

Evaluation of GEF Focal Area Strategies Approach Paper

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A. Introduction

1. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) provides grants to developing countries and countries with economies in transition for projects that address global environmental concerns related to biodiversity, climate change mitigation, international waters, land degradation, the ozone layer, and persistent organic pollutants; it also finances climate change adaptation through the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) and the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF). Since its inception in October 1991, GEF has allocated about \$10 billion in grants to address these concerns.
2. The GEF Council is the main governing body of the GEF.¹ The GEF Secretariat reports directly to the GEF Council ensuring that its decisions are translated into effective actions. The Secretariat coordinates the formulation of projects and programs, oversees their implementation, and makes certain that operational strategies and policies of GEF are followed. It is also responsible for appraisal of the project and program proposals that are submitted to it. The 10 GEF Agencies provide assistance to beneficiary countries in identifying and formulating GEF project and program proposals and implementing them.
3. The GEF Evaluation Office has a central role in ensuring the independent evaluation function within the GEF. It sets minimum requirements for M&E, ensures oversight of quality of M&E systems, and is responsible for sharing evaluative evidence within the GEF. The Office reports directly to the GEF Council and operates independent of the GEF Secretariat and GEF Agencies. The GEF Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) provides strategic scientific and technical advice to the GEF on its strategy and programs. All key GEF stakeholders have a role to play in ensuring that GEF is able to know the extent to which the resources invested by it are generating the expected long-term benefits.
4. The *Evaluation of GEF Focal Area Strategies* is designed as a formative, i.e. primarily a **learning evaluation**.² It aims to collect and assess information relating to the focal area strategies in order to gain a deeper understanding of the elements and mechanisms that make the respective strategy successful or provide room for enhancement. The evaluation will assess to what extent the focal area strategies identify effective causal pathways between GEF support and global environmental benefits. The ultimate goal of the evaluation is to inform the development and improvement of the strategies in the future. The evaluation aims to make a central contribution to the *Fifth Overall Performance Study* of the GEF (OPS5) that will in turn provide recommendations for the GEF replenishment process including the formulation of the GEF-6 focal area strategies.
5. The evaluation builds on prior effort of the GEF Evaluation Office. In 2004, in the context of OPS3, the GEF focal areas were evaluated through a series of program studies. While OPS4 also presented evidence relating to the focal areas, it did not include an assessment of initiatives aggregated at the focal area level. Since an aggregated focal area perspective has proven to be

¹ LDCF and SCCF are governed by their own, separate Council. However, the decisions of the GEF Council apply to the LDCF and SCCF, unless the LDCF/SCCF Council decides otherwise.

² The evaluation literature distinguishes between “summative” and “formative” evaluations. Summative evaluations focus on the assessment of performance and progress measured against expected targets and are used to evaluate accountability of a given system. In contrast, formative evaluations analyze evidence in order to inform adjustments and improvements of a given system. In this sense, the *Evaluation of GEF Focal Area Strategies* is a formative evaluation. See: Scriven, Michael (1967). “The methodology of evaluation”. In Stake, R. E.. Curriculum evaluation. Chicago: Rand McNally. American Educational Research Association.

of value to inform the GEF Council during the replenishment process, OPS5 will again include a focal area specific assessment including the findings of the *Evaluation of GEF Focal Area Strategies*.

B. Background

6. Prior to 2007, GEF provision of grants was guided by 15 operational programs: four in biodiversity, four in climate change, three in international waters, one addressing persistent organic pollutants, one on sustainable land management and one multifocal program on integrated ecosystem management. The operational programs identified relevant convention guidance, formulated corresponding program objectives and provided a list of expected outcomes, project outputs as well as examples for typical activities to be funded through GEF.
7. In 2007, a year into the GEF-4 replenishment period, the operational programs were replaced by the GEF-4 focal area strategies. In comparison to operational programs, focal area strategies are aimed at formulating long term strategic objectives to guide the activities under each focal area. The focal area strategies established strategic programs with explicitly stated expected outcomes. Provisional indicators to measure impacts as well as expected outcomes were formulated to allow for systematic monitoring of achievements through the GEF Results Based Management (RBM) framework.
8. The GEF-4 focal area strategies were approved by the GEF Council in September 2007. They included one strategy for each of the six focal areas (Biodiversity, Climate Change, Land Degradation, International Waters, Persistent Organic Pollutants, and Ozone Layer Depletion) as well as two cross-cutting strategies (Sustainable Forest Management, Sound Chemicals Management). The drafting of the strategies was conducted through a consultative process involving external advisory groups and contributions from Council Members, convention secretariats, GEF Agencies, STAP, and other GEF partners.
9. The GEF-5 focal area strategies were approved by the GEF Council and the LDCF/SCCF Council in the case of climate change adaptation in May 2010 and went into effect with the beginning of the replenishment period on July 1, 2010. There are eight GEF-5 strategies:
 - a) Biodiversity
 - b) Climate Change Mitigation
 - c) Climate Change Adaptation³
 - d) Land Degradation

³ The *Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change* will be included in this evaluation and assessed alongside the GEF-5 focal area strategies. However, the financing of climate change adaptation is managed separately from the standard GEF focal areas and features several particularities that need to be taken into account throughout this document:

- a) Funds for financing climate change adaptation in the GEF context are provided through the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) and the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF) set up under the UNFCCC and managed by the GEF.
- b) The funds have the LDCF/SCCF Council as a separate governing body. The Climate Change Adaptation Strategy was approved by the LDCF/SCCF Council in May 2010, and went into effect on July 1, 2010.
- c) LDCF/SCCF are not part of the GEF replenishment process, meaning that the Climate Change Adaptation strategy is only arbitrarily linked to the GEF-5 time period.
- d) Since LDCF/SCCF are not part of the GEF replenishment and funding levels are volatile and uncertain, the Climate Change Adaptation strategy does not feature indicative resource allocations per objective, but instead provides different funding scenarios linking expected outputs to potential levels of available funds.
- e) Activities under the LDCF/SCCF are not aimed at creating Global Environmental Benefits, but Adaptation Benefits. This needs to be taken into account throughout this document.

- e) International Waters
- f) Chemicals
- g) Sustainable Forest Management/REDD+
- h) Cross-Cutting Capacity Development

10. For the drafting process of the GEF-5 strategies, the CEO established six Technical Advisory Groups (TAGs) and a Strategy Advisory Group (SAG). TAGs were composed of external experts, a representative from the relevant convention secretariats, a member of STAP, and a member from the GEF Secretariat serving as TAG secretary. Working drafts were posted on the GEF website and comments received from GEF partners throughout the process.

Table 1: Overview of GEF programming frameworks

Before GEF-4 <i>Operational programs</i> (15 OPs in 6 clusters)	GEF-4 period <i>GEF-4 Focal Area Strategies</i>	GEF-5 period <i>GEF-5 Focal Area Strategies and LDCF/SCCF Strategy</i>
1. Biodiversity (5 OPs)	1. Biodiversity	1. Biodiversity
2. Climate Change (4 OPs)	2. Climate Change (<i>including climate change adaptation through SPA</i>)	2. Climate Change Mitigation 3. Climate Change Adaptation (<i>LDCF/SCCF 2010-2014 Strategy</i>) ⁴
3. International Waters (3 OPs)	3. International Waters	4. International Waters
4. Land Degradation (1 OP)	4. Land Degradation	5. Land Degradation
5. Persistent Organic Pollutants (1 OP)	5. Persistent Organic Pollutants 6. Ozone Layer Depletion 7. Sound Chemicals Management	6. Chemicals
	8. Sustainable Forest Management	7. Sustainable Forest Management/REDD+
6. Integrated Ecosystem Management (1 OP)		
		8. Cross-Cutting Capacity Development

11. The GEF-4 and GEF-5 strategies across all focal areas comprised the following basic elements:
- a) *Long term strategic objectives* partly re-adjusted from GEF-4 to GEF-5 in view of past experiences and recent COP guidance;
 - b) *Strategic programs* selected according to their importance, urgency and cost-effectiveness from a global environment perspective, as well as to country priorities;
 - c) *A results framework* in line with the development of RBM in the GEF including expected impacts (from strategic objectives) and expected outcomes (from strategic programs);
 - d) *Measurable indicators* for the expected impacts and outcomes, allowing monitoring and evaluation of progress towards achievement;
 - e) *An indicative provisional allocation* of GEF-5 funds and expected co-financing towards the strategic programs.

⁴ See footnote 3.

12. The following provides a brief introduction to each of the GEF-5 focal area strategies. A more comprehensive overview of the goals, objectives, and basic assumptions of GEF-4 and GEF-5 focal area strategies can be found in annex I.

Biodiversity: The BD strategy aims at the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the maintenance of ecosystem goods and services. It puts a focus on the sustainability of Protected Area Systems as well as the mainstreaming of BD conservation into Production Landscapes/Seascapes and sectors. Other objectives covered include biosafety under the Cartagena Protocol, and access to genetic resources and benefit sharing under the Nagoya Protocol. In identifying major challenges and defining corresponding priorities, the strategy draws inter alia on the recommendations of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. The role of BD activities as components of effective human adaptation to climate change is also highlighted. The total focal area allocation in GEF-5 amounts to \$1.2 billion.

Climate Change Mitigation: The CCM strategy supports developing countries and economies in transition in moving toward a low-carbon development path. It puts forward a combined approach of market transformation and market barrier removal on the one hand and promotion of innovative low-carbon as well as renewable energy technologies on the other hand. The strategy puts special emphasis on the transport sector and urban systems as well as land use, land use change and forestry. The CCM strategy highlights the necessity for differentiated approaches sensitive to different countries' dissimilar socio-economic conditions. The strategy proposes specific priorities depending on country size and development level. The total focal area allocation in GEF-5 amounts to \$1.35 billion.

Climate Change Adaptation: The CCA strategy guides the provision of grants through the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) and adaptation related funding through the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF), both set up under the UNFCCC and managed by the GEF (see footnote 3). While the two funds differ in scope, priorities and structure, both follow the overarching goal of supporting developing countries to increase resilience to climate change through immediate and longer term adaptation activities in development policies, plans, programs, projects and actions. Accordingly, the CCA strategy focuses on activities to reduce vulnerabilities to the adverse impacts of climate change and to increase adaptive capacity at the local, regional, national and global level. As it is funded through LDCF and SCCF that do not follow the GEF replenishment procedure, the CCA strategy does not have a focal area allocation. Consequently, the strategy presents different funding scenarios rather than setting measurable targets for the replenishment period.

International Waters: The IW strategy aims to promote the collective management of transboundary water systems and the implementation of policy, legal, and institutional reforms and investments contributing to the sustainable use and maintenance of ecosystem services. It puts a strong emphasis on catalyzing multi-state cooperation to balance conflicting water use of international water bodies as well as the rebuilding of marine fisheries and pollution reduction in Large Marine Ecosystems. The strategy prominently includes considerations of climatic variability and change as a key transboundary concern. Other issues covered by the strategy include the management of Marine Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ). The total focal area allocation in GEF-5 amounts to \$0.44 billion.

Land Degradation: The LD strategy strives to contribute to arresting and reversing current global trends in land degradation, specifically desertification and deforestation. The strategy puts its emphasis on agricultural and rangeland systems, aiming to improve flow of agro-ecosystem services as well as integrated landscapes, trying to reduce pressures on natural resources from competing land uses. Another point of concern, tied in with the strategy on sustainable forest management, is the improvement of forest ecosystem services in drylands. Like the BD strategy, the LD strategy

draws on the analysis provided by the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment to identify drivers of land degradation and priorities for GEF activities. The total focal area allocation in GEF-5 amounts to \$0.38 billion.

Chemicals: The Chemicals strategy aims to consolidate the persistent organic pollutants and ozone layer depletion focal areas, as well as broaden GEF engagement in the areas of sound management of chemicals and mercury pollution reduction. The combined goal is to promote sound management of chemicals throughout their life-cycle in ways that lead to the minimization of adverse effects on human health and the global environment. The strategy's main emphasis is the phase out of POPs and reduction of POPs releases (about 85% of total allocation). The strategy follows the holistic policy that support to Stockholm Convention and Montreal Protocol should build upon and contribute to strengthening a country's foundational capacities for sound chemical management. The total focal area allocation in GEF-5 amounts to \$0.4 billion.

Sustainable Forest Management/REDD+: The SFM strategy links SFM/REDD+ related initiatives in the biodiversity, climate change mitigation and land degradation focal areas. The strategy aims to achieve multiple environmental benefits from improved management of forests by reducing pressures on forest resources, generating forest ecosystem services, reducing GHG emissions from deforestation and forest degradation as well as enhancing carbon sinks from LULUCF activities. The SFM strategy advocates a landscape approach, embracing ecosystem principles as well as the connectivity between ecosystems. The GEF-5 replenishment created a \$250 million incentive mechanism for countries to invest STAR funding from their BD, CCM and LD allocations into SFM/REDD+ initiatives. The funds will be dispersed at a 3:1 ratio, aiming to leverage \$750 million from the three focal areas.

Cross-Cutting Capacity Development: The Capacity Development Strategy aims to create synergies of cross-cutting environmental capacity development enhancing national capacities to meet obligations under all of the Rio Conventions. The strategy put emphasis on mainstreaming of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) into national policy, management or financial and legislative frameworks. Issues covered by the strategy include capacity with regard to consultative processes, access to information and knowledge, policy and legislation development, management and implementation of convention guidelines as well as monitoring and evaluation. The assessment of the Capacity Development Strategy will not be included in the *Evaluation of GEF Focal Area Strategies* (see section E).

C. Generic GEF theory of change

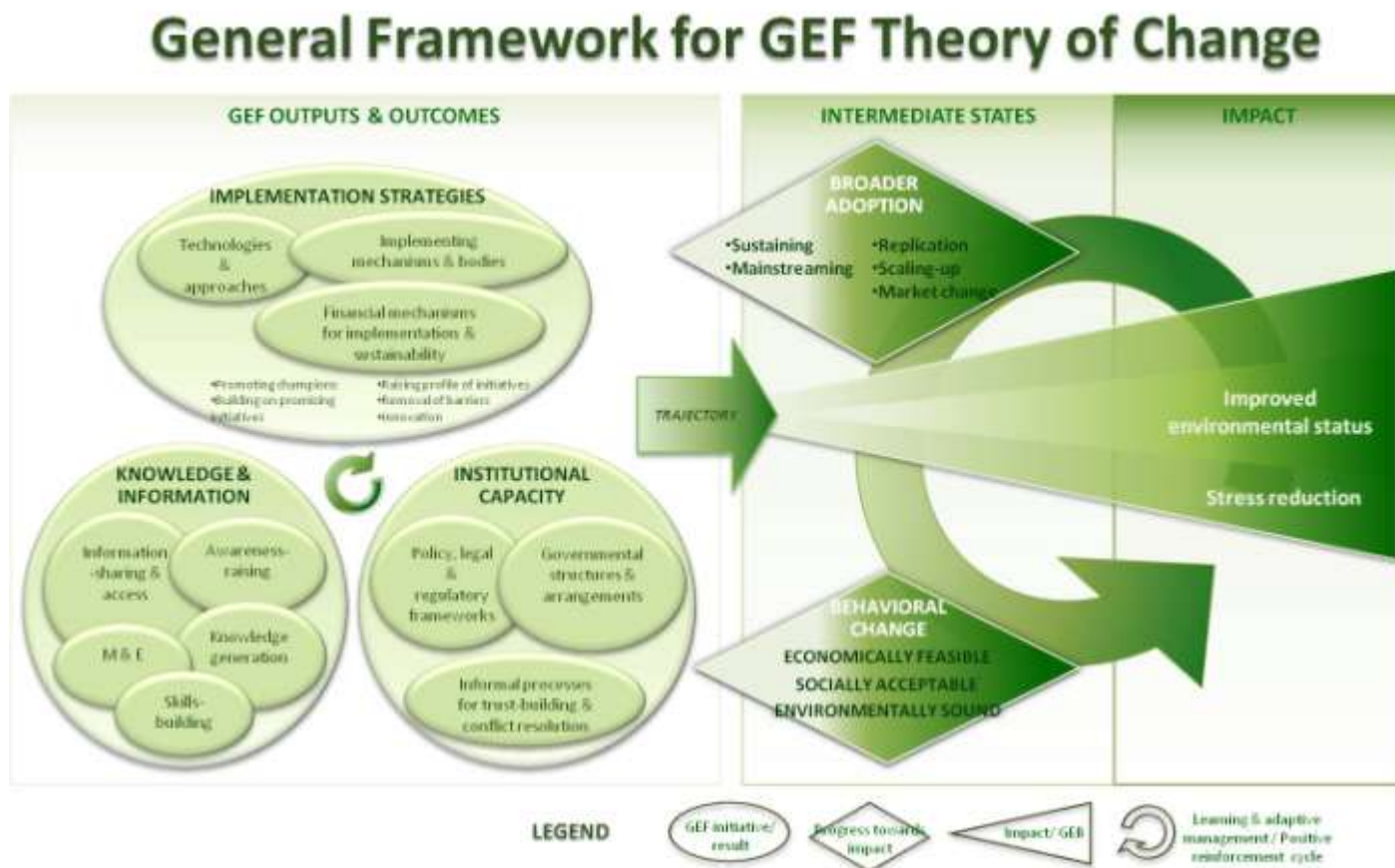
13. The *Evaluation of GEF Focal Area Strategies* aims to provide an improved understanding of the chains of causality expressed in the GEF focal area strategies, their strengths and weaknesses. For this purpose, the evaluation will employ *theories of change* (TOC), a theory-based evaluation tool that maps out the sequence of means-ends linkages identified in each focal area strategy and thereby makes explicit both the expected results and the actions that will lead to the achievement of results.⁵ The mapping of the causal links between outcomes and impacts will help to identify and place crucial issues for further analysis as well as to collect and assess relevant evaluative evidence in a systematic way.
14. The evaluation will draw on the GEF Evaluation Office's longstanding experience in employing TOC approaches primarily in its impact evaluation stream.⁶ In particular, the evaluation will be

⁵ See the ROTI Handbook at <http://thegef.org/gef/node/2225>.

⁶ Much of GEF's impact evaluation work draws from the theory of change approach to evaluation which has been documented by Chen, H. T. 1990. *Theory-driven Evaluations*. Sage Publications: Newbury Park.

directly linked to the preparatory work for OPS5 that is already underway. For guiding and structuring the analysis of OPS5, the Evaluation Office constructed an overarching theory of change describing the activities of the GEF as a whole (figure 1). The generic theory of change presents elements to be considered in the analysis but it does not indicate that all elements need to be present nor does it prescribe sequence in which actions or causality should take place.

Figure 1: Generic GEF theory of change framework



15. The generic GEF TOC framework draws on the large amount of evaluative evidence gathered over the years by the Evaluation Office. The generic GEF TOC framework is being adopted by the Evaluation Office as a heuristic⁷ tool to help understand the causal pathways between GEF support and global environmental benefits. The purposes of the generic GEF TOC are to:

- help place GEF support contributions in a chain of causality leading to the generation of global environmental benefits, or adaptation benefits, as in the case of LDCF/SCCF;
- help establish links between different elements of GEF support, and identify mechanisms of change put into place by GEF support;

⁷ The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines **heuristic** as “involving or serving as an aid to learning, discovery, or problem-solving by experimental and especially trial-and-error methods <heuristic techniques> <a heuristic assumption>; also : of or relating to exploratory problem-solving techniques that utilize self-educating techniques (as the evaluation of feedback) to improve performance.

- c) assess progress towards global environmental benefits; and
- d) identify gaps or constraints on further progress towards global environmental benefits.

The GEF Generic TOC diagram is meant to capture the desired trajectory of change, and it does not propose any specific sequence of activities or interventions. The intended trajectory seeks to move the system towards investments, broader implementation of actions and behaviors that will reduce environmental stress. The sequence of actions can take in any order and can go in any direction. The model also assumes that, in the long run global environmental benefits will only be possible if there is an increasing shift to development approaches that meet people's needs in ways that are environmentally sustainable.

Although the theory of change presented in the figure is generic – individual projects may focus on a few of the depicted aspects – it schematically portrays different causal mechanisms through which GEF supported activities might lead to long term environmental impact and other co-benefits. The generic TOC is **not** meant to be a standard GEF activities need to comply with or against which GEF support is to be measured.

16. Typically, GEF support is concentrated in knowledge & information, institutional capacity, and implementation initiatives that seek to contribute to an enabling environment and to the development of institutions. Results in these areas that can be linked to GEF support are known as GEF outputs and outcomes, and are considered to be within the realm of GEF influence. GEF-supported elements are meant to interact, complement and reinforce each other, collectively contributing to the trajectory leading towards impact. Intermediate states refer to situations in which there is evidence of progress towards impact at the level of the system. While in some cases, early intermediate states take place by the end of GEF support, or may be an integral part of GEF-supported interventions, these states generally take place after GEF support. Progress in this realm depends mainly on actions taken by countries. This takes place with increasing country ownership, and also increasing engagement of non-government stakeholders, such as civil society organizations (CSOs) and the private sector.
17. Broader adoption refers to the intermediate state where governments and other stakeholders continue and expand GEF outputs and outcomes beyond GEF support. Broader adoption can occur through various processes, but five are often seen following GEF initiatives, which may happen sequentially or simultaneously. The first is sustaining, where a GEF initiative continues to be implemented through its integration into the regular activities and budget of the government or some other stakeholder. The second is mainstreaming, whereby information, lessons, or specific aspects of a GEF initiative are incorporated into a broader stakeholder initiative. The third is replication, whereby a GEF intervention is reproduced at a comparable scale, often in different geographical areas or regions. The third is scaling-up, where an activity is expanded to address concerns operating at larger geographical, ecological or administrative scales. The fourth, market change, pertains to market transformation, which might encompass technological changes, policy and regulatory reforms, and financial instruments that increase demand for goods and services likely to contribute to global environmental benefits.
18. The GEF TOC framework assumes that broader adoption of GEF outputs and outcomes will progressively result in behavioral change that leads to greater environmental stress reduction. Behavioral change refers specifically to changes in stakeholder actions towards more environment-friendly choices, particularly in their direct interactions with the environment. At

the highest level, these changes are seen in “greener” economic and political choices of institutions, and not only among a critical mass of the population. These changes, however, must not only be appropriate environmentally, but also economically and socially. Thus, for example, GEF initiatives also give attention to gender and cultural sensitivity, as environmental initiatives are not likely to be sustained unless stakeholders feel that these are aligned with their basic values.

19. Stress reduction may come in the form of the decrease in, or prevention of the degradation, destruction or contamination of the environment. This may result directly from GEF-supported initiatives during project implementation, as well as occur gradually over time through broader adoption and behavioral change. Stress reduction, in turn, is expected to eventually lead to the removal of threats and improvement of environmental status. The framework assumes that, for positive environmental change to continue, these processes will also have to result in an increasing shift to development approaches that meet people’s economic and social needs in ways that are environmentally sustainable. This is expected to become a cycle of positive reinforcement where improvement in environmental status, and consequently the well-being of stakeholders, catalyzes even broader adoption of environmental initiatives by stakeholders, which in turn leads to greater and more widespread behavioral change and stress reduction. This positive reinforcement cycle ultimately results in increasing impact over time at higher and higher scales.
20. The range of GEF outputs and outcomes takes place at local, national, regional and global scales, both in administrative and ecological terms. Interactions of GEF results across different scales may lead to intermediate states also at multiple scales, sequentially or simultaneously, contributing to greater progress towards impact. The framework is thus seen to be applicable at any scale of intervention, but with a general and collective trajectory towards system-wide impact.
21. The GEF TOC framework acknowledges, however, that GEF support is delivered in a setting where previous initiatives have taken place and are ongoing, and that progress towards impact depends on these past, present and also future contextual factors. While GEF has no control over these factors, it strives to influence and work with these factors to take advantage of synergies and maximize the possibilities for positive unintended impacts, while minimizing negative ones. The framework also takes into account differences in time scales between the implementation of an intervention and the response of the ecological and social systems being targeted for improvement. It is therefore crucial that M & E systems are in place early on to track changes in environmental status, ensuring that management interventions adapt to these changes in timely and appropriate ways, and are continuing in the trajectory towards global environmental benefits.
22. The *Evaluation of GEF Focal Area Strategies* will construct **separate TOCs for each of the focal area strategies**, reflecting the particularities and specific conditions of the respective focal area. These specific TOCs will be rooted in the generic GEF TOC to ensure consistency across the focal areas while considering their differences. The generic GEF TOC will provide the general analytical framework for the construction of the focal area specific TOCs. The process of constructing the specific TOCs will be conducted in close consultation with the respective focal area team of the GEF Secretariat to ensure that all pertinent information is included and errors of interpretation are minimized.

D. Differentiation of GEF strategies

23. The *Evaluation of GEF Focal Area Strategies* will focus on GEF strategies that are explicitly labeled as *focal area* strategies.⁸ In addition to focal area strategies, the GEF follows a number of other strategies primarily concerned with the operations of the GEF. These will **not** be subject of the evaluation.
24. The additional strategies that are explicitly identified as GEF-5 strategies⁹ include:
- a) Communications and Outreach Strategy,
 - b) Knowledge Management Strategy,
 - c) Engagement with the Private Sector,
 - d) Strategic Approach to Enhancing Capacity Building, and the
 - e) Broadening of the GEF Partnership.
25. In addition to the GEF-5 focal area strategies and other GEF-5 strategies, the GEF adheres to several overall policies and guidelines. Most prominently this includes the “GEF Policy on Environmental and Social Safeguards” as well as the “GEF Policy on Gender Mainstreaming” as approved by the GEF Council in May 2011. Both provide guidelines for GEF support across all activities and focal areas. In form and scope, these overarching policies are comparable to the additional GEF-5 strategies (paragraph 20). They will also not be subject of the evaluation.
26. The focal area strategies differ from the other strategies and policies in several ways. They represent the **guidelines for the provision of GEF grants** to eligible activities developed by the beneficiary countries and implemented by the GEF Agencies. The focal area strategies are directly tied to financial resources to be provided by the GEF to other entities of the GEF Partnership. In contrast, resources that are budgeted for the implementation of the additional strategies are primarily used to improve or expand processes and structures within the GEF.
27. Serving as an additional point of distinction between focal area strategies and other GEF strategies, the focal area strategies are drafted in a distinct process which is closely tied to the GEF replenishment process. The focal area strategies reflect the donor countries' preferences of how the funding to be granted to beneficiary countries through the GEF should be used during the respective replenishment period. Consequently, the focal area strategies establish the relationship between the objectives and the resources necessary to achieve these objectives. This close interrelation of focal area strategies and replenishment process distinguishes them from the other GEF strategies.
28. In sum, the focal area strategies are clearly distinguishable from additional GEF strategies. However, the focal area strategies also differ from each other in several dimensions:
- a) **Scope and focus:** Most of the focal area strategies correspond with the scope and focus of one particular GEF focal area. While the strategies acknowledge the links between focal areas, each strategy remains primarily within the limit of its particular focal area. However, two of the eight strategies are explicitly cross-cutting in nature: the sustainable forest management strategy utilizes the SFM related overlaps and links between the biodiversity,

⁸ See <http://www.thegef.org/gef/strategies>.

⁹ Ibid.

climate change mitigation and land degradation focal areas. The capacity development reaches across all focal areas, creating synergies between shared capacity needs.

- b) **Source of guidance:** The biodiversity, climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as the land degradation strategies each receive guidance from only one international convention: the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) respectively.

In contrast, the chemicals strategy reflects guidance from a number of conventions and protocols, most importantly the “Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants” and the “Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer”. Several other international conventions, mainly the “Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal” and the “Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade” are also significant as sources of guidance for the chemicals strategy.

Conversely, for the strategy on international waters no guiding international convention exists. Instead, the IW strategy is based on GEF Council decisions and in addition draws on a variety of international and regional agreements that relate to issues of international waters. This includes multilateral environmental agreements (e.g. CBD, BWM Convention), as well as related provisions of international law (e.g. UNCLOS), regional agreements and conventions (e.g. Mekong River Commission) and broader internationally formulated goals like the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Johannesburg World Summit (WSSD) targets.

Finally, the strategy on sustainable forest management and the strategy on capacity development, cutting across focal areas, have to simultaneously reflect relevant pieces of guidance from different conventions.

- c) **Source of funding:** Almost all GEF activities covered by the focal area strategies are funded through the resource envelopes of the GEF Trust Fund for a given replenishment period. The only exceptions are the activities on climate change adaptation, which are funded through the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) and the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF). These funds do not follow GEF replenishment schedule (see footnote 3).
- d) **Resource allocation modality:** The resources for activities under the biodiversity, climate change mitigation and land degradation focal area strategies are allocated through the System for Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR). The activities of the chemicals strategy and international waters strategy are allocated from the GEF Trust Fund on a first-come-first-served basis. As described, the LDCF and SCCF resources for climate change adaptation are separate from the GEF Trust Fund and follow their own resource allocation modalities. The SFM strategy resources are allocated through a matching incentive system combining special SFM funds with STAR allocations of the BD, CCM and LD focal areas at a ratio of 1:3. The capacity development strategy is funded through a GEF Trust Fund set aside separate from focal area allocations.

Table 2: Differentiation of GEF-5 strategies

	Scope and focus			Source of guidance		
	Single Focal Area	Multiple Focal Areas	All Focal Areas	Single Convention	Multiple Conventions, Protocols	Other sources
Biodiversity	BD			CBD		
Climate Change Mitigation	CCM			UNFCCC		
Climate Change Adaptation	CCA			UNFCCC		
International Waters	IW					Various international and regional agreements
Land Degradation	LD			UNCCD		
Chemicals	Chemicals (formerly POPs and ODS)				Stockholm, Montreal, Basel, Rotterdam, SAICM	
Sustainable Forest Management/REDD+		BD, CCM, LD			CBD, UNFCCC, UNCCD	Collaborative Partnership on Forests
Cross-Cutting Capacity Development			All		All	

29. The evaluation will take into account differences between focal area strategies and implications these divergences have on the interpretation of evaluative evidence. However, the general approach outlined in section F is valid for all focal area strategies despite their distinctions:
- All focal area strategies link their objectives to identifiable guidance from international conventions and/or other international agreements. Therefore, the assessment of the relationship between the strategy and guidance can be applied to all focal area strategies.
 - For all focal area strategies a theory of change can be developed, identifying causality chains between types of funded activities and the expected outputs, outcomes and impacts. Therefore, using a theory of change approach for deepening the understanding of the focal area strategies can be applied to all strategies.

E. Objective, scope and limitations

I. OBJECTIVE

30. The objective of the *Evaluation of GEF Focal Area Strategies* is to develop a deeper understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the focal areas strategies based on current scientific knowledge as well as evaluative evidence from GEF activities in order to provide the GEF Council with information and recommendations supporting the further development and improvement of the strategies during the GEF-6 replenishment process.
31. The evaluation is designed as a learning exercise, a reflection of prior experiences to inform future adjustments of the strategies. It is therefore focused on improving the understanding of the strategies' elements and causal links and exploring how and why different causal pathways are more successful or less successful.
32. The evaluation will not provide information on accountability and compliance issues. It is not aimed at assessing the extent to which GEF supported projects across the portfolio are implementing the focal area strategies, complying with the results framework and realizing the specified targets. Questions of accountability with regards to the implementation of the focal area strategies will be addressed by other evaluation streams, in particular impact evaluations, in the context of OPS5.

II. SCOPE

33. The *Evaluation of GEF Focal Area Strategies* will encompass the analysis of the following GEF strategies:
 - a) Biodiversity
 - b) Climate Change Mitigation
 - c) Climate Change Adaptation (*under LDCF/SCCF*)
 - d) Land Degradation
 - e) International Waters
 - f) Chemicals
 - g) Sustainable Forest Management/REDD+
34. The evaluation will exclude the strategy on cross-cutting capacity development. The function of the capacity development strategy has recently been evaluated in the context of the evaluation of the National Capacity Self-Assessment (NCSA) program and in the ongoing Evaluation of GEF Enabling Activities. Capacity development as a cross-cutting issue is also envisioned to be further assessed in OPS5 as will be determined at a later stage. Therefore, the capacity development strategy will not be included in the *Evaluation of GEF Focal Area Strategies*.
35. The evaluation will primarily focus on the most recent GEF-5 focal area strategies covering the fifth GEF replenishment period. However, the analysis will also consider the GEF-4 focal area strategies and earlier Operational Programs in order to use them as comparison cases and to trace the development and continuity of GEF focal area strategies across replenishment periods. The **evolution of the strategies** in reaction to lessons from GEF project experiences as well as changing external circumstances such as new scientific insights or changing political priorities will be a central element of the evaluation.

36. The evaluation will pay special attention to the fact that significant parts of the GEF portfolio are multi-focal area activities reaching across focal areas and thereby across focal area strategies. The evaluation will examine what findings and lessons can be gathered from multi-focal area projects regarding the provisions on multi-focal area activities as articulated in the focal area strategies.

III. LIMITATIONS

37. One limitation of this evaluation is the extent to which new evaluative evidence can be gathered as part of the evaluation. As will be explained in more detail in section F, evaluative evidence and experiences from GEF activities will be a central source of information for the assessment of the causal links and pathways identified in the strategies. However, the necessary evidence can mostly not be generated by the evaluation itself. Instead, the evaluation will primarily rely on a meta-evaluation of existing evaluative efforts of GEF EO evaluation streams (thematic, impact, performance, and country portfolios) as well as evaluative data from additional sources like Terminal Evaluations.
38. The availability of already existing evidence is also subject to limitations. While the original focal areas like biodiversity and climate change mitigation feature a large portfolio of projects as well as corresponding prior evaluations to draw on, other areas like climate change adaptation or sustainable forest management will provide less available data and experiences from GEF activities. The evaluation will take these differences in data availability into account and devise ways to minimize and/or substitute data gaps during the evaluation process.
39. If the available information leaves significant gaps impeding the analysis of the focal area strategies, the evaluation will make targeted efforts to gather additional evidence in order to fill specific gaps. This may include additional desk reviews of selected projects as well as corresponding field visits if necessary.
40. Even though the evaluation will focus on the GEF-5 focal area strategies, the evaluation **will not be restricted to evaluative evidence from projects that were approved during the GEF-5 period**. The evaluation strives to reflect on the focal area strategies in the light of GEF project experiences. Given the continuity of many elements of the GEF focal area strategies across replenishment periods as well as the fact that the evolution of the strategies over time has been informed by experiences gathered from prior projects, older GEF projects will provide valuable information directly pertinent to components of the current GEF-5 focal area strategies despite the fact that they were designed prior to the formulation of the strategies themselves. Likewise, in line with the learning focus of this evaluation, past projects will serve as a source of evidence, lessons learned and best practices to inform recommendations for future GEF strategies.
41. The evaluation is not making evaluative judgments on how GEF projects implement the focal area strategies. Therefore, using selected information from older GEF projects does not unfairly presume any compliance with the current GEF-5 strategies.
42. The evaluation will include the analysis of the mechanisms and processes in place to ensure the translation of the GEF focal area strategies into GEF activities, including the results frameworks and tracking tools as well as links to project design through PIFs and resource allocation through STAR. Exploring these aspects will be necessary to contextualize the focal area strategies within the context of GEF activities. However, to a large extent these mechanisms and processes have

emerged rather recently. Since, other than for the fundamental concepts and assumptions of the focal area strategies (see paragraph 35), these aspects cannot be assessed in light of projects designed before the mechanisms became effective, evidence on their effectiveness is limited. Consequently, the evaluation will address the mechanisms and processes in a primarily descriptive manner to contextualize the focal area strategies. Conclusions in this regard will be preliminary in nature to be followed up on in future evaluations.

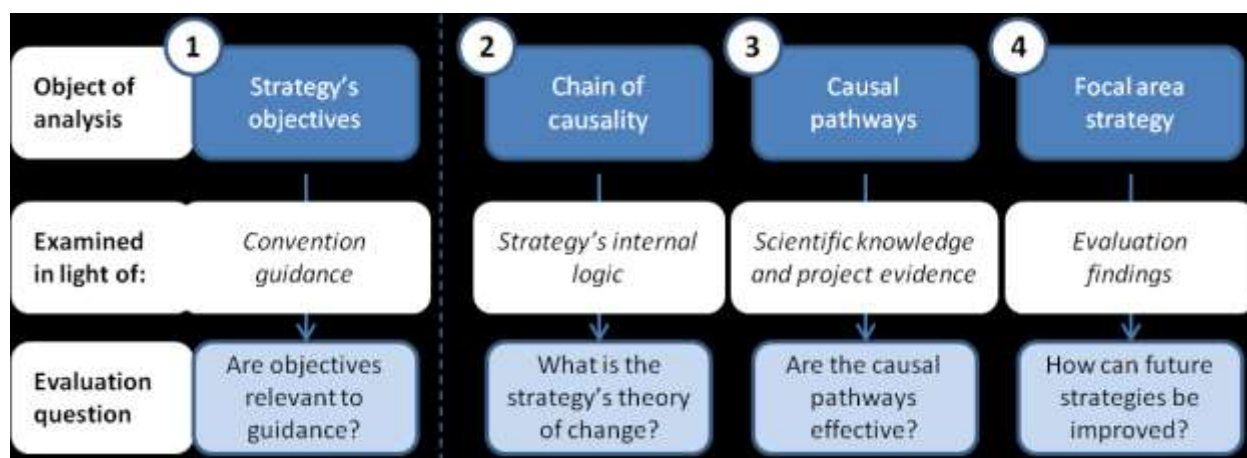
F. Evaluation approach

43. The evaluation will proceed in four steps:

- I. Review the relationship with convention guidance:** To what extent and in what way do the objectives formulated in the focal area strategies relate to respective convention guidance and/or other pertinent sources of guidance?
- II. Construct the theories of change:** What is the internal logic behind each of the focal area strategies? What are the identified causal pathways envisioned to lead to the achievement of the strategy's objectives?
- III. Assess the strategies' causal pathways:** What are the strengths and weaknesses of the causal pathways identified in the strategies in light of:
 - a) the current state of scientific knowledge; and
 - b) evaluative evidence and experiences from GEF projects?
- IV. Make recommendations for future strategies:** Based on the findings of steps 1-3, what recommendations for the further development and improvement of the focal area strategies can be provided?

44. The four steps can be schematically summarized as follows:

Figure 2: Steps of the evaluation



I. REVIEW THE RELATIONSHIP WITH CONVENTION GUIDANCE

45. The *Fourth Overall Performance Study of the GEF* (OPS4) included a thorough inventory and analysis of convention guidance to the GEF and the GEF's overall responsiveness to this guidance. Expanding on the OPS4 analysis, the *Evaluation of GEF Focal Area Strategies* will provide an assessment of the responsiveness to the conventions at the focal area level, focusing on the relationship between convention guidance and focal area strategies.
46. OPS4 has pointed out several challenges in responding to convention guidance, in particular the at times ambiguous, overlapping and contradictory nature of conventions' requests to the GEF. The evaluation will determine to what extent these challenges are still relevant and, if applicable, assess how the different focal areas respond to the challenges.
47. The evaluation will take into account the two-fold function of focal area strategies that have to:
- a) adequately reflect the guidance provided by the conventions while anticipating emerging issues expected to emerge from the conventions;
 - b) define priorities, strategic focus and coherent approaches for GEF programming.

The evaluation will assess to what extent these two requirements stand in contradiction to each other and how the focal area strategies define an appropriate balance. The relationship between focal area strategies and convention guidance will be explored in two steps:

a) Mapping of linkages between convention guidance and focal area strategies

48. The evaluation will review the guidance provided by the conventions and other relevant sources to the GEF and identify the topics to be addressed by respective focal areas. Based on the convention guidance compilation, the evaluation will establish the links between guidance and focal area strategies. The mapping will illustrate how topics raised by the convention are reflected in the strategies and how emerging topics are identified and addressed. In this way, the assessment will also identify potential gaps and discrepancies for subsequent inquiry.

b) Analysis of gaps and discrepancies between guidance and focal area strategies

49. Based on the mapping exercise, the evaluation will turn to a closer examination of the potentially identified gaps and discrepancies. Corresponding topics will be analyzed in view of the balance between responsiveness and strategic coherence as outlined above.
50. Stakeholder interviews, especially with GEF Secretariat and convention secretariats, will be crucial to gather the necessary information to detect the reasons of discrepancies between guidance and strategies. The evaluation will collect different opinions and explanations, paying attention to possible divergences of perspectives between stakeholder groups.
51. The gap analysis will search for and, if applicable, analyze cases where:
- a) A topic highlighted by a convention is not or incompletely covered by the focal area strategy;
 - b) A strategy addresses a topic not or not prominently highlighted by convention guidance;
 - c) Convention and strategy attach a significantly different level of priority to a certain topic.

II. CONSTRUCT THE THEORIES OF CHANGE

52. As a tool to better understand the envisioned causal pathways between GEF activities and global environmental benefits as identified by the focal area strategies, the evaluation will

employ a theory of change (TOC) approach. The TOC will map out the different results chains as implied in the respective strategy, comprising the logical sequence of a set of activities that are designed to deliver certain defined outputs and outcomes expected to ultimately result in long-term impacts. As part of the analysis, the identified causal pathways and desired behavioral change will be differentiated by key actors groups.

53. The TOC is an exploratory instrument to make visible the means-end links that connect the components of the focal area strategy. Using the TOC approach, the strategy's chain of causality and its underlying assumptions¹⁰ can be identified. In addition, the TOC approach will help to detect the aspects in each strategy that are most important for the overall effectiveness and likelihood of success of the respective strategy. These aspects will then be prioritized in the following steps of the evaluation.
54. For the construction of the TOC, the evaluation will use the generic GEF TOC (see section C) as a tool to identify causal pathways. Each of the focal area TOCs will follow the same framework, illustrating the relationship of each focal area strategy with the overarching GEF TOC.
55. Beyond the in-depth analysis of the focal area strategy documentation, the evaluation team will rely on the collaboration with the GEF Secretariat focal area teams to avoid errors of interpretation and fully take into account the intentions and assumptions that guided the strategies' formulation.
56. In addition, the evaluation will take into account other factors that might have shaped the drafting of the strategies and thereby influenced its components and underlying assumptions. These factors potentially include the design and implementation of the drafting process as a consultative multi-stakeholder procedure, divergences of opinions and preferences between contributing stakeholders, the political context at the time of drafting the strategies and so on.

III. ASSESS THE STRATEGIES' CAUSAL PATHWAYS

57. The construction of the focal area strategies' TOCs will reveal the causal pathways identified by each of the strategies is based on. In the next step, the evaluation will assess the strengths and weaknesses of these causal pathways and underlying assumptions¹¹ in light of two main sources of information:

a) Current state of scientific knowledge

58. The evaluation will assess the extent to which the strategies' causal pathways and underlying assumptions are in line with state of the art scientific knowledge in the respective area, taking into account recent scientific insights and developments.
59. To identify the most effective process for assessing the focal area strategies' conformity to the current state of scientific knowledge, the evaluation team will cooperate with STAP. STAP will also be asked to provide input for the identification of suitable independent scientific experts in

¹⁰ Definition of "assumption" from ROTI Handbook (<http://thegef.org/gef/node/2225>): "The significant factors that, if present, are expected to contribute to the ultimate realization of project impacts, but that are largely beyond the power of the project to influence or address." The evaluation will focus on the underlying assumptions that are directly and closely connected to the respective means-ends linkages and as such explicitly or implicitly expressed in the focal area strategies themselves.

¹¹ In addition to examining the underlying assumptions expressed in the focal area strategies, the evaluation will also consider potential assumptions that might have been neglected by the focal area strategies. Evidence from GEF projects will provide information on such missing assumptions if applicable.

the respective focal areas to support the assessment of the strategies' scientific robustness. Building on the Evaluation Office's prior experiences with scientific expert panels, for example in applying the Delphi method, the evaluation team will design an appropriate process for drawing on independent scientific expertise for this part of the evaluation.

b) Evaluative evidence and experiences from GEF projects

60. The second source of information to assess the strategies' causal pathways is evaluative evidence and experiences from GEF activities. The evaluation will collect information from GEF projects that relate to the causal pathways and their application under real-life conditions. The evaluation will analyze the extent to which the realization of causal pathways as identified by the strategies' has facilitated the achievement of project results. From this evidence, inferences about the strengths and weaknesses of the strategies' causal pathways can be drawn. Related evidence can not only be drawn from projects design under the GEF-5 strategies, but also from older projects as explained in paragraph 35.
61. To gather the necessary evaluative evidence from GEF projects the evaluation will primarily rely on a meta-analysis of existing evidence from GEF Evaluation Office work streams (thematic, impact, performance, and country portfolios) including Terminal Evaluations. The TOCs aim to identify the crucial aspects influencing the overall effectiveness of the respective strategy. The evaluation will emphasize evidence from GEF activities that can provide targeted information on these specific aspects.
62. While the meta-evaluation of existing evidence from GEF Evaluation Office work streams will be the primary source of information, it might be necessary to gather additional evaluative evidence through desk reviews and/or field research in order to close potential gaps in the evidence already available. In addition, evidence from existing or additional evaluative analysis will be complemented by the data collected through the monitoring system and the tracking tools of the RBM framework.
63. In order to support the interpretation of evaluative data, the evaluation team will conduct extensive interviews with representatives of all relevant stakeholder groups including GEF Agencies to incorporate different perspectives and opinions in the analysis of evidence from GEF activities.

IV. MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STRATEGIES

64. The final step of the *Evaluation of GEF Focal Area Strategies* will be to formulate recommendations for the development and improvement of future focal area strategies on the basis of the findings gathered in step 1 to 3.

G. Methods, Processes and Outputs

65. The *Evaluation of GEF Focal Area Strategies* will be led by a task manager from the GEF Evaluation Office and conducted by staff of the Office. The evaluation team will determine appropriate ways to include the expertise of international consultant(s).
66. Coordination with the GEF Secretariat focal area teams will be of crucial importance throughout this evaluation to ensure the correct interpretation of the theories of change and underlying

assumptions. Therefore, the evaluation team will set up a formal consultation process to ensure continuous channels of cooperation with the GEF Secretariat.

67. The important role of the state of science as a source of information to assess the strategies' causal chains and underlying assumptions calls for a close cooperation with the STAP. The evaluation team will seek STAP support in designing an appropriate process for the assessment of the scientific soundness of focal area strategies.
68. The evaluation team will consult with the GEF Agencies throughout the evaluation process. Since the GEF Agencies play an integral role in the implementation of the strategies through projects, they are an important interlocutor regarding the examination and interpretation of evaluative evidence and experiences from GEF projects and their relationship to the focal area strategies.
69. GEF stakeholders will be consulted at key steps in the evaluation. The GEF Secretariat, convention secretariats, GEF Agencies, and other relevant stakeholders will be asked to provide comments on a draft version of the report. Furthermore, the GEF Secretariat and representatives of the GEF Agencies will be requested to provide assistance with the collection of project information.
70. The evaluation will employ the following methods of data collection:
 - a) **Review of basic documents:** The evaluation will conduct an analysis of the focal area strategies themselves as well as prior assessments of focal areas¹², especially the OPS3 program studies and the relevant findings of OPS4.
 - b) **Guidance review and mapping:** The evaluation will review convention documentation (especially COP decisions) and other sources of guidance relevant to the different focal area strategies. Identified guidance will be mapped to the focal area strategies.
 - c) **Construction of theories of change:** The evaluation will spell out the theories of change underlying the focal area strategies based on the analysis of the strategies themselves, additional supporting documentation as well as information gathered from stakeholders.
 - d) **Scientific assessment:** The causal pathways implied by the focal area strategies will be assessed in order to determine their scientific soundness. The evaluation aims to involve STAP in the design of a suitable process for the provision of necessary scientific expertise.
 - e) **Meta-evaluation of project evidence:** For assessing the focal area strategies in light of evaluative evidence from GEF activities, the evaluation will conduct a targeted meta-analysis of evaluative evidence gathered by all four evaluation streams of the Evaluation Office. Among other sources of information, the evaluation will rely on the portfolio analyses of the different focal areas to be compiled by the impact evaluation stream.
 - f) **Stakeholder interviews:** The evaluation will conduct a series of semi-structured interviews with GEF focal area teams, GEF Agencies, responsible staff of the convention secretariats, convention focal points and representatives of the Parties' delegations to the conventions. During the course of the evaluation, other stakeholders may be identified for additional interviews.

¹² The prior assessments to be consulted in the context of the evaluation include an analysis of the GEF portfolio on Sustainable Forest Management prepared in preparation of the *Evaluation of GEF Focal Area Strategies* in 2011/12 by the GEF Evaluation Office in collaboration with the Institute of Development Studies.

- g) **Stakeholder survey:** Individual interviews will be complemented by an online survey reaching out to a higher number of stakeholders and thereby allowing for quantitative aggregation of stakeholder input if response rates are sufficiently high. The survey analysis will be conducted according to categories of respondents and, if possible, will be coordinated with other surveys to be conducted in the context of OPS5.
- h) **Project reviews/field visits:** To deepen the analysis and fill possible gaps in the available evidence, the evaluation will conduct a limited number of additional reviews of selected projects that can provide specific information on particularly important topics. This might include targeted field Review of Outcome to Impact or ROTI Studies if necessary.

Table 3: Overview of evaluation outputs

Output	Description	Source of Information
Background		
Review of basic documents	Assesses the focal area strategies themselves as well as relevant prior assessments on focal areas and focal area strategies (especially the OPS3 Program Studies and OPS4)	Document review
Review the relationship with convention guidance		
Guidance compilation	Collects guidance from relevant conventions, primarily provided through COP decisions as well as other relevant sources	Document review
Guidance-Strategy mapping	Identifies the links between convention guidance and strategic objectives for all GEF-4 and GEF-5 strategies	Guidance compilation, Stakeholder interviews
Gap analysis	Identifies discrepancies between convention guidance and focal area strategies and analyzes underlying reasons	Guidance-strategy mapping, stakeholder interviews
Construct the theories of change		
TOC for each focal area strategy	Spells out the theory of change underlying the different focal area strategies	Document review, Stakeholder interviews
Assess the strategies' causal pathways		
Review of scientific knowledge	Examine the strategies' causal pathways in light of the current state of science	Information provided by independent scientific experts in coordination with STAP
Meta-analysis of project evidence	Examine the strategies' causal pathways in light of evidence and experiences from corresponding GEF activities	Evidence from relevant prior & current evaluations, TEs, etc
Make recommendations for future strategies		
Recommendations	Recommendations for the development and improvement of future focal area strategies based on the evaluation's findings	Evaluation's findings

H. Reporting and dissemination

60. The findings and recommendations of the evaluation will be submitted to the GEF Council at its November 2012 meeting as part of the 2012 Annual Thematic Evaluations Report. The full evaluation report will be made available on the GEFEO Web site. The draft report will be circulated and validated through a stakeholder feedback process. It will be shared with GEF Agencies, the GEF Secretariat, convention secretariats and other key stakeholders.
61. The evidence gathered by the *Evaluation of GEF Focal Area Strategies* will also contribute to the Evaluation Office's *Fifth Overall Performance Study* (OPS5). Results of the evaluation are envisioned to add to the OPS5 sections on GEF's overall responsiveness to convention guidance and provide evidence on the GEF's effectiveness in different focal areas.
62. The primary target audience of the evaluation report is the GEF Council as the recipient of information pertinent to the GEF replenishment process. In addition, the report will be distributed to the GEF Secretariat, GEF Agencies, convention secretariats, GEF focal points, STAP, those involved in the evaluation, and other interested parties through email. The report will also be made publicly available on the GEF EO Web site. A two-page summary (Signpost) of the report will be produced in English, French, and Spanish and widely disseminated. Learning products from this evaluation will be identified and developed for specific and targeted audiences.

I. Time frame

63. The *Evaluation of GEF Focal Area Strategies* is expected to be launched in February 2012 and to be finalized by November 2012. The time frame will be further revised and detailed as part of the preparation of the terms of reference and work plan by the evaluation team.

Table 3: Time frame overview

Calendar Year: 2012 (month)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
I Evaluation Design												
Approach paper												
II Evaluation Context												
Basic documents review												
III Data Collection												
Guidance compilation												
Interviews/Survey												
Collection of existing evidence												
IV Analysis												
TOC construction												
Guidance mapping & gap analysis												
Scientific assessment												
Meta-evaluation of existing evidence												
V Results												
Drafting report												
Consultation workshop												
Final report												
VI Dissemination												
Presentation to Council												
Further dissemination												

Annex 1: Overview of goals, objectives and key assumptions in GEF-4 and GEF-5 focal area strategies

	GEF-4 Focal Area Strategies	GEF-5 Focal Area Strategies
	Biodiversity	Biodiversity
Goal	Conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, the maintenance of the ecosystem goods and services that biodiversity provides to society, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources.	Conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the maintenance of ecosystem goods and services
Objectives	1. To catalyze sustainability of protected area (PA) systems 2. To mainstream biodiversity in production landscapes/seascapes and sectors 3. To safeguard biodiversity 4. To build capacity on access and benefit sharing	1. Improve the sustainability of protected area systems 2. Mainstream biodiversity conservation and sustainable use into production landscapes/seascapes and sectors 3. Build capacity to implement the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety 4. Build capacity on access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing 5. Integrate CBD obligations into national planning processes through enabling activities
Basic assumptions	Oriented towards drivers of biodiversity loss identified by the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment: Direct drivers - habitat change, climate change, invasive alien species, overexploitation, and pollution Indirect drivers - demographics, global economic trends, governance, institutions and legal frameworks, science and technology, and cultural and religious values Strategy address subset of drivers, focuses on the highest leverage opportunities for the GEF to contribute to sustainable BD conservation Priorities: Habitat change, Overexploitation, Invasive alien species - underlying driver: policy and legal framework, institutions and governance	Basic assumptions on drivers of biodiversity loss unchanged from GEF-4 BD activities are integral components of any effective strategy for human adaptation to climate change

	Climate Change (including climate change adaptation through SPA)	Climate Change Mitigation
Goal	Support sustainable measures that minimize climate change damage by reducing the risk, or the adverse effects, of climate change	To support developing countries and economies in transition toward a low-carbon development path
Objectives	1. To promote energy-efficient technologies and practices in appliances and buildings 2. To promote energy-efficient technologies and practices in industrial production and manufacturing processes 3. To improve the efficiency and performance of existing power plants 4. To promote on-grid renewable energy 5. To promote the use of renewable energy for the provision of rural energy services (off-grid) 6. To support new low-GHG emitting energy technologies 7. To facilitate market transformation for sustainable mobility in urban areas leading to reduced GHG emissions 8. To reduce GHG emissions from land use, land use change, and forestry 9. To support pilot and demonstration projects for adaptation to climate change	1. Promote the demonstration, deployment, and transfer of innovative low-carbon technologies 2. Promote market transformation for energy efficiency in industry and the building sector 3. Promote investment in renewable energy technologies 4. Promote energy efficient, low-carbon transport and urban systems 5. Promote conservation and enhancement of carbon stocks through sustainable management of land use, land-use change, and forestry 6. Support enabling activities and capacity building under the Convention
Basic assumptions	Stabilizing GHG concentrations in the atmosphere will require: reducing GHG emission by improving the efficiency of energy production and utilization; increasing the use of renewable energy which produces low net GHG emissions; and improving the sustainability of mobility and reducing emissions from the land use and forestry sectors. Most effective use of GEF resources: reduction of GHG emissions through transforming markets; barrier removal approach also avoids duplication with carbon-financed backed mechanisms GEF resources most effective when used to facilitate, leverage, and complement other sources of financing Three types of activities: enabling, mitigation, and adaptation activities Differentiation: according to ability of countries to deliver global environmental benefits given their country capacity, policies, and practices	Focus on transformative impact: market transformation of, and investment in, environmentally sound, climate-friendly technologies GEF support will involve a combination of technology-push and market-pull activities Heightened emphasis on country differentiation: Mitigation solutions need to be differentiated to reflect different socio-economic conditions Priorities for large, medium-income countries: market transformation in the building, industry, and transport sectors; market demonstration and commercialization of innovative, emerging technologies Small, low-income countries: investments and technical and institutional capacity building; access to modern energy from renewable sources; adapting commercially available technologies to local market conditions for deployment and diffusion through investment, capacity building, and technology cooperation GEF can play a useful and growing role in the emerging carbon markets

		Climate Change Adaptation (under LDCF/SCCF)
Goal		To support developing countries to increase resilience to climate change through both immediate and longer term adaptation measures in development policies, plans, programs, projects and actions.
Objectives		1. Reduce vulnerability to the adverse impacts of climate change, including variability, at local, national, regional and global level 2. Increase adaptive capacity to respond to the impacts of climate change, including variability, at local, national, regional and global level 3. Promote the transfer and adoption of relevant adaptation technologies.
Basic assumptions		Climate change is already having an adverse impact and that the most vulnerable countries and the poorest communities within developing countries will be the ones most adversely affected and least able to respond to the effects of climate change Climate change impacts are now inevitable; the costs of adaptation are difficult to estimate, as they depend on many factors; the costs will be high One of main accomplishments of the GEF adaptation program: test and demonstrate adaptation in practice Integration of adaptation activities into existing policy and development frameworks results in a decreased vulnerability to adverse climate change impacts.
	International Waters	International Waters
Goal	Foster international, multi-state cooperation on transboundary water concerns and play a catalytic role in addressing those transboundary water concerns by assisting countries to utilize the full range of technical assistance, economic, financial, regulatory, and institutional reforms that are needed	Promotion of collective management of transboundary water systems and implementation of the full range of policy, legal, and institutional reforms and investments contributing to sustainable use and maintenance of ecosystem services

Objectives	1. Restoring and sustaining coastal and marine fish stocks and associated biological diversity 2. Reducing nutrient over-enrichment and oxygen depletion from land-based pollution of coastal waters in LMEs consistent with the GPA 3. Balancing overuse and conflicting uses of water resources in surface and groundwater basins that are transboundary in nature 4. Reducing persistent toxic substances and testing adaptive management of waters with melting ice	1. Catalyze multi-state cooperation to balance conflicting water uses in transboundary surface and groundwater basins while considering climatic variability and change 2. Catalyze multistate cooperation to rebuild marine fisheries and reduce pollution of coasts and Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs) while considering climatic variability and change 3. Support foundational capacity building, portfolio learning, and targeted research needs for joint, ecosystem-based management of trans-boundary water systems 4. Promote effective management of Marine Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ)
Basic assumptions	Activities in multiple countries with regional projects are more cost-effective than individual country projects in gaining commitments to transboundary action Use foundational processes to stimulate political commitment to collective action and then scaling up with innovative policy, legal, and institutional reforms and demonstrations Base activities on modifying human activities (integrated, ecosystem-based approaches) Main challenges: pollution, loss of critical habitats and biodiversity, ship waste, alien species, overuse and conflicting uses of surface and groundwater, over-harvesting of fisheries, and adaptation to climatic fluctuations (e.g. associated droughts, floods, sea level rise, reef bleaching)	Degradation and depletion of surface, ground water, and oceans caused by mismanagement and policy failure, population growth and forced migration, changing climate, global financial and trade distortions, food shortages, and changing diets Main challenges: unchanged from GEF-4 strategy Cooperation among States on water, fisheries, catchments, and environment can secure benefits Demonstration of appropriate technologies can catalyze investments for replication and scaling-up Climatic variability and change should be a key transboundary concern: Pollution reduction or improved fisheries management will still fail to provide impact if the needed flow regime to protect the river ecosystem is diminished by intensive water use and drought
	Land Degradation	Land Degradation
Goal	To arrest and reverse current trends in land degradation affecting peoples' livelihoods and the resilience of ecosystems	To contribute to arresting and reversing current global trends in land degradation, specifically desertification and deforestation

Objectives	1. To develop an enabling environment that will place Sustainable Land Management (SLM) in the mainstream of development policy and practices at the regional, national, and local levels 2. To upscale SLM investments that generate mutual benefits for the global environment and local livelihoods	1. Maintain or improve flow of agro-ecosystem services sustaining the livelihoods of local communities 2. Generate sustainable flows of forest ecosystem services in drylands, including sustaining livelihoods of forest dependant people 3. Reduce pressures on natural resources from competing land uses in the wider landscape 4. Increase capacity to apply adaptive management tools in SLM/SFM/INRM by GEF and UNCCD Parties
Basic assumptions	Priorities based on Millennium Ecosystem Assessment: a) no focus on rehabilitation of already-degraded lands or in the development of control technologies; b) use landscape approach/ecosystem principles; c) priority to areas that are i) severely affected by land degradation but which have potential for the creation of an enabling environment for SLM; and ii) showing promising improvements that can be spread to neighboring areas and other communities Tool is Sustainable Land Management (SLM): Investing in SLM to control and prevent land degradation in the wider landscape is an essential and cost-effective way to deliver other global environmental benefits, such as maintenance of biodiversity, mitigation of climate change, and protection of international waters.	Priorities: Continuity with GEF-4 strategy and Millennium Ecosystem Assessment's recommendation for investments in the prevention and control of land degradation in areas with medium to high production potential that are essential for peoples' livelihoods, and in affected areas where the social consequences of continuing land degradation can trigger serious environmental and developmental problems Desertification and deforestation remain priority with a focus on agro-ecosystems and forest landscapes Emerging/Intensifying challenges for GEF-5: competing land uses and resulting changes in land cover and ecosystem dynamics; climate change; exploitation of natural resources for short-term economic gain at the cost of ecological and social sustainability Direct drivers: land use change, natural resources consumption and climate change Embraces the landscape approach as well as integrated approach to natural resources management
	Persistent Organic Pollutants	Chemicals
Goal	To protect human health and the environment by assisting countries to reduce and eliminate production, use, and releases of POPs	To promote the sound management of chemicals throughout their life-cycle in ways that lead to the minimization of significant adverse effects on human health and the global environment

Objectives	1. Strengthening capacities for National Implementation Plans (NIPs) implementation 2. Partnering in investments needed for NIP implementation to achieve impacts in POPs reduction and elimination 3. Partnering in the demonstration of feasible, innovative technologies and best practices for POPs reduction and substitution	1. Phase out POPs and reduce POPs releases 2. Phase out ODS and reduce ODS releases 3. Pilot sound chemicals management and mercury reduction 4. POPs enabling activities
Basic assumptions	Main challenges: inadequate legislative and regulatory frameworks, coupled with the near absence of capacity for enforcement, and the lack of awareness of the hazards associated with POPs exposure Limited local capacity can lead to regional and, ultimately, global contamination of the environment by POPs National Implementation Plans (NIP) as the main driver/blueprint for implementation activities	
	Ozone Layer Depletion	
Goal	To protect human health and the environment by assisting countries to phase out consumption and production, and prevent releases of ozone-depleting substances (ODS) according to their commitments to the Montreal Protocol phase-out schedules, while enabling energy efficient alternative technologies and practices	
Objectives	1. Phasing out HCFC and strengthening of capacities and institutions	
Basic assumptions	Preference given to low-GHG technologies and substitutes in order that the projects reduce the overall emissions of GHG Approach: Mix of enabling-type activities and projects largely oriented towards technical assistance and capacity building, along with some investments	
	Sound Chemicals Management	

Goal	To promote sound management of chemicals for the protection of human health and the global environment	
Objectives	1. Integrating sound chemicals management in GEF projects 2. Articulating the chemicals related activities supported by the GEF within countries' frameworks for chemicals management	
Basic assumptions	Opportunities to support sound chemicals management in the GEF focal areas most often not apparent in project documentation or reporting Support improved management of chemicals, taking into account their whole life-cycle, as a cross-cutting issue that deserves global attention	
	Sustainable Forest Management	Sustainable Forest Management/REDD+
Goal	To maintain and enhance the economic, social and environmental values of all types of forests, for the benefit of present and future generations	To achieve multiple environmental benefits from improved management of all types of forests
Objectives	1. Sustainable financing of protected area systems at national level (same as BD#1) 2. Strengthening terrestrial protected area networks (same as BD#3) 3. Management of LULUCF as a means to protect carbon stocks and reduce GHG emissions (cross-cutting BD/LD) 4. Strengthening the policy and regulatory framework for mainstreaming biodiversity (same as BD#4) 5. Fostering markets for biodiversity goods and services (same as BD#5) 6. Promoting sustainable energy production from biomass (same as CC#4) 7. Supporting sustainable forest management in productive landscapes (same as LD#2)	1. Reduce pressures on forest resources and generate sustainable flows of forest ecosystem services 2. Strengthen the enabling environment to reduce GHG emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and enhance carbon sinks from LULUCF activities

Basic assumptions	SFM has the potential to address the objectives of at least three GEF focal areas: a) biodiversity: PA conservation, ABS b) climate change: terrestrial GHG sinks c) land degradation: forest degradation Mix of traditional forest management approaches such as protected areas and integrated watershed management and new and emerging aspects to forests such as biomass production for biofuels and the role of forests in climate change mitigation (LULUCF).	Advocates the landscape approach, which embraces ecosystem principles as well as the connectivity between ecosystems - integration of people's livelihood objectives in the management of forest ecosystems Identified threats: rapid population growth and the associated need for farming and grazing land; overexploitation of timber, forest fires, mining, cattle ranching, road construction and the production of biomass for biofuels; impacts of climate change
		Cross-Cutting Capacity Development
Goal		To address those important capacity needs that will enhance a country's ability to meet its obligations under the Conventions by creating synergies, while at the same time catalyzing the mainstreaming of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) into national policy, management or financial and legislative frameworks.
Objectives		1. Enhance capacities of stakeholders for engagement through consultative process 2. Generate, access and use of information and knowledge 3. Strengthened capacities for policy and legislation development for achieving global benefits 4. Strengthened capacities for management and implementation on convention guidelines 5. Capacities enhanced to monitor and evaluate environmental impacts and trends
Basic assumptions		Targeting specific components of the environmental governance system should allow for a more practicable approach towards meeting Rio Convention objectives and achieving environmental sustainability. Reducing, if not eliminating, the institutional bottlenecks Focus on the environmental governance system and mainstreaming global environmental issues into national development programs