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Washington, D.C.

Agenda Item 12

**FY 2026 WORK PROGRAM AND BUDGET OF THE
INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OFFICE**

(Prepared by the Independent Evaluation Office)

Recommended Council Decision

The Council, having reviewed document GEF/E/C.69/05, the “FY 2026 Work Program and Budget of the Independent Evaluation Office,” acknowledges the progress made by the Global Environment Facility Independent Evaluation Office (GEF IEO) in the reporting period. The Council approves the annual IEO budget for FY 2026 for a total of \$ 7.891 million, which includes the 11 percent indirect overhead charge in accordance with the decision made by the GEF Council at its 64th Session in June 2023.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report presents the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) work program and proposed budget for fiscal year (FY) 2026. It also provides an update on the IEO's completed and ongoing evaluations covering the reporting period from January–May 2025. Since the 68th Council meeting in December 2024, the IEO has completed the following evaluations: (1) the Annual Performance Report 2025; (2) the Evaluation of GEF Interventions in International Waters; (3) the Evaluation of the Socioeconomic Co-benefits of GEF-funded Interventions; and (4) the Evaluation of GEF Support for Nature-based Solutions. In addition, the IEO has also completed a Formative Evaluation of the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF) and the 2025 Annual Evaluation Report of the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) and the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF).

2. The report also provides an update on evaluations currently underway, knowledge management, and communication activities during the reporting period. Finally, it presents the IEO's proposed budget and staffing plan for FY 2026 for Council approval.

3. The full evaluation reports are provided in the following working and information documents:

IEO Working Documents

- GEF/E/C.69/01 Annual Performance Report 2025
- GEF/E/C.69/02 Evaluation of GEF Interventions in International Waters
- GEF/E/C.69/03 Evaluation of the Socioeconomic Co-benefits of GEF-funded Interventions
- GEF/E/C.69/ 04 Evaluation of GEF Support for Nature-based Solutions

IEO Information Document

- The Management Action Record

4. The GEF-8 budget allocation agreed on for the IEO during the eighth replenishment is \$30.0 million. The budget includes salaries and benefits, operational costs, travel costs, costs for consultants and advisory support, and publications. The FY 2026 budget request for \$ 7.891 million is aligned with this envelope.

I. OVERVIEW

1. During the reporting period, the GEF IEO conducted several evaluations that will contribute to the Eighth Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF (OPS8), to be presented at the fall 2025 replenishment meeting. At the 68th GEF Council (December 2024), the IEO presented three evaluations: (1) Evaluation of GEF Programs in Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS); (2) the Evaluation of Components of the GEF's Results-Based Management System; and (3) the Evaluation of GEF Interventions in Chemicals and Waste (GEF-5 to GEF-8).

2. The IEO has completed the following evaluations: (1) the Annual Performance Report 2025; (2) the Evaluation of GEF Interventions in International Waters; (3) the Evaluation of the Socioeconomic Co-benefits of GEF-funded Interventions; and (4) the Evaluation of GEF Support for Nature-based Solutions. These reports are presented as working documents to the 69th GEF Council in June 2025. In addition, the Management Action Record is provided as an information document. IEO has also completed a Formative Evaluation of the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF) and the 2025 Annual Evaluation Report (AER) of the LDCF/SCCF.

3. This report also provides updates on ongoing evaluations as well as on knowledge management (KM) and communication activities carried out during the reporting period. Finally, the proposed budget and staffing plan for the IEO for FY 2026 is submitted for Council approval.

II. EVALUATION WORK IN PROGRESS

4. As in previous replenishment cycles, the IEO will present highlights from its evaluations conducted during GEF-8 at the first replenishment consultation, held in Paris, May 20–22, 2025. These evaluations form the evidence base for the Eighth Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF (OPS8). The IEO is currently preparing the OPS8 report wherein past evaluation evidence will be supported by additional quantitative and qualitative data, including satellite imagery analysis, artificial intelligence (AI) applications, and existing survey data collected by partner organizations. The report will highlight areas of progress since the eighth replenishment, as well as areas requiring further attention.

5. The high-level advisory panel for OPS8 comprises Monika Weber Fahr, Patricia Rogers, Stefan Schwager, Vinod Thomas, and Hasan Tuluy—renowned international development professionals with expertise in environment, development, and evaluation. The panel provides quality assurance throughout all stages of OPS8 preparation. The first panel session was held in March 2025 in Washington, D.C., to review the evaluation inputs prepared for the first GEF-9 replenishment consultation. Discussions focused on evidence related to GEF performance, outcomes across focal areas and integrated programs, and key thematic issues such as private

sector engagement, gender inclusion, and technological innovation. The panel is scheduled to reconvene in July 2025 to review the OPS8 report. The final OPS8 report will be presented at the second Consultation Meeting of the GEF-9 replenishment in October 2025 and to the 70th GEF Council in December 2025.

6. Several evaluations are currently underway, all of which will contribute to OPS8. Approach papers and concept notes for these evaluations are available on the IEO website. An update on the status of these ongoing evaluations is presented below.

Evaluation of GEF Food Systems and Land Use Integrated Programs

7. This evaluation examines the extent to which GEF food system programs and their constituent projects address both the root causes and downstream effects of environmental issues stemming from food systems in both design and implementation phases. It includes an analysis of policy coherence—particularly regarding distortions caused by agricultural subsidies—and alignment with international assistance in this sector. The evaluation also assesses progress on gender equality and private sector engagement. Document and portfolio reviews have advanced, including a structured analysis of 17 terminal evaluations and six midterm reviews. In addition to stakeholder interviews, an online survey is underway, and field-based case studies have been conducted in Ghana, Indonesia, Peru, and Tanzania. The findings will be consolidated into a comprehensive report, expected to be finalized in December 2025.

Evaluation of the Sustainable Cities Integrated Program

8. The GEF Sustainable Cities Integrated Program was previously assessed in OPS6 ([Review of the Integrated Approach Pilot Programs](#)) and OPS7 ([GEF Integrated Approach to Address the Drivers of Environmental Degradation](#)), with a focus on program design and implementation. The ongoing evaluation shifts attention to program outcomes, the effectiveness of the knowledge platform, the sustainability of supported interventions, and the added value of GEF's support. It also aims to distill lessons to improve the program and inform stakeholders. Case studies were conducted in India and in South Africa, with additional evidence drawn from Brazil, China, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, Paraguay, and Senegal. The final evaluation report is scheduled for completion by December 2025.

Assessing Inclusion of Marginalized Groups in GEF-Supported Projects with Attention to Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations

9. The objective of this evaluation is to assess the extent to which GEF-funded projects have been inclusive of historically marginalized groups, with a particular focus on women, indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs), youth, and people with disabilities. It also aims to compare the level of inclusion across fragile and conflict-affected situations (FCS) and non-FCS

contexts. Furthermore, the evaluation seeks to examine the association between inclusion and effectiveness of GEF-funded projects and any associated socioeconomic co-benefits. The evaluation will analyze the approaches adopted to address the inclusion of historically marginalized groups, and their results. Data have been collected through geographic information system analysis, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, online surveys, and a portfolio analysis. Country case studies were carried out in Kenya, Mexico, Nepal, Pakistan, and Zimbabwe. The evaluation will be completed in FY 2026.

Strategic Country Cluster Evaluation of the Amazon Biome

10. This evaluation examines the GEF's contributions to biodiversity conservation, the reduction of deforestation and degradation, and the enhancement of community livelihoods across the Amazon region. Focusing on all three phases of the Amazon Sustainable Landscapes Program, the evaluation aims to generate evidence and lessons to inform the future design and implementation of GEF-supported interventions in the biome. The evaluation is being conducted at three levels—strategic, program/project, and country—to provide a comprehensive assessment of the GEF's impact in the region. A detailed portfolio analysis is currently underway, and preparations are in progress for field missions in four key Amazon countries (Brazil, Colombia, Peru, and Suriname). The evaluation is expected to be completed by June 2026.

Evaluation of GEF Engagement with the Private Sector and Non-Grant Instrument

11. This evaluation assesses the GEF's implementation of its approved strategy for private sector engagement. It draws on thematic and integrated program evaluations to analyze how the GEF engages with private sector actors—including large corporations; industry associations; and micro-, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs)—to address supply chain challenges and promote sustainable practices. The initial phase of the evaluation focuses on private sector involvement in the commodities supply chain and the Sustainable Cities Integrated Program. In addition, the evaluation will review recent developments related to the Non-Grant Instrument. The final report is expected to be completed in FY 2026.

Evaluation of GEF Support to Technological Innovations

12. This evaluation assesses the effectiveness of the GEF partnership's efforts and preparedness to leverage technological innovations for environmental benefits. It examines key technological innovations supported across the GEF portfolio in GEF-6, GEF-7, and GEF-8, and identifies enablers and barriers that influence the GEF's ability to effectively support such innovations. Using a combination of portfolio review, technology-focused case studies, and institutional analysis, the evaluation will offer insights into how the GEF can better harness technological innovations while managing associated risks. The final evaluation report is

expected to be completed by December 2025.

Evaluation of Policy Coherence in the GEF

13. In October 2023, the GEF Council approved activities seeking to go beyond project-level policy outcomes, advancing coherence at the programmatic and corporate levels to better achieve environmental objectives. There is a growing need for evidence on how to effectively operationalize and sustain coherence across these multiple levels. This evaluation assesses the relevance of GEF's support for policy coherence, the mechanisms through which the support is provided, and the emerging results. Evidence sources include (1) portfolio reviews of both completed and newly approved projects; (2) interviews with members of the GEF partnership; (3) an online survey; (4) findings from other IEO evaluations; and (5) case studies conducted in Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Philippines, and Uruguay, with one currently underway in Zambia. The evaluation is expected to be completed in FY 2026.

Small Grants Programme Evaluation: An Update

14. The GEF IEO, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) IEO, is conducting an updated evaluation of the GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP). The main objective of this evaluation is to assess progress made since the 2021 joint GEF-UNDP evaluation and review the implementation of new modalities known as SGP 2.0, approved by the GEF Council in December 2022. Under SGP 2.0, the program has expanded to include two additional GEF Agencies, Conservation International and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), alongside UNDP. Additionally, the SGP has launched a challenge program, led by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, to support innovative actions by civil society organizations (CSO) and community-based organizations. A second CSO-led initiative focused on microfinance is planned for launch in 2025. This evaluation will provide an overview of results from the most recent cycle of SGP projects and programs (2021–24) implemented under the previous modalities, while focusing primarily on the processes and anticipated impacts of SGP 2.0. It will also assess the extent to which recommendations from the 2021 joint evaluation have been implemented. While the evaluation will not measure outcomes from SGP 2.0—given that these activities are not yet fully operational—it will review processes and approaches that provide opportunities to deliver enhanced results under the new model. The SGP evaluation will contribute to OPS8 and will be completed by August 2025.

Evaluation of the Country Engagement Strategy

15. The evaluation of the GEF Country Engagement Strategy (CES) focuses on the Strategy's development, implementation progress, and early outcomes over the period from October 2022 to December 2024. It explores how the CES improves on previous initiatives, the effectiveness of

its components in supporting countries, and opportunities to enhance environmental outcomes—particularly in least developed countries (LDCs) and SIDS. A mixed-methods approach is adopted, including desk reviews, portfolio analysis, a global survey of stakeholders covering 121 countries, interviews, focus group discussions, direct observation of CES events. Four country case studies—Lesotho, the Philippines, Suriname, and Togo—provide in-depth contextual insights. The evaluation aims to provide a comprehensive assessment of the CES’s early performance, capturing both quantitative outcomes and qualitative experiences from key participants and stakeholders. The final report is expected to be completed by December 2025.

Evaluation of Knowledge Management (KM) in the GEF: An Update

16. This evaluation builds on previous IEO evaluations of KM completed in 2017 and 2020. Its objective is to assess the progress made by the GEF partnership in implementing the recommendations from the 2020 KM evaluation and identify remaining systemic challenges to be addressed in GEF-9. The 2020 evaluation recommended the development of a clear KM strategy and increased investment in technical solutions to strengthen the KM system. In response, the GEF Council approved the *Knowledge Management and Learning Strategy* in October 2023, and the GEF Secretariat has since launched several initiatives, including the redesign of the GEF intranet and the enhancement of knowledge platforms. Using the established KM cycle framework—which includes knowledge capture, development and curation, sharing, and application—this evaluation analyzes progress and remaining gaps through document reviews, an evaluation synthesis, and stakeholder interviews. The final report is expected to be completed by December 2025.

LDCF/SCCF Annual Evaluation Report 2025

17. The AERs for the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) and the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF) follow the biennial cycle of the *Annual Performance Report* and, in FY 2025, reported on fund performance based on completed project assessments using terminal evaluations. In addition to these assessments, the LDCF and SCCF are also partially covered through broader thematic evaluations conducted by the IEO. Accordingly, in FY 2026, the AER will synthesize evaluative evidence, findings, and conclusions drawn from relevant GEF Trust Fund evaluations that include LDCF/SCCF projects conducted since the 2024 AER. These include evaluations that address climate change adaptation, such as the evaluations on Nature-based solutions, socioeconomic co-benefits of GEF-funded interventions, components of the GEF results-based management system, and GEF programs in Pacific SIDS. The *AER 2026* will also include the *Management Action Record* to track the implementation of Council-approved action plans for the LDCF and SCCF. The report will be submitted to the LDCF/SCCF Council in June 2026.

Program evaluation of the LDCF/SCCF

18. In FY 2025, the IEO has initiated the program evaluation of the support for climate change adaptation through the LDCF and the SCCF. This evaluation will assess the strategic relevance, their response to conference of the parties (COP) guidance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of operations financed through these funds. Additionally, the evaluation is assessing the Challenge Program for Adaptation Innovation under the LDCF/SCCF, launched in 2019 in support of the increased emphasis on private sector engagement in its programming directions. The final evaluation report is expected to be completed in FY 2026.

III. KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT, COMMUNICATIONS, AND LEARNING

19. During the reporting period, the GEF IEO continued its KM, learning, and outreach activities. Through participation in conferences, workshops, webinars, and other strategic engagements, the IEO shared evaluation findings, provided capacity-building support, and collaborated with partners to promote evidence-based learning. Key activities undertaken during this period are listed below.

Four Climate Funds Meeting, Washington, D.C., December 2024

Evaluation units from the Adaptation Fund (AF), the Climate Investment Funds (CIF), the Green Climate Fund (GCF), and the GEF IEO met to strengthen collaboration and align priorities. Discussions focused on refining AI guidelines for climate evaluations and leveraging AI to assess forestry interventions in preparation for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change COP in Brazil in November 2025.

Webinar: A People-Centered Approach to Achieving the Global Biodiversity Framework, Washington, D.C., December 2024

This webinar emphasized the centrality of people—their needs, motivations, and challenges—in implementing the Global Biodiversity Framework. The IEO presented findings on moving beyond compliance to foster behavioral change.

Academic Symposium on Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Education, Colombo, Sri Lanka, December 2024

The GEF IEO Director delivered a keynote address titled “The Future of Evaluation: The Role of Academic Education in M&E,” highlighting the need to integrate environmental, social, and economic dimensions in evaluation for transformational change.

Webinar on Artificial Intelligence and Climate Change Evaluations, Washington, D.C., January 2025

Hosted by the Technical Evaluation Reference Group of the climate funds (AF, CIF, GCF, and GEF IEO), this session explored AI's potential to enhance evaluation quality and efficiency in climate change interventions.

Expanded Constituency Workshop (ECW) – Southern Africa, Johannesburg, South Africa, January 2025

The IEO engaged with GEF focal points, CSOs, GEF agencies, and the GEF Secretariat. As part of the Sustainable Cities Integrated Program evaluation, the IEO conducted stakeholder interviews and fieldwork.

Workshop: Advancing Transformational Change in Multilateral Climate Finance, Washington, D.C., February 2025.

The GEF IEO joined the AF, CIF, and GCF to examine how major climate funds conceptualize, implement, and evaluate transformational change. The session featured insights from a recent joint study and discussed practical applications.

United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Annual General Meeting, Tokyo, Japan, February 2025.

The IEO attended the meeting and presented the proposed UNEG Norms and Standards on environmental and social impacts, which were adopted by UNEG.

Workshop on Climate Evaluation and Learning Initiative, Rockefeller Foundation, New York, February 2025.

The IEO participated in this joint workshop between the foundations, the climate funds and the Global Evaluation Initiative. Building on recent discussions and initiatives, the workshop discussed approaches to advance strategic and practical collective action approaches to strengthen the roles that evaluation, learning, and evidence play in transformational climate action.

GEF Technical Advisory Group Meetings, Washington DC, February 2025.

Several members of the IEO attended sessions on systems thinking, private sector engagement and the focal areas at the Technical Advisory Group meetings held in preparation for GEF-9 discussions.

Annual meeting of the Amazon Sustainable Landscapes (ASL), Georgetown, Guyana, March 2025.

The IEO attended this meeting organized by the World Bank. The meeting reviewed the past decade of the ASL program, analyzing successes and challenges across its four pillars—

conservation, sustainable development, governance, and collaboration—to inform future strategies. The IEO conducted interviews for the evaluations of GEF support in the Amazon Basin, the GBFF, and Nature-based solutions.

IDEAS Conference, Rome, Italy, March 2025

At the International Development Evaluation Association (IDEAS) conference, the IEO organized three seminars on international communities of practice, geospatial data analysis, and evaluation of environmental and socioeconomic trade-offs. The director led a plenary session on evaluation's role in transformational change. The event also marked the launch of **EvalForEarth**, a new community of practice supported by the GEF IEO, FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the World Food Programme, and the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), aimed at enhancing evaluation capacity in food security, environment, and rural development, particularly in developing countries.

Evaluation Cooperation Group (ECG) of the Multilateral Development Banks, Rome, Italy, March 2025.

The IEO participated in the ECG meeting. Discussions included the planned update of the Good Practice Standards for evaluating public and private sector interventions—originally issued in 2012—with the update expected by 2027. The IEO will contribute to this process.

GEF IEO Workshop on Artificial Intelligence, Washington, D.C., April 2025

This internal workshop convened IEO staff alongside experts from the World Bank Independent Evaluation Group, the Adaptation Fund and the Climate Investment Funds. Discussions focused on the use of generative AI for text analysis, AI-driven geospatial tools leveraging satellite and drone imagery, and AI applications in evaluation communications. The workshop contributed to the IEO's efforts to develop pilot studies and establish ethical guidance for the use of AI in evaluation.

Virtual seminar on gender-sensitive climate actions hosted by the Global Evaluation Initiative and CLEAR, April 2025.

The IEO presented its approach to building evidence, linking inclusion of gender to project outcomes, and addressing current challenges, including the need for indicators focusing on women's decision making and agency.

Workshop on Promoting Sustainable Urbanization – Learning from the Sustainable Cities Program, Paris, France, April 2025.

Organized by the GEF Secretariat, the workshop aimed to examine global urbanization trends; synthesize lessons from the GEF's Sustainable Cities Integrated Program; and identify gaps,

barriers, and opportunities for advancing integrated urban transformation aligned with global sustainability goals. Participants included representatives from the GEF Secretariat, GEF Agencies, the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel, core partners of the Sustainable Cities Integrated Program, and subject matter experts. The IEO presented findings from its ongoing and past evaluations of the Sustainable Cities Integrated Program.

12th Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention, Geneva, Switzerland, April–May 2025

The IEO presented key findings and recommendations from the *Evaluation of GEF Interventions in the Chemicals and Waste Focal Area (GEF-5 to GEF-8)* at this major international event.

ECW – West Africa, Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, May 2025

The IEO delivered presentations on its methodology, work program and shared evaluation findings relevant to the region. It also conducted interviews with the GEF Secretariat, focal points, CSOs, and GEF agencies as part of data collection for the evaluation on policy coherence.

Induction Training for New GEF Staff, Washington, D.C., May 2025

The IEO presented on the evaluation function within the GEF, its own role, ongoing evaluation program, and opportunities for staff engagement.

IEO Participation in the GEF Interagency Retreat, Washington, D.C., May 2025

The IEO led a session focused on evaluation findings highlights and facilitated a discussion on agencies' experiences with integrated programming.

Canadian Evaluation Association 2025 Virtual Conference, May 2025

The IEO organized a panel presentation in collaboration with DEval and the independent evaluation offices of IFAD and the GCF. The panel focused on assessing the balance between environmental and socioeconomic benefits in conservation and climate change adaptation interventions.

International Research Group for Policy and Programme Evaluation (INTEVAL) Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C., May 2025

INTEVAL is a cooperative initiative of evaluation scholars and practitioners from international organizations and think tanks, known for producing highly regarded publications in the evaluation field. The IEO participated in the annual meeting, organized by Mathematica, contributing its methodological expertise in evaluating environmental programs.

Publications and media products

20. During the reporting period, the GEF IEO published the following documents: (1) Evaluation of Cofinancing in the GEF (presented to the Council in June 2024); (2) LDCF/SCCF Annual Evaluation Report 2024 (presented to the LDCF/SCCF Council in June 2024); and (3) Evaluation of GEF Support to Climate Information and Early Warning Systems (presented to the Council in February 2024).

21. A forthcoming **edited volume**, *Integrating for Sustainability: Evaluation Across Environmental and Socioeconomic Domains*, has been accepted for publication and is currently being finalized. Edited by Geeta Batra, Juha I. Uitto, and Margaret A. Spearman, this book builds on themes from the Fourth Conference on Evaluating Environment and Development, convened in March 2024 in Washington, D.C. The volume brings together contributions from over 60 authors and practitioners to explore how evaluation can meaningfully address the interconnected challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss, conflict, and socioeconomic inequality.

22. A **blog by the GEF IEO director** was published during this reporting period, titled “Earth Day Reflections: The Case for Smarter Action, Sharper Evidence, and Stronger Collaboration.” It emphasizes the role of evaluation in addressing environmental risks, promoting collaboration, and supporting informed decision making in resource-constrained contexts.

23. In January 2025, the IEO released the [latest edition](#) of the **GEF IEO Newsletter**, which includes insights from recent evaluations and activities.

24. The [first EvalVision video](#), focusing on the Chemical and Waste evaluation in Trinidad and Tobago, was showcased at the 68th GEF Council meeting, with two more planned for the June 2025 69th GEF Council meeting, focusing on nature-based solutions and socioeconomic co-benefits. EvalVision is a new evaluation video series designed to enhance storytelling and effectively communicate evaluation findings to the GEF partnership and broader audiences. This initiative aims to present insights in engaging, bite-size formats, improving accessibility and impact. The IEO also experimented with virtual reality ([web VR experience](#)) based on a field mission in Mexico.

25. The GEF IEO **website**, as of March 31, 2025, had a total of 11,199 views for the period December 2024–March 2025. Information on the GEF IEO homepage, evaluations, and news/communications ranked among the highest viewed sections. The approach paper of *Assessing Inclusion of Marginalized Groups in GEF-Supported Projects, with Attention to Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations* evaluation (2024) was the top viewed document, and the *Terminal Evaluations Guidelines* (2023) was the most downloaded document for the reporting period. A new and improved IEO website—designed to offer a more intuitive experience, richer content, and better access to the evidence and insights that matter—was launched as a beta

version in April 2025, with a full release scheduled for October 2025.

26. **Social media** activity has remained consistent, with continued growth across platforms. Over the past three months, LinkedIn impressions totaled 32,263, with engagements rising by 42.8 percent compared to the previous 90 days. The number of members increased steadily to 7,283. Additionally, the total number of followers grew by 8 percent, reaching 2,534, with the top-performing post receiving 3,653 impressions and 74 engagements. Similar engagement levels were observed on other social media platforms, including Twitter/X.

Training and capacity building

27. The IEO has developed an online training course on environmental evaluation, which was launched at the 67th GEF Council meeting. The course is being broadly disseminated through various channels. It includes modules on systems thinking, methods, the use of geospatial tools and approaches, transformation change, and scaling up. As of April 2025, 1,796 individuals had enrolled in this online training program.

IV. BUDGET AND HUMAN RESOURCES

28. For the GEF-8 replenishment cycle, the GEF Council approved a total budget of \$30.0 million over four years for the IEO, to effectively implement its mandated work program throughout the period. In FY 2025, the IEO executed its operations and evaluations budgets (table 1), approved during the 67th GEF Council Meeting.

29. The operations budget covered both fixed costs, including staff salaries and benefits, and variable expenditures such as participation in global evaluation networks, KM activities, and staff professional development. The FY 2025 operations budget was nearly fully utilized.

30. The evaluations budget, structured under a multiyear funding model, covered consultancy fees, travel costs, and other operational associated with conducting evaluations. The IEO continues to prioritize the use of in-house expertise, with staff leading all evaluation activities. This approach enhances cost efficiency, maintains continuity in delivering the evaluation work program-- particularly in support of OPS8-- and helps retain evaluative knowledge and experience within the IEO. In line with the multiyear model, any unspent evaluation funds from FY 2025 will be carried forward into FY 2026 to support ongoing evaluations.

31. In addition, hosting fees payable to the World Bank (indirect costs, table 1) have been incurred. These fees have been charged quarterly at 11 percent of total direct costs, excluding lease-related expenses, as agreed between the GEF and the World Bank.

Table 1: IEO budget for FY 2025 (million \$)

Estimated GEF IEO FY 2025 (million \$)		
Fixed cost	FY 2025	FY 2025 estimated
Salaries	3.098	\$3.052
Benefits	2.169	\$2.136
Subtotal A	5.267	\$5.188
Operations		
Subtotal B	0.200	\$0.200
Variable cost		
Professional development	0.100	\$0.100
Knowledge management/ communications	0.205	\$0.205
Subtotal C	0.305	\$0.305
Total (A+B+C) = D	5.772	\$5.693
Multiannual budget		
Evaluations E	2.000	\$2.000
Total direct cost (D+E) = F	7.772	\$7.693
Total lease cost G	0.340	\$0.340
Indirect cost (H)	0.855	\$0.846
IEO total budget FY 2026 (F+G+H) = I	8.966	\$8.880

Budget request for FY 2026

32. In FY 2026, the IEO will enter the third year of the Global Environment Facility's eighth replenishment cycle (GEF-8). The budget request for this period (see table 2) aligns with the amount approved during the GEF-8 replenishment process and is structured around two primary accounts.

33. The first is the operations account, which supports the core functioning of the IEO. This account covers essential expenditures such as staff salaries, benefits, and general operational costs, enabling the Office to effectively implement its work program and meet delivery commitments. Under the operations budget, the IEO will further strengthen knowledge management and communication activities, enhance its methodologies and organize workshops

focused on evaluation findings and methods. These workshops will not only support the dissemination and discussion of evaluation findings but also provide targeted training for agency staff and other partners on applying GEF guidelines for terminal evaluations of GEF-financed projects and programs, as well as adopting international good practices for evaluation. Projected increases in the salary envelope for FY 2026 follow corporate guidance. Additionally, in FY 2026, the IEO will prepare a new office strategy to guide its programming under GEF-9. The strategy will define the main objectives, set evaluation priorities, and outline the range and types of evaluation products best suited to address these priorities cost effectively. The strategy will also address human resources and the office's internal organization.

34. The second is the evaluation account, which covers the costs related to consultants, travel, and other operational expenses. It assumes particular importance, because during this period, the IEO will deliver its flagship product, the Eighth Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF (OPS8). Table 2 also includes the hosting fees payable to the World Bank for FY 2026, calculated at 11 percent of total direct costs (excluding lease-related expenses), in accordance with the agreement between the GEF and the World Bank.

35. The total budget request for FY2026 across both accounts is \$7.891 million.

Table 2: IEO budget request for FY 2026 (million \$)

FY 2026 GEF IEO budget	FY 2026 (million \$)
Fixed cost	
Salaries	3.193
Benefits	2.205
Subtotal A	5.398
Operations	
Subtotal B	0.100
Variable cost	
Professional development	0.105
Knowledge management/communications	0.200
Subtotal C	0.305
Total (A+B+C) = D	5.803
Multiannual budget	
Evaluations E	1.000
Total direct cost (D+E) = F	6.803

Total lease cost G	0.340
Indirect cost H	0.748
IEO total budget FY 2026 (F+G+H) = I	7.891

Human resources

36. As shown in table 3, the IEO currently has 19 staff members and one extended-term consultant. With this staffing level, the IEO has implemented the approved work program for the current year. The IEO has also managed the evaluation activities for the LDCF and the GBFF within its existing team.

37. To meet the growing demands associated with the expansion of GEF activities and the increasing scope of work under the GBFF and LDCF/SCCF, the IEO will require two additional staff positions to maintain the quality and timeliness of its evaluations. These positions will be accommodated within the overall budget envelopes of the three funds. Following the approval of a new office strategy in FY 2026, the IEO will also review its human resources and internal organization in preparation for the GEF-9 period.

Table 3: IEO staffing level

IEO staff		No.
Director		1
Deputy Director and Chief Evaluation Officer		1
Senior Evaluation Officers		5
Evaluation Officers		4
Evaluation Analysts		4
Senior Operations Officer		1
Knowledge Management Officer		1
Information Analyst		1
Senior Executive Assistant		1
Subtotal staff		19
Extended-term consultant		1