



Highlights Evaluation Findings 2022-2025

First Replenishment Meeting
May 20, 2025



Highlights Evaluation Findings 2022-2025

Purpose

- Provide early evidence for GEF-9
- Assess performance, policies and systems
- Identify potential areas for improvement
- Support decision making with evidence



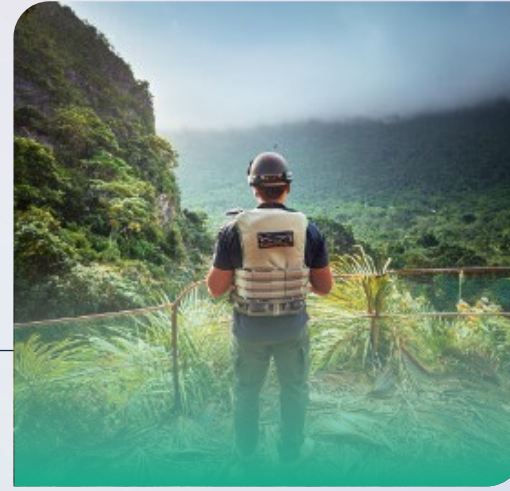
Context: A Critical Juncture



**Deteriorating
environmental
conditions**



**Evolving political
and economic
landscape**



**Other financial
mechanisms for
Conventions**



**Competition
for scarce
resources**

Environmental Trends: Global Crisis

Global risks ranked by severity

Risk categories

- Economic
- Environmental
- Geopolitical
- Societal
- Technological

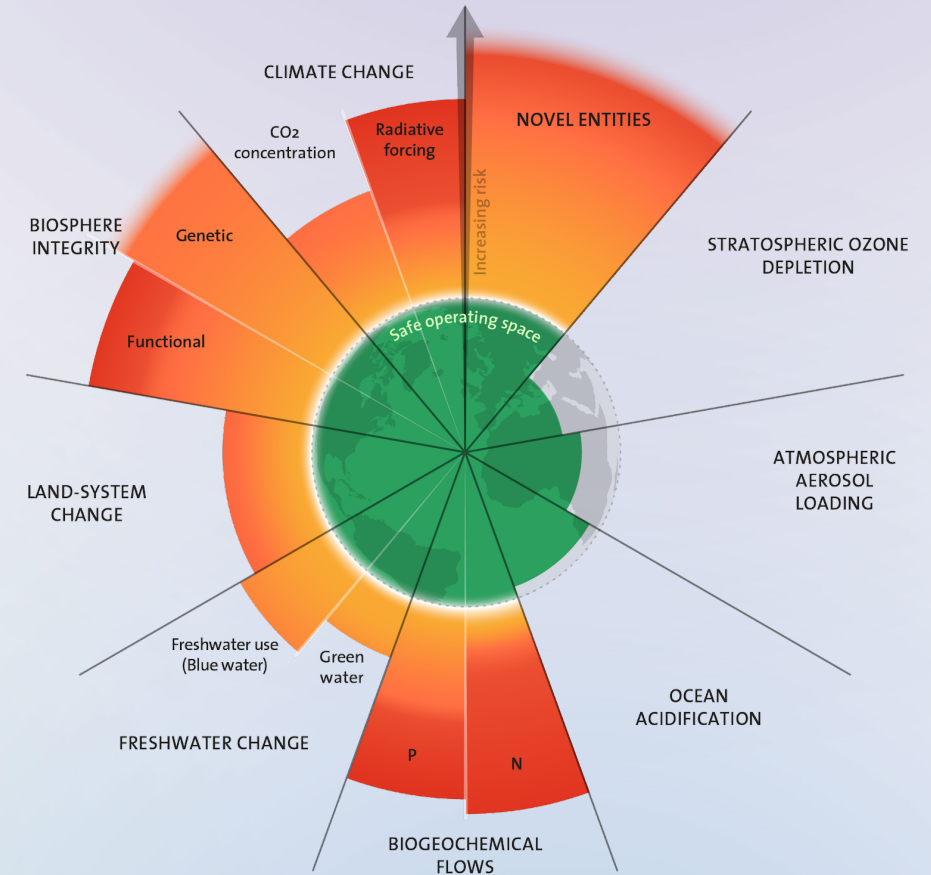
Uncertain
political,
economic, and
environmental
landscape

10 years

1 st	Extreme weather events
2 nd	Biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse
3 rd	Critical change to Earth systems
4 th	Natural resource shortages
5 th	Misinformation and disinformation
6 th	Adverse outcomes of AI technologies
7 th	Inequality
8 th	Societal polarization
9 th	Cyber espionage and warfare
10 th	Pollution

Source

World Economic Forum Global
Perception Survey 2024-2025.



6 of 9 planetary boundaries transgressed

Evaluation Coverage



2022-2025

Evidence Base: 34 Evaluations **21 completed**

1. Impacts of COVID on GEF Interventions
2. Evaluation of GEF Support Water Security
3. Information and Early Warning Systems
4. Report on the GEF Management Action Record
5. Least Developed Countries Strategic Country Cluster Evaluation
6. Strategic Country Cluster Evaluation: Drylands
7. Strategic Country Cluster Evaluation: Lower Mekong River Basin
8. Evaluation of GEF Support to Sustainable Forest Management and REDD+
9. Evaluation of GEF Interventions in International Waters
10. Evaluation of GEF Interventions in Chemicals and Waste
11. Review of Portfolio Level Risk in the GEF
12. Evaluation of GEF Programs in the Pacific SIDS
13. Evaluation of Cofinancing In the GEF
14. Evaluation of GEF Support to Community Based Approaches
15. Evaluation of GEF Support to Nature Based Solutions
16. Evaluation of Components of the Results Based Management System
17. Evaluation of Socioeconomic Co-Benefits of GEF Interventions
18. Annual Performance Report 2023: GEF Support to Behavior Change
19. LDCF/SCCF Annual Evaluation Report 2023
20. Evaluation of the Global Wildlife Program
21. Learning from Challenges In the GEF

2022-2025

Evidence Base: 34 Evaluations **13 ongoing**

1. Evaluation of the GEF Country Engagement Strategy
2. Evaluation of the Inclusion of Marginalized groups in Fragile and Conflict Affected Situations
3. Evaluation of the Sustainable Cities Program
4. Evaluation of GEF Support to the Amazon
5. Evaluation of the GEF Integrated Food Systems Program
6. Evaluation of Innovation and Application of Technologies in the GEF
7. Annual Evaluation Report of LDCF/SCCF
8. Evaluation of the Small Grants Programme
9. Evaluation of the GEF's Engagement In the Private Sector
10. Evaluation of the GEF's Interventions In Climate Change
11. Evaluation of GEF Support to Policy Coherence
12. Annual Performance Report 2025: Specials Themes include Project Efficiency and Broader Adoption
13. An Assessment of the Competitive Advantage of the GEF





Coverage & Methods

Portfolio

[1991-2024]

\$26B+ mobilized for **6,000+** projects in **164** countries

Evaluation



3,858

Completed Projects

Mixed Methods:

Geospatial, AI, Qualitative,
Surveys, Case Studies, Field
validations

Quality:

Reference Groups,
Senior Advisory
Panel

GEF-8 Portfolio

GEF-8: \$3.6B
for **479** projects

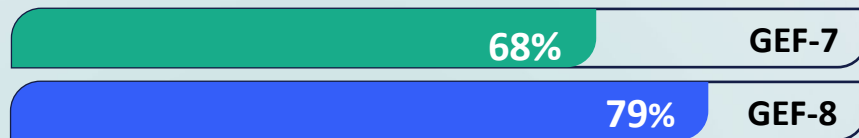
34% → **39%**
Biodiversity financing

18% → **14%**
Climate Change Mitigation

53% → **46%**
STAR share

60%  Programmatic approaches

10 → **18**
Avg Child Projects



Share of full-size projects

GEF-7

GEF-8

\$5.8 M → **\$7.7M**

Ave. project financing

GEF Portfolio



Regional Shifts in Resource Allocation GEF7-GEF8



LAC
24% → 26%



17% → 19%

LDCs



SIDs

8% → 11%



ECA 7% → 5%



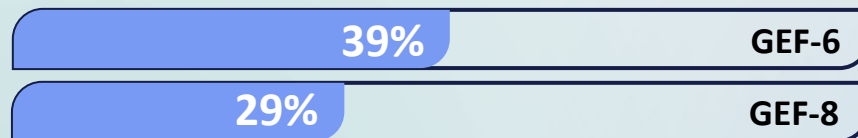
ASIA
25% → 20%

GEF Portfolio: Agency Shares



Agency
Shares

UNDP's share declined



World Bank share halved

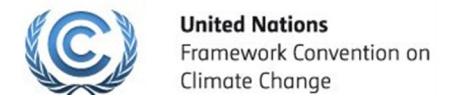
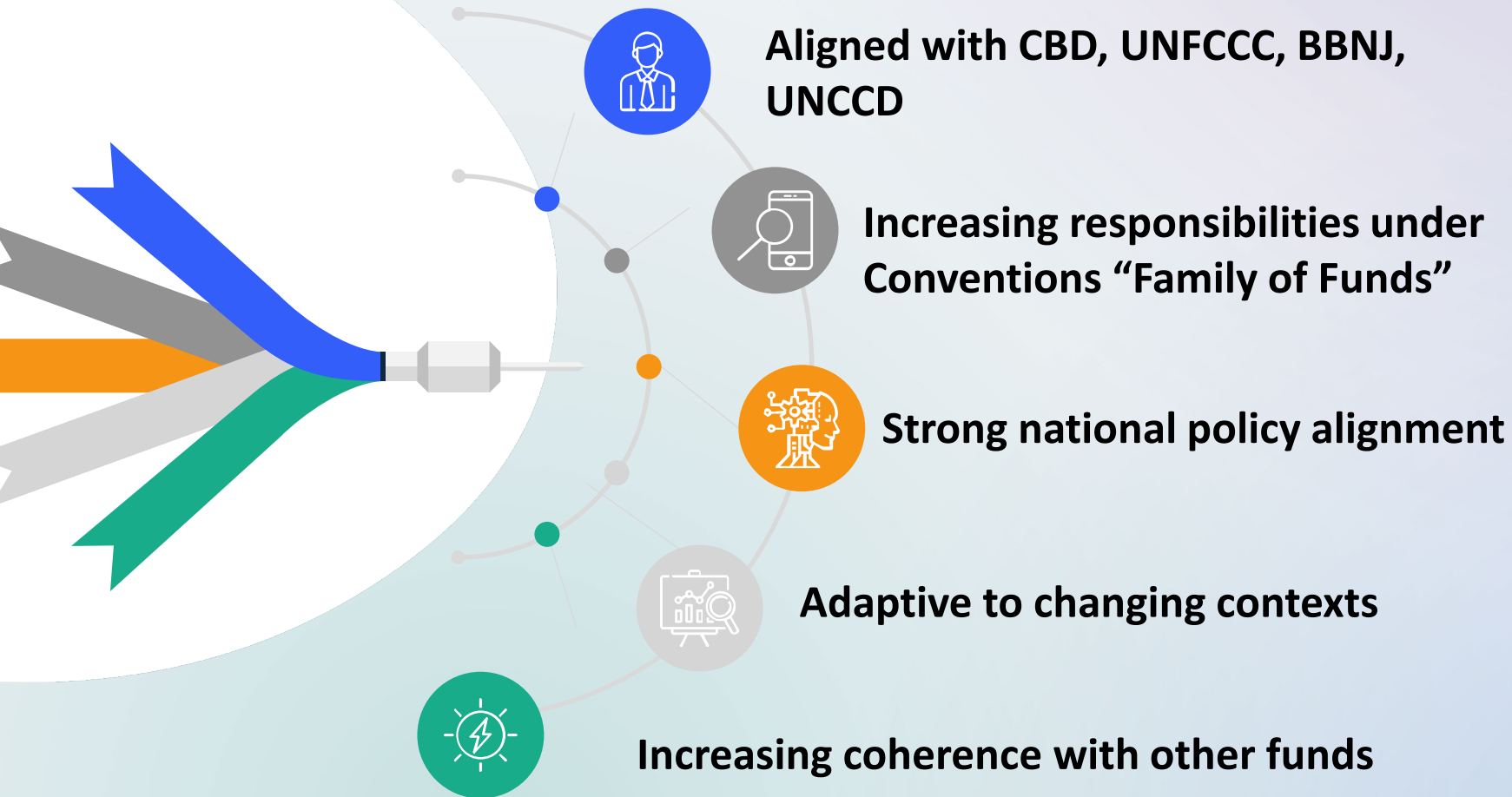


FAO biggest increase (7 to 17%)

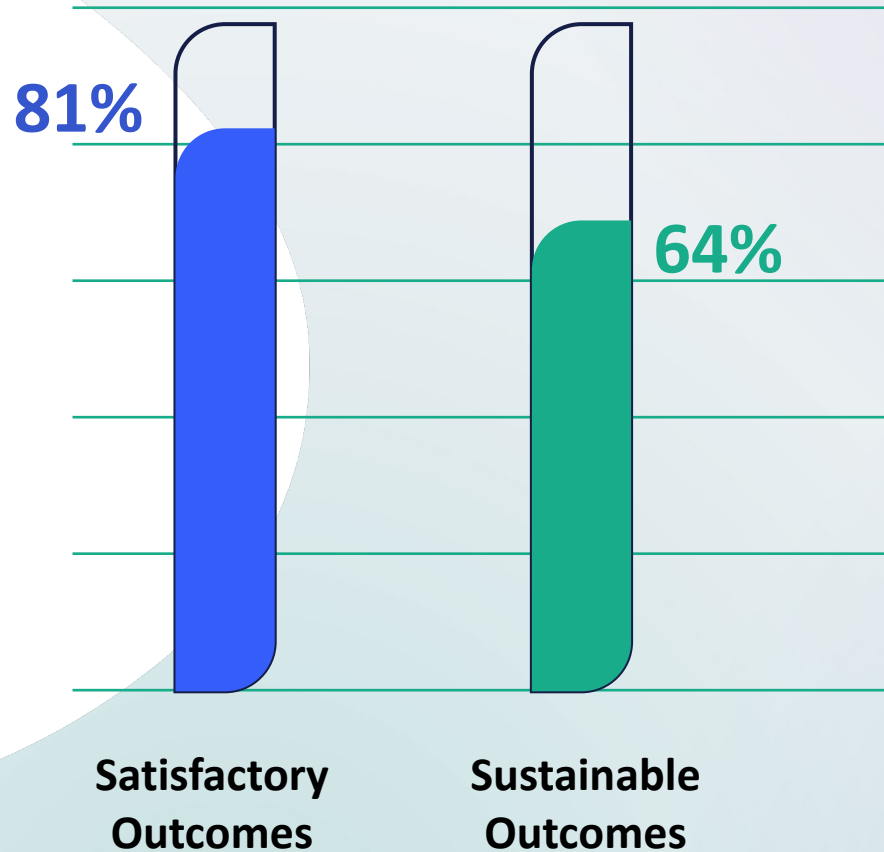


IUCN, WWF, UNEP and CI shares doubled

GEF Relevance



Strong Outcome Performance



Better Performance



International Waters



Asia



Chemicals & Waste



ECA

Below Ave. Performance



LAC



FCV



Africa



SIDS

Scaling

GEF reflected in
65%
of GCF proposals



Synergies, complementarity,
coordination with GEF in a quarter

42 GCF projects involved
\$1.4 billion in GCF investments at
\$33 million per project

Scale-Up Examples



Cambodia

\$5M GEF project
scaled by \$40M GCF
agribusiness project



Micronesia

SGP grant scaled via
\$16.6M GCF
adaptation project

Benefits beyond environmental outcomes



Improved livelihoods, skills, social cohesion and incomes



Well-integrated co-benefit strategies and strong local partnerships linked to effectiveness and innovation



Short project duration, limited follow-up, and unclear government roles limit lasting benefits.



Challenges in scaling, monitoring



Focal Area Impacts



What Works Well Across Focal Areas



**Alignment
with MEAs
& National
Priorities**



**Integrated &
Landscape
Approaches**



**Policy Influence
and Institutional
Strengthening**



**Regional and
Transboundary
Co-operation**



**Community-
Based
Implementation**



**Socioeconomic
Co-Benefits**

What Needs Work



**Sustainability
Risks**



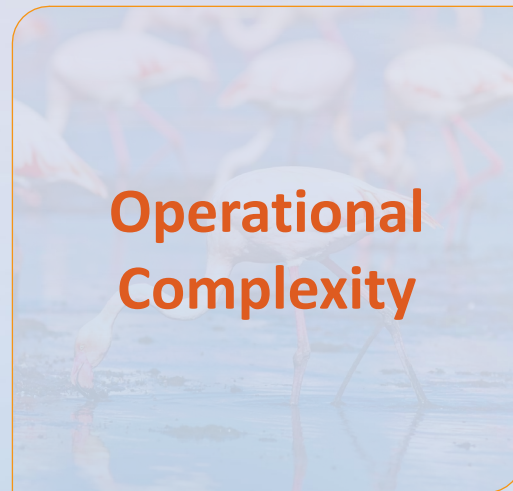
**Private Sector
Engagement**



**Innovation
Uptake**



**Monitoring
& Learning**



**Operational
Complexity**

Focal Area Impacts

Chemicals & Waste



**Highest sustainability;
strong policy
integration**

Climate Adaptation



**Notable resilience
results in SIDS &
LDCs**

Climate Mitigation



**Emerging focus on
enabling environments,
just transitions**

International Waters



**Strong regional
coordination; high
outcome ratings**

Land Degradation



**Effective in dryland and
agroecosystem
restoration**

Biodiversity



**Leading in scale, impact
& alignment with global
frameworks**

Does GEF Deliver Value for Money?

Carbon Sequestration Benefits



Sustainable Forest Management

1 : 1.17



Biodiversity

1 : 1.04



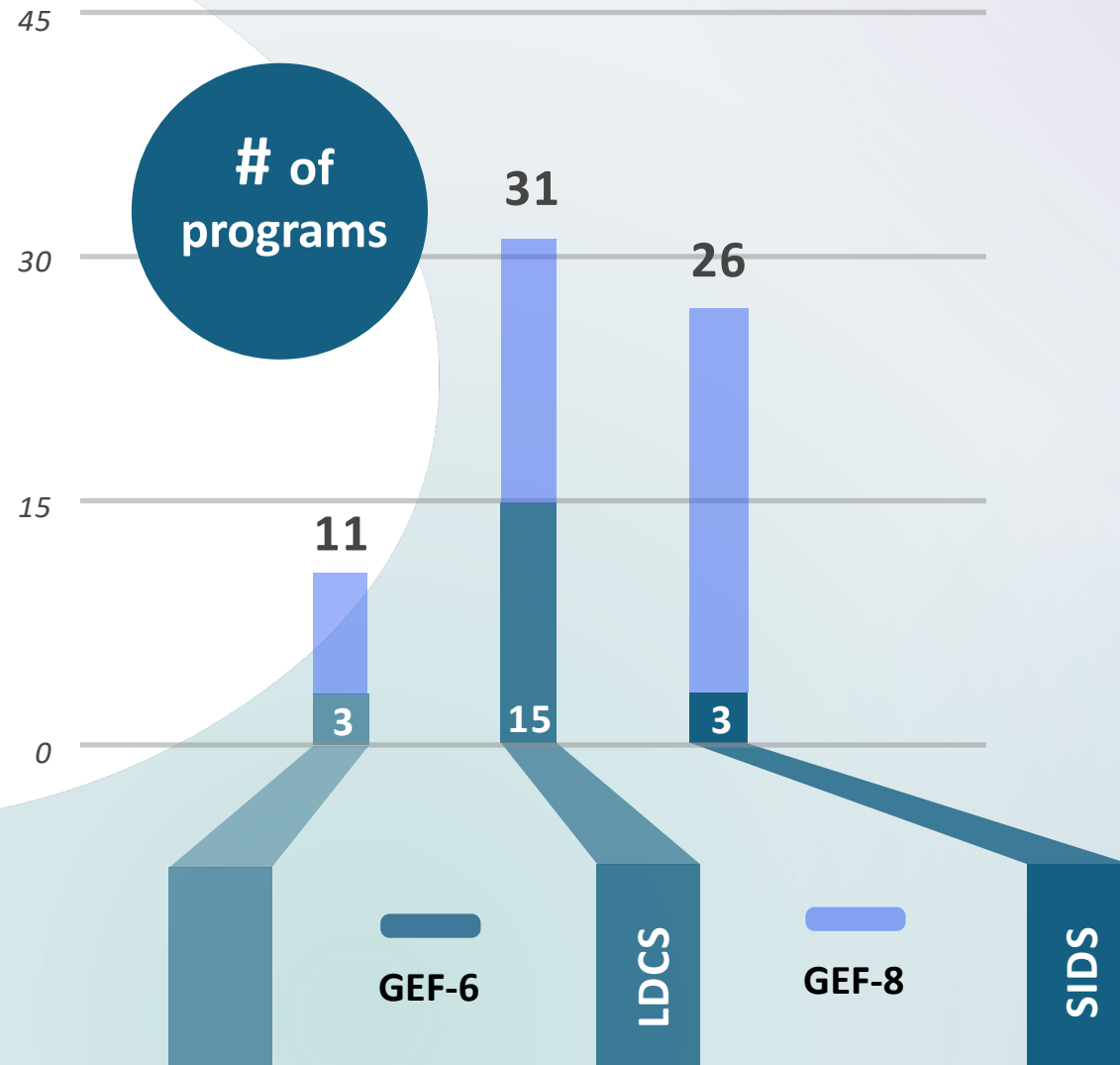
Land Degradation

1 : 1.08

Integrated Programs



Overview of Integrated/Impact Programming



GEF-6

GEF-8

\$314 M → **\$1.6 B**

Total GEF financing

10 → **18**

child projects per program

\$10.5 M → **\$8.3 M**

Funding per child project

Funding: Top Ten Agencies

GEF-8 Funding



Leading Agencies
UNDP, FAO, UNEP

GEF-6

GEF-8



Largest increases
for CI, IUCN,
UNDP, FAO, UNEP

GEF-6

GEF-8

24% ↓ 10%

Significant Share
Decline: World Bank

GEF-6

GEF-8

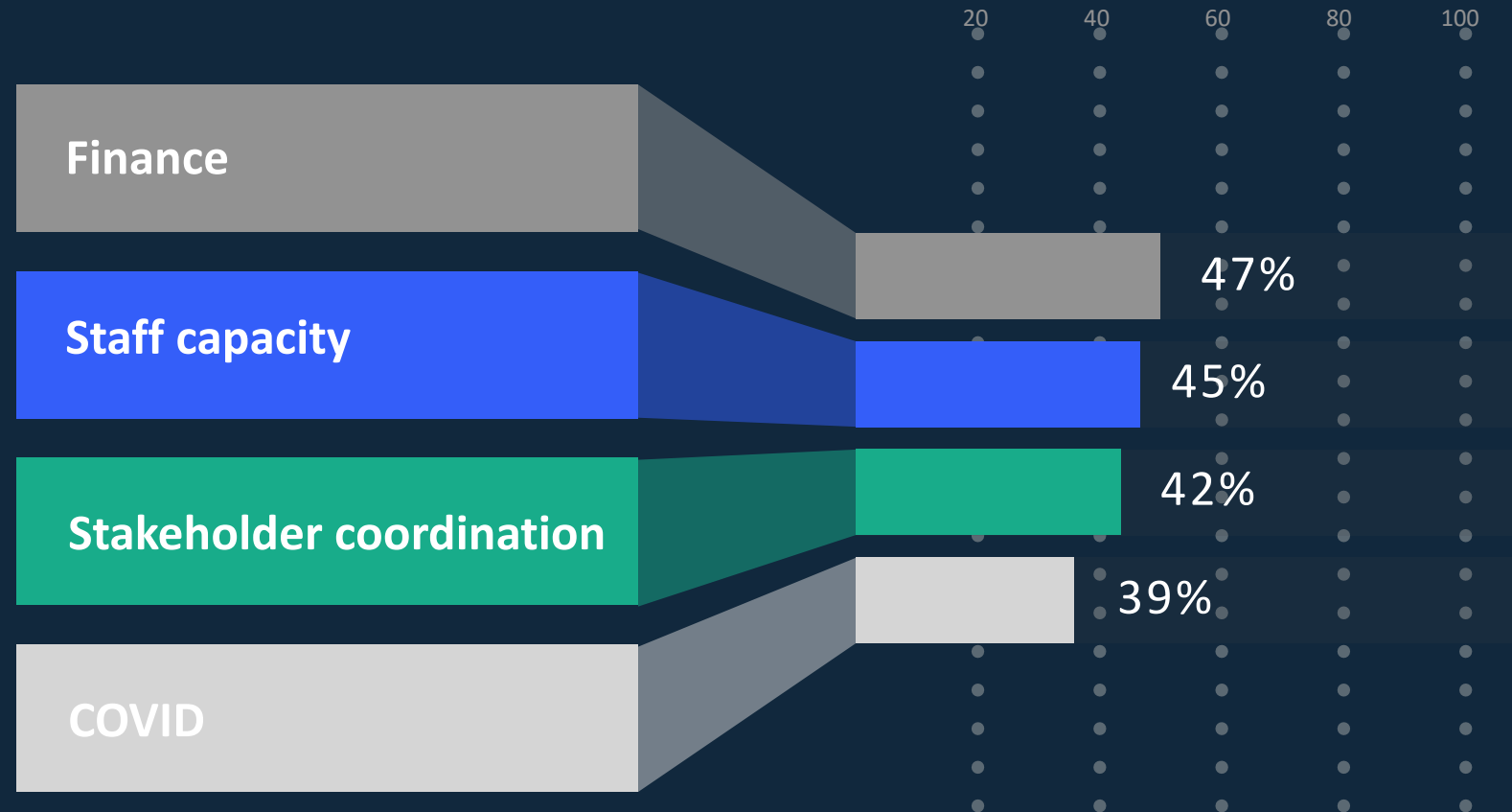
22% ↓ 3%

Significant Share
Decline: IFAD



Implementation and Efficiency

- Comparable implementation timelines to standalone projects
- Comparable outcome performance to standalone projects



% of child projects in GEF-6 and GEF-7

Design Elements



Systems Thinking



Theory of Change



Multistakeholder interaction



**Piloting/
demonstration**



**Focus on
co-ordination**



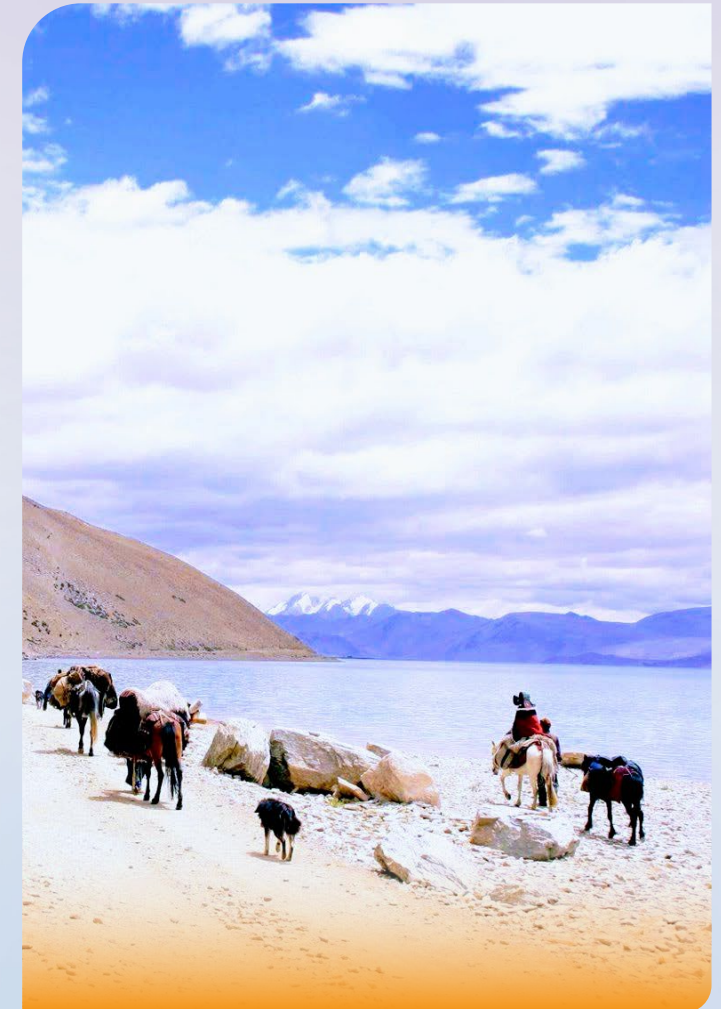
**Socioeconomic
Co-benefits**



Policy and institutional development

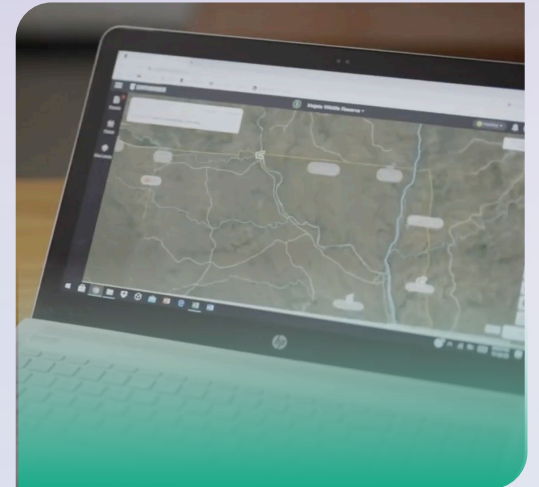


Limited focus on risks and economic risks



Global Platforms

- ◎ **Integral Component:** coordination, adaptive learning, and institutional strengthening
 - ◎ Share increased from **8% to 11%** between GEF-6 and GEF-8 (**\$277 M**)
 - ◎ Toolkits, Knowledge Platforms, Innovation Platforms (**Ethiopia and Nigeria**), Stakeholder Dialogue (**Paraguay, Liberia**)
- ◎ **Half experienced delays** due to project coordination issues
 - ◎ **Differences in timelines** among child projects and hub (Commodities and Cities)
 - ◎ **Resourcing** for program reporting is uneven



Performance and Sustainability

Outcomes and sustainability likelihood
satisfactory

Cofinancing in GEF 8 is
7.6



Private sector participation increased since GEF-6, mixed outcomes

Integrated programs aim at generating **systemic changes**

Working Sustainability Approaches

- **Integration in permanent institutions** (regional, national, local) **Brazil, Thailand, Mozambique**
- **Long-term financing** viability **Zambia, Tanzania**
- **Synchronized implementation** between main program and child projects across countries

Where Things Aren't Working

- **Overdependence** on Time-Limited Donor Funding **Myanmar, Botswana and Benin**
- **Ineffective transfer** of tools to countries and non synchronized project cycles
- **Political Risks** **Ethiopia**

Impact in Paraguay

3 child projects
GEF IDs 9182, 9180, 9696

- **Holistic:** Focus on production, demand and finance
- **Value China:** Traceable supply chain, connecting farmers with a slaughterhouse responsible for supplying beef to McDonald's
- **Project continuity** through FOLUR
- **Financial Continuity-:** Training and policy support to the Paraguay Central Bank
- **Development of a law** requiring financial institutions to disclose their impact on deforestation
- **Finance at Landscape levels:** Cooperatives now receiving training through FOLUR's global coordination project



Institutional and Policy Framework



A Broad Partnership



GEF governance anchored by Council, Assembly, and Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP)



Governance ensures alignment with global environmental conventions

18

accredited Agencies: UN, MDBs, international NGOs & national entities



Enables technical breadth and geographic reach

STAP

Scientific Credibility



Agency collaboration improved, competition and role overlap persist



Country-driven model



Civil Society and Local Stakeholders

Safeguards, Gender & Inclusion



Robust safeguards and inclusion frameworks



Recognized Advisory bodies (Gender Partnership, Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group)



Expanded engagement with marginalized groups



Inconsistent inclusion beyond gender (e.g., youth, IPLCs need more voice)



Need for deeper local empowerment



Short preparation time limits deep engagement



Citarum Watershed
Management Project
Indonesia

Policy Coherence

- ◎ GEF Strategic Commitment
- ◎ Opportunity to leverage MDBs

Limitations

- **Absence** of shared understanding
- **Focus** on Mainstreaming
- **Context-Dependent** Progress
- **Limited** Engagement Beyond Environment Ministries

Policy Coherence Examples



Kura River Basin

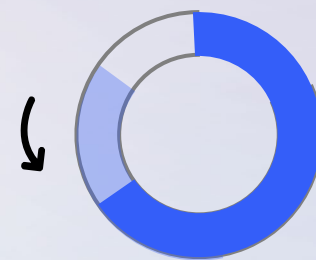
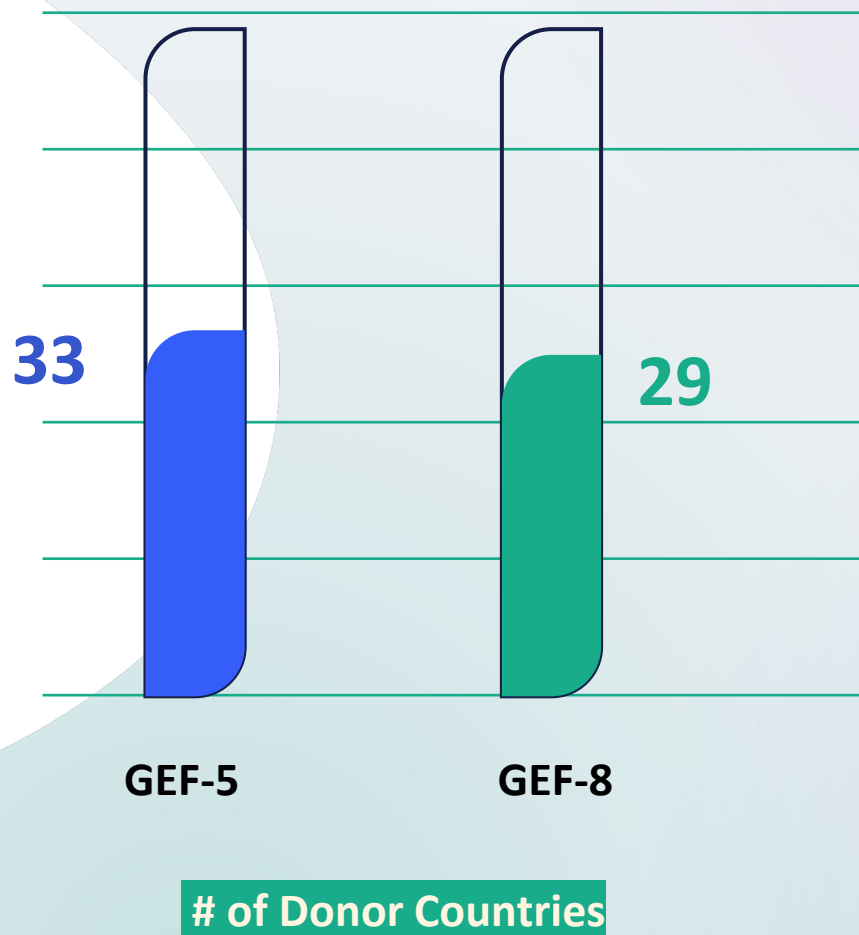
Water resource
governance **Turkey,**
Azerbaijan, Georgia



Philippines

Clarified institutional
roles in wildlife law
enforcement,
strengthening inter-
agency coordination

Challenging Financing Landscape



Inflation-adjusted funding decline

Risk: Donor Concentration

68%

5 top donors
GEF-8

Cofinancing



Cofinancing Target.



OVERALL

Ratio At CEO endorsement
GEF-8.



OVERALL

Cofinancing Ratios
GEF-8.

LDCS \$6.2 : \$1

SIDS \$3.2 : \$1

55%

of projects fully meet or surpass the amount committed at project approval/ endorsement

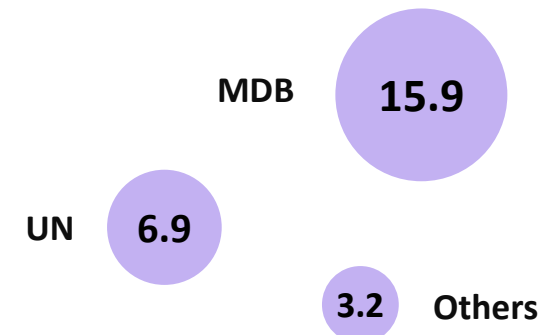
18%

of projects achieve less than half of the expected amount

12%

of cofinancing from private sector

Cofinancing ratios in
Integrated Programs.



Blended Finance and NGI



\$977 M

High Leverage of Cofinancing

~\$10.6 B

NGI investments mobilized



Innovative Financial Models: Natural Capital Fund, Rhino Bond



Catalytic Role in Blended Finance/Derisked private investments



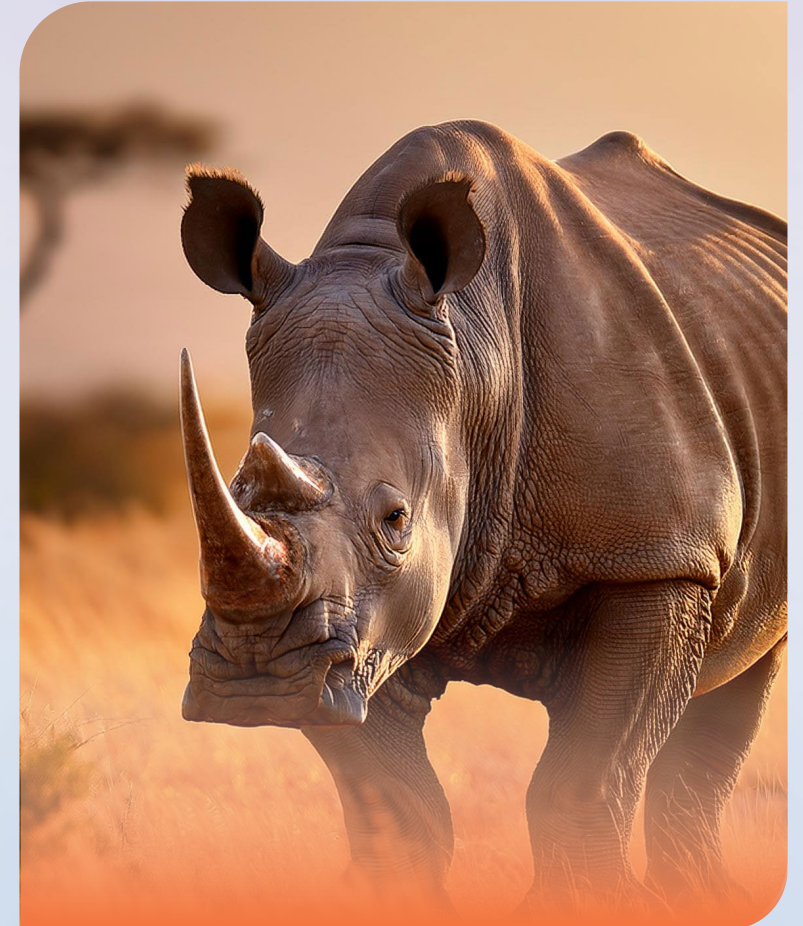
\$15 M

NGI project cap limits scalability

Limited country-level uptake



Challenges: Institutional and Capacity Barriers, Mismatch with Private Sector Timelines, Limited MDB Collaboration



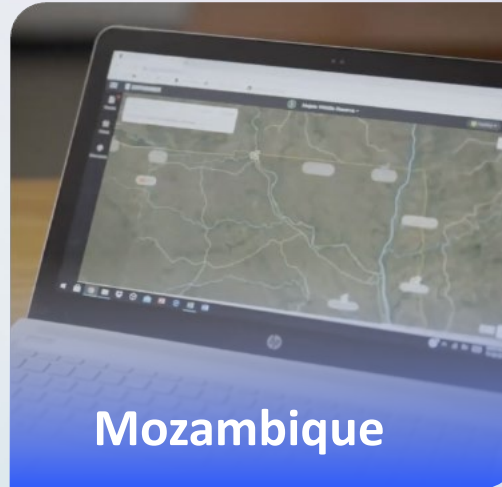
Innovation Trends in GEF Projects

- **Innovation is growing:** ~63% projects include tech components
- **Focus on broader technologies:** remote sensing, AI, digital tools, nature-based solutions
- **Disruptive tech** (e.g., blockchain, nanotech) underrepresented

Challenges

- **Lack of strategic approach** to identify and deploy innovation
- **Institutional readiness**, risk appetite, and funding flexibility remain limited

Innovation Examples



Mozambique



Thailand

AI-powered monitoring and drone-based surveillance in the Global Wildlife Program

Risk Appetite



Risk Appetite Framework (2024) to support higher-risk, high-reward investments



Most projects: low risk with satisfactory results



High-risk projects: variable outcomes, FCV contexts, potential for transformative impact



Variation in Agencies capacity to manage risk



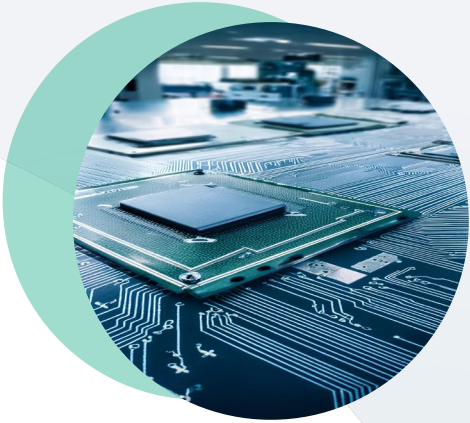
Risk-informed approaches help align project ambition with delivery capacity, improving overall outcomes



Example: Rhino Impact Bond (Rhino Bond)

A high-risk, high-reward initiative leveraging capital markets for conservation





Private Sector Engagement

○ Increased, particularly in innovation and blended finance projects

○ 67% participation in Technology-enabled projects

○ Performance-based grants and NGIs de-risk private investment

○ Partnerships emerging in sectors like sustainable agriculture, clean energy, and conservation finance

○ Engagement across focal areas is fragmented and inconsistent

○ Limited GEF capacity and unclear value hinder scaling

○ Regulatory delays and long cycles deter investment

○ Agencies lack experience with private-sector proposals

○ NGI uptake limited by funding caps and country-level unfamiliarity

Administrative and Operational Efficiency

Administrative

- GEF, an efficient vertical fund:
3.7% admin cost ratio
- Disbursement/approval ratio:
76% vs. GCF's 31%

Operational

- PIF-to-endorsement median timeline:
now 19 months
- Medium-size projects meeting target timeframes: 50%



Operational Complexity & GEF Funding Windows



Multiple windows increase burden:
5 GEF Trust Fund competitive windows +
external ones (e.g., GBFF)



Multiple mechanisms for civil society access:
SGP, CSO Challenge, Inclusive Conservation



Need for simplified structures and harmonized
processes



Improve processes and reduce overheads to
improve country access



Country Engagement Strategy

- ◎ **CES launched in 2022:**
Remains work in progress
- ◎ **Combines** upstream dialogues, knowledge-sharing, and stakeholder engagement
- ◎ **Supported project** prioritization in countries with strong coordination mechanisms

Observations

- **40% of CES budget** utilized by late 2024
- **Limited execution** in SIDS and fragile states
- **National dialogues** too late to influence programming.
- **Limited coordination** with other climate/environment funds
- **Limited consistent engagement** with non-government stakeholders

Results-Based Management



Portal upgrades support automation, tracking improvements

User access and experience with Portal mixed

Need for conflict-sensitive tools and tailored indicators in FCV contexts

RBM Framework should be enhanced to capture long-term transformative change and co-benefits

Knowledge and Learning Systems

- ◎ **KM&L Strategy (2023)**
People, process, and systems
 - ◎ **Communities of practice** within integrated programs
 - ◎ **27% of underperforming** projects improved via timely adaptation and learning
 - ◎ **Early risk identification** and responsive adjustments drive turnaround success
- ◎ **Gaps in project-to-project exchange** and country-level dissemination
 - ◎ **Limited application of lessons** in new project design
 - ◎ **Limited Appetite for Learning from failure**

1,700+

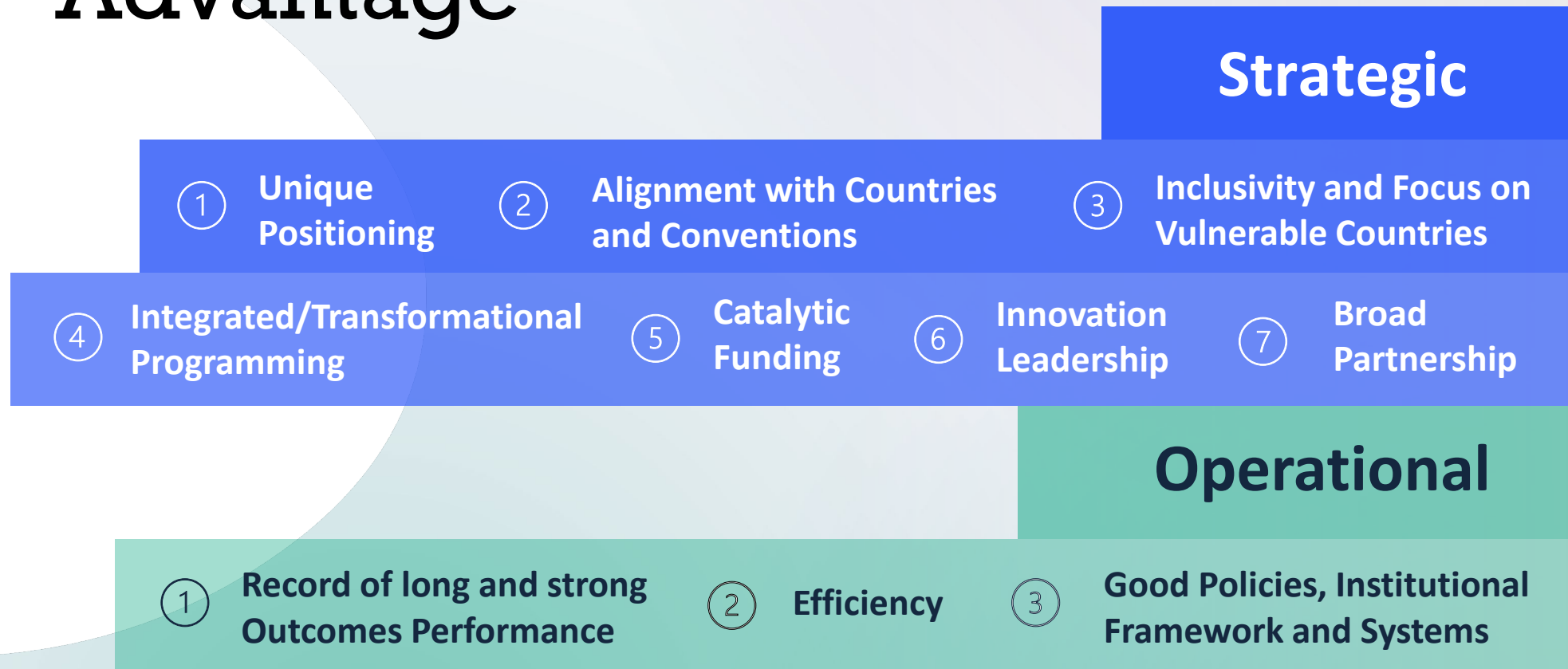
Lessons captured



Summary



Areas of Competitive Advantage



Areas for Consideration in GEF-9



What's Next

1. **Drafting Report:**
June-August 2025
2. **Final Report:** September 2025
3. **Presentation 2nd replenishment meeting:** October 2025
4. **Presentation to GEF Council:**
December 2025



Thank You

www.gefio.org

