

GEF IEO AUDIT TRAIL
Response to GEF Secretariat Comments received 18 March 2021 on the
“Evaluation of the Country Support Programme (CSP) of the Global Environment Facility (GEF)”

PARAGRAPH NUMBER	REFERENCE TEXT	COMMENTS	RESPONSE
	<i>General Comment</i>	The CSP has 5 distinct events. These are described in Table 1. Each event has a specific purpose and is targeted to different audiences. However, an analysis by event is not included in the evaluation. Moreover, the text and findings refer to CSP with examples of different events, which can be rather confusing.	The evaluation focuses on the program as a whole. From this perspective, the different events are program outputs (see Annex 8. Intervention Logic).
	<i>General Comment</i>	GEF-5, GEF-6 and GEF-7 are cycles or replenishment cycles, not periods. The term GEF cycle is used in the Executive Summary, while the GEF period in the text. It should be harmonized to GEF cycle or replenishment cycle.	Corrected throughout the report
	<i>General Comment</i>	The term “Special Initiatives” is used throughout the document as if it was a component of the CSP. It is recognized in the document that it is not, and it is explained in the comments why it is not. Nevertheless, these are workshops that are not ECWs and these are included in the CSP documents. Therefore, the words “Special Initiatives” should be replaced with “Thematic Workshops” which differentiates these from ECWs under the CSP Component of “Workshops”. This should be corrected throughout the document.	Corrected throughout the report
	<i>General Comment</i>	The document uses “Pre-Council Meetings” instead of the full name which should be “Pre-Council Meetings of Recipient Council Members”. The use of the full name allows to differentiate from Constituency Meetings which are also Pre-Council Meetings.	Corrected throughout the report

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	<i>General Comment</i>	The report does not make references to the Country Factsheet tool, which was piloted at the Kenya ECW in 2020, and then rolled out in events. The Country Factsheet is a report on the progress made by a country in preparing and implementing projects with financing from the Global Environment Facility. It provides an overarching view of progress made along key performance indicators tracking both the utilization of GEF resources and the ongoing portfolio of projects under implementation. This approach seeks to provide a picture of how countries use GEF resources and implement projects on the ground, along programming and policy priorities.	Included in paragraph 70
Executive Summary 2	<i>...global Introduction Seminars, National Dialogues, as well as Expanded Constituency Workshops (ECWs), Constituency Meetings, Pre-Council Meetings, and Special Initiatives at the regional level.</i>	Introduction Seminars are addressed primarily at new Agency staff; with OFPs and CSOs having been invited when space permitted. “Special Initiatives” are not a component of the CSP. They are another kind of workshops distinct from Expanded Constituency Workshops. Pre-Council meetings are specifically for recipient Council Members and Alternates <u>Suggested editing:</u> ... <i>Introduction Seminars, National Dialogues, Workshops, especially Expanded Constituency Workshops (ECWs), Constituency Meetings, and Pre-Council Meetings of recipient Council Members.</i>	Adjusted accordingly
Executive Summary 3	<i>Since 2011, the CSP has organized 320 events with 15,585 participants and has provided support for 75 NPFs in GEF-5 and GEF-6</i>	The 75 NPFs are part of the 320 events. <u>Suggested editing:</u> <i>Since 2011, the CSP has organized 320 events with 15,585 participants, including support for 75 NPFs in GEF-5 and GEF-6</i>	NPFs are not included in the 320 events with 15,585 participants. As we do not have participant data for NPFs, we are reporting them separately.

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Executive Summary 3	<i>“CSP events have taken place predominantly in African countries”</i>	This statement can be misleading. The CSP follows the GEF Council constituencies, covering 145 recipient countries organized in 18 constituencies. There are more countries in Africa (49 countries organized in 5 constituencies) compared to other geographical regions. This does not mean that CSP events were not organized in other constituencies with the same frequency. We suggest deletion of this sentence.	Deleted A clarification was included in paragraph 6
Executive Summary 6	<i>Comment on paragraph</i>	This paragraph should recognize that the GEF Secretariat, and therefore the CSP, does not have the objective of helping countries to develop specific projects. Since the Secretariat reviews the quality and eligibility of projects it would be a conflict of interest to develop the ideas it will then review.	This paragraph is reporting evaluation findings. The objectives of the CSP are explained in the first paragraph of the Executive Summary. A footnote was included in paragraph 63 to clarify this point in the main text.
Executive Summary 7	<i>The CSP has made limited efforts so far at coordinating and building synergies with other global environment funds. In GEF-7, the CSP made limited attempts at coordination and enhanced synergies with the engagement process of other global environment funds, in particular, the Green Climate Fund (GCF), to ensure that funding is effectively allocated in a more coordinated manner to support the implementation of environmental conventions. This challenge is compounded by the</i>	This point is not relevant to an evaluation of the CSP, it should be raised in the Governance evaluation. The rest of the paragraph explains the challenge and therefore why the efforts undertaken were unable to achieve more. The GCF regional composition and its readiness program do not match the GEF CSP approach by constituencies and component activities. Efforts were made to and in some cases a useful collaboration was found. But it was not possible to standardize for the reasons mentioned. The effort to coordinate funding more effectively was done by the Programs Unit coordinating with the GCF to make sure projects did not duplicate efforts and took advantage of opportunities for upscaling. Another factor is that The GEF provides support for the implementation of five focal areas; other funds including the GCF and others listed in the report only focus on climate change.	Adjusted with slight differences in relation with the suggested editing

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	<i>fact that, at both the regional and country levels, both the governance structures of different funds and the scope of their engagement processes are different and not always well coordinated by the countries themselves. This is an area of opportunity to increase coherence in environmental programming.”</i>	<u>Suggested editing:</u> <i>The CSP has made efforts to coordinate and build synergies with other global environmental funds’ capacity building schemes. The fact that, at the governance structures of the different funds and the scope of their engagement processes are different posed a considerable challenge. This is an area of opportunity to increase complementarity in capacity development.</i>	
Executive Summary 8	<i>The CSP does not have a strategy or plan to guide its operations, nor a theory of Change or Logical Framework. Some activities, such as ECWs, are carried out routinely, while others, such as National Dialogues or Constituency Meetings, are implemented at the request of GEF Focal Points or Council Members. Therefore, the CSP works reactively and does not approach capacity development as a continuous process at country level. In the absence of a theory of change, the link between the country support program and its contributions to the overall programming directions of the GEF is unclear.</i>	The country-driven nature of the CSP seems to be ignored here. Statement is correct in that no theory of change was proposed yet, as one is under preparation for GEF-8. However, the sentences in red can be deleted because they do not relate to the absence of the Theory of Change. In any event, please note that National Dialogues and Constituency Meetings cannot be imposed on countries or Constituencies. They are optional activities.	Adjusted accordingly. It is clear to the evaluation team that National Dialogues and Constituency Meetings cannot be imposed on countries. However, the CSP has a role to play in prompting countries to make use of CSP services.

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Executive Summary 9	<i>A limited variety of stakeholders is involved in the planning of CSP activities. The process for involving Convention Focal Points has recently started and ...</i>	In its development of this idea, the text refers to the participation of Convention Focal Points in planning. Since Convention Focal Points only participate in ECWs, the conclusion is that this paragraph refers specifically to ECWs. ECWs are not the whole CSP. Convention Focal Points have participated in ECWs since GEF5 while the adjective “recently” does not reflect that reality. All participants in ECWs (including CSOs and GEF Focal Points and Convention Focal Points) have been given the opportunity to comment and suggest ideas for future content of ECWs; many have done so and the CSP has reacted accordingly. This can be seen by a review of the evaluation forms of all the ECWs. Nevertheless, more consultation on ECWs is possible. GEF Agencies were given many opportunities to provide input to the ECWs including the provision of a time slot the content of which they were free to design.	The phrasing was clarified. The paragraph does not refer specifically to ECWs. It is our understanding that Convention Focal Points can also participate in National Dialogues.
Executive Summary 10	<i>“...inclusiveness does not extend beyond CSP events.”</i>	The CSP promotes and fosters integration but it cannot guarantee that it will happen in each country.	The phrasing was clarified.
Executive Summary 11	<i>While the average participation of line ministries other than GEF Focal Points has remained stable since GEF-5 at about 25 percent, their participation in GEF projects both as executing partners and in co-financing has decreased over time, which points to the need for the CSP to more actively foster their involvement in GEF programming.</i>	The CSP is not involved in programming in each country. The CSP provides learning about how to prepare GEF projects and programs and it can show the value of broad participation, but it cannot guarantee that will happen in each project. Who participates depends on the type of project being designed. Co-financing is not a mandate of the CSP nor of the GEF Secretariat: this is an important policy distinction and the report brings confusion here.	The phrasing was clarified. The evaluation makes it clear that the CSP is not responsible for programming, but is still a piece in the process through its capacity building and information sharing on GEF policies, strategies and priorities that are relevant to programming.

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Executive Summary 12	<i>Participation in CSP activities does not translate into further dialogue between CSOs and Focal Point ministries, nor in the inclusion of CSOs in activities on the ground after CSP events.</i>	The CSP survey carried out in May 2020 with 1300 CSP participants points to the opposite finding. In any event, participation of CSOs cannot be guaranteed after the CSP events are over. It will take proactive approach on all sides for this to happen at the national level.	The 2020 CSP survey findings are actually more nuanced. Participants find ECWs useful to engage with CSO representatives, among other reasons (Figure 2), but they indicate that ND provide little room for CSO engagement, and they suggest to enhance interactions between CSOs and country representatives. This should be taken into account in the intervention model of the CSP.
Executive Summary 14	<i>Retention of information, reach within countries, and south-south exchange remains sub-optimal.</i>	This paragraph should also include the fact that most countries have high turnover of staff involved with GEF issues. Continuity and development of experience is key to retention. This paragraph seems to refer to ECWs and National Dialogues. If countries request national GEF workshops, they can be done. Greater promotion of the E-Course at national level would also help. Whilst it is good to share best practices, it is also important to know what did not work out particularly well and how implementing agencies/countries were able to overcome these challenges, or not at all. The CSP could provide anonymity (if needed) by getting this information from countries ahead of planned ECWs/SES. This hopefully might better inform project design and development – depending on the sector, theme, the country or region or even culture in question. This paragraph and paragraph 61 in the main text that discusses the same should stress that the question on which this findings is	The CSP survey is based on perception, which has often a positive bias; in the evaluation survey, actual_knowledge was tested. As it is one of the main functions of the CSP to foster knowledge of GEF policies and procedures, a low level of retention suggests the need to adjust the program's approach to knowledge sharing. A footnote was included in paragraph 61 to allude to turnover as a possible cause.

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		based is in itself a complicated and demanding one. It's hard to imagine OFPs could readily list any three policies. The survey ran by the GEF Secretariat indicates strong learning as a result of CSP activities.	
Executive Summary 16	<i>GEF Focal Points have overall become more involved in project execution...</i>	It would be more precise to refer to GEF <u>Operational</u> Focal Points becoming more involved.	Adjusted accordingly
Executive Summary 17	<i>"The CSP has played a rather limited role in fostering co-financing and leveraging of resources. With respect to securing co-financing, the CSP is generally not considered a space where this happens systematically, ..."</i>	Please see above: there is confusion with mandates and policies here. This finding should be deleted as it refers to an issue that is not within the mandate nor the possibilities of the CSP. Helping countries to secure co-financing is a responsibility of GEF Agencies, not of the CSP nor of the GEF Secretariat.	Rephrased as an opportunity
Executive Summary 19	<i>The timing of the National Dialogue is not optimal in many countries. National Dialogues play a key role for many recipient countries in commencing the planning process for GEF Resources in a new GEF period. However, as National Dialogues are not hosted until the new GEF cycle commences, this often results in competition for CSP resources between recipient countries.</i>	National Dialogues are held as soon as requested once the replenishment period has begun. It would be premature to hold events that discuss how best to use GEF resources before the strategies have been approved. At most they could be held after the last replenishment meeting as the documents are unlikely to be changed by the Council or the Assembly. Competition for resources is not dependent on dialogue timing. STAR allocations ensure all countries know how much money is at their disposal in the STAR focal areas. In Chemicals and Waste and in International Waters, as well as NGI, Impact Programs and some projects where expressions of interest are requested, competition is based on the best projects being presented. In Asia & Pacific we have not observed a situation where, in terms of National Dialogues, there was a 'competition for CSP resources' among countries. One of the main reasons that the	This was a general comment from countries both in interviews and in the survey. It also echoes earlier evaluation findings. A clear schedule of when National dialogues can start and a clear PR plan may be able to help this process along for example to ensure NDs are held as early as possible in the GEF cycle. Planning could start before the GEF cycle as soon as strategies and priorities for the new GEF cycle are becoming apparent. The text "competition for CSP resources" was rephrased as

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		NPFE was rolled over in National Dialogues in GEF-7 was precisely to address the restrictive timing issue of the NPFE. NPFEs (prior to GEF-7) were advised to be held early part of each cycle, while National Dialogues can be held at anytime. The decision to phase out NPFEs and to expand the scope of National Dialogues is precisely to provide countries more flexibility in terms of the scope, timing & frequency of the national activities. The CSP team ensures all proposed National Dialogues comply with the GEF requirements (i.e, inclusiveness of invitees, CSO/indigenous active participation, encourage private sector participation) by examining submitted concept notes, agenda, participants list and financing request, etc. This process can take a few months in some cases – for example, when CSO or local government participation is lacking in the proposal or when the proposed agenda is dominated by Agency presentations.	“competition for CSP support” for greater clarity.
Executive Summary 19	<i>There are also some notable concerns about GEF Introductory Seminars; as these are only held once a year and early in the year, staff and stakeholders that commence a position immediately following a familiarization seminar have to wait almost a year to access this training.</i>	This statement is not totally correct. First, because the first year of ECWs is essentially an introduction seminar given to each constituency. Second, because the E-Course, which in itself is an introduction to all the basics of the GEF is available full time. The most recent Introduction Seminar, done virtually, shows that this concern can be addressed by holding these seminars more often and for more participants at one time.	We have added a mention of the E-course. However, the E-course is not as extensive as the Introductory seminar, and does not provide as much hands-on training.
Executive Summary 20	<i>... coupled with the direct communication between the Focal Point Ministries and the CSP team, ...</i>	In this sentence the reference should be to the Country Relations team.	Adjusted accordingly

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2	<i>Table 1: Third column on National dialogues: Held early in each GEF cycle as requested by Operational Focal Points</i>	National Dialogues can be held at any time during the replenishment period at the request of OFPs. It is true that in GEF 6 and 7 the majority were held “early” as the objective was to discuss project ideas, but dialogues are a flexible component of CSP that can be used for other objectives. <u>Suggested editing:</u> <i>Held in each GEF cycle at the request of Operational Focal Points.</i>	Adjusted accordingly
2	<i>Table 1: Section on Special Initiatives</i>	None of the CSP documents approved by the Council mention “Special Initiatives”. This line should refer to other workshops (as different from ECWs) that were indeed for the purposes mentioned.	The term “Special Initiatives” was changed for “thematic workshops” as suggested in a previous comment.
3	<i>Fourth bullet says: Each of the 32 existing Constituencies may request two meetings per calendar year, to be held prior to Council meetings. All Constituency Meetings held were with constituencies primarily consisting of GEF recipient countries, which constitute 19 out of the 32 constituencies.</i>	Statement is incorrect. <u>Suggested editing:</u> <i>Each of the 16 multi-country recipient Constituencies and the Constituency of Switzerland, Central Asia and Azerbaijan, may request two meetings per calendar year, to be held prior to Council meetings.</i>	Adjusted accordingly. Why does the comment to the third paragraph of the Executive Summary mentions 18 Constituencies?
3	<i>Footnote 3: There are 166 recipient countries in the GEF</i>	The GEF website page to which this footnote links, references 164 countries, not 166 (there is also a listing for “global” and “regional”), and so the statistics should be calculated accordingly. Furthermore, there are several countries on this list that are no longer GEF recipients – therefore, this statement should be qualified accordingly.	The number of recipient countries was adjusted to 145, based on the comment to the third paragraph of the Executive Summary.

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4	<i>The CSP has also carried out three (3) Special Initiatives during 2018 and 2019 as well as seven (7) SES in 2020. These events have, however, been more ad-hoc as they are not officially part of the CSP portfolio of activities per council programming documents.</i>	As mentioned in earlier comments Special Initiatives are not mentioned in the documents and should not be referred to as such. They should be referred to as Other Workshops. The second sentence is confusing: Other Workshops are officially a part of the CSP portfolio of activities. See for example para 10 of document GEF/C.54/04/Rev.01 that reads: “The CSP will organize meetings and workshops, of variable composition, to facilitate work on the development of the Impact Programs, as well as on regional projects and initiatives and other issues, based on thematic and geographic areas, as may be necessary.” See also para 17 of document GEF/C.47/08 that says: “In addition, the GEF Secretariat, based on the need and in consultation with countries and Agencies, will design and organize other meetings/workshops of variable composition to facilitate work on, among others, trans-boundary collaboration; regional programming; specific projects and programs and other issues based on thematic and geographic areas.” SEs could not possibly be part of the Council programming documents because they represent an adaptation during COVID times, which was not anticipated in the Council Replenishment documents (also note that programming documents cover GEF financing, not CSP activities).	The term “Special Initiatives” was changed for “Thematic workshops” as suggested in a previous comment. The second sentence was adjusted accordingly.
4	<i>It should be noted however that the SES are exclusively held online as they emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic.</i>	This sentence implies that SES are Special Initiatives. In fact, they are a totally new component of the CSP arising, as stated in the quoted sentence, from the need to move to virtual events because of the COVID pandemic.	The phrasing was clarified.
4	<i>It should be noted however that the SES are exclusively held online as they emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic. (Table 2: number of CSP events and participants 2011-2020.)</i>	This table highlights activities in 2020 which include the constituency meetings and national dialogues which were held online but are not referred to. Only SES activities are characterized as being online.	A footnote was added.

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6	<i>From a Regional perspective, the majority of CSP events have taken place in the Africa (AFR) Region; 39 percent (126 events) in all during the three GEF cycles with about a similar distribution amongst primary CSP event types (ECWs, National Dialogues, Constituency Meetings and NPFs). This was followed by the Latin America region with 67 events. In contrast, the MENA region had the least number (4 percent) of events, and the Pacific region accounted for 9 percent (Figure 3). The number of events hosted by each region is about the same for each GEF period excepts for MENA and SAR, which both seemingly hosted more events during GEF-6 compared with GEF-5 and GEF-7.</i>	This paragraph requires more detailed explanation to be properly understood. The CSP works based on Constituencies. The Instrument in Annex E para 2 considers the distribution of Constituencies by region as Africa, Asia/Pacific, Latin America/Caribbean, and Central/Eastern Europe/former Soviet Union. The distribution of regions chosen in the evaluation is different and this is what gives Africa the edge. In addition, Africa has more countries and constituencies (Asia/Pacific has the same number of Constituencies but two of them are single country). Every Constituency is given the same level of support. The paragraph would be easier to understand if these facts were explained. In terms of the regional distribution of events as discussed in this paragraph, it would be useful to also place these numbers in the context of the numbers of recipient countries within these regions.	The regional distribution was agreed with the CSP at the sampling stage, and follows the historic database provided by the CSP.
6	<i>Figure 3. Regional distribution of events by type 2013-2020 (number)</i> <i>Figure 4. Regional distribution of events by GEF Period (number)</i>	Does this distribution reflect number of events per location, or number of participants from each region? This is not clear. The related paragraph 6 gives the impression of events per location, but the graph includes the Introduction Seminar as a datapoint, and given that this traditionally takes place in Washington DC, that would imply that regional distribution is being measured by participants' origin. Given that the SES events are also here, that would also imply origin of participants, since the SES has been thus far purely an online activity. It would be useful to clarify this both in the relevant Figures and accompanying text.	The graph and its title were clarified. East Asia is included in SAR. The regional distribution was agreed with the CSP at the sampling stage, and follows the historic database provided by the CSP.

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		The Asia region consists of East Asia, South Asia & Central Asia. We assume that Central Asia in ECA. If so, the data seem to be missing East Asia. Or is East Asia data is included in the 'SAR' data? Please clarify. Stylistically, it would also be useful to choose colors that are more easily distinguishable – for example, the ECW and the SES are too similar for visual separation in the graph.	
8	<i>Therefore, the CSP works reactively and does not approach capacity development as a continuous process at country level.</i>	A more accurate way of saying the same is that the CSP responds to country demand.	This text is not included in paragraph 8. However, this expression was changed throughout the document based on previous comments.
7	<i>Figure 5. Participants from LDCs, SIDS and Non-SIDS/LDCs 2013-2020</i>	It would be useful to have the same categorizations for both graphs - the second graph does not include the "SIDS" category.	The graph was modified for greater clarity.
7	<i>In terms of ECWs, a random sampling of 17 ECWs showed that the majority of participants at ECWs were from LDCs.</i>	The analysis chooses a random approach. However, the CSP works on the basis of Constituencies which are made up of countries with different levels of development.	The sampling was event-based.
8	<i>In 2020, Global Environment Facility Independent Evaluation Office (GEFIEO) conducted an evaluation of the CSP to offer insights and lessons for the CSP during GEF-8.</i>	This sentence needs to be rephrased, as it gives the assumption that there was another evaluation last year, while it is referring to this very evaluation.	Rephrased accordingly
8	<i>As a result, the evaluation also offered an opportunity to assess CSP's usability of the virtual environment to carry out its objectives.</i>	It might be useful to state this objective (and any conclusions resulting from it) in more preliminary and tentative terms, given that the CSP has only been operating in a virtual environment for just under one year.	Rephrased accordingly

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11	<i>Relevance: How relevant is the design of the CSP and its activities to its stakeholders in view of its intended objectives related to ownership of, access to, and leveraging of GEF resources?</i>	The primary goals of the CSP as stated in paragraph 2 do not reference the “leveraging of resources”. We therefore are uncertain as to the utility of this benchmark as a point of assessment for the CSP program. This was also reflected in an earlier comment.	This question was agreed with the CSP and the GEF IEO at inception and cannot be modified at this point in the process. The conclusions and recommendations were rephrased to reflect that this is not the primary goal of the CSP.
11	<i>Coherence: How are the CSP activities on programming priorities compatible with other Multi-lateral Environmental Agreement (MEA) related support or funded initiatives in the country or at the regional level?</i>	The description of coherence with other funds should take into account that the GEF is multi-focal while other funds are single focal area, especially CC.	Included in paragraph 39
21	<i>The CSP must continuously reinvent itself to remain a relevant platform to its stakeholders, focused on building capacity and providing important information and knowledge in the most effective and efficient manner</i>	The CSP does rethink its components each replenishment cycle (reinvents itself) and also adapts the content of its activities to remain relevant. <u>Suggested editing:</u> <i>The CSP must continuously reinvent itself and adapt the content of its activities to remain a relevant platform to its stakeholders, focused on building capacity and providing important information and knowledge in the most effective and efficient manner</i>	Edited accordingly
22	<i>Comment on paragraph</i>	In this paragraph, it may be useful to recall that the CSP became a Corporate Program in 2010 as part of GEF5.	Adjusted accordingly
25	<i>The NPFE’s were ultimately phased out.....</i>	<u>Suggested editing:</u> <i>The NPFE’s were ultimately phased out as a stand alone component of the CSP.....</i>	Edited accordingly

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26	<i>While several of the recommendations for the NPFE have become obsolete given its cancellation</i>	<u>Suggested editing:</u> <i>While several of the recommendations for the NPFE have become obsolete given its blending with national dialogues</i>	Edited accordingly
26	<i>... programming support exercises should fall at the end of a GEF Cycle rather than at the beginning of the cycle to better prepare countries.</i>	National Dialogues and therefore Programing support exercises can be requested at any time during the replenishment period. All that is required is a request by an OFP. Nevertheless, it seems unlikely to be of use if the strategies for the coming replenishment period as well as the procedures on how to access them have not yet been agreed.	The referred text cites a finding from a previous review, which has been confirmed in this evaluation. (See also the response to the comment to the 19 th paragraph of the Executive Summary.)
27	<i>The CSP Programme has been responsive</i>	The P in CSP stands for Programme, so the word Programme may be deleted.	Edited accordingly
31	<i>Other parts of that process include namely the GEFSEC programming high level policy dialogue with the countries, as well as on-going dialogue between GEFSEC programming, GEF Agencies and countries.</i>	National Dialogues are also used for programming. It would be useful to clarify what other parts of programming are being specifically referred to here.	Adjusted accordingly
32	<i>In the case of Nigeria, participants in a National Dialogue for GEF-7 used the event to deliberate on projects to improve upon their presentation to the GEF council.</i>	This statement is misleading as countries do not present projects to the Council. <u>Suggested editing:</u> <i>.....participants used the event to deliberate on projects that would later be submitted to the GEF for funding</i>	Edited accordingly

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33	<i>In fact, the GEF started managing the CSP roughly at the same time as the shift to the STAR allocation system took place, the most important source of GEF financing.</i>	Instead of “STAR allocation system” it may be better to spell out the acronym System of Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR).	Adjusted accordingly
33	<i>In fact, the GEF started managing the CSP roughly at the same time as the shift to the STAR allocation system took place, the most important source of GEF financing.</i>	STAR is one of the sources of GEF financing, and indeed a significant one, but it is incorrect to state that it is THE most important source. We suggest rephrasing accordingly.	Adjusted accordingly
34	<i>Comment on paragraph</i>	It would be more precise to refer to “recipient countries” in this paragraph.	Adjusted accordingly
34	<i>In contrast, high-capacity countries look towards the CSP more for access to information through for example the ECWs so they can stay abreast of changes within the GEF.</i>	It would be useful to also state how, and with what metric, is the evaluation defining “high-capacity countries”.	It was rephrased as “countries with higher institutional capacity”
34	<i>For example, in interviews it was noted that countries such as Liberia and Nigeria¹⁷ claim that CSP events have played a direct role in securing GEF resources...</i>	This should be reworded as countries are not securing – since the funds are already allocated – instead they are programming.	Adjusted accordingly

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35	<i>The CSP does not provide project design training per se, but rather provides the knowledge and information on GEF project design procedures and requirements and thus gives some indications of how a GEF project is designed.</i>	While this is accurate, CSP events also consistently include a presentation of programming priorities. The 2020 Kenya ECW also included a session on project preparation and review.	This is made clear throughout the report.
36	<i>For example, recently the CSP introduced a simulation exercise where participants worked in groups and were requested to discuss and make a presentation on how to design a project.</i>	Games that helped to understand the project cycle were introduced in 2015 ECWs and Introduction Seminars. The word “recently” should be deleted or the date of 2015 added.	Adjusted accordingly
37	<i>Similar concerns were also expressed through this evaluation’s e-survey, where several respondents suggested the CSP should focus more on project design and the STAR Allocation system to guide the preparation of projects in the cycle.</i>	The rest of the paragraph states this point as an observation made by stakeholders, not a concern raised by them. We therefore suggest the word “concern” be replaced by “viewpoints” or something similar.	Adjusted accordingly

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37	<i>It should be noted though that, generally, project design happens through the GEF Agencies, which ensure fiduciary standards are met, in the context of their mandate to assist countries in developing their capacity on how to use GEF resources, and as such, the CSP's role may be largely to enhance capacity in project design.</i>	This is a very superficial and limited description of the role of GEF Agencies. Agencies are expected to help countries to develop projects to utilize resources available through the GEF. In order to provide a more complete picture of the role of Agencies, the wording could be changed to say: ...<i>their mandate to assist countries to develop projects to use GEF resources.....</i> . In addition, it may be useful to add a footnote that refers the reader to Paragraphs 22 and 23 of the Instrument as well as to Annex D paras 5-9 of the Instrument where the role of Agencies is more completely described.	Edited accordingly
38	<i>Some GEF staff interviewed note that the CSP shares a responsibility with other Funds for imposing a burden on countries to participate in different capacity building processes tailored to the particular focus and objectives of each Fund.</i>	The CSP is not responsible for the burden placed on countries by the existence of various funds with different policies and procedures. If you eliminate the CSP, the burden will remain. The burden is the responsibility of the different funding mechanisms and these funding mechanisms were all created by the same countries. Therefore, it is ultimately the countries themselves that are responsible for this burden. The reality highlighted by this paragraph is correct; but the CSP has no power or authority to change the facts and therefore cannot be held responsible.	Adjusted accordingly
39	<i>Comment on paragraph</i>	The comparison in this paragraph is made between the GEF which is multifocal and three other mechanism that concentrate exclusively on Climate Change. While the conclusion is correct, the paragraph should make this distinction very clear	Included

PARAGRAPH NUMBER	REFERENCE TEXT	COMMENTS	RESPONSE
40	<i>Comment on paragraph</i>	The opening statement is correct, but this paragraph could benefit from more detail on the differences among the institutions that are being compared, for example: 1) The GEF has 18 agencies only 3 of which were accredited as being national (FUNBIO, FECO and DBSA). 2) The GCF and AF have many more NDAs 3) Every GEF Project can request a Project Preparation Grant. Furthermore, this paragraph presents CSP as the GEF. As noted in other comments – every GEF project through its agency provides Project Preparatory Grants which carry out the activities outlined here. The comparison then is at different levels. GCF’s NDAs are government agencies. AF’s NIEs are government agencies. The CSP is a GEF program.	Clarified in paragraphs 39 and 40
44	<i>The planning and preparation of CSP events is primarily led by the host country OFP, with the assistance of the CSP staff.</i> <i>According to some interviewees, the OFPs set the agenda for national dialogues by...</i>	Since the paragraph refers to National Dialogues, the first part should be drafted accordingly: <i>The planning and preparation of National Dialogues is primarily led...</i>	Edited accordingly
45	<i>Comment on paragraph</i>	GEF Agencies have been invited to participate in ECWs and to design their own sessions. Agency staff responsible for GEF activities has only attended ECWs on certain occasions. Very few of the 18 Agencies are ever represented at ECWs and when it happens these have been staff from the local office. Contributions to the discussions at the ECWs have depended on the person attending. In very few cases they have been active, mostly they just listen as observers.	Clarified in the text

PARAGRAPH NUMBER	REFERENCE TEXT	COMMENTS	RESPONSE
45	<i>Historically, according to several interviewees, CSOs and GEF Agencies have not been involved in the planning of events (National Dialogues and/or ECWs), except when there is a request from the country, constituency or GEF to partake in a session.</i>	It would be useful to clarify how many interviewees made this statement, what percentage they represented of the total number of people interviewed, and what was their affiliation in the Partnership.	These were key informant interviews, which means their value resides in the quality of the information provided by the informant. We also must stay general as to interviewees profiles to protect confidentiality.
46	<i>Comment on paragraph</i>	See earlier comments on “special initiatives”	Adjusted accordingly
47	<i>The goal is to make CSP event participants aware of the latest objectives of the different conventions and enable people to connect the dots with the GEF projects in their regions/countries. This happens frequently enough in Europe and Central Asia (ECA).</i>	The phrase "frequently enough" is unclear. We suggest replacement and clarification accordingly.	Adjusted accordingly
48	<i>For example, in GEF-7, CSO involvement in ECWs ranged from 25 percent to 74 percent</i>	In GEF-7, ECWs were only held in 2019 and one in 2020 before the pandemic hit. The sentence seems to imply that 74% of participants in ECWs, or some of them, were from CSOs. This is not the case as for every country 2 CSOs and 6 Government officials (GEF and Convention focal points) are funded by the GEF CSP. In no case was the proportion of CSOs attending ECWs 74%.	According to the attendance lists provided by the CSP, the St Lucia ECW had 74% of participants from CSOs.
48	<i>Furthermore, the information on whether all CSO participants identified for the CSO sessions were included in the main ECW is inconclusive</i>	Every CSO invited and funded by the CSP participated in every session of the ECW. Host country CSOs who requested to participate were invited at their own cost and may not have attended every session.	The paragraph was deleted

PARAGRAPH NUMBER	REFERENCE TEXT	COMMENTS	RESPONSE
48	<i>Based on the limited data available, the average participation of CSOs in National Dialogues events has remarkably increased, especially from GEF-6 to GEF-7, reaching on average 16 percent of all National Dialogue participants; this is still well below the average participation in ECWs.</i>	It is not clear that uniform participation of all stakeholder groups across all event types is a goal, let alone a desirable one. The different CSP activities are targeted to, and therefore suit, different participants. Comparisons within event types are valid, but comparisons across event types seem less meaningful. We suggest clarification accordingly.	The comparison was removed. Instead we are highlighting that this seems a low percentage for a type of event that seeks broad inclusion of national stakeholders.
49	<i>Comment on paragraph</i>	Participation in ECWs is based on the roles of the invitees. Participation of women depends on whether they are appointed as focal points.	Clarified
50	<i>Interviews carried out for the evaluation indicated that GEF Agencies feel more disconnected from the CSP and are not as involved in events.</i>	Similar to a comment made in paragraph 45 above, it would be useful to clarify how many interviewees made this statement, what percentage they represented of the total number of people interviewed, and what was their affiliation in the Partnership.	These were key informant interviews, which means their value resides in the quality of the information provided by the informant. We also must stay general as to interviewees profiles to protect confidentiality.
53	<i>Participation of line ministries in GEF projects both as executing partners and in co-financing has decreased over time, While the average participation of line ministries in National Dialogues has remained stable since GEF-5 at about 25 percent, the country pipeline review shows that their participation in GEF projects both as executing partners and in co-financing has decreased over</i>	It appears somewhat misleading having these two in the same sentence - since the National Dialogues do aim to reach line Ministries– but has nothing to do with their participation in co-financing. Furthermore – the GEF encourages more than ever that line ministries or Government agencies are the executing agencies.	The finding was clarified.

PARAGRAPH NUMBER	REFERENCE TEXT	COMMENTS	RESPONSE
	<i>time, a trend that appears related to a shift in focus from national projects to regional and global projects.</i>		
55	<i>...the inclusion of CSOs in activities on the ground. while CSO participation has increased both in events and even in project design, CSOs still do not see the changes on the ground.</i>	The statement may reflect the experience of some CSOs that took part of ECWs. However, a recent review of the GEF-7 portfolio showed that CSOs are engaged in more than 40% of projects. We suggest the use of the word “some” as follows: <u>Suggested editing:</u> <i>the inclusion of some CSOs in activities on the ground while CSO participation has increased both in events and even in project design, some CSOs still do not see the changes on the ground</i>	Edited accordingly
56	<i>Stakeholder Engagement Policy that was published by the GEF Secretariat the same year. However, the most notable example was the CSP’s role in the introduction of the STAR allocation. Interviews confirmed that the CSP communication efforts on this subject came after the realization that countries did not know what the GEF resource allocation in GEF-4 was because it was grouped and assigned on a first come, first serve basis.</i>	Please note that the GEF-4 allocation system was not entirely grouped – there were also individual country allocations for certain countries. Please amend the text accordingly.	A footnote was included
57	<i>Introduction Seminars are another key CSP activity that provides updated information on GEF policies, priorities and resources to new GEFSEC and</i>	It is incorrect to state that the only point of difference between the ECW and the Introduction Seminar is that of focusing on “the history of the GEF”. All CSP events, including these two, have different objectives and/or cater to different audiences. Table 1 of this very report gives a summary of each event type.	Edited accordingly

PARAGRAPH NUMBER	REFERENCE TEXT	COMMENTS	RESPONSE
	<i>GEFIEO staff, new Focal Points, GEF Agencies, Convention Secretariat staff and selected country stakeholders; the contents covered in these seminars are similar to those of ECWs except they also focus on the history of the GEF.</i>	Introduction Seminars are aimed primarily at new GEF Agency staff. The content is identical to the content of the ECWs of the first year of a replenishment. Every ECW includes the history and general structure and background of the GEF. <u>Suggested editing:</u> <i>Introduction Seminars are another key CSP activity that provides training on GEF policies, priorities, and resources primarily to new GEF Agency staff. New focal points and some CSO are also invited. New GEFSEC and GEFIEO staff attend all or some sessions of interest to them. The contents covered in these seminars are identical to those of ECWs during the first year of a replenishment period.</i>	
59	<i>Comment on paragraph</i>	As stated in earlier comments, the reference to “special initiatives” should be deleted, please instead refer to them as “other workshops”.	The term “Special Initiatives” was changed for “Thematic workshops” as suggested in a previous comment.
69	<i>Likewise, at the 2019 Nigeria National Dialogue two projects were found “GEFable” and were thus selected for further development in GEF-7.</i>	It might be better to use more formal language than this. For example: “two projects were found relevant to the GEF-7 strategic directions...” or some such amendment.	Edited accordingly

PARAGRAPH NUMBER	REFERENCE TEXT	COMMENTS	RESPONSE
70	<i>Interviews also point out a need for the CSP to provide more specific information to countries, especially LDCs and SIDS, on what resources they have available and former projects given the often-high OFP turnover rate and low country capacities.</i>	It would be useful to the reader if the report refers here to the “country factsheets”, which is a tool designed for this very purpose and that has been in use for the last year. See this link for information on the country factsheets as recently presented to the GEF Introduction Seminar: https://www.thegef.org/events/2021-gef-introduction-seminar In addition, bilateral meetings (a meeting of the GEFSEC with Country teams and Agencies if present) have been mentioned in the report but what does not come through is that these meetings are used to review a country’s portfolio and have been a part of the ECWs in GEF 6 and 7.	Included. However, coordination issues within the GEF on the production and dissemination of information through these factsheets were highlighted during the evaluation process. This challenge has been highlighted as well on this newly piloted tool.
73	<i>These tensions are related, on the one hand, to monopoly that GEF Agencies, mostly multilateral organizations, still hold within the GEF system, and on the other, to the fact that OFPs are not decision-makers within governments and have limited influence in political negotiations.</i>	The GEF Agencies do not hold “monopolies” – the Agencies are our implementing arm and the GEF Partnership was designed that way. We suggest rephrasing accordingly. This statement about OFPs not being decision makers is a generalization to all OFPs that is not true. Perhaps this should be rephrased to "some OFPs..."	Adjusted accordingly
74	<i>Overall, the CSP is not seen as a space for securing co-financing by interviewees.</i>	As mentioned in other comments, the primary goals of the CSP as stated in paragraph 2 do not reference the “securing of co-financing”. We therefore are uncertain as to the utility of this benchmark as a point of assessment for the CSP program. This was similarly stated in an earlier comment to paragraph 11.	It was clarified that this is not the primary role of the CSP

PARAGRAPH NUMBER	REFERENCE TEXT	COMMENTS	RESPONSE
75	<i>As already alluded to in the discussion on relevance and coherence with other global environmental funds, the CSP as an engagement mechanism has had a limited role so far in fostering strategic and coordinated dialogue, let alone a strategic and coordinated use of GEF resources along with these other global funds around country priorities.</i>	This paragraph seems misplaced in a section that discusses “Effectiveness of the CSP to help leverage GEF Resources”. Perhaps it should be moved elsewhere to a more relevant location.	Deleted. Please note that, as a consequence, the numbering of paragraphs shifted in the remaining part of the report (76 became 75, etc.)
78	<i>A few GEFSEC stakeholders have expressed the need for more collaboration between the CSP and the GEF programs and communication teams in the planning process</i>	At every GEF staff retreat the CSP has been praised as a model of collaboration among the teams at the GEF Secretariat.	This is not a concern indicated by GEFSEC Staff. Our findings suggest that stakeholders (outside the GEFSEC) feel the need for more communication between GEFSEC staff and the CSP on the various projects and programming for their countries.
79	<i>The CSP responds to daily inquiries on-demand and acts as a liaison not only between the countries and the GEF, but also between stakeholders on bridging partnerships or addressing bottlenecks.</i> Overall, Operational Focal Points experience that they have a direct line of communication with the CSP team...	This paragraph should refer to the Country Relations Team. It is the Country Relations Team that has as one of its duties to run the Country Support Program. Therefore, please replace CSP in this para with Country Relations Team. <u>Suggested editing:</u> <i>The Country Relations Team that runs the CSP responds to daily inquiries on-demand and acts as a liaison not only between the countries and the GEF, but also between stakeholders on bridging partnerships or addressing bottlenecks.</i> Overall, Operational Focal Points experience that they have a direct line of communication with the Country Relations Team	Edited accordingly

PARAGRAPH NUMBER	REFERENCE TEXT	COMMENTS	RESPONSE
79	<i>Interviewees for this evaluation in particular expressed that the CSP is instrumental in providing the support needed by the Focal Point Ministries which include a lot of mentoring and coaching to ensure focal points function well and are informed of their rights and responsibilities</i>	The meaning of this term “Focal Point Ministries” is unclear. It seems to suggest that all OFPs come from Ministries, which is not necessarily the case. We suggest correcting, here and throughout the document - for example similar statements are made in paragraphs 80 and 129.	Has been modified accordingly. Reference to Focal Point Offices instead.
80	<i>GEF Agencies, on the other hand, indicate that they work more directly with focal points and that within the GEF they tend to contact and communicate more with the representatives of the GEF focal areas; all depending on which project they seek feedback on. They do not very often communicate directly with the CSP.</i>	It is not a surprise that Agencies’ primary GEF contact point lies with the programs team, as it is through that interaction that projects are developed. We suggest expanding this paragraph to make that point clear. Furthermore, it is correct to state that there is no need to communicate with the CSP, but Agencies do communicate with the Country Relations Team to help address issues that arise with the preparation of projects. <u>Suggested editing:</u> <i>They do not very often communicate directly with the CSP; but they do communicate with the Country Relations Team to address issues related to the preparation of projects; to facilitate communications and understanding among others.</i>	
81	<i>In addition, because the CSP staff, in particular the country support officers, are also specialized in various thematic areas, they are recognized as being able to add content support on issues related to for example gender or safeguards.</i>	<i>Suggested editing: In addition, because the Country Relations are also knowledgeable in the various thematic areas, they are recognized as being able to add content support on issues related to for example gender or safeguards.</i>	Edited accordingly

PARAGRAPH NUMBER	REFERENCE TEXT	COMMENTS	RESPONSE
83	<i>Constituency Meetings are usually planned in coordination with Council meetings given their focus on discussing Council documents; this seem to be an optimal time that fits operational focal points who attend the meetings</i>	Constituency meetings are attended by both GEF focal Points. <u>Suggested editing:</u> <i>Constituency Meetings are usually planned in coordination with Council meetings given their focus on discussing Council documents; this seem to be an optimal time that fits the political and operational focal points who attend the meetings</i>	Edited accordingly
84	<i>As reported by countries, the CSP's day-to-day support and willingness to respond to issues is almost always immediate, providing timely answers to pressing issues. However, there are instances where the CSP needs additional time to potentially find the right person within the GEF that can help with questions or make the connection on the ground; but the time this takes is still seen by countries as fair.</i>	As reflected in earlier comments, day-to-day support is provided by the Country Relations Team. <u>Suggested editing:</u> <i>As reported by countries, the Country Relations Team day-to-day support and willingness to respond to issues is almost always immediate, providing timely answers to pressing issues. However, there are instances where the Country Relations Team needs additional time to potentially find the right person within the GEF that can help with questions or make the connection on the ground; but the time this takes is still seen by countries as fair.</i>	Edited accordingly
92	<i>Within countries, this has led to actual results; for example, in Liberia, it was possible to use the information from the CSP event to put everything in place to develop a policy on gender and climate change.</i>	This Liberia example is interesting but a bit too vague, and the reader would benefit from more detail.	We did not receive much more detail from the interviewee on this example. Point just is that the information and training offered from the CSP aided the country in their development of the gender policy.
95	<i>Recommendation to add text into this paragraph</i>	We suggest adding the following: <i>The CSP has also produced its own publications: The A to Z of the GEF, A Guide to the Global</i>	Mention have been added. The GEF Good Practice Brief has also

PARAGRAPH NUMBER	REFERENCE TEXT	COMMENTS	RESPONSE
		<i>Environment Facility was published as a GEFSEC publication in 2011 and 2015. In 2019, it was produced as a CSP publication.</i> We also suggest mentioning the GEF Good Practice Briefs, which were produced to introduce concrete examples of good practices from GEF investments of the GEF 2020 Strategy and the GEF-7 Programming Directions to key GEF Partnership including OFPs, other country representatives, and CSOs. We suggest adding the following: “[...] in several languages. In 2019, GEF Good Practice Briefs have been developed to introduce some good practice examples from recent GEF investment illustrated integrated projects featuring GEF 2020 Strategy and achieving greater local and global environmental benefits. These good practices have been introduced during the Introduction Seminar (2020) and ECW (2020, After Kenyan ECW, it suspended face to face ECW due to Covid 19). In 2020, [...]”.	been mentioned, but a reference is made to the sections on sharing lessons learned, where these are described in more detail.
95	Interviews confirmed that the tool was marketed to all GEF member countries, <i>but the GEF often runs into a bottleneck when it comes to marketing outside their usual network</i> , which means Kaleo may not have reached key players like Local Government, CSOs and private sector companies.	This is a very general statement to make. We suggest deletion, or amendment to the specific example at hand rather than an overall generalization as is stated here.	This has been edited slightly to be relevant only for Kaleo
95	It is up to the countries to promote the tools launched by the GEF and the CSP, which is difficult to support without regional offices.	The meaning of this statement is not clear. What role do regional offices play? This statement would benefit from some more explanation.	Sentence has been edited for clarification.

PARAGRAPH NUMBER	REFERENCE TEXT	COMMENTS	RESPONSE
96	<i>Other courses, currently under development, relate to results, gender and stakeholder engagement</i>	The gender e-course is already available (and in multiple languages) and has been for some years. Please see this link: https://www.thegef.org/content/open-online-course-gender-and-environment	Has been added
97-98	<i>Pre-Council meetings are mentioned</i>	It is not clear if these Pre-Council Meetings mentioned are the “Constituency Meetings”, the “Pre-Council Meetings of recipient Council Members” or both. It may be good to clarify.	Clarified
101	<i>...in particular the potential impact of the new GEF Cancellation Policy...</i>	The Cancellation policy is not new. It may be better to delete the word “new” or replace it with “updated”.	Edited accordingly
101	<i>It was explained to the evaluation team that it had become apparent to the GEF that the pandemic was impacting the pace of project development, approval and co-financing mobilization, and the GEF did not want the policy to adversely impact countries due to this external factor.</i>	The Secretariat recently prepared a paper for the 59 th Council in December 2020 that precisely discussed the impact of the pandemic on the preparation and implementation of GEF projects and programs. It would be useful to the reader if this paper was referenced and summarized. It can be found here: https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/EN_GEF.C59_11_Impact%20of%20COVID19%20on%20Project%20Preparation%20and%20Implementation_0.pdf	Reference to paper and short purpose added and findings added.
104	<i>The CSP budget has been funded since its inception in 2010 through Council Decisions confirmed in each Replenishment document.</i>	It is actually the other way around. <u>Suggested editing:</u> <i>The CSP budget has been funded since its inception in 2010 through the Replenishment Document and confirmed by Council Decisions.</i>	Edited accordingly
105	<i>This only represents 68.4 percent of the actual cumulative grant amount allocated from the Council and 45 percent of actual budget spent compared with the budget originally allocated through the Council for the full</i>	It is not clear how two different figures are presented for budget spent – 45% versus 67%. What are the sources for both data points, and why are they so different? Some clarification would be useful.	The CSP budget and spending is complicated and not straight forward. The numbers differ because of the way the data was provided to us. The CSP did not provide us with data against their allocated

PARAGRAPH NUMBER	REFERENCE TEXT	COMMENTS	RESPONSE
	<i>evaluation period according to Council Documents (i.e. USD 70 million). Against the cumulative grant amount reported by the CSP, disbursements is about 67 percent, however.</i>		amount of 70 mill (for GEF5-7) by the Council per the replenishment documents. We received the following information for the 3 GEF cycles. Cumulative Grant Amount: \$47,866,250 Cumulative Disbursements: \$31,960,121 Fund Balance: \$15,906,129 As a result, we ran our actuals vs. budgeted accordingly: One analysis for actuals (31,960,121) versus requested budgets (70 mill) in replenishment documents = yielded a 45% burn rate A second analysis for actuals (31,960,121) versus the cumulative grant amount received (47,866,250) = yielded a 67% burn rate We would have assumed that the cumulative grant amount was 70 mill for the 3 GEF cycles as stated in the replenishment documents. The team requested clarification and were told that the budget rolls over. This would indicate

PARAGRAPH NUMBER	REFERENCE TEXT	COMMENTS	RESPONSE
			that there is a balance in the CSP at the end of each GEF cycle. The evaluation team has not received an answer on how much this balance is at the end of each cycle. This is all clarified in the text.
105	<i>However, if cumulative grant amount is only 68.4 percent of the requested amount of USD 70 million as reported through council document, it raises the question why USD 20 million is requested per GEF period as data suggest a reasonable amount of the budget rolls over between the GEF periods.</i>	The funding requested for the CSP declines each replenishment period, in amounts lower than the carry over. The reason was that since events such as the National Dialogues, Constituency meetings and workshops other than ECWs are organized at the request of the countries, it is impossible to know in advance how many will actually be requested. This provided the flexibility to attend to any and all requests that might have been presented.	This has been clarified. However, an overall burn rate of 45% against the total requested amount for the three GEF cycles is still fairly low and may indicate that PR of the CSP should potentially be increased and more countries encouraged to initiate support from the programme.
108 Table 8	<i>Staff fixed costs</i>	We would like to verify the numbers in this Table. May we have some more information from the Evaluation team on the source and the details on what is included in each number?	This was the data provided to the evaluation team, through a report from the CSP. Any discrepancies must be solved with the CSP. According to the CSP, staff cost is calculated accordingly: “Estimation of the exact staffing cost is somewhat complex, as each of the ten GEFPPPO Staff mapped to the CSP also allocate part of their respective work programs to non-CSP priorities, based on individual skills, ranging

PARAGRAPH NUMBER	REFERENCE TEXT	COMMENTS	RESPONSE
			from Council organization to contributing to drafting policy documents to project review, corporate priorities and the development of learning and knowledge supports In order to account for full costs associated with delivering the Country Support Program, Staff costs have been estimated in this note even if funded from sources different from the CSP TFs. It is noted that allocation of staff costs might give a better and full picture of both fixed and variable costs which are needed to deliver the program. Staff cost is based on average salary and benefits, number of staff involved, and estimated time assigned to CSP work be taken into account, divided by number of events to give proportional staff cost per event” Some of this text have been added for clarification
109	<i>However, data indicates that staff variable costs have not seen this same decline; compared with for example FY20.</i>	This sentence may require explanation. The table shows a strong decline. Is the light blue column in the table representing Staff costs (remuneration) or staff variable costs (travel expenses)? Some further clarification would be helpful.	Clarified

PARAGRAPH NUMBER	REFERENCE TEXT	COMMENTS	RESPONSE
110	<i>The Introduction Seminars, which seemingly also do not cover travel expenses etc. are much more costly</i>	Introduction Seminars pay for travel and lodging expenses for OFPs and CSOs invited to attend. About 50% of attendees are fully financed. The participants designated by the Agencies pay for their own expenses.	Clarified
111	<i>However, it is notable that there is not much room for flexibility in terms of producing additional materials or increasing stakeholder participation</i>	This sentence needs some clarification. All materials required for each event are produced, what is the flexibility that is lacking? Stakeholder Participation in National Dialogues has no preset limits. Constituency meetings participation has no preset limits, except insofar as the CSP only funds the participation of the OFP and PFO of each country.	We can delete the sentence
113	<i>Of course, the CSP benefits from the additional assistance from the GEFSEC focal areas.</i>	It may be better to replace this with “GEF programs staff”.	Edited accordingly
114	<i>Furthermore, although the CSP provides opportunities for feedback on GEF policies and strategies, some interviewed stakeholders have noted that this is not the primary role of the CSP as feedback on GEF policies and strategies is primarily provided through the Council Meetings.</i>	The process of collecting feedback on draft GEF policies and strategies actually starts long before Council meetings. The Secretariat undertakes dedicated consultations with stakeholders in the formulation of all new policies, guidelines, and strategies. We suggest amendment of this paragraph accordingly.	We are reporting the perspective of interviewees here, which must be reported as is. In addition, the focus here is specifically on the role of CSP events in this function. However, we have added a footnote that the GEFSEC undertakes consultations as well.
114	<i>and the GEF Policy on Stakeholder Engagement was developed as a result of feedback provided by CSP participants and other sources</i>	It would be good to explicitly mention CSOs as they played a major role in this process – in particular the GF CSO Network.	This is not the focus of the evaluation, and the information sources may not be readily available for us to support this affirmation on evidence.

PARAGRAPH NUMBER	REFERENCE TEXT	COMMENTS	RESPONSE
115	<i>What is enabling the important potential to provide feedback through events such as ECWs is that CSP participants have been able to share their skills and knowledge through previous CSP events regarding how the GEF works.</i>	The meaning of this sentence, and its connection to the paragraph itself, is unclear. We suggest a rewrite and some further clarification.	This sentence has been deleted as it does not add that much value to the paragraph findings
116	<i>An example of this new online capability to provide feedback was a Webinar on Gender and Environment held on October 22, 2020 as part of the CSP SES where participants were provided the opportunity to provide feedback on the GEF's Gender Policy.</i>	It would be useful to distinguish between feedback on a policy, and feedback on <u>the implementation of</u> a policy. We suggest clarification accordingly.	Clarification made
118	<i>Seventy-one percent of e-survey respondents are satisfied or highly satisfied with the way CSP activities are facilitating knowledge exchange and coordination (Figure 17).</i>	Both here and in all the figures of the report that reference the e-survey results, it would be useful to include the "N=?" to provide the context of the number of people that responded to the question at hand.	This data is included in the methodology section

PARAGRAPH NUMBER	REFERENCE TEXT	COMMENTS	RESPONSE
126	<i>The CSP has so far made limited efforts at coordinating and building synergies with other global environment funds.</i>	The primary goals of the CSP as stated in paragraph 2 do not reference the “coordinating and building synergies with other global environment funds.” We therefore are uncertain as to the utility of this benchmark as a point of assessment for the CSP program.	It was highlighted and validated during the inception phase of the evaluation that this is one of the several aspects the evaluation would assess. The language has been slightly adjusted to acknowledge the efforts already made and the need to build on them. Furthermore, the GEF 7 CSP implementation arrangements specifically mention, when talking about National Dialogues that the CSP through its activities at the country level “ <i>will engage further key players in the country’s public and private financial architecture to participate in discussions on ways to catalyze public and private sector financing for the environment</i> ” Such funds active in GEF countries are necessarily part of these key players in this sphere in the view of the evaluation team.
127	<i>Therefore, the CSP works reactively and does not approach capacity development as a continuous process at country level.</i>	It is more accurate to state that CSP activities are mostly demand-driven. We suggest amendment accordingly.	Change made

PARAGRAPH NUMBER	REFERENCE TEXT	COMMENTS	RESPONSE
132	<i>The need to share more experiences and good practices across countries and to facilitate discussion on global issues and their link to national strategy formulation was also highlighted.</i>	It might be useful to explicitly link this statement to the recent KM Evaluation, the recommendations of which are now being actioned by the Secretariat.	A reference to the evaluation on KM has been made
135	<i>The CSP has played a limited role in fostering co-financing and leveraging of resources.</i>	As also reflected in other comments, the primary goals of the CSP as stated in paragraph 2 do not reference the “fostering of co-financing and leveraging of resources”. We therefore are uncertain as to the utility of this benchmark as a point of assessment for the CSP program.	Edited according to discussions with the GEFIO and GEFSEC
139	<i>The CSP has piloted adaptation in the COVID-19 context that has allowed it to continue to respond to some of the program stakeholder needs; however, these have significant limits when it comes to GEF partnership building and networking.</i>	It would be helpful to explicitly state that these limitations are exogenous to the CSP Program and are in fact a feature of the online medium in general.	Clarification made
139	<i>However, the CSP has piloted some events in the virtual environment using reliable tools - though not necessarily innovative - and gradually improving technical execution.</i>	It might be more useful to state that <u>the CSP used reliable tools and platforms that were already in existence</u> . Otherwise, the use of the language “not necessarily innovative” implies that the CSP was implicitly expected to develop their own tools, which is clearly not a practical, desirable or necessary endeavor.	What is meant by innovative is now explained in more detail in the text.

PARAGRAPH NUMBER	REFERENCE TEXT	COMMENTS	RESPONSE
140	<i>The CSP team would benefit from strengthened IT, financial and monitoring and reporting expertise and a more dedicated team of professionals to manage the program as most staff have other responsibilities within the GEFSEC.</i>	While this phrase is meant to convey that the CSP needs more staff with dedicated time to the program, the way it is stated can come across as a judgement on the professionalism and dedication of the CSP team. We suggest changing the language accordingly.	It has been modified to make the message clearer.
143	With more events being held online, there is a general fear that interactions will be limited.	The virtual events have been such a success because so many people could join in without the constraints of budget or conflicts in their calendar due to travelling schedule. However, it will still be good to retain the option of face-to-face meetings post COVID because physical human interaction is priceless. It is one of the best ways to forge great working relationships and partnerships. A hybrid version of hosting the events could be a good option.	A note on the positive elements contributing to this success has been added in lessons learned. The Recommendations notes the need to continue Face-to-Face already.
144 Point 2	<i>Representatives in position of authority that ultimately decide on the use of national GEF allocations (including amongst others GEF political focal points, finance ministries, etc.), and which can effectively leverage GEF resources through other sources of co- financing or national programming, are often not present at CSP events.</i>	PFPs are always invited and funded to attend CSP events. In many cases the PFPs are of high rank and are not available to attend the events and, in such cases, they can designate advisors to attend in their place.	We have clarified, but the main point is still valid - and was also made by the GEF CEO in the November SES.

PARAGRAPH NUMBER	REFERENCE TEXT	COMMENTS	RESPONSE
144 Point 3	<i>In this context, empowering and building the capacity of GEF focal points around in-country processes must focus on the convening, facilitation and monitoring roles of the OFPs rather than playing a leadership role in actual project design and implementation.</i>	This is a valid and interesting point, but does not seem to have been discussed elsewhere in the report, unlike all other points of this section of “Lessons Learned from the Evaluation” which are all anchored in a deeper discussion in the body of the report. Perhaps some material is missing from the report? Furthermore, please note that it can be argued that OFPs should play both roles. The OFPs are the counterpart of the GEF at the country level and they must be involved (not necessarily lead) in all stages of a project in order to ensure projects objectives are met in a timely manner. (recommendation 6 seems to say this). The most frequent complaint from OFPs is that they are left completely out of the projects and are provided with no information at all; in some cases, even when they so request.	This is discussed on page 33 The sentence has been slightly modified to nuance this and now reads “must focus <i>more</i> on the convening, facilitation and monitoring roles of the OFPs rather than predominantly on playing a leadership role”
144 Point 4	<i>Comment on paragraph</i>	The statement is correct but the CSP cannot do this as it is not present at country level. The most it can do is to share good examples and best practices.	Additional suggestions are included in Annex 12, which describes the “how to” of the recommendations.
144 point 6	<i>The absence of a proper monitoring and reporting system greatly impedes the conduct of any comprehensive assessment of progress and actual impacts of the CSP in that respect.</i>	It should be noted that the CSP cannot monitor nor can it report on what happens in each country. Perhaps a more detailed description of the monitoring and reporting system being proposed here would be helpful.	Additional suggestions are included in Annex 12, which describes the “how to” of the recommendations.

PARAGRAPH NUMBER	REFERENCE TEXT	COMMENTS	RESPONSE
144 point 7	<i>Comment on paragraph</i>	The change in government leadership cannot and may not be anticipated. Perhaps the sentence can qualify this and speak of how the CSP can respond to this – by reaching out to new government/focal points etc.	This is focused on lessons learned, and therefore does not include recommendations on how to. The lessons learned is merely that the CSP has to take a lot of external factors into consideration as well in addition to internal GEF planning processes. We have added a few words on unpredictability.
144 Point 10	<i>Comment on paragraph</i>	Similar to the comments on paragraph 95 above, it would be useful to add material on the GEF Good Practice Briefs, and the A to Z of the GEF: <i>“[...] the introduction of Knowledge and Learning Days, GEF Good Practice Briefs, and the GEF Academy [...] The A to Z of the GEF, A Guide to the Global Environment Facility was published as a GEFSEC publication in 2011 (for CSOs) and 2015, was produced by the CSP. In 2019, it was produced as a CSP publication.”</i>	Edited accordingly

PARAGRAPH NUMBER	REFERENCE TEXT	COMMENTS	RESPONSE
Recommendation 1	<i>Improve coherence and collaboration with other global environmental funds.</i> In light of the need to better respond to the commitments of countries vis-à-vis the implementation of the MEAs that the GEF is supporting along with other global funds, CSP management should continue to explore opportunities for collaboration on readiness activities with other funds. Overall, the management of the CSP should continue to monitor developments to identify where substantive opportunities for collaboration can be established beyond the current ad hoc approach.	It is our view that this recommendation is not reflective of the full context of the GEF's and the CSP's work. Several specific comments above also reflect this point. The report itself also speaks to this; some relevant excerpts are as follows: <u>Paragraph 39:</u> Overall, this review revealed <i>that the processes used by the different funds are structured to work specifically with their programming, and thus vary greatly in their objectives, scope and delivery methods, making a direct comparison challenging.</i> This does and should not diminish the need for the Funds to seek ways to find common approaches. <u>Paragraph 40:</u> The evaluation found <i>little evidence of duplication between the CSP and other support programs.</i> While the CSP shares some qualities with other support programs, <i>the comparison of different programs with the CSP demonstrated the uniqueness of the CSP,</i> which has a very structured work program around events aimed at building capacity to enhance countries' access and use of GEF resources. <u>Paragraph 41:</u> Subsequently, in the Pacific Islands, CSP/GEF and the GCF held back-to-back events. The cost of bringing people to a common location was shared, and though it took a lot of work and coordination, it was successful. There was agreement to replicate the exercise, but it has yet to happen. Particularly because <i>the event exposed the clear differences between the organizations, which starts with the two funds looking at matters from different perspectives.</i> We therefore suggest the deletion of this recommendation.	The evaluation team still believes this recommendation is valid to ensure broader coherence and effectiveness of the financial architecture for the implementation of the MEA for which the GEF is one of the operating entities, namely for the climate change convention. The CSP is one GEF channel that can contribute to this. The CSP is not seen as the direct and sole contributor to this coherence and coordination of course. That being said, the wording of the recommendation has been modified to recognize current efforts and present it more as an opportunity moving forward to build further on past efforts.

PARAGRAPH NUMBER	REFERENCE TEXT	COMMENTS	RESPONSE
Recommendation 4	<i>The CSP should also enable National Dialogues in more countries and continue to favor and pursue deeper multi-stakeholder engagement in the process.</i>	The CSP has a budget for 80 countries to hold National Dialogues. Less than half this amount is requested by countries. This is not a compulsory event. It is up to countries to request it. We suggested deletion of this text.	The evaluation is aware of the restrictions regarding timing, but the concern from the stakeholders is still valid. Some adjustments have been made to focus on increased and periodic encouragement to countries to request these events, and make sure that new Focal Points are aware of this option provided by the CSP. The text of the recommendation has also been slightly amended to allow for the possibility of other means of strategic engagement with the countries.
Annex 2		Precision can be improved in some columns: 1) National Dialogues last column should read: In GEF-7 National Dialogues are also used for the purposes of an NPFE. 2) Constituency Meetings column 5 the two sentences contradict each other. They should read: GEF CSP finances the participation of GEF Political and Operational Focal Points. The second sentence is correct. 3) Pre-Council Meetings. The name of the event is incomplete. It should read in full: Pre-Council Meetings of Recipient Council Members 4) Special Initiatives should be changed to Thematic Workshops. Organizers should say: At the request of stakeholders with CSP support. Scope should say: Stakeholders. Types of stakeholders should say: Country, Agency and GEFSec representatives.	Edited accordingly

PARAGRAPH NUMBER	REFERENCE TEXT	COMMENTS	RESPONSE
Annex 4	<i>GEF Focal Points: Justin Nantchou</i>	There is an error here - he is the former OFP of Cameroon not DR Congo	Adjusted accordingly
Annex 4	<i>Comment on the list of interviewees from the GEF Agencies</i>	It is interesting to note that the Agency with the most presence in countries – UNDP – is not on the list of interviewees– and the one that rarely attends CSP events is. This may not give a balanced view of Agency role in CSP activities.	The sample was validated by the CSP and the IEO