informing an integrated and sustainable agenda.

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

Box 20: Case study examples of environmental governance results

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

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

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

GEF-7 impact programs

152. The country-level survey and interview partners showed high expectations for impact program child projects in terms of supporting better environmental governance. More than 90 percent of respondents expected that the impact program child projects would build individual and institutional capacity for environmental governance, enhance mechanisms among government entities, and influence the country's environmental legal framework. In the Sustainable Cities-Impact Program, for example, broadening the urban scope to the metropolitan scale will include regional natural resource management (NRM) agencies in project coordination and environmental governance decision making. The Drylands Impact Program sees a critical role for well-designed environmental governance in landscape management and draws attention to the need for GEF and Agencies to carefully monitor to what extent established and supported environmental governance institutions have decision-making powers. Among the impact program child projects that have submitted project documents, somewhat fewer projects show evidence of environmental governance activities (Table 14). Because the impact program portfolio is still under development, these percentages may change as project documents are finalized.

153. Stakeholder engagement, including civil society organizations, has also been strong in the impact programs, as demonstrated by the quality at entry analysis. Every impact program child project has developed a stakeholder engagement plan. The Amazon impact program has

paid particularly strong attention to participatory approaches, with projects designed in close collaboration with indigenous communities and directors of national protected areas.

Table 14. Quality at entry review of environmental governance related activities in impact program child projects

	Impact program child project	
	No.	%
Activities that influence the country environmental legal framework to promote good environmental governance	23	53%
Activities that enhance interactions or mechanisms between different Government ministries or agencies	18	42%
Activities related to capacity building that targets enhancing environmental governance mechanisms, processes, and institutions	17	40%
Activities that target building the capacity of actors involved in environmental governance	28	65%

Source: QAE analysis (see annex III).

3 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Conclusions

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

Relevance of design

155. **Integrated programming is largely targeting relevant countries and drivers of environmental degradation, with a few exceptions.** Integrated programs are designed to address root causes of environmental degradation. They show synergies primarily among biodiversity, climate change, and land degradation focal area objectives, but there is scope for stronger integration with international waters and chemicals and waste. Although the Amazon and Congo Basin impact programs consider freshwater systems, virtually no GEBs related to

marine systems are anticipated from the IAPs or impact programs²⁹—an absence that is all the more notable considering the long history of integration in the international waters focal area, from OP9 on integrated land and water to the GEF’s International Waters Learning Exchange and Resource Network (IW:LEARN) program. The limited participation of SIDS in IAPs/impact programs is also a missed opportunity, given the relevance of whole island approaches and history of the Integrating Watershed and Coastal Area Management (IWCAM) program (GEF ID 1254) in the Caribbean SIDS. In addition to environmental considerations, GEF integrated approaches also intersect with socioeconomic considerations, including associated with interventions focused on urban development, rural livelihoods, and commodity value chains. The GEF Secretariat’s strategy for the GEF-7 impact programs to ensure relevant countries participated to address drivers of environmental degradation—in terms of geographical targeting, putting incentives in place, and working with Agencies and countries—has been largely successful.

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

Coherence of design and M&E systems

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

158. Program-level reporting in the GEF-6 IAPs has still to demonstrate the value addition of taking a programmatic approach to integration; and while improvements are noted in the design of GEF-7 impact program M&E systems, important challenges remain. An important

²⁹ One exception is the Sustainable Cities impact program child project in Indonesia (GEF ID 10494) that targets over 38,000 hectares of marine habitat under improved practices under core indicator 5.

lesson learned is that common results frameworks across program and child projects—derived from the program theory of change—are critical for program reporting; these were not well developed for all IAPs, hindering program-level aggregate reporting. While the RFS IAP has undertaken substantial work to develop such a framework and transition to the GEF-7 core indicators, these preparations have taken until mid-2020. The GGP IAP and Sustainable Cities IAP are still in the process of finalizing their program-level reporting systems for some of the GEF-7 core indicators. In the GEF-7 impact programs, Lead Agencies have started to work more strongly and interactively to develop common program results and reporting frameworks earlier in the design process; in addition, all impact program child projects will report on GEF-7 core indicators. However, several challenges remain which complicate program-level reporting for Lead Agencies in the impact programs, including related to the approaches for determining the results from coordination projects and aggregating intermediate results. A main issue is that while the 2019 GEF Monitoring and Evaluation policies help to clarify roles and responsibilities in program and child project level M&E reporting, program-level M&E has still to be implemented in project cycle practice.

Process

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

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

161. The design of the GEF integrated approaches places considerable responsibility on the Lead Agency to deliver programmatic results and value added. The design of the GEF-7 approach better recognizes the critical role of the Lead Agency and global/regional coordination project in this regard. GEF-7 expands the role for the Lead Agency to involve program coordination, program integration, and program reporting—building on an important lesson from the IAPs that ensuring clarity of roles and responsibilities between the global/regional

coordination projects and country child projects is a critical aspect of good program governance. Some additional funding follows this expansion; GEF-7 impact programs have a slightly higher funding allocation for coordination projects, and child projects also now allocate funds for interacting with the coordination project. Managing internal and external coordination, integrating across scales, countries, and Agencies, and monitoring and reporting on the program value-add of it all are important and substantial tasks for the Lead Agencies. If the experience of the GGP IAP coordination project is telling in its struggle to integrate across value chains for a smaller number of commodities and countries, then the FOLUR Impact Program faces a massive task—requiring strong technical, partnership management, and leadership capabilities—in doing so across a wider-ranging program.

162. This positive evolution is held back in part by unaddressed aspects of the GEF-6 design that interact with the systemic characteristics of the GEF as an institution that is based on partnerships. While the GEF partnership model clearly allows Agencies to bring their comparative advantages into integrated programming, some Agencies are more cooperative than others in a setting in which the incentives for working in a coordinated manner are not clear and the rules of engagement are not fully codified. The experience of the GGP IAP, for example, has shown that establishing a foundation of trust among Agencies and partners upon which the benefits of integration can be built is a time intensive process—one that has taken fully three years. A lack of cooperation from some Agencies has also hampered Lead Agencies' efforts to establish program-level reporting systems, as mentioned above, in part because Agencies are not required to share PIRs.

Results

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

164. **At midterm, the GEF-6 IAPs knowledge platforms are playing their intended key role in supporting learning and capacity building across projects, with areas for improvement.** The IAP knowledge platforms have resulted in greater knowledge and learning activities than many past GEF programmatic approaches and other programs where knowledge was given priority.

Partnerships with major relevant institutions and networks show promise to amplify the effects of knowledge platforms in integrated programs. Across the IAPs, the most effective activities combined global knowledge activities with specific assistance to the countries. A main challenge has been that few child projects allocated funds or staff time for knowledge management. Other challenges for the IAP knowledge platforms have been related to delivering country-relevant information, especially in the Sustainable Cities IAP with diverse participation from less developed cities in Africa to much more developed cities in Asia, and to ineffective sequencing among platforms and child projects. Although not all designs are finalized, the knowledge platforms being devised for the GEF-7 impact programs show some evidence of lessons learned from the GEF-6 pilots, such as closer partnerships with child projects, plans for more offers of technical assistance, and use of regional clustering.

3.2 Recommendations

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

165. To make the ongoing efforts in aggregate program-level reporting effective, the GEF Secretariat must clarify program-level reporting requirements for Lead Agencies. The GEF community is eager to learn whether integrated programming delivers on its promise of the “whole being more than the sum of its parts”. The GEF IEO 2017 Programmatic Approaches evaluation has demonstrated the program value added over comparable standalone interventions. The value-added potential is there but must be measured. Current program-level reporting for the IAPs is insufficient to measure this value added. This must be improved in the GEF-7 impact programs to support the rationale for integrated programming. Program-level monitoring and reporting requirements must be better codified in project cycle practices. Global and regional coordination projects should not be required to report on GEBs in all cases. Some relevant intermediate results that are linked to the program theory of change—not just GEBs—should be aggregable across child projects. This will take substantial work on the part of the Lead Agency, as the RFS experience has demonstrated.

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

- (a) The GEF Secretariat should ensure that global and regional coordination projects are designed before child projects or at least with some logical staging so that they are not designed fully in parallel. Lead Agencies’ coordination and integration role during design is intensive and may require funding beyond the normal project preparation grant. Depending on program objectives and scope, additional funds should be available.
- (b) In implementation, Lead Agencies should consider activities that support systems-based thinking—such as the midterm systems-based workshops to review drivers and barriers—and adapt accordingly. Such reflection and agility are important processes for supporting progress toward transformational change.

- (c) In design and throughout implementation, the Lead Agency, under the guidance of the GEF Secretariat, should clarify operational roles and responsibilities for working with the private sector entities involved in value chains that span from multinational to national and subnational scales. This will be critical for value chain integration across those scales and with Agencies and child projects.

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

REFERENCES

Ahner-McHaffie T., Guest G., Petruney, T., Eterno, A., Dooley, B., 2018. Evaluating the impact of integrated development: Are we asking the right questions? A systematic review. Version 2. Gates Open Research. DOI: 10.12688/gatesopenres.12755.2.

Bierbaum, R. et al. 2018. *Integration: to solve complex environmental problems. Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel to the Global Environment Facility*. Washington, DC.

CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity). 2019. "Post-2020 global biodiversity framework: discussion paper." CBD/POST2020/PREP/1/1. CBD, Montreal, Quebec.

Dou, Y., da Silva, R.F.B., Yang, H. et al. 2018. Spillover effect offsets the conservation effort in the Amazon. *J. Geogr. Sci.* 28, 1715–1732 (2018).

GEF (Global Environment Facility). 2014. "GEF-6 Programming Directions." GEF/A.5/07/Rev.01. GEF, Washington, DC.

_____. 2015a. "GEF 2020: Strategy for the GEF." GEF, Washington, DC.

GEF (Global Environment Facility). 2015b. "Program Framework Document. Fostering Sustainability and Resilience for Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa: An Integrated Approach." GEF ID: 9070. GEF, Washington. DC.

_____. 2015c. "Program Framework Document. Taking Deforestation out of Commodity Supply Chains." GEF ID: 9072. GEF, Washington. DC.

_____. 2015d. "Program Framework Document. Sustainable Cities Integrated Approach Pilot." GEF ID: 9077. GEF, Washington. DC.

_____. 2017. "Policy on Gender Equality." GEF/C.53/04 GEF, Washington, DC.

_____. 2018a. "GEF Assembly Background Note: Food, Land Use, and Restoration." GEF, Washington, DC.

_____. 2018b. "GEF Assembly Background Note: Sustainable Drylands." GEF, Washington, DC.

_____. 2018c. "GEF Assembly Background Note: Sustainable Landscapes in the Amazon and Congo Basin." GEF, Washington, DC.

_____. 2018d. "GEF Impact Programs Terms of Reference and Criteria for Lead Agency" GEF, Washington, DC.

_____. 2018e. "Roll Out of the GEF-7 Impact Programs Progress and Update for the GEF Council" GEF, Washington, DC.

_____. 2018f. “Guidance Note on Operationalizing the GEF-7 Impact Programs” GEF, Washington, DC.

_____. 2019a. “Evaluation Policy.” GEF/ME/C.56/02/Rev.01. GEF, Washington, DC.

_____. 2019b. “Policy on Monitoring.” GEF/C.56/03/Rev.01. GEF, Washington, DC.

_____. 2019c. “Program Framework Document. Amazon Sustainable Landscapes Program Phase 2 – ASL 2 Child Projects.” GEF ID: 10198. GEF, Washington. DC.

_____. 2019d. “Program Framework Document. Congo Basin Sustainable Landscapes impact program.” GEF ID: 10208. GEF, Washington. DC.

_____. 2019e. “Program Framework Document. Drylands Sustainable Landscapes impact program.” GEF ID: 10206. GEF, Washington. DC.

_____. 2019f. “Program Framework Document. Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration (FOLUR) Impact Program.” GEF ID: 10201. GEF, Washington. DC.

_____. 2019g. “Program Framework Document. Sustainable Cities Impact Program.” GEF ID: 10391. GEF, Washington. DC.

_____. 2019h. “Report on the Seventh Replenishment of the GEF Trust Fund. GEF/A.6/05/Rev.01”. GEF, Washington, DC.

_____. 2020a. “The GEF Monitoring Report 2020.” GEF/C.59/03/Rev.01. GEF, Washington, DC.

_____. 2020b. “GEF’s Private Sector Engagement Strategy.” GEF/C.58/05. GEF, Washington, DC.

GEF IEO (Global Environment Facility Independent Evaluation Office). 2018a. *Evaluation of GEF Support for Transformational Change*. Evaluation Report No. 122. GEF IEO, Washington, DC.

_____. 2018b. *Evaluation of the Multiple Benefits of GEF's Support through its Multifocal Area Portfolio (MFA)*. Evaluation Report No. 124. GEF IEO, Washington, DC.

_____. 2018c. *Evaluation of Programmatic Approaches in the GEF*. Evaluation Report No. 113. GEF IEO, Washington, DC.

_____. 2018d. *Formative Review of the Integrated Approach Pilot Programs*. Evaluation Report No. 126. GEF IEO, Washington, DC.

_____. 2020a. *2020 Evaluation of Knowledge Management in the GEF*. GEF IEO, Washington, DC.

_____. 2020b. *An Evaluative Approach to Assessing the GEF's Additionality*. Evaluation Report No. 159. GEF IEO, Washington, DC.

_____. 2021. *Evaluation Findings 2018–21: Highlights*. Evaluation Report No. 145. GEF IEO, Washington, DC.

O'Connell, D., Abel, N., Grigg, N., Maru, Y., Butler, J., Cowie, A., Stone-Jovicich, S., Walker, B., Wise, R., Ruhweza, A., Pearson, L., Ryan, P., Stafford Smith, M. 2016. "Designing projects in a rapidly changing world: Guidelines for embedding resilience, adaptation and transformation into sustainable development projects. (Version 1.0)". GEF, Washington, DC.

Rockstrom, J., and O. Edenhofer, J. Gaertner, and F. DeClerck. 2020. "Planet-proofing the global food system." *Nature Food* 1, 3-5.

UNCCD (United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification). 2018. "Checklist for Land Degradation Neutrality Transformative Projects and Programmes (LDN TPP)." UNCCD, Bonn, Germany.

UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change). 2018. "Summary and recommendations by the Standing Committee on Finance on the 2018 Biennial Assessment and Overview of Climate Finance Flows." UNFCCC, Bonn, Germany.

UNGA (United Nations General Assembly). 2021. "Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 11 February 2021: Extension of the preparatory period preceding the graduation of Angola from the least developed country category." UNGA, New York, United States.

UNGA (United Nations General Assembly). 2014. "Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 14 November 2014: SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway." UNGA, New York, United States.

World Bank. 2020. "Project document: Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration (FOLUR) Global Knowledge to Action Platform." World Bank, Washington, DC.

ANNEX I: APPROACH PAPER

Background

1. One of the main reforms introduced by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) during GEF-6 consisted of a set of pilot programmatic approaches aimed at addressing the main global environmental challenges through an integrated approach. This new approach includes programming of GEF funds to help recipient countries meet their commitments to more than one global convention or thematic area by addressing the underlying drivers of environmental degradation. The GEF-6 Programming Directions set out a rationale for the pilots to address discrete, time-bound global environmental challenges in line with the targets and goals of the multilateral environmental agreements (MEA) that the GEF serves ([GEF 2014](#)).
2. Three Integrated Approach Pilot (IAP) programs were launched during GEF-6, introducing this new dimension of programming that emphasized “integration” as a key organizing principle for GEF financing. These programs were structured around major drivers of global environmental degradation. Two programs were global, one focusing on urbanization (the Sustainable Cities IAP) and one on commodity-driven deforestation (the Commodities IAP); a third program centered on sustainability and resilience for food security in Sub-Saharan Africa drylands (the Food Security IAP). GEF financing for these programs was not “siloed” by focal area, but rather designed with the intention to be invested in a coherent manner to promote synergies in generating multiple global environmental benefits, while ensuring that progress in any dimension of the global environment does not negatively affect other related socio-economic objectives.
3. In 2017, the GEF Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) assessed the relevance and coherence of the design of IAP programs with GEF-6 focal area strategies, their alignment with convention guidance and their capacity to reflect synergies in delivering focal area strategies while accounting for country needs and ownership ([GEF IEO 2018](#)). This formative review also looked at the IAP programs’ initial uptake in participating countries and the efficiency of the launching process. The review concluded that:
 - a. integrated programming to tackle the main drivers of environmental degradation through the IAPs enables addressing the objectives of multiple conventions while allowing participating countries to address national environmental priorities;
 - b. the IAPs have pursued an innovative and flexible design to address the drivers of environmental degradation, but use a wide variety of indicators and tracking tools, hindering aggregation within each IAP and for the three IAPs all together;
 - c. the IAPs draw on the comparative advantages of a variety of GEF Agencies and specialized think tanks, but the involvement of several Agencies and institutions in each IAP has added to the programs’ organizational complexity; and
 - d. the IAPs’ design and launch process were affected by insufficient clarity in terms of rules of engagement between Agencies, transparency of selection processes, clarity

on the role of the Secretariat, and insufficient communications between some participating GEF Agencies and countries on technical design.

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

5. The GEF-7 programming documents build on the early lessons generated by the three pilots – including those generated by the 2018 Formative Review mentioned above – to fully roll out the GEF integrated approach through a sizeable investment in a set of discrete impact programs. Building on the Food Security and the Commodities IAPs, the Food, Land Use and Restoration Impact Program (FOLUR impact program) seeks to transform food and land use systems and help countries reconcile competing social, economic, and environmental interests by moving away from unsustainable sectoral approaches. The Sustainable Cities impact program, which builds upon its homonymous GEF-6 predecessor, the Sustainable Cities IAP promotes sustainable urbanization to more cities and countries. Three Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) impact programs shift GEF support focus from individual countries, an approach applied to precedent Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries (REDD+) projects under the climate change mitigation focal area, to three specific biomes: the Amazon, the Congo Basin, and selected drylands around the globe, where comprehensive SFM intends to preserve these ecosystems and their services to humanity. These programs incorporate three unique innovations, based on the experience with the IAPs in GEF-6 and previous programmatic approaches. These are: (i) incentive funding for country participation, (ii) a competitive selection process amongst countries (through the preparation and evaluation of expressions of interest), and (iii) dedicated funding for a coordination or platform project to act as the knowledge “glue” between selected countries, extend the “reach” of the impact program beyond selected countries, as well as to ensure that overall delivery of the impact program achieves the ambitions of transformational change central to the GEF-7 Strategy.

6. As part of its work program for GEF-7, the GEF IEO has been tasked to evaluate both the IAPs and impact programs. Building on the formative review conducted in 2017, and as information on results is not yet available for GEF-7 impact programs, IEO plans to adopt a formative approach also to this evaluation. As implementation of the activities supported by the three GEF-6 IAPs in the field has reached midterm, some intermediary results should possibly be observed. GEF-7 impact programs have only recently been approved and project preparation for design of child projects is currently ongoing. This formative evaluation will therefore include a midterm assessment of the implementation of the GEF-6 IAPs, early results and lessons, and an assessment of how the lessons from these pilots are informing the impact programs. The evaluation will also include an assessment of the design of the GEF-7 impact

programs, focusing on *inter alia*, relevance, coherence, the theory of change, results matrices and indicators, program additionality and innovation, addressing risks and GEF's adaptability to help build back better with greater sustainability. In order to capture the evolution of the integrated approach from GEF-6 to GEF-7 programs by looking at the links between GEF-6 pilot initiatives and GEF-7 impact programs, this formative evaluation will be structured around three major pillars, based on common themes dealt with by both GEF-6 pilots and GEF-7 impact programs: (i) Sustainable Cities IAP and impact program (sustainable urbanization theme); (ii) FOLUR impact program and Food Security & Commodities IAPs (food systems theme); and (iii) SFM and Amazon, Congo and Drylands impact programs (sustainable forest management theme). The main features of GEF-6 IAPs and GEF-7 impact programs are described in Appendix 1.

7. The current Covid-19 pandemic crisis has affected almost every country in the world, from the more industrialized nations to the developing ones. At the virtual Council meeting in early June 2020 several Council members expressed concern about the Covid-19 crisis and requested to monitor its impacts on GEF programs, especially in developing countries. As Covid-19 affects urban areas more acutely,³⁰ the Sustainable Cities IAP and Impact Program are an opportunity to understand how the implementation of these programs is being affected by the crisis in the short term and how program teams are responding to it. In addition to evaluating midterm results of the IAPs and design elements of the impact programs, this formative evaluation will also shed light on the strengths and weaknesses of the integrated approach in the presence of a newly emerged crisis.

Purpose and Objectives

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

9. The Formative Evaluation of the GEF Integrated Approach is being conducted as an input to the Seventh Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF (Overall Performance Study – OPS-7).

³⁰ According to the latest Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Report ([UN 2020](#)), over 90 percent of Covid-19 cases are in urban areas.

Scope, Issues and Key Questions

10. This formative evaluation will cover the GEF integrated approach experience and evolution from the GEF-6 pilot phase to the full roll out in GEF-7. The GEF-6 IAPs, GEF-7 impact programs and related child projects are included in the evaluation scope (Appendix 2). Issues to be looked at fall in three main categories: design, process and cross-cutting issues, described in the following paragraphs.

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

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

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

(A) Relevance and coherence of the GEF integrated approach design

- a. Does the new GEF integrated approach applied to GEF-7 impact programs continue to be responsive to convention guidance, and consistent with multilateral environmental agreements?
- b. Do the integrated programs draw on GEF's comparative advantage to address drivers of environmental degradation and how do they demonstrate GEF's additionality and innovation?
- c. To what extent are these programs internally coherent in terms of objectives, theories of change and M&E systems demonstrating progress along credible scaling pathways to achieve transformational change?

- d. Have important factors such as governance (including environmental governance and related institutions),³¹ financial and other sustainability factors been considered in the design of both IAPs and impact programs, and if yes, how?
- e. Have the cross-cutting issues of gender, resilience to climate and non-climate risks and engagement with the private sector been considered in the design of both IAPs and impact programs, and if yes, how?

(B) Efficiency and effectiveness of the GEF integrated approach implementation

- f. Have these programs' internal governance systems and decision-making processes been transparent and inclusive both at design and during implementation?
 - g. How efficient have the start-up of the impact programs and implementation of the IAPs been, and how have programs been impacted by the current Covid-19 crisis?
 - h. To what extent have the IAPs' child projects achieved their planned outcomes at midterm?
 - i. How effectively has knowledge been shared within programs through the knowledge platforms?
 - j. To what extent has program level reporting been systematized and enables establishing a clear and demonstrated link between program and project results?
14. An evaluation matrix will be developed as a result of a detailed evaluability assessment. The matrix will be structured around the above key evaluation questions and include specific quantitative and qualitative indicators as well as methods and sources of data for each of them.

Approach

15. This formative evaluation will apply a mixed methods approach, encompassing both qualitative and quantitative data and information gathering and analyses, including:
- a. A **Quality at Entry Analysis** on all the IAPs and impact programs' program and child project documents to assess the responsiveness to UN Conventions of these interventions; the program-child project internal coherence (objectives, theories of change and M&E systems); consideration of gender, resilience and private sector engagement; governance and sustainability; institutional arrangements for knowledge sharing and other program coordination mechanisms (with a focus on the knowledge

³¹ **Good governance** in a social system exists when processes and institutions produce results that meet the needs of society while making the best use of resources at their disposal. Good governance is participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive, and follows the rule of law. **Good environmental governance** considers the role of all actors that impact the environment. From governments to NGOs, the private sector, and civil society, cooperation is critical to achieving effective governance and move towards a more sustainable future.

platforms); among others. The quality at entry analysis will be based on the latest available official project document and will use an adapted version of a formative assessment tool developed by IEO.

- b. A **Geospatial Analysis** focusing on the relevance of the design of the food systems-related interventions (Food Security and Commodities IAPs, and FOLUR impact program). This analysis will assess whether the targeted locations at the national and sub-national level correspond to the critical areas of environmental degradation targeted by the GEF. Global and regional geospatial datasets showing the locations where the IAP/impact program target commodities and crops are grown and also where environmental degradation is occurring or is vulnerable to occur due to important environmental characteristics (deforestation, areas of high biodiversity) will be used. Datasets showing areas that could be prioritized for restoration will also be considered, given the focus of the Food Security IAP and FOLUR impact program on integrated landscape management and restoration of natural habitats. Overlaying these datasets with areas where the IAPs/impact programs have chosen to work will allow a spatial assessment of how well the programs have chosen target countries and subnational regions where they would have the most impact addressing key environmental issues associated to the target commodities and crops.
- c. A **Portfolio Analysis** aiming at describing in aggregate form the portfolio under review in terms of Agencies involved, source of funds, focal areas covered, implementation statuses and main intervention typologies.
- d. A **Timeline Analysis** relative to the GEF Activity Cycle applied to GEF programmatic approaches, to assess the efficiency of the programs and related child projects' design, start-up and implementation phases. This analysis will complement similar analyses conducted in the 2018 Formative evaluation aiming at providing an important metric contributing to the understanding of the time needed to set up these investments and informing the discussion on the need to manage their organizational complexity.
- e. A comprehensive set of **Central Level Interviews** and selected **Focus Groups** to gather insight and perspectives from all the relevant stakeholders and key informants involved in these programs and related child projects. These will include representatives from the GEF Secretariat, STAP and GEF Agencies who have been involved in the design and implementation of these programs and child projects, as well as the representatives of the various external international institutions and think tanks involved in providing services related to knowledge sharing, M&E and coordination.
- f. An **Online Survey** specifically designed to gather country stakeholder perceptions on the IAPs in general and the child project in which they are participating. This survey will be administered to GEF and UN Conventions focal points, GEF Agencies' representatives and other involved national stakeholders. The survey will be designed with the aim to shed light on the level of understanding amongst the GEF focal points and within governments of recipient countries more generally of what these programs were (or are, in the case of impact programs) intended to accomplish, and whether there should

in future be some mechanism to account for country demand for participation in this type of programming.

- g. A limited number of **Country Case Studies** purposively selected based on the presence of both (ongoing) IAP and (planned) impact program child projects in the country (potential country candidates include Brazil, India and China, among others). A focus of these studies will be on assessing the similarities and differences between GEF-6 IAPs and GEF-7 impact programs child projects and capture any eventual links and interconnection in order to understand how the GEF integrated approach to address the drivers of environmental degradation has evolved in a given country from GEF-6 to GEF-7. The total number of cases will depend on access to and availability of information, given the constraints placed by the current Covid-19 pandemic, among others. If travel to selected countries is not allowed, the studies will be conducted remotely.

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

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

Synergies

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

19. A formative quality-at-entry review of the portfolio will be conducted in synergy with the *Evaluation of GEF Support to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs)* and have a special focus on the interventions that engage the private sector, especially MSMEs, and the economic and social outcomes intended to benefit this sector. This evaluation will also collaborate with the *OPS-7 Knowledge Management Review* on a case study focusing on knowledge management applied in IAPs (including hub projects, knowledge platforms,

networks and services) to identify early lessons on their effectiveness and functioning, and prospects for their continuation post-completion.

Limitations and Mitigation Measures

20. This formative evaluation will face two interlinked limitations, namely the Covid-19 pandemic and related travel restrictions, and the early stages of development of impact programs' child projects. The latter limitation is compounded by the former. On three subsequent email communications (March 1st, April 23rd and June 1st, 2020), due to extraordinary events or circumstances beyond the control of the parties (the COVID-19 pandemic fits within this definition) the GEF CEO decided to extend by six months the deadlines for CEO Endorsements and Approvals for all projects approved to date. This decision is impacting the development and submission for CEO Endorsement of impact programs' child projects. As not all child projects may get officially CEO endorsed by the end of 2020, the quality at entry analysis will be based either on CEO endorsement documents or child project concepts, whichever is most updated. As child project concepts are not intended to be used as standalone documents, they will be considered within their respective program framework documents (PFDs).

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

Stakeholder Engagement

22. Different stakeholders will be consulted during the process to verify preliminary findings. A reference group will be established, composed of representatives from the GEF Secretariat, GEF Agencies, and STAP, to: (i) provide feedback and comments on the approach paper, the preliminary findings and the evaluation report; (ii) help ensuring evaluation relevance to ongoing as well as future operations; (iii) help identifying and establishing contact with the appropriate individuals for interviews/focus groups; and (iv) facilitate access to data and information.

Resources and Timeline

23. This formative evaluation will be conducted by an IEO team led by a Senior Evaluation Officer, with oversight by the Chief Evaluation Officer and the Director of the IEO. The team is composed of an Evaluation Analyst and specialized subject matter experts. IEO staffs with

specific skills (i.e., geospatial analysis) will also contribute to the evaluation. The skills mix required includes evaluation experience and knowledge of IEO's methods and practices; familiarity with the policies, procedures and operations of GEF and its Agencies; knowledge of the GEF and external information sources; demonstrated skills and long term experience in food systems, food security, commodities value chains and sustainable urban development, as well as practical, policy, and/or academic expertise in key GEF focal areas of the programs under analysis (i.e. land degradation, climate change and biodiversity, sustainable forest management).

24. This formative evaluation is being conducted between June 2020 and June 2021 with early findings formulated within the first quarter of 2021. The initial work plan presented below (Figure 2) will be adapted as a result of further preparations.

Figure 2: Timetable

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

References

- Global Environment Facility (GEF). 2014. [GEF-6 Programming Directions](#). Document Number GEF/A.5/07/Rev.01. Washington, DC: GEF.
- _____. 2015. [GEF 2020: Strategy for the GEF](#). Washington, DC: GEF.
- _____. 2018. [GEF-7 Programming Directions](#). Document Number GEF/R.7/19. Washington, DC: GEF.
- _____. 2018. Guidance Note on Operationalizing the GEF-7 Impact Programs. Internal Document, Washington, DC: GEF.
- _____. 2018. GEF Impact Programs - Terms of Reference and Criteria for Lead Agency. Internal Document, Washington, DC: GEF.
- _____. 2019. [Work Program for GEF Trust Fund](#). Document Number GEF/C.56/08/Rev.01. Washington, DC: GEF.
- _____. 2019. [Work Program for GEF Trust Fund](#). Document Number GEF/C.57/07. Washington, DC: GEF.
- _____. 2019. [GEF-7 Corporate Scorecard](#). GEF/C.57/Inf.03. Washington, DC: GEF.
- Global Environment Facility Independent Evaluation Office (GEF IEO). 2018. [Formative Review of the Integrated Approach Pilot Programs](#). Evaluation Report No. 126. Washington, DC: GEF IEO.
- United Nations (UN). 2020. [The Sustainable Development Goals Report](#). New York: UN.

Appendix 1 – IAPs and impact programs’ Main Features

GEF-6 Integrated Approach Pilots

Food Security IAP

1. Goal and targets: The Food Security IAP aims at supporting countries in target geographies for integrating priorities to safeguard and maintain ecosystems services into investments improving smallholder agriculture and food value chains. The program targets 10 million hectares of production landscapes with 2-3 million beneficiary households in drylands ecosystems of 12 Sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries, having a long record of concerns about food security and environmental sustainability.
2. Rationale/Theory of Change: The Food Security IAP seeks to tackle one of the major drivers of environmental degradation – *food production* – by advancing a holistic and integrated approach to enhancing agricultural productivity in smallholder systems where food insecurity is directly tied to agricultural output. By focusing on safeguarding those natural resources — *land, water, soils, trees and genetic resources* — that underpin food and nutrition security in SSA drylands, the program aims at strengthening soil health, improve farmers access to drought-tolerant seeds, adjust planting periods and cropping portfolios, and enhance on-farm agrobiodiversity. This, in turn, is expected to foster sustainability and resilience of food production systems while at the same time reducing land degradation and biodiversity loss, recovering natural vegetation and increasing soil carbon. The program adopts a three-pronged approach that: (i) ENGAGES stakeholders across the public and private sectors, and across environment and agriculture to foster collective action and coherent policies; (ii) ACTS to scale up, diversify and adapt practices for a large-scale transformation of agroecosystems; and (iii) TRACKS ecosystem services and resilience to enable more informed decision-making on agriculture and food security at multiple scales.³²
3. Funding sources and allocations versus MEAs: According to the Program Framework Document (PFD), the GEF resource envelope for the IAP is roughly USD 106 million. The program budget cuts across three GEF-6 programming resources through System of Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR) country allocations for the GEF focal areas of Land Degradation (28%), Biodiversity (15%), and Climate Change (11%), supplemented by set-aside Regional Incentives funds (46%). The program is geared to contribute to GEBs in the respective focal areas, as well as implicitly contributing to country capacity to implement multilateral environmental agreements. It tries to achieve synergies in generating multiple GEBs addressing guidance from three United Nations (UN) environmental conventions, namely the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the Convention for Biological Diversity (CBD) and the UN Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC).

³² Global Environment Facility. [Fostering Sustainability and Resilience for Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa](#), November 2015.

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

Sustainable Cities IAP

5. Objective and targets: The overall objective of the Sustainable Cities IAP program is to promote among participating cities an approach to urban sustainability that is guided by evidence-based, multidimensional, and broadly inclusive planning processes that balance economic, social, and environmental resource considerations. By promoting sustainable urban development through better integrated models of urban design, planning and implementation, the program is contributing towards avoiding or reducing more than 100 M tCO₂e in greenhouse gas emissions.

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

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

8. Countries and Agencies: The Sustainable Cities IAP was designed to be implemented over five years in Brazil, China, Côte d'Ivoire, India, Malaysia, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Senegal, South Africa, and Vietnam. The program involves eight GEF Agencies—namely, the African Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the Development Bank of Southern Africa, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the UNDP, the United Nations Environment

Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and the World Bank as the lead Agency.

Commodities IAP

9. Objective and targets: The objective of the Commodities IAP program is to reduce the global impacts of agriculture commodities expansion on greenhouse gas emissions and biodiversity by meeting the growing demand of palm oil, soy and beef through supply that does not lead to deforestation. The program aims to bring 23 million hectares of land under sustainable management practices and mitigate 80 M tCO₂e of GHG emissions through its support for transformational shifts towards low-emission and resilient commodity production.

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

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

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

GEF-7 Impact Programs

FOLUR impact program

13. Objective and targets: The objective of the Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration Impact Program (FOLUR impact program) is to promote sustainable, integrated landscapes and efficient food value and supply chains at scale. The FOLUR impact program outlines how GEF-7 financing will support a system-wide approach that brings together strategies and stakeholders through both horizontal (interventions with actors within landscapes, policy reform,

governance strengthening, etc.) and vertical (food value and supply chain commitments and financing) dimensions. The program targets include:

- Indicator 3, Area of Land Restored: Increase by over 83,000 ha to a total of more than 2,387,000 ha
- Indicator 4, Area of landscapes under improved practices: Increase by more than 1,134,000 ha to a total of over 42,954,000 ha
- Indicator 6, Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated: Increase by 16.7 million tCO₂eq to a total of 304.6 million tCO₂eq
- Indicator 11, Direct Beneficiaries: Increase by 105,000 to a total of more than 7,105,000

14. Rationale/Theory of Change: The FOLUR impact program will help transform food production system and land use which is cited by scientific reports as major causes of global environmental degradation. It takes through commodities supply chains around the world to remove deforestation as well as other externalities related to food crops from their practice and become environmentally sustainable. This will be achieved through a system-wide approach that brings together strategies and stakeholders through both horizontal (interventions with actors within landscapes, policy reform, governance strengthening, etc.) and vertical (food value and supply chain commitments and financing) dimensions. The program aims to push these supply chains towards tipping points, where the costs of sustainable production are internalized into the market transactions and accepted by the global markets where production and consumption is taken up. The FOLUR impact program is structured in four main components: development of integrated landscape management systems; promotion of sustainable food production practices and responsible commodity value chains; restoration of natural habitats; and global platform (program coordination, collaboration and capacity building). The program will also build a global coalition that engages key stakeholders in the major food systems and supply chains, including existing platforms such as the Food and Land Use coalition (FOLU), Tropical Forest Alliance (TFA), Consumer Goods Forum, Bonn Challenge and others, to work collectively with countries toward achieving sustainability.

15. Funding source:³³ The total GEF financing approved for the FOLUR Impact Program and its two addendums is \$437.6million (\$401.5 million in GEF grant money and \$36.1 million in agency fees), with cofinancing amount reaches \$3.7 billion at design. The Council has approved \$437.6 million of GEF grant funds, including STAR allocation from biodiversity (34 percent), climate change (9 percent), and Land Degradation (19 percent). The rest is from impact program FOLU set-asides (38 percent).

16. Countries and Agencies: Twenty-seven countries will address environmental degradation caused by unsustainable production of key commodities in a variety of landscapes around the world, including Burundi, China, Colombia, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guatemala, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Liberia, Malaysia, Mexico, Papua New Guinea, Peru,

³³ The financial figures are retrieved from the GEF Portal on August 3, 2020.

Tanzania, Thailand, Ukraine, Viet Nam, Brazil, India, Nigeria, Paraguay, Uganda, Kenya, Guinea, Uzbekistan, Nicaragua. Eight GEF Agencies are involved in the implementation, they are the World Bank, UNDP, IFAD, WWF-US, CI, UNIDO, UNEP, FAO.

Sustainable Cities impact program

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

- *Terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use*: over 900,000 ha
- *Area of land restored*: close to 25,000 ha
- *Area of landscapes under improved practices (excluding protected areas)*: over 280,000 ha
- *Area of marine habitat under improved practices to benefit biodiversity (excluding protected areas)*: more than 38,000 ha
- *Greenhouse Gas Emissions mitigated*: more than 184.8 million tCO₂eq
- *Direct beneficiaries*: more than 58,000,000

18. Rationale/Theory of Change: The Sustainable Cities Impact Program builds on the GEF-6 Sustainable Cities and emphasizes a holistic approach to tackling systemic drivers of environmental degradation in cities for long-term sustainability and resilience. The Sustainable Cities Impact Program maintains a two-tiered approach that brings together investments for more integrated sustainable cities in 24 cities in nine countries, with a global knowledge sharing and learning platform to build momentum, raise ambitions, secure commitments, and implement integrated solutions that require new behaviors. A virtuous and reinforcing circle emerges from these two tiers: capacity development informs implementation of more innovative, inclusive, gender-sensitive, sustainable, and integrated projects, which sets an example for replication in the city, country, and beyond.

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

20. Countries and Agencies: In the Sustainable Cities Impact Program, nine countries will promote transformational shift in urban development by supporting cities to pursue integrated urban planning for impactful development outcomes. The countries are Argentina, Brazil, China, Costa Rica, Indonesia, India, Morocco, Rwanda, and Sierra Leone. UNEP (lead agency), Asian Development Bank (ADB), UNDP, and World Bank are the Implementing Agencies. Built on the experience from the GEF-6 Sustainable Cities IAP, the Sustainable Cities Impact Program will bring together three leading global organizations working with cities to fulfill their climate

and sustainability targets, including World Resources Institute (WRI), Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI), C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group. The three-organization consortium, known as city-based organizations, will be co-executing partners of the Sustainable Cities Impact Program. Each CBO brings a different and complementary set of strengths to the Sustainable Cities Impact Program, from cutting-edge knowledge and tools to political leadership and advocacy, and regional networks and experience in capacity building.

Amazon Sustainable Landscapes

21. Objective and targets: The Amazon Sustainable Landscapes 2 (ASL2) Impact Program aims to improve integrated landscape management and conservation of ecosystems in targeted areas in the Amazon region. ASL2 program seeks to bring about 32 million hectares of protected lands and over 16 million hectares of landscapes under improved management, restore more than 18,000 hectares of land, and reduce more than 29.8 M tCO₂e in greenhouse gas emissions. The direct beneficiaries of this program are estimated at 32,000 people.

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

23. Funding source: GEF financing approved for the ASL2 program reaches \$96.3 million (\$88.3 million GEF grant amount and \$7.9 million Agency Fee), including STAR allocation from Biodiversity (53%), Climate Change (5%), and Land Degradation (4%). The rest is from impact program SFM Amazon set-asides (37%). The promised co-financing resources are estimated at \$509.5 million.

24. Countries and Agencies: The ASL2 Program added Bolivia, Ecuador, Guyana, and Suriname to the original three countries in the first phase (ASL1), namely, Brazil, Colombia and Peru. World Bank (lead Agency), CI, FAO, IFAD, UNDP, UNIDO, CAF and WWF-US are involved in the implementation.

Congo Basin Sustainable Landscapes

25. Objective and targets: The Congo Basin Sustainable Landscapes (CBSL) Impact Program seeks to catalyze transformational change in conservation and sustainable management of the Congo Basin through landscape approaches that empower local communities and forest dependent people, and through partnerships with the private sector. In terms of Global Environmental Benefits, the program will improve the management effectiveness of 20 protected areas covering more than 7.0 million hectares, create 600,000 hectares of new protected areas, restore 500,000 hectares of forest and forest lands, and improve land management practices on more than 4.3 million hectares of landscapes. All these activities will result in GHG emissions reductions of 121 M tCO₂e. 358,000 direct beneficiaries, more than half being females are targeted by the program.

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

27. Funding source: GEF financing approved for the CBSL program reaches \$62.3 million (\$57.2 million GEF grant amount and \$5.1 million Agency Fee), including STAR allocation from Biodiversity (44%), Climate Change (7%), and Land Degradation (7%). The rest is from impact program SFM Congo set-asides (40%). The promised co-financing resources are estimated at \$387.4 million.

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

Drylands Sustainable Landscapes

29. Objective and targets: The objective of the Dryland Sustainable Landscapes (DSL) Impact Program is to avoid, reduce, and reverse further degradation, desertification, and deforestation of land and ecosystems in drylands through the sustainable management of production landscapes. In terms of GEB targets, the program will bring 12 million hectares under sustainable land management, including 1.2 million hectares primarily benefitting biodiversity and avoiding deforestation of 240,000 hectares of high conservation value forests. In addition, the program will improve the management effectiveness in 1.6 million hectares of protected areas and restore 1.2 million hectares of degraded land in the drylands. All these activities will result in GHG emission reductions of in total 81 M tCO₂e.

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

31. Funding source: GEF financing approved for the DSL program reaches \$104.5 million (\$95.8 million GEF grant amount and \$8.6 million Agency Fee), including STAR allocation from Biodiversity (21%), Climate Change (10%), and Land Degradation (31%). The rest is from impact program SFM drylands set-asides (40%). The promised co-financing resources are estimated at \$809.1 million.

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

Appendix 2: Impact Program Child Projects (Updated in April 2021)

FOLUR Impact Program Child Project Specifics and Financials

GEF ID	Project Type	Focal Area	Project Status	Country	Project Title	Lead Agency	GEF Amount (\$)					Agency Fee (\$)	Total (\$)
							BD	CC	LD	impact program FOLU Set-Aside	Subtotal		
10232	FSP	MFA	CEO Endorsement Pending	Liberia	Reducing deforestation from palm oil and cocoa value chains	CI	3,162,763	0	0	3,976,686	7,139,449	642,551	7,782,000
10237	FSP	MFA	Included in Council-Approved PFD	Malaysia	Integrated Landscape Management of Heart of Borneo Landscapes in Sabah and Sarawak	UNDP	3,569,725	458,716	817,431	2,522,935	7,368,807	663,193	8,032,000
10238	FSP	MFA	CEO Endorsement Pending	Indonesia	Strengthening Sustainability in Commodity and Food-Crop Value Chains, Land Restoration and Land Use Governance through Integrated Landscape Management for Multiple Benefits in Indonesia	UNDP	8,056,881	1,784,863	867,431	5,504,587	16,213,762	1,459,238	17,673,000
10239	FSP	MFA	CEO Endorsement Pending	Papua New Guinea	Establishing System for Sustainable Integrated Land-use Planning Across New Britain Island in Papua New Guinea	UNDP	5,354,587	842,431	842,431	3,669,725	10,709,174	963,826	11,673,000
10243	FSP	MFA	CEO Endorsement Pending	Ethiopia	Preventing forest loss, promoting restoration and integrating sustainability into Ethiopia's coffee supply chains and food systems	UNDP	8,974,312	0	4,487,156	6,880,734	20,342,202	1,830,798	22,173,000
10245	FSP	MFA	CEO Endorsement Pending	Viet Nam	Integrated Sustainable Landscape Management in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam	FAO	1,338,647	990,599	1,240,479	1,784,862	5,354,587	481,913	5,836,500

10246	FSP	MFA	CEO Endorsement Cleared	China	Innovative transformation of China's food production systems and agroecological landscapes	FAO	3,589,725	4,487,156	897,431	4,487,156	13,461,468	1,211,532	14,673,000
10247	FSP	MFA	CEO Endorsement Pending	Cote d'Ivoire	Scaling up Cocoa-based Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration / Transformative Innovations in Côte d'Ivoire (SCOLUR-CI)	FAO	446,215	0	3,123,509	1,784,863	5,354,587	481,913	5,836,500
10262	FSP	MFA	CEO Endorsement Pending	Tanzania	Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration in Tanzania's Forest Landscapes	WWF-US	3,572,755	0	1,339,784	2,456,269	7,368,808	663,192	8,032,000
10263	FSP	MFA	CEO Endorsement Pending	Guatemala	Promoting sustainable landscapes in the Motagua River watershed	UNDP	5,640,339	867,431	867,431	3,787,601	11,162,802	1,004,653	12,167,455
10264	FSP	MFA	CEO Endorsement Pending	Ukraine	Promoting sustainable livestock management and ecosystem conservation in Northern Ukraine	UNDP	1,356,000	454,000	2,694,000	2,252,000	6,756,000	608,040	7,364,040
10265	FSP	MFA	CEO Endorsement Pending	Kazakhstan	Promotion of sustainable food systems and improved ecosystems services in Northern Kazakhstan Landscape	UNDP	2,940,000	0	4,038,000	3,489,000	10,467,000	942,030	11,409,030
10268	FSP	MFA	CEO Endorsement Pending	Thailand	Inclusive Sustainable Rice Landscapes in Thailand	UNEP	1,799,862	443,716	1,447,064	1,845,321	5,535,963	498,237	6,034,200
10306	FSP	MFA	CEO Endorsement Cleared	Global	FOLUR Global Knowledge to Action Platform to Support Transformational Shifts In Food and Land Use Systems	World Bank	0	0	0	29,128,440	29,128,440	2,621,560	31,750,000

10307	FSP	MFA	CEO Endorsement Pending	Peru	Deforestation Free Commodity Supply Chains in the Peruvian Amazon	UNDP	8,056,881		917,431	4,587,155	13,561,467	1,220,533	14,782,000
10348	FSP	MFA	CEO Endorsement Pending	Ghana	Landscape Restoration and Ecosystem Management for Sustainable Food Systems	World Bank	3,830,275	880,734	3,766,055	4,279,817	12,756,881	1,148,119	13,905,000
10463	FSP	MFA	Included in Council-Approved PFD	Uganda	Promoting integrated landscape management approach for conservation of the Mount Elgon ecosystem in Eastern Uganda	UNEP	3,161,009	1,326,147	1,784,862	3,161,009	9,433,027	848,973	10,282,000
10464	FSP	MFA	Included in Council-Approved PFD	Paraguay	Paraguay FOLUR	UNEP	2,408,716	0	3,050,917	2,729,817	8,189,450	737,050	8,926,500
10468	FSP	MFA	Included in Council-Approved PFD	Brazil	Sustainable Multiple Use Landscape Consortia - Vertentes Project	World Bank	9,981,651	0	6,403,670	8,192,661	24,577,982	2,212,018	26,790,000
10480	FSP	MFA	Included in Council-Approved PFD	India	Transforming Rice-Wheat Food Systems in India	FAO	9,051,988	2,715,596	1,810,398	6,788,991	20,366,973	1,833,027	22,200,000
10481	FSP	MFA	Included in Council-Approved PFD	Nigeria	Promoting Integrated Landscape Management and Sustainable Food Systems in the Niger Delta Region in Nigeria	FAO	408,716	1,326,147	1,784,863	1,834,864	5,354,590	481,910	5,836,500
10594	FSP	MFA	CEO Endorsement Cleared	Burundi	Burundi Landscape Restoration and Resilience Project	World Bank	394,495	394,495	3,211,010	2,000,000	6,000,000	540,000	6,540,000
10598	FSP	MFA	Included in Council-Approved PFD	Kenya	Integrated Landscape Management for conservation and restoration of the Mt. Elgon Ecosystem in Western Kenya	FAO	2,181,078	0	1,338,647	1,834,862	5,354,587	481,913	5,836,500

10599	FSP	MFA	Included in Council-Approved PFD	Nicaragua	Transforming Food Systems and Reducing Deforestation in the Protected Areas and Biological Corridors landscapes from the Southern Caribbean Coast and San Juan River autonomous region	FAO	1,784,862	892,431	892,431	1,784,863	5,354,587	481,913	5,836,500
10600	FSP	MFA	Included in Council-Approved PFD	Guinea	Integrated management of degraded landscapes for sustainable food systems and livelihoods in Guinea Forest Region and Upper Guinea	FAO	3,290,564	1,334,011	1,707,535	3,166,055	9,498,165	854,835	10,353,000
10601	FSP	MFA	Included in Council-Approved PFD	Uzbekistan	Food System, Land Use and Restoration Impact Program in Uzbekistan	FAO	443,901	3,107,305	443,901	1,997,554	5,992,661	539,339	6,532,000
10735	FSP	MFA	CEO Endorsement Pending	Mexico	Connecting Watershed Health with Sustainable Livestock and Agroforestry Production	World Bank	4,587,156	2,752,294	1,834,862	4,587,156	13,761,468	1,238,532	15,000,000
10750	FSP	MFA	Included in Council-Approved PFD	Madagascar	Integrated Landscape Management for a zero-deforestation coffee and rice value chains in the Central South and Eastern coast of Madagascar	FAO	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	9,874,117	888,671	10,762,788

Note: For projects that are at the "CEO endorsement cleared/pending" stage, financial data is extracted from GEF portal on April 13, 2021. For projects that are at the "Included in Council-Approved PFD" stage, financial data is from the PFD.

Sustainable Cities Impact Program Child Project Specifics and Financials

GEF ID	Project Type	Focal Area	Project Status	Country	Project Title	Lead Agency	GEF Amount (\$)					Agency Fee (\$)	Total (\$)
							BD	CC	LD	impact program FOLU Set-Aside	Subtotal		

10452	FSP	MFA	CEO Endorsement Cleared	Global	Sustainable Cities Impact Program Global Platform	UNEP	0	0	0	16,213,761	16,213,761	1,459,239	17,673,000
10465	FSP	MFA	Included in Council-Approved PFD	Brazil	Promoting integrated metropolitan planning and innovative urban technology investments in Brazil	UNEP	2,679,864	5,806,374	0	4,066,202	12,552,440	1,129,720	13,682,160
10466	FSP	MFA	Included in Council-Approved PFD	Argentina	Integrated low-carbon and conservation investments in Argentinian cities	UNEP	5,987,886	8,103,906	1,800,869	7,554,575	23,447,236	2,110,251	25,557,487
10467	FSP	MFA	Included in Council-Approved PFD	Costa Rica	Transitioning to an urban green economy and delivering global environmental benefits	UNDP	6,206,029	781,839	0	3,330,102	10,317,970	928,617	11,246,587
10484	FSP	MFA	Included in Council-Approved PFD	India	Livable Cities in India: Demonstrating Sustainable Urban Planning and Development through Integrated Approaches	UNEP	902,995	10,748,381	0	5,564,276	17,215,652	1,549,409	18,765,061
10486	FSP	MFA	Included in Council-Approved PFD	Morocco	Strengthening Marrakech's sustainable development through innovative planning and financing	UNDP	1,216,055	3,060,092	2,096,789	3,043,231	9,416,167	847,455	10,263,622
10494	FSP	MFA	Included in Council-Approved PFD	Indonesia	Indonesia Sustainable Cities Impact Program	World Bank	7,155,963	3,577,982	0	5,136,255	15,870,200	1,428,318	17,298,518

10530	FSP	MFA	CEO Endorsement Cleared	Rwanda	Rwanda Urban Development Project II	World Bank	2,752,293	1,376,147	1,376,147	2,568,128	8,072,715	726,544	8,799,259
10768	FSP	MFA	CEO Endorsement Pending	Sierra Leone	Resilient Urban Sierra Leone Project	World Bank	2,752,294	917,431	917,431	2,140,106	6,727,262	605,454	7,332,716

Note: For projects that are at the "CEO endorsement cleared/pending" stage, financial data is extracted from GEF portal on April 13, 2021. For projects that are at the "Included in Council-Approved PFD" stage, financial data is from the PFD.

Amazon impact program Child Project Specifics and Financials

GEF ID	Project Type	Focal Area	Project Status	Country	Project Title	Lead Agency	GEF Amount (\$)					Agency Fee (\$)	Total (\$)
							BD	CC	LD	impact program FOLU Set-Aside	Subtotal		
10248	FSP	MFA	CEO Endorsement Pending	Peru	Building human well- being and resilience in Amazonian forests by enhancing the value of biodiversity for food security and bio- businesses, in a context of climate change	FAO	8,908,934	900,120	900,120	4,889,909	15,599,083	1,403,917	17,003,000
10252	FSP	MFA	CEO Endorsement Pending	Suriname	Strengthening management of protected and productive landscapes in the Surinamese Amazon	UNDP	1,766,055	883,028	883,028	1,633,027	5,165,138	464,862	5,630,000

10259	FSP	MFA	CEO Endorsement Pending	Ecuador	Connectivity corridors in two priority landscapes of the Ecuadorian Amazon Region	WWF-US	3,469,724	0	917,432	2,036,697	6,423,853	578,147	7,002,000
10288	FSP	BD	Included in Council-Approved PFD	Guyana	Securing a Living Amazon through Landscape Connectivity in Central Guyana	WWF-US	3,519,725	0	0	1,633,028	5,152,753	463,747	5,616,500
10295	FSP	MFA	CEO Endorsement Pending	Bolivia	Amazon sustainable landscape approach in the Plurinational System of Protected Areas and Strategic Ecosystems of Bolivia	CAF	6,900,226	0	0	3,155,963	10,056,189	905,057	10,961,246
10300	FSP	MFA	CEO Endorsement Cleared	Colombia	Forest Conservation and Sustainability in the Heart of the Colombian Amazon (AF2)	World Bank	9,043,250	2,712,975	904,325	5,706,422	18,366,972	1,653,028	20,020,000
10737	FSP	MFA	CEO Endorsement Cleared	Regional	Amazon Regional Technical Assistance	World Bank		0	0	8,256,881	8,256,881	743,119	9,000,000
10749	FSP	MFA	CEO Endorsement Pending	Brazil	Brazil Amazon Sustainable Landscapes Project-Phase 2	World Bank	13,577,982	0	0	5,706,422	19,284,404	1,735,596	21,020,000

Note: For projects that are at the "CEO endorsement cleared/pending" stage, financial data is extracted from GEF portal on April 13, 2021. For projects that are at the "Included in Council-Approved PFD" stage, financial data is from the PFD.

Drylands Impact Program Child Project Specifics and Financials

GEF				Country	Project Title	Lead Agency	GEF Amount (\$)					Total (\$)
-----	--	--	--	---------	---------------	-------------	-----------------	--	--	--	--	------------

ID	Project Type	Focal Area	Project Status				BD	CC	LD	impact program FOLU Set-Aside	Subtotal	Agency Fee (\$)	
10249	FSP	MFA	CEO Endorsement Cleared	Mongolia	Promoting Dryland Sustainable Landscapes and Biodiversity Conservation in the Eastern Steppe of Mongolia	FAO	1,784,862	0	1,784,862	1,784,862	5,354,586	481,914	5,836,500
10250	FSP	MFA	CEO Endorsement Pending	Tanzania	Integrated Landscape Management in Dry Miombo Woodlands of Tanzania	FAO	893,189	0	4,019,349	2,456,269	7,368,807	663,193	8,032,000
10251	FSP	MFA	CEO Endorsement Pending	Namibia	Integrated landscape management to reverse degradation and support the sustainable use of natural resources in the Mopane-Miombo belt of Northern Namibia	FAO	0	444,223	3,642,627	2,043,425	6,130,275	551,725	6,682,000
10253	FSP	MFA	CEO Endorsement Pending	Global	Global coordination project for the SFM Drylands Impact Program	FAO	0	0	0	8,056,881	8,056,881	725,119	8,782,000
10254	FSP	MFA	CEO Endorsement Pending	Malawi	Transforming landscapes and livelihoods: A cross-sector approach to accelerate restoration of Malawi's Miombo and Mopane woodlands for sustainable forest and biodiversity management	FAO	2,810,567	0	1,423,072	2,116,820	6,350,459	571,541	6,922,000
10255	FSP	MFA	CEO Endorsement Pending	Botswana	Integrated sustainable and adaptive management of natural resources to	FAO	0	0	3,569,725	1,784,862	5,354,587	481,913	5,836,500

					support land degradation neutrality and livelihoods in the Miombo-Mopane landscapes of North-east Botswana								
10256	FSP	MFA	CEO Endorsement Pending	Angola	Land and natural resource degradation neutrality and community vulnerability reduction in selected Miombo and Mopane Ecoregions of Angola (Okavango and Cunene river basin)	FAO	0	1,777,700	1,813,077	1,768,856	5,359,633	482,367	5,842,000
10257	FSP	MFA	CEO Endorsement Pending	Zimbabwe	A cross-sector approach supporting the mainstreaming of sustainable forest and land management to enhance ecosystem resilience for improved livelihoods in the Save and Runde Catchments of Zimbabwe	FAO	891,790	713,432	5,350,741	3,477,982	10,433,945	939,055	11,373,000
10291	FSP	MFA	CEO Endorsement Pending	Burkina Faso	Sustainable management of dryland landscapes in Burkina Faso	IUCN	1,336,147	445,382	2,672,294	2,226,911	6,680,734	601,265	7,281,999
10292	FSP	MFA	CEO Endorsement Pending	Kenya	Strengthening forest management for improved biodiversity conservation and climate resilience in the Southern rangelands of Kenya	IUCN	2,231,078	446,216	892,431	1,784,862	5,354,587	481,913	5,836,500

10299	FSP	MFA	CEO Endorsement Pending	Kazakhstan	Kazakhstan Resilient Agroforestry and Rangeland Management Project	World Bank	0	3,486,238	642,202	2,155,964	6,284,404	565,596	6,850,000
10583	FSP	MFA	CEO Endorsement Cleared	Mozambique	Conservation Areas for Biodiversity Conservation and Development II- Additional Financing	World Bank	9,941,464	1,908,257	4,100,917	7,165,138	23,115,776	2,080,420	25,196,196

Note: For projects that are at the "CEO endorsement cleared/pending" stage, financial data is extracted from GEF portal on April 13, 2021. For projects that are at the "Included in Council-Approved PFD" stage, financial data is from the PFD.

Congo Basin Impact Program Child Project Specifics and Financials

GEF ID	Project Type	Focal Area	Project Status	Country	Project Title	Lead Agency	GEF Amount (\$)					Agency Fee (\$)	Total (\$)
							BD	CC	LD	impact program FOLU Set-Aside	Subtotal		
10269	FSP	MFA	CEO Endorsement Pending	Regional	Transformational Change in Sustainable Forest Management in Transboundary Landscapes of the Congo Basin	UNEP	0	0	0	8,192,366	8,192,366	737,313	8,929,679
10287	FSP	MFA	CEO Endorsement Pending	Cameroon	Integrated management of Cameroon's forest landscapes in the Congo Basin	WWF-US	6,405,505	0	0	3,202,752	9,608,257	864,743	10,473,000
10293	FSP	MFA	CEO Endorsement Pending	Equatorial Guinea	Transforming and scaling up results and lessons learned in the Monte Alen and Rio Campo Landscapes through an inclusive Landscape-scale approach, effective land use planning and promotion of local governance	IUCN	1,824,687	932,256	932,256	1,665,281	5,354,480	481,913	5,836,393

10298	FSP	MFA	CEO Endorsement Pending	Congo	Integrated Community - Based Conservation of Peatlands Ecosystems and Promotion of Ecotourism in Lac Télé Landscape of Republic of Congo – ICOBachild projecte /PELATEL	UNEP	2,282,544	896,958	894,535	2,037,018	6,111,055	549,995	6,661,050
10314	FSP	MFA	CEO Endorsement Pending	Congo DR	Community-based forested landscape management in the Grand Kivu and Lake Tele-Tumba	UNEP	9,174,312	0	0	4,587,156	13,761,468	1,238,532	15,000,000
10347	FSP	MFA	CEO Endorsement Cleared	Central African Republic	Scaling up ecological corridors and transboundary connectivity through integrated natural resources management in the Ngotto Forest landscape and Mbaéré-Bodingué National Park	World Bank	2,540,106	1,196,372	1,334,776	2,535,627	7,606,881	684,619	8,291,500
10729	FSP	MFA	Included in Council- Approved PFD	Gabon	Transforming Forest Landscape Governance in the Lower Ogooué - Lower Nyanga Landscape Corridor	UNDP	803,243	2,771,189	803,243	2,188,838	6,566,513	590,986	7,157,499

Note: For projects that are at the "CEO endorsement cleared/pending" stage, financial data is extracted from GEF portal on April 13, 2021. For projects that are at the "Included in Council-Approved PFD" stage, financial data is from the PFD.

ANNEX II: EVALUATION MATRIX

Key Questions	Data/Indicators	What to look for	Sources of information	Methods/Tools
Relevance and coherence of the GEF integrated approach design				
a. Does the new GEF integrated approach applied to GEF-7 impact programs continue to be responsive to convention guidance, and consistent with multilateral environmental agreements?	- Alignment with convention guidance and GEF strategy documents	- PFDs and child projects have clear references to the Conventions and MEAs - PFDs and child projects have objectives that clearly align with GEF-7 strategies - PFDs and child projects clearly focus on major drivers of environmental degradation in a way that promotes synergy; and target multiple GEBs	- Relevant guidance documents from the Conventions served by the GEF as a financial mechanism - GEF programming docs, Focal Area Strategies - Program/Child Project docs (PIFs, CEO Endorsement, PIRs and midterm reviews [MTRs]) - 2018 Review for IAPs	- Document Review - Quality at Entry Review for impact programs
	- Perceptions on stakeholder incentives and/or disincentives to participate in GEF impact programs	- Respondents are motivated to participate in the IAP/impact programs because of the integrated nature and focus on drivers of environmental degradation - Respondents are committed to implement activities and generate multiple GEBs across the relevant Conventions - Countries are motivated by the additional GEF impact program incentive funds - Countries perceive disincentives to participation, such as heavy or complex reporting requirements, different national plans for using STAR, or country issues with Lead Agency or with child project Agency, among others	- GEF Secretariat, Agencies and UN Convention staffs (both in HQs and in country), OFPs and other key informants involved in these programs and related child projects - 2018 Review for IAPs	- Document Review - Central Interviews and Focus Groups - Case studies - Online survey
	- Alignment of GEF program support with national priorities and other donor programs	- PFDs and child projects align to national environmental priorities - Respondents perceive that programs and child projects align with national priorities and engage relevant government and non-government actors - PFDs and child projects have clear references to other donor programs and clearly articulate the program/project position vis-à-vis others	- Program/Child Project docs (PFD, PIFs, CEO Endorsement) for impact programs - Documents from other donors' programmatic support - National strategic, programmatic and budget documents - OFPs and national UN Conventions focal points, GEF Agencies staffs (in country) and other key informants	- Quality at Entry Review for impact programs - Case studies - Online survey

			involved in these programs and related child projects - 2018 Review for IAPs	
b. Do the integrated programs draw on GEF's comparative advantage to address drivers of environmental degradation and how do they demonstrate GEF's additionality and innovation?	- Evidence that IAPs/impact programs draw on GEF comparative advantage	- Respondent perceptions of the comparative advantage of the GEF in IAPs/impact programs (a) as an environmental finance mechanism; (b) in leveraging the right partners; (c) as an institution with experience on programmatic approaches; and (d) as a trusted Government counterpart, particularly of environmental ministries and agencies - GEF capacity to mainstream issues in projects when they are co-financed / blended finance - Relevant Agencies lead hub projects and other child projects, based on their comparative advantage - Access to finance for multiple environmental issues; evolution of STAR and non-STAR focal areas allocations and utilization in GEF programs	- GEF Secretariat, Agencies and STAP staffs, OFPs, other country stakeholders - GEF PMIS and portal - 2018 Review for IAPs	- Document review - Central Interviews and Focus Groups for impact programs -Online survey -Case studies - Portfolio analysis
	- Program additionality in food systems and value chains (i.e., locating impact programs in areas where they can have the most impact in achieving the GEBs)	- Level of agreement between impact program site locations and areas of high environmental importance or impact (geospatial) - Level of agreement between impact program site locations and areas of high importance to global supply chains of key commodities (geospatial)	- Program/Child Project docs - Online data repositories - Geospatial data layers	- Geospatial analysis for impact programs

	-Expected additionality at completion - Expected transformational change	- Clear articulation and typology of how additionality is expected to manifest itself at completion - Clear articulation of how programs and child projects will achieve broader impact beyond project completion - Mechanisms for broader adoption (mainstreaming, scale-up, replication, market transformation) mentioned in PFD and child projects - Depth of change and scale of change targeted by the programs and child projects (<i>relevance and</i>	- Program/Child Project docs for impact programs - OFPs and national UN Conventions focal points, GEF Agencies staffs (in country) and other key informants involved in these programs and related child projects - 2018 Review for IAPs	- Document review - Quality at Entry Review for impact programs -Case studies -IEO evaluation method for additionality
	-Evidence that IAP/impact programs are helping to introduce innovations	- Frequency and typology of references to innovations (consistent with the definition in the IEO's Approach Paper for the study on Innovation in the GEF) in PDF and child project (e.g., innovative approach, institutional arrangement, technology, business model / financial structure) - Evidence of impact program partnerships with specialized technical regional and global organizations that promote innovative thinking, technologies and activities	- Program/Child Project docs for impact programs - GEF Secretariat, Agencies and STAP staffs, OFPs, other country stakeholders - 2018 Review for IAPs	- Document review - Quality at Entry Review for impact programs - Central Interviews and Focus Groups - Online survey
c. To what extent are these programs internally coherent in terms of objectives, theories of change and M&E systems demonstrating progress along credible scaling pathways to achieve	- Coherence and consistency in objectives and design across child projects, and in the evolution of IAPs to impact programs	-Extent of alignment of child projects with PFD and hub project programmatic theory of change, priorities, innovative propositions, and partnership objectives	- Program/Child Project docs for impact programs - 2018 Review for IAPs	- Document review - Quality at Entry Review for impact programs - 2018 Review for IAPs - Portfolio analysis
		- impact program PFDs and child projects reference and incorporate lessons learned from previous projects and programs, including IAPs	- Program/Child Project docs for impact programs - GEF Secretariat, Agencies and STAP staffs - 2018 Review for IAPs	- Document review -Implementation analysis for impact programs -Central Interviews and Focus Groups

transformational change?	- Coherence in M&E systems demonstrating progress toward transformational change (at design)	- Clear guidance issued by the GEF Secretariat to support coherence - Common standards developed for program and child project M&E (aligned tools, common indicators, relevant gender and resilience indicators) - M&E baselines established or planned for child projects and PFDs - M&E systems enable tracking at multiple and aggregate scales, including the program level and relevant environmental scales (e.g., ecosystem)	- Program/Child Project docs for impact programs and IAPs - GEF Secretariat internal governance documents - GEF Secretariat, Agencies and STAP staffs - 2018 Review for IAPs	- Document review - Quality at Entry Review for impact programs - Central Interviews and Focus Groups
d. Have important factors such as governance (including environmental governance and related institutions), ³⁴ financial and other sustainability factors been considered in the design of both IAPs and impact programs, and if yes, how?	- Extent of consideration of governance	- Role of all actors involved in the programs and child projects, from governments to NGOs, the private sector, and civil society - Types and intensity of child project activities (advocacy, capacity building, generation of information, etc.) aimed at influencing the country environmental legal framework to promote good environmental governance	- Available country data - OFPs and national UN Conventions focal points, GEF Agencies staffs (in country) and other key informants involved in these programs and related child projects	- Case Studies
	- Extent of consideration of financial and other sustainability factors	- Existence and typology of financial sustainability measures in program and project design - Existence and typology of measures supporting institutional, political and environmental sustainability in program and child project design	- Program/Child Project docs for impact programs - 2018 IAP Review	- Document review - Quality at Entry Review for impact programs

³⁴ **Good governance** in a social system exists when processes and institutions produce results that meet the needs of society while making the best use of resources at their disposal. Good governance is participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive, and follows the rule of law. **Good environmental governance** considers the role of all actors that impact the environment. From governments to NGOs, the private sector, and civil society, cooperation is critical to achieving effective governance and move towards a more sustainable future.

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

Efficiency and effectiveness of the GEF integrated approach implementation

f. Have these programs' internal governance systems and decision-making processes been transparent and inclusive both at design and during implementation?	- Level of response from countries to the requests for Expression of Interest (Eoi) to participate in the impact programs with respect to available incentive funding, by program	- Process for allocating incentive funding among the impact programs and requesting EOIs for each of the impact programs - Whether demand as expressed via EOIs exceeded available incentive funding for each impact program, and perceptions of why - Perceptions of whether process for selecting among EOIs was criteria-based and transparent - Changes in level of interest from countries from IAPs to impact programs and lessons learned	- GEF Secretariat, Agencies and STAP staffs, OFPs and other country stakeholders - GEF Secretariat records and internal governance documents	- Central Interviews and Focus Groups - Document review - Case studies
	- Transparency and inclusivity in governance, and GEF Secretariat and Lead Agency role	- GEF Secretariat expectations have been clearly communicated for IAP/impact program design - Availability of meeting minutes to demonstrate governance and decision-making - Evidence of the program steering committee providing strategic direction and taking decisions for adaptive management during implementation - Perceptions of whether Lead Agency shows good practice in coordination and partnerships, in support of the common components of child projects, capacity, and partnership building; effects of changes in Lead Agencies from IAPs to impact programs - Whether programs and child projects were	- GEF Secretariat and Agencies - Coordination meeting minutes - GEF Secretariat records and internal governance documents - PIRs and MTRs of hub projects - IEO KM Evaluation – case study	- Document review - Central Interviews and Focus Groups - Document review - Implementation analysis for impact programs - Case studies

g. How efficient have the start-up of the impact programs and implementation of the IAPs been, and how have programs been impacted by the current Covid-19	- Elapsed time between various phases in the project cycle	- Approval and implementation status of child projects - Comparison of elapsed time between project cycle milestones for IAPs and impact programs, and benchmarked to other GEF projects and programs - Perceptions on the factors influencing elapsed times between various phases in the project cycle - Reasons for delay, if experienced - Effect and implications of COVID-19 for the Sustainable Cities IAP/impact program	- GEF PMIS and Portal - GEF Secretariat, Agencies and STAP staffs, OFPs, other country stakeholders - PIRs and MTRs	- Timeline analysis for IAPs and impact programs - Central Interviews and Focus Groups - Case studies
h. To what extent are the IAP programs and their child projects achieving outcomes at midterm?	- Evidence of progress toward outcomes	- Results reported against outcomes in IAPs - Frequency and typology of challenges and lessons in implementation learned from project and program reporting - Evidence of how governance, including environmental governance, has been performing during implementation - Evidence of progress toward additionality in PIRs or MTRs - Evidence of progress toward transformational change in PIRs or MTRs - Evidence of environmental changes in project locations for food security and commodity IAPs (geospatial analysis)	-PIRs and MTRs of IAP child projects -GEF Secretariat and Agency progress reports and lessons learned reports - OFPs, GEF Agencies staffs (in country) and other key informants involved in these programs and related child projects	- Implementation analysis for IAPs - Case Studies - Geospatial Analysis
i. How effectively has knowledge been shared within programs through the knowledge platforms?	- Effectiveness of knowledge sharing	- Extent to which knowledge platforms provide access to global best practices, and evidence that this evidence feeds into child project implementation and adaptive management of child projects - Perceptions on whether platforms reflect the comparative advantage and value addition of the GEF; comparison to “comparator” programs/initiatives	-PIRs and MTRs of IAP child projects -GEF Secretariat and Agency progress reports and lessons learned reports - GEF Secretariat, Agencies and STAP staff; staff of “comparator” programs/initiatives - OFPs, GEF Agencies staffs (in country) and other key informants involved in these programs and related child projects - IEO KM Evaluation – case study	-Document review - Implementation analysis for IAPs - Central Interviews and Focus Groups - Case Studies

	- Evidence of adaptive management (i.e. changes at mid-term)	- Evidence of impact program knowledge platforms incorporating lessons learned from IAP platforms - Perceptions on the effect of changes in agencies responsible for platforms from IAPs to impact programs	-PIRs and MTRs of IAP child projects -GEF Secretariat and Agency progress reports and lessons learned reports - OFPs, GEF Agencies staffs (in country) and other key informants involved in these programs and related child projects	-Document review - Implementation analysis for IAPs - Central Interviews and Focus Groups - Case Studies
	- Sustainability	- Proportion of hub impact program child projects that describe actions to ensure sustainability of knowledge platforms -Evidence of IAP knowledge platforms implementing or adapting their plans for financial and institutional sustainability (or appropriate exit or sunseting strategies)	- Program/Child Project docs -PIRs and MTRs of IAP child projects -GEF Secretariat and Agency progress reports and lessons learned reports - GEF Secretariat, Agencies and STAP staff	-Document review -Quality at entry analysis for impact programs - Implementation analysis for IAPs - Central Interviews and Focus Groups
j. To what extent has program level reporting been systematized and enables establishing a clear and demonstrated link between program and project results?	- IAP program and project reporting is clearly linked	- IAP reporting to date shows clear linkages between child project and program results - Responsibilities for program-level reporting are clearly understood and fulfilled - Common standards adopted and used in IAP reporting to date (PIRs, MTRs); GEB tracking tools applied	-PIRs and MTRs of IAP child projects -GEF Secretariat and Agency progress reports and lessons learned reports - GEF Secretariat and Agencies staff	-Document review - Implementation analysis for IAPs - Central Interviews and Focus Groups

ANNEX III: QUALITY AT ENTRY ANALYSIS

Overview

168. The quality-at-entry (QAE) review covers all the 31 Integrated Approach Pilot (IAP) child projects and 43 out of the 63 child projects under the five Impact Programs (impact program) (Table 15). Only 9 out of 31 IAP child projects have MTRs so far, although most IAP child projects have at least two PIRs to date (67 total reviewed for the QAE).

Table 15. IAP and Impact Program Projects by Program

IAP/Impact Program	No. of Child Projects
RFS IAP	13
GGP IAP	5
Sustainable Cities IAP ³⁵	12
FOLUR impact program	28
Sustainable Cities impact program	8
Amazon Sustainable Landscapes impact program	8
Congo Basin Sustainable Landscapes	7
Dryland Sustainable Landscapes impact program	12

Source: GEF Portal website, <https://gefportal.worldbank.org/App/>; accessed 3 February 2021.

169. Nine impact program projects have been officially endorsed, and 34 have submitted the initial CEO endorsement requests but are still under review by the GEF Secretariat (Table 16). The remaining 20 impact program projects that have developed concept notes are in the process of preparing project documents, hence, they are excluded from this review. Given the ongoing nature of the impact program portfolio, data collected through the project document review at this stage are subject to changes, as the project documents are yet to be finalized. Some aspects may not be fully developed in the current version of the project documents; hence, the presented results summarize what has already been considered by the child projects instead of what may be included at the time of final CEO endorsement. For the 34 child projects

³⁵ The Urban Networking to Complement and Extend the Reach of the Sustainable Cities IAP (GEF 9666) project is considered a stand-alone project under the Sustainable Cities IAP but is included with the child projects as part of this analysis.

that are under review by the GEF Secretariat and STAP, comments have been provided to Agencies to help improve project justification and enhance alignment with GEF requirements.

Table 16. Impact Program Child Project Status

Child project status	Number of child projects by impact program					Total
	10198 (Amazon)	10201 (FOLUR)	10206 (Dryland)	10208 (Congo Basin)	10391 (Cities)	
CEO Endorsement Cleared	1	3	2	1	2	9
CEO Endorsement Pending	6	13	10	5	-	34
Included in Council-Approved PFD	1	12	-	1	6	20
Total	8	28	12	7	8	63

Source: GEF Portal website, <https://gefportal.worldbank.org/App/>; accessed 3 February 2021.

Note: The cutoff date is March 19, 2020.

170. The following sections provide results from QAE review of child projects' documentation. Documents reviewed include IAP project implementation reviews (PIRs) and midterm reviews (MTR) and IAP and impact program child project CEO Endorsement documents and program framework documents (PFDs). In some cases, findings are unique to either the IAPs or impact programs. These cases are indicated by section headings.

QAE Findings

Relevance (impact program)

171. All national impact program child projects (n=43) mentioned alignment with national government's environmental priorities and with the Rio Conventions (UNFCCC, UNCBD, UNCCD).

Program coherence (impact program)

172. Each of the impact program child projects (n=43) has described how it contributes to the overall program impact by referring to the program-level objectives, components, or expected outcomes. 15 of the 38 non-hub child projects (39%) already present specific indicators that directly contribute to the global impact program, which will feed into program level M&E reporting.

M&E (impact program)

173. All impact program child projects (n=43) have presented M&E plan in the project documents, including a timeline of planned M&E activities, a budget, roles and responsibilities. For the child projects that are officially endorsed by the CEO, baseline data is provided in the results framework.

Evidence of progress toward results and challenges (IAP)

174. Forty-eight percent of child projects explicitly demonstrated progress toward achieving concrete environmental results in their PIRs or MTRs. Progress is most common among RFS IAP projects (77%, n=13) and less common among GGP (40%, n=5) and Sustainable Cities (23%, n=13) projects. Thirty-five percent of child projects (n=43) provide evidence of achieving concrete socioeconomic outcomes/effects.

175. The large majority of IAP child projects reviewed (68%, n=31) received a satisfactory or highly satisfactory Development Objective Rating in their 2020 PIR or MTR.³⁶ Fewer, about half of child projects (48%), received a satisfactory or highly satisfactory Implementation Progress Rating (Table 17). Projects which received an Unsatisfactory rating included the National Platform for Sustainable Cities and Climate Change (GEF ID 9698) and Reversing Land Degradation trends and increasing Food Security in degraded ecosystems of Semi-arid areas of central Tanzania (GEF ID 9132). The Adaptive Management and Learning for the Commodities IAP (GEF ID 9179), Fostering Sustainability and Resilience for Food Security in Karamoja sub region (GEF ID 9137), and Support to Reduced Deforestation Commodity Production (GEF ID 9180) projects received a Marginally Unsatisfactory rating.

Table 17. IAP Child Project Ratings

IAP Child Project Rating (n=31)	HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
Overall Development Objective Rating	3%	65%	26%	6%	0%	0%
Overall Implementation Progress ³⁷	3%	45%	35%	6%	6%	0%

176. IAP child projects have encountered a multitude of challenges and delays to date. Most IAP child projects identified challenges associated with the Covid-19 pandemic (77%, n=31). Nearly half (48%) of child projects reported operational challenges. Challenges related to stakeholder engagement (26%), implementation (23%), and government administrations and/or priorities (23%) were also frequently identified. The majority of delays were attributed to these challenges. Delays were cited by 71% of child projects. Sixty-one percent of child projects indicated a major change to project delivery. In response to Covid-19, 61% of IAP child projects modified public project activities (e.g., workshops, trainings, and public consultations) and corresponding schedules. Other adaptations have included changes to internal governance (26%) and project objectives (10%), driven by implementation challenges and, in some cases, changes in country governments.

³⁶ Reporting periods vary by PIR with most covering April 2019 through March 2020 or July 2019 through June 2020.

³⁷ The Sustainable Cities IAP - Global Platform for Sustainable Cities (GEF ID 9162) does not report its Implementation Progress in its available PIR. Therefore, total those ratings do not equal 100 percent.

Sustainability and broader adoption

177. Of the 31 IAP child projects reviewed, institutional sustainability of interventions and/or outcomes was the most common outcome identified (71%) in project MTRs and PIRs, followed by the scaling up of interventions and/or outcomes (39%). Deep changes (e.g., market change, systemic change, behavioral change, addressing root cause of environmental problem) was the least commonly identified outcome (13%) (Table 18).

Table 18. Types of outcomes reported by IAP child projects

Outcomes	Institutional sustainability of interventions and/or outcomes	Financial sustainability of interventions and/or outcomes	Scaling up of interventions and/or outcomes	Deep changes	Mainstreaming of interventions and/or enabling conditions	Replication of interventions and/or enabling conditions
No. of IAP projects	22	7	12	4	10	9
Percentage of IAP projects (n=31)	71%	23%	39%	13%	32%	29%

178. Institutional sustainability of interventions and/or outcomes is reported by all impact program child projects (n=43). Financial sustainability of interventions in terms of developing sustainable financing mechanisms and enhancing public and private investments is reported by 26 child projects (60%). Scaling up of best practices and aiming for transformational impact are explicitly stated by 19 and 15 child projects, respectively (Table 19).

Table 19. Types of expected outcomes reported by impact program child projects

Expected outcomes	Institutional sustainability of interventions and/or outcomes	Financial sustainability of interventions and/or outcomes	Scaling up of interventions and/or outcomes	Deep changes	Mainstreaming of interventions and/or enabling conditions	Replication of interventions and/or enabling conditions
No. of impact program projects	43	26	19	15	12	7
Percentage of impact program projects (n=43)	100%	60%	44%	35%	28%	16%

Expected GEBs and social economic benefits (impact program)

179. Of the 11 core indicators, indicator 6 (greenhouse gas emission mitigated) and indicator 11 (number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender) are consistently reported by all 38 national child projects. Indicator 4 (area of landscapes under improved practices) is reported by all but one national child project of the Sustainable Cities impact program (Rwanda Urban Development Project II, GEF ID 10530). Indicator 1 (terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management) and Indicator 3 (area of land restored) are reported by 15 and 31 national child projects, respectively. Only one child project (FOLUR: Inclusive Sustainable Rice

Landscapes in Thailand, GEF ID 10268) set a target for the chemicals and waste related core indicator 9.³⁸

180. The five hub projects report on core indicator targets in different ways. For the Sustainable Cities impact program, Amazon impact program, and Congo Basin impact program, separate core indicator targets are set for the hub/regional projects to avoid double counting, while the dryland hub project reports on program-level aggregated targets. The FOLUR hub project calculates the core indicator targets at two levels.

181. The Sustainable Cities hub project (global platform) focuses on measuring achievements of additional cities that will receive the global platform services to avoid double counting, which means the targets set by the hub project exclude cities directly covered by national child projects. The same method is applied to the Amazon hub project (regional technical assistance), which only reports on the non-directly attributable “influencing effect” of the hub project and excludes core indicator targets from national child projects. The regional child project under the Congo Basin impact program also reports on its separate GEB targets.

182. The core indicator targets for the dryland hub project are reported in an aggregated way. The targets are calculated as 5% on top of the total of the child projects in the case of core indicators 1 and 3, and 10% in the case of core indicators 4, 6, and 11.

183. The FOLUR hub project (global platform) plans to report on core indicator targets at two levels: total targets at program level (including 27 child projects and the global platform), and the global platform separate targets. The former measures the synergistic contribution of the global platform toward the overall objectives of the FOLUR impact program based on five GEF-7 core indicators. The latter measures the direct achievements of the global platform as a coordination, facilitation, advisory and assistance mechanism that works with and between child projects to facilitate changes in policies and practices that affect outcomes on the ground.

184. For the expected social and economic benefits, other than core indicator 11 (number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender), the most frequently mentioned benefit is increasing income or access to capital or livelihood opportunities (84 percent, n=43). Opportunities for marginalized populations to participate in governance, food security, safety and security in terms of increased resilience to climate change and improved labor condition, land tenure, equitable access to resources are also reported in the project documents.

³⁸ Indicator 9: Reduction, disposal or destruction, phase out, elimination, and avoidance of chemicals of global concern and their waste in the environment and in processes, materials, and products metric tons of toxic chemicals reduced.

Additionality (impact program)

185. Six types of GEF additionality are defined³⁹ for this review (Table 20). By reviewing the “incremental reasoning” stated in the impact program child project documents, the most frequently reported additionality that would be brought by the child projects are generating GEBs and strengthening institutions.

Table 20. Types of additionality reported as expected by impact program child projects

Types of additionality	GEBs	Institutions	Improvements in the living standard	Financing	Legal or regulatory reforms	Technologies
No. of impact program projects	35	31	18	12	10	9
Percentage of impact program projects (n=43)	81%	72%	42%	28%	23%	21%

Innovation

186. IAP child project documents commonly cited innovations, with 77% (n=31) indicating at least one type of innovation⁴⁰ (Table 21). Technology innovations were most common among IAP child projects (52%), followed by finance (23%), business models (19%) and institutions (19%). Policy was the least commonly cited innovation (10%). Technology innovations frequently included data platforms and analysis systems (e.g., Trase Platform, GEF 9182: Generating Responsible Demand for Reduced-Deforestation Commodities). Some projects incorporated innovative low-emissions technologies and sustainable agriculture interventions. Financial and business model innovations included the development of new financial products and funding mechanisms, and public-private partnerships. Institutional innovation included new practices to support project governance and sustainability interventions in project countries.

187. The most frequently reported innovation at impact program child project design stage is institutional innovation (81%, n=43), which is provided through strengthening capacities for decision-making, supporting multi-stakeholder participation, promoting cross-sectoral planning processes (Table 21). Innovative technology is mentioned by 37% of the child projects, including use of technologies for production/resources management, access to markets, monitoring of natural resources, traceability, as well as access to communication. Financial innovation mainly refers to engagement of financial sector and private sector, as well as introduction of innovative incentive mechanisms.

³⁹ Definition of GEF additionality is available from: <https://www.gefio.org/sites/default/files/documents/reports/additionality-framework.pdf>

⁴⁰ Definitions of innovation is available from: <https://www.gefio.org/sites/default/files/documents/Innovation-approach-paper.pdf>

188. Promoting sustainable value chains is considered as business model innovation by 11 child projects. Introducing and piloting an integrated approach is also considered as an innovation by 11 child projects. As stated by the FOLUR child project in Vietnam (Integrated Sustainable Landscape Management in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam, GEF ID 10245), the project aims to move beyond conventional “mainstreaming” approaches focused on individual crops or farming systems, it will address the intersections between markets and value chains, food systems, livelihood systems, farming systems and landscapes in an integrated and balanced manner.

Table 21. Types of innovation reported by child projects

Types of innovation	Institutions	Technology	Financial mechanism	Business models	Integrated approach	Policy change
No. of IAP projects	6	16	7	6	NA	3
Percentage of IAP projects (n=31)	19%	52%	23%	19%	NA	10%
No. of impact program projects	35	16	14	11	11	7
Percentage of impact program projects (n=43)	81%	37%	33%	26%	26%	16%

Factors influencing sustainability of outcomes (impact program)

189. The “sustainability and potential for scaling up” section of the impact program child project documents provides information on arrangements or plans for long term sustainability at design stage. The most frequently reported contributing factors are: stakeholder engagement in terms of participatory process in designing and implementing project activities as well as the focus on social inclusion (79 percent, n=43); appropriate project design, mainly the integrated nature of project (63 percent); financial mechanisms for continued post project outcome delivery embedded in project design (63 percent); stakeholder ownership at the various levels of implementation (63 percent) (Table 22).

Table 22. Most frequently mentioned contributing factors for sustainability of outcomes

Factor influencing sustainability of outcomes	Frequency	Percentage (n=43)
Stakeholder engagement in designing, implementing project activities	34	79%
Logical, context sensitive, technologically appropriate project design	27	63%
Financial mechanisms for continued post project outcome delivery embedded in project design	27	63%
Stakeholder ownership at the various levels of implementation	27	63%
Promoting the inclusion of environmental considerations in local development plans	21	49%
Opportunities for global and local knowledge exchange	21	49%
Working through long-term institutions or structures (vs creating new ones)	16	37%
Activities that generate direct social and economic benefits	16	37%
Objectives and activities targeting change at the system level	15	35%

Note: factors that were reported by at least 10 projects are listed.

Environmental governance

190. Most IAP child projects self-reported on activities to influence environmental governance in their respective countries in their PIRs or MTRs. Specifically, most IAP child projects (71%, n=31) reported on activities to influence country environmental legal frameworks. A majority (68%) of child projects also indicated that they influenced country environmental legal and regulatory frameworks. IAP child projects were also highly likely to include activities to support enhanced interactions and institutions (81%) and to increase the capacity of actors involved in environmental governance (90%). These activities included shared knowledge platforms and stakeholder working groups, online trainings, and targeted technical assistance and analyses to support environmental governance.

191. Most of the impact program child projects reviewed (65%, n=43) have planned activities to build capacities of key stakeholders involved in the environmental governance (Table 23), followed by activities that aim to influence the environmental legal framework (53%).

Table 23. Environmental governance related interventions reported by IAP and planned by impact program child projects

	IAP (n=31)		impact program (n=43)	
	No.	%	No.	%
Activities that target building the capacity of actors involved in environmental governance	28	90%	28	65%
Activities that plan to influence the country environmental legal framework to promote good environmental governance	22	71%	23	53%
Evidence that projects have influenced the country environmental legal and regulatory framework	21	68%	NA	NA
Activities that improve or enhance interactions or mechanisms between different Government ministries or agencies	25	81%	18	42%
Activities related to capacity building that targets enhancing environmental governance mechanisms, processes, institutions	25	81%	17	40%

Cross-cutting themes

192. **Resilience** in the context of climate risk was referenced by approximately half (52%, n=31) of IAP child projects reviewed. Climate change risks were most frequently identified in the context of natural resource impacts, including agricultural impacts, and climate risks and natural disasters. Resilience to non-climate risks was only referenced by 26% of child projects. Food security, financial resilience, and resilience to non-specified disasters were the most frequently identified risks considered.⁴¹ When identified, climate risks were frequently identified together with non-climate risks. Forty-two percent of IAP child projects report on resilience-focused indicators.

193. Resilience related to climate risk has been reported in the impact program child projects' risk management plans, which have specified mitigation actions at the design and

⁴¹ Unless explicitly stated, non-specific disasters were not considered climate risks for the purpose of this QAE.

implementation stages. Child projects are designed to strengthen resilience and build local capacity to adapt to climate change, in particular in developing early warning systems, implementing locally appropriate climate-smart practices, and improving disaster management.

194. All impact program child projects are responsive to the **COVID-19** impacts. Mitigation measures are identified in project documents at the CEO endorsement stage. Short-term responses include adopting remote communication via email, video conference and phone; adjusting project work plans and stakeholder engagement plans; evaluating the need for design modification from a decreased availability of co-financing. The mitigation measures will support countries' COVID-19 responses and contribute to building the resilience of local livelihoods by providing necessary inputs, technical assistance, and diversification opportunities. In medium-term, projects will contribute to countries' recovery plans by improving management of natural resources.

195. Each of the impact program child projects has developed a **stakeholder engagement** plan through stakeholder consultation and participatory stakeholder mapping and analysis. Local communities, indigenous peoples, non-governmental organizations, private sectors, academic and research institutions were involved in the consultation process (Table 24). About a quarter of projects (12) explicitly report engagement with youth representatives and groups. Persons with disabilities are not explicitly mentioned in the child project documents. It is possible that they are engaged as part of the vulnerable groups during stakeholder consultation.

Table 24. Impact program child project preparation phase stakeholder engagement

Engagement Stakeholder Type	Stakeholder engagement (%) (n=43)
Academic & research institutions	65%
Indigenous peoples' groups	42%
Local community groups	95%
NGOs	98%
Persons with disabilities	2%
Private sector (e.g., smallholders, SMEs*, large corporations)	91%
Youth	28%
*SME=small or medium enterprise	

196. Eighty-one percent of IAP child projects documented a role for civil society organizations in implementation, with consultations during project implementation (42%) the most common form of engagement, followed by adopting or implementing GEB-producing interventions (35%) and multi stakeholder platforms (32 percent). impact program child projects plan to involve civil society organizations through consultation during implementation, adoption and implementation of GEB-producing interventions, serving as member of project steering committee, and co-financer.

197. **Private sector** engagement was mentioned in 81 percent of IAP child project implementation reports (n=31) and is included in all impact program child projects. Most of the IAP child projects reviewed referenced engagement with private sector organizations in implementation (Table 25). Private sector stakeholders were mostly likely to be engaged in

adopting/implementing GEB-producing intervention (45 percent). Private sector engagement as a co-financer/investor (29 percent) and as part of a public-private partnership (26 percent) were the next most common forms of private sector engagement.

Table 25. IAP child project private sector engagement

Engagement Type	Private sector engagement (%) (n=31)
Public-private partnership	26%
Multi-stakeholder platform	19%
Member of project steering committee	0%
Co-financer / investor	29%
Adopt/ implement GEB-producing interventions	45%
Receiving direct social benefits	19%
Consulted during project implementation	23%
Source of innovative technology and approaches	23%
Ensure institutional/technical capacity for GEB-producing interventions beyond project	16%
Fund interventions beyond project	3%
Scale up interventions	10%
No role	19%
Other	23%

198. Fifty-five percent of IAP child projects explicitly mention engagement with micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), with engagement most common with individual producers (e.g., farmer, fisher, miner) (48 percent). Engagement with cottage industries and other home-based production were the second most commonly cited MSMEs, with 13 percent of projects referencing their involvement. Other MSMEs, including income-generating community-based organizations (e.g., cooperatives, associations, village groups) and small or medium enterprises (SMEs) were referenced in 6 percent and 3 percent of child projects, respectively.

199. All 43 impact program child projects have provided specific information regarding plans for private sector engagement in the project documents. Private sector stakeholders will be engaged through co-financing, adopting or implementing GEB-producing interventions, building public-private partnership, receiving direct social benefits, participating in multi-stakeholder platforms (Table 26). Thirty-one projects explicitly mention engagement with MSMEs, mainly the income-generating community-based organizations (65%), individual producers (39 percent), and SME (32 percent).

Table 26. Impact program child project planned private sector engagement

Engagement Type	Private sector engagement (%) (n=43)
Public-private partnership	47%
Multi-stakeholder platform	30%
Member of project steering committee	5%
Co-financer, investor	60%
Adopt, implement GEB-producing interventions	53%
Receiving direct social benefits	40%
Consulted during project implementation	16%
Source of innovative technology and approaches	9%
Ensure institutional, technical capacity for GEB-producing interventions beyond project	21%

Fund interventions beyond project	2%
Scale up interventions	2%
No role	0%
Other	0%

200. Most of the IAP child projects (71%) included sex-disaggregated indicators. Gender-specific indicators, which go beyond disaggregation of beneficiaries by sex and allow for the intervention to demonstrate progress toward achieving gender equality or the empowerment of women, were adopted by less than one-third of projects (29 percent). Fifty-eight percent of child projects indicated gender-specific results. Results included the mainstreaming of women's participation in stakeholder platforms, workshops, and consultative bodies, and the adoption of gender-responsive tools and interventions (e.g., decision support tools, agriculture livelihood interventions), which directly benefited women. One project targeted small business development and microproject activities around value chains specifically to empower women (GEF ID 9141 Fostering Participatory Natural Resource Management Project).

201. Each of the impact program child projects has conducted gender analysis and developed gender action plan during project preparation. Gender-sensitive indicators and interventions are considered in the project logical frameworks. All child projects include gender disaggregated indicator in terms of number of female beneficiaries.

Knowledge Sharing (IAP)

202. Explicit linkages between program hub projects and other IAP child projects were identified in a minority of PIRs/MTRs. Twenty-five percent of IAPs, excluding hub projects (n=28), mention linkages with to the hub project or global/regional coordination project. Linkages were most common among Food Security (n=12, 50 percent) projects and less common among Sustainable Cities (n=12, 8 percent). There were no linkages mentioned among Commodities (n=4, 0 percent) projects.

203. Twenty-one (21) of the 38 non-hub impact program child projects (53 percent) include outputs/activities that explicitly contribute to effective knowledge management, monitoring, and linkages with the parent program hub project, which implies there is budget assigned for learning and coordination with the parent program or hub project at child project level. The review did not calculate this budget amount, since not all project documents provide financial breakdown at output level.

ANNEX IV: GEOSPATIAL ANALYSIS

Introduction

204. This annex describes the geospatial analysis undertaken for the Formative evaluation of the GEF integrated approach to address the drivers of environmental degradation. The analysis aims to provide evaluative evidence to assess the relevance of the integrated approach, specifically focusing on how well GEF's additionality and comparative advantage to address drivers of environmental degradation is reflected in the locations of its child projects in the food systems programs. The three food systems programs, the RFS and GGP Integrated Approach Pilots (IAPs) and the Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration Impact Program (FOLUR impact program) address the overlapping environmental, social and economic issues related to agriculture (especially smallholders) and food security, land degradation, biodiversity and climate change. Ideally, the child projects of these food systems programs would be located in areas where the overlap of these issues is greatest and the need for an integrated approach is highest so that GEF could have the highest possible relevance and impact with the resources available.

205. One way of evaluating if GEF has chosen highly relevant locations is using geospatial analysis, in which several spatially explicit layers of indicators representing the location and severity of environmental and socioeconomic issues are "stacked" upon one another to see where they overlap. A spatial index can be created, combining information from all the layers into an overarching score showing areas where the greatest number of issues are present in the highest severity. This analysis's objective is to use geospatial datasets and analysis to understand if GEF child projects in the three food systems integrated programs are located in such areas where pertinent environmental drivers of degradation along with socioeconomic indicators overlap, giving GEF the highest possible chance to utilize its comparative advantage and achieve maximum impact.

Methodology

206. To assess the relevance of the child project locations chosen by the three food system programs, such spatial indices were created for each program, referred to as spatial relevance indices. The input data layers showed locations and severity of indicators representing the major environmental issues that the programs hope to tackle, along with the locations of the key commodities included in the programs (Table 27). If an environmental issue or commodity was mentioned in the expected outcomes, program objective, program components or planned program outcomes in the program's framework document (PFD), it was included in the spatial relevance indices.

207. The analysis was done at two scales: a global analysis which created country-level indices and a subnational analysis which created subnational indices for select countries. For the global analysis, all 164 countries eligible for GEF funding were initially included. Certain data layers did not include some countries, making those countries impossible to include for some or

all of the spatial relevance indices created. This issue was especially common for the small island countries in the Pacific Ocean.⁴²

208. The subnational analysis was completed for Brazil and Kenya. These countries were chosen to align with the country case studies for the larger integrated approach evaluation and because they both included two projects in the food systems programs: Projects GEF ID 9617 (GGP IAP) and GEF ID 10468 (FOLUR impact program) in Brazil and GEF ID 9139 (RFS IAP) and GEF ID 10598 (FOLUR impact program) in Kenya. Subnational spatial relevance indices were only calculated for the programs that corresponded to a project in each of the two countries. Furthermore, the GGP IAP Brazil indices and the FOLUR impact program indices for both countries were modified to exclude data layers showing the locations of commodities that were targeted by the broader programs but not by the specific child projects in those countries. The subnational analysis was done using administrative boundaries one level below the country level—states in Brazil and counties in Kenya. Some of the data layers used at the global level did not have sufficient spatial resolution for a subnational analysis. In those cases, alternate data layers were used for the analysis, as specified in Table 27. Additionally, the proxy used for smallholder agriculture locations, field size, was altered slightly for the Kenya Food Security indices from that used for the global analysis. For Kenya, only “very small” fields (<0.64 ha) were considered smallholder agriculture due to evidence that even the average Kenyan farm size is less than 0.5 ha.⁴³ For the global analysis, both very small and small farms (<2.56 ha) were considered smallholder areas.

Table 27. Data layers used to create the spatial relevance indices for the three food systems programs

Issue represented by the layer	Indicator shown in the layer	Description of data processing	Layer source	Inclusion in spatial relevance indices
Biodiversity	Area of biodiversity hotspots	Area considered to be a biodiversity hotspot was summed for each country.	Hoffman et al. (2016) ⁴⁴	GGP

⁴² Countries excluded from all spatial indices for lack of data in certain datasets: Cook Islands, Kiribati, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Niue, Nauru, Palau, Samoa, Tokelau, Tonga and Tuvalu. Countries included only in the Food Security IAP index: Comoros and Micronesia. Countries included only in GGP IAP and FOLUR impact program: Kosovo, North Korea and Saint Vincent.

⁴³ D’Alessandro SP, Caballero J, Lichte J and Simpkin S (2015) Kenya agricultural sector risk assessment. Agriculture Global Practice Technical Assistance Paper, World Bank Group Report 97887.

⁴⁴ Hoffman M, Koenig K, Bunting G, Costanza J and Williams KJ (2016) Biodiversity Hotspots (version 2016.1). <http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3261807>.

Climate change vulnerability	Global analysis: Climate change vulnerability index	Climate change country index was used.	Notre Dame Global Adaptation Index ⁴⁵	RFS
	Kenya analysis: Projected change in rainfall seasonal variability for 2030	Projected change in seasonal variability at the watershed scale was area-weight averaged for each subnational unit. Larger change in seasonal variability correlates to larger swings in rainfall amounts (floods and droughts) at times of the year differing from historical patterns.	AQUEDUCT ⁴⁶	
Commodity location	Area of physical crop location and number of cattle	Area of physical location for each target crop and number of cattle for each country was summed.	MapSPAM ⁴⁷ and Food and Agriculture Organization ⁴⁸	GGP and FOLUR
Conservation of existing forests	Amount of forest biomass	Aboveground carbon maps were clipped to forested areas and then summed by country.	European Space Agency Climate Change Initiative ^{49, 50}	GGP

⁴⁵ Chen C, Noble I, Hellmann J, Coffee J, Murillo M and Chawla N (2015) University of Notre Dame Global Adaptation Index, Country Index Technical Report.

⁴⁶ Luck M, Landis M, Gassert F (2015) Aqueduct water stress projections: decadal projections of water supply and demand using CMimpact program5 GCMs. Technical Note, Washington, D.C.: World Resources Institute.

⁴⁷ Yu Q, You L, Wood-Sichra U, Ru Y, Joglekar AKB, Fritz S, Xiong W, Lu M, Wu W and Yang P (2020) A cultivated planet in 2010 –Part 2: the global gridded agricultural-production maps. *Earth Systems Science Data*: 12, 3545-3572.

⁴⁸ Robinson TP, William Wint GR, Conchedda G, van Boeckel TP, Ercoli V, Palamara E, Cinardi G, D'Aiotti L, Hay SI and Gilbert M (2014) Mapping the global distribution of livestock. *PLOS One*: 9,5.

⁴⁹ Santoro M and Cartus O (2019) ESA Biomass Climate Change Initiative: Global datasets of forest above-ground biomass for the year 2017, v1. Centre for Environmental Data Analysis.

⁵⁰ ESA Land Cover CCI project team, Defourny P (2016) ESA Land Cover Climate Change Initiative: Global Land Cover Maps, Version 2.0.7. Centre for Environmental Data Analysis.

Food security	Global analysis: Food or water security index	Global Food Security Index scores at the country level were used. If not available, baseline overall water stress for the agricultural sector was area-weight averaged for each country.	Global Food Security Index ⁵¹ and AQUEDUCT ⁵²	RFS
	Kenya analysis: Sum of food security integrated phase classification (impact programC) ratings 2009-2020	impact programC ratings from each quarter-year were summed for each subnational unit. Higher ratings indicate more food insecurity for a given quarter-year.	Famine Early Warning Systems Network ⁵³	
Natural landscape degradation	Area of deforestation, by driver	Area of deforestation (2001-2019) by select driver was summed for each country. For GGP IAP, only commodity-driven deforestation was used. For FOLUR, commodity-driven and shifting agriculture were included.	Global Forest Watch, Curtis et al. (2018) ⁵⁴	GGP, FOLUR
Natural landscape restoration	Area of potential reforestation	Non-forest areas suitable for reforestation were summed by country.	Griscom et al. (2017) ⁵⁵	FOLUR

⁵¹ Bapat P, Bharadwaj S, Grenville S and Smith R (2019) Global Food Security Index 2019. Economist Intelligence Unit and Cortva Agriscience.

⁵² Hofste RW, Kuzma S, Walker S, Sutanudjaja EH, Bierkens MFP, Kuijper JM, Faneca Sanchez M, van Beek R, Wada Y, Galvis Rodriguez S and Reig P (2019) AQUEDUCT 3.0: updated decision-relevant global water risk indicators. World Resources Institute, Technical Note.

⁵³ Famine Early Warning System Network (2021) Food security classification data: current situation (non-projection) shapefiles. <https://fews.net/fews-data/333>. Accessed 5 Mar 2021.

⁵⁴ Curtis PG, Slay CM, Harris NL, Tyukavina A and Hansen MC (2018) Classifying drivers of global forest loss. *Science*: 361 (6407), 1108-1111.

⁵⁵ Grisom BW, Adams J, Ellis PW, Houghton RA, Lomax G, Miteva DA, Schlesinger WH, Shoch D, Siikamaki JV, Smith P, Woodbury P, Zganjar C, Blackman A, Campari J, Conant RT, Delgado C, Elias P, Gopalakrishna T, Hamsik MR, Herrero M, Kiesecker J, Landis E, Laestadius L, Leavitt SM, Minnemeyer S, Polasky S, Potapov P, Putz FE, Sanderman J, Silvius M, Wollenberg E and Fargione J (2017) Natural climate solutions. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*: 44, 11645-11650.

Smallholder agriculture	Global analysis: Area of small and very small field size (<2.56 ha)	Area of very small and small (for global analysis only) farms were summed by country.	Lesiv et al. (2019) ⁵⁶	GGP and RFS
	Kenya analysis: Area of very small field size (<0.64 ha)			

209. In most cases, the data layers used had spatial resolutions much finer than the country or even the subnational administrative boundary scale used for the subnational analysis. This necessitated averaging or summing the value of the data layer to calculate a total or average value per area unit (one value per country at the global scale and one value per subnational administrative unit at the subnational scale). Once a single value for each data layer was obtained for each area unit, the values were normalized to the minimum and the maximum values to standardize the values across indicators and avoid artificial over-weighting of one indicator over another. In this minimum-maximum normalization, the lowest area unit value for each indicator was given a score of zero while the highest given a score of one.

210. Once the minimum-maximum normalization was complete, the single values for each data layer included in each program’s spatial relevance index were averaged to create a total spatial relevance index score per area unit. This score is referred to as the “total” spatial relevance index score and tends to favor larger area units since such units are more easily able to accrue large amounts of certain indicators given their size. To counter this effect, a second spatial relevance index was created by normalizing by area unit size—dividing the area unit values for each indicator by the size of the area unit. This “normalized” spatial relevance index tends to favor small area units where a large percentage of their area is taken up by certain indicators. The geospatial data processing steps described here are shown graphically in Figure 6.

211. Once the total and normalized spatial relevance indices were calculated globally and for the two subnational analysis countries, the resulting scores were broken into five “spatial relevance” classes for display purposes: very high, high, moderate, low and very low. The class breaks were determined within Esri’s ArcGIS software using the Jenks Natural Breaks algorithm, which seeks to classify data into naturally clustered groupings.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Lesiv M, Laso Bayas JC, See L, Duerauer M, Dahlia D, Durando N, Hazarika R, Kumar Sahriah P, Vakolyuk M, Blyshchik V, Bilous A, Perez-Hoyos A, Gengler S, Prestele R, Bilous S, Hassan Akhtar I, Singha K, Boro Choudhury S, Chetri T, Malek Z, Bungnamei K, Saikia A, Sahariah D, Narzary W, Danylo O, Sturn T, Karner M, McCallum I, Schepaschenko D, Moltchanova E, Fraisl D, Moorthy I, Fritz S (2019) Estimating the global distribution of field size using crowdsourcing. *Global Change Biology*: 25, 174-186.

⁵⁷ For more information on the use of Jenks Natural Breaks in ArcGIS, see [Esri’s website](#).

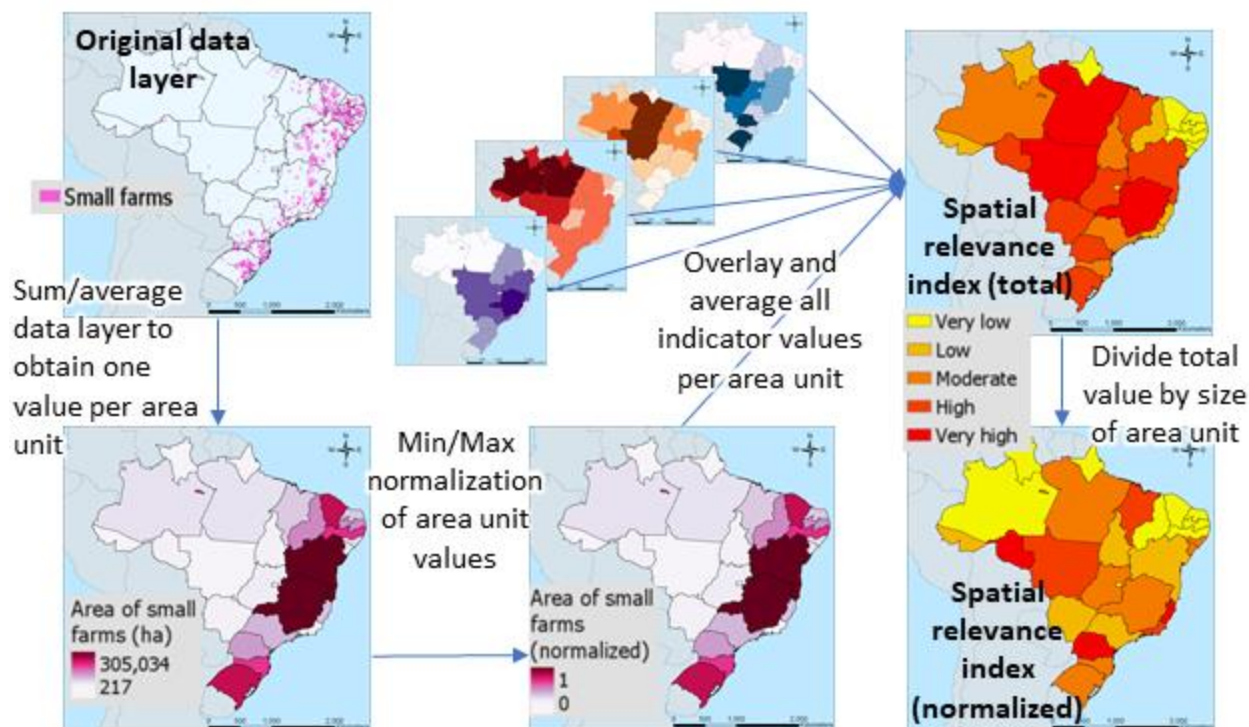


Figure 6. Geospatial data processing steps to create the spatial relevance indices. The example of the GGP IAP spatial relevance indices for the Brazil subnational analysis is shown here.

Methodological differences with ex-ante FOLUR spatial prioritization analysis

212. The GEF Secretariat performed a spatial prioritization exercise in 2018 to identify the most relevant countries for the drivers targeted by the FOLUR program. This exercise was similar to the global spatial relevance analysis described here in that it combined several country-level data layers into a spatial index. There are some key differences between the two analyses. The ex-ante prioritization analysis conducted by the Secretariat included slightly different indicators (Table 28). The ex-ante analysis's index was created using commodity production location information and weighted by a country's emissions reduction commitments in the agriculture, forestry and other land use sector. The other indicators were used only qualitatively for comparison but were not included in the calculated prioritization index. In contrast, the FOLUR spatial relevance index described in this report includes area of deforestation and area of potential reforestation and does not take into account emissions reductions or restoration commitments.

213. Given the importance of reducing deforestation and encouraging forest landscape restoration within the FOLUR impact program program design, it was deemed important to embed these two indicators in the quantitative spatial relevance index of the program rather than only including them as qualitative comparators as done in the ex-ante prioritization analysis. In contrast, emissions reductions and restoration commitments, while serving as

useful indicators of level of country commitment to reducing emissions and restoring forests, don't necessarily correlate with amount of actual emissions within a country or the amount of land suitable for forest restoration. The goal of the spatial relevance analysis described in this report is to understand where the drivers of environmental degradation and opportunities for restoration the food systems related IAPor impact program programs seek to address are most abundant and in need of focus without consideration to political will. For this reason, it was not deemed appropriate to include these commitments in the FOLUR spatial relevance index.

Table 28. Main differences in data sources between the GEF Secretariat ex-ante geospatial prioritization analysis and the FOLUR spatial relevance index.

Environmental issue	Data source used		
	Ex-ante FOLUR prioritization analysis	FOLUR spatial relevance analysis	Implications of differences
Commodity location	Area of production (FAO)	MapSPAM physical area and FAO number of cattle	Finer resolution layers used in spatial relevance analysis allow for more granular, subnational analysis.
Natural landscape degradation	Area of deforestation from FAO for 2015*	Area of deforestation by driver from Global Forest Watch	Same as above and Global Forest Watch includes a longer data series (2001-2019) and is an independent data source based on remote sensing rather than country-reported numbers.
Natural landscape restoration	Bonn Challenge and Tropical Forest Alliance commitments*	Griscom et al. (2017) area of potential reforestation	Commitments show political will but not potential suitability from an ecological and bioclimatic perspective.
Emissions reductions commitments	Intended National Determined Commitments to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change	None	Same as above.
Biodiversity hotspots	Conservation International, 2005*	None	Biodiversity did not meet the criteria for inclusion in the FOLUR spatial relevance index because it was not mentioned in the key parts of the PFD.

*According to GEF Secretariat documents, these layers were used only for “comparison”, not included in the index created for the GEF Secretariat ex-ante analysis. It isn’t clear how these comparisons were specifically used in the selection of FOLUR child project countries.

Limitations

214. This spatial relevance analysis attempts to understand whether GEF food systems integrated programs investments are being targeted in areas of the world having the highest concentration of key environmental issues present. The analysis does not aim, however, to be inclusive of all factors that go into the decision to place a child project in a specific country. Other political, safety, funding and practical issues are very important in such decisions and cannot easily be captured by spatial analysis. For example, country governments must show interest in the programs and be willing and have the capacity to design projects together with GEF Agencies to be eligible to participate in the programs. Such country capacity is not captured in the spatial relevance index. Other factors not related to environmental issues, such as involvement in international conventions and GEF focal area funding, are also not considered. In addition, programs operate with limited resources, which limits the number of spatially relevant countries in which the programs can work. In this sense, the spatial relevance index serves as a scientific, data-driven and quantitative first-cut look at where GEF could have the most environmental impact. The results then must be considered alongside other political, financial, logistical and social factors.

Results

Global analysis

215. **Finding 1 – The GGP IAP and FOLUR impact program have child projects or child project activities located in the countries that have the highest spatial relevance according to their programs’ spatial relevance indices.** The two programs’ indices produced similar results, especially the total spatial relevance indices (Figure 7 and Table 29). Since both programs included deforestation and commodity location, many of the large, forested countries topped their indices. The programs are active in several of these top countries--Brazil and Indonesia, both countries with child projects or project activities in both programs, had the two highest total spatial relevance scores for the GGP IAP and the 1st and 3rd highest total spatial relevance for the FOLUR impact program. Brazil’s high relevance is a result of its large forest and agricultural areas—it had the highest amount of forest biomass, deforestation, biodiversity hotspot area and area of soy and coffee farms and the highest number of heads of cattle of any of the countries included in the analysis. Indonesia had the second-highest amount of deforestation (although only half as much as Brazil) and the largest area of oil palm farms in the included countries. China, which had the 2nd highest total spatial relevance for the FOLUR impact program, has a child project in the FOLUR impact program as well. China had the largest area suitable for forest restoration, of small or very small fields (a proxy for smallholder agriculture) and of maize farms. India, Mexico and Colombia, other FOLUR project countries, all were in the top 10 for total spatial relevance for that program, meaning six of the top 10 countries with the highest total spatial relevance have child projects in the program. Four of the

top 10 for the normalized FOLUR spatial relevance also have projects—Malaysia (1st), Nicaragua (3rd), Paraguay (4th) and Guatemala (5th). Paraguay and Liberia, both with projects in the GGP IAP, were outside the top 10 for both of that program’s indices, but nonetheless were classified as having high spatial relevance with the normalized index given their high rates of deforestation and soy farming (Paraguay) and biodiversity hotspot area (Liberia).

216. **Finding 2 - the FOLUR impact program has child projects in many countries with low spatial relevance.** Kenya, Papua New Guinea and Uzbekistan all had very low relevance for the total and normalized scores while Burundi, Kazakhstan, Peru and Uganda had low relevance for either the total or normalized indices and very low for the other. Uzbekistan is a generally arid country with no deforestation and very little area suitable for reforestation, although it does have a somewhat large area of wheat farming. Kenya also had relatively low deforestation and area suitable for reforestation, while Papua New Guinea’s very low scores were due to its lack of area of the major FOLUR commodities.

217. **Finding 3—There is high agreeability between the FOLUR impact program total spatial relevance index and the ex-ante analysis index with some exceptions.** Six of the top 10 FOLUR spatial relevance index countries were also in the top 10 of the ex-ante index, all of which have child projects in the FOLUR program (Table 30). The normalized spatial relevance index showed less agreement, as none of the top 10 countries overlapped. Bangladesh and Ecuador, ranked 7th and 10th in the ex-ante analysis, are not FOLUR countries and were not in the top 10 for either spatial relevance index.

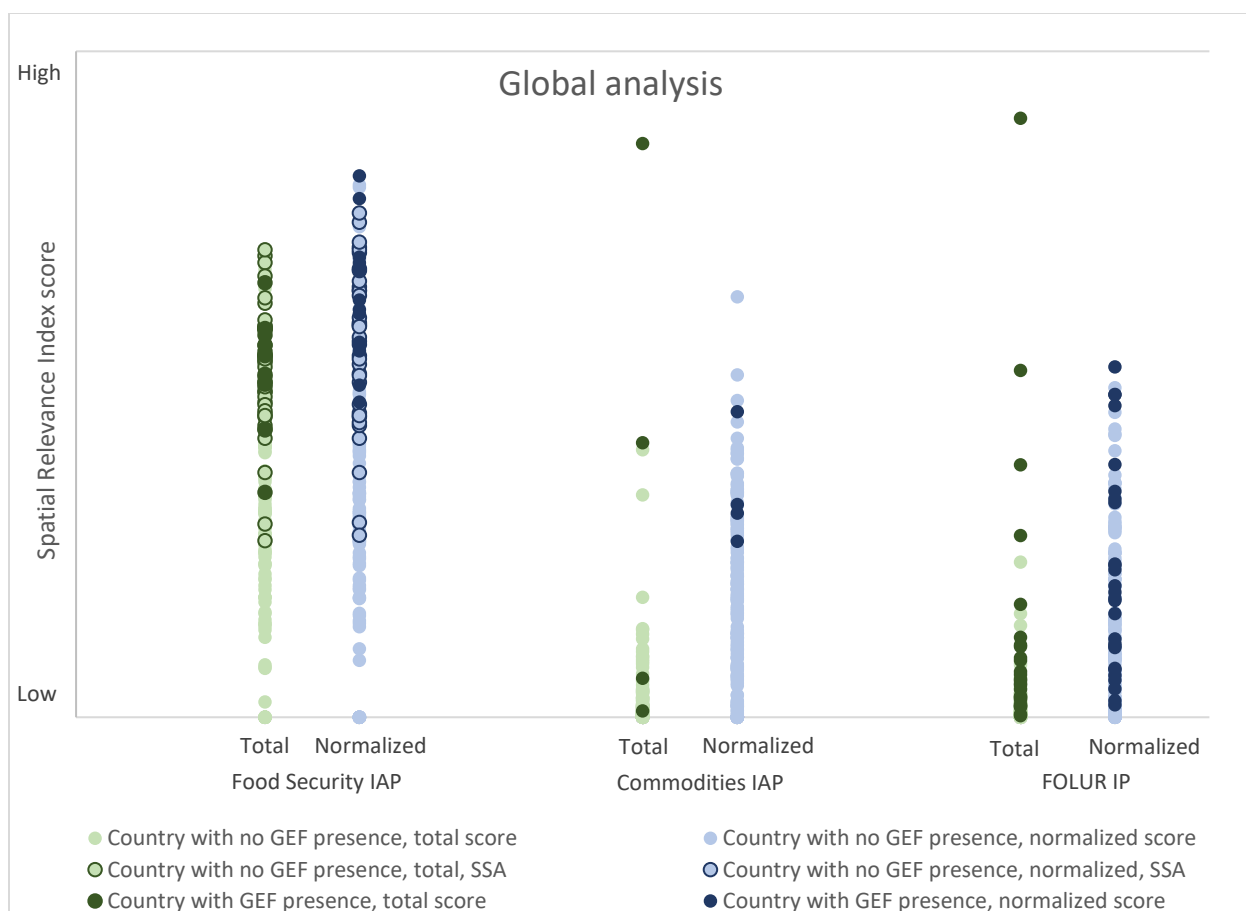


Figure 7. Relative spatial relevance index scores for all included countries for all three food systems programs. Note: SSA = sub-Saharan Africa. SSA countries are differentiated from others only for the RFS IAP indices.

Table 29. Countries with the highest GGP IAP spatial relevance index scores.

GGP IAP							
Total Spatial Relevance index				Normalized Spatial Relevance index			
Rank	Score	Country	Program presence	Rank	Score	Country	Program presence
1	0.78	Brazil	Yes	1	0.57	Malaysia	No
2	0.37	Indonesia	Yes	2	0.46	Cambodia	No
3	0.36	China	No	3	0.43	El Salvador	No
4	0.30	India	No	4	0.41	Indonesia	Yes

5	0.16	Russia	No	5	0.40	Vietnam	No
6	0.12	Malaysia	No	6	0.38	Thailand	No
7	0.12	Mexico	No	7	0.36	Laos	No
8	0.11	Argentina	No	8	0.36	Guatemala	No
9	0.11	Ethiopia	No	9	0.36	Jamaica	No
10	0.09	Democratic Republic of the Congo	No	10	0.36	Honduras	No
19	0.05	Paraguay	Yes	27	0.29		
65	0.01	Liberia	Yes	29	0.28		

Table 30. Countries with the highest FOLUR impact program spatial relevance index scores.

FOLUR impact program								
Total Spatial Relevance index				Normalized Spatial Relevance index				Ex-ante prioritization index
Rank	Score	Country	Program presence	Rank	Score	Country	Program presence	Country
1	0.81	Brazil	Yes	1	0.47	Malaysia	Yes	India
2	0.47	China	Yes	2	0.45	Dominican Republic	No	Indonesia
3	0.34	Indonesia	Yes	3	0.44	Nicaragua	Yes	Brazil (T3)
4	0.25	India	Yes	4	0.44	Paraguay	Yes	China (T3)
5	0.21	Russia	No	5	0.42	Guatemala	Yes	Mexico
6	0.15	Mexico	Yes	6	0.41	Haiti	No	Nigeria

7	0.14	Democratic Republic of the Congo	No	7	0.39	Honduras	No	Bangladesh
8	0.12	Argentina	No	8	0.38	El Salvador	No	Colombia (T8)
9	0.11	Colombia	Yes	9	0.38	Cuba	No	Thailand (T8)
10	0.10	Côte d'Ivoire	Yes	10	0.36	Sierra Leone	No	Ecuador
12	0.08	Nigeria	Yes	73	0.10			
16	0.06	Thailand	Yes	37	0.21			
17	0.06	Vietnam	Yes	17	0.31			
22	0.05	Ethiopia	Yes	89	0.06			
20	0.05	Ghana	Yes	36	0.21			
21	0.05	Tanzania	Yes	71	0.10			
26	0.04	Peru	Yes	100	0.05			
23	0.04	Ukraine	Yes	51	0.16			
32	0.03	Kazakhstan	Yes	115	0.02			
38	0.02	Guinea	Yes	49	0.17			
48	0.02	Papua New Guinea	Yes	95	0.06			
46	0.02	Uganda	Yes	75	0.09			
49	0.01	Kenya	Yes	106	0.04			
53	0.01	Liberia	Yes	20	0.29			
103	0.00	Burundi	Yes	87	0.07			

83	0.00	Uzbekistan	Yes	121	0.02			
----	------	------------	-----	-----	------	--	--	--

218. **Finding 4 – Almost all of countries with child projects in the RFS IAP were found to have very high or high spatial relevance.** Of the 12 countries with child projects, only two (Ghana and Senegal) didn't have very high or high spatial relevance for both the total and normalized indices (Table 31, Table 32). Four of the countries with child projects (Burundi, Malawi, Nigeria and Uganda) had very high relevance for both indices. Burundi had the second lowest food security index score of countries included in the analysis while all four had high climate change vulnerability.

219. **Finding 5 – Several countries with the highest spatial relevance do not have child projects in the program.** Of countries with child projects, only Burundi and Malawi were in the top 10 countries with the highest spatial relevance, with Burundi as the top country in the normalized index and seventh in the total index and Malawi 4th in the normalized index. The countries with the highest total spatial relevance were Chad (highest climate change vulnerability of any country), Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC—very low food security and very high climate change vulnerability), and India (large area of smallholder farms and relatively high climate change vulnerability), none of which have child projects in the program. In the normalized index, after Burundi were Haiti and Bangladesh with the highest spatial relevance. In total, 19 countries classed as very high for total spatial relevance don't have child projects in the program (24 for normalized index), with 13 of those (for both indices) falling in sub-Saharan Africa where the program has all of its child projects.

Table 31. Countries with the highest RFS IAP spatial relevance index scores.

RFS IAP							
Total Spatial Relevance index				Normalized Spatial Relevance index			
Rank	Score	Country	Program presence	Rank	Score	Country	Program presence
1	0.63	Chad	No	1	0.73	Burundi	Yes
2	0.62	Democratic Republic of the Congo	No	2	0.72	Haiti	No
3	0.62	India	No	3	0.72	Bangladesh	No
4	0.61	Eritrea	No	4	0.70	Malawi	Yes

5	0.61	Afghanistan	No	5	0.68	Zimbabwe	No
6	0.60	Somalia	No	6	0.67	Togo	No
7	0.59	Burundi	Yes	7	0.66	Lebanon	No
8	0.58	Yemen	No	8	0.64	Chad	No
9	0.57	Venezuela	No	9	0.64	Eritrea	No
10	0.57	Zimbabwe	No	10	0.63	Rwanda	No
21	0.52	Nigeria	Yes	13	0.62		
23	0.50	Uganda	Yes	16	0.61		
26	0.49	Niger	Yes	43	0.51		
27	0.49	Ethiopia	Yes	33	0.55		
30	0.49	Tanzania	Yes	32	0.55		
37	0.46	Burkina Faso	Yes	30	0.56		
41	0.45	Swaziland	Yes	20	0.60		
44	0.45	Kenya	Yes	50	0.50		
67	0.39	Senegal	Yes	66	0.45		
88	0.30	Ghana	Yes	72	0.43		

Table 32. Countries with the highest RFS IAP spatial relevance scores, showing sub-Saharan African countries only.

RFS IAP – Sub-Saharan Africa only							
Total Spatial Relevance index				Normalized Spatial Relevance index			
Rank	Score	Country	Program presence	Rank	Score	Country	Program presence
1	0.63	Chad	No	1	0.73	Burundi	Yes

2	0.62	Democratic Republic of the Congo	No	2	0.70	Malawi	Yes
3	0.61	Eritrea	No	3	0.68	Zimbabwe	No
4	0.60	Somalia	No	4	0.67	Togo	No
5	0.59	Burundi	Yes	5	0.64	Chad	No
6	0.57	Zimbabwe	No	6	0.64	Eritrea	No
7	0.56	Madagascar	No	7	0.63	Rwanda	No
8	0.54	South Sudan	No	8	0.63	Democratic Republic of the Congo	No
9	0.53	Mauritania	No	9	0.62	Nigeria	Yes
10	0.53	Sudan	No	10	0.61	Uganda	Yes
18	0.49	Niger	Yes	29	0.51		
19	0.49	Ethiopia	Yes	21	0.55		
21	0.49	Tanzania	Yes	20	0.55		
27	0.46	Burkina Faso	Yes	19	0.56		
29	0.45	Swaziland	Yes	13	0.60		
31	0.45	Kenya	Yes	31	0.50		
44	0.39	Senegal	Yes	38	0.45		
47	0.30	Ghana	Yes	39	0.43		

Kenya subnational analysis

220. Finding 1—In Kenya, areas with lowest food insecurity and highest climate change vulnerability did not overlap with areas with the most smallholder agriculture. The counties with the highest spatial relevance for the Kenya RFS IAP index were in the arid north, where

food security was at its lowest and climate change vulnerability its highest. In contrast, areas of smallholder agriculture were mostly located in the southern half of the country (Figure 8). This shows that spatially, there is little area in Kenya in which all of the important environmental and socioeconomic indicators of the RFS IAP exist together. A project hoping to work with the Kenyan populations with the lowest food security probably wouldn't be working with smallholder farmers—instead, the project might want to focus on working with herders in arid regions where agriculture is largely untenable. However, the program by design aims to work with smallholder farmers and thus logically did not work in northern Kenya where there are very few such farmers.

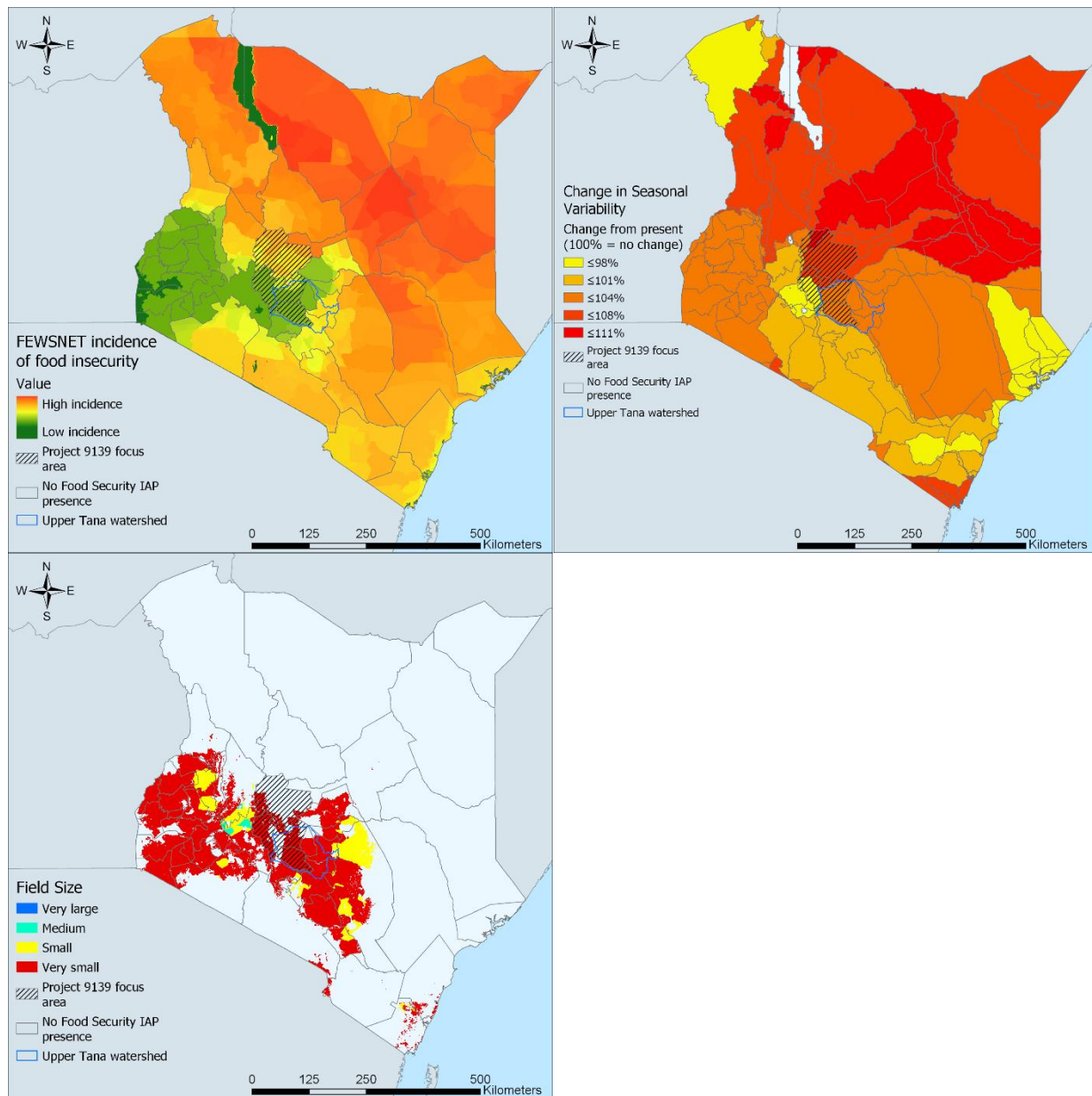


Figure 8. Input layers representing food security (upper left), climate change vulnerability (upper right) and smallholder agriculture (lower left—very small field size only) into the Kenya RFS IAP spatial relevance index.

221. **Finding 2—the Kenya RFS IAP project areas had mixed spatial relevance, capturing neither the counties with the highest nor the lowest spatial relevance (Figure 9).** Only one of the southern counties in the upper Tana river watershed where RFS IAP Project GEF ID 9139 works, Laikipia, was classed having high spatial relevance for the RFS IAP total index while both Laikipia and Muranga had high spatial relevance in the normalized index (Figure 10 and Table 33). Nyeri had moderate and Nyandaru had low spatial relevance for both indices. Laikipia’s relevance was higher because of its high climate change vulnerability (it is the most northern of

the project's counties) and somewhat large amount of smallholder agriculture. Meanwhile, Nyandarua had low incidence of food insecurity, keeping its spatial relevance low.

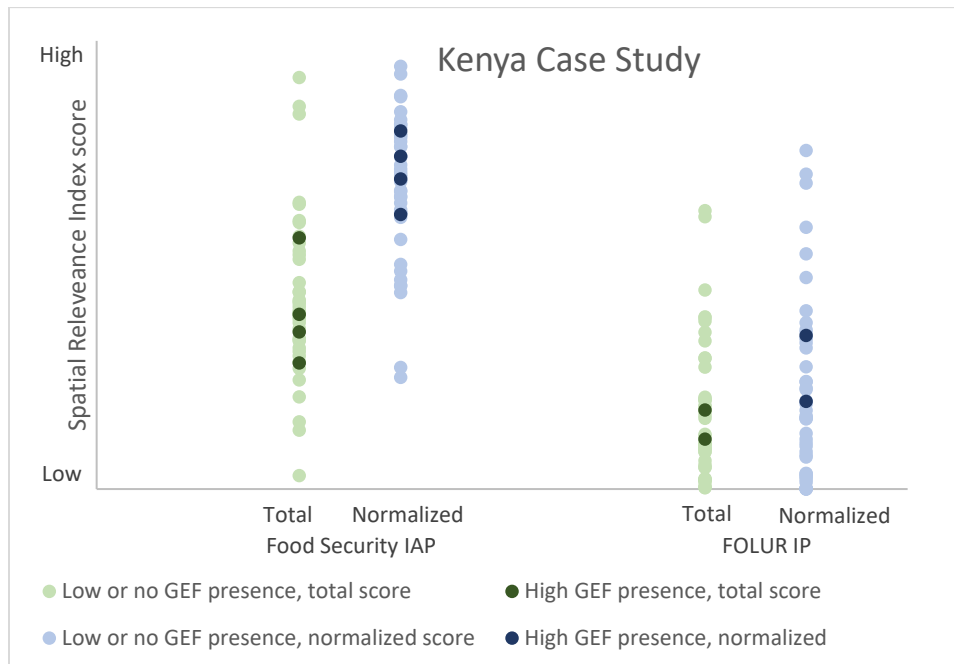


Figure 9. Relative spatial relevance index scores for all counties in Kenya for the RFS IAP and the FOLUR impact program. GEF presence refers to the presence of projects GEF ID 9139 (RFS IAP) and GEF ID 10598 (FOLUR impact program) only.

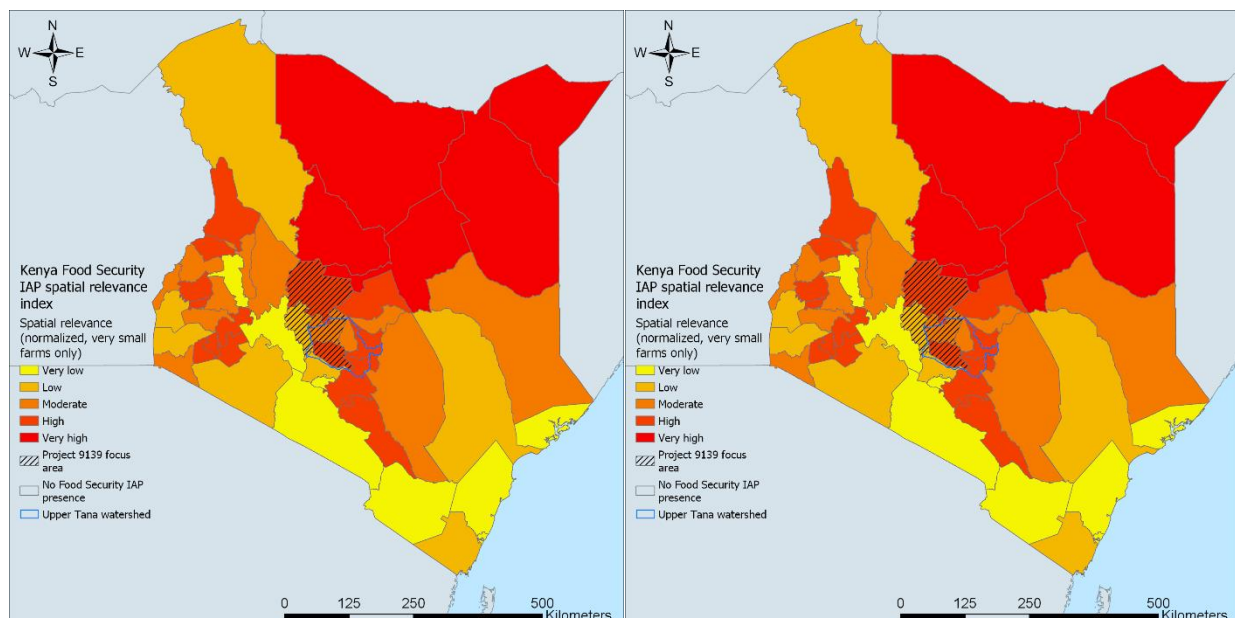


Figure 10. Spatial results for the RFS IAP total (left) and normalized by county area (right) spatial relevance index for the Kenya case study.

Table 33. Kenyan counties with the highest RFS IAP spatial relevance scores.

RFS IAP							
Total Spatial Relevance index				Normalized Spatial Relevance Index			
Rank	Score	County	Project GEF ID 9139 focus area	Rank	Score	County	Project GEF ID 9139 focus area
1	0.64	Marsabit	No	1	0.66	Isiolo	No
2	0.60	Kitui	No	2	0.65	Wajir	No
3	0.59	Wajir	No	3	0.61	Marsabit	No
4	0.45	Isiolo	No	4	0.61	Samburu	No
5	0.44	Narok	No	5	0.59	Mandera	No
9	0.39	Laikipia	Yes	10	0.56		
25	0.27	Nyeri	Yes	25	0.48		
32	0.25	Murang'a	Yes	17	0.52		
41	0.20	Nyandarua	Yes	37	0.43		

222. Finding 3—While the areas of highest spatial relevance for the FOLUR impact program were in southern Kenya, the FOLUR project areas had moderate spatial relevance. The environmental drivers and areas of the major commodities included in the FOLUR impact program child project in Kenya (Project GEF ID 10598) overlapped for the most part, as the areas of deforestation and potential reforestation were in southern Kenya along with the areas of coffee and maize (Figure 11). However, some of the coastal counties had both high deforestation and area suitable for reforestation—and the FOLUR project is not working in that area of the country. Of the two FOLUR impact program project counties which border the Mt. Elgon ecosystem on the border with Uganda, Trans Nzoia had the higher spatial relevance, achieving high relevance in the normalized index and moderate in the total (Figure 12 and Table 34). Bungoma had moderate normalized relevance and low total relevance. Both had fairly high deforestation and area of maize farms but little area suitable for reforestation and low area of coffee farms.

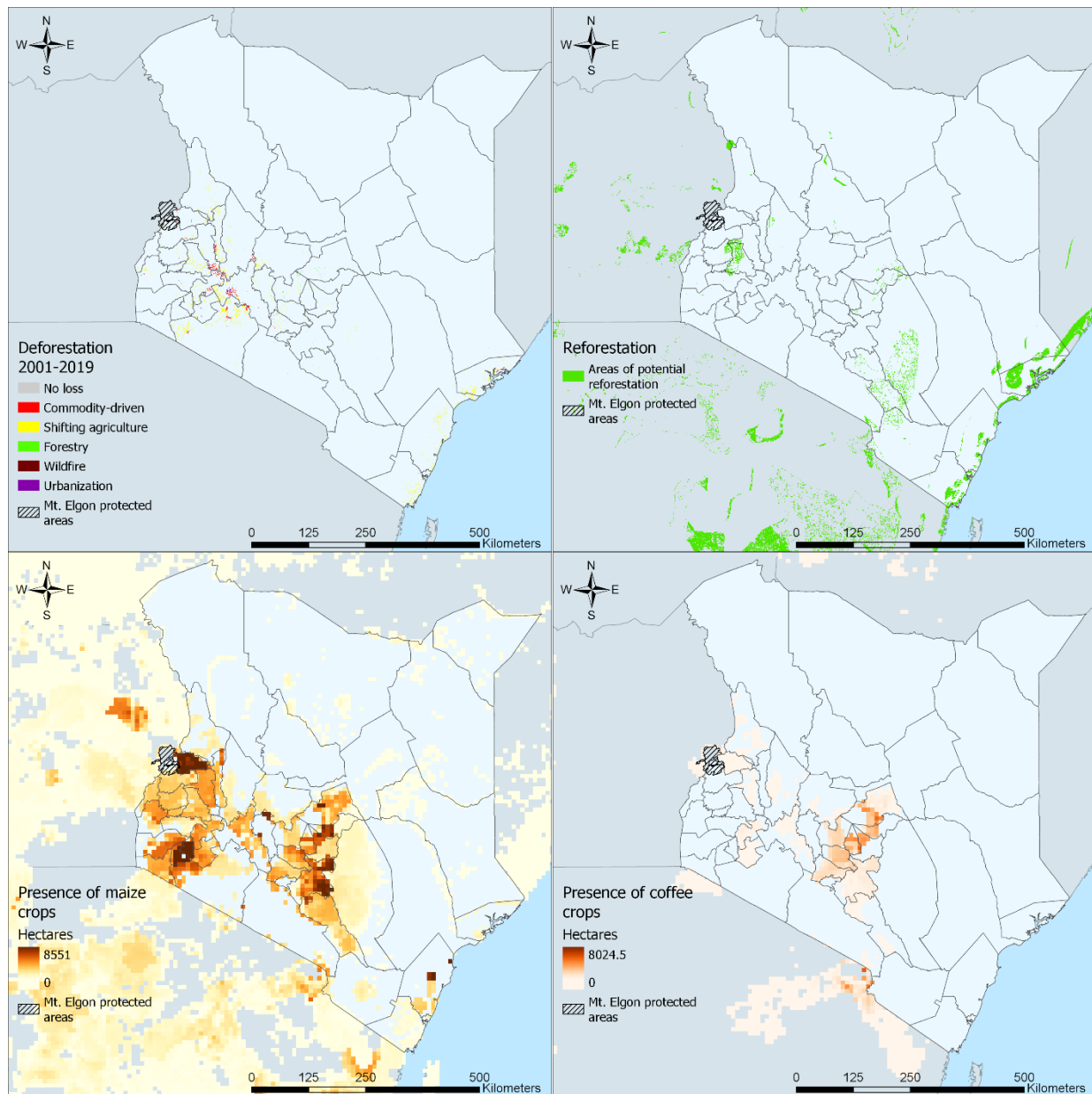


Figure 11. Input layers representing deforestation (upper left, commodity-driven and shifting cultivation only), area suitable for reforestation (upper right), area of maize farms and area of coffee farms, into the Kenya FOLUR impact program spatial relevance index.

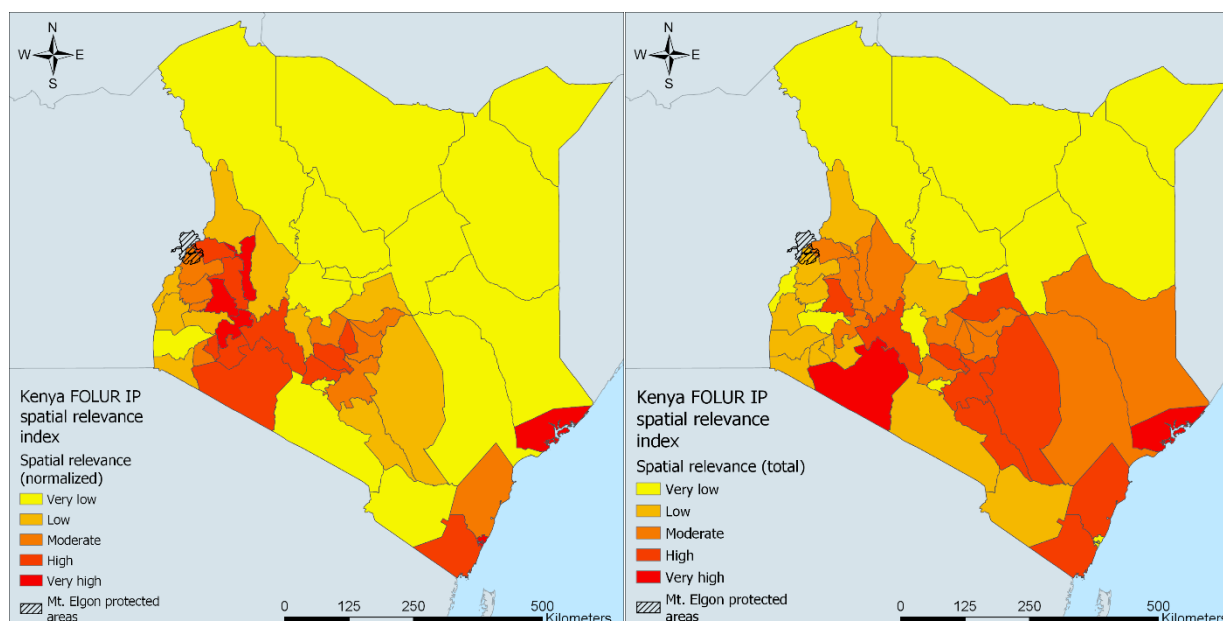
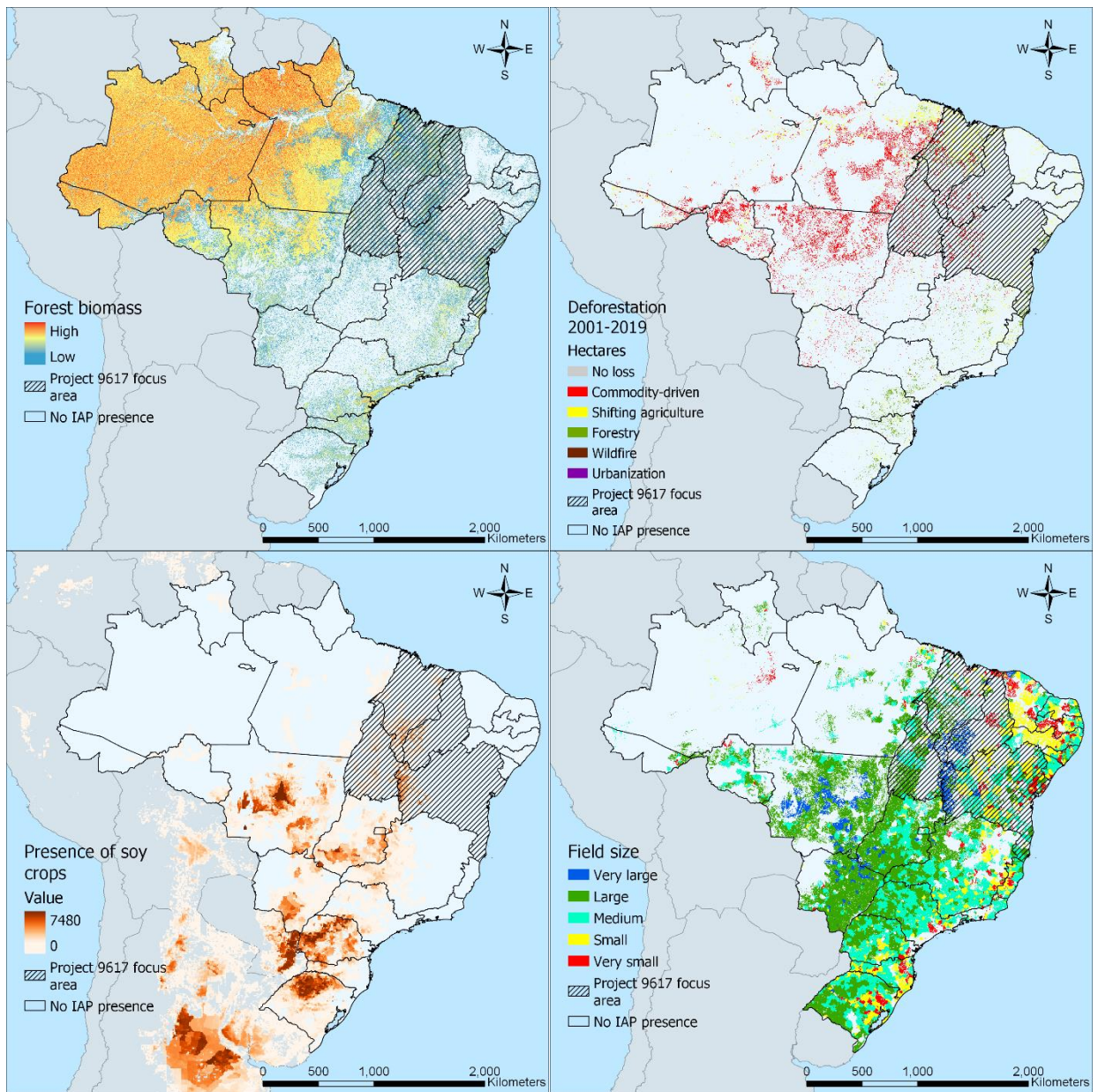


Figure 12. Spatial results for the FOLUR impact program total (left) and normalized by county area (right) spatial relevance index for the Kenya case study.

Table 34. Kenyan counties with the highest FOLUR impact program spatial relevance scores.

FOLUR IAP							
Total Spatial Relevance index				Normalized Spatial Relevance Index			
Rank	Score	County	Borders Mt. Elgon ecosystem	Rank	Score	County	Borders Mt. Elgon ecosystem
1	0.44	Lamu	No	1	0.53	Nandi	No
2	0.43	Narok	No	2	0.49	Lamu	No
3	0.31	Kitui	No	3	0.48	Mombasa	No
4	0.27	Machakos	No	4	0.41	Kericho	No
5	0.27	Meru	No	5	0.37	Elgeyo-Marakwet	No
19	0.12	Trans Nzoia	Yes	11	0.24		
27	0.08	Bungoma	Yes	22	0.14		

223. **Finding 1—The GGP IAP spatial relevance indices showed high spatial relevance in the central portions of Brazil, including one of the program’s child project focal areas—the Bahia state.** The geospatial layers included in the GGP IAP spatial relevance indices showed diverging patterns—with the forest-related indicators (forest biomass and deforestation) highest in the Amazon rainforest biome, while the agricultural indices (smallholder farming and presence of soy farms) and biodiversity highest in northeastern Brazil and southern Brazil (Figure 13). The result was that, according to the total spatial index, the areas with the highest spatial relevance were the large states in the central portion of the country—Mato Grosso, Minas Gerais, Bahia and Pará (Figure 14, Figure 15 and Table 35). The normalized index yielded quite different results, with some southern states high in soy and biodiversity hotspot area having the highest spatial relevance. However, southern Brazil had very low commodity-driven deforestation, meaning the large amount of soy in the area is unlikely a large driver of deforestation and the remaining forest there is less at risk than in other areas of the country. Of Project GEF ID 9617’s focus states, Bahia has the highest spatial relevance, rating very high for total and moderate for normalized. Tocantins had moderate spatial relevance for both indices and Maranhão and Piauí had moderate total and low normalized spatial relevance.



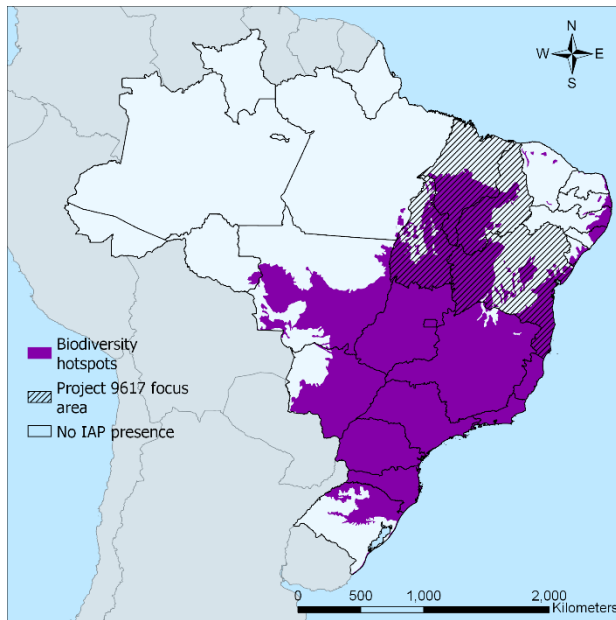


Figure 13. Input layers representing forest biomass (top left), deforestation (top right, commodity-driven only), area of soy farms (middle left), area of smallholder farms (middle right, small and very small field sizes only) and biodiversity hotspots (lower left) into the Brazil Commodity IAP spatial relevance indices.

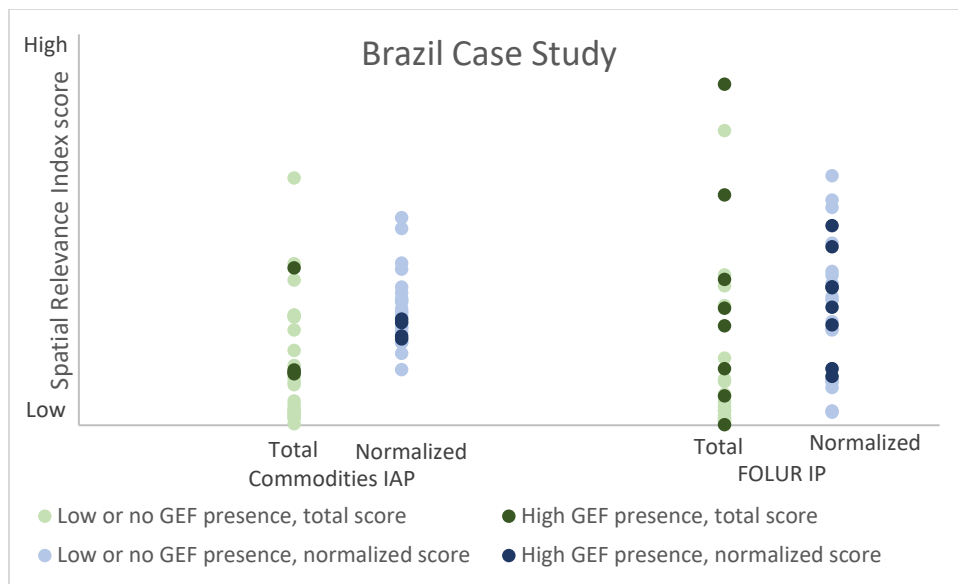


Figure 14. Relative spatial relevance index scores for all states in Brazil for the GGP IAP and the FOLUR impact program. GEF presence refers to the presence of projects GEF ID 9617 (GGP IAP) and GEF ID 10468 (FOLUR impact program) only.

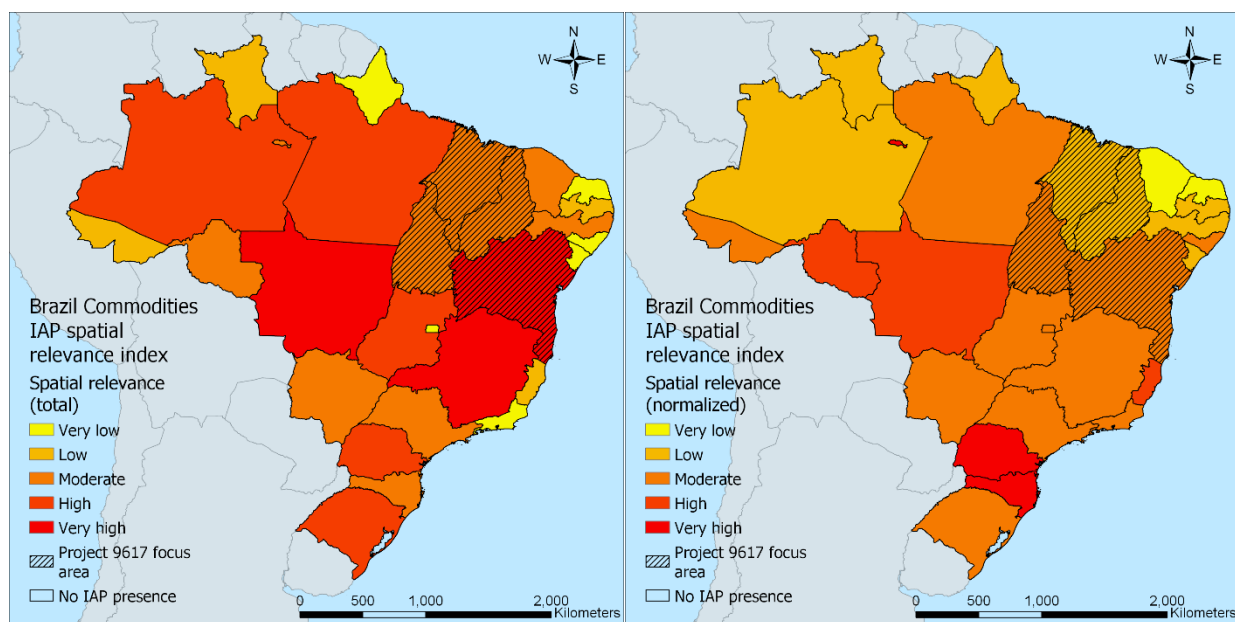


Figure 15. Spatial results for the GGP total (left) and normalized by county area (right) spatial relevance indices for the Brazil case study.

Table 35. Brazilian states with the highest GGP IAP spatial relevance index scores.

GGP IAP							
Total Spatial Relevance index				Normalized Spatial Relevance Index			
Rank	Score	State	Project GEF ID 9617 focus area	Rank	Score	State	Project 9617 GEF ID focus area
1	0.57	Mato Grosso	No	1	0.48	Paraná	No
2	0.37	Minas Gerais	No	2	0.45	Santa Catarina	No
3	0.36	Bahia	Yes	3	0.37	Espírito Santo	No
4	0.33	Pará	No	4	0.36	Mato Grosso	No
5	0.25	Paraná	No	5	0.32	Rondônia	No
11	0.13	Maranhão	Yes	21	0.21		
12	0.12	Piauí	Yes	23	0.20		
14	0.12	Tocantins	Yes	14	0.24		

224. **Finding 2—the focus states of the FOLUR impact program child project in the southern Cerrado biome had mostly high spatial relevance.** The Cerrado biome, the focus of Project GEF ID 10468, cuts a large swath of Brazil from north to south between the interior Amazon region and the coastal Atlantic forest biome (Figure 16). It is likely that the FOLUR project will focus in the southern portion of the biome in productive landscapes in six states. These southern portions of the ecosystem have high amounts of soy and cattle, while deforestation is spread throughout the ecosystem (although not as high as in the eastern Amazon region). Most of the ecosystem has low amounts of area suitable for reforestation compared to the eastern Amazon region and the central Atlantic coastal states. Two of the states where the project is likely to work had very high total spatial relevance (Mato Grosso and Minas Gerais) and three had high relevance (Bahia, Goiás and Mato Grosso do Sul). The only state that is included in the likely

project area with very low spatial relevance was the Distrito Federal—a small state covering the capital city of Brasília with low forest cover and deforestation. Some states outside of the Cerrado with the highest spatial relevance included Paraná and Rondônia, with very high normalized spatial relevance and high total spatial relevance. Paraná had very high soy area and potential for reforestation although low deforestation, meaning soy is unlikely a large driver of deforestation in the state. In contrast, Rondônia had very high deforestation and cattle area.

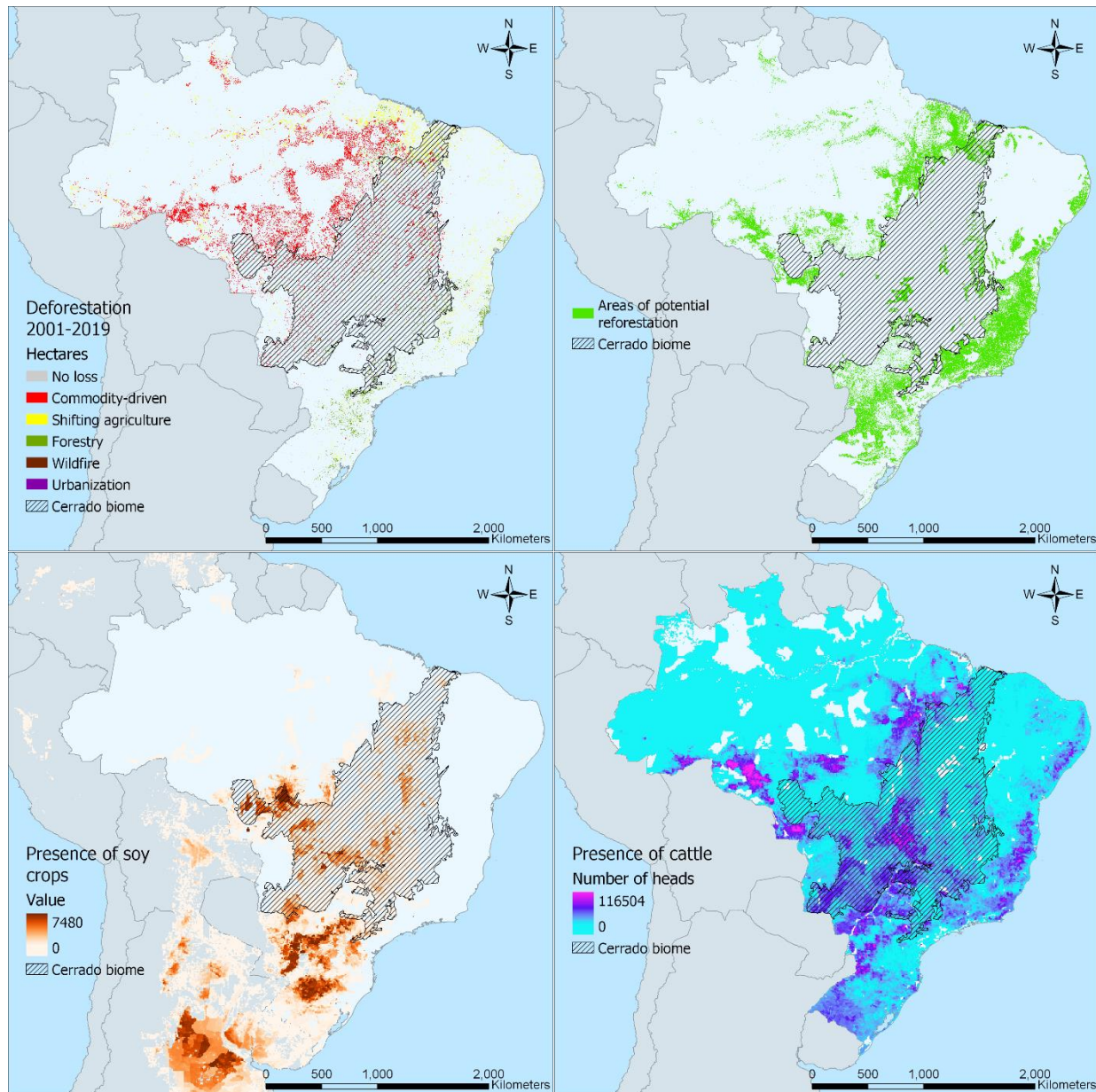


Figure 16. Input layers representing deforestation (top left, commodity-driven and shifting cultivation only), area suitable for reforestation (upper right), area of soy farms (lower left) and location of cattle (lower right) into the Brazil FOLUR impact program spatial relevance indices.

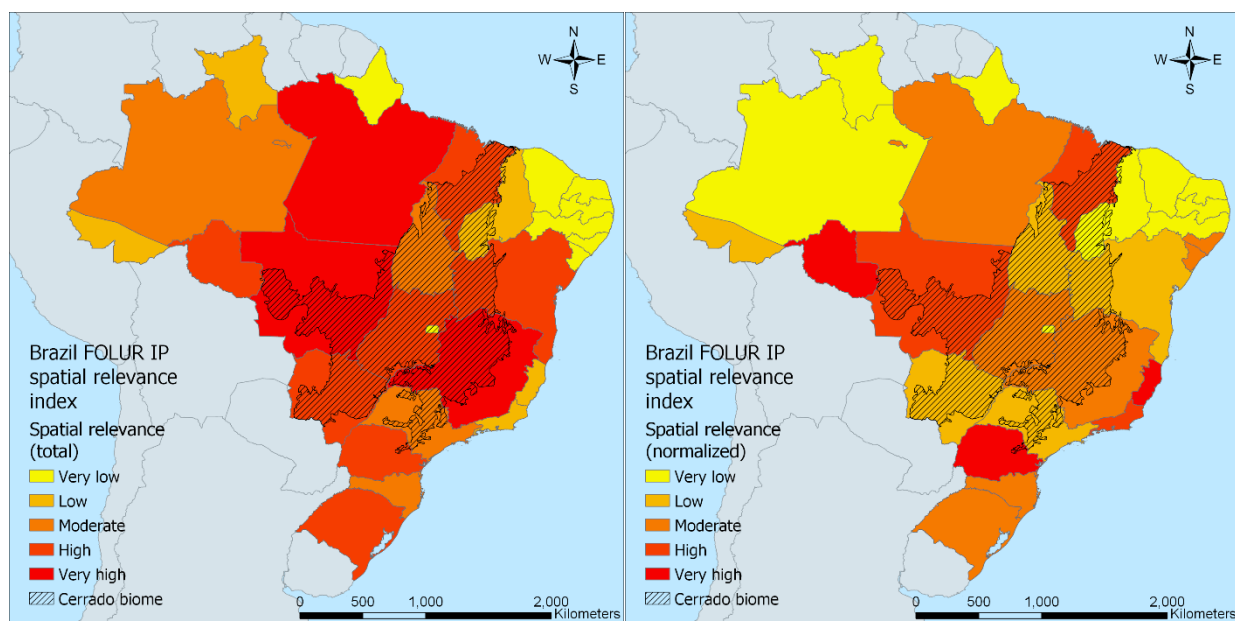


Figure 17. Spatial results for the FOLUR impact program total (left) and normalized by county area (right) spatial relevance index for the Brazil case study.

Table 36. Brazilian states with the highest FOLUR impact program spatial relevance scores.

FOLUR IAP							
Total Spatial Relevance index				Normalized Spatial Relevance Index			
Ran k	Scor e	State	Percent of area in Cerrado ecosystem	Ran k	Scor e	State	Percent of area in Cerrado ecosystem
1	0.79	Mato Grosso	40%	1	0.57	Rondônia	0%
2	0.68	Pará	0%	2	0.52	Paraná	2%
3	0.53	Minas Gerais	56%	3	0.50	Espírito Santo	0%
4	0.35	Bahia	26%	4	0.46	Maranhão	64%
5	0.34	Maranhão	64%	5	0.42	Rio de Janeiro	0%
9	0.27	Goiás	97%	11	0.32		

10	0.23	Mato Grosso do Sul	60%	14	0.27		
12	0.13	Tocantins	91%	16	0.23		
16	0.07	Piauí	37%	19	0.13		
27	0.00	Distrito Federal	100%	21	0.11		

ANNEX V: LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

	Name	Organization	IAP/impact program
Conventions			
1	Neil Pratt	UNCBD	All
2	Yibin Xiang	UNCBD	All
3	Frank Moser	Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions	All
4	Melchiade Bukuru	UNCCD	All
5	Louise Baker	UNCCD	All
6	Phillip Eyre	UNFCCC	All
7	Noah Kim	UNFCCC	All
8	Jenny Wong	UNFCCC	All
9	Debapriya Roy	UNFCCC	All
GEF Secretariat, STAP, and CSO Network			
10	Carlos Manuel Rodriguez	GEF Secretariat	All
11	Ulrich Apel	GEF Secretariat	Drylands impact program
12	Sonja Teelucksingh	GEF Secretariat	All
13	Paul Hartman	GEF Secretariat	GGP; FOLUR
14	Pascal Martinez	GEF Secretariat	GGP; FOLUR
15	Mohamed Bakarr	GEF Secretariat	All
16	Matthew Reddy	GEF Secretariat	All
17	Mark Zimsky	GEF Secretariat	Amazon Impact Program; FOLUR
18	Jean-Marc Sinnassamy	GEF Secretariat	RFS; Congo impact program
19	Gustavo Alberto Fonseca	GEF Secretariat	All
20	Claude Gascon	GEF Secretariat	All
21	Aloke Barnwal	GEF Secretariat	Sustainable Cities - IAP
22	Rosina Bierbaum	GEF STAP	All
23	Guadalupe Duron	GEF STAP	All
24	Christopher Whaley	GEF STAP	All
25	Blake Ratner	GEF STAP	FOLUR
26	Maria Leichne	GEF CSO Network	All
GEF Agencies			
27	Phillippe Munyaruyenzi	AfDB	Sustainable Cities - IAP and Impact Program
28	Arunkumar S. Abraham	ADB	Sustainable Cities - IAP and Impact Program
29	Alexander D. Nash	ADB	Sustainable Cities - IAP and Impact Program

	Name	Organization	IAP/impact program
30	Cecilia Guerra	CAF	Amazon impact Program
31	Miguel Morales	Conservation International	GGP
32	John Buchanan	Conservation International	GGP
33	Jessica Furmanski	Conservation International	GGP
34	Amanda Sennert	Conservation International	GGP
35	Peter Alele	Conservation International	RFS
36	Monica Noon	Conservation International	RFS
37	Everline Ndenga	Conservation International	RFS
38	Alex Zvoleff	Conservation International	RFS
39	Neila Maria Cavalcante	Conservation International Brasil	GGP
40	Mariana Parra	Conservation International Brasil	GGP
41	Karine Barcelos	Conservation International Brasil	GGP
42	Valeria Gonzalez Riggio	FAO	Amazon impact program; FOLUR
43	Thomas Hammond	FAO	Drylands impact program
44	Stefano Mondovi	FAO	RFS
45	Maria Hernandez Lagana	FAO	RFS
46	Marcelo Rezende	FAO	Drylands Impact Program
47	Fritjof Boerstler	FAO	RFS; Drylands impact program
48	Anne Sophie Poisot	FAO	RFS
49	Alex Nyarko Badohu	FAO	RFS
50	Adrian Barrance	FAO	Drylands impact program
51	Angela Joehl	FAO, China	FOLUR
52	Patricio Zambrano-Barragán	IADB	Conservation International -IAP and Impact Program
53	Liza Leclerc	IFAD	RFS
54	Jonky Tenou	IFAD	RFS
55	Edith Kirumba	IFAD	RFS
56	Sheila Agarwal-Khan	IUCN	Drylands impact program
57	Jonathan Davies	IUCN	Drylands impact program
58	Kenneth Angu	IUCN	CBSL impact program
59	Tomas Sales	UNDP	RFS; FOLUR
60	Phemo K. Kgomo	UNDP	RFS
61	Pascale Bonzom	UNDP	RFS

	Name	Organization	IAP/impact program
62	Ludmilla Diniz	UNDP	SC-IAP and impact program
63	Frederico Machado	UNDP	GGP
64	Charles O'Malley	UNDP	GGP
65	Andrew Bovarnick	UNDP	GGP; FOLUR impact program
66	Andrea Bina	UNDP	GGP
67	Aline da Silva	UNDP	GGP
68	Alexandra Fischer	UNDP	GGP; Amazon impact program
69	Ruth Coutto	UNEP	SC-IAP and impact program
70	Margaret Oduk	UNEP	RFS
71	Lara Yacobo	UNEP	GGP
72	Jonathan Gheysens	UNEP	GGP
73	Johan Robinson	UNEP	Congo impact program
74	Jacinto Coello	UNEP	GGP
75	Ivo Mulder	UNEP	GGP
76	Geordie Colville	UNEP	SC-IAP and impact program
77	Doreen Robinson	UNEP	Congo impact program
78	Charles Sebukeera	UNEP	RFS
79	Asher Lessels	UNEP	SC-IAP and impact program
80	Martina Otto	UNEP-Cities	SC-IAP and impact program
81	Katarina Barunica Spoljaric	UNIDO	SC-IAP and impact program
82	Jianwen Liu	World Bank, China	FOLUR
83	Xueman Wang	World Bank	SC-IAP and impact program
84	William Sutton	World Bank	FOLUR
85	Wanli Fang	World Bank	SC-IAP
86	Timothy H. Brown	World Bank	FOLUR
87	Tanya Lisa Yudelman	World Bank	Amazon impact program
88	Sameh Naguib Wahba	World Bank	SC-IAP and impact program
89	Nyaneba Nkrumah	World Bank	Congo impact program
90	Lindsey Knowles Larson	World Bank	FOLUR
91	Gayatri Kanungo	World Bank	RFS; FOLUR
92	Bernadete Lange	World Bank	GGP

	Name	Organization	IAP/impact program
93	Angela Armstrong	World Bank	GGP
94	Ana María Gonzalez	World Bank	Amazon impact program
95	Adriana Moreira	World Bank / GEF Secretariat	Amazon impact program
96	Rachel Kaplan	WWF-US	FOLUR impact program
97	Margaret Arbuthnot	WWF	GGP
98	Isabel Filiberto	WWF	Amazon impact program
99	Gino Bianco	WWF	GGP
All Other Stakeholders			
100	Diego Riaño	C40	SC-IAP and impact program
101	Andrea Fernandez	C40	SC-IAP and impact program
102	Nazaré Lima Soares	CGEE	SC-IAP and impact program
103	Rose Nankya	CGIAR/Bioversity	RFS
104	Debra Jarvis	CGIAR/Bioversity	RFS
105	Ana Maria Paez	CGIAR	RFS
106	Marco Aurelio Lóbo	CGEE	SC-IAP and impact program
107	Hhe Xin	Chengdu	SC-IAP and impact program
108	He Xingyu	Chengdu PMO	SC-IAP and impact program
109	Bai Wei	China Center for Urban Development (CCUD)	SC-IAP and impact program
110	Zhao Lihua	China Hubei Province Project Management Office	FOLUR
111	Shi Shangbai	China Hubei Province Project Management Office	FOLUR
112	Zhang Yanping	China Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs	FOLUR
113	Chen Fu	China Team Leader of Chinese Expert Team	FOLUR
114	Zhou Tao	Chongqing PMO	SC-IAP and impact program
115	Xu Wei	Chongqing PMO	SC-IAP and impact program
116	Li Heng	Guiyang PMO	SC-IAP and impact program
117	He Li	Guiyang PMO	SC-IAP and impact program

	Name	Organization	IAP/impact program
118	Sasha Mentz	ICRAF	RFS; FOLUR impact program
119	Sabrina Chesterman	ICRAF	RFS; FOLUR
120	Rodrigo Ciannella	ICRAF	RFS
121	Lucy Martin	ICRAF	RFS; FOLUR
122	Dieter Fischer	IFC	GGP
123	Vidya Rangan	ISEAL Alliance	GGP
124	Karin Kreider	ISEAL Alliance	GGP
125	Charles Oluchina	Kenya, Southern Rangelands Project	Drylands impact program
126	Philip Kisoyan	Kenya, Mt. Elgon Conservation and Restoration Project	FOLUR
127	Patrick Mugi	Kenya, Mt. Elgon Conservation and Restoration Project	FOLUR impact program
128	Meshack Muga	Kenya, Mt. Elgon Conservation and Restoration Project	FOLUR impact program
129	Agnes Yobteric	Kenya Min. of Environment and Forestry	RFS; FOLUR
130	Roger White	Kenya GEF Water Fund Project (UTNWFP)	RFS
131	Loice Abende	Kenya GEF Water Fund Project (UTNWFP)	RFS; FOLUR
132	Anthony Kariuki	Kenya GEF Water Fund Project (UTNWFP)	RFS; FOLUR
133	Marcela Aboim	MCTI	SC-IAP
134	Zulkiffle Mohamad	MIGHT	SC-IAP and impact program
135	Ir. Qaharuddin Abdullah	MIGHT	SC-IAP and impact program
136	Anusha Magendram	MIGHT	SC-IAP and impact program
137	Otavio Ferrarini	MMA	
138	João Arthur Soccal Seyffarth	MMA	
139	Zhang Wanjun	MoHURD child project	SC-IAP and impact program
140	Wang Yao	MoHURD child project	SC-IAP and impact program
141	Zhou Huining	Ningbo child project/PMO	SC-IAP and impact program
142	Zuleica Goulart	PCS	SC-IAP
143	Isadora Freire	Porto Digital/ARIES	SC-IAP
144	Jane Lino	ProForest	GGP
145	Isabella Freire	ProForest	GGP
146	Wang Jie	Shenzhen child project	SC-IAP and impact program

	Name	Organization	IAP/impact program
147	Luo Xianwu	Tsinghua University	SC-IAP and impact program
148	Viviane Romero	WRI Brasil	SC-IAP and impact program
149	Luiza de Oliveira Schmidt	WRI Brasil	SC-IAP
150	Rogier Van den Berg	WRI	SC-IAP
151	Mariana Orloff	WRI	SC-IAP and impact program

ANNEX VI: SURVEY RESULTS

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

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

Q 1. Which have you been involved in?

	Number of Responses	%
None of the above	23	9%
GEF-6 IAP only	76	28%
GEF-7 impact program only	114	43%
Both IAP and impact program	55	21%
<i>Answered</i>	<i>268</i>	
<i>Skipped</i>	<i>0</i>	

Q 2. Which GEF-6 IAP have you been involved in? (select all that apply)

	Number of Responses	%
None of the above	4	5%
Sustainable Cities	24	32%
Food Security (Resilient Food Systems)	50	66%
Commodities (Good Growth Partnership)	3	4%
<i>Answered</i>	<i>76</i>	
<i>Skipped</i>	<i>192</i>	

Q 3. Which GEF-7 impact program have you been involved in? (select all that apply)

	Number of Responses	%
None of the above	1	1%
Sustainable Cities	14	13%
FOLUR	51	46%
Amazon Sustainable Landscapes	10	9%
Congo Basin Sustainable Landscapes	8	7%
Dryland Sustainable Landscapes	44	40%
<i>Answered</i>	<i>111</i>	
<i>Skipped</i>	<i>157</i>	

Q 4. Which GEF-6 IAP have you been involved in? (select all that apply)

	Number of Responses	%
None of the above	13	25%
Sustainable Cities	11	21%

Food Security (Resilient Food Systems)	24	46%
Commodities (Good Growth Partnership)	7	13%
<i>Answered</i>	52	
<i>Skipped</i>	216	

Q 5. Which GEF-7 impact program have you been involved in? (select all that apply)

	Number of Responses	%
None of the above	5	10%%
Sustainable Cities	10	19%
FOLUR	26	50%
Amazon Sustainable Landscapes	6	12%
Congo Basin Sustainable Landscapes	0	0%
Dryland Sustainable Landscapes	13	25%
<i>Answered</i>	52	
<i>Skipped</i>	216	

Q 6. Which type of organization do you belong to?

	Number of Responses	%
Government	78	35%
GEF Agency	88	39%
Private sector	9	4%
Civil society	13	6%
Other (please specify)	38	17%
<i>Answered</i>	226	
<i>Skipped</i>	42	

Q 7. As a government actor, which of the following options describe your function? (select all options that apply)

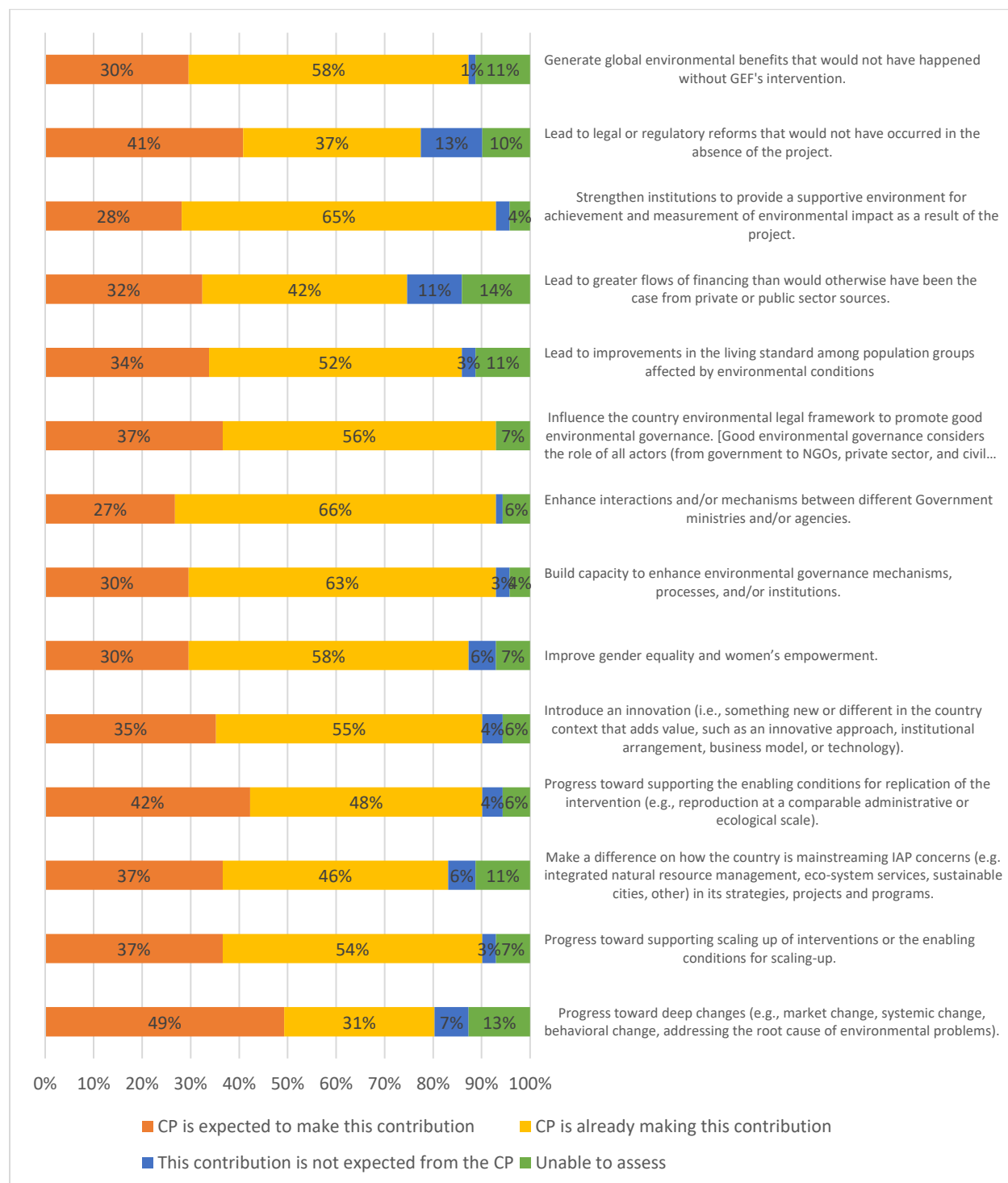
	Number of Responses	%
GEF operational focal point	29	38%
GEF political focal point	1	1%
Convention focal point (CBD, UNCCD, UNFCCC)	20	26%
Project contact point	31	40%
Other (please specify)	10	13%
<i>Answered</i>	77	
<i>Skipped</i>	191	

Q 8. As a GEF Agency actor, which of the following options describe your function? (select all options that apply)

	Number of Responses	%
Technical staff	49	56%
Country representative	5	6%
Program/project contact point	42	48%

Other (please specify)	12	14%
<i>Answered</i>	<i>88</i>	
<i>Skipped</i>	<i>180</i>	

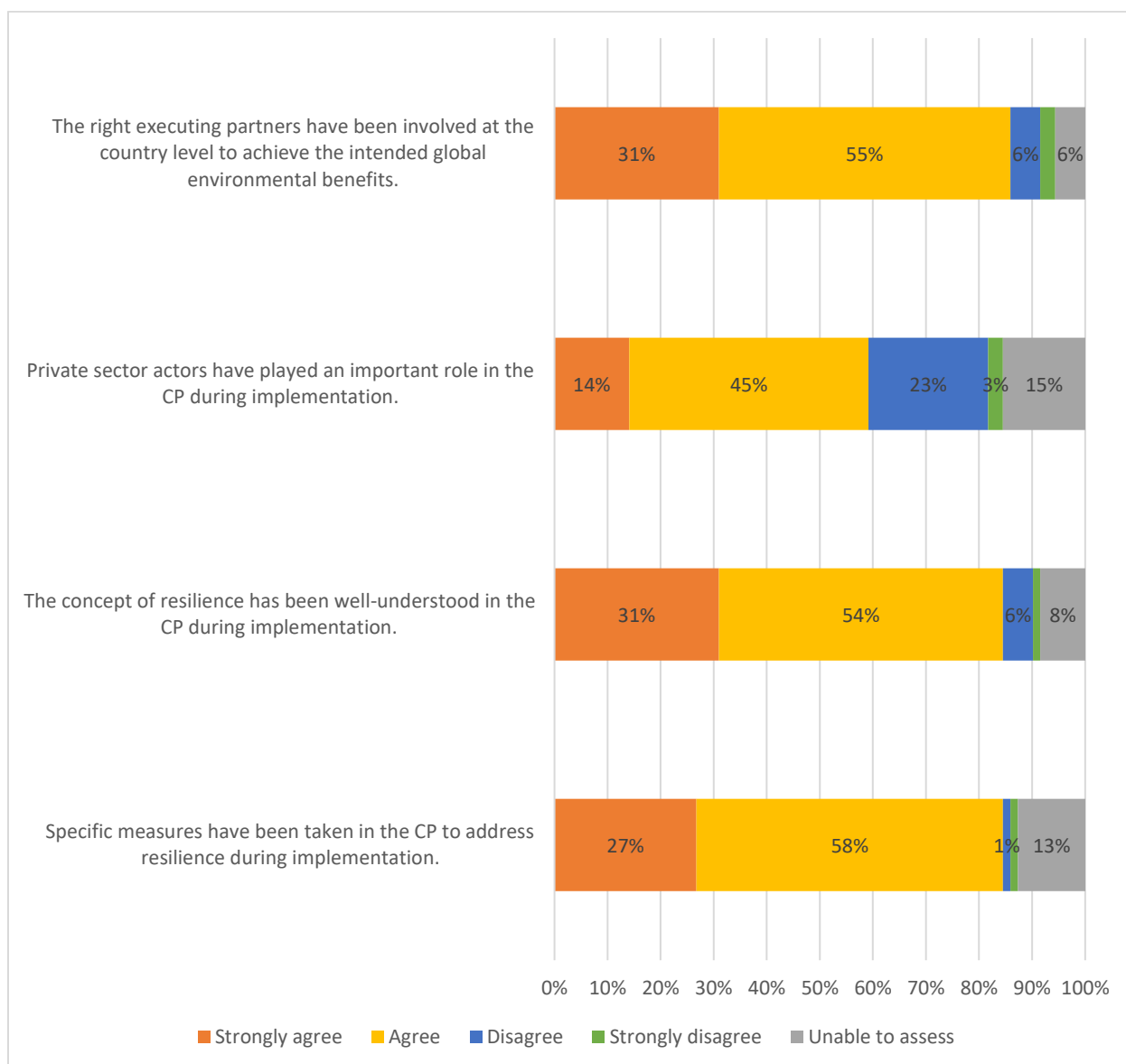
Q 9. What do you see as the main contributions that the GEF-6 IAP Child Project (child project) is expected to make, or is already making, compared to baseline or business or usual (i.e., without the GEF's intervention)? (indicate your agreement with the following statements) (n=71)



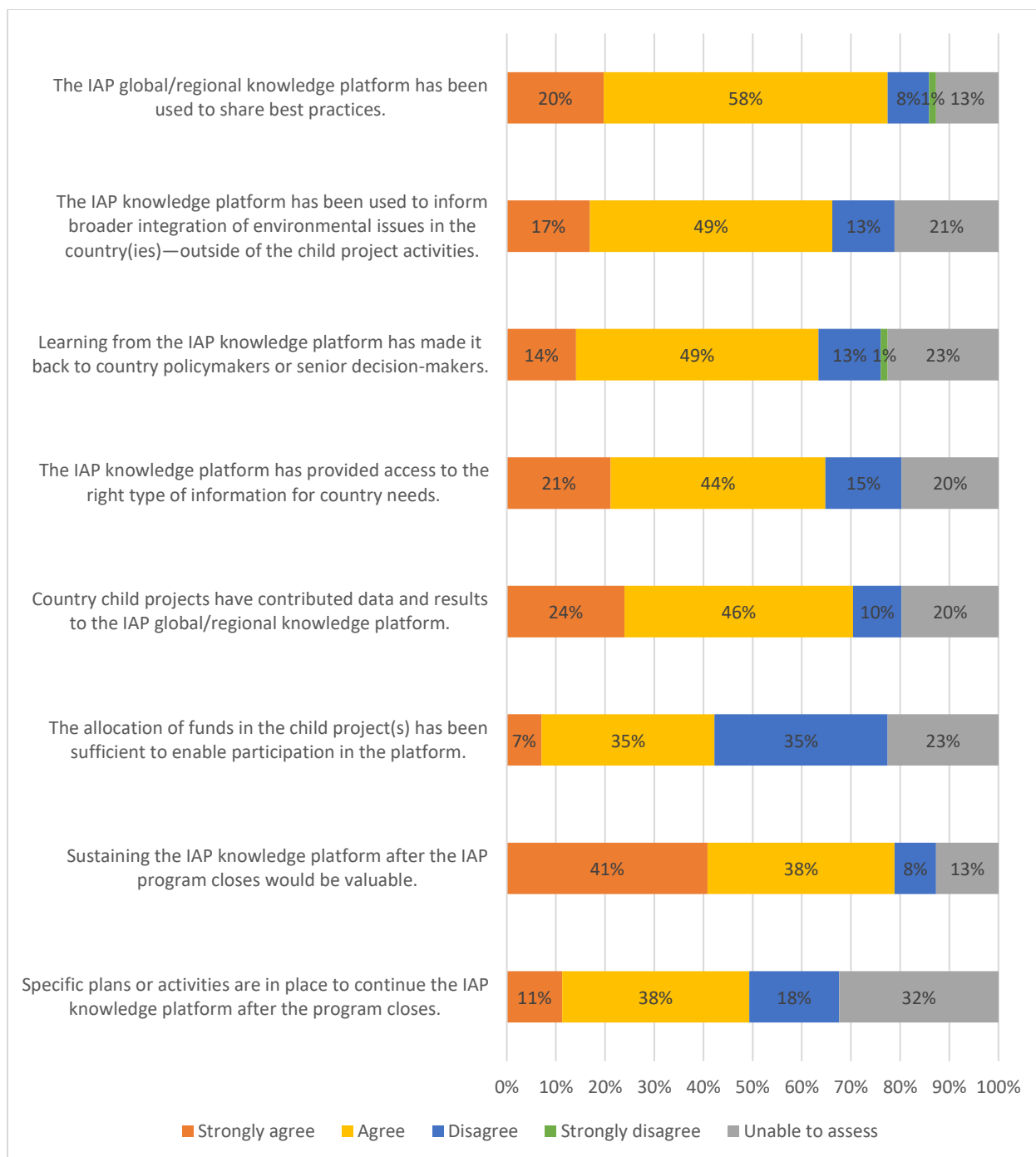
Q 10. Please provide specific examples of these contributions that the child project is already making.

	Number of Responses
Answered	39
Skipped	229

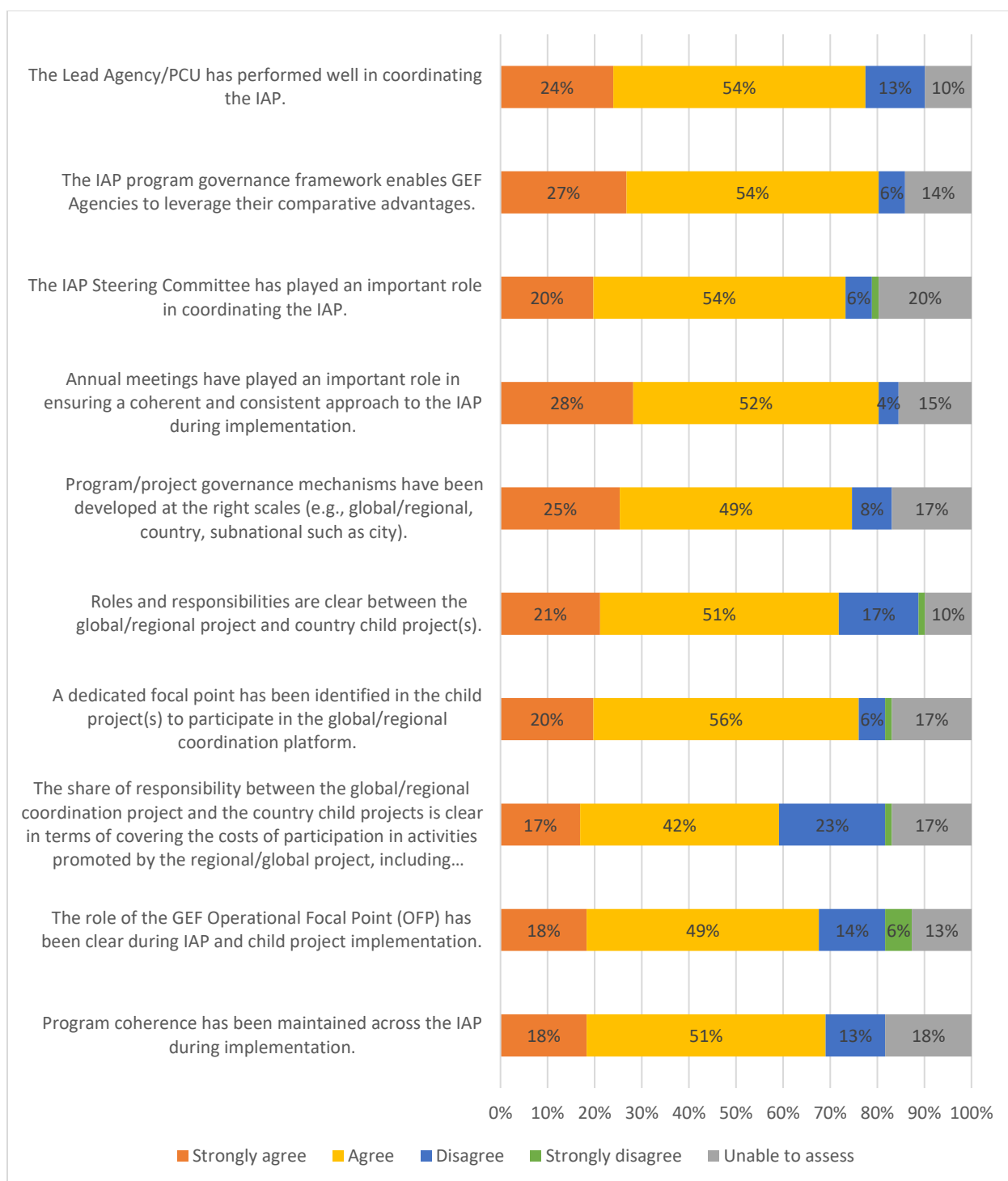
Q 11. To what extent do you agree with these cross-cutting statements? (indicate your agreement with the following statements) (n=71)



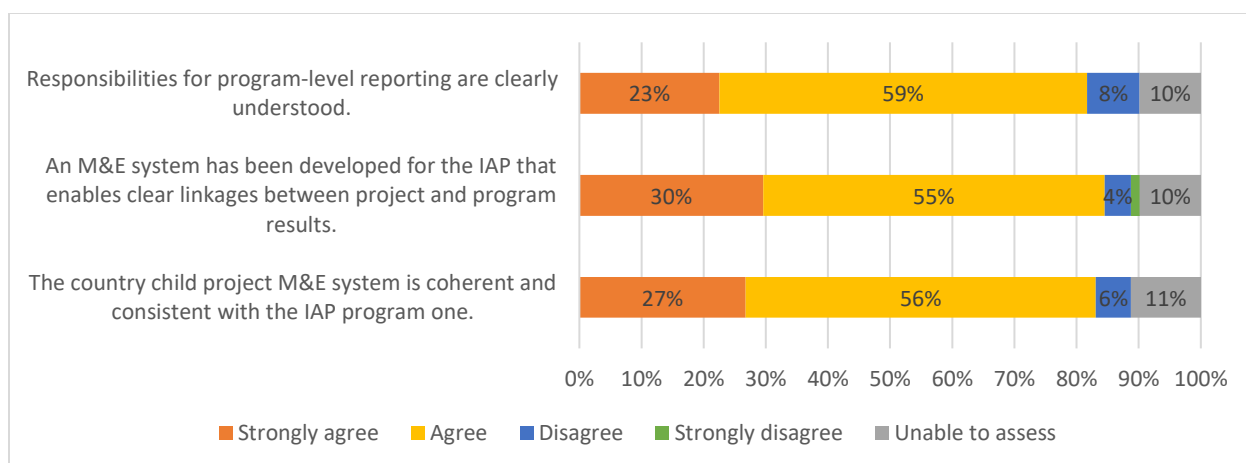
Q 12. How effectively has knowledge been shared within the GEF-6 IAPs through the knowledge platforms led by the global/regional project? (indicate your agreement with the following statements) (n=71)



Q 13. Have the IAPs' internal governance and coordination systems been transparent and effective during implementation? (indicate your agreement with the following statements) (n=71)



Q 14. To what extent has a clear and demonstrated link been established between program and project results? (indicate your agreement with the following statements) (n=71)



Q 15. What have been the main challenges faced so far in implementing the GEF-6 IAP child projects? (select up to 3) (n=71)

	Number of Responses	%
Lack of knowledge and/or institutional capacity to advance the integrated approach at national and/or local levels	19	27%
Difficulties to communicate to different UN Conventions on results achieved through an integrated approach	14	20%
Challenges to overcome sectoral mandates or coordinate among ministries and agencies	27	38%
Changes in government administration and/or priorities	30	42%
Challenges engaging with the hub or global/regional coordination project	15	21%
Limited flexibility to respond to emerging or changing priorities or requirements	8	11%
Expected co-financing did not materialize or is delayed	12	17%
Challenges related to adoption of new practices and approaches	8	11%
Challenges related to implementation arrangements (e.g., joint implementation by multiple Agencies, execution by multiple national agencies)	30	42%
Unexpected trade-offs between project objectives	3	4%
Operational challenge (such as procurement, contractual issues, quality of work)	10	14%
Other – explain	10	14%
<i>Answered</i>	<i>71</i>	
<i>Skipped</i>	<i>197</i>	

Q 16. What has been your main motivation for participating in this GEF-7 impact program?
(select up to 3) (n=115)

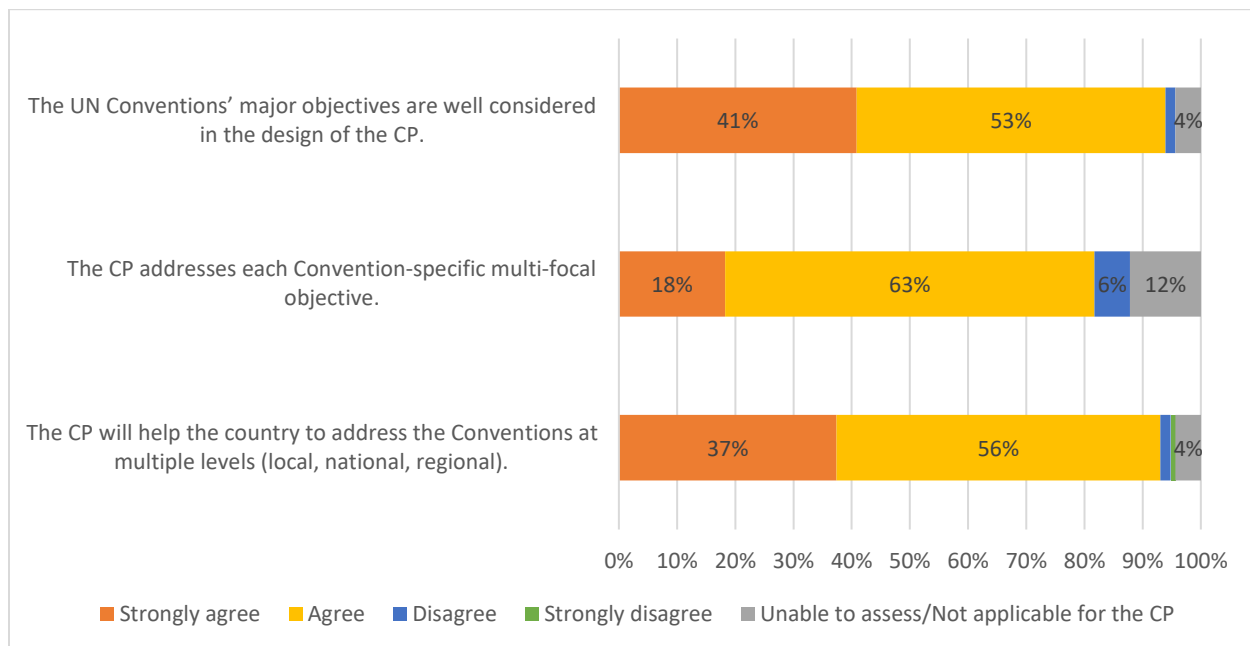
A t-test was conducted for Questions 16 and 17 to determine if responses from Government respondents were statistically different between all other respondents. T-test results indicate that there is not a statistically significant difference in responses for Questions 16 ($p=0.83$) and 17 ($p=0.75$)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

	Number of Responses	%
Learning and piloting integrated approaches to address drivers of environmental degradation	78	68%
Developing models for replication, upscaling or mainstreaming in future (emerging) projects or programs	67	58%
Participating in regional or global platforms for engagement and interaction with other partners on the issues	57	50%
Accessing funds beyond available GEF STAR resources	32	28%
Expanding funding resources for other ongoing or planned projects or programs (both GEF and non GEF)	28	24%
Potential for leveraging higher co-financing as compared with previous and current GEF projects	24	21%
Other – explain	6	5%
<i>Answered</i>	<i>115</i>	
<i>Skipped</i>	<i>153</i>	

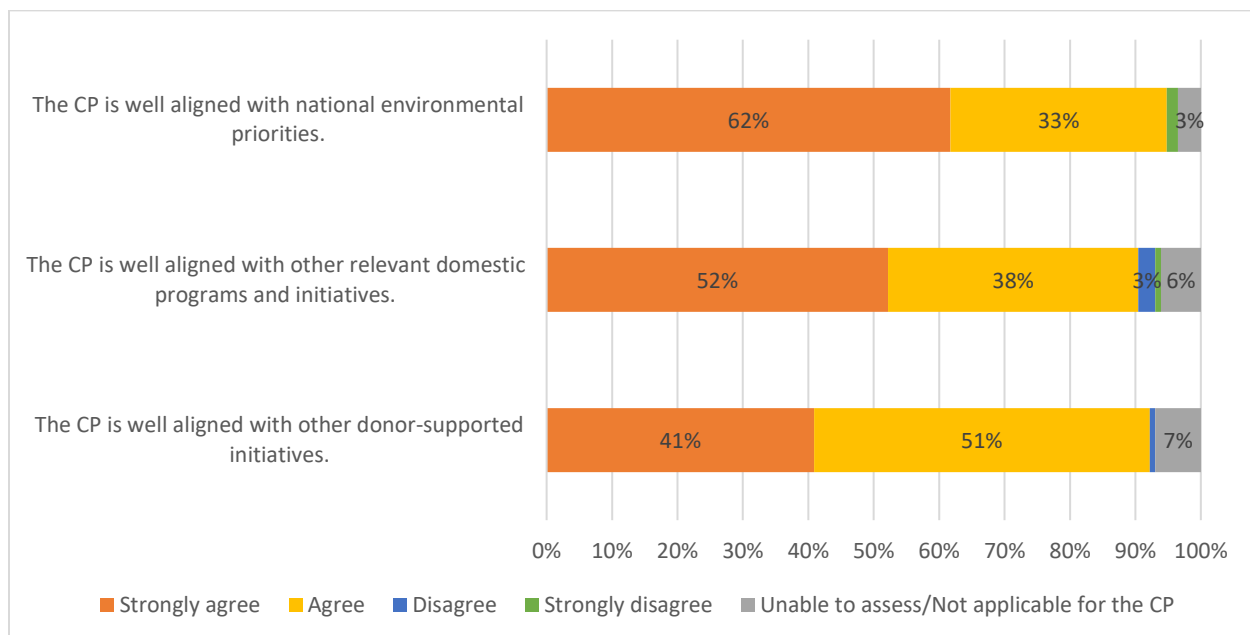
Q 17. What challenges or concerns, if any, did you anticipate in deciding to participate in the GEF-7 impact program? (select up to 3) (n=115)

	Number of Responses	%
The need to set aside budget for participation in and coordination with the regional or global platforms	47	41%
Heavy or complex monitoring and reporting requirements	55	48%
Challenges working across different ministries, agencies, and other stakeholders for an integrated approach	74	64%
Issues with Lead Agency or other GEF Agencies	20	17%
Other – explain	18	16%
<i>Answered</i>	<i>115</i>	
<i>Skipped</i>	<i>153</i>	

Q 18. To what extent is the impact program Child Project (child project) intended to help to implement multiple UN Conventions in an integrated way? (indicate your agreement with the following statements) (n=115)



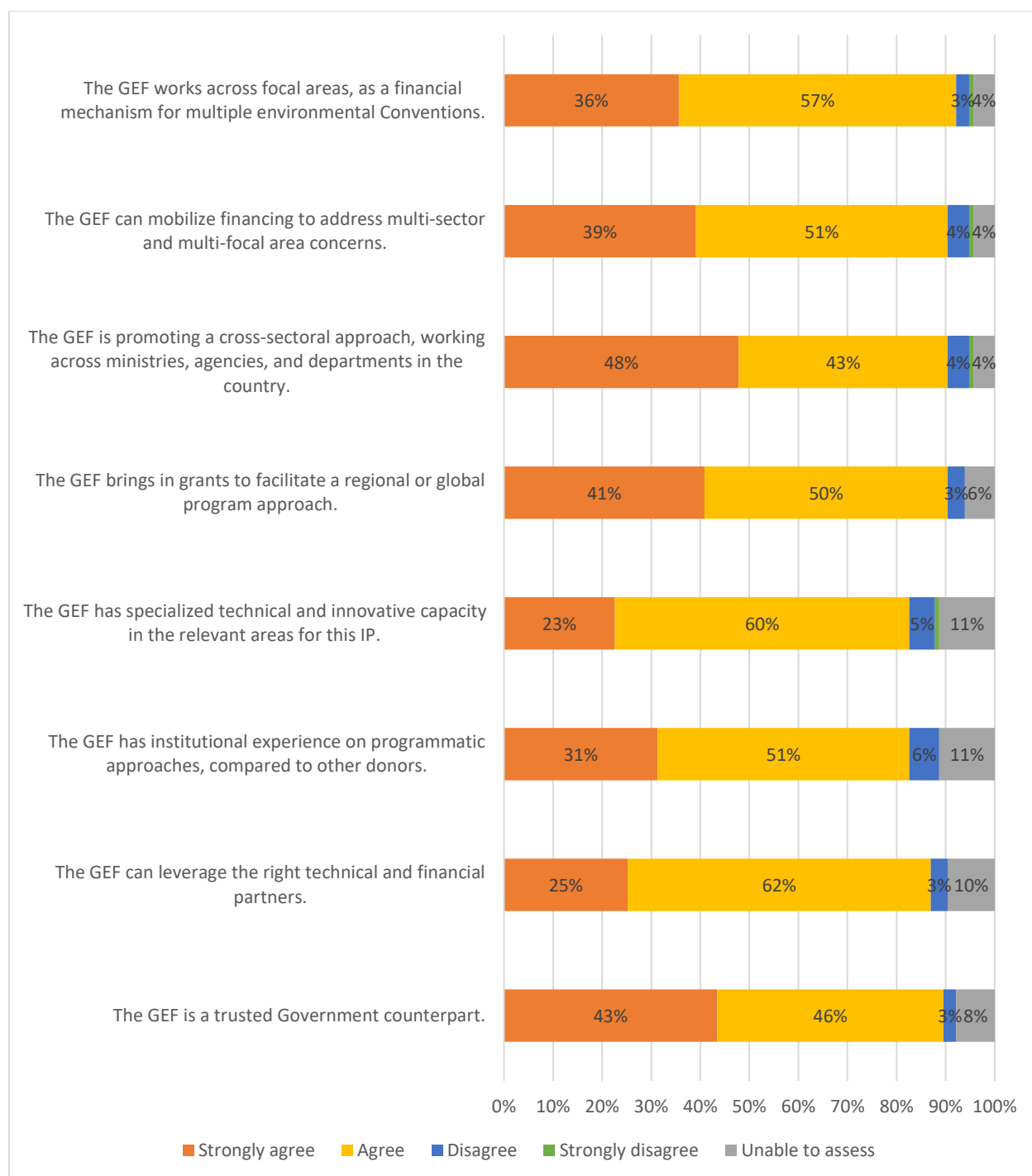
Q 19. To what extent does this GEF-7 impact program Child Project (child project) align with national priorities and other initiatives? (indicate your agreement with the following statements) (n=115)



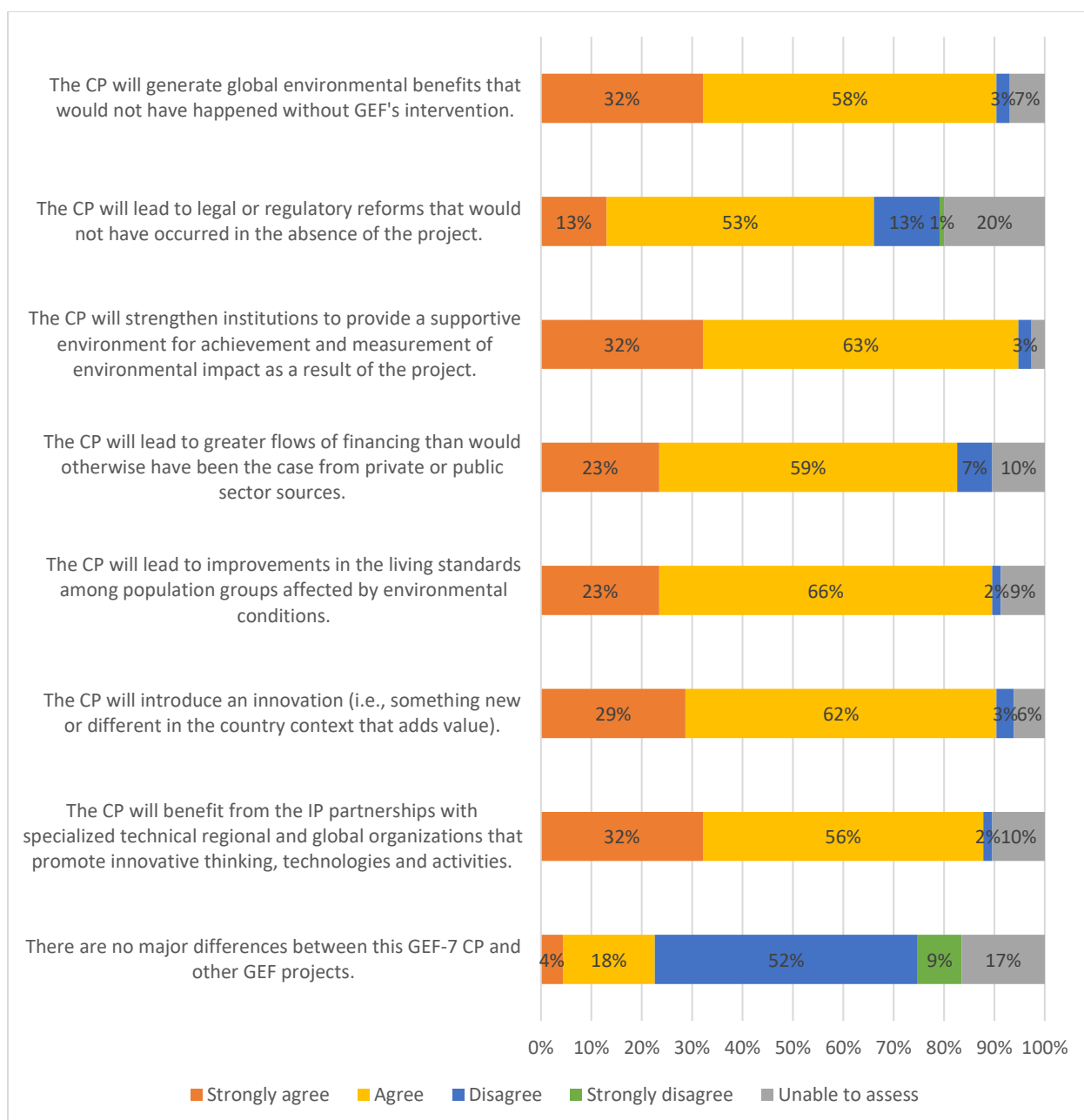
Q 20. Why was/were this particular GEF Agency/ies selected to implement the impact program in your country? (select up to 3) (n=115)

	Number of Responses	%
Agency/ies has/have extensive technical experience in the relevant themes	90	78%
Agency/ies is/are particularly active in targeted subnational areas	24	21%
Agency/ies is/are trusted by Governments, regional institutions and non-Government agencies to mobilize and coordinate institutional support	65	57%
Agency/ies has/have the resources and connections to promote scaling up (leverage and catalytic potential; # of staff in the field)	28	24%
Agency/ies can help secure larger amounts of co-financing funds	13	11%
Agency/ies worked successfully with GEF in other projects and programs before	57	50%
Agency/ies is/are implementing GEF-6 IAP child project(s)	11	10%
Other – please explain	6	5%
<i>Answered</i>	<i>115</i>	
<i>Skipped</i>	<i>153</i>	

Q 21. What do you see as the main contributions that the GEF is making through the GEF-7 impact programs, as compared to other donors active in the environmental sector in your country? (indicate your agreement with the following statements) (n=115)



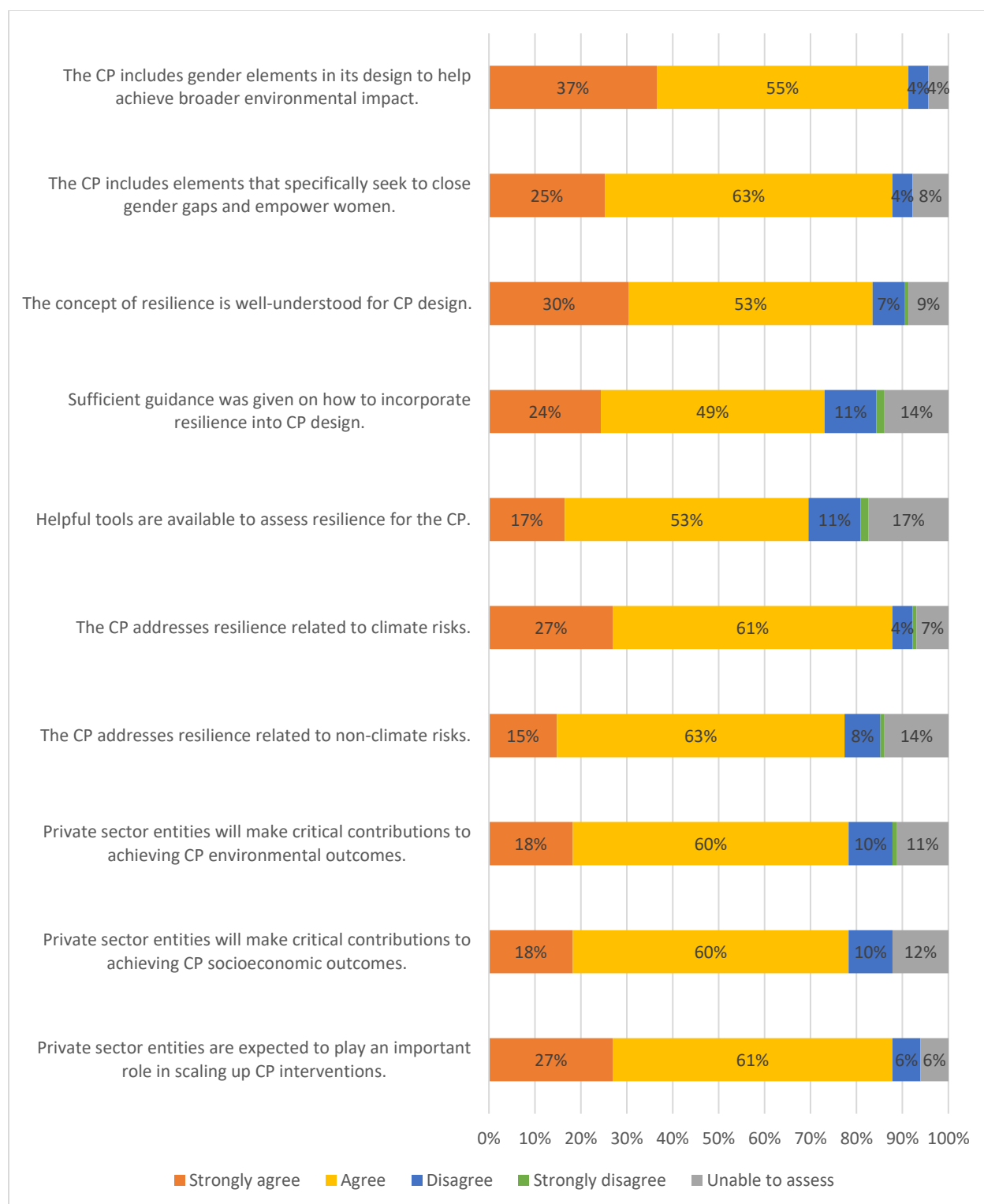
Q 22. What do you see as the main contributions that the GEF-7 impact program Child Project (child project) is expected to make, compared to baseline or business or usual (i.e., without the GEF's intervention)? (indicate your agreement with the following statements) (n=115)



Q 23. Please provide specific examples of expected contributions.

	Number of Responses
Answered	41
Skipped	227

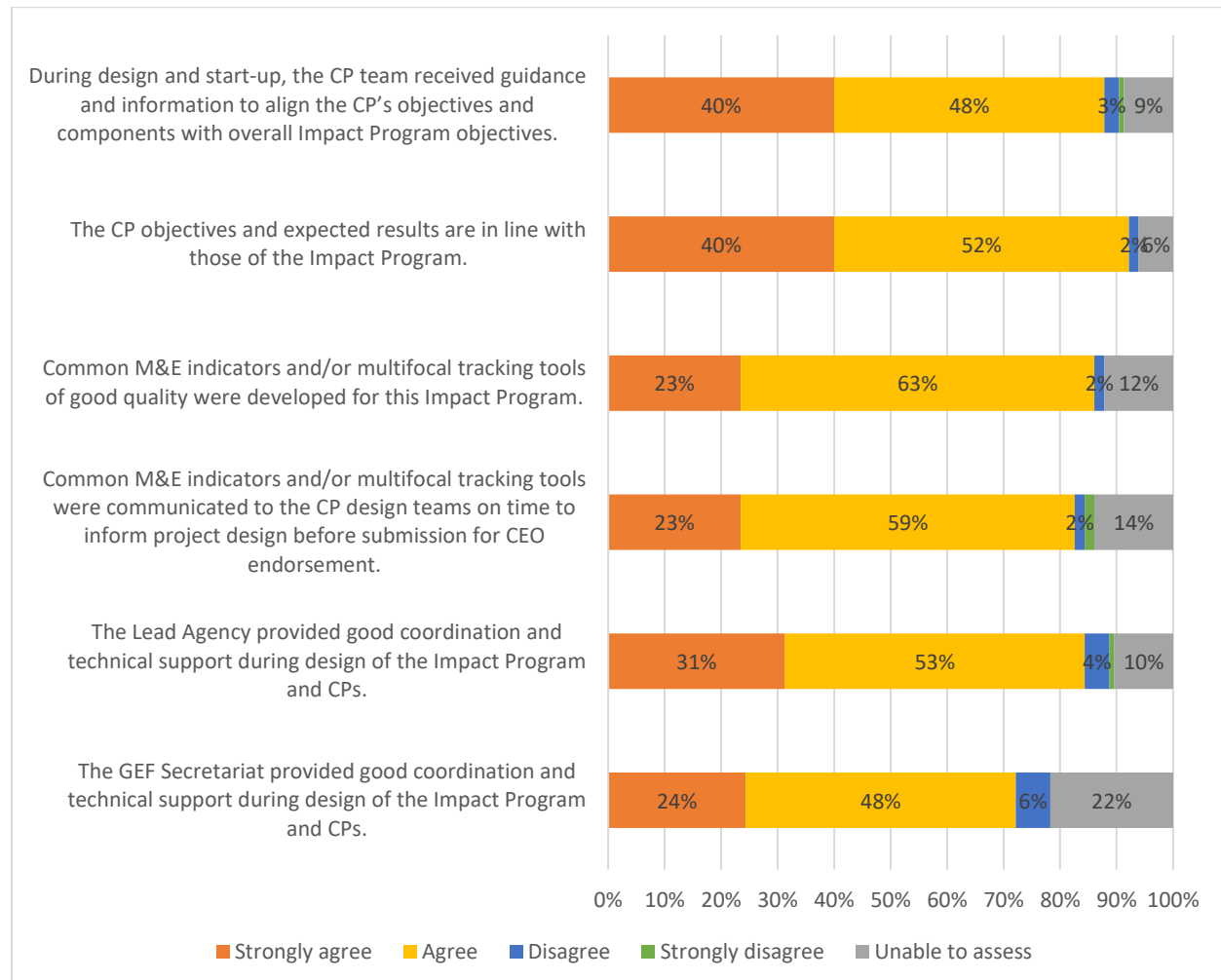
Q 24. To what extent have gender, private sector, and resilience been taken into account in the child project design? (indicate your agreement with the following statements) (n=115)



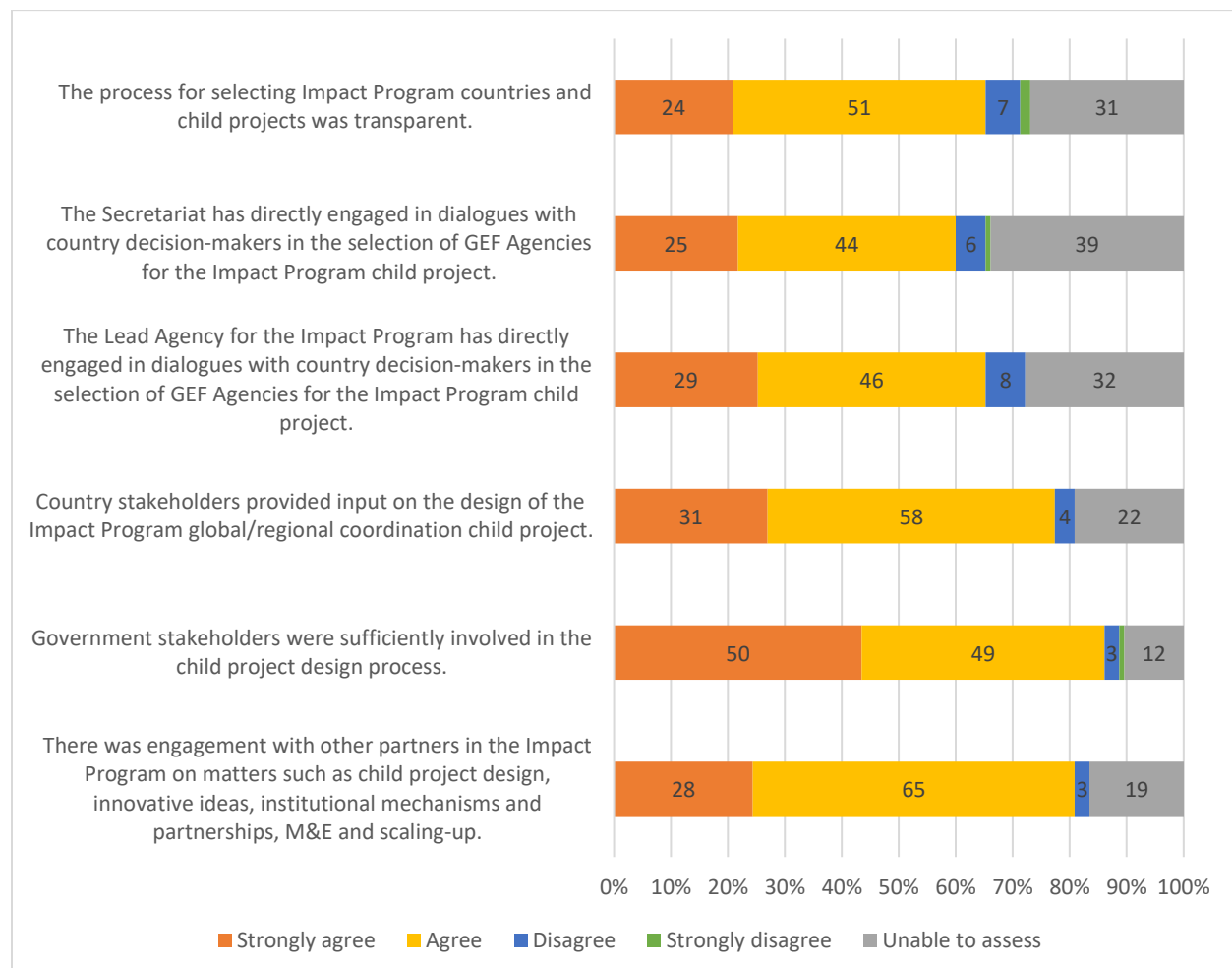
Q 25. To what extent has good environmental governance been taken into account in the child project design? (indicate your agreement with the following statements) (n=115)



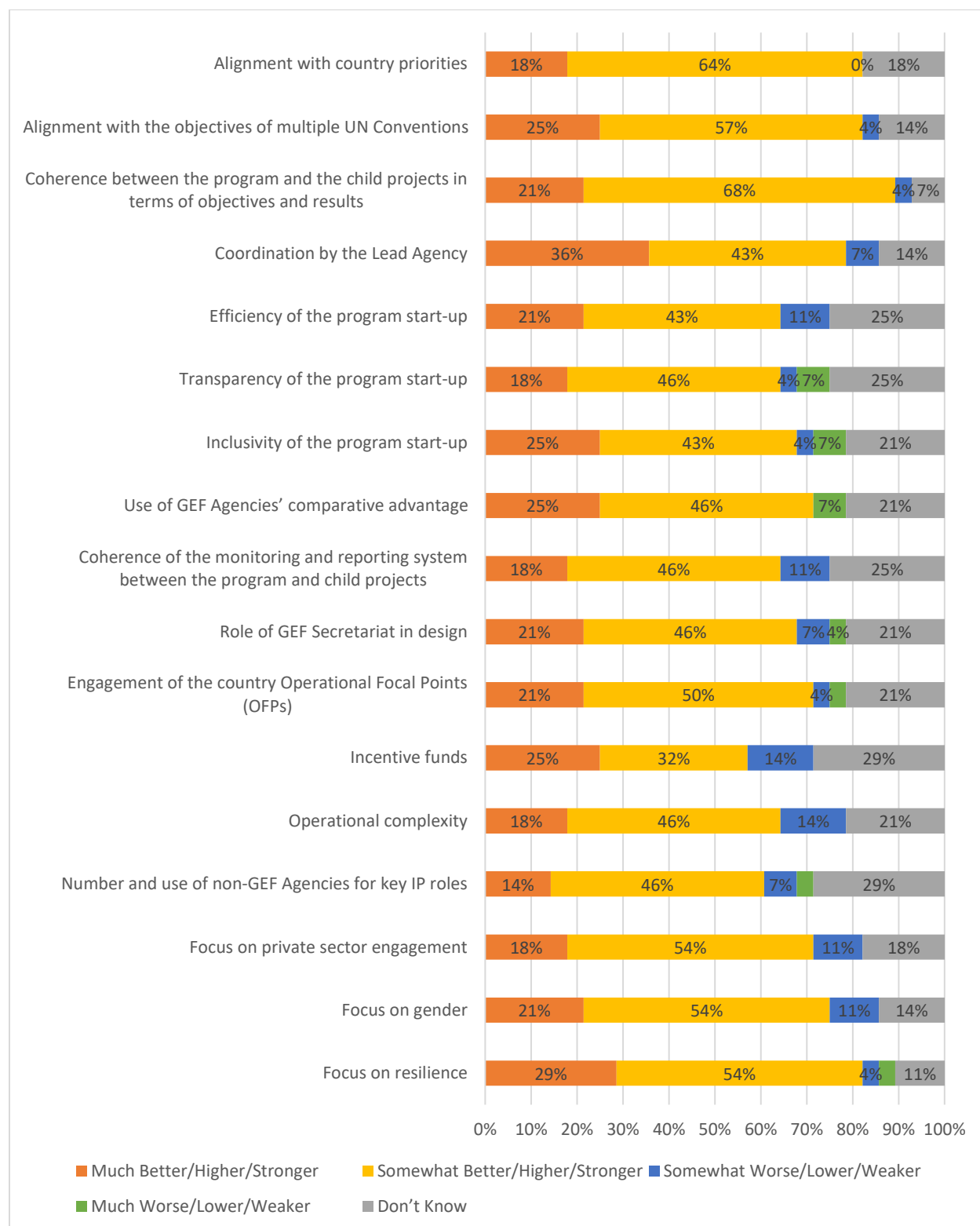
Q 26. Is the GEF-7 impact program Child Project coherent with the impact program? (indicate your agreement with the following statements) (n=115)



Q 27. How transparent and inclusive have the decision-making processes been for the impact program? (indicate your agreement with the following statements) (n=115)



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



ANNEX VII: COUNTRY CASE STUDIES

227. The objectives of the country case studies were to provide a deeper understanding of the design, process, and results of the IAPs/impact programs at the country level, for instance on governance issues, consistent with the evaluation matrix and to assess the similarities and differences between the IAP and impact program child projects and identify any links to understand how the GEF integrated approach has evolved in a given country from GEF-6 to GEF-7.

Country selection

228. Based on the objectives above, three countries were purposively selected for case studies according to the following criteria.

- a. *IAP/impact program evolution*: Selected countries must have both IAP and impact program child projects present. Selection preference is given to countries where the IAP and impact program projects are on related themes (e.g., sustainable cities IAP and impact program, food security IAP and FOLUR impact program), rather than disparate themes (e.g., cities IAP and FOLUR impact program), to better observe the evolution from IAPs to impact programs.
- b. *IAP/impact program coverage*: Selected countries must together cover all three IAP programs, both FOLUR and SC impact programs, and at least two SFM impact programs.
- c. *Regional coverage*: Selected countries should together cover the main three global regions where these programs are being or will be implemented (Asia, Latin America, and Africa).
- d. *Maturity*: At least one child project from each IAP should be included that is at or nearly mid-term. As of this writing, known countries with a child project that has undergone mid-term review are: Ethiopia (Food Security IAP), Senegal and Malaysia (Sustainable Cities IAP), and Brazil, Indonesia, Paraguay, and Sierra Leone (Commodities IAP).
- e. *Diversity in Agencies*: Selected countries should cover a range of GEF Agencies implementing the child projects, including both hub and non-hub Agencies.

229. In terms of the application of the criteria, the IAP/impact program evolution was given the primary position, and thus the countries shown are only those that have both IAP and impact program child projects present. The secondary criterion was the IAP/impact program coverage, giving preference to countries that cover the most programs. Employing this criterion in combination with regional coverage yielded these possible selections: in South America, Brazil; in Asia, either China or India, and in Africa, either Kenya or Tanzania. The fourth criterion of maturity confirmed the selection of Brazil but did not further narrow the country selection in Asia. Applying the IAP/impact program coverage criteria in preference to maturity meant that Ethiopia, as a country with an MTR, was not selected for a full case study, in order to select a

country that could cover the Drylands impact program. Applying the final criteria of diversity in Agencies resulted in this final selection: Brazil, China, and Kenya (Table 37).⁵⁸

Table 37: Countries selected for case studies and key attributes

Country	IAP/impact program programs covered	Child Projects	Agencies
Brazil	GGP IAP	Brazil: Taking Deforestation out of Soy Supply Chain (GEF ID: 9617, Under Implementation)	UNDP/CI
		Generating Responsible Demand for Reduced Deforestation Commodities (GEF ID: 9182, Under Implementation)	WWF
	Cities IAP Cities impact program	Cities IAP: Promoting Sustainable Cities in Brazil through Integrated Urban Planning and Innovative Technologies Investment (GEF ID: 9142, Under Implementation) Promoting integrated metropolitan planning and innovative urban technology investments in Brazil (GEF ID: 10465, Included in Council-Approved PFD)	UNEP
	FOLUR impact program	Sustainable Multiple Use Landscape Consortia - Vertentes Project (GEF ID: 10468, Included in Council-Approved PFD)	World Bank
	Sustainable Landscapes Amazon impact program	Brazil Amazon Sustainable Landscapes Phase 2 Project (Pending)	N/A
China	Cities IAP Cities impact program	Sustainable Cities IAP – China Child Project (GEF ID: 9223, Under Implementation) China Sustainable City Impact Program (Pending)	World Bank
	FOLUR impact program	Innovative transformation of China’s food production systems and agroecological landscapes (GEF ID: 10246, Included in Council-Approved PFD)	World Bank
Kenya	RFS IAP	Establishment of the Upper Tana Nairobi Water Fund (GEF ID: 9139, Under Implementation)	IFAD

⁵⁸ GEF Agencies with IAP and impact program projects in Tanzania are IFAD, WWF-US, and FAO.

	FOLUR impact program	Integrated Landscape Management for conservation and restoration of the Mt. Elgon Ecosystem in Western Kenya (GEF ID: 10598, Included in Council-Approved PFD)	FAO
	Sustainable Landscapes Drylands impact program	Strengthening forest management for improved biodiversity conservation and climate resilience in the Southern rangelands of Kenya (GEF ID: 10292, Included in Council-Approved PFD)	IUCN

Case study methods and process

230. The conduct of the case studies was informed by a Guidance Note for Country Case Studies, to ensure that the same data gathering approach was used, so that observations and emerging findings are coherent and comparable across all countries and projects reviewed. Due to continued travel restrictions and safety considerations as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the country case studies were conducted remotely, with one exception. The national consultant for the Kenya case study visited a site where the RFS IAP project is being implemented; all COVID-related national and local guidelines were followed throughout the duration of the field visit.

231. The country case studies took a mixed methods approach, using both desk review of project and national documents and data and interviews. Desk review included relevant Program Framework Documents; Project Documentation (both at design and in implementation, including PIRs and MTRs); relevant national data and statistics, country-specific literature, and policies and regulations; and previous evaluations (GEF and otherwise) on the topic and country. Interviews were guided by a specific protocol developed for country-level stakeholders. Interviewees included national and sub-national government officials, national Convention focal points, Agencies, partner institutions active in executing the child projects and managing the stakeholder platforms, external experts, GEF and non-GEF development partners active in the sector, and private sector and civil society organizations. Geospatial analysis was also conducted for the food systems related projects in Kenya and Brazil.

232. Importantly, the draft versions of each country case study were shared with the GEF focal points and the full list of interviewees for participatory stakeholder validation. GEF focal points and other stakeholders provided comments on the case studies, which were duly considered in their finalization. In the case of Kenya, a virtual closing workshop was also held with the GEF OFP and other stakeholders to review the findings.

BRAZIL COUNTRY CASE STUDY REPORT

Introduction

233. This Brazil Case Study is part of the broader Formative Evaluation of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Integrated Approach to Address the Drivers of Environmental Degradation and provides a deeper understanding of the design, process, and current results or preparation of the GEF-6 Integrated Approach Pilot (IAP) and of the GEF-7 Impact Program (impact program) in Brazil. It was designed to assess the similarities and differences between the IAP and impact program child projects and to understand how the GEF integrated approach has evolved from the GEF-6 to GEF-7 financing cycles in Brazil.

234. Brazil has a total of six child projects under the following programs: Sustainable Cities IAP (SC- IAP); Sustainable Cities impact program (SC-impact program); Good Growth Partnership (GGP) IAP⁵⁹; Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration Impact Program (FOLUR) impact program; and the Amazon Sustainable Landscapes impact program. The case study covers all six IAP and impact program child projects, as shown in the table below.

Brazil GEF-6 IAP and GEF-7 impact program – Key project information

GEF ID	Child project title and main scope	Coverage	GEF Agency	Status	Finance		Sources of Co-finance
					GEF grant	Co-finance	
					\$ million		
Sustainable Cities IAP							
9142	Integrated Urban Planning and Innovative Technologies Investment	Brasilia, Recife, Sustainable Cities Platform, Sustainable Cities Innovation Observatory, national	UNEP	On-going	22.6	195	Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, Municipality of Recife, Sustainable Cities Programme, UNEP, COMPESA (state water utility), Government of the Federal District utilities, in-kind
Sustainable Cities impact program							

⁵⁹ Previously called the Taking Deforestation out of Commodity Supply Chains program.

GEF ID	Child project title and main scope	Coverage	GEF Agency	Status	Finance		
					GEF grant	Co-finance	Sources of Co-finance
					\$ million		
10465	Integrated urban planning for Brazilian metropolitan regions	Belem, Teresina, Florianopolis, national	UNEP	Under preparation	12.5	120	State, municipal investments, loans
GGP IAP							
9617	Taking Deforestation Out of the Soy Supply Chain	Maranhão, Tocantins, Piaui, and Bahia states	UNDP	On-going	6.6	28.2	GEF Agency, Beneficiaries, Central govt.
9182	Generating Responsible Demand for Reduced-Deforestation Commodities	Global	WWF	On-going	8.7	42.3	GEF Agency, Civil Society Organizations
FOLUR impact program							
10468	Sustainable Multiple Use Landscape Consortia - Vertentes Project	Tocantins-Araguaia, Pantanal, Paranaíba/Paraná, and São Francisco Basins	World Bank	Under preparation	24.58	172.00	GEF Agency, Government of Brazil
Sustainable Landscapes Amazon impact program							
10749	Brazil Amazon Sustainable Landscapes Project – Phase 2	Amazon Region	World Bank	CEO Endorsement Pending	19.28	120.396	GEF Agency, Central and local govts., Civil Society Organizations

235. Due to continued travel restrictions and safety considerations as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Brazil case study was conducted remotely by three senior international consultants and a Brazil-based national consultant. The team triangulated its documentation review (including GEF Chief Executive Officer [CEO] Endorsement documents, project implementation review [PIR] and midterm review [MTR] reports, World Bank project appraisal documents) with individual interviews with 29 staff from the Government of Brazil, GEF Agencies, municipal departments, and project partners. Sixteen of these interviews were conducted in Portuguese by the national consultant. Given the current COVID-19 pandemic, no field verification could take place.

GEF ID 9142: Sustainable Cities IAP – Promoting Sustainable Cities in Brazil through Integrated Urban Planning and Innovative Technologies Investment

236. This project was CEO endorsed in January 2017 and began execution in April 2018; the project closing date is set for April 30, 2022. The grant of \$22.6 million came from the Sustainable Cities Trust Fund (20 percent of total), from the Biodiversity Focal Area (BD-4 Program 9) (16 percent), with the remaining balance from the Climate Change Focal Area (CCM-

2 Program 3). The global environmental benefits (GEB) pursued include the improved management of 415 ha of landscapes and seascapes, the sustainable land management of 80 ha, and the abatement of 3.8 million metric tons carbon dioxide equivalent (MMT CO₂eq). The oversight of the GEF grant is managed by a Task Manager in the United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP) Brazil office in Brasilia, with the Fund Management Officer based in the Nairobi headquarters.

237. The project pursues the following objective: "To Promote Sustainable Cities in Brazil through Integrated Urban Planning and Innovative Technologies Investment". This objective is to be achieved via the implementation of three components: 1) Integrated Planning Pilots; 2) Integrated Investment Pilots; and 3) Knowledge Platform. The first two components are to be implemented in two recipient cities: Brasilia (the capital of the Federal District) and Recife (the capital of the state of Pernambuco). The national partner is the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MCTI); the Government of the Federal District (GFD) and the Municipality of Recife are the city partners, while the National Platform for Sustainable Cities (PCS) and the Center for Strategic Studies and Management (CGEE) are implementing the knowledge platform. The project co-financing of \$195 million includes investments of \$133.6 million by COMPESA (the water utility company of the State of Pernambuco) for the Recife component, and by CAESB (the water utility company for the Federal District) and the District Service System for Urban Cleaning for the Brasilia component, complemented by in-kind contributions by all partner institutions.

238. The expected project outputs for Brasilia are: a) an Environmental Information System (SISDIA) including Economic Ecological Zoning guidelines and data, online and available for GFD sustainable planning and public access; b) new data and studies to populate SISDIA to be collected, developed and included; c) climate risk assessment and scenarios to be completed and a 'climate bill' to be drafted; d) citizens are engaged in FDG public policy making; e) springs preservation is completed, best practices implemented and open dumpsite monitored towards decommissioning; f) solar energy pilots and promotion are completed; and g) lessons learned are collected and structured to feed into the local and national platforms.

239. The expected project outputs for Recife are: a) integrated and resilient plans for Recife through enhanced popular participation, more evidence and live and open data; b) geo-referenced Integrated Management System (IMS) tested; c) financial and technical viability of operating two solar boats across the Capibaribe river assessed; d) banks of the Capibaribe River urbanized in two sections; d) filtering garden cleaning the water through the use of vegetation established; and e) lessons learned collected and structured to serve as input to the national platform.

240. The expected project outputs for the Knowledge Platform are the following: a) an operational Knowledge Platform online; b) operational modules for the Knowledge Platform online portal; c) skills development training designed and delivered; d) mayors and politicians mobilized to join the sustainable cities platform; e) sustainable solutions to six urban planning and investment challenges identified and delivered to Brasilia, Recife and to the National

Platform for Sustainable Cities; and f) solutions for urban planning and investments promoted to up to 300 other cities.

GEF ID 10465: Sustainable Cities impact program – Promoting integrated metropolitan planning and innovative urban technology investments in Brazil

241. This child project is currently under preparation by UNEP and is expected to be submitted for GEF CEO endorsement in June 2021. The national partner is MCTI, and the metropolitan areas of Belem, Teresina, and Florianopolis have been selected as the recipients of in-situ grant activities, in addition to activities of a national focus. The GEBs pursued are biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation, in the measure of 12,942 hectares (ha) of terrestrial protected areas, 23,342 ha of landscapes under improved practices, and 24.5 million metric tons carbon dioxide equivalent (MMT CO₂eq) abated, of which 4.9 million are direct emissions. The project is being prepared by a team of Urban and Climate Change Specialists from the World Resources Institute (WRI) based in Sao Paulo and Porto Alegre, with back-stopping from the UNEP Task Managers based in Brasilia and Panama.

242. The objective of the project is to “Demonstrate how Brazilian metropolitan regions can reduce GHG, conserve biodiversity and achieve economic, social and environmental co-benefits through an integrated urban planning approach”. At the project identification form (PIF) stage, the components were defined as: 1) integrated planning; 2) integrated investments; 3) innovative financing; and 4) knowledge management and replication. The GEF grant of \$12.5 million will be financed for \$4 million from the Sustainable Cities impact program (SCImpact program) multifocal area allocation, for \$5.8 million from the climate change focal area System for Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR) allocation, and for \$2.7 million from the biodiversity focal area STAR allocation. Tentative project co-financing at PIF stage is of \$120 million, consisting of state and municipality investments and loans for 98 percent, and 2 percent of in-kind contributions and private sector investments.

243. At PIF stage, the main expected outputs of the four project components include: 1) geo-referenced digital metropolitan plans and platforms for the three cities; GHG emissions inventories for Teresina and Florianopolis; design of Low Emission Zones (LEZ) for the urban cores of those two cities; 2) recovering urban green areas in the three cities; pilot investments in the LEZs of Teresina and Florianopolis; biodiversity conservation and public transport investments in Belem; 3) financial mechanisms tested in Belem; new approaches for payment of environmental services and green areas protection developed; a portfolio of related projects for Brazilian cities prepared; and 4) creation of a national network of living labs and knowledge platform; training on sustainable urban planning and financing.

GEF ID 9182: GGP IAP – Generating Responsible Demand for Reduced-Deforestation Commodities

244. Brazil is part of this global child project, referred to as the Demand Project, which was approved for implementation in January 2017 and will close in 2022. World Wildlife Fund’s (WWF) US Chapter is the Implementing Agency, and the Executing Agencies with activities in

Brazil are WWF Brasil and Proforest. Additional co-financing support comes from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, the Stockholm Environment Institute, and the Global Canopy Program.

245. This project is conducted at the global level and intends to lead “companies, investors, governments and consumers to reduced-deforestation commodity sourcing.” The entire program includes five different components: 1) Mainstreaming demand for reduced deforestation commodities with major buyers and traders; 2) Strengthening the enabling environment for reduced deforestation commodities in demand markets; 3) Promoting reduced deforestation commodities in major markets; 5) Advancing supply chain transparency, traceability & decision support tools; and 6) Monitoring and evaluation. Expected outcomes at design included increased investor and government capacity, consumer awareness, market intelligence and transparency tools, and global demand and finance projections for project support and knowledge management. In Brazil, the Demand Project is focused on supporting global soy traders in incorporating responsible procurement practices to reduce its indirect contribution to deforestation of the Cerrado biome. Several components of the Demand Project include coordination with the Brazil Production Child Project described below, including a soy traders’ platform, the Transformative Transparency Portal, and case study development.

GEF ID 9617: GGP IAP – Taking Deforestation Out of the Soy Supply Chain

246. The Brazil child project Taking Deforestation Out of the Soy Supply Chain (GEF Project ID 9617) was approved for implementation in March 2017 and will end in December 2021. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is the Implementing Agency, and Conservation International (CI) Brasil is the Executing Agency. Additional executing partners include Fundação Brasileira de Desenvolvimento Sustentável (FBDS), Sociedad Rural Brasileira (SRB),⁶⁰ and Empresa Brasileira de Pesquisa Agropecuária (EMBRAPA). Expected co-financing of \$195 million includes investments by FBDS, UNDP Brazil, SRB (including beneficiaries), and the Ministerio do Meio Ambiente (MMA).

247. The objective of this child project is to “To reduce the threat to biodiversity that the advancing agricultural frontier is posing in the MATOPIBA⁶¹ region, through a supply chain approach that solves the underlying root causes of deforestation from soy.” Working in the Cerrado biome, the project includes five components: 1) Dialogue, policies, and enforcement, 2) Farmer support systems, 3) Land use planning, 4) Supply chain integration, and 5) Adaptive Management, Learning and M&E. Project documents also state that “The project [...] focuses on promoting a dialogue oriented to building a shared vision on sustainable landscapes among key stakeholders: government, companies, civil society and the productive sector.”

⁶⁰ SRB left the project in 2019 and EMBRAPA was engaged to act as the stakeholder to support direct engagement with rural producers.

⁶¹ MATOPIBA is an acronym for the states of Maranhão, Tocantins, Piauí and Bahia.

248. The project's activities are concentrated in the western Bahia and central Tocantins areas, in 10 priority municipalities⁶². Other activities include the four states in the region. The project is supporting several outcomes under these components: 1) A shared vision on expansion of the production of agricultural commodities in the MATOPIBA region in combination with the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services through sustainable land management and the creation of sustainable productive landscapes 2) Improved environmental management; 3) A system of support in the four focal areas prepared and implemented that will help farmers to adopt sustainable management of their properties and sustainable agricultural practices; 4) Improved planning for expansion of production and conservation; 5) Increased market demand for responsibly sourced soy; and 6) Financial sector engaged in the promotion of sustainable soy.

GEF ID 10468: FOLUR impact program – Sustainable Multiple Use Landscape Consortia - Vertentes Project

249. The FOLUR impact program child project is currently under preparation by its Implementing Agency, the World Bank, and its coordination agencies the Ministry of Environment (MMA), and the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food Supply (MAPA) . The World Bank expects to submit the project for CEO endorsement by June 2021. Because the project is still in preparation, many details are subject to change, including the names of the components, targets, details of the intervention areas, and other elements. The proposed project is expected to have four components: 1) Development of Integrated Landscape Management (SLM) approach; 2) Promotion of sustainable food production practices and responsible value chains; 3) Conservation and restoration of natural habitats and mainstreaming biodiversity; and 4) Project Management and Knowledge Management.

250. The proposed objective of the project is to “increase the area under sustainable land management and restoration in selected beef cattle and soybean production landscapes in Brazil.” The project will take place in the Cerrado region of Brazil and will include areas that are important for beef and soybean production and are located within nine Productive Landscapes (PLs) covering approximately 47,159,091 ha in the states of Bahia, Goiás, Mato Grosso, Mato Grosso do Sul, and Minas Gerais, and in the Federal District. The project will focus on areas of high land degradation and “combine actions to build the capacity and awareness of the rural population about integrated natural resources management, strengthening public support services and infrastructure (research and innovation, land regularization, and rural roads rehabilitation and maintenance), and support for sustainable business initiatives of groups of small producers to foster their greater integration with remunerative value-chains.”

251. At the current preparation stage, project goals are to restore 49,800 ha of land, of which 40,000 are agricultural land. In addition, the project targets 578,000 ha of landscapes under

⁶² In the state of Bahia (BA): Barreiras, Luis Eduardo Magalhães, São Desidério, Formosa do Rio Preto and Riachão das Neves. In the state of Tocantins (TO): Palmas, Porto Nacional, Silvanópolis, Santa Rosa do Tocantins and Monte do Carmo.

improved agricultural practices.⁶³ The project is also expected to directly mitigate 21 MMT CO₂e over 20 years.

GEF ID 10749: Amazon Sustainable Landscapes impact program – Brazil Amazon Sustainable Landscapes Project – Phase 2

252. This child project builds on a long history of GEF support to the Brazilian part of the Amazon. The Brazil Amazon Sustainable Landscapes Project – Phase 2 (ASL2) project is an extension (officially additional finance in the World Bank project system) of a national project, Amazon Sustainable Landscapes Project – ASL1 (GEF Project ID 9664), which was approved for implementation in August 2017. ASL1 also built on the Amazon Region Protected Areas Program - ARPA (GEF Project ID 771), a program that started in 2000.

253. The Brazil ASL project includes four components: 1) Amazon Protected Areas System, 2) Integrated Landscape Management, 3) Policies for Conservation, Sustainable Use, and Restoration⁶⁴, and 4) Capacity Building, Cooperation and Project Management. Total GEF funding for ASL1 is \$60 million, of which about half is for Component 1. ASL2 has requested a total GEF funding of \$19 million.

254. Overall project targets are to create or improve management of 2,373,628 ha of terrestrial areas, restore 1,200 ha of land, and promote improved landscape practices on 12,233,507 ha of land. The project is also expected to directly mitigate 2.8 MMT CO₂e over 20 years.

Findings

255. Findings are presented first for the Sustainable Cities IAP and impact program and GGP IAP in Brazil, followed by findings for the FOLUR impact program and Amazon Sustainable Landscapes impact program.

Sustainable Cities

Relevance of Design

256. **Alignment with country priorities.** The alignment of the Sustainable Cities child projects with local, national, and international priorities is confirmed. In the two SC-IAP participating cities of Brasilia and Recife activities were aligned with the local governments' existing plans (including the long-term Recife 500 Plan, and the Master Plan for Land Management of Brasilia). The project activities also correspond to climate change principles, goals, and strategies, as set in the Federal District Government (Brasilia) by Climate Law no. 4,797/2013 and Law No. 5,113 / 2013. In Recife, the 500-year anniversary of the foundation of the city was

⁶³ Targets based on project document submitted in Dec. 2020.

⁶⁴ In ASL1, this component was called Policies for Protection and Recovery of Native Vegetation.

accompanied by a programmatic planning effort, which provided the framework for project activities. At the national scale, the project aimed to support an already established municipal knowledge-sharing entity, the *Programa Cidades Sustentaveis* (PCS) and develop a Sustainable Cities Innovation Observatory. The SC-impact program project ambition of applying the comprehensive sustainable urban planning at the metropolitan scale (through GEF-7) is also aligned with national priorities for urban development; the Brazilian Plan for Urban Development calls for an integrated approach to address environmental sustainability. The design of both Sustainable Cities child projects is also aligned with Brazil's international commitments to the climate change and biodiversity conservation Conventions.

257. Country incentives and motivation to participate. Project stakeholders state that initiatives such as the Sustainable Cities projects are unlikely to be developed in Brazil without the support from GEF, as they cover several complementary activities and allow innovative approaches and solutions to be tested. These projects straddle programmatic areas which are the responsibility of different sectors, and GEF creates the opportunity for active collaboration.

258. GEF additionality and innovation. Stakeholders with previous GEF project experience highlighted positive and negative aspects of the integrated approach when compared to single-sector projects. Integrated approach projects may promote more robust results, which are more likely to lead to long-term impacts. However, they involve more institutions from more sectors, therefore requiring more time for project preparation and increasing project management complexity. Such delays discouraged partners beyond the public sector: according to interviews, PCS almost dropped out but remained involved due to the commitment of one of its staff.

Coherence of Design

259. Theory of change. Both Sustainable Cities child projects are predicated on the assumption of introducing a new generation of sustainable urban management tools at the local government level. The IT management tools are expected to significantly impact the preparation and implementation of local public policies by providing key data for evidence-based planning. The projects are explicitly designed to encourage replication. The expansion of the PCS platform and a new platform developed by CGEE (the aforementioned observatory) under the SC-IAP are expected to promote similar initiatives throughout the country, including through supporting the creating of sustainable development ambition (through the PCS platform) and the sharing of solutions and good practices (through the observatory). The platforms will also share the results expected from the five participating cities. Similarly, the SC-impact program child project expects to create a national network of living labs which would promote the replication of integrated urban planning at the metropolitan scale. (See also Knowledge Platforms below.)

260. Monitoring and evaluation. The results framework for the SC-IAP child project coherently follows the stated program objectives, components, and expected outcomes. It includes thirteen indicators for the five expected project outcomes. There are, however, no intermediate targets to be achieved at MTR for twelve of the thirteen indicators (see also

Results below). As the SC-impact program is still under preparation, its monitoring and evaluation framework has not been finalized yet.

261. **Environmental governance.** Both Sustainable Cities child projects clearly encompass environmental considerations in the sphere of urban planning, by establishing the linkages between built environment and natural resources in the cities and beyond their boundaries. Project activities aimed at remediation of environmental externalities, such as solid waste dumps, and at the protection of forestry and agriculture areas around the sources of water supply for the city clearly establish that link. The extension of the project areas perimeter from municipal (SC-IAP) to metropolitan (SC-impact program) jurisdictions further reinforces the integration of natural resource management and urban planning.

Cross-cutting Issues

262. **Gender.** Gender considerations are recognized in the Sustainable Cities child projects. In terms of representation in the project team, the national and municipal project coordinators are or have been women, as well as the leader of the PCS platform. In Recife, a gender standard has been incorporated into bidding processes, in which suppliers must ensure at least 50 percent women among the teams selected for contracted activities. In Brasilia, the land restoration activity at the water capture areas in the surroundings of the city works primarily with women, and the agricultural equipment under development by the project have been adapted to women's needs, as identified through training workshops. At design stage, SC-impact program intends to reach more female than male project beneficiaries, and to provide gender sensitive training and capacity building to project stakeholders.

263. **Resilience** is present in the design of the child projects. The SC-IAP child project planned to help Recife use the results of the Housing Policy and Resilience Strategy to inform the city development plan, but because the municipality has already developed these, the project adjusted its activities to instead elaborate on Sectoral Adaptation Plans. Interviews noted that these plans will be important for risk analysis and long-term planning for Recife. Resilience considerations remain present throughout the implementation of project activities.

264. **Private sector engagement in the Sustainable Cities child projects is aspirational.** However, some activities prepare business opportunities in which private sector participation is expected. The Brasilia project is evaluating all risks related to the local closed landfill to assess private sector opportunities such as in energy recovery. Also, the Brasilia project is developing low impact agriculture equipment adapted for local rural producers that, if successful, may be produced by an industry located in the state of Paraná. The Recife project is working on a solar boat that will be used by local population to cross rivers within the city. Currently, the local population relies on long routes by bus. The solar boat is expected to be managed either by a private sector local company or by a non-governmental organization. In the SC-impact program child project, the role of the private sector is not yet clear. The PIF lists a \$1.5 million co-financing from BYD Auto Company, but interviews suggest that this is unlikely since the promotion of electric vehicles may no longer be part of the project.

265. **Internal governance of the Brazil SC-IAP project has been laborious.** Guidance and support were slow to emerge from UNEP and MCTI, the key national counterpart, for project partners including the a) Secretariat of Environment of the Federal District (SEMA-DF) and the CGEE for the Brasilia component; b) Agency for Innovation and Strategy (ARIES) for the Recife component; and c) Sustainable Cities Program (PCS) as well as CGEE for the knowledge management component. These two latter entities, one non-profit and the other for-profit, were both contracted for knowledge management activities including national knowledge platforms (see section below). Due to internal UNEP administrative procedures, project contracts are managed directly from Nairobi. To date, MCTI has had three subsequent project coordinators in charge of the SC-IAP project.

266. For the first two years project partners were working quite independently from one another. Municipal level partners had little or no experience with the preparation of Terms of References (ToRs), resulting in significant project delays and in the need for additional efforts to train staff. In some cases, it was also necessary to hold meetings with local public comptrollers to explain and approve ToR terms and to hire consultants to provide technical support to the local teams. In November 2019, the new MCTI project coordinator called upon all project partners to revise their activities and schedules, and MCTI increased its project team and communication with partners, which has helped advance implementation. Local partners appreciated this more frequent communication with MCTI, but also raised concerns that MCTI is intervening too much in the activities of the co-executing partners.

267. Implementation has also been very much affected by national and local elections. National and state governments experienced significant changes in January 2019. Most focal points at national and state levels were replaced through a lengthy process. Some local governments also experienced changes in January 2021, and this is likely to result in a lengthy process to identify and engage new focal points for both the SC-IAP and the SC-impact program projects. The Sustainable Cities projects differ from other GEF projects as not only national and/or state governments are actively engaged, but municipal governments as well, which requires greater coordination and alignment of orientations.

268. **Efficiency of startup and impacts of COVID-19.** The SC-IAP project took approximately two years to reach CEO approval in January 2017, and more than a year to sign all contracts with project participating entities by early 2018. Consequently, SC-IAP project startup has not been efficient. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused major impacts in project implementation during 2020 and is expected to continue causing significant impacts during most of 2021, particularly on field activities. In Recife, some consultants have refused to present proposals fearing COVID-19 exposure. In-person monthly meetings in Brasilia with representatives of all six institutions involved in the project (UNEP, MCTI, CGEE, PCS, SEMA-DF, and ARIES) were discontinued in March 2020 and replaced by virtual bilateral and monthly meetings. Many field actions and activities that depend on public interaction such as workshops, training and public consultations have been either adapted to virtual formats or postponed, requiring adjustment to the schedules. Field actions of Brasilia's pilots regarding training for local farmers

and planting had to be put off until the next rainy season. These delays may compromise the period for the monitoring of the pilots after their implementation.

269. The SC-impact program project is currently being prepared by WRI Brazil for MCTI and UNEP, which have entrusted it with an executing agency role. As preparation is still at an early stage, there are no documents to review beyond the initial PIF, and there were no identified local stakeholders in the participating cities to be interviewed.

Knowledge Platforms

270. **Knowledge platforms.** Brazil has engaged in the knowledge platform aspects of the Sustainable Cities program at two levels: participation in the Global Platform for Sustainable Cities (GPSC) activities; and the construction or reinforcement of national-scale knowledge platforms. In interviews, national and local SC-IAP project stakeholders expressed much appreciation for taking part in the GPSC Global Conferences in New Delhi and hosting the event in 2019 in Sao Paulo. In Sao Paulo, six Brazilian cities participated: Brasilia, Recife, Teixeira de Freitas, São Paulo, Palmas, and Sao José de Campos. These events were not only motivational for the Brazil project teams but were also important opportunities for learning and exchange of experiences with other stakeholders involved in the Sustainable Cities program worldwide.

271. The national knowledge platform component of the SC-IAP is intended to support replication and scale-up of sustainable urban development in Brazil. This component has evolved in practice from design to implementation. At project design stage, the platform was to be an expansion of the existing national PCS platform, managed by a non-profit association, which already had over 200 municipalities engaged, and a large list of sustainability indicators based on Agenda 2030. The component is being implemented via two parallel contracts: one for the expansion of the existing PCS platform, and the other for the creation of a new platform on innovative urban solutions (OICS), assigned to the service provider CGEE. These two platforms have been evolving with little interaction and were launched in late 2019 as two separate websites: the Sustainable City Innovation Observatory (<https://oics.cgee.org.br>) and the Sustainable Cities Platform (www.cidadessustentaveis.org.br). While there is some integration between the platforms (e.g., in the PCS platform's best practices module, there is a link to innovative solutions presented in the OICS platform), there are also some risks of overlap and of competition. Interviewees reported that some conflicts between the two entities have already occurred, as both have separately reached out to the same external institutions for networking and participation. Interviewees also noted that the idea to merge the public and private knowledge platforms had been raised, but without adequate consideration, including for the issue of proprietary rights by the organizations leading these. MCTI has sought to address the issues of coherence and complementary through workshops in 2020; this is on-going in 2021.

272. The two on-line platforms are clearly related to the Citinova project, as the SC-IAP is branded in Brazil, and provide useful case studies and best practices to viewers. Interviewees noted that the PCS platform is currently evaluating strategies for financial independence. The OICS platform currently depends fully on GEF funding, but the CGEE Director has indicated that

the platform will be sustained after the completion of the GEF project, consistent with other observatories managed by the organization. Potential sources of funding could include CGEE's long-term management contracts with MCTI, event or consultancy revenue, or other international donor projects.

273. The SC-impact program project is unlikely to continue supporting the PCS platform, which has a strong focus on being a platform run by a civil society organization. Through the SC-impact program project, a focus is on enhancing the CGEE platform developed under the SC-IAP and incorporating it into the Ministry's operations as a federal government tool for supporting the creation of public policy on sustainable urban development. It would also be strengthened to provide more tailored support to municipalities for identifying and prioritizing locally relevant urban solutions and technologies.

Progress Towards Results of the IAP child project

274. UNEP has submitted two comprehensive and detailed PIRs for the implementation of the SC-IAP child project, the latest with information as of June 2020. By June 2020, three years after project effectiveness, expenditures have only reached 20 percent of the grant. The slow start-up, the national, state, and municipal election cycles, challenges in procurement, and the COVID-19 pandemic have led to a significant delay in project execution that may affect project results both quantitatively and qualitatively. According to the latest PIR, the single intermediate target (5 percent of urban planning decisions taken in Brasilia on the basis of the Integrated Management System put in place by the project) had not been achieved yet.

275. In addition to the on-going preparation of the IT tools, activities were on-going in Brasilia on the remediation of contaminated soils at the rubbish dump, and on mechanized agroforestry in drinking water catchments. Activities in Recife were related to community consultations for the preparation of the solar boat project. Interviewees pointed to potential disagreements between project partners and the Ministry about the business model for the solar boat and its sustainability; one option is for the boat to be operated without subsidy by a cooperative of boat operators, another is for the boat to be donated to and run by the existing municipal public transport system.

276. With regard to the dual cities platforms, support is on-going to the PCS for the extension of its coverage to more cities. Although the number of cities has not grown substantially, given that according to the latest progress report PCS membership has risen only to 214, new signatories now include the largest cities in the country (including São Paulo, Recife, Rio de Janeiro, Belém, São Luís, and Boa Vista. CGEE has delivered a platform that describes 578 sustainability measures and case studies (national and international). Both platforms have sought to work with two important local government associations—CNM (National Confederation of Municipalities) and ABM (Brazilian Association of Municipalities)—to share these sustainable city innovations.

277. All activities at the municipal level have been implemented with the aim of being incorporated by the municipal governments. This includes IT management tools currently under

implementation, training municipal government staff on project management skills and climate change mitigation and adaptation plans to guide municipal planning. The project has improved the knowledge platform of PCS, an institution that has promoted sustainable city public policies in Brazil for the last ten years; it has built the capacity of ARIES, an institution recently created to promote long-term sustainable urban planning for Recife; and, finally, it has supported the creation of a new knowledge platform on sustainable cities solutions by CGEE, an institution that has several management contracts with MCTI and other public institutions. PCS, ARIES and CGEE contribute to the dissemination of knowledge produced by the project, increasing the likelihood of long-term and national-level project impacts.

GGP IAP

Relevance of Design

278. **Alignment with country policies and priorities and other donor initiatives.** The Brazil Production project as designed aligned with national policies, programs, and plans. It contributes to Brazil's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans and is consistent with the national climate change policy (law 12.187 of 29 December 2009) and the National Climate Change Plan (1 December 2008), including objectives related to reduction of deforestation rates in all biomes and the elimination of net loss of forest cover. The project also aligns with other initiatives, including the Sustainable Cerrado Initiative, which is supported by GEF and the World Bank,⁶⁵ and the Prevention and Control of Deforestation and Forest Fires in the Cerrado (PPCerrado) project. The Brazil Production project is further linked to implementation of the new Forest Code (approved in 2012), by supporting its rural environmental registry (CAR) to register 17,000 additional properties to prevent illegal deforestation of native forest into the future.

279. The Brazil Production project was explicitly requested by the Government of Brazil, following Council approval of the Program Framework Document (PFD). Interviewees shared that initially the Brazilian government was concerned that the GGP IAP could be a trade barrier with limitations to soy production; a stand-alone project aligned with the interests of the federal government helped dissuade this concern. The project promotes a government program for sustainable soy production (ABC Soja Sustentável) in a new agricultural frontier in the MATOPIBA region. ABC Soja is a low-carbon agriculture program designed by Embrapa in partnership with CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL Brasil in 2019 under the GGP umbrella and is also captured as co-finance to the GGP project.

⁶⁵ The Sustainable Cerrado Initiative's objective is to "promote the conservation of the biome's biodiversity and improve the management of its environmental resources, through: (i) the creation of 2 million hectares in conservation areas; (ii) support for the sustainable use of its natural resources through training of farmers and the implementation of 12 initiatives based on traditional knowledge; (iii) institutional strengthening and the formulation of new policies."

280. Multiple interviewees and project reporting indicated, however, that since the federal elections in 2019, the political context has presented a challenge for the buy-in of the project at the federal level. Project reporting suggests that the new administration has empowered the productive sector to resist international pressures on sustainability goals and deforestation-free targets. Legislative negotiation to make the Forest Code more flexible and postponement of the deadline for farmers to comply with the Code has also created uncertainty and relevance challenges for a project linked to implementation of this Code. (See also Progress Toward Results section below.)

281. In terms of alignment with other donor initiatives, the delays in the GGP project award meant that another initiative—the Collaboration for Forests and Agriculture (CFA), a joint effort of the National Wildlife Federation, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), WWF, and the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation—started in Brazil with similar objectives to the Demand Project. Interviews and project reporting indicate that while this required an adjustment period to ensure complementarity rather than duplication, the adaptive management by Proforest to design a Soy Toolkit (rather than the initially envisioned Soy Traders Platform) was an effective one. (See also Progress Toward Results section below.)

282. **Relevance of targeting.** Interviewees and documentation indicate that a focus on soybeans in Brazil is highly relevant, as the country produces about a third of the global supply, generating more national income than any other commodity, at the same time that production threatens some of the most diverse ecoregions in the world. The MATOPIBA region in the Cerrado has experienced a new agricultural frontier over the last decade, which threatens the remaining native vegetation. The region has also experienced a rapid expansion of soy production in recent years because the Cerrado has relatively little legal protection, and because multilateral deforestation agreements such as the Soy Moratorium have displaced soy plantations from the Amazon into the MATOPIBA.⁶⁶

283. **Additionality, comparative advantage, and innovation.** Interviewees pointed to the institutional support from GEF as a key comparative advantage for opening doors with governments as well as large private sector corporations. The Demand Project has also offered innovations that benefit several of the participating countries, including Brazil. The Trase Platform, supported in part from GEF funding under the Demand Project, has been extremely innovative in tracing flows of exports from the district of production up to the country of import, and is seen as a market “disruptor.”

Coherence of Design

284. **Theory of Change.** The theory of change for the Demand Project is that “increased demand for sustainable commodities will promote increased sustainable production that helps conserve forests, biodiversity and ecosystems especially in Brazil for soy, Indonesia for palm oil,

⁶⁶ Dou, Y., da Silva, R.F.B., Yang, H. et al. Spillover effect offsets the conservation effort in the Amazon. *J. Geogr. Sci.* 28, 1715–1732 (2018).

Paraguay for beef and West Africa for palm oil.” The MTR found, however, that the project’s envisioned results chain does not fully apply for soy, given the “invisible” nature of soy as an ingredient for consumers. As such demand will likely be a less prominent driver of sustainable actions. The MTR acknowledges that engagement with key corporate actors in the supply chain, which control the majority of commodities production, is important, but also emphasized the importance of financial incentives and government buy-in to promote systems change for soy.

285. The Brazil Production Project’s theory of change followed from the overall GGP program theory, that a supply chain approach can address the root causes of deforestation from soy. In Brazil, this theory strongly relied on compliance with the Brazilian Forest Code. The MTR concluded that this theory overlooked the sensitive dynamics of producers and governments, that market drivers “should have been better observed,” and institutional weaknesses to manage the Forest Code were not considered sufficiently. In other words, the theory of change and assumptions missed or under-considered important political, social, and institutional drivers of change. The project gave some consideration to leakage effects associated with the concentrated efforts in 10 municipalities to register properties, and the potential displacement of deforestation in other areas of the MATOPIBA, by working with state agencies—although the MTR found this approach inadequate.

286. The findings from the MTRs are consistent with the perceptions of multiple interviewees, who shared the view that while the supply chain approach was sound and innovative, the demand and supply sides have not been sufficiently coordinated in implementation to date (see also the section on Program Governance). The GGP IAP’s global hub project MTR also found that “there is insufficient buy-in and incentive for integration of Demand, Production and Transaction in Brazil and Paraguay, although there is some move in the right direction.” One interviewee explained that while the overall program theory of change made sense at a global level, it needed to be better unpacked and tailored to the country level. In Brazil, project partners held a soy systems workshop following the release of the findings of the MTR (May 2020), in the words of one interviewee “to re-open and better understand the key levers of change that make sense nowadays in the current context, and to try to align the work of partners around that.”

287. Opportunities to benefit from integration may be starting to emerge, however (see also the section on Results). In the words of one interview partner:

“The issues on the ground do not enable that kind of truly integrated approach and implementation in the time that we have [...] In Brazil, only now 3 years in are we starting to see these opportunities for true integration of our approaches. I don’t know if it’s an issue with the design to say artificially we have these four years, but in reality, it just doesn’t work this way especially when you have so many partners and changes politically in a country that hold up implementation or [require you to] change course. I feel that there is sometimes gross underestimation of what really needs to happen to catalyze [...] true integration of activities.”

288. Given the growing momentum for integration, several interviewees expressed the view that it was unfortunate that the FOLUR impact program project did not explicitly build on the efforts and lessons learned from the GGP project, as also addressed further below.

289. A further complicating factor for taking a supply chain integrated approach in Brazil was that the Demand and Brazil Production Projects had different environmental aims, as raised by interviewees and project reporting. The Demand Project focused on defending zero deforestation in the Cerrado, while the Brazil Production Project addresses illegal deforestation. The Demand Project MTR found that “Both projects have worked more in parallel rather than in integrated manner since the MATOPIBA project could not engage with producers if speaking of deforestation free, while the Cerrado aims to achieve this goal.”

290. **Monitoring and Evaluation.** Project-level monitoring and evaluation (M&E) has been reasonably effective. The Brazil Production Project includes a detailed M&E plan and budget and, according to the 2020 MTR, and has been “adequately executed.” The MTR further found that, “The project has produced its own monitoring system, which shows a high standard for the database and analytical tools.” However, the MTR also states that the results framework was hindered by “unrealistic and unfeasible indicators and targets.” The Demand Project’s M&E system has been designed to demonstrate impact to the GEF Program’s core indicators and was found to be satisfactory at MTR.

291. Interviewees pointed to the challenges of monitoring systemic change, which is still considered a work-in-progress in the GGP IAP. Concerns were also raised that measuring long-term environmental impacts has been difficult.

Cross-cutting Issues

292. **Gender.** Both the Brazil Production and Demand projects included gender considerations in the initial project design; however, implementation has been mixed across child projects. The Brazil Production Project completed a gender assessment in the first year of implementation and organized activities such as field visits, meetings, and workshops with attention to diversity in female participation from the productive sector and technical research. However, interviewees and documentation confirmed that gender responsiveness and inclusiveness has since been challenging to deliver on, given changes in the Brazilian political scenario, which have contributed to a “hostile” environment for these actions. Efforts to strengthen engagement through the Women Agribusiness Leadership initiative, for example, were interrupted by the departure of a key project partner, SRB (discussed in the section on Private Sector below). The MTR found that that the recommended actions in the gender assessment and the corresponding monitoring were still a “pending task.”

293. Since then, a gender-focused plan has been developed by CI, informed by the GGP knowledge production gender mainstreaming in global agricultural supply chains. This plan includes elements such as: engaging women's organizations that work in agricultural production primarily in the states of MATOPIBA, as well as in other regions of the Cerrado; elaborating a consolidated vision on sustainability from the perspective of women working in

the soy supply chain – producers, community members, executives (based on a qualitative and quantitative survey in Tocantins and Bahia); disseminating results and booklets in different communication channels and promoting exchange of knowledge in workshops and events; and promoting technical training for rural producers in MATOPIBA with the development of modules on selected topics according to the demands and bottlenecks raised in the survey.

294. The Demand Project includes a gender strategy, which provided practical ways to integrate gender issues. Gender disaggregated M&E data is being collected and in 2018 Demand Project partners agreed to a series of actions to incorporate gender into work plans.

295. **Resilience.** Resilience was given limited treatment in the Brazil Production and Demand projects. At design, the Brazil Production Project emphasized resilience to climate change impacts, referencing “resilience of the productive landscape against climate changes” in its theory of change and in multiple project outputs. But interviewees felt that this concept was not at the core of their work.

296. **Private Sector.** The Brazil Production Project expected considerable private sector involvement but faced issues securing that engagement and addressing the competing interests of farmers and producers’ associations that drive environmental degradation. These issues required substantial changes to the project approach. Interviewees’ perception is that private sector actors are involved to some extent in the project but not sufficiently; this outcome is partially associated with external factors outside the influence of the project, as described below. One interviewee stated that actual co-financing expected from private sources is nearly zero; at CEO Endorsement, the expected cofinance from farmer investments/beneficiaries was \$10 million.

297. From the outset (the Project Inception Workshop), private sector and farmers’ associations expressed concern about one of the objectives of the project to preserve 40% of native vegetation, which was viewed as unduly financial burdensome to farmers, who might have to voluntarily forego converting more than half⁶⁷ of their properties for productive purposes. The MTR concluded that the project would have benefitted from more effective consultation with these actors during design. These initial concerns, combined with the changing political context, has generated reluctance of the productive sector towards legal compliance with the Forest Code—which was at the heart of the Brazil Production Project’s design. Anticipating more favorable modifications to the Code, farmers’ associations were reluctant to sign agreements with CI. Large producers’ associations also left the project. Sociedade Rural Brasileira (SRB), an implementing partner and the primary intermediary with producers, along with the Associação de Agricultores e Irrigantes da Bahia (AIBA), decided to

⁶⁷ Under the Forest Code, farmers in Bahia and Piauí must set aside 20 percent of their properties in a legal reserve, and up to 35 percent to 80 percent (in the legal Amazon) in the states of Maranhão and Tocantins.

leave the project in 2019.⁶⁸ These departures are seen by interviewees as strongly influenced by the national political context and the tension between environmental and productive sector agendas.

298. Due to these challenges, the team shifted its approach towards one more focused on strengthening relationships with the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply (MAPA) and with the state agricultural and environmental secretaries. In addition, the project established a new partnership with the EMBRAPA (Empresa Brasileira de Pesquisa Agropecuária, or in English the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation) in 2019 to serve as intermediary with individual producers who are beneficiaries of training on sustainable soy production. The MTR concluded that this has been an effective partnership: “The collaboration with EMBRAPA to support the ABC loans to farmers, directed at low-carbon, high productivity, and better water management practices, has been of great significance. EMBRAPA’s integrated approach through the ABC Beef, ABC Milk, and the crop-livestock-forest integration (ILPF) needs to be highlighted as they all contribute to reducing deforestation in MATOPIBA.”

299. Private sector actors, including traders and financial institutions, have also continued to be involved through the Brazil Production Project’s support for the MATOPIBA Coalition, in terms of identifying synergies and common agendas to promote a more sustainable production model based on an integrated approach to the soy supply chain.

300. The Demand Project has been substantially focused on engagement with the local and international private sector to support sustainable soy in the Cerrado region. The project has made excellent progress in terms of corporate engagement with buyers and traders. The agreement signed by 64 global buyers as Signatories of Support for the Cerrado Manifesto in February 2019 is a major milestone for protection of the Cerrado biome, and one that the project has contributed to according to interviewees and project reporting. Interviewees explained that this initiative is perceived by signatory companies as one that truly seeks real positive impacts on the ground, rather than promoting mere declarations of intent. With contribution from WWF’s involvement in the Cerrado Working Group (or GTC⁶⁹), a further agreement has been reached between the GTC and the Cerrado Manifesto signatories that would serve to eliminate the conversion of native Cerrado vegetation for soy production. This accomplishment illustrates the effectiveness of the corporate engagement approach through platforms and pressure on traders, as orchestrated through non-public letters signed by 160 buyers and 43 investors (responsible for \$7 trillion), making clear the risk of divestment if traders do not take action in relation to the deforestation associated with products they market. The success of the agreement, however, depends on finding donors to fund the

⁶⁸ These associations withdrew from other environment-agriculture initiatives in Brazil that brought together environmental NGOs, rural producers, and agriculture businesses (e.g., Coalizão Brasil Clima, Florestas, e Agricultura; Grupo de Trabalho do Cerrado—GTC).

⁶⁹ The GTC includes large soybean trading companies (representing 80% of the Brazilian soy market), producers’ organizations, Brazilian consumer goods companies, civil society organizations, financial institutions, and government representatives.

financial mechanism for compensating producers to conserve biodiversity above the legal requirements—a process being led by CFA.

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

302. **Environmental Governance.** The Brazil Production Project addresses stakeholder engagement in environmental governance specifically through support for Coalition MATOPIBA, a multi-stakeholder forum previously created by Conservation International under another initiative, that facilitates dialogue between government, academic, farmers, civil society, and private sector. Under this Project, the discussions have brought together representatives of farmers' organizations, traders, and financial institutions to coordinate actions under a shared vision of sustainable production in the region. These discussions have also considered policy proposals.

303. The Brazil Production Project has also made efforts to recommend improvements in policies. The project has advanced the draft state-level regulation in Tocantins that would enable implementation of the Environmental Regularization Program (PRA), under the Forest Code.

Program Governance

304. **Internal Governance.** Governance of both projects has been challenging in terms of coordination and communication with numerous stakeholders, partners, and GEF Agencies, according to interviews and project reports. The Brazil Production Project is implemented by UNDP, with full management responsibility for the entire project with CI. IFC and WWF are also responsible for execution of Component 4 of the project, on Supply Chain Integration, but are funded and monitored under their respective GGP IAP child projects. This served to be a complex arrangement with output dependencies and high transaction costs for Conservation International to coordinate among implementing partners—including those contracted separately from the Brazil Production Project, as raised in interviews, project PIRs, and the MTR. The MTR noted that “Conservation International identified in both PIR 2018 and 2019 that it was a challenge to manage the high transaction costs which involved coordinating efforts

among the implementing partners toward a common approach based on the GGP's integrated perspective."

305. Similarly, interviewees pointed to challenges in coordinating diverse project partners under the Demand Project; and the MTR found that "the number of sub grantees provided complexity to the project and did not facilitate the integration of the work of all sub grantees."

306. Interviewees pointed to a lack of partner interaction, including within and across the Brazil Production Project and global projects (such as the Demand and Adaptive Management and Learning Projects), which meant, in the words of one interviewee, that the Projects "lost many interesting opportunities." When partners did collaborate, this supported results achievement: for example, in the case of Proforest and Trase (who had institutionally collaborated prior to the GEF project), where Trase's participation helped enable the engagement of companies with Proforest on the Soy Toolkit.

307. Coordination among project partners and GGP child projects is improving, however, according to interviewees and project reporting. One interviewee noted that "only in 2019 there was a clear alignment between all project partners." Quarterly meetings are now organized by Conservation International and held with UNDP Brazil, WWF, IFC, and UNEP-FI to coordinate actions under their child projects.

308. **COVID-19.** The severity of the COVID-19 crisis in Brazil has been a major challenge for GGP projects. For the Brazil Production Project, the 2020 PIR expected that "The Covid 19 outbreak could affect project activities and stakeholders' engagement in MATOPIBA, since the economic and political scenario will impact negatively local government budgets and, consequently, influence municipal elections in October 2020." Despite mitigation measures, shifts in priorities and capacities in terms of the actions may be necessary. The 2020 Demand Project PIR reported that "The most significant challenge affecting all of the Demand Project partners across the globe is the coronavirus pandemic, which has shuttered offices, prevented travel, canceled meetings, trainings, and events, upended commodity markets, and created a significant sense of uncertainty at a pivotal moment for the project when all of the work had hit its stride. Many organizations are still exploring on a case-by-case basis whether to postpone events indefinitely or try to hold them virtually."

Knowledge Platforms

309. Interviewees agreed that the Brazil Production Project has been somewhat disconnected from the global coordination project. Little GEF funding was available for participation, and thus most participation (such as by Conservation International Brasil) was made possible through other sources of funding. Interviewees and project reporting both highlighted that bringing the project's new government partners (the MATOPIBA state secretaries of agriculture) to the global Green Growth Conference in Peru was crucial for project revival and achievement of results. Interviewees also suggested that GGP events could play a stronger role in integrating the different projects under the program.

Progress Towards Results of the IAP child projects

310. The Demand Project has had strong outcomes in soy through the Soy Toolkit and Cerrado Manifesto, which may have a significant impact on the global market and even a “transformative shift”, according to the MTR.

311. The Soy Toolkit (<https://www.soytoolkit.net/welcome>) is a platform “to support companies in the responsible sourcing of soy [...] to decouple soy production and trading from deforestation, conversion of native vegetation and human rights violations.” The Toolkit has supported companies’ capacity building for responsible sourcing, further strengthened by many of the same companies engaging with the Transparent Supply Chains for sustainable economies (Trase) platform,⁷⁰ also supported through the Demand Project. Cargill and Amaggi,⁷¹ two major soy traders in Brazil, used the Soy Toolkit to update their corporate environmental policies. As mentioned above, the Soy Toolkit also influenced WBCSD’s Soft Commodities Forum, which could contribute to long-term positive impacts.

312. WWF’s involvement in the GTC has also contributed to an agreement reached in 2019 to stop conversion of native Cerrado vegetation for soy production among 64 global buyers, who became signatories for the Cerrado Manifesto. This success is seen as a major milestone to protect the Cerrado biome and evidence of the effectiveness of collective corporate engagement through platforms. However, to be successful, the Cerrado Manifesto requires major funding for its Financial Mechanism, which will provide direct payments to farmers who protect vegetation beyond the requirements of the Forest Code. The main responsibility for this fundraising lies outside the bounds of the Demand Project; CFA will present the financial mechanism to major companies and donors. In terms of GEBs, the MTR warns that some project results may be threatened if the Cerrado Manifesto does not find funding for its compensation mechanism.

313. The Brazil Production Project was slow to get started and has faced major changes in the political context and partnerships, as described above, which has affected results achieved to date. Interviews and project documents indicate that the project team has exercised strong adaptive management in the face of these changes. Still, progress toward results is not on track for this child project as of the completion of the MTR (May 2020). The MTR raised “serious concerns as to the achievement of the targeted decrease of the deforestation rate by 1000 km²,” which was designed to contribute to GEF GEBs.

⁷⁰ The Trase platform traces flows of exports from the district of production up to the country of import, making transparent the main companies involved along the supply chain.

⁷¹ According to interviews, Amaggi, which is a soy producer and trader, previously had an environmental policy that was focused on production only and now covers trading activities as well, increasing the requirements imposed to other soy producers.

314. Some significant outcomes achieved by the child project to date are institutional: the project contributed to the creation of a Consortium of Secretaries of Agriculture in the MATOPIBA interested in promoting sustainable soy production, to support joint planning in the region, and regional governments have publicly expressed support for sustainable soy production. The project has also strengthened the Tocantins and Bahia's Regional Environment Registry (CAR) validation processes. The project's partnership with Embrapa has extended the ABC Soja program to rural properties in the region, and interviewees noted that positive results from participating properties (up to 40% increase in productivity alongside conservation of vegetation and soil and water protection) are expected to induce other properties to join the program. Currently, there is a long queue of producers waiting for Embrapa's support in the region. The President of Embrapa-Tocantins has also been on local TV to talk about sustainable soy production.

315. The establishment of a biodiversity corridor was an expected output of the project and viewed by interviewees as fundamental for the conservation of the Cerrado biome. The project has municipal land use plans to identify priority regions for the creation of ecological corridors or protected areas. However, interviewees stated that such a corridor is unlikely to be established under the current political context and the position of the producers' associations. Instead, Conservation International Brasil has been working with municipal governments that now intend to create municipal protected areas and promote private reserves (RPPNs). In Tocantins, there is also a financial incentive for municipalities to create reserves in its territory (ICMS Ecológico).

316. As discussed above, a trend of improvement is noted in terms of coordination among project Agencies and partners, including across GGP child projects. One of these joint outcomes (UNEP-FI/CI) is the development of online training modules for financial institutions that provide rural credit to producers, which incorporates Embrapa's expertise and lessons learned. Another example is that Conservation International is working with IFC on the business case for sustainable production and connecting COFCO with responsible Brazilian producers.

Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration Impact (FOLUR) Program

Relevance and Coherence of Design

317. **Alignment with country policies and priorities and other donor initiatives.** At the PIF stage, the FOLUR proposed child project is well aligned with existing national policies in Brazil. Brazil has an established policy framework to support sustainable agriculture and protections against deforestation, including the: National Policy of Water Resources (Law No. 9,433/1997), National Policy on Climate Change (Law 12.187/2009); Sector Plan for a Low Carbon Economy in Agriculture – ABC Plan (Decree No.9,578/2018), National Plan for the Promotion for Socio-Biodiversity Value Chains (Resolution No. 239/2009), and the Forest Code (Law No. 12,651/2012).

318. The FOLUR child project is also consistent with other donor programs in the Cerrado, including those managed by the World Bank. A significant effort is through the national

investment plan that Brazil developed in collaboration with the Forest Investment Program (Fim pact program), a funding window of the Climate Investment Funds, a multidonor dedicated climate fund implemented by multilateral development banks. Brazil's Fim pact program investment plan seeks to "improve sustainable land use and forest management in the Cerrado to contribute toward reducing pressure on the remaining forests, reducing GHG emissions, and increasing carbon dioxide (CO₂) sequestration" and includes existing projects managed by the World Bank,⁷² which the FOLUR impact program can build on. The Fim pact program investment plan is a coordinated action plan between the Ministries of Environment, Science, Technology & Innovation, and Agriculture and Livestock and Food Supply. The investment plan includes two themes, including "Investments outside the forest sector necessary to reduce the pressure on forests; and Institutional capacity, forest management and information." It also focuses on forest mitigation actions, including the recovery of Legal Reserves (RLs) and Permanent Preservation Areas (APPs).

319. The child project identifies a significant opportunity to build on existing efforts, although not specifically the GGP child project. The PIF states that "The added value of the project is to build the synergy of the already installed actors, policies and initiatives to achieve proposed goals rural credit system." Moreover, it states that "financing will build on and complement the ongoing investments in sustainability being made by government and private sector at the national and landscape level...." and "it will specifically support the incremental costs of interventions aimed at achieving a large-scale, transformational shift and GEBs."

320. Relevance of targeting and coherence with GGP IAP project. According to the PIF, "the expansion of agriculture production has reshaped the Cerrado landscapes with environmental costs, including significant loss of native vegetation and environmental and land degradation. On those anthropized areas, the prolonged use of grasslands for conventional beef cattle production diminishes the soil productivity capacity for agriculture and vegetation regeneration". Furthermore, key challenges for Brazil include increasing food production, restoring degraded land, and conserving natural characteristics in the region.

321. The FOLUR child project focuses on the livestock and the soy production chains. While soy production was a key focus of the GGP child projects in Brazil, it is expected that the FOLUR project will receive greater support from the livestock production chain for the implementation of several low carbon measures, including mainly recovery of pastureland and implementation of agro-silvi-pastoral systems. Interviewees also indicated that Brazil's federal government had decided to work with consolidated productive areas and not in areas of expansion of the agricultural frontier such as MATOPIBA, where the GGP IAP project had focused its engagement. This was due in part to the fact that part of the STAR resources made available for

⁷² These include the Environmental Regularization (P143334), Sustainable Agriculture Production (P143184), Forest Fire Prevention Systems and Monitoring of Vegetation Cover in the Brazilian Cerrado (P143185), Integrated Landscape Management in the Cerrado (P164602), Forest Information Oriented Management for Conservation and Use of Forest Resources of the Cerrado by Public and Private Sectors - IFN Project.

the project came from Land Degradation focal area, for which the MATOPIBA region would not be eligible.

322. Multiple interviewees stated that there have been limited linkages with the GGP IAP child projects during the FOLUR child project development, including little interaction among the institutions involved in these projects. One interviewee expressed the view that it is likely that little of what was produced under GEF-6 will feed into GEF-7. Interviewees noted that the FOLUR impact program child project should be considered as a continuation of the partnership between the World Bank, Ministry of the Environment (MMA) and Ministry of Agriculture (MAPA), which was already under development through the Fimpart program.

323. **Coherence.** The child project addresses the objectives of and includes GEF core indicators related to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The child project is also consistent with the FOLUR integrated Theory of Change for sustainable food systems and landscape restoration. The PIF states that “The project will apply an SLM approach in the areas presented in item 2.1 to maximize the impact program objectives.” Additionally, project components are consistent with FOLUR impact program components. The child project components include: 1) Development of Sustainable Landscape Management (SLM) approach; 2) Promotion of sustainable food production practices and responsible value chains; 3) Conservation and restoration of natural habitats and mainstreaming biodiversity; and 4) Project Management and Knowledge Management.

324. **Monitoring and Evaluation.** At the PIF stage, limited information is available about the child project M&E system. The PIF identifies core project indicator targets, which will contribute to FOLUR impact program targets. The project states that Component 4 “will focus on coordination, cooperation, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E), including knowledge generation and dissemination nationally and internationally.”

325. **Additionality, Transformational Change, and Innovation.** Limited information is available at the PIF stage. The child project states that “It will specifically support the incremental costs of interventions aimed at achieving a large-scale, transformational shift and GEBs” by enhancing existing institutional coordination and support the coordinated application of both the sustainable agriculture (ABC Plan) and environmental (Forest Code) policies. By supporting sustainable development in rural areas, the project aims to reverse existing trends in the Cerrado biome. One interviewee, when speaking about the FOLUR and Sustainable Landscapes Amazon impact program, however, noted that GEF funding is always welcome but cannot generate major impacts due to Brazil’s size, and is better positioned to support the development of “good examples.”

326. The child project PIF states that it will scale-up innovation, building on-farm interventions applied in the Sustainable Agriculture Production and Integrated Landscape Management in the Cerrado projects. Innovations to be supported include the provision of sustainable Low Carbon Economy in Agriculture (ABC) practices; forest protection and restoration practices; and associated with technical assistance to access credit for adoption of

those practices. The project also intends to work with public and private sector stakeholders to facilitate the adoption of institutional frameworks to support the adoption of its approach at other locations. Specifically, the project states that it “has the potential to be implemented in other areas, as it will make use of existing local structures to identify regional resource-gaps and address these issues through participatory methodologies which will lead to custom local solutions.”

327. **Environmental Governance.** At the PIF stage, the FOLUR child project expects to advance environmental governance through robust stakeholder engagement. The child project emphasizes that it will engage a breadth of key stakeholders, including farmers and their representative organizations, state and municipal governments, local financial and technical assistance agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), buyers and investors, to address the systematic challenges associated with environmental degradation and productivity losses. According to interviewees, the federal government has rejected the direct involvement of environmental NGOs in the project but recognizes the importance of seeking synergies with ongoing initiatives that Conservation International Brasil, TNC, WWF and other NGOs may have in the locations in which the project will be implemented.

Cross-cutting Issues

328. The cross-cutting issues of **Gender** and **Resilience** are only discussed in limited detail at the PIF stage. The project notes that it will incorporate lessons learned from the previous World Bank-implemented Sustainable Agriculture Production Project – Projeto ABC Cerrado as it relates to women’s participation in capacity building activities and that it will conduct a gender assessment and design a gender strategy to support equitable participation. Resilience is only briefly referred to as it relates to indirect project benefits associated with improved employment and food security.

329. **Private Sector.** The child project places a strong emphasis on the role of the private sector to support project objectives and transformational change. The PIF states that “Supported by leading Government agencies, the engagement with the private sector will play a key role in implementing and consolidating a socio-environmental business model conducive to environmental traceability and mainstream sustainable efforts made by farmers in their production systems, such as applying standards enabling them to meet the EMBRAPA’s meat carbon neutral protocol.”

330. The project does not commit to delivering certified production but promotes the adoption of traceability and certification practices and will engage with “agroindustry, traders and exporters (on mainstreaming sustainable practices along the value-chain and improve traceability and security throughout the value-chain).” The project already has partnerships with Embrapa (4 units) and Brazil’s National Institute for Space Research (landscape monitoring) and other partners may also be included, such as the IFC. There are certification processes under evaluation by Embrapa in partnership with TNC and the company Marfrig that the project may use as a reference. The project will also develop a forum for local buyers, slaughterhouses, and traders to “understand the demand side and market needs, risks and

harness their commitment to promote productive alliances with local farmers.” The private sector is also expected to play an important role in scaling up the project’s approach through food supply chain initiatives and networks.

Program Governance

331. In the proposed project document, SENAR (the rural extension branch of the National Agriculture Confederation - CNA) would be the Executing Agency. Interviewees noted that SENAR is viewed as highly qualified institution with a presence in all states and close proximity to rural producers. Additionally, SENAR has already worked with the World Bank on other projects and has incorporated many of the good environmental practices promoted through these projects. One interviewee noted that the project has been prepared in a collaborative way between MMA and MAPA, and it is expected that this close collaboration between environmental and agricultural governmental institutions will continue during implementation.

Knowledge Platform

332. **Knowledge Platform.** At the PIF stage, the project indicates an intention to engage with other countries and platforms through the FOLUR global platform and the UNDP Commodities Program, the Good Growth Partnership and with other FOLUR child projects. Resources will be shared to support the development of “collective knowledge management products”. Project experiences may also be shared through Rio Convention forums, the World Forest Forum, and the World Soil Alliance.

Amazon Sustainable Landscapes impact program

Relevance of Design

333. **National Alignment.** The project document demonstrates alignment with national policies and programs, including building on previous initiatives. These include the Legal Amazon Deforestation Prevention and Control Plan (PPCDAM, 2005), the Terra Legal Program, and the Rural Cadaster, which provide opportunities to integrate sustainable activities in the Amazon. As of the writing of the PFD, Brazil had expanded protections for the Brazilian Amazon through the Amazon Protected Areas program (Programa Áreas Protegidas da Amazônia – ARPA) and established a Transition Fund with an estimated value of around \$215 million. GEF also has a long history of support for biodiversity conservation in the Brazilian Amazon.⁷³

⁷³ FUNBIO, currently a GEF Implementing Agency, was a result of GEF-1. PROBIO, the National Biodiversity Program that led to the creation of the Secretariat for Biodiversity and Forests of the Ministry of Environment and structured all investment in biodiversity in Brazil was another result of GEF-1. GEF projects helped the government to structure the entire scientific and public policy base to define priority areas for biodiversity conservation in all Brazilian biomes, including marine areas. This led to the structuring of larger projects like ARPA, which started in year 2000 and continues today as the component 1 of ASL I.

334. ASL II is an extension of the national project, Amazon Sustainable Landscapes Project – ASL I (GEF Project ID 9664), which was approved for implementation in August 2017. ASL I, in turn, incorporated the Amazon Region Protected Areas Program - ARPA (GEF Project ID 771), a program that started in 2000. ASL I's components 2, 3, and 4 have expanded GEF actions into promoting sustainable initiatives not only in protected areas, but also in non-protected areas.

335. Since the federal elections in 2019, interviewees noted that the political context has presented a challenge for the preparation of the additional finance and the implementation of the parent project.

336. **Additionality and environmental governance.** According to submitted CEO endorsement documents, the ASL II Brazil project will build on existing activities to bring additionality in several areas. The project will contribute to institutional additionality through strengthening governance structures and management instruments for five Integrated Management Areas (IMAs) in Amazonas state covering an area of 26.2 million ha, to include the Central Amazon Biosphere Reserve; Lower Rio Negro Mosaic and Central Amazon Heritage Site and the Ramsar Sites of Rio Negro and Juruá. Environmental governance will be supported through participatory governance and management of these IMAs, including strengthening the participation of indigenous peoples and local communities in the management of these large areas.

337. Expected contributions to legal/regulatory additionality relate to strengthening the implementation of Brazilian public policies (e.g., National Plan for the Control of Illegal Deforestation and Recovery of Native Vegetation 2020-2023, LPVN; law for the management of public forests and National Policy for Recovery of Native Vegetation, or Proveg). The project also contributes to financial additionality via expanding efforts to mobilize public and private financial resources to support integrated approaches to landscape management, including Payment for Environmental Services (PES). GEBs will be delivered through expanding the hectares under restoration—through more rural property areas supported by the project adopting sustainable management practices and more incentive mechanisms to reduce deforestation and increase recovery.

Coherence of Design

338. **Coherence.** The ASL2 Brazil project is consistent with the parent project (ASL1) theory of change. The CEO endorsement document states that the project “aims to build upon and scale up ongoing project efforts to further consolidate protected areas in the Amazon and strengthen connectivity at the landscape level, including an expanded focus on forest and aquatic ecosystems.” The ASL2 Brazil project is also built on the successful GEF-funded ARPA projects. ASL1 and ASL2 in Brazil are treated by the World Bank and the MMA as a single project with four components. All components will receive additional support under ASL2, although in ASL2, Component 1 of ASL1 becomes sub-component 1.1 and another sub-component, 1.2 is introduced to reflect the new approach that ASL2 will take for activities under Component 1.

Cross-cutting Issues

339. **Gender.** The project includes targeted, gender-sensitive activities. These include awareness raising, leadership training for young men and women, and increasing focus on productive chains favored by women. By strengthening extension services and actively promoting dialogue among different actors in productive chains, the project expects to enhance individual capacities of women and contribute to building lasting local social capital.

340. **Resilience.** Integrating landscape management to contribute to climate resilience and enhance sustainable land use is a key component of the ASL impact program's Theory of Change, which will be supported under ASL II. The project paper states that the project will increase "resilience to climate variability of those who depend on the forest resources, which are among the poorest and most vulnerable." The project also considers resilience in the context of COVID-19, providing response opportunities through job creation, local economic development, and productivity improvements in the short term, which are expected to help increase natural and economic resilience.

341. **Private Sector.** The child project envisions a substantial role for private sector actors. This includes support to farmers and community associations along the productive chain, from production to market, with a view to fostering emergence of sustainable forest- and freshwater-friendly value chains (e.g., native biodiversity products, ecotourism), and support for restoration of degraded areas and native vegetation through private financing. Public-private sector partnerships will develop new technologies and tools to improve planning for connectivity (e.g., multi-criteria spatial planning tools), helping guide native vegetation restoration efforts by the private sector and communities, reducing fragmentation. In addition, a modelling of multiple financial mechanisms (e.g. blended-finance, payment for ecosystem services, green bonds, development and multilateral bank guarantees, etc.) will be developed to leverage public-private financing for large-scale restoration.

Program Governance and Efficiency

342. **Internal Governance.** The ASL project in Brazil is treated as a single project by the World Bank system; ASL2 is considered additional finance to the ASL1 project already underway. ASL II adds a new executing agency, Fundação Getúlio Vargas (FGV), for components 1 (only subcomponent 1.2), 2, 3, 4; FGV is the only new recipient of funds from ASL2. ASL1 already had two executing agencies: FUNBIO for component 1 of the ASL project (also collaborating on activities in Components 2, 3, and 4 that involve protected areas), and Conservation International Brasil for Components 2, 3, and 4. Multiple interviewees noted that the introduction of this new executing agency as part of ASL2 will require a review of implementation responsibilities and arrangement to ensure harmonized implementation, particularly for activities under Components 2, 3, and 4. These are currently being clarified. Increased coordination by MMA for these issues is expected, along with effort for integrating planning, execution, and joint reporting across the two phases of the project.

343. The strong engagement of Brazilian Amazon state governments, inherited from ARPA, has been important given political changes at the federal and state levels. The overall coordination of the project remains with MMA, but state governments are important sources of co-financing and lead many local actions. Interviewees also indicated that technical engagement has been extremely strong; the national technical team has transitioned through the political changes, bringing important continuity in understanding the project and stakeholders that need to be involved.

344. **Efficiency of project start-up.** Conceptualized in 2018, the project faced substantial changes in the federal government and in four state governments after elections in October 2019. Interviewees stated that new governments made important institutional changes that affected the submission of the ASL II project for CEO endorsement, including changes in focal points, changes in management, and new priorities for new administrations, and the centralization of decision making in MMA. Although the ASL II child project was ready for submission for CEO Approval since the beginning of 2020, it was only submitted in December 2020 due to significant restructuring of the MMA (which divided decision making for the project from one into three Secretariats, among other changes) and the addition of FGV as an Executing Agency for the project.

345. COVID-19 has also had a significant impact on the ASL I project and is expected to hinder the implementation of ASL II project in Brazil. With the COVID-19 pandemic, both MMA and World Bank banned all field visits by the project team. In addition, many technicians fell ill. The impact of the pandemic is expected to remain large at least during the first half of 2021.

Knowledge Platforms

346. The Brazil child project is expected to play an important role in knowledge sharing for ASL II. The impact program PFD states that “Experience gained under the Brazilian project will develop approaches and lessons which can subsequently be replicated in other areas of the Amazon, and Brazilian stakeholders will benefit from approaches and lessons learned in other countries through participation in Regional Coordination Project activities.”

Summary of Findings

Sustainable Cities

347. **The relevance of design** of the Sustainable Cities child projects is confirmed, as both child projects seem aligned with local, national, and international priorities for Brazil. The incentives for participation are related to the opportunity of carrying out integrative activities that would otherwise not be possible under the sector-specific budgetary allocations.

348. **Design** of the child projects is coherent with the overall Sustainable Cities IAP and impact program programs, including common objectives, components, and outcomes. Both projects are based on introducing new sustainable urban management tools at local government level to inform evidence-based planning, and include activities supporting networks of cities to promote replication.

349. **The cross-cutting issues** of gender and private sector participation are not prominently present in the design and implementation of the SC-IAP child project, and it is too early in the preparation of the SC-impact program child project to say whether they will acquire a higher profile in the future. Resilience is given more attention in Brasilia and Recife.

350. **The internal governance** of the two child projects raises concern. The collaboration of federal, state, and municipal agencies is complex to construct and to manage, with interviews suggesting that the federal level agency is more influential. Electoral cycles, staff turnover, and COVID-19, in addition to the administrative requirements of the GEF grant, add difficulties to project implementation.

351. **Knowledge platforms** play an important and promising role in both child projects as they aim at facilitating the systematic absorption of lessons learned and their dissemination to other cities. However, design choices made under the SC-IAP child project for the national platform have created a dualism of initiatives which could undermine the success of this component. Participation in GPSC activities has been positive.

352. **The results of the SC-IAP child project at mid-term** have not been measured yet (the mid-term review is underway), given the significant delay in project start-up. However, 2020 updates indicate potentially significant difficulties in achieving expected project outcomes in Recife, and moderate ones elsewhere.

353. **Evolution of GEF integrated approach.** The SC-impact program project is currently being prepared by WRI Brazil under a contract with MCTI and UNEP. As preparation is still at an early stage, there are no documents to review beyond the initial PIF, and there were no identified local stakeholders in the participating cities to be interviewed. SC-IAP partners were consulted by the project design team on specific topics but are not involved in project preparation: PCS was consulted at the beginning with the selection of the cities and suggested the participation of Belem and Teresina. MCTI apparently intends to reduce the number of project partners, despite the increase of the scope from a municipal to a metropolitan scale. SC-impact program may focus on the development of IT management tools like those developed under the SC-IAP, especially the one developed for Brasilia.

GGP IAP

354. The GGP child projects in Brazil are **relevant** to national policies and programs, although political changes during implementation have presented a challenge to the continuing alignment and execution of the projects. The projects are also aligned with, and working in cooperation with, other donor initiatives, such as the Collaboration for Forests and Agriculture (CFA). The project targets soy in the MATOPIBA region (lying within the Cerrado), which is highly relevant given recent trends in agricultural expansion and deforestation.

355. The **coherence of design** is consistent with the overall GGP IAP theory of change, and this theory is considered sound and innovative. However, in Brazil, the demand and supply sides have not been sufficiently integrated during implementation, and current key drivers of

change have not been adequately considered. Now, in the second half of implementation, opportunities to benefit from integration are starting to emerge.

356. The **cross-cutting issues** of **gender** and **resilience** have been given somewhat limited attention in the Brazil Production and Demand Projects. At mid-term, the actions recommended in the Production Project's gender assessment were still pending, resulting in a new plan. **Private sector engagement** is featured prominently in the GGP child projects. The Demand Project has had substantial success in this regard, finding effective entry points to engage with private producers and traders and using collection action through platforms to drive market change. Private sector engagement was not the core of the Brazil Production Project's work, although it faced challenges given the changes in the political climate and the withdrawal of large producers' associations from the project.

357. **The internal governance** has been challenging for both GGP child projects given the large number of GEF Agencies and project partners involved, as well as a complex management arrangement for the Brazil Production Project that ultimately fell to Conservation International Brasil. Transactions costs have been considered to be high. Coordination is starting to improve, however.

358. The Brazil child project has been somewhat disconnected from the overall GGP **knowledge platforms**, with little GEF funding available for participation. Bringing the Brazil Production Project's new government partners to the global GGP conference, however, was seen as a catalyst for reviving the project after the withdrawal of major partners.

359. **Progress toward results** has been substantial in the Demand Project, with strong outcomes in soy through the Soy Toolkit and Cerrado Manifesto, which may have a significant impact on the global market and even herald a transformative shift. Progress has been more muted in the Brazil Production Project, in part due to major changes in the political context and partnerships. The MTR raised serious concerns about the project's ability to deliver on GEBs, though institutional and policy outcomes have been identified at the midterm.

360. **Evolution of GEF integrated approach.** While the FOLUR child project (discussed below) also focuses on commodity value chains in the Cerrado, as did the GGP Brazil child project, the projects are located in different parts of the Cerrado, and the FOLUR project focuses more strongly on beef (which was not part of the GGP project). Interviewees expressed disappointment that the FOLUR project did not build more directly on the GGP one, given the momentum that has started to build in terms of supply chain integration, as well as expressed some disappointment that the partners and lessons from GGP were not more directly influential on the design of the FOLUR child project.

FOLUR impact program

361. The **relevance of design** of the FOLUR child project is confirmed, as it appears to be well aligned with national and international priorities for Brazil, as well as other donor initiatives. As proposed, the child project also identifies an opportunity to complement ongoing sustainability activities.

362. The child project is **coherent at design** with the FOLUR integrated Theory of Change for sustainable food systems and landscape restoration. Project documents indicate that the project will build on past World Bank-implemented initiatives and scale up existing innovations; however, interviewees questioned whether the GEF intervention was at the appropriate scale to support transformational change.

363. The **cross-cutting issues** of gender and resilience are not presented in detail in the design of the FOLUR child project. The child project places a strong emphasis on the role of the private sector to support project objectives and transformational change and has indicated that initial partnerships are under development.

364. The planned **internal governance** of the FOLUR child project appears to be solid. Stakeholder feedback indicates that the project has been prepared in a collaborative way between MMA and MAPA, and it is expected that this close collaboration between environmental and agricultural governmental institutions will continue during implementation. Additionally, the child project Executing Agency, SENAR, is viewed favorably by stakeholders and has worked with the World Bank and adopted good environmental practices through this engagement.

365. Information is limited on the role of **knowledge platforms** in the child project. Project documents indicate an intention to engage with other countries and platforms through the FOLUR global platform, the UNDP Commodities Program, the Good Growth Partnership and with other FOLUR child projects.

Amazon Sustainable Landscapes impact program

366. The Amazon Sustainable Landscapes impact program child project is **coherent** with the parent project theory of change and **relevant** through its alignment with previous and ongoing national programs, as well as with the proposed National Plan for Control of Illegal Deforestation and Recovery of Native Vegetation, 2020-2023. The ASL II Brazil project is built on the successful ARPA and ASL I projects, expanding the geographic focus to existing protected areas outside of ARPA and strengthening connectivity between protected and productive areas.

367. The **cross-cutting issues** of gender, resilience, and private sector feature clearly in the design of the child project. The private sector is expected to play a significant role as beneficiaries of project interventions and as candidates for scaling up project interventions, with special attention given to multi-criteria spatial and financial modeling mechanisms to foster large-scale restoration and improve incentives for farmers to invest in relevant best practices.

368. **Project start-up** has been slowed by institutional restructuring following national and state level elections, and the designation of a new executing entity for the child project (processed as Additional Finance by the World Bank) is expected to create additional challenges for overall project governance. COVID-19 has also had a significant impact on execution of the parent project, which is expected to continue at least through the first half of 2021. Continuity

within the government technical team and the commitment of state level actors were seen as mitigating factors.

369. **Knowledge platforms.** The Brazil child project is expected to play an important role in knowledge sharing for ASL II, with experience in Brazil expected to be used to develop approaches and lessons which can be applied in other areas of the Amazon and Brazilian stakeholders benefitting from approaches and lessons learned in other countries.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – List of interviews conducted

Name	Role/Organization	Interview Date
Adriana Moreira	Senior Biodiversity Specialist, GEF Secretariat	December 17, 2020
Alexandra Fischer	UNDP	December 4, 2020
Aline da Silva	UNDP GGP M&E	
Amanda Sennert	Conservation International	November 23, 2020
Ana Maria Gonzalez	World Bank	November 30, 2020
Andrea Bina	UNDP GGP M&E	November 26, 2020
Asher Lessels	Task Manager, UNEP	November 19, 2020
Bernadete Lange	Senior Environmental Specialist, World Bank	January 6, 2021
Dieter Fischer	IFC	December 2, 2020
Frederico Machado	WWF Brazil	December 8, 2020
Geordie Coville	SC-IAP coordinator, UNEP	November 19, 2020
Isabella Freire	Proforest	November 27, 2020
Isadora Filiberto	Project Coordinator, Porto Digital/ARIES	January 11, 2021
Jane Lino	Proforest	November 27, 2020
João Arthur Soccal Seyffarth	Environmental Analyst, Ministry of Environment (MMA)	January 7, 2021
John Buchanan	Conservation International	November 23, 2020
Karine Barcelos	Conservation International Brasil	November 26, 2020
Luiza de Oliveira Schmidt	Urban Development Coordinator, WRI Brasil	December 17, 2020
Marcela Cristina Rosas Aboim Raposo	Project Coordinator, Ministry of Sciences, Technology and Innovation (MCTI)	November 27, 2020
Marco Aurélio Lobo Júnior	Project Coordinator, CGEE	December 9, 2020
Mariana Parra	Procurement Manager, Conservation International Brasil	December 16, 2020
Miguel Moraes	Conservation International Brasil	November 26, 2020
Nazaré Lima Soares	Project Coordinator, SEMA-DF/CGEE	December 15, 2020
Neila Maria Cavalcante	Project Manager, Conservation International Brasil	December 16, 2020
Otávio Ferrarini	Project Coordinator, Ministry of Environment (MMA)	January 8, 2021
Ruth do Coutto	SCImpact program Coordinator, UNEP	November 19, 2020
Tanya Yudelman	Environmental Specialist, World Bank	January 6, 2021
Viviane Romeiro	Climate Change Manager, WRI Brasil	December 17, 2020
Zuleica Goulart	Project Coordinator, PCS	January 7, 2021

Appendix 2 - References

- Dou, Y., da Silva, R.F.B., Yang, H. et al. Spillover effect offsets the conservation effort in the Amazon. *J. Geogr. Sci.* 28, 1715–1732 (2018).
- GEF (Global Environment Facility). 2019. Program Framework Document. Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration (FOLUR) Impact Program. GEF project ID: 10201.
- GEF (Global Environment Facility). 2019. Program Framework Document. Amazon Sustainable Landscapes Program Phase 2 – ASL 2 Child Projects. GEF project ID: 10198.
- GEF (Global Environment Facility). 2019. Program Framework Document. Sustainable Cities Impact Program. GEF project ID: 10391.
- GEF IEO (Global Environment Facility Independent Evaluation Office). 2018. Formative Review of the Integrated Approach Pilot Programs. Evaluation Report No. 126.
- GGP (Good Growth Partnership). No date. Project Document. Generating Responsible Demand for Reduced Deforestation Commodities. GEF project ID: 9182.
- GGP (Good Growth Partnership). No date. Project Document. Good Growth in the Brazilian Soy Supply Chain. GEF project ID: 9617.
- GGP (Good Growth Partnership). 2019. UNDP-GEF Midterm Review (MTR). Adaptive Management and Learning for the Commodities IAP. GEF project ID: 9179.
- GGP (Good Growth Partnership). 2020. COVID-19 and Soy in Brazil.
- GGP (Good Growth Partnership). 2018. Year One: Good Growth Partnership Highlights: 2018.
- GGP (Good Growth Partnership). 2019. Year Two: Good Growth Partnership Highlights: 2019.
- GGP (Good Growth Partnership). 2020. Year Three: Good Growth Partnership Highlights: 2020.
- GGP (Good Growth Partnership). No date. Report for Technical Workshop. Emerging Lessons from the Implementation of the GEF-6 Commodities Integrated Approach Pilot Program.
- UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). 2019. Fiscal Year 2019. Project Implementation Report (PIR) Taking Deforestation Out of the Soy Supply Chain. GEF project ID: 9617.
- UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). 2020. Fiscal Year 2020. Project Implementation Report (PIR) Taking Deforestation Out of the Soy Supply Chain. GEF project ID: 9617.
- UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). 2020. Mid-term Review (MTR). Taking Deforestation Out of the Soy Supply Chain. GEF project ID: 9617.

UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). No date. Project Document. Taking Deforestation Out of the Soy Supply Chain. GEF project ID: 9617.

UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme). 2019. GEF Fiscal Year 2019 Project Implementation Report (PIR). Promoting Sustainable Cities in Brazil through integrated urban planning and innovative technologies investment. GEF project ID: 9142.

UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme). 2020. GEF Fiscal Year 2020 Project Implementation Report (PIR). Promoting Sustainable Cities in Brazil through integrated urban planning and innovative technologies investment. GEF project ID: 9142.

WWF (World Wildlife Federation). 2019. GEF Fiscal Year 2019 Project Implementation Report (PIR). Generating Responsible Demand for Reduced Deforestation Commodities. GEF project ID: 9182.

WWF (World Wildlife Federation). 2020. GEF Fiscal Year 2020 Project Implementation Report (PIR). Generating Responsible Demand for Reduced Deforestation Commodities. GEF project ID: 9182.

WWF (World Wildlife Federation). 2019. WWF-GEF Midterm Evaluation (MTE) Final Report. Generating Responsible Demand for Reduced Deforestation Commodities. GEF project ID: 9182.

WB (World Bank). 2020. GEF Endorsement Draft. Brazil Amazon Sustainable Landscapes Project – Phase 2. GEF project ID: 10737.

WB (World Bank). 2020. Technical Workshop Program Report Draft. Building for the Future Together: The GEF-6 Sustainable Cities Integrated Approach Pilot Program.

KENYA COUNTRY CASE STUDY REPORT



County official, GEF evaluation national consultant and extension workers in Murang'a county

Introduction

370. This Kenya Case Study is part of the broader Formative Evaluation of the GEF Integrated Approach to Address the Drivers of Environmental Degradation and provides deeper understanding of the design, process, and current results of the GEF-6 Integrated Approach Pilots (IAP) and GEF-7 Impact Programs (impact program) in Kenya. It was designed to assess the similarities and differences between the IAP and impact program child projects and to understand how the GEF integrated approach has evolved from the GEF-6 to GEF-7 financing cycles in the case of Kenya.

371. Kenya was one of three countries selected for case studies for the evaluation (along with Brazil and China). The criteria-based selection considered: a) coverage of global regions; b) the presence of both IAPs and impact programs in the selected countries; c) coverage of all IAP and impact program programs; d) the level of maturity of the IAP child project, at or close to Mid-Term Review (MTR); and e) the diversity of GEF implementing agencies covered under the three country case studies.⁷⁴

372. The case study covers all three child projects under integrated programs in Kenya (table 1). The first one, the Upper Tana Nairobi Water Fund Project (UTNWFP or short “Water Fund project”), has been implemented since 2016 under the Food Security IAP (FS-IAP, renamed Resilient Food Systems [RFS] Program) by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). Two child projects are currently under preparation for the Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) impact program Drylands and the Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration (FOLUR) impact program, implemented by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) respectively. The IUCN project has been

⁷⁴ See Inception Report for more details on selection.

submitted for CEO Endorsement in December 2020; the FAO project is still in its project preparation grant (PPG) phase.

373. The case study took a mixed methods approach, using both desk review of project and national documents, as well as interviews with representatives of the Government of Kenya, Agency and project staff, and external stakeholders. Due to continued travel restrictions and safety considerations as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the case study was largely conducted remotely. The lead international and national consultants carried out seven interviews by call. The national consultant also took a field visit to one of the four counties, Murang'a, where the ongoing FS-IAP Water Fund project is implemented. Due to COVID-19 field visits to other counties were not possible in this evaluation. In Murang'a country the consultant met with the County Executive Committee for Agriculture, County and Civil Society Organization (CSO) extension workers, followed by discussions with beneficiaries in the field. All COVID-related national and local guidelines were followed throughout the duration of the field visit. At completion, evaluation findings were validated through a virtual closing meeting headed by the designated representative of the Kenya GEF operational focal point and with stakeholders from all relevant projects (Appendix 1 for list of participants).

Kenya GEF-6 IAP and GEF-7 impact program Project Information

GEF ID	Project	Coverage	Agency	Status approved / completed	Finance		
					GEF	Co-finance	Source of Co-finance
					US\$ million		
9139	FS-IAP: Upper Tana Nairobi Water Fund Project (UTNWFP)	4 counties* in Upper Tana (Murang’a, Nyeri, Nyandarua, Laikipia)	IFAD	Under implementation 2016-2021	7.2	61.05**	Private sector, Counties, CSO, Beneficiaries IFAD loan project*
10292	SFM impact program Drylands: Strengthening forest management for improved biodiversity conservation and climate resilience in the Southern rangelands of Kenya	2 southern counties (Kajiado, Narok)	IUCN	Submitted for CEO endorsement, returned to Agency to address comments	5.94	13.0	Counties, Private sector, CSO, IUCN
10598	FOLUR impact program: Integrated landscape management for conservation and restoration of the Mt. Elgon Ecosystem in Western Kenya	2 western counties (Bungoma, Tran Nzoia)	FAO	Included in Council-Approved PFD	5.35	51.2	Counties, Private sector, CSO, IUCN

* There are 47 counties in Kenya which has a total population of 52 million.

** According to the IFAD MTR total project costs are US\$33.6 million, of which US\$7.2 million come from the GEF grant and US\$26.4 million are co-financed. A planned co-finance of US\$37.89 million through another IFAD project is not included in the MTR, although it was included in the 2016 CEO Endorsed project document. Co-finance sources reported in the MTR are: US\$3m from TNC co-finance, US\$10m from private sector contributions, US\$11.9m from NGOs and counties (mainly in-kind) and US\$1.5m from beneficiaries (cash and kind).

374. The **Upper Tana Nairobi Water Fund Project (UTNWFP) (GEF ID 9139)** is a 5-year PPP implemented by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and executed by an international NGO, TNC, on behalf of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry. It was one of the first FS-IAP projects that became effective in October 2016 and its closing date is June 2021, after a one-year extension due to COVID-19 (PIR 2020).

375. Half of UTNWFP's GEF financing came from IAP set-asides, the rest came from the Land Degradation Focal Area (25%) and contributions by Biodiversity and Climate Change Focal Areas (12.5% each). The project targeted 1 million hectares under sustainable land management and the mitigation of 1.64 million mtCO₂e at its inception.

376. The goal of the UTNWFP is that "The Upper Tana-Nairobi Water Fund as a Public-Private-Partnership increases investment flows for sustainable land management and integrated natural resource management in the Upper Tana catchment", north of Nairobi. The project targets 21,000 smallholder farmers in four counties through three components: 1. Institutionalizing a Water Fund management platform; 2. Improved Upper Tana catchment ecosystems that support livelihoods, food security, and economic development; and 3. Robust knowledge management and learning systems lessons sharing, both nationally and regionally.

377. The **IUCN Drylands SFM impact program Southern Rangelands child project (GEF ID 10292)** addresses "Strengthening forest management for improved biodiversity conservation and climate resilience in the Southern rangelands of Kenya." It is focused on land restoration and forest conservation with a strong livestock marketing aspect in two counties where the Kenya National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) serves as the executing agency in collaboration with Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO). 42% of the GEF grant comes from Biodiversity Focal Area financing, 33% from impact program set-asides, 17% from Land Degradation and 8% from Climate Change Focal Areas.

378. The Southern Rangelands project aims "To restore southern Kenya dryland forest and rangeland landscape for resilient environment and community livelihoods." The project plans to reach 200,000 beneficiaries, 36% of whom are women. Its three components are 1. Strengthening the enabling environment for the sustainable management of drylands, 2. Investment in scaling up sustainable dryland management, and 3. Programmatic coordination, monitoring, and knowledge management.

379. The project goals are to restore 400,000 hectares of land, of which 25,000 are agricultural land, 25,000 are forest land and the remaining 350,000 are natural grass and shrublands. In addition, the project targets 200,000 hectares of landscapes under improved

agricultural practices.⁷⁵ The project is also expected to directly mitigate 1.5 million mtCO₂e over 20 years.

380. The **FAO FOLUR impact program Mount Elgon project (GEF ID 10598)** of “Integrated landscape management for conservation and restoration of Mt. Elgon eco-system in Western Kenya” covers the two counties of Bungoma and Trans Nzoia and plans to generate synergies with a similar UNEP-implemented FOLUR project for Mt. Elgon across the border in Uganda. 41% of the GEF grant comes from Biodiversity, 25% from Land Degradation Focal Area financing, and 34% from impact program set-asides. The project goals are to restore 10,000 hectares of land and 50,000 hectares of landscapes under improved practices.⁷⁶ The project is also expected to directly mitigate 5.4 million mtCO₂e over 20 years.

381. The main objective of the Mount Elgon project is ‘To promote sustainable, integrated management of Mt. Elgon landscape through the development of inclusive responsible coffee value chain and sustainable staple food production systems’ and plans to reach 60,000 beneficiaries, half of whom are women. The project has four components: 1. Integrated landscape management systems and land use plans (lowlands, mountains, small/large scale farming etc.); 2. Sustainable food production practices and responsible value chains; 3. Conservation and restoration of natural habitats (Lake Victoria watershed, carbon sink); and 4. Project coordination, collaboration, communication and monitoring and evaluation.

Findings

Relevance of design

Alignment with national policy and commitments

382. All three integrated projects in Kenya are fully in sync with government priorities, policies, and strategies such as Vision 2030, Big 4 Agenda, National Adaptation Plan, Nationally Determined Contributions, the Environmental Management and Co-ordination Act, No. 8 of 1999 (amended in 2012 and gazetted in 2015), the Climate Change Act (2016), the National Policy on Climate Finance (2018), the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2000), the Forest Conservation and Management Act (2016), and the Water Act (2016) among others.

383. The **Water Fund Project** is strategically aligned with and highly relevant to the Kenyan government’s objective of conserving water towers (i.e., watersheds) that are critical to the economic well-being of the country and essential to the livelihoods of millions of farmers and citizens. Its PPP approach fosters greater interest by government in the project. The Water Fund project remains a national priority for Kenya, which enables mainstreaming of the project’s modality in the government planning process and justifies national and county governments and their agencies to support the project financially and with their staff (PIR

⁷⁵ Targets based on project document submitted in Dec. 2020.

⁷⁶ Targets based on project document submitted for CEO Endorsement in December 2020.

2020). The relevance of this project is also demonstrated by the government's recent allocation of counterpart funds for three additional critical water towers in the country (two are funded through GEF-7). The Water Fund and its integrated approach is encouraged by GEF as a scalable initiative across Africa (PIR 2020). The Water Fund model was presented by TNC at a GEF Expanded Constituency workshop in Nairobi in February 2020.

384. Site and type of intervention of the planned **Mount Elgon project** are also driven by the government's interest in covering more water towers in the country with an integrated approach to agriculture and natural resource management (NRM). Although it is not directly linked to the Water Fund, the Mount Elgon project offers a particular opportunity to integrate and learn from the field experiences of the Water Fund project and other non-impact program/IAP GEF projects in Kenya. Information exchange has already started between the design and implementation teams of the two projects.

385. The **Southern Rangelands project** under design is particularly relevant and important as a model to better manage the increasing demand for forest products in Kenya, including timber and non-wood forest products and to promote alternative livelihoods for farmers and rural populations. The project directly supports Kenya's commitment to restore 5.1 million hectares of land in the country under the Bonn challenge with AFR100 and aligns with NDC actions calling for increased tree cover, climate smart agriculture, and drought management (IUCN PIF).

Government and Agency motivation for participation in impact program

386. Interview partners in Government and GEF Agencies in Kenya perceive the comparative advantage of GEF and the integrated program approach mainly for its catalytic and thematically challenging interventions. The Government, i.e., the hosting the GEF Focal Point, has been primarily motivated to participate in the IAP/impact programs due to their holistic and programmatic approach and the strong emphasis on livelihoods in addition to environmental considerations. Interviewees stated that past GEF projects tended not to perform that well because they often focused almost exclusively on the environment and did not sufficiently consider real income earning opportunities for communities. In contrast, the new generation of IAP/impact programs now concertedly target the nexus between environment, agricultural productivity, sustainable land management and livelihoods enhancement. The holistic watershed approach in the Water Fund project is especially appreciated by the government and offers an opportunity and entry point for MoEF to work with ministries and agencies focused on agriculture, water, and other sectors. The IAP/impact program emphasis on private sector engagement, value chain focus, and transboundary cooperation with Uganda are important too. It is noted that the Upper Tana Nairobi Water Fund project hosted a Ugandan delegation for cross-country learning as Uganda is one of the Child Projects in the FS-IAP. The FOLUR project is targeting Mt. Elgon, which is a trans-boundary ecosystem shared between Kenya and Uganda and will afford learning across the two countries. The incentive payments are another critical factor to encourage participation and help to compensate for the extra effort required to develop high quality proposals—although the Government perceived that these incentive payments were reduced in GEF-7.

387. Interview partners from the Agencies see the impact programs as more in line with their policies and experiences in Kenya than “classical” GEF projects as they push ‘in a big way’ towards governance, stakeholder consultations, market linkages, and private sector. The impact programs offer a comprehensive suite of interventions and a transformative agenda with a unique opportunity to address environmental issues more holistically in a ‘whole-of-systems approach’. But such an approach also requires managing of expectations since multi-sectoral interventions are by definition more complex and tend to require more resources and time. For IUCN, the GEF is also seen as opening more government and policy doors through the impact programs, including through their international linkages. For FAO an opportunity lies in the strong impact program focus on livelihoods, value chains and income earnings that could avoid limitations in past GEF landscape/forest restoration and enterprise development projects that were not attractive enough for beneficiaries. FAO’s experience in GEF-5 in forest restoration linked to national policies and strategies can now be carried forward in the Mount Elgon project in the FOLUR impact program.

Coherence of design, innovation, environmental governance, and M&E

Coherence of child projects

388. All three child projects in Kenya address objectives of the Conventions on land degradation, biodiversity, and climate change and receive respective GEF focal area funding, except for the Mount Elgon project that only includes land degradation and biodiversity funding (Appendix 3). All projects include GEF core indicators for global environmental benefits (GEBs) associated with the three corresponding focal areas. The components of the projects are fully aligned with the theories of change of, and mirror the components in, the overarching IAP/impact program programs (FS-IAP, SFM Drylands, and FOLUR).

Innovation

389. Interview partners in Kenya confirmed that the IAP and impact program programs brought many innovative ideas and practices that are new for the country beyond their integrated soil and land management practices. The most innovative and ground-breaking aspects in the Water Fund project are its private sector approach to sustainable fundraising and linking this to the payment for ecosystem services to ensure sustainability and farmer/community incentives (see next section on Environmental governance). These innovations caused some initial challenges, and it took time for players to understand the project. Also in the Water Fund project, the TNC model brought new, modern communication and environmental measurement technologies, such as an SMS platform, GIS and telemetric stations (see box below). The application of the Land Degradation Surveillance Framework (LDSF) in partnership with the World Agroforestry Center (International Council for Research in Agroforestry, ICRAF) also helped the project better understand the extent of land degradation and soil health in the project areas, thus informing the selection of interventions.

390. For the Southern Rangelands project the main innovation is the incorporation of value-chain and livelihood aspects as part of its activities; and particularly through doing so by linking

livestock marketing premium prices to those communities that can demonstrate participation and positive results in natural resource management/soil and land management (NRM/SLM) management, a form of indirect payment for eco-system services.

Digital applications and information sharing in the Water Fund

- In addition to telemetric measurement stations, farmers started to benefit from enhanced and timely weather and climate advisory services thanks to the roll out of the SMS-based weather and climate advisories platform, in collaboration with the Meteorological department, county governments and the MoA. Results on water quality and quantity analysis are shared with stakeholders through KM products, reports and virtual sharing platforms like Zoom, WebEx and Skype.
- In addition, the Water Fund has intensified the use of various social media platforms, including Twitter and Facebook, to communicate project activities. The project is also using its SMS platform covering 26,119 farmers to communicate area-specific conservation and meteorological messages, information on water pan liners and guidelines on their installation. This is particularly useful during a time of limited personal communication opportunities due to COVID-19. In addition, information is shared through the Water Funds for Africa Network platform.

Environmental governance

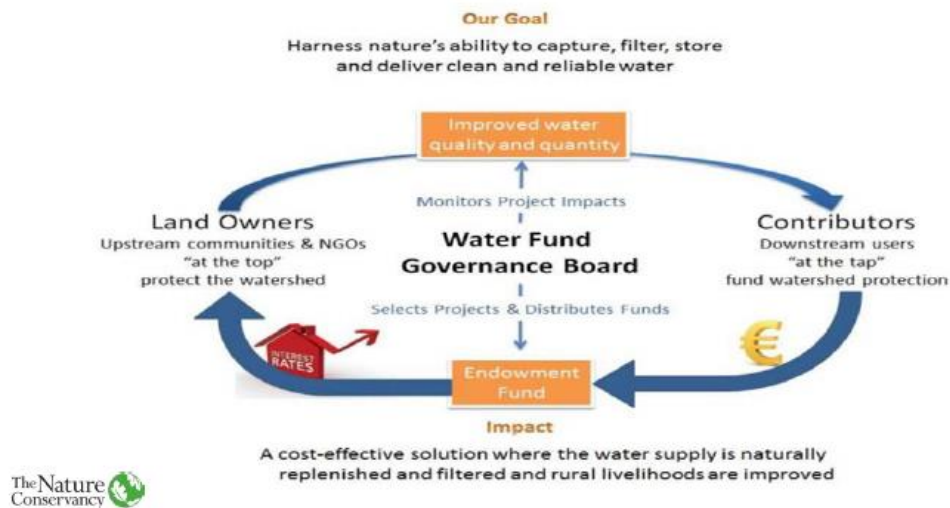
391. Many ministries and authorities are involved in NRM, water resources, and climate change in Kenya, including: the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MoEF); the Ministry of Agriculture; the Ministry of Water, Sanitation and Irrigation; the Ministry of Devolution; and the National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA) as far as pollution is concerned. MoEF primarily deals with policy and less with implementation, so while it is a key agency, its role is a bit more peripheral and less that of a convener for implementation. Its financial resources also currently would not allow to assume a larger role here. However, it should be noted that the Ministry also has a role in implementation through its Agencies for example the Kenya Forest Service, NEMA and the Kenya Forestry Research Institute. It is a key requirement for GEF Agencies to develop proposals (PIFs) jointly with the relevant government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), since these are the same MDAs that will implement on the ground. The MoEF also provides technical support and inputs through their participation in field supervision and project implementation support missions. Other interviewees believe the national NRM and climate finance communities and their institutional architecture and governance in Kenya are relatively fractured. These interviewees mainly attribute this to ongoing devolution of roles to the counties and spread-out or poorly defined and limited organizational mandates.

392. **Water Fund architecture.** The strongest contribution of the GEF-6 Water Fund project to environmental governance is the Water Fund's Endowment Fund itself. The Water Fund is the financial pillar and core of the project and collects private sector contributions downstream from water users and others to protect the watershed upstream in catchment areas, through the principle of eco-system service payments (see figure below). The Nature Conservancy (TNC) piloted and implemented this model in other countries over the last 20 years and extended it to

Kenya in 2013 with an upgraded methodology. Kenya is the location of the first Water Fund in Africa and the UTNWF is the largest one in East-Africa. It has been a groundbreaking innovation that by now has led to one more such Fund operating in Cape Town, South Africa, and to seven others being developed across the continent (Appendix 4).

393. The Kenya Water Fund is 51% private sector and 49% government represented and has a Governance Board (Board of Trustees and Board of Management), a national Project Steering Committee (PSC) and a County Advisory Committee. The PSC consists of 21 members, from national and county levels, and is chaired by the GEF Political Focal Point. It includes various government line ministries (such as MoEF, Agriculture, Water and The Treasury), the private sector, research institutions (e.g., Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology - JKUAT), and county governments. The County Advisory Committee has representatives from the participating counties (county ministers) that are expected to provide some support through county budgets and integrate Water Fund activities in their county development plans.

The Water Fund Model



394. Yet, private sector financing of the Water Fund Endowment is still lagging, and some early targets have been reduced (see Private Sector section below for its capitalization). It is noteworthy that smallholder farmers themselves contribute with contributions to the Water Fund, through their co-payments of local investments and equipment and maintenance of generated assets.

395. Frequent shifts of institutional roles and responsibilities and the ongoing decentralization process complicate work for the Fund and in the field. A broad array of stakeholders and many Ministries come together in the Water Fund, but the departments and their responsibilities keep shifting, a challenge for continuity and progress. For instance, the PSC now has the 5th chairperson in 4 years. Furthermore, the constitutional process of decentralization changed roles and responsibilities for implementation and in tariff and fund appropriations. At county level, the County Executive Committees play a critical role in coordinating and implementing the Water Fund project activities on the ground since many

operational tasks were devolved to the counties. Other operational responsibilities remained with national ministries which makes coordination somewhat challenging.

396. At the same time, interviewees saw only limited scope for engagement and leadership in the GEF portfolio and the sector through the GEF OFP and the Ministry of Environment and Forestry during GEF project implementation. This was mainly due to resource gaps and no GEF funds being made available for this purpose.⁷⁷ Interviewees also perceived a need for greater information exchange and cross-learning at the national level among different GEF projects.

397. **Governance at county level.** Guided by the Government's Inter-government Relations Act, the GEF Water Fund project strongly supports decentralization to the county-level and actively promotes new ways of fostering environmental governance and farmer and community support at the sub-national level. Decentralization has also led to considerable political support in the counties themselves ("Return the water to the county!"). The Water Fund Project builds on a strong alliance with the County Executive Committee of Agriculture. Field implementation also involves CSO facilitators, water user and forest user associations, and the Water Regulatory Authority. Awareness and capacity for integrated NRM and watershed management are advancing at the county level. A significant amount of work remains to ensure that the payment for ecosystem services (PES) model and farmers and communities' benefits endure beyond project completion, requiring adaptive management of the Water Fund and PES model.

398. The Water Fund project has made commendable efforts to mobilize various partners to work with farmers in the field. Progress has been made at achieving better management and greater coordination of these partnerships in the field (IFAD 2020 Supervision Report).⁷⁸ As the project moves into its final year of implementation and prior to transiting into the Water Fund, the latest supervision mission sees a need for a formal review of existing partnerships to determine which of these partnerships have been able to assist effectively in project implementation.

399. **Policy dialogue.** The Water Fund project also supports policies and incentives for climate smart smallholder agriculture and food value chains in financially viable and sustainable watershed stewardship (component 1, part 2). The MTR noted positive progress on the ongoing county-level policy dialogues, which are being conducted with and through the County Executive Committees for Agriculture. Three white papers have been produced for three of the

⁷⁷ GEF STAR allocations are off-budget, but the MoEF still has to report monthly on budgets and physical progress to Treasury and a Committee of all Permanent Secretaries. MoEF would prefer some allocation of GEF financing to the OFP to facilitate some monitoring and visiting of project sites by Kenyan GEF National Portfolio Steering Committee members. This committee is drawn from Public, Private and Civil Society Organization. For a start, 1% of the 10% GEF Agency Fees could be allocated to the OFP.

⁷⁸ The Water Fund project MTR (2019) had called for better design of partnership agreements with clear targets and demonstrated linkage effects between conservation and agriculture that could help to improve management. The MTR had also seen a need for partners to allocate more resources to innovative extension approaches, technical support, follow-up and monitoring.

four target counties. The project is also working with Kenya Rural Roads Authority (KeRRA) in Murang'a County to integrate rainwater harvesting from road run off. Policy dialogues are focusing on (1) riparian land management (pegging, maintenance, protection, sustainability, wetlands); (2) plants (water unfriendly, invasive, establishment localities); (3) quarries management (establishment of management committees, best practices, support by counties, rehabilitation); and (4) road runoff safe drainage and necessary conveyancing across farmers' fields which generally consist of steep slopes. The MTR also noted that the policy dialogue processes need to be expedited and greater documentation of successes and lessons learned captured in order to inform decision making. The MTR recommended the MoEF to lead a review of public policies and regulations financing catchment conservation to better coordinate efforts to fundraise for the Water Fund.

400. **Secure community ownership and sustainable resource governance.** The two impact program child projects under preparation plan to pay special attention to strengthening governance and community and county institutions. The **Southern Rangelands project** interviewees consider community institutions such as community wildlife conservancies, community forestry associations and livestock producer organizations as critical to grassroots ownership. At the county-level, the project envisions County Steering Committees as essential to foster ownership but acknowledges that many county departments are nascent and require considerable capacity building. According to project designers the 'GEF natural resource governance framework' offers a useful approach with clear management and inclusiveness criteria to support these capacities. The project plans to address the principal constraint of sustainable governance and management of dryland forests through improving capacity in organizing and managing local institutions and policy frameworks at the conservancy, county, and inter-county level.

401. Sustainability in dryland management requires that local people have secure rights to access, manage, use, and enjoy the goods and services generated by dryland ecosystems and landscapes. The project will support analyses of existing conditions of tenure and use rights and contribute to negotiated development or modification of appropriate provisions for tenure and use right mechanisms. This will include the development of a framework for the management of shared pastoral and agropastoral resources including traditional pasture management systems and conflict prevention.

402. Environmental governance at the local level and for organizing natural resource ownership, tenure and access is also considered of primary importance in the FAO implemented **Mount Elgon project**. According to FAO's experience in the GEF-6 Mt. Kulal project and others, future projects should promote more traditional models of community governance rather than modes that rely too heavily on Government. At Mount Kulal, FAO worked with elders to register land as community forest under the Community Land Act.⁷⁹ One interviewee expressed that Government agencies and many NGOs often start with

⁷⁹ As confirmed by FAO, Mt. Kulal is not a gazetted forest but falls under community land.

environmental advocacy and implementation of restrictions that is seldom appreciated by the communities. There have been strong traditional natural resource governance systems in the past, but they have eroded over time.

403. At present, there is no system for payment for ecosystem services included in the design of the Mount Elgon project because few resources have market values that somebody may be willing to pay for. The future GEF FOLUR impact program child project plans to develop such systems through stronger valuation of water and eco-tourism, which will be supported through an economic ecosystem assessment and the valuation of ecosystem services, including carbon below and above ground. However, ecosystem service payments will also require effective national laws that are not yet in place in Kenya, except for some draft regulations on forest benefits sharing. Thus far all of these structures are voluntary, and the Kenyan experience has demonstrated that relying exclusively on voluntary contributions by private companies is insufficient to meet objectives.

Monitoring and Evaluation

404. The monitoring and reporting system has taken time to operationalize in the **Water Fund project**, but the project by now has ensured that indicators are coherent with the results frameworks of the broader FS-IAP that were finalized in 2020. Reporting and an impact survey are planned for 2021 provided that the COVID-19 circumstances allow for it.

405. Field level M&E in the Water Fund project includes an automated system that reports on hydrology and biodiversity indicators and contains an online reporting platform. Hydrological data is measured upstream and downstream, including water quality and flow, with control and treatment sites. According to the 2020 supervision mission there have been many improvements in capturing all relevant metrics since the MTR. A beneficiary tracking system using the District Health Information System 2 (DHIS2) has been operationalized and is online. This database is the main tool for field staff and implementing partners to upload their data and for the project to analyze and generate reports and data visualizations to inform decision-making. The 2020 SV mission was impressed with the improvements of data quality and their regular follow-up by the project team since the previous supervision.

406. For the **Southern Rangelands project** the establishment of an M&E system and indicators was reportedly well guided through the GEF-7 core indicator sheet and the broader impact program results framework. However, there were some challenges related to coverage and target areas, and there was reportedly some upward pressure on these issues by the GEF Secretariat. There are some remaining issues related to possible double counting of land covered under various components and focal areas, as well as definitions and impacts at the household level (e.g., the definitions and impacts of the number and categories of beneficiaries

in households that benefit, how “youth” age groups are defined⁸⁰, and how to discern the ways in which changes to policies and best practices affect men and women).

407. **GEBs.** The **Water Fund project** carried out several baseline surveys for all five targeted GEBs. This includes a Land Degradation Surveillance Framework survey by ICRAF, data collection from 26 river gauging stations, a Multi-Poverty Assessment Tool (MPAT) that incorporated household food security as well as biophysical elements from the Resilience Adaption Pathways and Transformation Assessment Framework (RAPTA), the wetland biodiversity baseline by the National Museums of Kenya, and the assessment of avoided greenhouse gases (GHG) and carbon sequestration through the Ex-ACT tool. However, at mid-term the project had not yet followed up on the GEB baseline results, nor assessed GHG emissions mitigated or the river basin’s aquatic and terrestrial biodiversity.

408. The latest PIR of 2020 reveals some progress towards achieving GEB targets. For example, the PIR reports that 16,913 hectares of land that had been previously degraded by water erosion have been put under sustainable land management (land degradation) and 200 hectares in forests are being restored to protect some of the world’s most iconic wildlife (biodiversity). Current land-use changes being implemented are expected to avoid or sequester 4.1 million mtCO₂eq over a period of 20 years (compared with a target of 1.6 million mtCO₂eq at project design)⁸¹. Core staff have undergone extensive training on how to capture GHG emission reductions and carbon sequestration with various tools. The project selected Plan Vivo⁸² as its main standard and instrument, with the FAO Ex-act tool as one of the methodologies.

Cross-cutting issues (gender, resilience and private sector)

Gender

409. In terms of women participation, 40 percent of project beneficiaries in the **Water Fund project** are women, against an appraisal target of 50 percent (IFAD 2020 Supervision Report). The project improved women’s control and access to productive resources and their decision-making role, and reduced their workloads. Women, as well as men, were empowered through growing horticultural crops with the help of more water pans, provision of fruit seedlings (such as avocado), and training. Three out of four extension workers are women, and the project provides a special 50% subsidy on all materials to target women-led households for drip kits and biogas.

⁸⁰ This is mainly a question of potentially differing definitions between the GEF Secretariat and The Government. The Government has a clear definition of youth which counts those up to the age of 35 years.

⁸¹ Information received from the Water Fund project manager March 19, 2021.

⁸² Plan Vivo is an Offset Project Standard for forestry, agricultural, and other land use projects with a focus on promoting sustainable development. t

410. The Water Fund project has a Gender Equality and Poverty Targeting Strategy and Action Plan, but at mid-term the action plan was found to lack ‘timeliness, responsibilities, and clear budget lines’ (MTR, p.14). Subsequently, a specific Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Training was prepared for 2020 but postponed due to COVID-19 (PIR 2020). To further enhance gender roles in the project, more gender sensitization for staff and implementation partners, bringing in suppliers of labor-saving technologies, and using the Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) are suggested (IFAD 2020 Supervision Report). Additional avenues should be explored to attract the participation of youth. For the **Southern Rangelands Project**, one interview partner noted that GEF introduced important new aspects on gender and indigenous people.

Resilience

411. At inception, the Kenya **Water Fund project** benefited from a RAPTA based analysis of the resilience of ecosystems and households. At the watershed level, the combination of biophysical and agricultural techniques and support for water management were expected to lead to diversified production and increased yield, broadened adaptation potential, and ultimately, climate and household resilience. Unfortunately, partner reports from implementation thus far provide very little information on the links between conservation works, agriculture production and productivity, and farmers’ livelihoods and resilience, partly since the planned impact survey for the MTR had to be postponed. Resilience was taken into consideration in analysis and design of the **Southern Rangelands project**, but the utility of the resilience concept in project design and results was found to be limited for two reasons. First, there is little consensus on how to understand and apply the concept of resilience consistently. Secondly, interview partners who raised this issue considered resilience more as a process-oriented mechanism rather than a measurable outcome and understood there to be few concrete implications for core indicator and results measurement.

Private sector

412. The **Water Fund project** envisions significant engagement of the private sector, mainly in terms of seeding and replenishing the Endowment Fund and participation in its governance. According to several interviewees, a number of projects in Kenya have attempted to attract private sector involvement and funding, but this process is generally considered to be difficult. Direct benefits from involvement in such projects are not always clear to Kenya’s private sector. Furthermore, Kenyan laws are also oriented towards large-scale private sector contributions and investment in PPPs that require high-rank governance committees. Given the current COVID-19 situation’s impacts on employment and earnings significant private sector contributions are even less likely. The latest supervision missions recommended more resource mobilization from public sector and international sources for the Fund, including the Kenya Water Sector Trust Fund.

413. **By Sept. 2020 the Water Fund project had collected a total of about US\$ 2.2m⁸³ for the Endowment Fund**, of which US\$ 990k originate from GEF seed money and the remainder are from private sector sources, mainly the Coca Cola foundation, Frigoken and a small contribution by a US private sector donor. Additional private sector pledges of US\$ 1.52m have reportedly been made but are not yet confirmed. Without the additional pledges, this is about US\$ 5.3m short of target of US\$7.5m for the Fund (or an achievement rate of 29.3 percent). Private sector contributions are to a large part earmarked and are directly disbursed for activities in the field as agreed with the project, some are also made in kind (i.e., for reforestation, water pans and drip kits). As of Feb. 2021, an amount of about US\$ 2.0 million was in the fixed-interest deposit account of the Endowment Fund.⁸⁴ Overall, the 2020 IFAD supervision mission was concerned that private sector contributions were far below targets (at an achievement rate of 10.8 per cent), at the time of the SV mission. The supervision mission and interviewees in this evaluation identified several reasons for relatively weak fundraising for the Water Fund Endowment including: the business case forwarded by the project, companies' short-term interests and alternative mandatory payments for conservation, political changes, and policies and regulations governing private sector contributions (see box below).

414. The latest supervision mission of the Water Fund project reiterated its concern about the possibility of the project not reaching its US\$7.5m resource mobilization target to ensure the Fund's successful continuation. As already suggested in the MTR, the public sector would have to get more strongly involved with guidance and contributions to ensure sustainability. Additional institutional representation by the public sector was suggested, "if considered advantageous for policy engagement and access to public sector funding." The supervision

⁸³ According to the financial management section of the 2020 SV report, p.18. The PMU clarified that the project receives grants through (i) cash for endowment capitalization; (ii) cash for financing water fund activities under TNC procurement and financial management procedures; and (iii) in-kind support (inputs, water facilities etc.) which is directly implemented by partners.

⁸⁴ Information received from PMU on March 19, 2021.

mission also again proposed for the Fund to increase its discussions with the Water Sector Trust Fund (WSTF) in the Ministry of Water and to identify areas of potential synergy.

Reasons for limited fund-raising for the Water Fund

Interview partners noted several reasons for below-target private sector fund-raising for the Water Fund:

- **Business case:** TNC has enhanced its resource mobilization in 2020, including the President of the Board of Trustees and a professional fund-raising consultant. But there is still concern among evaluation interviewees that the business case for private sector contributions remains too weak.
- **Double charges:** Some private and semi-private utilities and companies already contribute to other statutory payments that are earmarked for conservation efforts. For instance, Kenya Electricity Company consumers already pay a conservation levy to the Water Resource Authority (WRA) that has a conservation mandate, although reportedly most of this money is used for WRA's operational and administrative costs.
- **Image/PR:** When companies are willing to make a contribution, it is generally for more short-term image reasons, often a once-in-a-time contribution rather than a long-term commitment.
- **Changing political preferences:** The Nairobi Water and Sewerage Company had initially planned to make a US\$600k contribution, but then withdrew for political reasons when the Nairobi Governorship changed and the need to support the Water Fund was de-prioritized.
- **Lack of policy support:** Conservation funding is currently not sufficiently consolidated. This includes sector-wide policy support for the consolidation of conservations funds/levies and channeling the same to initiatives such as the Water Fund. There are advanced discussions now to lobby the Government more strongly to support the Water Fund.

Program governance

Efficiency of IAP child project implementation, start-up of impact program child project projects and choice of GEF agencies

415. The **Water Fund project** started up very efficiently; it was among the first child projects being launched in the FS-IAP and has been making positive steady progress towards meeting its objectives and deliverables. The MTR was completed by IFAD on time (August 2019) and provides comprehensive information, well justified judgements in a concise format, and offers critical recommendations for the project and the Government. IFAD has also been undertaking annual field-based supervision missions and generating detailed supervision mission reports.⁸⁵ The reports cover all technical, M&E, KM financial and procurement aspects of the project.

416. The **IUCN led Southern Rangelands project** was designed on time as part of the first batch of Drylands forests impact program projects to be submitted for CEO endorsement in December 2020. Resources for design (US\$150,000) were considered “borderline” since preparation efforts went beyond a regular GEF project, international experts were involved, and COVID-19 considerations increased expenses. Ultimately, IUCN had to co-finance design

⁸⁵ The supervision mission in August/September 2020 was undertaken virtually due to movement restrictions occasioned by the COVID 19 pandemic.

from its own resources. IUCN is well qualified to implement the project; the organization has strong cooperation with the Kenya Government and Kenya Wildlife Service and its regional coordinator, who was also in charge of designing the project, is based in Nairobi. The project and the impact program fit well into IUCN's policy and strategic objectives including United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) land degradation neutrality targets and the balancing of environmental and human concerns.

417. The **FAO led Mount Elgon project** (FOLUR impact program) is still in its PPG phase and has not yet submitted a detailed project document. The COVID-19 situation delayed preparation of the proposal in 2020. FAO has a very large country program in Kenya and is well connected with the Government. They also bring extensive experience from their involvement in a GEF-5 project in Kenya on enterprise development, timber products and wild harvesting, and landscape restoration (Kirisia Forest); and in another one in GEF-6, a Sustainable Forest Management project in Mt. Kulal and Mukogodo forests.

Program governance

418. The **Water Fund project** had close and mutually supportive interactions with IFAD as lead agency and the FS-IAP/RFS hub. This is in part because the hub project is carried out from Nairobi and IFAD is both program lead and implementing agency for the Water Fund project (with separate staff responsibilities). Nairobi often served as an RFS program meeting point and the Water Fund model was prominently disseminated through the hub project and FS-IAP reporting. According to project sources the key driver for success of the governance system has been that it was set up from the start through a broad-based consultative process.

419. The Water Fund project was envisioned to link to another co-finance IFAD project implemented by the Government of Kenya with funding from IFAD (UTNRMP). But this relationship remains weak and needs to be clarified and further advanced (see box below). The assumption that the UTNWFP could ensure the sustainability of the UTNRMP is not shared by all interviewees in Kenya, actually regarded as unrealistic by some, since the Water Fund project only covers a part of the larger UTNRMP project geographic area.

Co-finance of GEF Water Fund project through IFAD NRM project

TNC and IFAD designed the GEF Water Fund project (UTNWFP) together, as a stand-alone project but it was blended to some extent with an ongoing IFAD NRM loan project in the same location (UTNRMP 2013-2020). The GEF Water Fund project is considered an 'off-shoot' of the UTNRMP project as the Water Fund was supposed to ensure sustainability for the UTNRMP. The UTNRMP was accepted as co-finance for the Water Fund project in its submission for GEF-6 CEO endorsement/approval in 2016. But in reverse, the 2018 UTNRMP MTR did not mention GEF, neither as partner nor co-financier in this project.

There are some linkages between the two projects, but they are limited to knowledge exchange and the coordination of part of the UTNRMP through the Water Fund project. The UTNRMP project is implemented through Government, while the Water Fund relies mainly on CSOs contracted by TNC. The Water Fund has more of an individual farmer approach, while the IFAD project is group- and community-oriented. As of late the two projects are trying to reconcile their different approaches on the ground and better manage their partnership at national level. IFAD has been requesting the two projects to develop joint workplans, avoid duplication, share staff, and work towards taking common approaches.

420. For the **Southern Rangelands project** interview partners considered FAO, as SFM Drylands Lead Agency, as a good 'gate-keeper', acknowledging they provided sufficient information and guidance, including providing specific platform 'supply-driven' suggestions and convening quarterly meetings. The PPG phase was carried out mostly by IUCN internally, with some feedback from FAO lead and GEFSEC.

421. FAO has not yet had much contact with the FOLUR Lead Agency on preparing the **Mount Elgon project** document for CEO endorsement as it was delayed.

Transparency

422. For Kenya, GEF project selection is based on a national portfolio formulation exercise after GEF replenishments clarify priorities. This includes meetings by the national portfolio formulation steering committee, calls for proposals to all GEF Agencies, Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), and certification of alignment with national priorities, medium-term government plans and strategies, and the MoEF strategic plan. Joint proposals submitted to the Operational Focal Point are also subjected to review by the Ministry's Technical directors as well as technical counterparts of concerned MDAs. The National Portfolio Steering Committee reviews the proposals and submits its recommendations to the Operational Focal Point for final decisions and endorsement. Various interviewees for this report confirmed the transparency of the GEF-7 impact program child project selection. The GEF operational focal point provided leadership and clear criteria, and the multi-agency national steering committee under the Principal Secretary vetted the concepts thoroughly.

Knowledge platforms

423. For the **Water Fund project**, the Kenya Government and the Water Fund Management participated actively in sharing lessons and best practices during annual RFS knowledge platform meetings and Kenya hosted several of them. The knowledge platform mainly served to raise awareness around the Water Fund model, in addition to bringing knowledge and lessons

learned back to Kenya to inform the project on broader environmental management. The Water Fund project team has worked closely with the FS-IAP hub project communication team to use the platform to showcase the Water Fund model to other African countries. Since the Kenya Water Fund is the first of its kind in Africa, Kenya received visiting delegations from Gabon, South Africa, and Uganda, contributing to South-South learning opportunities. Kenya also made presentations at the World Water Forum, in monthly newsletters etc. They had a GEF expanded workshop with delegates from 14 constituency countries in early 2020 and are also leveraging social media (Twitter, Instagram, Facebook) as an outreach tool. 'World-water week' was an example of positive outreach.

424. The Water Fund project also has built its own local knowledge network, linking the Fund to the field. An SMS platform works to share relevant messages and weather information and serves as an educational tool on a range of topics such as the distribution and planting of tree seedlings. Online information centers were established at national and county levels. The SMS platform also offered a useful alternative for the project to distribute project materials and key conservation messages during the halt of many field activities in March 2020 due to COVID (PIR 2020).

425. For the **Southern Rangelands project**, the SFM impact program Drylands knowledge platform is only in the design phase, but IUCN has already begun working with impact program partners to define baseline information for the child projects and invited them to form a community of practice. Currently this process is led by FAO in Asia, but it is expected that there will be a regional cluster hub in Nairobi at some point (possibly managed through IUCN). In future, the Southern Rangelands project expects to achieve greater impact through cooperative efforts, planning, policies and partnership with other SFM Drylands program countries. Dedicated child project resources have been allocated for participation in knowledge sharing and learning events, capture and development of knowledge products for contribution to SFM Drylands program partners and the wider community, and participation in relevant communities of practice. Tailored briefs and other informational products for policymakers and stakeholders will be produced and disseminated so that SFM Drylands program progress can serve as a model for replication and scaling up in other landscapes across Kenya and beyond. In addition, the Kenya IUCN led child project expects to benefit from relevant technical and capacity development support provided by the global child project.

Program results

426. The latest supervision mission of the **Water Fund project** in September 2020 gives a good overview on up-to-date program results and achievements, as well as some remaining challenges for child project results. The field visit by the Evaluation team in Murang'a county confirmed in many ways the findings from the review of project documents and from interviews and comments by reviewers (see box below). At the same time, visiting only one of four target counties due to COVID circumstances limited the representativity and field observations of the full range of project activities.

427. The 2020 supervision report does not provide a summary rating for impact program and DO (as in PIRs) but there are detailed ratings for key evaluation criteria and project management. Climate change adaptation, beneficiary participation, exit strategy and potential for scaling up were all seen as satisfactory (5), the latter mainly on the merits of the Water Fund model. Project effectiveness, responsiveness of service providers, and targeting were rated moderately satisfactory (4), and so was project management. Gender and M&E were upgraded from moderately unsatisfactory in the MTR 2019 to moderately satisfactory (4).

Achieving results for farm smallholders and ecosystems

428. In terms of direct benefits of smallholder farmers and enhanced ecosystem services in the watersheds, the project is working with 23,218 farmers on promoting SLM measures (IFAD 2020 Supervision Report). Many project outputs are close to those targeted, some have already been overachieved, although several implementation partners were not able to implement all field activities in 2020 due to the COVID-19 environment. There are now 8,297 households with water pans (68% of PDR target) and 115 with biogas installations (115%). Only drip irrigation is far below targets, with only 219 farmers (or 9.5% of target) using this technology, which many farmers regard as costly and maintenance intensive. UTNWFP partnered with Murang'a county to plant one million Hass avocado seedlings over two years on a 50:50 cost sharing basis with farmers, supported through county extension.

429. The project is also making good progress in adapting to climate change through the planting of more than 3.3 million tree seedlings (372% of target)⁸⁶, with a commendable survival rate of 78%; the upgrading of 28 river gauging stations (109%); and the establishment of 12 tree nurseries (400%). In addition, 68 hectares of public forests have been rehabilitated (or 85% of PDR target). Road shoulders were stabilized with Bracharia grass along 7.0 kms of the Mununga-Ngonda road.

430. A total of 295 kilometers of riparian land covering 960 hectares has been conserved using giant bamboo, Napier grass, and indigenous water friendly trees. The reason farmers are taking up bamboo is because of high market demand. Increasingly bamboo is being used for varying uses including furniture making, toothpicks making, paper making etc. This demonstrates the need to link conservation goals with economic benefits for farmers as an incentive for farmers to undertake conservation measures on riparian land.

431. The areas of the Water Fund project are targeted by a number of other development initiatives and partners, past and present, sometimes with similar activities. The Water Fund project demands that implementing partners record activities financed by the Water Fund separately and that all its farmers and field activities are geo-referenced and reported in DHIS2 to assure attribution of activities to the project.

⁸⁶ It is not fully clear whether the 1 million avocado seedlings planted in Murang'a county are included in this figure.

Value chains

432. Linking farmers more effectively to value chains is part of the main planned outcomes of the Water Fund project. Several of the targeted counties, such as Murang'a, are already actively promoting various value chains, such as for avocados, dairy, tea, coffee, and bananas. For some of these commodities this includes policies and legislative interventions on regulating production, harvesting, aggregation, grading, and marketing to safeguard farmers and products. The Water Fund project supports the counties and acts as a trusted convenor to bring several parties together and demonstrate the potential to catalyze these value chains for conservation work. This includes, for instance, Frigoken for green beans, Green Pot Enterprises for bamboo value chains, and Horizon Business Ventures for piloting commercial farming of Rose Geranium for essential oils.

433. The Water Fund project is not related in any way with Kakuzi Company Ltd. in Murang'a county that has generated much international controversy in recent months due to alleged human rights abuses on its avocado plantations. The affected area is outside the Water Fund project's geography. In contrast, the project is working with the county governments to train and empower farmers on contract management and negotiation and some basics on their rights. It is also linking farmers with institutions such as the Kenya Horticulture Council (KHC), which lobbies for better working environments, contracts, farmers rights and safeguarding issues.

Remaining challenges

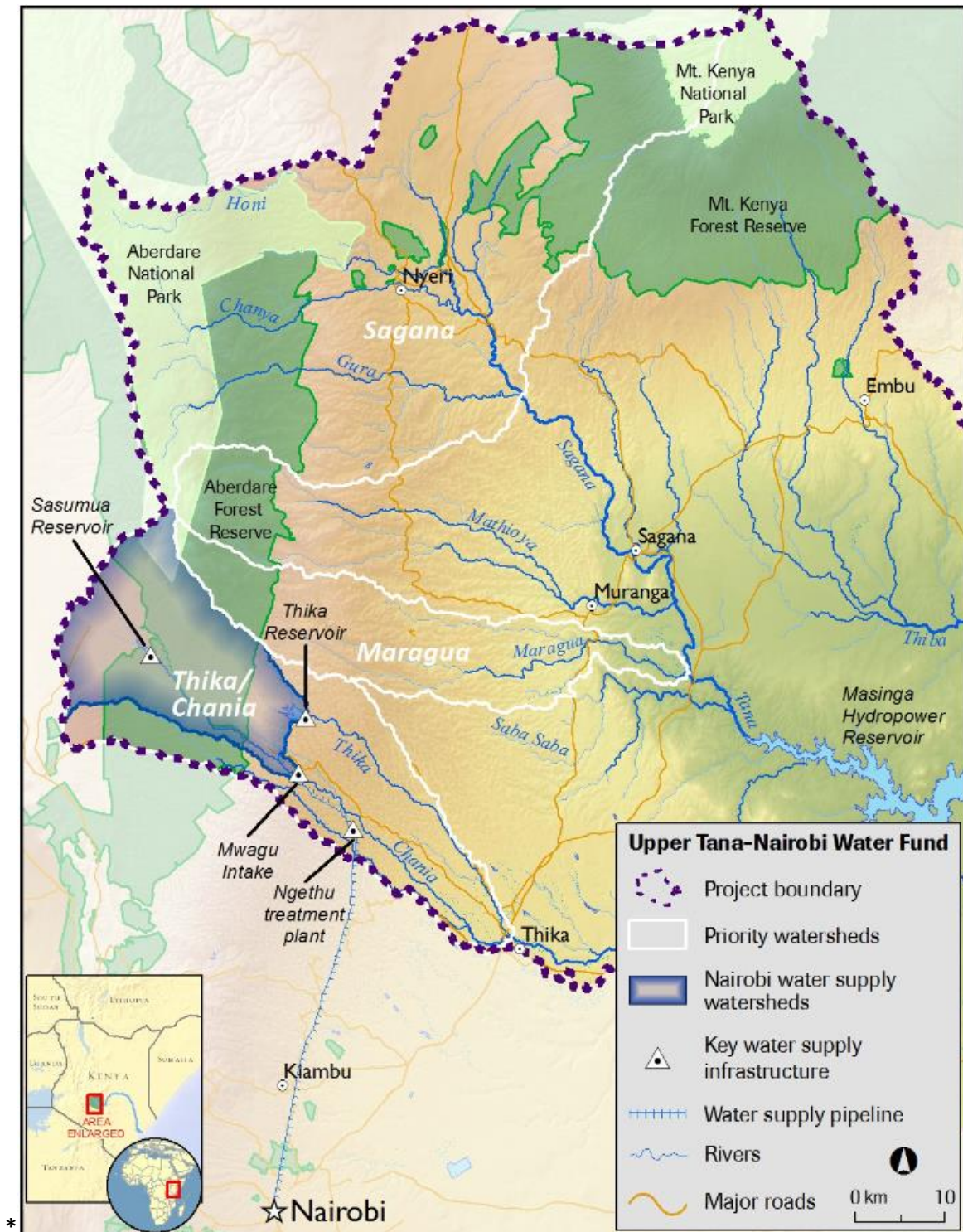
434. There is still too little information on how many farmers have effectively adopted the three core SLM technologies promoted by the project on terracing, agroforestry and grass strips (2020 IFAD Supervision Report). This would be a way for the project to better justify its outreach figures according to SLM measures being practiced. It would also allow to classify farmers according to the number of SLM measures adopted, the indicator on which a farmer graduation model should be based.

435. More detailed adoption data would also help to confirm that a landscape approach is taken by the project with wide participation of households in target catchment areas. The fact that project intervention activities are demand driven creates the risk that the project is not able to create a critical mass of actors in targeted geographical areas and communities that result in desired conservation outcomes (MTR). The MTR had suggested that the approach of individual farmers as entry points in the Water Fund project compared with targeting communities and landscapes should be reviewed, also in terms of bringing the targeting approach more in line with the parallel executed IFAD project (UTNRMP).

436. The PMU of the Water Fund project stressed the complexity of the work that not only collaborates with different categories of individual farmers, their communities, and the private sector to bring about transformation, but also works simultaneously at the ecosystem level of the watershed and the national level through the governance of the Endowment Fund itself.

Findings from a field visit in Murang'a County

- The evaluation team's Nairobi-based consultant conducted a site visit in Murang'a country. Meetings were held with the **Murang'a County Executive Committee (CEC)** for Agriculture, County and CSO staff. The CEC Agriculture (County Minister) is also a member of the County Advisory Committee of the Water Fund project.
- **The county government has seconded a project officer** (extension worker) to the project working closely with TNC and the CSO Caritas to implement the project in the field.
- **The specific contribution of the GEF project is not always clear in the field.** Multiple donor projects address similar agendas in the County, all working towards the objectives and targets of the **County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP)**, such as the French beans value chain programme (Sweden), the water pan and the avocado value chain project by the National Agricultural and Rural Inclusive Growth Project (NARIGP) funded by the World Bank, and the national fertilizer supply project. Whether separate records for similar activities are kept for different projects was not directly evident during the field visit.
- **Popular activities** include water pans (ponds) fed partly by water harvesting from roads, diversifying into crops such as upland arrow-roots, avocado, and macadamias, establishing kitchen gardens and some fish-farming. Main benefits arise from farming around the year and crop diversification. Suggested construction of check dams to prevent siltation and drip irrigation have been less adopted, partly due to their high costs of installation and difficult maintenance.
- A number of **national NRM policies** are currently being discussed and adapted in Murang'a county with community participation, including on the management of riparian and wetlands areas, invasive plant species, rural roads and storm water and mining and quarries.
- **Gender.** According to national law, at least 1/3 of all activities and positions are reserved for women. Measures are taken to facilitate participation of women in meetings (organizing them close to their homes, timing of meetings etc.). Kitchen gardens are seen to have the largest positive benefits for women, in terms of nutrition, less diseases, and increased incomes that enable households to pay school fees for their children.
- Most **private sector** engagement at county level is in market services, such as for avocado and macadamia, often in contract farming arrangements. The county government tries to enhance access to markets and private services through rural transport and better roads. The county government is not concerned with private sector contributions to the Water Fund.
- **Individual and community orientation.** The field visit confirmed the observation of the MTR that the GEF project, at least in Murang'a county, is more oriented towards support of individual farmers and agricultural production than that of communities for facilitating a broader landscape approach. There is less concern for the larger, common environmental good at this moment.



Summary of Findings

Relevance and coherence

437. **Relevance of design** by all three integrated projects in Kenya is ensured through the Government's strong objective of conserving 'water towers' (Water Fund and Mount Elgon projects) and through support to the Kenya's commitment to 5.1 million hectares of land being restored under the Bonn challenge with AFR100 (Southern Rangelands project). The **comparative advantage** of GEF and the integrated program approach rests primarily in its catalytic and thematically challenging interventions, particularly around market linkages, private sector, and environmental governance.

438. The three Kenya IAP/impact program projects address objectives of the Conventions on land degradation, biodiversity and climate change and mirror the components and major goals of the overarching IAP/impact program programs (**coherence**). They are **innovative** in terms of introducing modern environmental water flow measurement techniques and SMS and social media communication platforms with service providers and beneficiaries (Water Fund), private sector fundraising for eco-system service payments (Water Fund), and linking marketing premium prices to demonstrated participation and results in SLM (Southern Rangelands).

439. The **monitoring and evaluation** system has taken time to operationalize in the Water Fund project but capturing all relevant metrics and tracking of beneficiaries through the DHIS2 on-line system has shown much progress in recent years. Hydrological data is measured upstream and downstream, including water quality and flow, with control and treatment sites. The Water Fund project completed baselines for targeted GEB early on but has only had limited success in systematically tracking GEB progress against baselines so far, partly due to COVID-19 delays.

440. The strongest contribution to **environmental governance** is the Water Fund Endowment model, the financial pillar of sustainable governance that collects private sector contributions downstream from water users to protect the watershed upstream in catchment areas.

441. All GEF integrated projects also contribute significantly to devolution of responsibilities and operations to Kenya's **counties** (equivalent to districts) through new ways of farmer and community support for environmental governance at the sub-national level and collaboration with County administrations. This includes **policy dialogue** during which counties took the lead to produce White Papers on riparian land management, invasive plants, quarries management, and use of road water for three counties.

442. Grassroots ownership is promoted through community institutions such as community wildlife conservancies, community forest associations and livestock producer organizations (Southern Rangelands) and promoting traditional models of community governance without too much Government interference (Mount Elgon). These activities aim for **security of community ownership and sustainable resource governance** through supporting the rights of local people to access, manage, use, and enjoy the goods and services generated by ecosystems and landscapes.

Cross-cutting issues

443. 40 percent of project beneficiaries in the **Water Fund project** are women. They were empowered among others through producing horticultural crops more effectively with the help of water pans and provision of fruit seedlings (such as avocado), as well as through a 50% subsidy on all materials to target women-led households for drip kits and biogas. A refresher training on gender mainstreaming and a Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) survey are planned for the future.

444. There is still not much information so far on the links between conservation, agriculture production and productivity, and farmers' livelihoods and **resilience**, as the planned impact survey for the MTR was postponed. The RAPTA approach was mainly applied for design, less for implementation. There is limited consensus on how to understand and apply the resilience concept.

445. Targets for **private sector** participation were only partly reached in the Water Fund project. Private sector capitalization of the Endowment Fund falls short of targets, due to the lack of a convincing business case and companies' short-term interests and alternative mandatory payments for conservation. The latest project supervision mission recommends more resource mobilization from public sector and international sources.

Program governance

446. The Water Fund project started up **efficiently** - it was among the first of the child projects being launched in the FS-IAP. The MTR was carried out by IFAD on time (August 2019) and provides comprehensive information and well justified judgements. The Southern Rangelands project was designed on time, but resources for design (US\$150,000) were considered borderline for an integrated project that involved international experts and incremental COVID-19 expenses that were ultimately covered by IUCN. In terms of **lead agencies**, The Water Fund project has had close and mutually supportive interactions with IFAD and the FS-IAP hub. FAO is considered as a good "gate-keeper" as SFM Drylands Lead Agency, providing sufficient advance information and guidance, platform 'supply-driven' suggestions, and quarterly meetings. The **transparency** of child project selection follows a well-established and known process of a national portfolio management exercise after priority setting of GEF replenishments and calls for proposals and their vetting by a multi-agency national steering committee under the PS.

Knowledge platforms

447. For the Water Fund project, the Kenya Government and the Water Fund Management actively participated in sharing lessons and best practices during annual RFS knowledge platform meetings and Kenya hosted several of them. Kenya's advantage is its physical closeness to the hub management agency, ICRAF, that is based in Nairobi. The knowledge platform mainly served to raise awareness around the Water Fund model rather than to bring lessons learned and knowledge back to Kenya to inform the project or broader environmental management. A local knowledge platform established by the Water Fund project turned out as

a reasonable alternative to distribute project materials and key conservation messages during the halt of many field activities in March 2020 due to COVID.

448. The two projects under design have allocated dedicated child project resources to their respective knowledge platforms. In the Southern Rangelands project IUCN has already been working with impact program partners to define baseline information for the child projects and inviting them to form a community of practice.

Progress towards results of the IAP child project

449. The project is already achieving multiple direct benefits for 23,218 farmers through promoting SLM and water conservation measures, linkages to value chains and adapting to climate change. Many project outputs are close to those targeted, some have already been overachieved. All project activities are separately recorded, geo-referenced and reported to assure their attribution to the project.

450. It would be helpful if there was more information on how many farmers effectively adopted the three core SLM technologies promoted by the project on terracing, agroforestry and grass strips. This would allow the project to better justify its farmer outreach figures, to develop a farmer graduation model according to the number of SLM measures adopted, and to underpin the intended landscape approach with wide participation of households in target catchment areas.

451. Planned interactions with a co-financed IFAD project have been slow to materialize so far, partly as extension models and coverage areas of both projects are different. This limits GEF scaling-up and sustainability effects.

Evolution of GEF integrated approach

452. **The impact program Integrated Program framework as driver for change.** The main impetus for evolution of the GEF integrated approach in GEF-7 reportedly came from changes and requirements of the FOLUR and SFM dryland impact program programs themselves, compared with those in the IAP, and the way they were communicated by the Lead Agencies and the GEF Secretariat. Most of these changes were appreciated and readily picked up by design teams, such as their increased focus on markets and value chains, environmental governance at grassroots, and linking child projects more closely and with financial budget lines to the knowledge platform. The concept of value chains and value addition are well established in the country which allows them to be well integrated in the GEF child projects.

453. **Continuity and learning in Kenya.** Yet, the latest integrated GEF impact program child projects in Kenya also include lessons and experiences from the Kenya IAP child project. For instance, the FAO Mount Elgon project design team made contact with the IAP Water Fund project which they considered as a good baseline for working in a Kenya “water tower.” impact program child project design also internalized many lessons from past and ongoing non-IAP GEF projects in Kenya as many Agency and Government staff and consultants involved in impact program design have a long history of GEF project management across several GEF

replenishment periods. There is some evidence that specific country experiences by the IAP child project on managing complexities and operational strategies of its multi-sector and holistic approach were incorporated and mitigated in the impact program projects. During the Ministry's Technical Directors meeting and review of submitted proposals all GEF Agencies were present. The GEF OFP provided clear policy guidance and emphasized the need for cross-learning between the IAP and impact program projects, and for incorporating experiences and lessons learnt, building synergies and avoiding overlaps.

454. Replication of the GEF-6 Water Fund model in Kenya. The Water Fund project is already being replicated in another location in Kenya (Eldoret-Iten), partly with GEF-7 funds and with contributions by other donors, but not as an impact program child project.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – List of interviews

Name	Role/Organization	Interview Date
Agnes Yobterik	MoEF, Director for Programmes, Projects and Strategic Initiatives/GEF Desk Officer (as authorized by the GEF OFP)	Dec. 16, 2020
Edith Kirumba	IFAD Environment and Climate Programme Officer – Eastern and Southern Africa Region, Water Fund project (UTNWFP)	Dec. 22, 2020
Anthony Kariuki	Project Manager Water Fund project (UTNWFP)	Dec. 10, 2020
Loice Abende	M&E officer UNTWFP	Dec. 10, 2020
Charles Oluchina	IUCN Regional Coordinator East and Southern Africa and Coordinating task manager for Kenya SFM Drylands child project design	Dec. 9, 2020
Philip Kisoyan	FAO Natural Resources' Governance Sub-Programme Leader	Dec. 9, 2020
Meshack Muga	FAO National Project Coordinator	Dec. 9, 2020
Patrick Mugi	FAO M&E officer	Dec. 9, 2020
Roger White	Advisor to Water Fund through Danish Embassy	Dec. 15, 2020
Edward Mungai	Kenya Climate Innovation Center (KCIC)	Feb. 2, 2021

Field visit, January 12, 2021

(Due to COVID-19 only one of four Counties was visited)

Venue: County Government Murang'a - Kenol Office

- Albert Mwaniki – County Executive Committee, Agriculture
- Stephen Waweru - UNTWFP Officers, Caritas Development Organization
- Virginia Kinyanjui - Agriculture Field Officer, Murang'a County Government
- Lucy Njigua – Consultant, ICF

Interview with farmers:

Venue: Ichagaki and Genda wards, Maragua sub- county, Murang'a County.

- Joseph Muturi
- Benson Kangara
- Purity Wangechi

Closing meeting participants (April 7, 2021)

Name	Role/Organization
Agnes Yobterik	MoEF, Director for Programmes, Projects and Strategic Initiatives/GEF Desk Officer (as authorized by the GEF OFP)
Florence Mugi	MoEF
Alfaxad Omwenga	MoEF

Peterson Kamau	MoEF
Edith Kirumba	IFAD Environment and Climate Programme Officer – Eastern and Southern Africa Region, Water Fund project (UTNWFP)
Anthony Kariuki	Project Manager Water Fund project (UTNWFP)
Fredrick Kihara	TNC Africa Water Fund Advisor
Charles Oluchina	IUCN Regional Coordinator East and Southern Africa and Coordinating task manager for Kenya SFM Drylands child project design
Philip Kisoyan	FAO Natural Resources' Governance Sub-Programme Leader
Carlo Carugi	GEF Independent Evaluation Office, Senior Evaluation Officer and IAP/impact program Evaluation of Integrated Approach Task Manager
Detlev Puetz	Independent International Consultant, Team Leader for Kenya case study
Lucy Njigua	Independent Local Consultant, Kenya case study

Appendix 2 – References

- IFAD. 2016. Establishment of the Upper Tana-Nairobi Water Fund (UTNWF). GEF-6 Request for project endorsement/approval. GEF project ID: 9139.
- IFAD. (n.d). Upper Tana-Nairobi Water Fund (UTNWF). Detailed design report. East and Southern Africa Division. Programme Management Department. Rome, Italy
- IFAD. 2019. Upper Tana Nairobi Water Fund Project. Kenya. Mid Term Review. Date of mission: 19-28th August 2019. IFAD Eastern and Southern Africa Division, Programme Management Department.
- IFAD. 2020. Upper Tana Nairobi Water Fund Project. Supervision Report. Mission dates: 28 August - 4 September, 2019. IFAD Eastern and Southern Africa Division, Programme Management Department.
- IFAD. 2020. GEF Fiscal Year 2020. Project Implementation Report (PIR) – GEF Project grants. Establishment of Upper Tana Nairobi Water Fund.
- IUCN. Strengthening forest management for improved biodiversity conservation and climate resilience in the Southern rangelands of Kenya. GEF-7 Child Project Concept. Program: impact program SFM Drylands.
- IUCN. 2020. “Strengthening forest management for improved biodiversity conservation and climate resilience in the southern rangelands of Kenya”. Project Document. Draft version accessed December 2020.
- FAO. Integrate Landscape Management for conservation and restoration of the Mt. Elgon Ecosystem in Western Kenya. GEF-7 Child Project Concept. Program: impact program FOLUR.
- TNC. 2020. Presentation on TNC Water Fund in Kenya. Nairobi, February 2020.
- Leisher, Craig, Justus Makau, Fred Kihara et al. 2016/17. Upper Tana-Nairobi Water Fund. Monitoring and Evaluation Plan.

Appendix 3 – Kenya GEF-6 IAP and GEF-7 impact program - GEF resources by focal areas and GEBs by core indicators

GEF ID	Project	GEF financing by focal areas (project financing only)					GEB achieved (A) and targeted (T) by GEF-7 core indicators				
		CC	LD	BD	Other	Set-aside	#3*	#4*	#6*	Other	#10*
		US\$ million					'000 ha	'000 ha	mtCO2e million		No. '000
9139	FS-IAP: Upper Tana Nairobi Water Fund Project (UTNWFP)	0.90	1.80	0.90	-	3.60	A: 0.20 T: 0.0	A: 16.91 T: 1000 ***	A: 5.7** T: 1.6	-	A: 23,218 T: 21,000 ****
10292	SFM impact program drylands: Strengthening forest management for improved biodiversity conservation and climate resilience in the Southern rangelands of Kenya	0.45	0.89	2.23	-	1.78	T: 400	T: 200	T: 1.50	-	A: 200 (36% women)
10598	FOLUR impact program: Integrated landscape management for conservation and restoration of the Mt. Elgon Ecosystem in Western Kenya	-	1.34	2.18	-	1.83	T: 10	T: 50	T: 5.4	-	A: 60 (50% women)

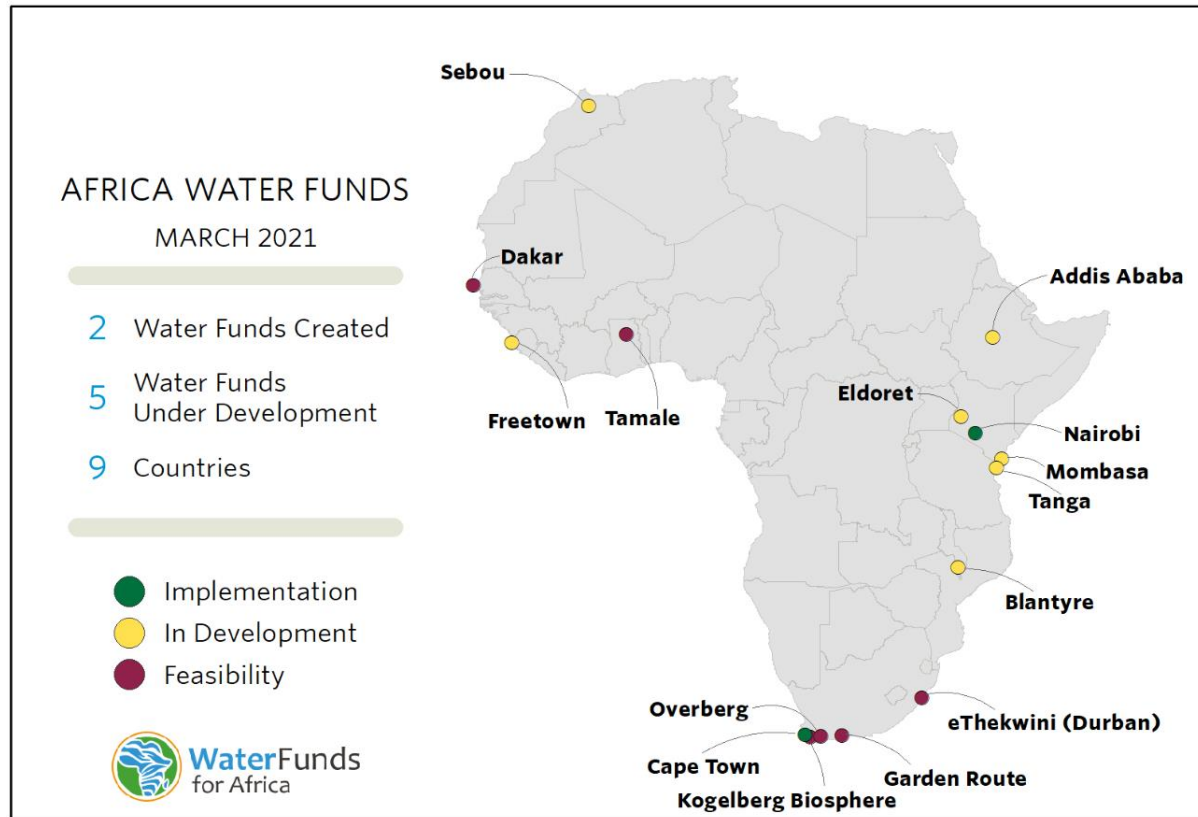
* GEF-7 core indicators: 3 - Area of land restored, hectares; 4: Landscapes under improved practices, hectares; 6: Greenhouse gas emissions mitigated (metric tons of CO2e); 11: Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender (% women) as co-benefit of GEF investment

** This is a preliminary estimate reported for the project period 2016-2022 in the 2020 PIR that still needs to be validated by FAO and IFAD.

*** This target figure is from the GEF-6 Request for project endorsement approval document; the IFAD project design report targeted 100,000 ha of land on which SLM would be implemented and 663,000 ha of land 'influenced to adopt SLM practices' (IFAD Detailed design report p.16, Table 1). The large discrepancy between planned and targeted area is because achieved outcomes did not include those of an ongoing IFAD co-finance project, partly due to changes in indicator definitions or their understanding.

**** MTR target of 8400 and project target of 21,000 households.

Appendix 4 – Africa Water Funds



Source: The Nature Conservancy

CHINA COUNTRY CASE STUDY REPORT

Introduction

455. This China Case Study is part of the broader Formative Evaluation of the GEF Integrated Approach to Address the Drivers of Environmental Degradation and provides a deeper understanding of the design, process, and current results of the GEF-6 Integrated Approach Pilot (IAP) and of the design of the GEF-7 Impact Program (impact program) in China. It was designed to assess the similarities and differences between the IAP and impact program child projects and to understand how the GEF integrated approach has evolved from the GEF-6 to GEF-7 financing cycles in China.

456. China has a total of three child projects under the following programs: Sustainable Cities IAP (SC- IAP); Sustainable Cities impact program (SC-impact program); and Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration Impact Program (FOLUR) impact program. While the Sustainable Cities program in China is in its second iteration, FOLUR has been prepared for the first time. The case study covers all three IAP and impact program child projects, as shown in the table below.

China GEF-6 IAP and GEF-7 impact program – Key project information

GEF ID	Child project title and main scope	Coverage	GEF Agency	Status	Finance		
					GEF grant	Co-finance	Sources of Co-finance
					US\$ million		
Sustainable Cities IAP							
9223	Transit Oriented Development, integrated urban planning	Tianjin, Beijing Shijiazhuang Nanchang Shenzhen Ningbo Guiyang + MOHURD	World Bank	On-going	35.6	2,550	WB loan, central and local govts.
Sustainable Cities impact program							
TBD	Biodiversity conservation and NBS in urban areas	Chongqing Chengdu Ningbo + CCUD	World Bank	Under preparation	29.0	396	WB, ADB loans, central and local govts.
FOLUR impact program							
10246	Innovative transformation of China’s food production systems and agri-ecological landscapes towards sustainability	Sub-project 1: Shandong, Jiangsu, Jiangxi and Guizhou provinces	FAO (Lead)	Submitted for CEO endorsement	7.18	56.50	Govt., Private sector
		Sub-project 2: Hubei province	World Bank		6.30	346.00	WB loan, Govt., Private sector

457. Due to continued travel restrictions and safety considerations as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the China case study was conducted remotely by two senior international consultants and a Beijing-based national consultant. The team triangulated its documentation review (including GEF PIR and MTR reports, World Bank PAD and ICR reports, and FAO project documents) with individual interviews with 22 staff from the Government of China, GEF Agencies, municipal departments, and project staff. Seventeen of these interviews were conducted in Chinese by the national consultant. Given the current COVID-19 pandemic, no field verification could take place.

GEF ID 9223: Sustainable Cities IAP – China Child Project

458. The project was submitted by the World Bank for CEO Approval in November 2016. The grant became effective in December 2017 and the project closing date is set for March 31, 2023. The grant of US\$35.6m to this child project was by far the largest under the SC-IAP. 28% of its financing came from the Sustainable Cities Trust Fund, with the remaining balance from the Climate Change Focal Area (CCM-2, Program 3). The global environmental benefit (GEB) pursued is the abatement of 62 MMT of CO₂e emissions. This represents 62 percent of program-wide emission abatement goals of 100 MMT CO₂e, as the other ten child project combined aim at abating a total of 38 MMT CO₂e. The implementation of the GEF grant is co-managed by an Urban Development Specialist and an Operations Specialist in the World Bank's China office in Beijing.

459. The project pursues the following objective: "To promote integrated planning and investments related to urban sustainability that result in environmental, social and economic benefits at the local and global scale". This objective is to be achieved via the implementation of two components: 1) National TOD Platform, Toolkit, and Policy Support, with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development as its national partner and executing agency; ; and 2) City Level Transit Oriented Development (TOD) technical assistance and pilot, with seven recipients cities: Tianjin, Beijing, Shijiazhuang, Nanchang, Shenzhen, Ningbo, and Guiyang, represented by their local governments; each city is responsible for the project activities in its jurisdiction. The grant is allocated between the two components each receiving six and 94 percent of the funds respectively.

460. The TOD urban planning concept is based on the concentration of residential and commercial development around transit lines, enabling pedestrian and other non-motorized access to the rail stations, thus reducing the use of individual cars and related local pollution and GHG emissions. TOD also favors density and compact urban form, via neighborhoods that integrate residential and service functions. TOD counteracts car-dependent urban sprawl and contributes to more sustainable and less carbon-intensive urbanization.

461. Two of the project cities, Nanchang and Tianjin, were already recipients of World Bank urban transport loans at the time of CEO endorsement: the "Nanchang Urban Rail project", for US\$180million, and the "Tianjin urban transport improvement project" for US\$100 million. These amounts were to be complemented respectively by US\$680 million and US\$124 million of central and local government financing. Thus, a total of over US\$1billion was reported as the

co-financing of the GEF grant for investments in those two cities. However, at project closing in December 2020, the World Bank loan for Nanchang had increased to US\$250 million and the related government financing had increased to US\$2.3 billion.

GEF ID TBD: China Sustainable Cities Impact Program

462. This child project is currently under preparation and expected to be submitted for CEO Approval in April 2021. The national partner is the China Center for Urban Development (CCUD) and the cities of Chongqing, Chengdu and Ningbo are the recipients of the grant activities. The GEBs pursued are biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation, as measured through number of hectares of landscapes under improved practices (excluding protected areas) targeted at 231,222 ha, and the MMT of CO₂eq emissions abated targeted at 19.2 MMT (direct) and 65.4 MMT (indirect). The project is being prepared by a Senior Urban Specialist based at World Bank headquarters in Washington D.C., previously based in Beijing.

463. The objectives of the project are to “Support select cities in developing and implementing green urban strategy by integrating climate change, urban biodiversity, urban natural resource management into the planning and investment process, and to promote global knowledge exchanges on green and carbon-neutral urban development”. The project has five components: 1) A comprehensive indicator system to support a sustainable “high quality” urban growth and integrated urban planning; 2) Integrated approach to climate action, biodiversity, and natural resources management to support participating cities and a cluster of cities in implementing green urban development; 3) Piloting net-zero emissions in select project sites and communities, including an integrated approach to urban “cooling”, to identify options that can be scaled up; 4) Green financing; and 5) Supporting and engaging more cities through the China Urban Knowledge Platform.

GEF ID 10246: Innovative transformation of China’s food production systems and agroecological landscapes

464. The China FOLUR impact program child project was first submitted for CEO Endorsement in August 2020 and re-submitted after comments from the GEF Secretariat in January 2021.⁸⁷ The project consists of two sub-projects that cover five provinces (see Box below). One sub-project is executed in four provinces by the national Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (MARA) with FAO as the GEF Agency. The other sub-project is executed by the

⁸⁷ The project was circulated for Council comments on Feb. 1, 2021.

Department of Agriculture of Hubei Province with the World Bank as GEF Agency and co-financier. The Chinese Government designated FAO as lead agency for this project.

Combining two sub-projects in the China FOLUR impact program child project

As outlined in the FAO proposal, the two sub-projects share the same goal, outcomes, and components. Jointly, they are expected to contribute to the achievement of the targeted global environmental benefits. The FAO-MARA sub-project primarily builds on a baseline of existing investments by public and private sectors in sustainable agriculture technologies, which it aims to scale up and out; the WB-Hubei sub-project additionally builds on an IBRD loan that will enable the target counties in Hubei to make greater investments in innovative technologies.

The two sub-projects have been joined with the aim of having a larger reach and impact to support the project's ambitious goal of transformation of the food production systems and agricultural landscapes in China through an integrated landscape and value chain approach. The FAO-MARA sub-project has a more national reach covering several provinces in different agro-ecological regions, starting from the national level down to the provincial and county level; the WB-Hubei sub-project has a county/provincial focus enabling it to reach a larger coverage and transformation within a single province while also generating lessons and standards that can be applied at national scale.

The FAO-MARA sub-project primarily focuses on the staple crops wheat, maize and rice; while Hubei focuses on rice, livestock and agroforestry.

Combined, the two sub-projects have the necessary reach and influence to contribute to national and provincial upscaling through the development of standards and policies, sustainable value chains, national capacities, and by generating and exchanging best practices and establishing partnerships towards sustainability.

465. Of the total GEF grant of US\$13.46 million, US\$7.18 million was allocated to the FAO-MARA sub-project and US\$6.28 million to the World Bank-Hubei sub-project. 33.3% of GEF financing comes from the FOLUR Trust Fund (incentive funds), 33.3% from the Climate Change Focal Area, 26.7% from the Biodiversity Focal Area, and 6.7% from the Land Degradation Focal Area.

466. The objectives of the project are to “Support the innovative transformation of China’s agro-landscapes and agri-food value chains towards environmental and ecological sustainability at scale in support of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Rural Revitalization, and climate resilience”. The project has four components: 1) Integrated landscape management (ILM) systems in agricultural landscapes; 2) Sustainable food production practices and responsible agri-food value chains for the staple crops of rice wheat and maize, selected cash crops and livestock; 3) Conservation and restoration of agroecosystems and biodiversity; and 4) Knowledge management and M&E.

467. The GEBs pursued by the child project are related to biodiversity, climate change, and land degradation. The core indicators are the number of hectares of land restored (100,000 ha), landscapes under improved practices estimated at 970,000 ha, and the MMT of CO₂e emissions mitigated, estimated at 13.3 MMTCO₂e (direct) and 6.86 MMTCO₂e (indirect). The majority of GHG emission reductions are expected from the World Bank-Hubei sub-project (14.14

MMTCO₂e). The number of targeted direct beneficiaries are 550,000, 43.6% of whom are women.

Findings

468. The two sub-projects in the China FOLUR Child Project have separate GEF and Executing Agencies, steering committees, and management offices. They operate in different provinces, so their interaction will be assured through a joint Technical Advisory and Coordination Committee (TACC), cochaired by the two Executing Agencies (MARA and Hubei Provincial DARA) to oversee implementation and foster coherence (CEO endorsement request [ER]). The Committee also functions as an intermediary for inter-disciplinary technical guidance and developing national policies and strategies for scaling.

469. Findings are presented first for the Sustainable Cities IAP and impact program in China, followed by findings for the FOLUR impact program.

Sustainable Cities

Relevance of Design

470. **The alignment of the Sustainable Cities child projects** under both GEF-6 and GEF-7 with national and local priorities, as well as Convention objectives, is confirmed through this case study. There is strong alignment between the locally relevant project goals pursued at the city level with the ones of emerging national policies related to innovative urban design, compact urban form, and transit-oriented development (SC-IAP) as well as national policies pertaining to biodiversity conservation and nature-based solutions for urban environmental management (SC-impact program). These emerging national-level policies also align with China's international ambitions to respond to its commitments under the Paris Agreement and promote biodiversity conservation. These will be the themes of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) COP15 to be held in Kunming, China, in May 2021 and of the Glasgow UNFCCC COP26 in November 2021.

471. **Country incentives and motivation to participate** in the GEF-7 program are reinforced by the Chinese government commitment to align national programs with the two related multilateral environmental agreements, UNFCCC and CBD. China's engagement with the GEF in the Sustainable Cities projects provides a visible opportunity for international engagement. Central Government directives to provincial authorities, and through those to municipal ones, reflect a long-term vision of low-carbon city development, community livability, biodiversity conservation, and the development of financial and business models to generate green urban infrastructure, all of which are aligned with convention guidance. These principles are also found in China's five-year plans (the main framework for investment decisions) and in the country's long-term vision to 2060 as formulated by the Government. In the words of a city stakeholder:

472. "The GEF-7 programs fit well with international green development trends, China's 14th Five-Year Plan, 15th Five-Year Plan, and even China's plans for the next 30 years. China has

placed a very high priority on ecological green development and has also put forward a vision for the year 2060. So, the GEF-7's emphasis on high-quality development and low-carbon development is perfectly in line with China's national development strategy. From the city side, Chengdu's development must first serve China's development. President Xi Jinping also clearly proposed that Chengdu should build a park city. A park city is not just about building parks, but also about the spatial layout, industrial layout and lifestyle of the city. To build a park city we have to achieve high quality development and low carbon development. So, I think GEF-7 also fits very well with Chengdu's development plan”.

473. National stakeholders confirmed the coherence of the SC-IAP with national policies. The context for the design of the SC-IAP project reflected the concerns of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development at the time, as it was grappling with constrained land resources in the face of massive urbanization and very large, interconnected metropolitan areas. The concept of Transit-Oriented Development was built around rail transportation as the anchor for better land-use planning and for greater environmental sustainability of urban development. This is of particular relevance for the participating cities, which are also benefiting from very large, related infrastructure investments. Two national policies underpinned project design: the “National New Urbanization Plan” and the “Opinions on Further Strengthening Urban Planning and Construction Management”. In the words of another city stakeholder:

474. “The goal of our project is definitely to address climate change and promote sustainable urban development. Unlike the GEF-7, which is to promote biodiversity conservation and urban environmental improvement, our project is to indirectly promote sustainable urban development by optimizing the spatial and functional layout of the city. We hope that the land use of the city will be more intensive, and the travel of the citizens will be greener, low-carbon, and smart. We will connect different parts of the city with rail transportation in TOD mode to reduce the frequency and distance of the citizens' private car travel, and alleviate the traffic congestion, land waste and heat island effect caused by urban development”.

475. The child projects are also aligned with the World Bank’s Country Partnership Framework, which specifies the Chinese development priorities that it will support. The Country Partnership Framework is defined in consultation with the Government and allows for a convergence of investment lending in areas of sustainable urban development with the management of GEF grants supporting those goals. The World Bank’s role in the design of both child projects ensures continuity and consistency with multilateral environmental agreements.

Coherence of Design

476. **GEF additionality and innovation.** Project stakeholders recognize the importance of the role played by the GEF in creating and supporting the Sustainable Cities projects in China. In both cases, GEF grants leverage sector investments to ensure the linkage of local and global environmental benefits. Some city representatives involved with the implementation of previous GEF grants clearly recognize the evolution from GEF-5 to GEF-6 and GEF-7, distinctly mentioning the differences between the single-sector approach and the current integrated approach. They noted an appreciation for the synergies the new integrated approach

generates. However, the institutional complexity of involving multiple sectors can be taxing and account for longer project preparation, unlike many projects in China which quickly move from design to implementation.

477. The key innovation of the GEF-6 child project was the identification of TOD as a core concept around which to aggregate all sustainability-related urban planning initiatives. Innovation goes further in the GEF-7 child project by expanding integrated urban planning to incorporate biodiversity conservation and nature-based solutions for the provision of urban services. Both SC-IAP and SC-impact program project designs are also innovative in the Chinese institutional landscape as they are simultaneously based on the participation of: a) a central government agency (MOHURD under GEF-6 and CCUD under GEF-7) in charge of upward linkages with government policies and of nation-wide dissemination of outcomes and lessons learned; and b) a number of cities where TOD, integrated urban planning, biodiversity conservation, and nature-based solutions generate local impacts and offer a demonstration effect at scale.

478. Stakeholders interviewed clearly recognized that GEF's global environmental agenda fosters innovation and incentivizes national governments to strive for greater environmental sustainability. Stakeholders also praised the role of the World Bank in promoting environmental governance at the local level and ensuring sustainability considerations in project design (for both projects). The long-term engagement of the World Bank in China and in some of the participating cities was acknowledged as a very positive factor, as it ensures continuity of outcomes beyond the limited five-year time-horizons of the individual GEF grants. The synergy of the World Bank's own strategies with GEF policies is also significant, both in the case of the SC-IAP and of the SC-impact program.

479. **Theory of change.** The Theory of Change in the SC-IAP Program Framework Document (PFD) is: "The Sustainable Cities IAP seeks to promote the creation and implementation of comprehensive sustainability planning and management initiatives. It will primarily do so by supporting local strategic planning processes and implementation efforts in selected cities and countries. To the maximum extent possible, local challenges addressed by this work—designed to promote improved livability and environmental conditions—will be linked to global challenges, such as climate change, biodiversity, water resources, chemicals and waste, land degradation, and so on". The SC-impact program PFD stated its theory of change much in the same way: "The SCimpact program's objective is to support cities in their pursuit of integrated urban planning and implementation that delivers impactful development outcomes with global environmental benefits".

480. This pursuit of GEBs combined with local urban sustainability goals, which is the core concept of both programs, is effectively reflected in the design of both SC-IAP and SC-impact program child projects in China and is confirmed by the results of the early implementation of the SC-impact program. Some national and local stakeholders in the participating cities, and especially those who had direct exposure to both child projects, remarked the complementarity of the GEF-6 and GEF-7 goals. As one project stakeholder put it:

481. “Ningbo’s GEF-6 project is a comprehensive project that focuses on TOD. I think the TOD is the skeleton for the whole city, and the GEF-7 project that we are doing now is more focusing on low-carbon development, which I think may be more like the skeleton and the blood vessels. The skeleton and the blood vessels are inseparable, and the low-carbon content must be combined with the TOD model as well. We will promote low-carbon development based on the TOD ‘skeleton’ framework. Compared to the GEF-6, the GEF-7 is more comprehensive and more complex, which also enhances people’s sense of gain. TOD can change the way people travel and cities develop and can reduce carbon emissions by a significant amount. But carbon emissions need to be calculated to get a figure. The GEF-7, on the other hand, focuses on the ecological environment, which is something that citizens can directly perceive”.

482. **Monitoring and Evaluation.** The World Bank PAD of 2016 for the SC-IAP child project does not include the child project’s GHG mitigation targets in its Results Framework but does make assumptions as to the potential GHG abatement that the project could achieve, estimated at 60 MMT CO₂eq over 20 years. Coherently with the PAD, the MTR report of 2020 did not include any monitoring of the GHG abatement achieved so far but reports satisfactory results on PDO for all but one intermediate indicators.

483. For the SC-impact program child project, the following Key Performance Indicators are identified: (i) green-growth indicators identified through the project which support 14th Five Year Plan for select cities and integrated into planning process; (ii) GHG emissions reduced or avoided; (iii) natural capital accounts established for the project areas, and the demonstration of the improved land management and planning; (iv) biodiversity strategy and index established in the project areas and improved land restoration; and (v) knowledge platform established and learning activities conducted, with the engagement of hundreds of cities.

484. **Environmental governance and sustainability.** The World Bank applies its own environmental and social safeguards to the GEF child projects it implements as it does to all its loans and credit operations. These are unlikely to vary from the GEF’s own environmental and social safeguard standards. The use of the safeguards has allowed participating cities to become more aware of the potentially negative environmental impacts of some investments and of the multiplicity of stakeholders to be consulted in the design of each action to mitigate them. The on-going design of the SC-impact program entails the engagement of the environment departments of municipal and provincial governments as its goals are directly related to biodiversity conservation and nature-based solutions in urban management.

485. Project stakeholders expect that national guidelines on TOD will be issued at the central level as a result of the GEF-6 project, creating a set of norms to be followed by Chinese cities when planning the integration of transit systems and land-use. These guidelines would emerge from the first generation of TOD projects in the cities supported by the GEF grant and would demonstrate significant progress, given that Transit-Oriented Development and the related reorientation of urban planning towards compact urban form and lower GHG emissions was entirely new for Chinese cities before the GEF project. This would be a high-level, long-lasting impact of the SC-IAP child project in China. While this is for the time being a stakeholder expectation, were it to materialize it would generate additional project outcomes.

Cross-cutting Issues

486. **Gender.** The SC-IAP child project did not have specific gender objectives at CEO endorsement. The related World Bank PAD approved by its Board stated that “The project design will identify gender benefits of integrating land use and transport planning and explore strategies for mainstreaming gender in TOD planning, design and evaluation”. This objective has been led to a specialized consulting firm conducting surveys which addressed behaviors of transit user groups in participating cities, identifying clear distinctions between gender and age groups in terms of how and why they use public transportation. The surveys were built upon to develop a study on the accessibility of public transportation for seniors, people with disabilities, and women, in order to make design improvements to increase participation in public transportation by these groups.

487. In the case of the SC-impact program, gender targets are clearly spelled out at the PIF stage, with a project core indicator being the “number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of the GEF investment”. This number is stated as 23 million, of which 12.4 million are male and 10.6 million are female. At the current early stage, participating city stakeholders are aware of the project gender goals and point out the high level of female participation in the project teams.

488. **Resilience.** The SC-IAP did not include resilience as an expected outcome, given its focus on TOD. However, during project implementation the issue of resilience of transport infrastructure is being considered. Conversely, the SC-impact program has a clearly identified resilience output: City-cluster level green strategy to support integrated solutions to low carbon, resilient development and conservation of natural assets, to be achieved through the implementation of Component 2: Integrated approach to climate action, biodiversity and natural resources management to support participating cities and a cluster of cities in implementing green urban development.

489. At the national level, CCUD is designing a Platform to disseminate project outcomes throughout China which will include materials and international references on urban resilience. CCUD has worked with the Rockefeller Foundation’s “100 Resilient Cities Program” and seems well aware of the linkages between resilience and nature-based solutions. Addressing urban health issues after the COVID-19 pandemic is considered an important part of enhancing urban resilience. Participating cities, now in the project design phase, seem equally aware and interested in incorporating resilience actions. As one city-level interviewee stated:

“We have a pilot project on river basin management, and we will consider resilience in the planning and design of a demonstration area of a river basin plan. We want to design nature-based solutions. In the past, our river management may have been artificially designed landscapes, building on both sides of the river. Now we want to follow a natural solution. In this regard, the World Bank is very keen on the Singapore approach. We also hope to do this well and compare it with previous projects to create a demonstration effect and enhance urban resilience. With the GEF7, we hope to fully integrate water conservation project with NBS, which on the one hand serves to prevent flooding, and on the other hand creates green infrastructure, improves

ecosystem services and generates a premium for the surrounding land by enhancing the ecological landscape”.

490. **Private sector participation** in the Sustainable Cities child projects is limited, although all national stakeholders endorse the concept of private sector participation. Under SC-IAP, one city is exploring ways to enhance private sector participation in financing TOD and GEF-7's child project preparation is exploring which business model could attract private sector investments around biodiversity conservation and nature-based solutions. Tourism-related real-estate development could perhaps provide investment opportunities around conservation sites of particular aesthetic or recreational value. In both child projects the procurement policy has been to exclude all publicly subsidized entities from the competitive bidding, thus creating market opportunities for private firms to provide professional services.

Program Governance

491. **Internal governance.** Project governance of the GEF-6 SC-IAP child project seems robust and in line with the design of the child project since its outset. All interviewed stakeholders referred to the continuity of interactions with the World Bank team and the quality of the support that was provided in the early phases, enabling participating cities to internalize the necessary procedures for procurement and financial management. The technical expertise provided by the World Bank in the design phase is also considered an element that ensured the high quality of project components. The bimonthly supervision missions and meetings with the World Bank team provide for continuity and integration among city components. Each city PMO operates in consultation with a local Steering Committee, the composition of which reflects the participation of the various relevant sector agencies and local government representatives, according to the goals of the integrated approach program.

492. The World Bank's rigorous management of the project and oversight of the eight PMOs through bimonthly supervision missions of the SC-IAP seems successful. Stakeholders relied on the World Bank to provide the integrative elements of the child project across its components, including the system of reporting indicators, procurement, and financial management guidelines. For some cities, their participation in the Sustainable Cities child projects represents their first engagement with the World Bank, and they face the steep learning curve of interacting with that institution, which considerably raises the bar of expected performance. Others have already collaborated with the institution in other development projects.

493. For the GEF-7 SC-impact program child project, the design process has been inclusive, with consultations across many local departments in various sectors. City stakeholders refer to the importance of international expertise that was brought to bear in the design phase, but also the value of the local competencies and how the interplay between the two has added depth to the project design process. It is expected that the internal governance of the SC-impact program is going to benefit from the lessons learned in the design and implementation of the SC-IAP. The on-going preparation of the SC-impact program child project seems fully conducted by the World Bank, with no apparent role of UNEP which is the Lead Agency for the overall SC-impact program program.

494. **Efficiency of startup and impacts of COVID.** The Sustainable Cities IAP child project start-up was slow and provides an indication as to the complexity of setting up the implementation of integrated approach programs at the sub-national scale, given the processing of the grant via the multiple institutions involved internationally, nationally, and locally. The project was approved by the World Bank Board of Directors in July 2017 and the grant became effective in December 2017, a full year after submission for GEF CEO Approval.

495. The August 2020 Mid-Term Review reported on a further slow start-up of the project due to: a) close to a year required for the eight national and local PMOs to sign subsidiary grant agreements with provincial finance departments and to set up designated accounts required for making disbursements; b) a nation-wide government institutional restructuring which started in late 2018, delaying the establishment of Provincial Local Governments and of PMOs in some participating cities; c) unexpected shifts in urban development priorities as compared to those identified at the appraisal stage in some participating cities, given the time that had elapsed since project identification; and d) lack of PMO experience in preparing TORs and selecting qualified bidders, given the technical complexity of the consulting contracts. The first three of these factors are context- related, hence difficult to predict. However, the fourth one could have been foreseen and internalized at project design stage by including specific procurement activities.

496. The main impacts of COVID-19 on both child projects during 2020 have been: a) a shift to on-line meetings for supervision purposes; b) the cancellation of China travel by international experts who were expected for the implementation of various activities; c) the withdrawal of some international bidders from open tenders for consulting services; and d) the cancellation of an international study tour to the Netherlands, which took one year of preparation, as part of the SC-IAP child project. However, the relatively quick control of the pandemic in China points to the likely resumption of normal activities for the project stakeholders in the near future.

Knowledge Platforms

497. **Knowledge platforms.** Knowledge management is central to the design of both SC-IAP and SC-impact program child projects, and coherent with the overall Sustainable Cities program design. Each child project has a component dedicated to the development of a national-scale knowledge platform, to be accessible to a wider audience beyond project participants. For SC-IAP, it is managed by MOHURD, and focuses on TOD and integrated urban planning. For SC-impact program, it is being prepared by CCUD, and will focus on incorporating biodiversity conservation and nature-based solutions into urban planning and development. Project stakeholders look at the platforms as resources to contribute to and to draw from, with a combination of international, national, and local experiences.

498. This has already been the case for cities participating in SC-IAP, whereby a common set of TOD references can be drawn upon and adapted to the design of specific local project activities. For instance, in the case of Chongqing, the World Bank mobilized an additional Energy Sector Management Assistance Program grant to explore the compact urban form

opportunities that TOD offered the city, but the outcomes were shared on the national platform, offering insights to all users. The platforms are expected to be maintained and expanded by the responsible central level agencies (MOHURD and CCUD) after the completion of the GEF grants, ensuring the long-term impacts of the Sustainable Cities program.

499. The role of the World Bank as the GEF executing agency for the Global Platform for Sustainable Cities as well as for the two China child projects has facilitated the seamless integration of the knowledge generated within the SC-IAP and SC-impact program with the Global Platform for Sustainable Cities (GPSC) in general. It is also notable that the World Bank Task Manager in charge of the GPSC is also responsible for the on-going design and preparation of the GEF-7 child project. This continuity among different components of the Sustainable Cities program and between the GEF-6 and GEF-7, is of high value for their likely impact.

500. Under GEF-6, PMOs have been active in organizing or joining knowledge sharing events and capacity building activities according to the following formats: a) Global Platform for Sustainable Cities (GPSC) global meetings and city academies; b) technical workshops and training sessions organized by the World Bank task team; c) participation in Tokyo Development Learning Center (TDLC) deep dive learning week; d) study tours organized by the PMOs; and e) webinars organized by the PMOs (especially during COVID-19 outbreak). A total of 39 events were held between September 2017 and August 2020, of which 19 were on-line. According to the MTR results indicators, 4,075 person/days have been invested in training on TOD modules, against the 750 planned.

501. All such activities have had a positive impact on the level of participation and capacity building of national and local stakeholders in China in the design and implementation of the SC-IAP child project. The GPSC global meetings held in New Delhi (2017), Singapore (2018), and Sao Paulo (2019) offered the opportunity to the Chinese participants to interact with representatives from the other cities and countries involved in the Sustainable Cities program at large, and of learning from each other while comparing different aspects of sustainable urban planning. The study tours to Japan, United States, Germany, Denmark, and Brazil exposed the Chinese stakeholders to successful cases of TOD implementation, including the opportunity to interact directly with the institutions in charge. It is also significant that by holding technical workshops, training sessions, and webinars involving all participating cities, the SC-IAP created the opportunity for the cities to interact with one another directly rather than to develop their project activities in isolation.

502. In addition to the learning events listed above, a total of twelve quarterly newsletters as of February 2021, available in both English and Chinese, have been produced by the World Bank team. The purpose of the newsletter is to document project implementation progress, and more importantly, to share TOD-related trends of policy reforms, academic and professional activities, engagement of the private sector, and best practices in China. These newsletters were disseminated among a broader audience through the GPSC platform.

503. **Reporting.** Given the consistent and systematic management of the GEF-6 child project by the World Bank, the SC-IAP counts on a set of regular reports. These reports enable the

tracking of results indicators at the PDO and project components levels and supported the preparation of a comprehensive MTR report in 2020. There is evidence of coherent program level reporting that integrates the updates and findings from the individual child projects. This is provided by the GPSC, which draws from all of them and allows for horizontal exchanges as well. The May 2020 GPSC progress report is a positive example of this program level reporting.

Progress Towards Results of the IAP child project

504. At MTR in August 2020, all cumulative target values for the mid-point of implementation had been reached or extensively surpassed, with the exception of the national knowledge platform which had been delayed. The Project Leading Group at MOHURD was only established in June 2019, and the contract for the design and preparation of the platform was awarded to the China Academy of Urban Planning and Design in April 2020. That inception report was completed by June 2020. The knowledge platform will comprise modules such as a TOD database, toolkits for planning and design, regulations and technical standards, best practice examples, a monitoring and evaluation framework, and other associated activities. It is expected to provide an invaluable resource for further integrated urban design work in other Chinese cities going forward.

505. At MTR, grant disbursement was only at 13.53%. However, the World Bank considers that grant implementation has been on track since early 2019. Of the 21 contracts in the latest procurement plan, 10 have been signed and entered implementation stage, six are at different stages of the procurement process, and the remaining five still need further work to finalize the TORs. Technical packages include city-level, corridor-level, district-level and station-level TOD application studies across all participating cities.

Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration Impact (FOLUR) Program

Relevance of Design

506. **National alignment.** China has an ambitious vision for an Ecological Civilization, in accordance with the concept of coordinated development of production, ecology, and life. This is documented within its 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-2020) and its No. 1 Central Document 2018 on sustainable agricultural development and preserving important ecosystem functions, among others. According to Chinese interview partners the FOLUR child project is fully compatible with the ecological transformation of farmland and restoration of agricultural soil quality advocated by Chinese policy. It also strongly supports commitments by the country's National Plan for Sustainable Development of Agriculture (2015-2030) to treat or use 90% of animal waste, use all crop straw, increase nitrogen fertilizer efficiency by 40%, and equip 75% of all irrigated farmland with water saving technologies (FOLUR child project PIF). The GEF project offers a good platform for interactions with international organizations to learn and exchange experience about policymaking and technology development on these and other related issues.

507. **Comparative advantage, transformational change and Government motivation.** For the Chinese counterparts interviewed the relatively small GEF financial contribution was understood as less important than interacting with GEF on developing better awareness, know-

how, and conceptual leadership about environmental and climate-change related transformation. GEF concepts are considered very advanced, particularly on carbon emissions and biodiversity, and government officials, farmers, and private sector can learn from them. At the same time, interviewees at the National Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (MARA) see combining ecological aspects, broader landscape planning, and value-chain/private sector focus with more classical public agricultural support and investments as a major challenge and opportunity brought FOLUR. Entering into partnerships with international and domestic environmental and conservation organizations for this purpose is seen as an innovative development.

508. When submitting its expression of interest to the FOLUR impact program in 2018/19 the National Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (MARA) initially was more interested in focusing on rice and fisheries and moving from pilots to scale, including optimizing and reducing chemical fertilizer use. When developing the FAO-MARA sub-project and the joint CEO endorsement request (ER), FAO managed to demonstrate FOLUR's broader strategic approach to the Government, such as a strong focus on international commodity chains, policies and standards, and land use planning. Policy is now seen in the project as the critical lever for the transformation towards green and climate-smart practices in China. China offers a high potential for large-scale impact on GEBs through developing green standards that could be turned into country wide policies, such as the planned certification of 'green' rice or different maize and meat production standards. Since inception, the GEFSEC and FAO were interested to involve China also in the Asia regional Sustainable Rice Landscape Initiative (SRLI)⁸⁸ in which GEF, World Bank, and FAO are participating through the FOLUR platform. Linkages with this initiative will be sought during project implementation. In its final version, the project passed on some co-financing opportunities mentioned in the earlier concept note⁸⁹. Most activities of the FAO-MARA sub-project will be co-financed with relatively large contributions from the government, a common feature of GEF projects in China.

⁸⁸ The Sustainable Rice Landscapes Initiative (SRLI) supports the sustainable production of rice in Southeast Asia from 2020 to assist farmers and supply chains adversely impacted by climate change in the region ([The Sustainable Rice Landscapes Initiative \(SRLI\) \(foodandlandusecoalition.org\)](#)). SRLI is an initiative funded by a consortium of public, private and civil society partners. GEF-7 provides US\$25 million through its Food Systems Impact Program for applying the Sustainable Rice Platform (SRP) standard. The FOLUR Global Platform plans to assist such roundtables with Technical Assistance and analysis to improve production practices, cross-platform and regional learning, and development of private-public financing options (FOLUR Global Knowledge to Action Platform child project document, para. 125, 126). The partner organizations involved in the SRLI include the World Business Council for Sustainable Development ([WBCSD](#)), UN Environment Program ([UNEP](#)), UN Food and Agriculture Organization ([FAO](#)), Sustainable Rice Platform ([SRP](#)), the German Agency for International Cooperation ([GIZ](#)) and the International Rice Research Institute ([IRRI](#)).

⁸⁹ Among others, the FOLUR China PIF considered as co-finance the ADB 'Yangtze River Green Ecological Corridor Comprehensive Agriculture Development Project' which is under preparation, a planned collaboration by the World Bank–Hubei sub-project with the China Development Bank to bring in additional financing for private sector activities supporting the goals of the project, and working with the Ministry of Agriculture National Agricultural Biodiversity Conservation Program that is well funded.

509. The World Bank-Hubei sub-project started in 2018 after the Province won a domestic call by the Ministry of Finance for proposals for a World Bank loan. The Hubei Provincial Government then requested the World Bank add a GEF grant to the loan, even before the launch of FOLUR, since they liked an earlier GEF project in Dongwon province. Eventually, according to interviewees, this move sharpened the full integration of environmental, sustainability, and climate-smart activities into the early loan project proposal that was more agricultural production and food safety focused. Secondly, the Provincial Government was strongly motivated by learning more about GHG emission reduction and carbon sequestration measurement, monitoring and trading. More recently, President Xi's ambitious carbon neutrality targets announced in September 2020 underpinned this interest. Another advantage of GEF in Hubei province is the grant financing of public goods and knowledge products at provincial level, such as for innovative integrated land use planning, forestry/biodiversity, and GEB monitoring. Loan investment funds usually go directly to the counties. GEF mechanisms to link provinces, counties, and national government project in the FOLUR child project were also appreciated for better interactions, exchange and dissemination.

Coherence of Design

510. **Coherence.** The sub-projects reflect the FOLUR PFD integrated Theory of Change well. Both sub-projects also address the objectives of and include GEF core indicators related to the UNFCCC, UNCCD, and CBD. The components of the project are fully aligned with the components in the FOLUR impact program Theory of Change, consisting of (1) Integrated landscape management and land use planning (including payment for eco-system services); (2) Improved extension and agricultural practices for reduced fertilizer use and pesticide substitution,⁹⁰ focused on rice, wheat and maize, plus value chains; (3) Biodiversity and ecological restoration; and (4) Knowledge management and M&E. The components in the *Hubei Smart and Sustainable Agriculture Project* are organized according to another principle, that of 3S, i.e., climate smart, sustainable, and safe design and implementation, but are mapped against the GEF components in the CEO ER. In substance, the Hubei sub-project covers the various aspects of climate-smart and safe agricultural practices, soil restoration, biodiversity, and emphasizes carbon emissions reduction and value chains. GEF contributions for each component are well described and specified.⁹¹

⁹⁰ The project document submitted for CEO Endorsement notes that the project will not reduce use of persistent organic pollutants as covered under the Stockholm Convention, and therefore will not contribute to this particular GEB. The "project will, however, contribute to Sub-Indicator 9.5, Number of low-chemical/non-chemical systems implemented particularly in food production, manufacturing and cities."

⁹¹ For the World Bank-Hubei sub-project, Component 1 covers agricultural, climate and food safety risk assessments and development of standards (\$11.1m WB, \$1.94m GEF, plus Government); Component 2 is about scaling-up of smart and sustainable agricultural practices and landscape planning (\$137m WB, \$3.40m GEF, plus Government); and Component 3 funds project and knowledge management (\$1.6m, WB, \$0.94m GEF, plus

511. **Additionality and innovation.** For Hubei province representatives, all of the World Bank-Hubei sub-project is considered innovative, since it is strongly oriented toward climate-smart agriculture, sustainability and food safety—actions that had not been done in such an integrated manner before. Several specific GEF-funded knowledge products and concepts are seen by the Province Government as innovative, particularly on integrated landscape planning, GHG reduction/carbon trade, and GEB monitoring.

512. Green value chains are also a new concept brought in by GEF. For the FAO-MARA sub-project the main innovation and contribution to transformational change lies in the design of new policies and good standards of practice, including those around the change of local industrial policies that guide contributions by private sector enterprises. Additionally, the strong focus of the FOLUR impact program on value chains and sustainable market demand is an innovative idea that the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs would like to integrate more strongly across all its activities.

513. Specific technical innovations include the reduced use and discharge of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, through precision agriculture, soil testing, integrated pest management (impact programM), ecological interception systems and digital technologies. (CEO ER, p.50 and output 2.1.3.). The concept of multi-stakeholder platforms is rather new, due to the strong government presence and leadership. In contrast, land use is already relatively confined in China, which means that innovative integrated land management with a landscape perspective is harder to apply.

514. **Environmental governance.** Environmental governance relies heavily on mainstreaming environment in agriculture and provincial governments. There are no special institutional mechanisms planned so far to ensure participation and decision-making of all parties that have a stake in environmental outcomes, apart from some value chain platforms and food and land use collaboration mechanisms whose nature is yet to be defined in more detail. For Hubei province, the focus is on supporting the Agri-environmental Department in the Hubei Department of Agriculture. Beyond that, some work with Hubei's Ecology and Environment Department is expected. Another project mechanism for environmental governance envisioned in the FOLUR project is the planned coordination mechanism for the two sub-projects led by MARA. This mechanism is intended to allow for nationwide dissemination and scaling up of best practices developed during project implementation. At this early stage, it is not possible to know whether this mechanism would be permanent or only in use for the project duration.

515. **Monitoring & evaluation (M&E) and GEBs.** Both FOLUR sub-projects in China have a strong emphasis on enhancing methods and capacities in M&E of GEBs at provincial and national levels. In Hubei province the interest is particularly concentrated on ways to measure GHG emissions avoided through reduced nitrous oxide (N₂O) and methane (CH₄) emissions, and

Government). Specific GEF supported activities and financial contributions for each of these components are well specified in the WB PAD.

carbon sequestration through improved agronomic practices and increasing biomass in tree crops. Similarly, the FAO-MARA sub-project targets both GHG emissions abatement and carbon sequestration.

516. Both sub-projects faced challenges of defining and setting targets of GEB outcomes of land coverage. Interviewees stated that MARA considered the originally proposed land coverage indicators and targets to be overly broad, overlapping, overly ambitious, and not well defined. The Ministry also perceived discrepancies in GEF indicators and methodologies as well as those promoted by other international institutions, such as the impact program CC. For instance, GEF appears to permit land covered by land use planning through Integrated Landscape Management (ILM) to be counted towards the target areas and not just land covered with specific plot level interventions. After much work with national experts and the GEF Secretariat, the FAO-MARA subproject now has consolidated its plans and will cover 450,000 hectares in four provinces with ILM, good agriculture practices, climate-smart agriculture, and integrated pest management, plus 80,000 hectares of ecological restoration. For Hubei province the World Bank-Hubei sub-project will target 520,000 hectares under improved climate smart, safe, and sustainable practices, and 20,000 hectares for restoration.

Cross-cutting Issues

517. **Gender.** Interviewees pointed to the outmigration of men from Chinese provinces, leaving many women and children behind, as an important consideration for designing gender-sensitive interventions in these areas. For this reason, the participation of women is intended to be a rigid indicator, with 50 percent female beneficiaries targeted in the FAO-MARA sub-project and 40 percent in Hubei province. For Hubei, a gender analysis concluded that there were gender gaps in knowledge and earnings that the project intends to narrow through developing women's skills and awareness, improving investment opportunities for women-owned and -led cooperatives, and creating enterprises and jobs for women along value chains. The FAO-MARA sub-project presents a detailed gender analysis and action plan including gender specific capacity building. In general, Chinese counterparts consider the strong emphasis on social issues, gender, and participation as one of the assets of collaborating with GEF.

518. **Resilience.** Although food security is an important goal of the Chinese government, household resilience aspects do not feature strongly in the sub-projects. For the Hubei sub-project, resilience to climate risks is mentioned as a project goal. But it is mainly related to crop resilience through better soil and water management. Climate resilience is a project objective in the theory of change of the China FOLUR child project, but it is similarly brought up only in rather general language throughout the text, ranging from resilience of ecosystems, farmer communities, landscapes, and livelihoods to agricultural supply chains during COVID-19.

519. **Private sector.** Both FOLUR sub-projects see a large role for private sector contributions and interactions, mainly in the areas of agricultural input, technology and marketing companies and cooperatives. This is mainly a result of the FOLUR impact program having requested stronger interactions with the private sector in a value-chain approach. Specifically,

interviewees stated that they expect the project to help enhance the market value of ecologically and safely produced agricultural products. In Hubei, private enterprises and cooperatives have committed to substantial self-financing for scaling-up green practices and land-use planning promoted by the project. It is also intended to expand the instrument of allowing companies to use voluntary carbon emissions project offset options to cover part of their carbon reduction targets. The private sector is expected to adhere to local industrial policies, introduce innovations, and include poorer farmers.

For the FAO-MARA sub-project an amount of US\$10.2 million (15 percent of total project costs) is expected to be contributed from named agricultural companies and cooperatives. Since the Chinese government subsidizes the private sector for certain activities, the FOLUR child project is expected to influence conditionalities. As a particular avenue of innovation, the FAO-MARA sub-project tries to involve and work with the giant Alibaba company in digital agriculture, precision farming, and green e-commerce. According to FAO, there were many discussions in FOLUR on the type of private sector to be targeted, particularly the extent to which smaller actors in value and commodity chains should be addressed, such as small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and MSMEs, beyond the large-scale domestic and global players.

Program Governance

520. Efficiency of start-up. Both FOLUR child project sub-projects were developed in a relatively short time—slightly more than a year. Design of the World Bank-Hubei sub-project was largely guided by the regional World Bank project task team co-leaders with occasional consultation of the World Bank FOLUR Lead team and GEF Secretariat staff. The provincial government confirmed that it had good communications with the World Bank task team leaders on GEF priorities. There have been few opportunities for contacts with GEF Secretariat staff so far, particularly throughout 2020 due to COVID-19. For the FAO-MARA sub-project and the joint CEO ER, design was primarily guided by the FAO FOLUR team and to some extent the GEF Secretariat, with regional and national consultants doing most of the work and local consultations. Some concerns were expressed about cumbersome administrative reviews by international agencies with experts not familiar with Chinese conditions, partly based on former experiences in other projects. There was relatively little interaction with the World Bank FOLUR team except for some written guidance notes shared by the World Bank and some discussions on private sector involvement. Overall, the division of labor between the different actors involved was very clear to Chinese counterparts.

521. Still, the splitting of the China child project into two sub-projects caused some delays and confusion (see also box). For the World Bank-Hubei sub-project this led to the delay of the GEF grant that was embedded in the co-financed loan project, with the overall project having been approved by the Bank's Board without the GEF part in 2020. A joint CEO endorsement request was eventually submitted in August 2021 as mentioned earlier.

Developing the two China FOLUR impact program sub-projects

The Hubei WB GEF sub-project was developed first starting in 2018 after the province won a domestic call for proposals for a World Bank loan from the China Ministry of Finance. The Province was interested in a GEF contribution to add environmental, sustainability and climate-smart activities into the early proposal that was more agricultural production and food safety focused and the FOLUR impact program was an opportunity at the time. A country allocation meeting was held with the GEF Secretariat in Beijing in Jan. 2019. Afterwards the GEF China OFP proposed that the WB and FAO projects to work together under FOLUR since the National Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (MARA) was interested working with FAO in FOLUR, too, but only one FOLUR impact program project was permitted per country. So, the originally allocated GEF amount was split.

GEF approved a joint GEF concept note for the two projects in 2019. The MARA/FAO sub-project and the joint CEO Endorsement Request were then designed between June 2019 and June 2020. Since it had started earlier, the WB GEF sub-project design in Hubei province moved faster and the co-finance baseline project was approved by the WB Board in 2020, with GEF co-finance and a GEF sub-project document still pending. In the end, no joint project document was developed, only a joint CEO endorsement request. This document includes joint objectives, outcomes and outputs for the China FOLUR child project, elaborated in coordination between the two sub-projects.

522. **Program governance.** Government authorities see both FAO and World Bank as strong GEF Agencies for FOLUR in China. FAO is well placed and connected in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (MARA) and a preferred partner in other GEF projects. Interviewees stated that they view FAO as particularly strong on whole 'food systems' approaches, pro-poor strategies, and food security (the latter being a big priority of the Chinese Government); and food safety and chemicals (as important in both FAO-MARA and World Bank-Hubei sub-projects). Interviewees see the World Bank as having significant political and financial leverage in terms of policy influence and co-finance potential. Both FAO and World Bank are appreciated for their expansive regional and international connections, with accumulated advanced experience and ideas from all over the world.

523. **Transparency.** The process thus far has been generally perceived as transparent and cooperative. Chinese counterparts describe the process of selecting and designing the GEF FOLUR child project as fair, open, and fully transparent. After an open call by the Chinese Ministry of Finance (OFP), Agencies submitted projects that were internally screened and reviewed by the China Secretariat and then submitted for further review and decisions to GEF. After the Chinese OFP decided to develop two sub-projects and selected the Agencies, the World Bank and FAO sub-project preparation teams interacted regularly and professionally. For the Hubei sub-project, the selection of the four target counties in Hubei was based on transparent criteria, with ample consultations among participating agencies and counties.

Knowledge Platforms

524. Interview partners expressed their interest in engaging with the FOLUR Global Knowledge Platform, but contacts so far have been limited. The FAO-MARA sub-project allocated some resources for knowledge exchange activities related to the Global Platform, but some interviewed project stakeholders stressed that they did so in the absence of a clear understanding of its real purpose and activities and of what their participation and obligations in the platform would entail.

525. Chinese counterparts expressed concern that the Platform's exclusive use of English will pose an obstacle for many Chinese stakeholders and suggest that important platform knowledge products and events be translated into Chinese to foster broader transfer to China. In addition to the global platform, the FAO-MARA sub-project builds considerably upon domestic cooperation with knowledge organizations which includes intended partnerships with the National Ministry of Science and Technology, China Agricultural University, the China Food and Land Use /World Resources Institute coalition, as well as activities by the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) and the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) activities in China on rice (IRRI as founding member of SRLI) and wheat and maize (CIMMYT).

Summary of Findings

Sustainable Cities

526. **The relevance of design** of the Sustainable Cities child projects under GEF-6 and GEF-7 is confirmed via the case study. There is strong alignment between the locally relevant project goals pursued at the city level with the ones of emerging national policies, with regard to transit-oriented development, innovative urban design, and compact urban form (SC-IAP), and with regard to biodiversity conservation and nature-based solutions for urban environmental management (SC-impact program). These emerging national-level policies also correspond to China's ambitions at the international scale of responding to its GHG mitigation commitments under the Paris Agreement and of promoting biodiversity conservation. These will be the themes of the Glasgow November 2021 UNFCCC COP26 and of the Kunming May 2021 Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) COP15. China's engagement with the GEF in the Sustainable Cities projects thus provides another opportunity for international engagement and visibility.

527. **The coherence of design** of the China child projects with the Sustainable Cities programs and their respective Theories of Change is also confirmed via the case study. National and city-level stakeholders recognize and are benefiting from GEF's international mandate to promote the integration of global and local environmental benefits. The World Bank's long-standing engagement in China in the urban and environmental arenas has also allowed for project designs which are coherent with its financial and technical support and strategic engagement at the national level. There is continuity of design between the SC-IAP and the SC-impact program given that in both projects one central-level agency is responsible for the link with national

policies and institutions and knowledge management, while multiple cities take part in the implementation at scale of the innovations being introduced. In both the SC-IAP and the SC-impact program projects, loans and budgetary resources are supporting infrastructure investments.

528. **The cross-cutting issues** of gender, resilience, and private sector participation are present in the two Sustainable Cities child projects to varying degrees. In the case of gender, SC-impact program has clearly specified quantitative targets, which were absent in SC-IAP. In the latter child project, however, there are on-going efforts to ensure that transit accessibility takes gender and age considerations into account. Resilience plays a more prominent role in the SC-impact program than it did in the SC-IAP. Although there are no related indicators, ongoing SC-impact program project design incorporates urban and coastal resilience into biodiversity conservation and nature-based solution design. Private sector participation is not well developed in either project.

529. **Internal governance** of the SC-IAP has been robust so far, and attributed by all project stakeholders consulted, both at national and local scales, as due to a systematic management by the World Bank. The World Bank has invested time and effort first at training PMOs and then at coordinating their work with regular bi-monthly missions and meetings, which created the opportunities for participating cities to interact with one another. COVID-19 has shifted most interactions online and has had a negative impact on international participation of experts and firms.

530. **The knowledge platforms have an important role** to play in the integration of the specific experiences of participating cities, in a two-way exchange with positive expected impacts for Chinese cities beyond those involved in the projects. The knowledge platforms are expected to play a normative role at national scale and to continue operating beyond the GEF grant timelines. SC-IAP has provided its stakeholders exposure to other cities around the world and multiple capacity building opportunities on TOD. The GPSC has widened the range of peers and global exchanges in continuity with the work occurring in China, also due in large part to its management by the World Bank. Project reporting for SC-IAP has been consistent and coherent with the results framework as established at the outset.

531. **The results of the SC-IAP child project at MTR are significant.** Despite an initial delay due to grant set-up and the creation and training of the PMOs in the participating cities, all intermediate targets have been reached or vastly surpassed, with the exception of the national knowledge platform which is delayed. Capacity building outcomes have significantly surpassed targets and half of contract packages have entered implementation, which constitutes a sound basis for the completion of the project. While the disbursement ratio is relatively low at 13.6%, it is likely to accelerate significantly during 2021 and 2022 and projected to be complete by project closing.

Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration Impact Program

532. In terms of **relevance**, the two sub-projects of the FOLUR impact program China child project are well aligned with national priorities and the Conventions. The Hubei province government explicitly requested GEF co-finance to a World Bank lending operation to better pursue its environmental and climate change objectives, particularly of GHG-emissions and carbon sequestration measurement and monitoring. Developing better environmental and climate change awareness, know-how, and conceptual leadership as well as M&E of GEBs are major motivations for GEF involvement by the Chinese Authorities. Green policies and standards are an important vehicle for GEBs.

533. As far as **coherence and innovation** are concerned, both sub-projects of the FOLUR impact program China child project are fully aligned with the FOLUR Theory of Change. They are broader in integrating the focal areas of land degradation, climate change, and biodiversity than regular GEF projects. A number of GEF technical and institutional activities and concepts applied in the sub-projects are seen as highly innovative for China. Environmental governance could be helped through the establishment of an institutional coordination mechanism for the two sub-projects. There is high demand for increasing Government capacities to define, measure, and monitor major project outcomes and GEBs, such as CO₂eq emission reductions and carbon sequestration. Clarifications on GEF core indicators during design helped in defining targets.

534. On **cross-cutting issues**, gender analysis and action plans exist in both sub-projects of the FOLUR China child project and between 40 and 50 percent of beneficiaries targeted are women. Resilience is one of the objectives in the child project and mainly defined in terms of environmental and climate resilience. Private sector is expected to be a key player, including medium scale enterprises as well as major conglomerates such as Alibaba Company to expand digital agriculture. Financial and in-kind contributions are expected from private sector in both sub-projects.

535. In terms of **program governance**, the efficiency of start-up in the FOLUR impact program China child project has been affected by the division of the child project into two sub-projects. FAO and World Bank are both seen as strong GEF Agencies for bringing in their international connections, experiences and ideas which contributed to their efficiency of project design (within approximately 12 months). The sub-projects had so far only limited interactions with the FOLUR impact program Lead team and projects have mainly been guided by GEF Agencies and to some extent by the GEF Secretariat. In terms of future cooperation with the Global Knowledge Platform the Chinese Government expressed its hope that critical knowledge products could also be made available in Chinese language(s) to facilitate local counterparts to better benefit from it.

536. There are no **results** yet in the FOLUR child project as it is still under design.

Evolution of GEF integrated approach

537. **Sustainable Cities.** There is strong continuity in the design of the Sustainable Cities IAP and impact program child projects in China. This continuity is evident first in the selection of the

GEF implementing agency, the World Bank, which has a deep financial and technical engagement with cities and municipalities in China. Secondly, both SC-IAP and SC-impact program project's institutional architectures are based on a national level agency, entrusted with the creation of a knowledge platform, and on a number of participating cities where the innovations supported by GEF are tested at scale, in the pursuit of local and global environmental benefits.

538. The evolution of the GEF integrated approach is taking place at the Sustainable Cities program level and is reflected in the design of the China child projects. SC-impact program focused on a single sector, TOD, and integrated urban planning, compact urban form, and related GHG emissions abatement around it. SC-impact program on the other hand expands the concept of integrated urban planning to the interface of the city with surrounding rural areas and focuses on biodiversity conservation and nature-based solutions for environmental management in and around urban areas. Given the selection of cities for the two child projects, the city of Ningbo is the only one which will experience the cumulative benefits of both. This will allow this city to pursue biodiversity supported by GEF-7, in continuity with the progress in integrated urban planning and TOD being achieved with the support of GEF-6. The linkages between the two subject areas are thus only experienced by this participating city.

539. **FOLUR.** There had been no previous IAP related child project in China on agriculture. Nevertheless, the two FOLUR impact program sub-projects were informed and inspired by several previous GEF projects in China. Among others, the MARA/FAO sub-project built on the experiences and lessons from the UNDP-led GEF-6 *PRC-GEF Partnership Program for Sustainable Agricultural Development* and another UNDP GEF-6 project of phasing out endosulfan in cotton and tobacco, an IUCN GEF-6 project on climate resilient infrastructure and forest landscape restoration in Jiangxi and Guizhou provinces, and a FAO led GEF-5 project on wetland protected areas in Jiangxi Province.⁹² The Hubei sub-project was strongly motivated by the Dongwon GEF project. Compared to these and many other full-scale GEF projects approved for China in GEF 5-7, the FOLUR child project takes an integrated approach across the three GEF focal areas (CC, BD and LD) for the first time.⁹³ Similarly, before the Hubei province project, the World Bank had been working in China on climate-smart, sustainable and food safety issues, but had never combined all in one project.

⁹² FAO proposal, p.39 (and CEO ER)

⁹³ The China GEF portfolio is relatively large, with 48 full-scale projects approved in GEF5, 25 in GEF6, and 10 in GEF7 so far. For GEF6, 10 of these projects exclusively addressed biodiversity, 7 climate change, 5 chemicals and waste and 2 were mixed BD/LD or BD/CC (Source: GEF website).

Appendices

Appendix 1 – List of interviews

Name	Role/Organization	Interview Date
Sustainable Cities – IAP		
Wanli Fang	Senior Urban Specialist World Bank, Task Manager	November 19, 2020
Peng Mengyue	MoHURD Deputy Director and PMO Executive Director	December 15, 2020
Wang Yao	PMO Project Officers	December 15, 2020
Zhang Wanjun	PMO Project Officers	December 15, 2020
Lu Zheng	Consultant, Ningbo PMO	December 14, 2020
Wang Jie	Deputy Director, Shenzhen PMO	December 9, 2020
He Li	Deputy Director, Guiyang PMO	December 4, 2020
Li Heng	Project Officer, Guiyang PMO	December 4, 2020
Luo Xianwu	Tsinghua University and PMO Consultant Expert	December 4, 2020
Sustainable Cities – impact program		
Xueman Wang	Senior Urban Specialist, World Bank, Task Manager	November 16, 2020
Bai Wei	PMO Project Officer, China Center for Urban Development (CCUD)	December 8, 2020
Zhou Huining	Deputy Director, Ningbo PMO	December 7, 2020
He Xingyu	Director, Chengdu PMO	December 9, 2020
Zhou Tao	Director, Chongqing PMO	December 4, 2020
Xu Wei	Project Officer, Chongqing PMO	December 4, 2020
FOLUR child project China		
William Sutton	Economist, World Bank	December 8, 2020
Jianwen Liu	Agricultural Economist, World Bank	December 8, 2020
Angela Joehl	FAO long-term consultant	December 23, 2020
Zhao Lihua	Deputy Director, Hubei Province Project Management Office	January 11, 2021

Shi Shangbai	Consultant Expert, Hubei Province Project Management Office	January 11, 2021
Chen Fu	Team Leader of Chinese Expert Team	January 20, 2021
Zhang Yanping	Project Coordinator, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (MARA)	January 20, 2021

Appendix 2 - References

World Bank. July 2017. GEF China Sustainable Cities Integrated Approach Pilot Project Appraisal Document (PAD). Report No: PAD 1801. Social, Urban, Rural and Resilience Global Practice. East Asia and Pacific Region. Washington, DC.

World Bank. Aide Memoire. China: GEF Sustainable Cities Integrated Approach Pilot Project (P156507). Virtual Mid-Term Review Mission and TOD Knowledge Sharing Workshop. August 17-18, 2020. Washington, DC.

World Bank and GEF. Quarterly Newsletter of GEF China Sustainable Cities Integrated Approach Pilot Project. Issue No. 9, September 2020.

World Bank. China: Nanchang Urban Rail Project. Implementation Completion and Results Report. Report No: ICR00005224. 12/31/2020. Washington, DC.

FAO. Nov. 2020. Innovative transformation of China's food production systems and agro-ecological landscapes towards sustainability (FAO-MARA sub-project). FAO-GEF Project Document. FAO project symbol: Gchild project/child projectR/065/GFF. GEF project ID: 10246.

FAO and World Bank. Jan. 2021. Innovative transformation of China's food production systems and agro-ecological landscapes towards sustainability. (Joint) GEF-7 Request for project endorsement/approval. GEF project ID: 10246.

World Bank. April 2020. Hubei Smart and Sustainable Agriculture Project. Project Appraisal Document (PAD). Report No: PAD3582. Agriculture and Food Global Practice. East Asia and Pacific Region. Wash. DC.