Effects of Conflict and Fragility on GEF Projects, and Innovations to Manage Those Risks

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WHY THIS EVALUATION?

PORTFOLIO

4,136 GEF projects

Evaluation methods:
- document analysis
-statistical analysis
- remote sensing
- interviews

- case studies across seven conflict and fragile situations

- Several IEO evaluations have provided evaluative evidence on how FCS affect the outcomes and sustainability of GEF support
- No independent assessment of GEF interventions in such situations
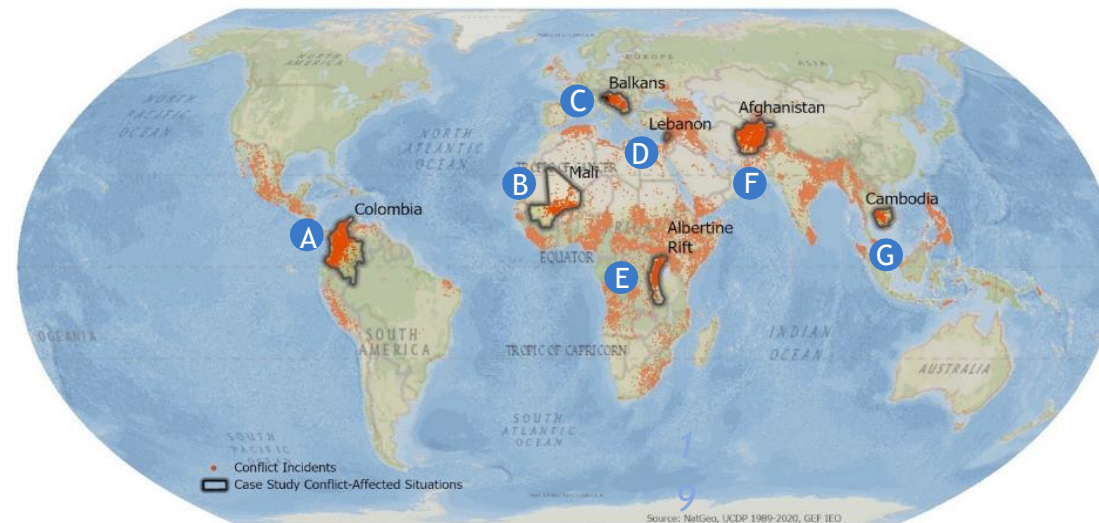
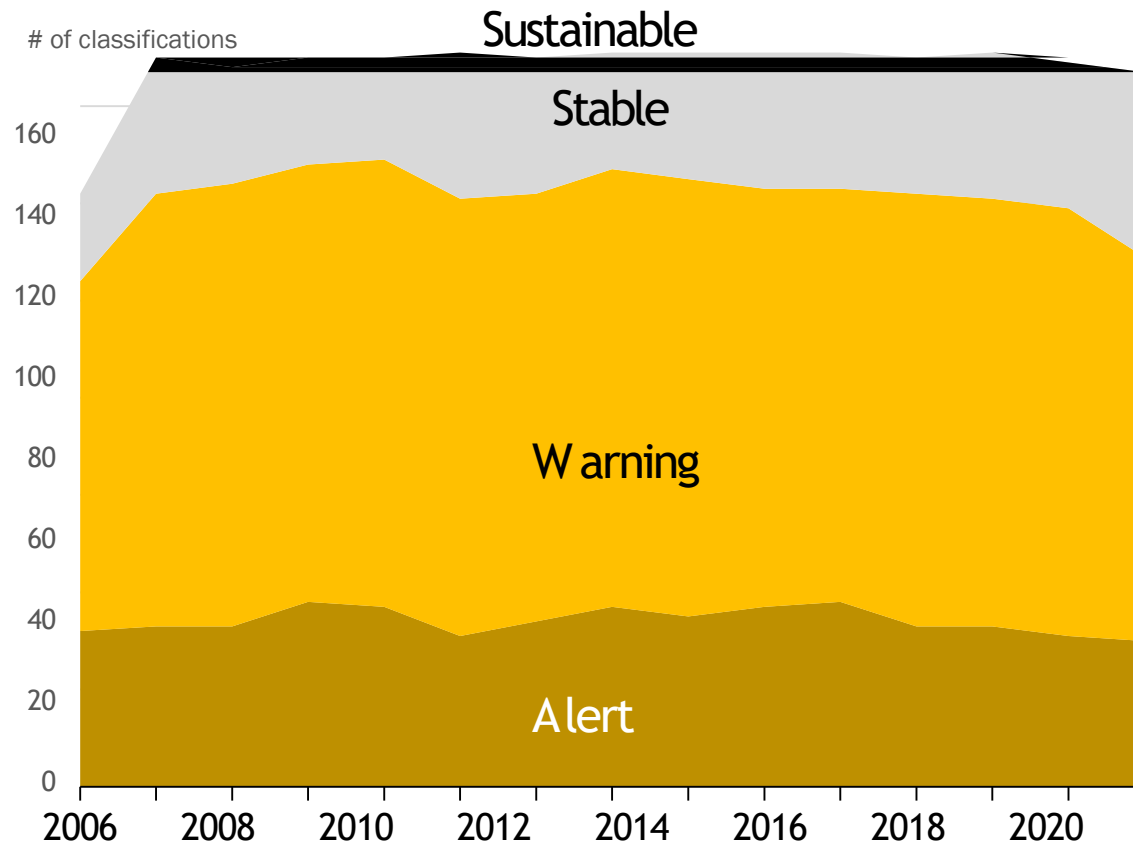**GEF Case Study Situations and Conflict (1989-2020)**

GEF-SUPPORTED INTERVENTIONS IN FRAGILE AND CONFLICT AFFECTED SITUATIONS

- The **vast majority** of GEF projects occur in countries affected by conflict and fragility

- 88% of GEF country-level projects occurred in fragile environments

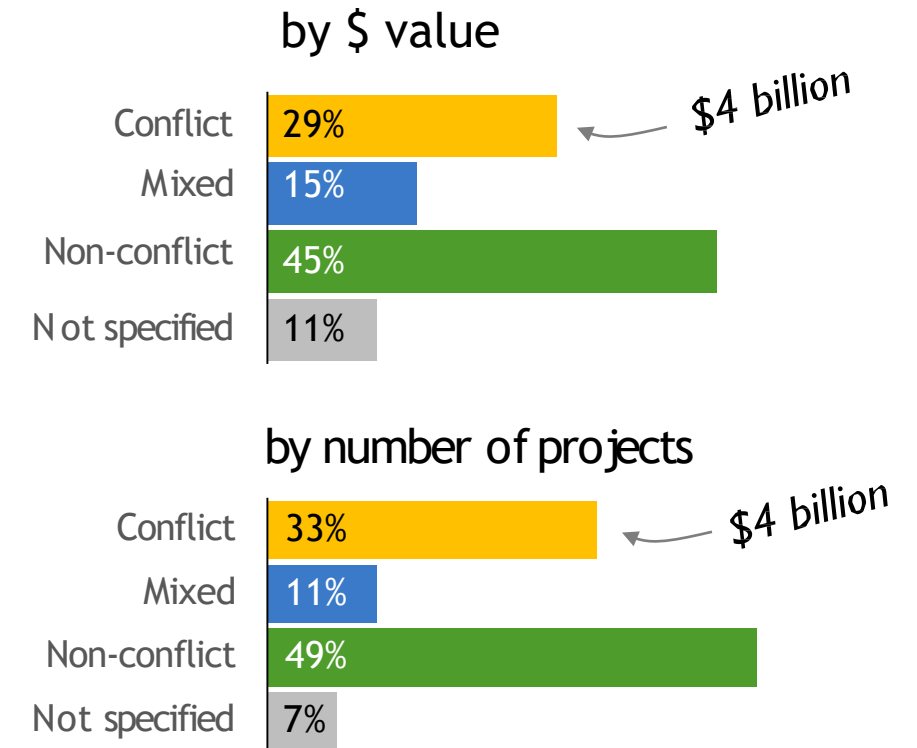- As of July 2020, GEF had invested **$4 billion** in countries affected by major armed conflict
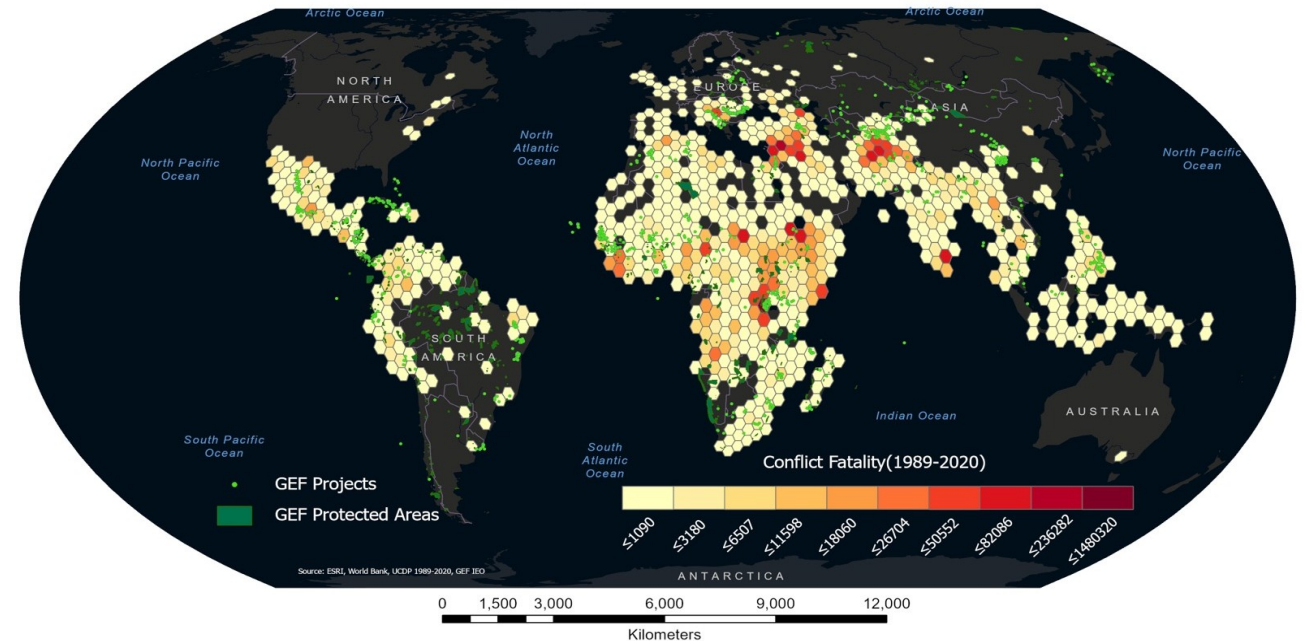
Conflict Hotspots and GEF Project Locations

Fragility of countries and territories receiving GEF funding

# of classifications

Sustainable

Stable

Warning

Alert

160
140
120
100
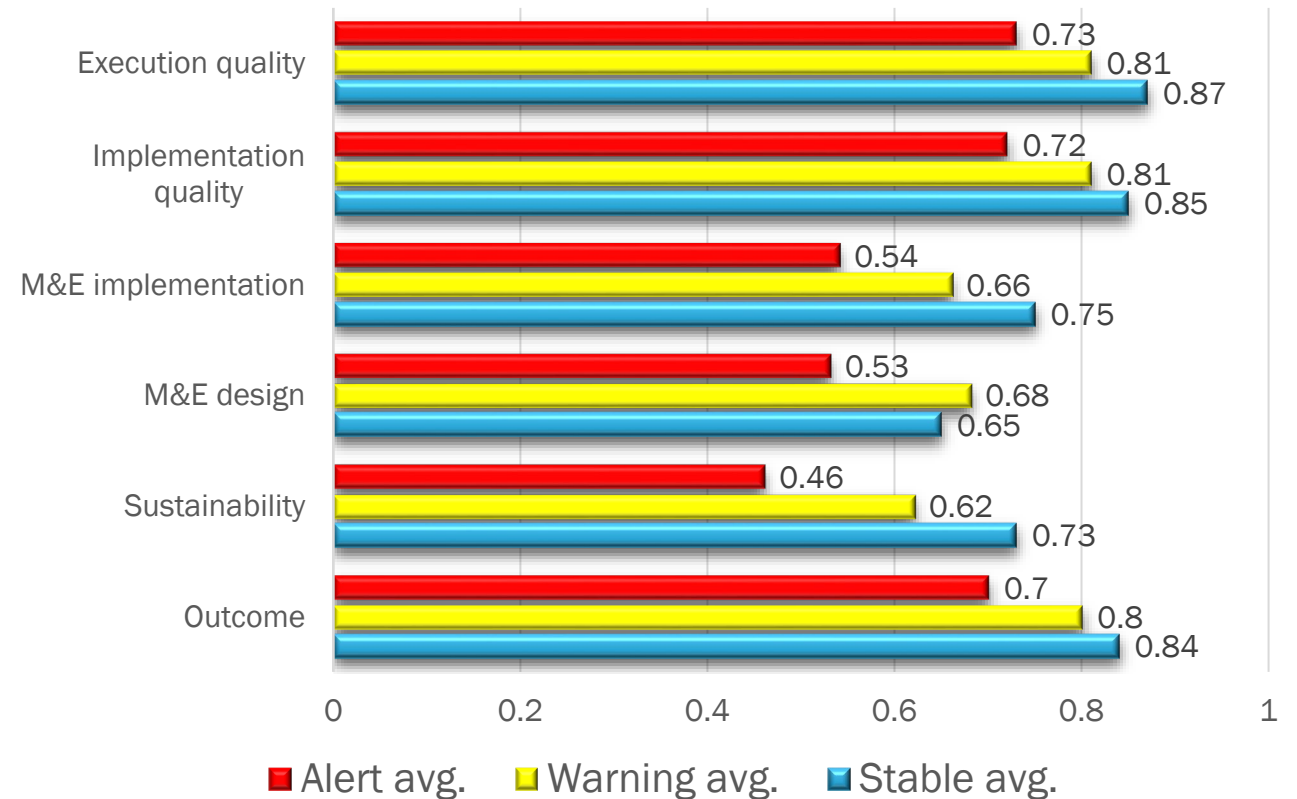80
60
40
20
0

2006 2008 2010 2012 2014 2016 2018 2020

Share of GEF projects in countries affected by major armed conflict

by $ value

Conflict 29% → $4 billion
Mixed 15%
Non-conflict 45%
Not specified 11%

by number of projects

Conflict 33% → $4 billion
Mixed 11%
Non-conflict 49%
Not specified 7%

IMPACTS OF CONFLICT AND FRAGILITY

- Fragility has a statistically significant impact on **all performance (TER) indicators**.

- Conflict and fragility had statistically significant impacts on a project being **cancelled or dropped,** as well as **increased duration of delays**

Impacts on Terminal Evaluation Review Performance Indicators

Indicator	Alert avg.	Warning avg.	Stable avg.
Execution quality	0.73	0.81	0.87
Implementation quality	0.72	0.81	0.85
M&E implementation	0.54	0.66	0.75
M&E design	0.53	0.68	0.65
Sustainability	0.46	0.62	0.73
Outcome	0.7	0.8	0.84

■ Alert avg.   ■ Warning avg.   ■ Stable avg.

KEY PATHWAYS BY WHICH CONFLICT AND FRAGILITY AFFECT GEF PROJECTS

	PHYSICAL INSECURITY	SOCIAL CONFLICT AND MISTRUST	ECONOMIC DRIVERS	POLITICAL FRAGILITY AND WEAK GOVERNANCE	COPING STRATEGIES
Negative impact	• Impedes access to project site • Physical safety of project staff and partners • Difficulties hiring staff	• Land tenure issues • Sensitivities hiring project staff	• Illicit extraction and trade of natural resources • Competition over resources can drive conflicts and put staff and parties at risk • Currency depreciation	• Institutional capacity and legitimacy • Financial capacity • Corruption and rule of law	• Conflict between internally displaced persons/refugees and local communities • Decreased carrying capacity • Vulnerability enhanced by climatic stressors
Positive impact		• Projects designed to increase cooperation among groups	• Projects focused on livelihoods and sustainable natural resource management	• Projects designed to align with governmental priorities, including implementation of peace agreement	

Can affect the **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency,** and **sustainability** of the project

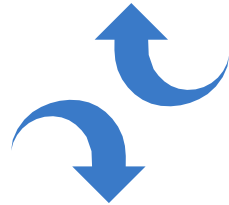# MANAGING RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH CONFLICT AND FRAGILITY

- The GEF has no standard safeguards, policies, guidance, or procedures to manage conflict- and fragility-related risks to projects
  - Half of the GEF Agencies have developed policies, strategies, and toolkits
  - In the absence of official guidance, implementing organizations and project staff have innovated to meet the needs of their operating environments

GEF PROJECT INNOVATIONS TO MANAGE RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH CONFLICT AND FRAGILITY

RISK MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

Acknowledgement

Avoidance

Mitigation

Peacebuilding

Learning

GEF PROJECT INNOVATIONS TO MANAGE RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH CONFLICT AND FRAGILITY

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

AVOIDANCE	MITIGATION	PEACEBUILDING	LEARNING
• Project site selection	• Training • Monitoring and early warning • Participatory approach • Local partners • Dispute resolution mechanisms • Adaptive management	• Political will • Livelihoods • Environmental restoration • Co-benefits	• Applying learning from previous experiences in project design • Learning during project implementation • Learning during M&E

RISK MANAGEMENT

LESSONS

- Conflict and fragility **matter.**

- These contexts present **risks** but also **opportunities**

- Projects in fragile and conflict-affected settings should be approached differently than non-conflict-affected projects

  → Conflict sensitivity!

  - Project staff should assess risks early and plan for potential complications

  - Institutions need to ensure provide guidance, policies, safeguards, and trained staff to support conflict-sensitive programming

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE GEF

1. The GEF Secretariat should use the project review process to provide feedback to Agencies to identify conflict- and fragility-related risks to a proposed project and develop measures to mitigate those risks.

2. To improve conflict-sensitive programming while also providing flexibility to Agencies and projects, the GEF Secretariat could develop guidance for conflict-sensitive programming.

3. To improve conflict-sensitive design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of GEF projects, the GEF Secretariat together with the Agencies should leverage existing platforms for learning, exchange, and technical assistance

4. The current GEF Environmental and Social Safeguards could be expanded to provide more details so that GEF projects address key conflict-sensitive considerations.

5. The GEF Secretariat could consider revising its policies and procedures so that GEF-supported projects can better adapt to rapid and substantial changes common in fragile and conflict-affected situations.

THANK YOU!

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