

1st Reference Group Meeting

Formative Evaluation of the

GEF Integrated Approach to Address the Drivers of Environmental Degradation

Date: July 15, 2020, 10-11 am (Washington, DC time)

Note taking: Peixuan Zhou

Participants

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Objective

To collect stakeholder feedback and comments on the draft approach paper circulated on July 2, 2020.

Discussion

Juha (GEF IEO): I assume everybody has read the draft approach paper we circulated, so there is no need for us to present it. I propose we go straight to hearing from you. We already received written comments from some of you. The GEF Council and Replenishment participants are expecting to see what we can provide regarding early results of these programs on the ground. This evaluation is designed to be a combination of both formative and summative approaches: while IPs are relatively new, IAPs have child projects under implementation for some time. We hope to be able to observe some results.

Mohamed (GEF SEC): we already provided written comments. A few points to stress include: (i) it is good to see that this evaluation will combine IAPs and IPs, there's a lot of value in learning how the integrated approach programs have developed over the two GEF phases; (ii) the approach paper mentioned continuation of GEF-6 IAPs to GEF-7 IPs, which is not entirely correct. The Sustainable Cities IP is a continuous effort of the GEF-6 Cities IAP, but it is definitely not the mere replication of the same approach to promoting sustainable urbanization. The same applies to the other IPs. For example, some elements of both the Food Security and Commodities GEF-6 IAPs are embodied in the GEF-7 IP FOLUR, but this program has not been specifically designed with a mandate to be a natural evolution of these two IAPs. Regarding IAPs results, these may not be coherent or consistent across the portfolio of GEF-6 IAPs. The IAPs are pilots, and countries are given opportunities to learn from and get familiar with the program design.

Carlo (GEF IEO): in GEF SEC's written comments, it's mentioned that IPs' child project concept notes should not be used as stand-alone documents. What other documents do you suggest using?

Mohamed (GEF SEC): child project concept notes do not present the complete picture, they are snapshots, they do not serve as individual documents. We recommend treating PFD and concept notes as a whole package.

Geeta (GEF IEO): this evaluation aims at understanding what lessons have been learned from the IAP pilots as well as from the IAP formative review the GEF IEO did in 2017. Thanks, Mohamed, for inviting us to sit in the IAP workshop in May.

Jonky (IFAD): I am the project manager of the Food Security IAP. To what extent do you expect individual IAPs to provide inputs to this evaluation? We already contributed to IAP workshops, and a program midterm review is planned for next year.

Carlo (GEF IEO): we expect you to provide us contact details for interviews (project staff, country stakeholders, etc.), project data, and any other information that allows us to conduct this evaluation. This includes any available internal governance and coordination as well as knowledge sharing record, such as meeting minutes reporting on decisions and follow up at program level.

Geeta (GEF IEO): anything that came out from workshops or other program level coordination events, including in terms of lessons learned, please share it with us. We'd like to see to what extent have the

lessons learned from IAPs been incorporated into the new impact programs. The knowledge platforms of both IAPs and IPs will be looked into in detail to see if and how they are operating and if they serve the program additionality purpose in terms of knowledge sharing as well as scaling up. Also, anything that's been done to adjust implementation under the COVID-19 situation would be very useful.

Guadalupe (STAP): STAP has identified three cross-cutting themes in the IAPs and IPs: KM, gender, and resilience. Resilience is broader than just the climate-related resilience mentioned in the approach paper. It includes non-climate resilience. We would like to see an evaluation question on scaling up and transformational change. Regarding methodologies, the geospatial analysis component is well described. It would be good to also describe other methods and tools in the approach paper. STAP recently found out that power dynamic analysis in environmental governance plays an important role. We can share documentation on this method with the GEF IEO.

Carlo (GEF IEO): The revised approach paper will contain a more detailed description of the methods and tools we plan to use. The design of some of these tools will need to have built-in flexibility due to the pandemic.

David (WWF): the IAPs and IPs are designed to achieve impacts at scale and move away from the STAR silos. The evaluation questions should cover to what extent do the IAPs and IPs achieve impacts at scale, and what's the role of lead agency versus GEF SEC. We would also welcome comparisons with programs that do not use set-asides.

Liza (IFAD): the evaluation could explore whether the sum at program level is greater than the parts at child project level, and whether these programs have adequate resources to achieve their scaling up ambitions. The current evaluation question "g" asks: how have programs been impacted by the current COVID-19 crisis? We could flip the question and ask: are we building resilience for countries to cope with systemic risks like the COVID-19 crisis?

Kelly (UNEP): Conventions were not big fans of the IPs during the last replenishment. Even if it's too early to evaluate results, we could try to assess whether IAPs and IPs show the potential to deliver better to the conventions in terms of qualitative outcomes and quantitative GEBs. IAPs and IPs are different types of programs, with financial incentives and set asides: are the high transaction costs associated with them worth it?

Geeta (GEF IEO): We will indeed look at whether IAPs and IPs are designed to achieve transformational change and scaling-up.

Mohamed (GEF SEC): the IPs are designed to scale up. Ex-ante assessment of projects using the proposed geospatial analysis will show us the baseline and shed lights on the likelihood of achieving scaling up. However, we should not anticipate to be able to observe GEBs at this early stage.

Next Steps

Juha (GEF IEO) closed the meeting outlining next steps, including a revised approach paper, an audit trail table documenting all the comments received and the related IEO response and action taken.