

2020 Program Evaluation of the Least Developed Countries Fund

Audit Trail

Stakeholder Comments on Draft Evaluation Report – November 2020

Paragraph or page	Context in which comment is made	Comments	Response and action taken
GEF Secretariat			
1	"The overall purpose of this evaluation is to..."	Please indicate up front the date/month until which the information in this evaluation is current	The cutoff date is presented in paragraph 6 of the introduction. It is normally not included in the first paragraph.
4	"Since it entered into force in November 2016, the LDCF is part of the operating entity of the financial mechanism for the Paris Agreement and the UNFCCC."	The sentence reads as if the LDCF entered into force in November 2016, not the Paris Agreement. Please revise.	This sentence has been revised.
6	As of the December 10, 2019 LDCF/SCCF progress report to council, LDCF support towards the NAP processes totaled \$52.53 million (GEF 2019b).	This information has been updated in the COP 26 report and upcoming Progress Report for the 29 th LDCF/SCCF Council.	This information has been updated.
8, Table 1	Agencies involved in LDCF operations	Some of the 18 GEF Agencies are not positioned to be engaged in the LDCF, as (a) they are not accredited by the GEF to work in LDCs (such as FUNBIO, DBSA, FECO), and (b) their areas of operations do not cover LDCs (such as CAF, EBRD). The above observations mean that as of now, most Agencies that could implement GEF projects in LDCs are already involved in the LDCF. Suggest to reflect these facts, as just including the number of agencies in the text and the list may not convey the full situation.	The text has been amended to reflect this.

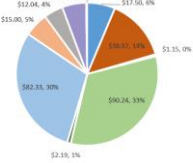
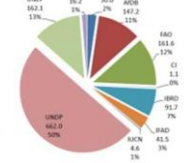
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9	The extent to which the LDCF is achieving the objectives set out in the GEF Programming Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change for LDCF/SCCF (2018-2022)	It is not clear how the achievement of objectives can be assessed for a time period that is not done yet - and is literally halfway to completion. Also, the vast majority of the projects that are Council-approved in GEF-7 has not started implementation. It would be useful to make this point clearer throughout the evaluation. It may be suggested to rephrase as “<i>the extent to which the LDCF is progress towards achieving the objectives set out in the GEF Programming Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change for LDCF/SCCF (2018-2022)</i>”	Text has been modified.
9	The overarching goal and strategic objectives, an integral part of the GEF programming strategy on adaptation...	Please note that "overarching goal and strategic objectives" are an integral part of any GEF programming strategy, not just adaptation.	No action taken. The scope of the evaluation was defined in the approach paper.
9b	Effectiveness. How effective is the LDCF at delivering on expected climate adaptation and resilience outcomes? What are the gender equality objectives achieved and gender mainstreaming principles adhered to by the LDCF? To what extent has the LDCF engaged the private sector? What are lessons learned from implementation experience?	Please provide additional detail on LDCF engagement with private sector. For example, what exactly constitutes as the private sector for the purposes of this evaluation? For the LDCF, MSMEs have been a strong counterpart in comparison to MNCs.	No action taken. The scope of the evaluation was defined in the approach paper.

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9c	Efficiency. How have resource flows and resource predictability, or lack thereof, affected the Funds programming? How efficient is the Fund's project cycle as a delivery mechanism?	Efficiency of resources, as described here, is something that is beyond the control/responsibility of GEF Sec alone. Voluntary contribution nature of the LDCF determines the resource predictability. Therefore, it does not seem to be useful to use this criteria as one against which the LDCF as a fund is evaluated.	No action taken. The scope of the evaluation was defined in the approach paper.
11	The following categories determined how projects were analyzed during the evaluation...	The cohort in this paragraph seems to largely predate 2018, as commented on Paragraph 9. Therefore, it is not clear how can the evaluation claim to be evaluating the 2018-2022 period. Please clarify.	The evaluation does not claim to be evaluating the 2018-2022 period. This evaluation is an update to the 2016 evaluation, covering the 4-year period following that evaluation. The current strategy is used as a reference point, given the fact that the fundamental elements of the strategy were also present in the previous strategy, including private sector engagement. We have added language to emphasize this point.
15	Selection of Samoa for country visit		No comment is provided.
22	"Fund's convoluted, inefficient management structures".	This is a quote from a study of the LDCF by Sovacool et al. The IEO has not provided any explanation (from the referenced study or otherwise) for why the terms "convoluted" and "inefficient" were used. Please either substantiate (with support from IEO's own findings) or delete .	Report section has been re-labelled "literature review" rather than "meta-assessment." Quotation marks used to clarify text throughout.

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23	LDCF's efficiency had been undermined due to "... co-funding requirements, and lengthy project approval processes"	This is also a possibly misleading quote from another study. The draft IEO evaluation itself states in later sections that the LDCF does <u>not</u> have strict co-financing requirements. Please Delete this unless evidence can be provided. On the <i>lengthy project approval process</i>, has effort been made to compare the duration of the project approval process with other funds that support adaptation? Unless being substantiated by IEO's finding, please delete.	Report section has been re-labelled "literature review" rather than "meta-assessment." Quotation marks used to clarify text throughout.
23	The assessment also raised concerns about a lack of consistent gender monitoring across the GEF, with the GEF's core gender indicators being different from those within other active results frameworks, including LDCF's	We would welcome the exact quote and reference on this from the MOPAN report. Our understanding is that this point in the MOPAN report referenced the GEF-6 gender indicators, not the GEF-7. Page 50 of the report states "<i>GEF-6 had Core Gender Indicators that were separate from the GEFTF, LDCF and SCCF results frameworks. They cannot therefore be considered to be fully integrated.</i>" Therefore, this statement (in both MOPAN and the LDCF evaluation) does not reflect the GEF-7 reality. We suggest an amendment, or the provision of the correct context.	Report section has been re-labelled "literature review" rather than "meta-assessment." Quotation marks used to clarify text throughout.

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24	A policy review published by the UN Committee for Development Policy (Cortez 2019) identified some LDCF-specific concerns and observations relating to countries that are approaching graduation from the LDC category.	This is not an official document by the UN Committee for Development Policy. The document says the views and opinions expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the CDP nor the United Nations Secretariat. Recognizing that views expressed in this document are highly contentious and personal, what is the rationale to include this? It is outside the scope of this evaluation (and the role of the IEO) to comment on the ongoing political negotiations on extension of support to graduating LDCs.	Report section to re-labelled “literature review” rather than “meta-assessment.” This reference is now described as a “think piece policy review” rather than just a “policy review.”
Table 2	Title: Number of and Budgetary Allocation for LDCF Projects by Project Modality	It would be useful to also include in this table the numbers of these projects that had reached the TE (terminal evaluation) stage.	This information has been added to paragraph 30.
Table 3	Title: Number of and Budgetary Allocation for MTF Projects by GEF Phase	For GEF-7, please put the period covered by the table – it looks as if it covers the entire GEF-7 period. Also, the GEF-7 figures do not appear accurate: LDCF/SCCF Council approved three MTF projects/program in FY19. Please correct. It would be useful in this Table to also show, for these projects, the total financing coming from the other Trust Funds - otherwise, the “total” column is wrongly implying that this is the total funding to these projects.	Information is provided in the note below the table on the period covered. A note has also been added to figure 2 stating that for GEF-7 programming is still underway and explaining the portfolio.

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Figure 3	Title: Chart on agency distribution	Kindly also include a chart showing the agency distribution for GEF-7 only, as it is quite different. Given the major differences in the GEF-7 portfolio compared to the cumulative record, just presenting the cumulative chart may not capture the current status of the LDCF adequately.	No action taken. As no GEF-7 projects have begun implementation, and many projects from past periods are still underway, the current status of the LDCF is more accurately represented by figure 3 than by a chart focused only on the GEF-7 period. Furthermore, this evaluation does not only cover GEF-7.
Para 32	All 15 LDCF projects approved in the GEF-7 period are NAPA Implementation projects.	In GEF-7, the LDCF/SCCF Council approved six projects in December 2018 and eleven projects/programs in June 2019. So the GEF-7 portfolio prior to the cut-off date of September 2019 should be 17, not 15. Please clarify and revise the analysis. If the evaluation is excluding two out of the 17 projects/programs, what is the rationale?	Two GEF-7 parent programs with no child projects approved as of the cutoff are not included. Notes have been added to relevant tables and figures.
32, 33	"Error! Reference source not found"	It appears in number of paragraphs and pages. Please correct it as appropriate	This error has been addressed.

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34	“UNDP historically has been the GEF Agency with the largest share of LDCF...”	Yes, historically, but the agency distribution has become much more balanced in GEF-7. There is a distinct difference between the GEF-7 agency distribution compared to the cumulative figures, which has also been noted by Council. In the first two years of GEF-7, FAO had the highest share. Graphs below are from the LDCF Work Program cover note, presented to the June 2020 LDCF/SCCF Council. Please state these changes explicitly in this paragraph. Figure 2: Comparison of Agency Distribution of LDCF Financing Distribution of LDCF Financing by GEF Agency (\$ million) for GEF-7 Period <table><caption>Data for Figure 2 (Left): Distribution of LDCF Financing by GEF Agency (\$ million) for GEF-7 Period</caption><thead><tr><th>Agency</th><th>Amount (\$ million)</th><th>Percentage</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>UNDP</td><td>182.35</td><td>39%</td></tr><tr><td>UNEP</td><td>100.34</td><td>33%</td></tr><tr><td>FAO</td><td>55.00</td><td>11%</td></tr><tr><td>WHO</td><td>52.04</td><td>11%</td></tr><tr><td>WFP</td><td>51.55</td><td>11%</td></tr><tr><td>UNESCO</td><td>51.00</td><td>11%</td></tr><tr><td>UNEP</td><td>50.65</td><td>11%</td></tr><tr><td>UNEP</td><td>50.65</td><td>11%</td></tr></tbody></table> Distribution of LDCF Financing by GEF Agency (\$ million) since Fund Inception <table><caption>Data for Figure 2 (Right): Distribution of LDCF Financing by GEF Agency (\$ million) since Fund Inception</caption><thead><tr><th>Agency</th><th>Amount (\$ million)</th><th>Percentage</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>UNDP</td><td>462.0</td><td>39%</td></tr><tr><td>UNEP</td><td>362.2</td><td>33%</td></tr><tr><td>FAO</td><td>347.2</td><td>29%</td></tr><tr><td>WHO</td><td>343.6</td><td>29%</td></tr><tr><td>WFP</td><td>343.6</td><td>29%</td></tr><tr><td>UNESCO</td><td>343.6</td><td>29%</td></tr><tr><td>UNEP</td><td>343.6</td><td>29%</td></tr><tr><td>UNEP</td><td>343.6</td><td>29%</td></tr></tbody></table>	Agency	Amount (\$ million)	Percentage	UNDP	182.35	39%	UNEP	100.34	33%	FAO	55.00	11%	WHO	52.04	11%	WFP	51.55	11%	UNESCO	51.00	11%	UNEP	50.65	11%	UNEP	50.65	11%	Agency	Amount (\$ million)	Percentage	UNDP	462.0	39%	UNEP	362.2	33%	FAO	347.2	29%	WHO	343.6	29%	WFP	343.6	29%	UNESCO	343.6	29%	UNEP	343.6	29%	UNEP	343.6	29%	No action taken. GEF-7 is not the only period under review for this evaluation.
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36	have gained final approval by the CEO	Please use the term “CEO endorsement” consistent with established nomenclature, instead of “gained final approval” .	The text has been revised using CEO endorsement.																																																						
39	“The lowest degree of alignment, 78 percent of the projects reviewed across both evaluations, was related to UNFCCC guidance calling for projects to be cost-effective and complementary to other funding sources”	Please provide evidence/detail on how the projects are not cost-effective or not complementary to other funding sources.	This was part of the portfolio review, please refer to annex E.																																																						

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41 and Figure 7	“Figure 7 shows that 80 percent of recently submitted and approved projects included reference to the country’s respective NDCs in project documents compared to only 18 percent of recently completed projects...”	Not all NDCs include adaptation, as it is not a requirement to include adaptation in NDCs. This is why the 2018-2022 strategy states projects/programs should be aligned with NAPA, NAP, <u>and/or</u> NDC priorities. It is unclear if the 20 percent of the projects came from countries that did not include adaptation in NDCs, or projects did not reference the NDCs that included adaptation action. If you wish to keep this paragraph and figure, we think it only makes sense to include in the analysis the countries that actually included adaptation in the NDCs, and remove those that did not include adaptation. Otherwise, the statement and figure are misleading and do not present useful information. If a country did not include adaptation action in its NDC, there is nothing to reference in the NDC. Also, the “80 percent” statement is sufficient without the “18 percent” comparator, as this comparator references completed projects that were likely developed before the Paris Agreement. Please amend the paragraph accordingly.	Language has been added to clarify that not all NDCs include adaptation. Completed projects which reference (I)NDCs are mentioned with clarification that these were developed before the Paris Agreement, and with the comparator to recently submitted projects removed.
41	Recently submitted and approved projects also included more systematic linkages in comparison to completed projects.	Kindly provide clarification on what “systematic linkages” refers to here.	Paragraph has been amended as noted above.

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44	Most projects contribute to at least one other focal area...	Kindy elaborate on how "contribution" is being measured here.	This has been clarified in the text.
44	The portfolio review of recently approved Projects...	This paragraph speaks of "recently approved projects" but references the GEF-6 GEBs and not the GEF-7 core indicators. This leads to further confusion as to what "recently approved" means in the context of the report – are these referring to GEF-6 projects then, and not to GEF-7 ones? Please clarify.	The cohort of projects is explained in paragraph 11, point b.
44	Climate change only...	This line in the table is puzzling - why is "climate change only" being referenced as a GEF focal area, and furthermore as an "other" focal area to which LDCF projects potentially contribute? Is this referring to climate change mitigation?	Word "only" has been deleted to reflect that this refers to climate change focal area.
45	LDCF relevance in relation to the GEF adaptation strategy	It would be useful to have a summary here of what the adaptation strategy is and when it came into being. For example, reference to strategic objectives and strategic pillars can be brought up here to provide readers with some contextual information.	This information has been provided in box 2 and in table 5.

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45	“LDCF-financed support has been, to a lesser extent, generally relevant to the third objective—66 percent of projects were in alignment with the object to foster enabling conditions for effective and integrated climate change adaptation.”	Objective 3 has two specific entry points: (i) support to the NAP process; and (ii) support for enabling activities (EAs) in response to COP guidance. Whereas Objectives 1 and 2 focus on the nature of adaptation action, Objective 3 is focused more on the <u>category</u> of LDCF support. It is not accurate to state that it is relevant to a “lesser extent”; it is just relevant for different things. Without a doubt, the LDCF has been supporting the development of enabling conditions for adaptation in countries through Objectives 1 and 2, though projects that are not EAs of explicitly designed to solely support the NAP process. Given this background, please review and amend this paragraph.	These are the results of the portfolio review; please see annex E.

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46	“Relevance to the two strategic pillars has been less clear, particularly when it comes to the second pillar, enabling environments for the private sector”.	It appears this paragraph does not account for the LDCF projects supported through the Challenge Program for Adaptation Innovation (e.g. 10430, 10431, 10432, 10433, 10435, 10436), which are all PIF approved and include focus on adaptation innovation. We recognize these projects through the Challenge Program were only approved in late 2019 and early 2020, however similar also applies to the GEF-7 FSP PIFs, yet they were assessed (to September 2019) in this Evaluation. We suggest that a preliminary discussion on potential of the Challenge Program be included, as has been done for the GEF-7 LDCF PIFs. We suggest including reference to progress and potential with regards to these two strategic pillars through the GEF Challenge Program for Adaptation Innovation. For more information, see GEF, 2019, Update on the Challenge Program for Adaptation Innovation under the Special Climate Change Fund and the Least Developed Countries Fund , Council document GEF/LDCF.SCCF.27/Inf.04, and Winners of GEF Challenge Program for Adaptation Innovation announced .	These projects were not PIF approved as of the cutoff date for the evaluation, which was presented in the approach paper. As noted above, this evaluation does discuss the Challenge Program to the extent possible, given how recent a development it is.

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46	Relevance to the two strategic pillars has been less clear, particularly when it comes to the second pillar, enabling environments for the private sector. Sixty-two percent of projects aligned to a large or very large extent with the first pillar, expanding catalytic grant and non-grant investments.	It is unclear on how those projects that were designed and approved before GEF-7 need to align with the GEF-7 strategic objectives and the two strategic pillars. What is the rationale to analyze older projects against the new objectives and pillars that did not exist when they were approved? Please clarify or delete.	This evaluation covers a four-year period which overlaps GEF-6 and GEF-7. Projects submitted and approved during that period are covered using the most recent strategy. This is reiterated in paragraph 45.
46	“Sixty-two percent of projects aligned to a large or very large extent with the first pillar, expanding catalytic grant and non-grant investments...”	It is important to mention the context that the LDCF is only grant based, which may have some effect on expanding catalytic non-grant investments. The LDCF cannot be programmed as non-grant investments.	We have noted that LDCF is only grant based in paragraph 83. We disagree however that this is an argument to explain low alignment with this pillar, which guides LDCF work. The strategy introducing these pillars states “These two pillars are aligned with the approach to private sector engagement in the GEF-7 Programming Directions, while reflecting the challenges of financing adaptation through non-grant instruments.”
Table 5	Title: Comparison of Current and Previous GEF Adaptation Strategic Objectives and Pillars	These entries on the Table do not sound similar to each other at all – the last two rows of the “previous” adaptation objectives need to be switched to line up with the “current” ones.	No action taken. This table presents the current and previous strategic objectives and pillars in the order presented by the GEF Sec in 2018 and 2014. There seems to be a misunderstanding on the part of the reviewer.
54	Given the recentness of the changes to strategic objectives, the portfolio analysis of strategic alignment only reviewed projects that were recently submitted and approved (n = 25).	Please specify the time period covered in this analysis – when were these projects submitted and approved?	This is noted in paragraph 11 above.

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55 - This is 58	Perhaps the most substantial revision to the GEF adaptation strategic objectives in 2018 was the explicit identification of innovation and technology transfer as the means for reducing vulnerability and increasing resilience. Approaches or elements of LDCF projects are considered innovative if “they are deliberately applied to tackle an issue, and these approaches (i) have not been used before in the project area, and/or (ii) have not been used before to tackle this specific issue. Other elements that make an approach innovative is that the approach needs to be (iii) widely replicable, which is linked to being locally appropriate from a technological, environmental as well as a socio-economic point of view, and this should be possible (iv) at low economic cost, which links innovation to financial sustainability.” Given this increased emphasis on innovation, the portfolio analysis reviewed terminal evaluations of recently completed projects (n = 34), with a view to identifying and characterizing how LDCF projects were already contributing to the new innovation-focused objective. Table 6 categorizes the number and proportion of projects exhibiting innovative approaches, with examples provided to illustrate each innovation category.	Please note that there is no standard term for innovation. It is highly context specific. Therefore, it will be difficult to evaluate effectiveness based on this, unless there is a more expansive definition of this term. Also, the proposed “Approaches or elements” for innovation, as used in this document, has not been used in the strategy document.	No action taken. The working definition of innovation is provided in this paragraph. We have used this working definition in review of LDCF/SCCF projects in the Annual Evaluation Report consistently.

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Table 6	Title: Examples of Innovative Approaches from Recently Completed Projects	We suggest including reference, as relevant to the 6 LDCF projects supported through the GEF Challenge Program for Adaptation Innovation (see comment above for para 46). If this evaluation is not able to consider these projects due to timing, it may be useful to at least mention this programs creation and potential, given its explicit direct focus on innovation and private sector engagement. See GEF, 2019, Update on the Challenge Program for Adaptation Innovation under the Special Climate Change Fund and the Least Developed Countries Fund, Council document GEF/LDCF.SCCF.27/Inf.04, and Winners of GEF Challenge Program for Adaptation Innovation announced.	No action taken. The Challenge Program is covered to the extent possible given the fact that none of the projects were approved by the evaluation cutoff date, provided in the approach paper.

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Table 6	Title: Examples of Innovative Approaches from Recently Completed Projects	Please emphasize that these completed projects were not in operation when this new strategic objective of innovation came into being. Otherwise, this Table gives the wrong impression. This is explained in para 59 and in Figure 9, and could be uplifted more into the Table so as to give the proper context to the data: <i>“The limited alignment can be largely explained by the recentness of the pillar revisions in 2018 (table 5 above), and the material difference of the new pillars when compared to the previous pillars. These recent, major changes have yet to ‘trickle down’ into project design (this is in contrast to the revised strategic objectives, which were substantively similar to the previous strategic objectives)”</i>	We disagree with this comment. This table presents illustrative examples of innovation in the portfolio of projects completed since the 2016 LDCF evaluation. We do not consider this is misleading in any way. No action taken.
59	While LDCF portfolio alignment with GEF adaptation strategic objectives was strong, the extent of alignment with the two strategic pillars was less clear. The limited alignment can be largely explained by the recentness of the pillar revisions in 2018 (table 5 above),	It is unclear on how those projects that were designed before GEF-7 are meant to align with the GEF-7 strategic objectives and its pillar. Please clarify.	The next sentence in the same paragraph explains this point: “These recent, major changes have yet to trickle down’ into project design (this is in contrast to the revised strategic objectives, which were substantively similar to the previous strategic objectives).”

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59	The limited alignment can be largely explained by the recentness of the pillar revisions in 2018 (table 5 above), and the material difference of the new pillars when compared to the previous pillars. These recent, major changes have yet to 'trickle down' into project design (this is in contrast to the revised strategic objectives, which were substantively similar to the previous strategic objectives).	Figure 9 needs to be discussed and emphasized in reference to Table 6- that the recently submitted and approved projects DO align with the two new pillars to a very great extent.	Table 6 categorizes the forms of innovation identified across the portfolio, whereas figure 9 aggregates the ratings on depth of alignment, so the two charts are not directly comparable. No action taken.
Figure 12	Title: "Gender Mainstreaming Ratings of LDCF Portfolio"	It is not clear if these ratings apply to approved projects or TEs of completed projects - please clarify.	This has been clarified in paragraph 69 and in a note to the graph.
67	"The great majority of projects completed since 2016 are at least rated as "gender aware"; however, within 38 percent of projects the extent of gender mainstreaming actually reduced over the course of project implementation. The 34 LDCF projects completed since 2016 were rated at completion."	Please clarify when these 34 LDCF projects were approved. Different cohorts follow different policies and requirements. It is difficult to understand the analysis without such information.	It has been clarified that these projects pertain to the GEF-4 and 5 periods in paragraph 11. This gender scale has been in use by the IEO for some time and does not assess compliance with GEF policies and requirements, therefore details when these projects were approved are not necessary to repeat here.
70	However, the proportion of gender mainstreamed projects has reduced within the latest cycle...	As GEF-7 is only at the midpoint, this is not an entirely fair assessment to make. Also, the cohort of 15 projects for GEF-7 needs to be explained, as that does not cover all the projects/programs approved in GEF-7 before September 2019 (the first year of GEF-7). Suggest either deletion, or the provision of some context of (i) the number of GEF-7 mainstreamed projects that lead to this statement and (ii) the caveat that the analysis only covers the first year of GEF-7.	The text has been amended to clarify that we are still only partway through the GEF-7 period. The cohort of GEF-7 projects has been explained (see above comments).

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73	“It is notable that no LDCF projects approved during GEF-7 had a confirmed gender action plan in place.”	This statement seems to reflect some confusion around GEF policy and therefore not appropriate. The “Guidance to Advance Gender Equality in GEF Projects and Programs” shows in its Figure on page 7 that a Gender Action Plan is required of projects by CEO Endorsement. Most GEF-7 LDCF projects have not yet reached the stage of CEO Endorsement. So it is no surprise that they do not have a confirmed gender action plan, and they are in full compliance with the policy. We further note that a very high percentage of the GEF-7 LDCF PIFs/PFDs mention that a Gender Action Plan <u>will</u> be developed during project preparation. The IEO statement is de-facto requiring the gender action plan to be in place earlier than the GEF policy requires, and we think this is neither necessary nor appropriate. Please delete this paragraph.	The final sentence of this paragraph has been deleted.

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Figure 13	Title: "Existence of Gender Action Plan across LDCF Portfolio"	This figure needs revision as it mixes apples and oranges i.e., (PIF and CEO Endorsement Requests). It misleads readers into thinking GEF-7 projects are performing poorly on Gender (in terms of not providing Gender Action Plans (GAPs). As mentioned above, GAPs are not required at PIF stage and most of the PIFs explicitly mention that a Gender Action Plan (GAP) will be developed during project preparation. From the practical standpoint, it makes little sense for GAPs to be submitted at PIF stage as basic aspects of the project such as specific investments and project locations are still not fully known at that time. Please revise this figure to separate the analysis for PIFs and CEO Endorsements, noting that GAPs are not required at PIF stage. Or please include a footnote with the figure stating that for GEF-7, only PIFs were examined, which do not require a GAP and of which X% mentioned in the PIF that a GAP will be prepared.	The GEF-7 data has been removed from figure 13 and explanatory text has been added in paragraph 73.

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74	However, the terminal evaluation noted that in spite of these efforts, “not all project activities attracted the interest of women. For example, women were not involved (and probably were not interested in being involved) in the canal renovation.	This seems to be more of a reflection of the local context and conditions affecting project implementation, rather than the effectiveness of the implementation of any gender policy and guidelines by the LDCF. Also, it is unclear from this statement if adaptation priorities required canal renovation with potential benefits to women upon completion (even if women were not involved in the actual renovating work).	Text has been amended.
75	There is only limited evidence of gender action plans or gender mainstreaming strategies being implemented by LDCF projects	This paragraph is discussing evidence related to TEs, so these completed projects would therefore predate the recent GEF gender policy and guidelines. Please amend the sentence.	The IEO has been assessing gender considerations in completed LDCF projects in Annual Evaluation Reports since 2014. No action taken.
75	The figures also suggest that a majority of recent LDCF terminal evaluations are clearly not fulfilling GEF’s evaluation requirements on gender...	This paragraph is discussing evidence predating GEF Gender policy and guidelines. Please amend the sentence.	The IEO has been assessing gender considerations in completed LDCF projects in Annual Evaluation Reports since 2014.
75	“... and 25 (56 percent) of the terminal evaluations did not include any discussion of gender impacts or gender action plans. These figures imply that there <u>is a knowledge gap</u> around the gender-related results of LDCF projects, and of the extent to which gender analyses and action plans influence gender-related results.”	This paragraph is discussing matters related to older projects. It would be more accurate to say “there <u>was</u> a knowledge gap”. Please make the suggested amendment.	The analysis includes the most recently completed projects, therefore identifying that the knowledge gap still exists. No action taken.

Paragraph or page	Context in which comment is made	Comments	Response and action taken
77	“However, the portfolio analysis suggests that—for the LDCF at least—some work is still required to operationalize this guidance, and to ensure that GEF Agencies and LDCF projects now develop and actually deliver gender action plans.”	This has not been sufficiently demonstrated by the IEO evaluation; please see above comments on most GEF-7 PIFs specifying that Gender Action Plans will be developed during project preparation, as per the Guidance . Please revise the Gender section of this evaluation based on the above observations.	This sentence has been deleted.

80	The private sector is more involved as a participant or target of LDCF projects, but more substantive engagement—as an investor or executing partner—is extremely limited.	It could be useful clarify what is meant here by “more substantive engagement.” Is this more leveraging co-financing, as opposed to private sector engagement as an executing partner? This seems to reinforce the value of more explicitly indicating recent steps that have been made to strengthen private sector engagement and initial indications on their potential, including through the Challenge Program on Adaptation Innovation. Also, the statement seems to reveal a possible bias that involvement as a participant or target of project interventions is not as valuable as being an investor or executing partner. Within the LDC and LDCF context, participation/target engagements is an important element, as clearly stated in paragraph 112 of the 2018-2022 strategy as follows (underlined): Of particular relevance is the local private sector actors, especially micro, small, and medium enterprises, as they play an important role for the economy and communities in developing countries, providing services and access to hard-to-reach populations. They have a potential to contribute to increasing climate resilience in vulnerable populations and rural communities. <u>When addressing the private sector in the context of adaptation, and for the LDCF/SCCF, nurturing and facilitating the engagement local private sector actors is also</u>	The text has been revised.
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Paragraph or page	Context in which comment is made	Comments	Response and action taken
		<u>an important element</u> , in addition to targeting private sector primarily as catalyzers of larger scale financing and market developers.	
80	"...but more substantive engagement – as an investor or executing partner – is extremely limited."	Similar to comment above on para 46, with regards to private sector investment, it would be useful to mention the LDCF can only use grant instruments, and this has an influence on ability to blend finance with private equity or loan-based financing. To provide a wholistic view of GEF context and opportunities where the LDCF is situated within, it may also be relevant to mention the other parallel Funds and instruments available to the GEF that are complementary to the LDCF. For example, the NGI can use a range of financing instruments in engaging the private sector and catalyzing investment, but does not include adaptation impact indicators. However, the SCCF does have an adaptation focus and has flexibility to use different financial instruments and can therefore be particularly conducive to engagement and investment catalyzation with the private sector, including with blended finance.	This is now noted in paragraph 83.

Paragraph or page	Context in which comment is made	Comments	Response and action taken
Figure 14 and paragraphs on co-financing		We do not think it is appropriate to include co-financing from the private sector and inclusion of private sector as executing partners in this analysis. Globally, more than 90 percent of climate finance is attributable to mitigation, there is virtually no systematic private investment in adaptation, and there is no established framework or methodology to account for private sector adaptation investments (domestically or internationally). Almost all accounted for adaptation finance comes from the public sector (see CPI, 2019, 2020; UNEP adaptation finance gap report, 2016). Also, co-financing, public or private, is not required for the LDCF. There is also no requirement to include private sector as executing partners.	Fig 14 provides a summary of the nature of private sector involvement. We have added text clarifying that these forms of engagement are not requirements.
82	“...some of the main challenges for engaging the private sector.”	This paragraph provides a couple of possible explanations for limited private investment in LDCF projects, but ignores that LDCF is only grant based and therefore is limited in catalyzing blended finance with the private sector. Suggest some reference here, further to the comments above for para 80.	A note has been added that LDCF can only use grant instruments, in now paragraph 83.

Paragraph or page	Context in which comment is made	Comments	Response and action taken
83	“It is too early to assess the results of the Challenge Program: at the time of writing, none of the projects approved for funding through the Program have yet to commence. However, the Challenge Program will be reviewed in more detail during the upcoming evaluation of the SCCF.”	The exclusion of the Challenge Program from the Program evaluation is unfortunate, as it has been designed to address some of the challenges stated in the evaluation. The same statement – that the projects have yet to commence – also applies to the GEF-7 FSP PIFs, yet they were assessed (to September 2019) in this Evaluation. We suggest that a preliminary discussion on the Challenge Program be included, as has been done for the GEF-7 LDCF PIFs. Information Document on the Challenge Program prepared for the LDCF/SCCF Council 27 of Dec 2019 should be referenced in this para. See here: 2019, Update on the Challenge Program for Adaptation Innovation under the Special Climate Change Fund and the Least Developed Countries Fund, Council document GEF/LDCF.SCCF.27/Inf.04, and Winners of GEF Challenge Program for Adaptation Innovation announced	The statement has been amended to clarify that none of the projects were approved as of the cutoff date for this evaluation, (they are even newer than the GEF-7 projects we do cover). Assessment of the Challenge Program was not included in the scope of the evaluation in the approach paper. It will be included in future evaluations, as is stated within the evaluation.
86	Entire paragraph	Please highlight the lack of resources as an external factor, as the Secretariat has no control over voluntary contributions.	The paragraph describes the state of resources and its effect but does not assign blame. No action taken.

Paragraph or page	Context in which comment is made	Comments	Response and action taken
86 Figure 16	LDCF Funds Available Versus Funds Sought in Projects Awaiting Approval/Endorsement, and Projects in Pipeline	Paragraph 86 and figure 16 reference “projects in pipeline”. Figure 16 also graphs the “total projects in pipeline for CEO approval/endorsement.” There seems to be a misunderstanding – The term pipeline in the LDCF context referred to GEF-6 projects that were technically cleared but did not receive support. In GEF-7, there is no pipeline of projects. As stipulated in the programming strategy, countries that had a GEF-6 pipelined project had a choice to submit an entirely new project or update their proposal. There was no carry-over and automatic approval of GEF-6 pipelined concepts in GEF-7. Also, there is no such thing as “total project in pipeline for CEO approval/endorsement.” Please clarify and correct.	The language has been amended in the graph from “projects in pipeline” to “projects technically cleared for approval.”

Paragraph or page	Context in which comment is made	Comments	Response and action taken
87	“GEF Agencies reported in interviews that the long pipeline had left some lingering doubts as to the availability of resources, which continues to impact decisions on submitting project proposals.”	Whatever the sentiments expressed by the Agencies, the fact is that LDCF approved significantly greater resources in the first two years of GEF-7 compared to the first two years of GEF-6. There is no more pipeline, no more long wait, and a fairly good balance between the flow of PIFs getting approved and the Work Program based on resource availability. Clearly, the countries and Agencies have been benefitting from the improvements. Also, please recall that prior to GEF-7, Agencies raced to submit the PIFs in part to ring fence the resources due to the first-come, first-served policy of the LDCF and no access cap per country. In GEF-7, there is no incentive for such behavior. The Strategy clearly states that each LDC may access up to \$10 million in LDCF resources in GEF-7. This message has been reinforced in several fora, including communication to OFPs and Agencies and biannual Progress Report. Also, GEFSEC frequently updated all the Agencies through the Adaptation Task Force meeting about availability of resources for programming. Please factor this elements in this and other relevant paragraphs.	The paragraph already provides details on how Agencies have benefited from operational improvements. However, it remains valid and useful to note that this perception continues to affect t stakeholder decision making. No action taken.
89	...delays caused by activities for which timing was necessarily dependent on the season.	The meaning of this statement is unclear – please clarify.	This statement has been removed.

Paragraph or page	Context in which comment is made	Comments	Response and action taken
<i>Table 10</i>	Title: Cofinancing Across GEF Administered Funds	Please make it clear about the project cohort being covered – is it all completed projects for all phases? All programming modalities? If so, why is GEF only 321? Please clarify and make necessary changes	This information has been added in a note to the table.
90	... <u>cofinancing</u> can be an important source of stakeholder buy in and sustainability, and failure of expected <u>co-financing</u> ...	Please adopt consistent use of term ‘co-financing’ throughout this report. Please update throughout the text (not just this para90).	No action taken. Cofinancing is the term our IEO style guide stipulates.
91	Given that LDCF funds do not aim to meet a target ratio for cofinancing	Co-Financing Policy does not apply to the LDCF. Further LDCF does not have a <i>target</i> ratio. Also, it is unclear if the past IEO analysis that was cited as the cause for concern regarding project performance covered a portfolio of projects that did not require co-financing. Please clarify. Also, is IEO confident that different programming requirements do not influence on the overall project performance? Please revise this para accordingly.	We have included that the cofinancing policy does not apply to the LDCF in the body of the paragraph (was already noted in a footnote). Paragraph 91 clearly states there is no target for cofinancing. LDCF projects do report on expected cofinancing at entry and when that cofinancing fails to materialize, it is reasonable to expect that this may impact performance.

Paragraph or page	Context in which comment is made	Comments	Response and action taken
93	“Concurrent to these operational improvements has been a shift from the GEF-Secretariat Project Management Information system to a new platform, the GEF Portal. While the performance of the portal will be assessed through a future GEF IEO evaluation of the GEF’s results-based management system (GEF IEO 2020a), it is worth noting here that several stakeholders noted difficulties in using the new system for LDCF projects. Stakeholders have welcomed operational improvements, though some interviewees suggested additional guidance on operational changes would also be welcome....”	We would like to request that this paragraph be split into two, with one paragraph on the Portal and transition from the PMIS, and a separate paragraph concerning operational improvements introduced as per the 2018-2022 adaptation programming strategy. The reason is that these functions managed and followed up separately. The Portal is a GEF Secretariat-wide effort, with its own work plan, accountability, and team. On the other hand, the operational improvements are part of the 2019-2022 adaptation programming strategy, and as such were negotiated, rolled out, and managed for the LDCF, and fully under the control of the LDCF/SCCF team.	This paragraph has been split into two in line with this comment.
93	“... some interviewees suggested additional guidance on operational changes would also be welcome”	Please specify what kind of additional guidance has been requested, and whether this is a majority view. Also, please clarify the operational changes refer to those related to the review process and the Portal, or those related to the operational improvements as per the 2018-2022 adaptation programming strategy. Otherwise, please delete.	Clarifications have been added.

Paragraph or page	Context in which comment is made	Comments	Response and action taken
93	“Some agencies noted a lack of clarity around certain operational changes, such as a shift to a two-tiered review process (technical and operational), and subsequent extra time in back and forth communications. A webinar for stakeholders providing an overview of the new process may improve efficiency.”	This seems to be referring to the portion of the review conducted by GPU and that conducted by PPO. Together, they constitute the GEF review, and it is not a two-tiered process. The GEF review comments come as one. Please correct this mis understanding. Also, these operational changes, such as review process, are not unique to the LDCF but apply across the GEF to all projects. It is not clear if it makes sense to make suggestions/recommendations regarding GEF-wide approaches only to the LDCF. Finally, OFPs have been regularly provided information about the Portal and GEF-wide policy and process changes at National Dialogues and Agencies continue to be apprised about new processes through retreats and other meetings. This needs to be clarified in the paragraph.	Clarifications have been added.

Paragraph or page	Context in which comment is made	Comments	Response and action taken
96	“While efforts to mobilize funding before graduation can help ensure graduating LDC countries receive all the support for which they are eligible, one stakeholder interviewed also suggested additional leeway for continued LDCF funding to graduated countries for some period could ensure a smoother transition.”	This is a highly contentious topic in negotiations. The eligibility criteria set forth and approved by Council do not allow for support after graduation. Inclusion of this paragraph may possibly be misinterpreted as the IEO signaling its view or position on this matter, which is not advisable. As such, suggest to delete this.	The text has been revised and the second half of this sentence has been deleted.

101-102 Figure 19 Figure 20	“Half of all completed NAPA implementation and NAP projects did not show evidence of developed approaches being taken up on a regional/national scale”	It is not clear in this sentence who is expected to support the expansion on a regional/national scale; is the assumption that the LDCF project should support adaptation interventions and also replicate/upscale them within the same project? Replication within a project that is testing approaches would not make sense as the value and feasibility of the approach has yet to be demonstrated during its implementation. Also, the paragraph does not clarify whether replication was included among the project components. Please clarify. Most LDCF projects include a strategy for scale-up or replication. Whether actual replication can be accomplished depends on the country being able to secure resources for it. However, there is clear evidence that LDCF-supported approaches are being replicated in many cases, while securing additional, scaled-up finance for countries. For example: (i) Lao PDR participated in the UNEP-LDCF regional project, “Building climate resilience of urban systems through Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) in the Asia-Pacific region” (ID 5815), where EBA approaches were piloted in Phongxaly and Oudomxay in Lao PDR. The UNEP will build on this key LDCF-supported experience to support urban EBA	This finding is based on the portfolio review. The review protocol is available in annex E.
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		in other parts of Lao PDR, through the \$11.5M GCF proposal (approved in Dec. 2019), “Building resilience of urban populations with ecosystem-based solutions in Lao PDR.” (ii) In Samoa, the LDCF is supporting “Economy-wide Integration of Climate Change Adaptation and DRM/DRR to Reduce Climate Vulnerability of Communities in Samoa” (ID 5417). It’s MTR states: “Most progress has been achieved on the design and initial construction of the Vaisigano river protection wall, the finalized Integrated Watershed Management Plan for the Vaisigano watershed, the finalized revised National Building Code, and the increased capacity of government staff to access information on climate and disaster risks, as well as M&E on Climate Change Adaptation.” The GCF is now supporting a \$65M project (approved Dec 2016) in Samoa titled: “Integrated Flood Management to Enhance Climate Resilience of the Vaisigano River Catchment in Samoa”, which clearly builds on the LDCF one. (iii) The LDCF supported the UNDP-implemented “Strengthening Climate Information and Early Warning Systems in Malawi to Support Climate Resilient Development and Adaptation to Climate	
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Paragraph or page	Context in which comment is made	Comments	Response and action taken
		Change” project (ID 4994), which was approved in 2013. The GCF approved in 2015 a UNDP project on “Modernizing climate information and early warning systems in Malawi”. The GCF proposal states in para 19 <i>that this LDCF project will be referred to as the UNDP EWS project</i> in the remainder of the document and then proceeds to provide numerous examples of upscaling and building on the LDCF investments: - Para 30: “These investments build on on-going infrastructure efforts, including that through the UNDP EWS project...” - Para 30: “This will extend an existing system being installed through UNDP EWS project” - Para 34: “This output builds on and complements the efforts of the LDCF financed UNDP EWS project...” - Para 41: “Building on hydromet business development plans (existing and revisions through UNDP EWS project), provide...” Based on the above information, kindly revise.	

Paragraph or page	Context in which comment is made	Comments	Response and action taken
104	“Project built on the traditional knowledge and practices of local communities” in Fig. 22	Most of the LDCF portfolio is focused on rural agriculture, ecosystem-based adaptation, community-based adaptation, etc. Further, agencies inform us that communities are engaged in consultations on project design. Thus, the likelihood of building on traditional knowledge is high. However, the figure seems to show that this was not done to a large extent. Please provide more information on this.	This finding is based on the portfolio review. The review protocol is available in annex E.
General		This Evaluation could also discuss: (i) how stakeholders assess the LDCF approval process <u>compared</u> to that for other adaptation funds, such as the GCF, Adaptation Fund, PPCR, etc.; (ii) The technical strength and rigor that the STAP review brings to the LDCF (some climate adaptation funds – e.g., the Adaptation Fund - have no such scientific advisory body).	No action taken. The scope of the evaluation was defined in the approach paper.

Paragraph or page	Context in which comment is made	Comments	Response and action taken
108	with a sample of 11 projects and 72 percent rated in the likely range, compared to 50 percent of the 30 projects reviewed in 2020 with sustainability ratings available in the likely range	Please add the caveat here that an analysis of just 11 projects is unlikely to reveal much inference-worthy information, as the sample is simply too small. Also, could you clarify when these projects were approved/CEO endorsed, and what were the prevailing modalities/activities to ensure sustainability back then? In other words, has there been any advances in how projects are developed/reviewed/monitored/implemented for sustainability since the cohort of these completed projects were done?	A note has been added. The report has previously stated that all completed projects are from GEF-4 and GEF-5 periods.
119	LDCF has mainly contributed to innovation and institutional strengthening additionalities extending beyond adaptation benefits	Innovation and institutional strengthening are essential conduits to deliver adaptation benefits. In this context, please clarify how innovation and institutional strengthening is “beyond adaptation benefits”? Also, please clarify how is adaptation benefits defined here?	Outcomes of GEF projects are global environmental benefits. Outcomes of LDCF projects are adaptation benefits. Innovation and institutional strengthening are, as described in the footnote, spill-over effects beyond project outcomes. No action taken.
121	... although this was partly explained by the recentness of the pillar revisions (2018), which have yet to have a marked influence on LDCF project design	Please uplift to the bolded conclusion text. We suggest that the bolded conclusion text be edited along the following lines, with the blue highlights representing new text: <i>The design of LDCF projects clearly contribute to the three recently revised GEF adaptation strategic objectives. While the extent of contributions to the two new strategic pillars was not as strong, this is partly explained by the recentness of the pillar revisions.</i>	We disagree, this change will not impact the message. No action is needed.

Paragraph or page	Context in which comment is made	Comments	Response and action taken
122	The overall gender performance of the LDCF portfolio has improved over time and the use of gender analysis during project design is now widespread; however, the operationalization of these analyses is limited	Given the emphasis in the paragraph on the positive movement towards the operationalization of the Gender Equality policy and guidelines, we suggest that the bolded conclusion text be edited along the following lines, with the blue highlights representing new text: <i>“The overall gender performance of the LDCF portfolio has improved over time and the use of gender analysis during project design is now widespread; while the operationalization of these analyses seems limited in the project cohort under analysis, the current Policy and Guidelines are likely to positively impact recently approved and ongoing projects.”</i>	The conclusion text has been edited.
122	it is also concerning that a majority of LDCF terminal evaluations fail to undertake any form of gender-focused assessment, despite this being a requirement of GEF terminal evaluations.	Similar to the point made in earlier comments, it is likely that the TE cohort being analyzed refers to projects that were created and mostly implemented before these gender requirements were in place. Please revise the sentence, If that is the case.	Language has been amended to reflect when guidelines came into effect (April 2017) and supporting evidence focused only on terminal evaluations published in or after April 2017 has been added.

123	“Substantive engagement with the private sector is extremely limited, with LDCF projects facing common challenges. ..two common challenges...”	This conclusion is somewhat misleading and does not represent the full picture. As indicated earlier, globally, more than 90 percent of climate finance is attributable to mitigation, there is virtually no systematic private investment in adaptation, and there is no established framework or methodology to account for private sector adaptation investments (domestically or internationally). Almost all accounted for adaptation finance comes from the public sector (see CPI, 2019, 2020; UNEP adaptation finance gap report, 2016). The challenge is universal, not just for the LDCF. The details very well note the challenges related to private sector investment and business case in adaptation and also the less developed private sector in LDCs. It is therefore important that these factors are acknowledged in the main statement as proposed at the end of this paragraph. As indicated in our comment on paragraph 80, the statement seems to show a possible bias that involvement as a participant or target of project interventions does not count as substantive engagement. Within the LDC and LDCF context, participation/target engagements is an important element, as clearly stated in paragraph 112 of the 2018-2022 strategy. Also, this paragraph seems to ignore the reality that the LDCF is solely grant	Text has been revised.
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Paragraph or page	Context in which comment is made	Comments	Response and action taken
		based, and the implications for programming and joint investment with private sector partners. It is useful to recognize creation of the Challenge Program, with the explicit objective to overcome related barriers. It may also be relevant to reference GEF engagement with the Global Commission on Adaptation and related activities to catalyze private sector investment in adaptation here, and or other relevant paras. A related useful reference can be found here: https://www.unepfi.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/GCA-Adaptation-Finance.pdf (see page 32 for discussion on barriers) We suggest that the paragraph be revised, and bolded conclusion text be edited along the following lines: <i>Engagement of the private sector as adaptation financiers is extremely limited, with LDCF projects facing common challenges that have been identified in global adaptation finance.</i>	

Paragraph or page	Context in which comment is made	Comments	Response and action taken
124	Several interviewees noted improvements in efficiency during the GEF-7 period	This fact can be uplifted into the bolded conclusion text. We therefore suggest that the bolded conclusion text be edited along the following lines, with the blue highlights representing new text: <i>The lack of resources available for new projects during GEF-6 clearly reduced the efficiency of the LDCF project approval process, while an improvement in efficiency is noted for the GEF-7 period.</i>	We do not agree. This change will not impact the message. No action taken.
125	caused by activities for which timing was necessarily dependent on the season.	As in an earlier comment, the meaning of this statement is unclear. Please clarify.	This sentence has been removed.

Paragraph or page	Context in which comment is made	Comments	Response and action taken
Page 55	Recommendation 1: “The GEF Secretariat and GEF Agencies should ensure that the GEF Gender Equality Policy and related guidance is operationalized including the development and implementation of gender action plans.”	As noted before, it is not true that the gender policy is not operationalized. The understanding of operationalization especially for GEF 7 projects is drawn from the evidence that the PIFs do not include Gender Gap Analysis (Figure 13). The IEO may consider the fact that the gap analysis is provided at the CEO endorsement stage when the project is fully designed, and the scope is clearer for factoring in gender related issues. We suggest rephrasing the recommendation to state: <i>“The GEF Secretariat and GEF agencies should build on the momentum created on Gender for the remainder of GEF-7 and beyond. It should ensure that the Gender Action Plans, developed by the CEO endorsement in line with the GEF policy, are robust and implemented.”</i>	The language has been modified.

Paragraph or page	Context in which comment is made	Comments	Response and action taken
Page 55	Recommendation 2: “The GEF SEC should ensure operational changes introduced in new programming strategies such as the revised approval process for 2018-2022 are systematically communicated to GEF Agencies and countries through published guidelines and when appropriate webinars.”	The recommendation seems to mix the operational improvements from the new LDCF/SCCF strategy and the GEF-wide changes in project review and approval process and the Portal introduction. Recommendations for the GEF-wide policy and operational changes should be made for the GEF-wide evaluation, not for the LDCF, as these are beyond control of the LDCF. These changes were introduced for all funds, and as such the LDCF cannot be held responsible on its own to address desired improvements expressed by stakeholders. Also, any findings and recommendations regarding the Portal (i.e., review and approval process) should be reflected in the Portal evaluation. The GEF-wide recommendations cannot be implemented by the LDCF on its own. We would like this recommendation to be deleted.	This recommendation has been removed.

Paragraph or page	Context in which comment is made	Comments	Response and action taken
Page 55	Recommendation 3: “The GEF Secretariat and GEF Agencies should give more emphasis to factors, both within and outside the control of a project, affecting the sustainability of outcomes during project design and implementation.”	We suggest reorienting this recommendation to focus more concretely on measures the GEF Secretariat and its Agencies can take to ensure better sustainability outcomes for LDCF-financed projects and programs. Specifically, the recommendation should point to the durability actions outlined in GEF Council document, Towards Greater Durability of GEF Investments (GEF/C.57/08), approved by the Council in December 2019. We suggest rephrasing the recommendation to state: <i>“To enhance sustainability outcomes during project design and implementation, the GEF Secretariat and GEF Agencies should continue to explore further improvement in implementing relevant durability actions, i.e., ensuring that projects include a theory of change, multi-stakeholder processes, stakeholder engagement and adaptive learning, as highlighted in Council document GEF/C.57/08.”</i>	The language has been modified to include durability actions found in his document.
STAP			
62	In response to paragraph “The AfDB Climate Adaptation for Rural Livelihoods and Agriculture (CARLA) (GEF ID 3302) project in Malawi included various content-technical lessons related to climate change adaptation initiatives in the agriculture sector. These include the finding that treadle pump technology and	There are a few instances where anecdotal data or place-specific findings are presented in a universal way. This evaluation does not provide evidence for generalized findings about specific interventions, and would be unwise to present data in a manner that suggests it can do so.	Language has been amended to reflect the fact that this is specific to the country context.

Paragraph or page	Context in which comment is made	Comments	Response and action taken
	motorized pumps are not suitable for smallholder farmers, as the former is labor intensive, and the latter is costly and environmentally unfriendly. Other lessons from this project are that beneficiary farmers prefer individual woodlots to communal woodlots, and that environmental and conservation measures in catchment areas (upstream) are key to sustained use of irrigation infrastructures developed downstream.”	(p.25) - #62 is a problem. That is a narrow evaluation of a technology in one place. Just because the pumps did not work there does not mean we have a finding that such pumps “are not suitable for smallholder farmers, as the former is labor intensive, and the latter is costly and environmentally unfriendly.” This might be true in Malawi, but it is not clear it is true anywhere else, and better not to present it as such.	
109 & 110	In response to description of findings from postcompletion visits.	(p.49) - again two data points from project visits become a dataset that could be interpreted as broad findings about the continuation of benefits. It is unclear what is the value of two site visits. They could be used to illustrate examples of larger trends, but including them as stand-alone points risks elevating their evidentiary value.	Language has been added to emphasize that these two projects cannot be considered representative.
45	In response to statement “The evaluation found the project design for 88 percent of projects approved since the 2016 evaluation (n = 25) to be aligned from a large to a very large extent with the objective to reduce vulnerability and increase resilience through innovation and technology transfer for climate change adaptation...”	(p.18) It seems difficult to capture the alignment of projects with objectives that involve innovation when the definition of innovation itself seems to be in question. What is the working definition of innovation being used here? <u>Clarifying this in the text of the report would be very helpful.</u> Without this definition, it is unclear what is the value of the claims and trends reported.	Definition of innovation is provided in paragraph 58.
50	In response to paragraph “Taking a closer look at projects approved since the 2016 evaluation (n = 25) a trend towards	(p.20) The declining alignment of projects with primary priority areas is interesting, but the explanation of this trend is unconvincing – is a best guess? Suggest discussing this with	We have amended this section.

Paragraph or page	Context in which comment is made	Comments	Response and action taken
	alignment with other priorities outlined in the NAPA country report is detected. While the 2016 evaluation found that 90 percent of projects addressed a primary priority area as listed in the report, this evaluation found only 42 percent of projects reviewed at entry did so, while the rest (58 percent) addressed priorities identified and discussed in NAPA reports, but not the primary priority areas. One possible explanation is that as time has passed the primary priorities have been addressed in previous projects, and new projects address other priorities identified and discussed in the NAPA country report. Additionally, while NAPAs have provided a solid foundation for adaptation work in LDCs, adaptation work and research has advanced since their formation, and countries may be responding to more recent priorities. For example, two of the 25 projects reviewed at entry in 2020 were focused at least in part on the NAP process, the UNDP project Climate Resilient Growth and Adaptation in Democratic Republic of Congo, (GEF ID 9392) and the UNEP project Strengthening the Capacity of Government and Communities in South Sudan to Adapt to Climate Change (GEF ID 9723). As noted above, projects are also increasingly focused on alignment with priority areas identified in INDCs/NDCs. Thus, an evolution over time in the focus of LDCF projects is appropriate.”	project staff to find out what is going on; this might validate the conclusions or provide alternatives, either would be valuable.	

Paragraph or page	Context in which comment is made	Comments	Response and action taken
56	In response to paragraph “Firstly, projects helped to raise awareness of climate change adaptation across all stakeholder groups, from communities to senior politicians and decision-makers. For some projects this increased awareness was purposefully delivered through targeted activities (for example, direct promotional work on adaptation), but more common was a general level of awareness raised simply through each project’s basic, inherent focus on adaptation.”	(p.22) Is the claim that projects raise awareness of adaptation more than an assumption that awareness should be raised because there is a project? There does not appear to be any measurement to support this contention. If the mechanism for impact is simply existence, perhaps that should be the absolute baseline against which impact is measured, and not the measured impact. Unless there is data to support this claim, beyond project staff (who have a conflict of interest) believing this to be true, this finding might be overstating the awareness-raising potential of LDCF work. <u>If so, please consider removing this claim.</u>	Language has been amended to reflect the fact that this is based on perception on the part of interviewees (across stakeholder groups.)
Figure 10 p.25	In response to APR performance ratings	(p.25) Under implementation, there is a disturbing trend where projects go from a very high quality of implementation to a much lower quality of execution, but no discussion about why. <u>This should be discussed and, to the extent possible, explained.</u>	Discussion has been added.
100	In response to findings on catalytic effects	(p.42) – 70% of projects demonstrated a technology. Did that demonstration catalyze anything new? This what we want to learn. The finding on demonstration should be linked across projects – that is, what percentage of projects demonstrating a new technology catalyzed something new with that technology (this is not clear) and what was it that the technology catalyzed (new behaviors, new activities, new outcomes)?	No action taken. These findings were derived from a portfolio review which was not designed to answer the specific question you pose here.

Paragraph or page	Context in which comment is made	Comments	Response and action taken
		Without this sort of follow-on, the percentage of projects demonstrating a technology is not very useful information	
44-45	In response to findings on catalytic effects	(pp.44-45) – The assessment of projects’ replication outcomes and scaling-up outcomes are very similar...suggesting that they might have shared barriers that could be identified and addressed. There is no discussion of this in the text. <u>The report should assess the extent to which these are related challenges that might be addressed in project design, implementation, or execution.</u>	Discussion of barriers such as the need for continued financing are discussed, as is the fact that these two catalytic effects are more difficult to achieve because they are less within the control of the project, compared to the previous two presented.
-	In response to Table 11: factors noted in terminal evaluations as contributing to or hindering likely sustainability of project outcomes and number of projects in which they are noted	While it is clear that unpredictable resources had an impact on projects and the overall portfolio, a lot of the challenges captured in this review are not about financing. They are about design and implementation. For example, on p.50, weak project design is listed as a factor in sustainability outcomes in the LDCF portfolio, which is an argument for STAP’s advice on ToC, climate risk assessment, etc.	Noted. The evaluation has added a discussion of the GEF Secretariat paper on durability in the section on Factors affecting sustainability of outcomes, which builds on STAP advice and includes advice on development of project theories of change.
22	In response to ““LDCF projects were also found to face broader contextual challenges, where limited capacities within LDCs tended to limit projects’ ability to deal with the complexity of adaptation, and to fully manage climate-related risks.”	(p.8) This calls out for TOCs that take the potential for complex, systemic risks and probabilistic climate futures more seriously, because these can make concrete the capacities which are missing in a given context and therefore a path to success.	Discussion of the need for TOCs has been added in paragraph 110.
39	In response to “the portfolio of approved and/or ongoing LDCF projects have objectives to promote the integration of adaptation measures	(p.15) While it is interesting that a huge percentage of “the portfolio of approved and/or ongoing LDCF projects have objectives	Noted. We look forward to the next IPCC AR and will take it into account in future work.

Paragraph or page	Context in which comment is made	Comments	Response and action taken
	in national socioeconomic and environmental policies and actions, including development and poverty reduction strategies, plans or policies from a large to a very large extent”	to promote the integration of adaptation measures in national socioeconomic and environmental policies and actions, including development and poverty reduction strategies, plans or policies from a large to a very large extent” this may not be an unmitigated good. There is a growing literature on how mainstreaming adaptation into other sectors can result in adaptation capture, where adaptation becomes a means of perpetuating business as usual in sectors that need change and transformation. This issue will appear in the next IPCC AR.	
Table 6 p.23	In response to examples of innovative approaches from recently completed projects	(p.23) What are the biggest payoffs under the heading of “innovation and technology transfer” for adaptation? The introduction of new technologies is concrete, but the level of innovation is quite low if a proven technology is applied in a new context. What is needed, and what will be emphasized in the next IPCC AR, are the social/economic/political barriers to adaptation – things that are best addressed through innovative participatory approaches and significant capacity building, not new technologies. In short, there is a lot of technology, but not a lot of ability to use it, in the world. Transformative investments might explore how to make the existing technology usable.	Noted. We look forward to the next IPCC AR and will take it into account in future work.
General		Gender mainstreaming: the entire evaluation of gender mainstreaming rests on a rating system that assumes that more is better –	Noted. The IEO is conducting an evaluation on Institutional Policies and Engagement at the GEF that includes the Gender Equality Policy.

Paragraph or page	Context in which comment is made	Comments	Response and action taken
		that is, the darker green the level of the project (moving toward gender transformative), the better the project. GEF projects, like development and adaptation projects, should have a gender analysis, gender-disaggregated data, and gender-sensitive indicators (as under “Gender Sensitive” on the scale). There is no project that will not be improved, or whose M&E will not be improved, by such efforts. a. However, not all projects need to be gender mainstreamed or transformative to achieve significant global environmental benefits. Indeed, there are times when such mainstreaming/transformation can hinder the achievement of such benefits. A good project design should make the argument for why gender mainstreaming or transformation will promote project goals, but it should not be assumed that they will. b. As a result, it is not clear that projects “get worse” at gender from entry to completion. It could be that projects figure out that some need more attention to gender, while others need less. There needs to be a contextual argument for the depth of gender engagement beyond the “gender sensitive” baseline in PIFs and beyond.	This evaluation will revise the methodology for assessing gender mainstreaming by IEO evaluation.

Paragraph or page	Context in which comment is made	Comments	Response and action taken
		c. Therefore, it would appear that (page 28), LDCF is getting very good at getting to a baseline for gender in its projects. However, it would be a mistake to assume that the limited amount of mainstreaming or transformation is a failure: there isn't enough evidence about the projects to know if mainstreaming or transformation was appropriate. d. The gender action plans noted under #73 on page 29 seem to be a potentially useful place from which to start addressing this issue.	
75	In response to "There is a knowledge gap around the gender-related results of LDCF projects, and of the extent to which gender analysis and action plans influence gender-related results."	(p.30) – The knowledge gap around the gender related results of LDCF projects, or the extent to which gender analysis and action plans influence gender-related results, is unsurprising. This is because there is a lack of differentiation between projects where such results are appropriate and necessary, and those where such results are not. So there will be a lot of noise in the data – this is why the whole typology/rating system for gender needs to be overhauled.	Clarifications have been made in the text. The knowledge gap we are referring to is regarding reporting on implementation and results of gender analysis and gender action plans.
External Reviewer, Adaptation Fund – Technical Evaluation Reference Group (AF-TERG)			
4	In response to "Since it entered into force in November 2016, the LDCF is part of the operating entity of the financial mechanism for the Paris Agreement and the UNFCCC."	Not sure that is the exact right text. I found: "At the Paris Climate Change Conference in 2015, the Parties agreed that the operating entities of the financial mechanism – GCF and GEF – as well as the SCCF and the LDCF shall serve the Paris Agreement.	The text has been amended.

Paragraph or page	Context in which comment is made	Comments	Response and action taken
		The fact that the GEF 'manages' the LDCF does not make the LDCF 'part of the operating entity'. Would phrase this differently.	
4	In response to "The LDCF is entrusted to continue to play a key role to strengthen least developed countries' resilience to climate change, with a renewed focus on implementation."	A bit of a big step! Par. 2 does not mention resilience. The Paris agreement also has other focus areas; 'adaptive capacity', 'vulnerability'. To single out resilience is a stretch, without building that bridge.	The text has been amended.
4	In response to "The LDCF is entrusted to continue to play a key role to strengthen least developed countries' resilience to climate change, with a renewed focus on implementation."	Why 'renewed'? It always focused on implementation after the NAPAs.	The word renewed has been removed.
4	At the heart of the Paris Agreement and the achievement of long-term goals are the nationally determined contributions (NDCs).	A country's INDC is converted to a Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) when it formally joins the Paris Agreement by submitting an instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, Given that LDCs have not all formally joined the Paris agreement - post probably have - it is more correct to talk about (I)NDC, because it might be a mixed bag.	We have changed to (I)NDC throughout where appropriate.
4	Each country outlines its efforts to reduce national emissions and to adapt to impacts of climate change. LDCF supports the adaptation related NDCs and seeks to align its programming with priorities identified in NDCs.	No, not 'each country'. I think it was an NDC Partnership study in 2018 that found that just below 75% of NDCs mentioned adaptation. That does not mean that is meaningful. NDCs are not known for their adaptation, but it is improving. This sentence seems to imply	The language has been amended.

Paragraph or page	Context in which comment is made	Comments	Response and action taken
		that each country tackles both adaptation and mitigation in their NDC. That is not true.	
6	NAPs provide a process for LDCs to formulate and implement activities that focus on medium- and long-term adaptation needs, building on the experience of the LDCs in addressing urgent and immediate adaptation needs through the NAPAs.	YES! The biggest area for alignment is between NAPs and NDCs in an operational way, with the opportunity to integrate into broader development planning, i.e. SDGs.	Noted.
6	As of September 2019, the cutoff for this evaluation, 11 projects have been identified by the GEF Secretariat as providing support to the NAP process.	Any mention in those 11 about any linkages to the (I)NDCs or SDGs? That is what the future will look like...	Linkages to (i)NDCs are discussed later.
8	As of September 2019, the cutoff date for this evaluation, nine GEF Agencies were involved in LDCF operations. Following the cutoff date, two additional agencies, Conservation International, and World Wildlife Fund (WWF-US) had project concepts approved, bringing the current total as of writing to 11 GEF Agencies involved in LDCF operations.	Why a cut off of Sept. 2019 if after that you include data beyond the cut-off? Why mention it? They are concepts! Might never materialize as implementation.	Presentation of this evaluation was delayed by the COVID pandemic. We included discussion to the extent of possible some relevant developments past the cutoff date, including progress on the Challenge Program.
9	The main objective of this evaluation is to assess the progress made by the LDCF since the 2016 LDCF program evaluation and the extent to which the LDCF is achieving the objectives set out in the GEF Programming Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change for LDCF/SCCF (2018-2022) (box 2).	The first question should be achieving objective from COP guidance. Somewhere it should mention whether or not the GEF programming strategy is actually aligned with COP guidance. That seems now to be implicitly assumed.	No action taken. This was not in the scope of the approach paper.
9	The overarching goal and strategic objectives, an integral part of the GEF programming strategy on adaptation, translate into evaluation questions grouped by five core evaluation criteria.	Again, COP guidance.	No action taken. This was not in the scope of the approach paper.

Paragraph or page	Context in which comment is made	Comments	Response and action taken
9	Relevance. Does LDCF support continue to be relevant to UNFCCC COP guidance and decisions, the GEF adaptation programming strategy, and countries' broader development policies, plans and programs?	Yes, of course that is mentioned first. Should also be the case in the introductory part of the paragraph.	No action taken.
9	Sustainability. To what extent have the outcomes achieved in LDCF projects been sustainable postcompletion?	Are you really looking at actual sustainability x years after completion, or anticipated sustainability? In case of actual sustainability, you probably would need to set a fixed amount of time (eg. x years after completion) to value completed projects in the same way.	The time frame for postcompletion assessment is provided in paragraph 15.
9	Additionality. What has been the additionality, both environmental and otherwise, of the LDCF?	Would define it somewhere. Eg. a question would be why gender objectives are not part of additionality.	The definition is provided in paragraph 120.
10	At the evaluation's onset, the evaluation undertook a meta-assessment of evaluations conducted by the IEO, the evaluation offices of GEF Agencies and others that have reviewed the LDCF, the NAPA and NAP process since the 2016 LDCF program evaluation.	Touch upon the adaptation component of (I)NDCs here.	No action taken. This sentence refers to the section retitled literature review, which is covering relevant studies and evaluations, and did not cover the issue of (i)NDCs.
12	For example, information for all completed NAPA implementation and NAP projects with terminal evaluations available ($n = 45$) is presented together where possible, and information for the all NAPA implementation and NAP projects: ($n = 229$) is presented as well where possible.	is presented jointly as well	The language has been amended.
12	Some elements of the portfolio review, such as questions related to private sector involvement, contributions to NDCs, and questions on gender inclusion informed by the newly introduced GEF	(I)NDCs	Has been amended.

Paragraph or page	Context in which comment is made	Comments	Response and action taken
	gender policy, were included for the first time in this review.		
12	Results for these questions can therefore only be presented for the 59 projects reviewed in 2020.	First time you mention that 59 projects were reviewed. Could do with a little introduction here.	A clarification has been added.
15	These included piloting of a methodological approach for postcompletion verification developed by the GEF IEO (GEF IEO 2019b).	Is this used for sustainability? If so, better make that link in this sentence.	They are not exclusively used for sustainability as they also provide evidence on other findings and recommendations, as currently reflected in the text.
17	The evaluation matrix (annex C), summarizing the key questions, indicators or basic data, sources of information and methodology, was used to guide the analysis and triangulation.	Perhaps good to discuss the type of triangulation. Just a few lines.	Further clarification has been added.
18	Finally, in line with IEO practices, stakeholder engagement and quality assurance measures were established for this evaluation. The draft approach paper and evaluation report were circulated to, and validated before finalization through a comprehensive stakeholder feedback process with the key stakeholders. Key stakeholders include the GEF Secretariat, relevant GEF Agencies, the GEF Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) and select GEF focal points. The Coordinator of the Adaptation Fund Technical Evaluation Reference Group Secretariat served as an external peer reviewer providing advice on the approach paper and evaluation report. Audit trails of comments and responses are available on the IEO website.	If these are put on paper, perhaps put a reference in to the approach paper. It is not entirely clear where the below talks about engagement, and where it talks about quality assurance.	No action taken.
19	Developments in the LDCF portfolio after September 2019 were however covered through stakeholder interviews.	Doesn't that create a skewedness in your evidence base? How did you deal with that?	No action taken. The sentences following provide more detail on developments covered after September 2019. These developments

Paragraph or page	Context in which comment is made	Comments	Response and action taken
			were covered to the extent possible given their recentness.
19	All Agencies active in the LDCF portfolio were contacted for interview, regardless of whether or not they were implementing projects approved by the September 2019 cut-off date.	While you indicate projects that were covered but not part of the portfolio review, you do not follow up on the previous sentence, which is more about agencies > Sept 2019, opposed to projects > Sept 2019. Yes, you introduce CI and WWF-US earlier, but would repeat here, given the sentence.	The expansion of Agencies involved in LDCF is a development in the LDCF portfolio, as is the Challenge Program. Language has been amended to clarify.
22	The most substantive recent study of the LDCF was undertaken by Sovacool, Linnér and Klein (2017), presented in an open access journal article, used a sample of five LDCF-financed projects to analyze strengths and weaknesses of the Fund.	So they analyze strengths and weaknesses of over 200 projects by looking at a sample of 5?! Not sure I would call this substantive and give is this much attention. If you do, please be more explicit about the limitations here.	Language has been amended to clarify that these five projects were case studies.
23	A key part of the supporting evidence for this conclusion was that LDCF's efficiency had been undermined "due to unstable governments, unpredictability of resources, climate extremes and natural disasters, co-funding requirements, and lengthy project approval processes."	So strange to give such a weight to the LDCF in the MOPAN. Financially the LDCF was < 10% of GEF money for the 2017-2018 period. Is should as such get less weight.	Noted.
24	The review provided some evidence of the value placed on the LDCF by recipient countries, noting that "losing access to the LDCF is a main concern for many graduating countries, particularly the small island developing States (SIDS), due to their considerable vulnerability to the impacts of climate change."	You can also refer to your own SIDS eval, which during my time found the same. See if that made it into the final report, or in the case studies.	Noted.
25	These two characteristics were seen as an implicit acknowledgement that "LDCs are not in a position to 'compete' with other, more	Very strange to 1. be implicit (like it is a finding you don't really believe in) and 2. that it is a finding at all.	Noted.

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	capable developing countries for climate change finance."	There are other grant-based funds on adaptation that also target non-LDCs. There are also loan focused operations focusing on LDCs (IDA).	
25	These two characteristics were seen as an implicit acknowledgement that "LDCs are not in a position to 'compete' with other, more capable developing countries for climate change finance."	Just look at the amount of IBRD / IDA money going to LDCs and non-LDCs.	Noted.
25	In line with a core finding and recommendation of the 2016 GEF IEO evaluation of the LDCF, the paper also reiterated that a prominent concern for LDCs was the inadequacy of resources available through the LDCF, and the lack of funding predictability.	Completely separate conclusion from the rest of the par. Strange.	Noted.
27	Finally, the GEF IEO's 2018 Sixth Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF (OPS6) included several LDCF-specific findings, although these were mostly derived directly from the 2016 GEF IEO evaluation of the LDCF.	Were there no LDC findings in any of the IAP work?! I assume both SIDS and food security having some LDC specific elements in it?	No action taken.
28	This chapter presents an overview of the LDCF portfolio. The LDCF portfolio has evolved since first introduced during the GEF-3 period, shifting from enabling activities focused on preparing NAPA reports, to full- and medium-size projects implementing priority activities from NAPAs, or supporting the NAP process.	Good to split out if that is towards the development of the NAP or work implementation. Also, missing is the adaptation component of (I)NDCs, while you do bring it up later on.	This level of detail is not necessary in the introduction to the section. No action taken.
Table 2, pg. 10	Total MSP/FSP	Would be nice to have a line below it saying "* Of which NAP focused" ...	No action taken. This level of detail is not necessary.
Table 3, pg. 11	Cofinancing	Would add a column to the right "* Of which GEF MTF" ... and add values there.	Table has been amended.

Paragraph or page	Context in which comment is made	Comments	Response and action taken
35	National and regional LDCF projects are implemented primarily in the Africa and Asia region, consistent with the regional distribution of LDCs.	Odd! Given global is ALSO implemented in Africa and Asia, so you can say that LDCF projects (in general) are implemented primarily in Africa and Asia.,	No action taken.
36	The LDCF portfolio has matured since the previous LDCF Program Evaluation, with 45 NAPA implementation and NAP projects completed, or 20 percent of the portfolio of approved projects.	Continued to grow. It matured from NAPA to NAPA implementation. This is more a continuation. If there would be a big focus on NAP and INDC I would talk about a second maturing.	This section refers to increasing share of completed projects.
Figure 5 pg.14	Figure 5: Distribution of LDCF Projects by Status	Reading from left ot right, I would probably put completed to the right, not the left. I do like this figure!	Noted. Figures will be refined for the published version.
37	This chapter focuses on the key question: Does LDCF support continue to be relevant to UNFCCC COP guidance and decisions, the GEF adaptation programming strategy, and countries' broader development policies, plans and programs?	Do findings let you be more specific here? E.g. INDCs / SDGs?	(I)NDCs are covered in this section. SDGs are not within the scope of the evaluation.
38	LDCF support continues to be well aligned with—and highly relevant to—UNFCCC COP guidance and decisions.	Would say something as to whether guidance / decisions were added since 2016. Right now focus is on evaluating the new projects seemingly against the guidance and decisions of 2016. If no new G&D, fine, but say so.	Recent guidance is mentioned in paragraph 2 and was factored into the review of recently completed projects.
39	Figure 6 combines these results with results from the 2016 evaluation, to provide information on the project design at entry of all NAPA implementation and NAP projects.	any INDC guidance?	Alignment with (I)NDCs is discussed in paragraph 41.
39	The lowest degree of alignment, 78 percent of the projects reviewed across both evaluations, was related to UNFCCC guidance calling for	Earlier you say the number of MTF projects increased. Perhaps make the link. Did this improve from 2016?	No action taken. This finding is not related to the increase in multitrust fund projects.

Paragraph or page	Context in which comment is made	Comments	Response and action taken
	projects to be cost-effective and complementary to other funding sources.		
40	The LDCF has responded effectively to recent COP guidance on building domestic institutional capacities in LDCs.	There was one part in the previous text where a repeat of the recent guidance would be useful.	Recent guidance is listed in annex A.
40	While there are examples of discrete activities targeted at developing capacity for proposal development, it is the ongoing involvement of national institutions in LDCF development and delivery that is most important for building and sustaining capacities.	Any link to the INDCs? Any improvement for NAPs over NAPAs?	No action taken.
41	A large portion of the LDCF's work is also inherently aligned with the Paris Agreement. LDCF supports the adaptation related NDCs and seeks to align its programming with priorities identified in NDCs, which is increasingly noted in project documents.	See earlier (I) comment, (I)NDC.	Has been amended.
42	A project implemented by FAO, Strengthening Resilience to Climate Change of Coastal Communities in Togo (GEF ID 10165) directly targeted three of the six priority sectors identified in its Intended National Determined Contributions (INDC): agricultural production, coastal erosion, and forestry, and supported implementation of proposed adaptation measures.	Ratified Paris, so NDC. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_parties_to_the_Paris_Agreement	Has been amended.
43	Among completed projects where documents confirmed a linkage with or contribution to the country's INDCs/NDCs, an FAO project in Mali- Integrating Climate Resilience into Agricultural Production for Food Security in Rural Areas (GEF ID 3979) influenced the development of	Ratified paris	No action taken since the text states NDC.

Paragraph or page	Context in which comment is made	Comments	Response and action taken
	countries' NDCs, directly by supporting their formulation ahead of COP 21.		
43	A UNDP project, Increased Resilience and Adaptation to Adverse Impacts of Climate Change in Guinea's Vulnerable Coastal Zones (GEF ID 3703) influenced NDC development indirectly by working with ministries in charge of developing NDCs.	Ratified paris	No action taken since the text states NDC.
47	While the most significant portfolio and project-level results cited by interviews generally suggest strong alignment with the spirit and specifics of the strategy, interviewees also cited challenges in engaging private sector in adaptation work, as will be discussed in depth in the effectiveness section.	Make the link to the private sector evaluation. Eg. This is not a challenge specific to the LDCF, etc.	No action taken here. More details on challenges of private sector involvement are presented in the effectiveness section.
50	One possible explanation is that as time has passed the primary priorities have been addressed in previous projects, and new projects address other priorities identified and discussed in the NAPA country report.	or they might not be relevant anymore... Here you are guessing.	This sentence has been removed.
54	When considering newer projects, the current LDCF portfolio is well-aligned with all three strategic objectives.	The current or the previous? Below the previous overview, indicate what you will use, given there can be situations where projects reviewed are actually developed against the older strategy. That needs acknowledgement.	The current strategic objectives. This has been further clarified in the report.
59	As discussed in the section on LDCF Private Sector Engagement, LDCF projects also face a number of common challenges in engaging the private sector (i.e. the focus of the new strategic pillars).	Common to...? Common to grant focused projects in general? common to climate change? To adaptation? To climate finance instruments?	No action taken. As indicated, this is clarified in the section on LDCF Private section engagement.

Paragraph or page	Context in which comment is made	Comments	Response and action taken
68	However, 38 percent had a lower gender rating at completion in comparison to their rating at entry, and 29 percent of projects did not see their ratings change during project implementation.	Perhaps more info on the drivers for increase or decline.	No action taken.
73	This guidance is even more recent than the latest Gender Equality Policy, so its influence on the use of gender action plans across the LDCF portfolio cannot yet be ascertained.	You can ask in interviews whether the guidance has been used and how.	No action taken.
76	However, most interviewees felt that—rather than the LDCF or indeed any one institution—the main driver behind any improvements in addressing gender was the continuing evolution of international norms and consensus.	of which the new developments in the GEF are of course part.	Yes. No action taken.
77	Following up the gender-focused recommendation from the 2016 LDCF evaluation, the revised gender policy is being applied more consistently, and has already supported improvements in the gender ratings of LDCF projects approved during GEF-7.	Figure 13 does not support this.	Figure 13 has been amended, as GEF-7 projects were too early in the approval process to have developed gender action plans.
78	Encouraging private sector involvement has always been a strategic principle for the LDCF, but the weight placed on this element has been increased significantly through the GEF-7 programming directions and the GEF's Adaptation Strategy 2018-2022.	Really?! Always??!!	Yes, private sector involvement was also part of the prior strategy. No action taken.
80	While the private sector training events were viewed as very useful by the workshop attendees, the next course of action remained unclear to them, especially as they required further guidance on environmental and social activities.	So they liked the trainings. They might have even learned something. Did anyone follow up on whether it change behavior / practice?	No action taken. This project level information is not available.

Paragraph or page	Context in which comment is made	Comments	Response and action taken
80	As a result of the workshops, there are now at least 20 local construction companies qualified to design and deploy climate proofed rural infrastructure across all sub-sectors of roads, irrigation, water supply and flood defense.	Here! That is a real result.	Noted.
82	Secondly, private sector within LDCs tends to be less developed, more informal, and typically have tighter margins: this can reduce the appetite of both domestic and international enterprises to invest in the (perceived) risky domain of adaptation. Some interviewees also noted that these perceptions and challenges extended to banking sectors within LDCs, with lenders (macro and micro) tending to have limited understanding of adaptation, and—consequently—being less willing to support adaptation-focused initiatives.	Any findings on international companies operating in LDCs?! A good amount of private sector involvement is through international entities. In SIDS, international premium hotel chains had a clear role in conservation (AF projects I saw). That is international private sector involvement in implementation.	The portfolio review did not distinguish between categories of private sector. No action taken.
83	In support of the increased emphasis on private sector engagement across recent strategic documentation, in 2018 the GEF launched the Challenge Program for Adaptation Innovation under the SCCF and LDCF.	Any linkages with the IEO private sector eval?	LDCF was not mentioned in the most recent IEO private sector evaluation.
85	These findings are supported by interviews with GEF Agencies and country stakeholders, who noted that while approval can be time consuming overall, it is comparable to other donors when the level of funding is accounted for.	Would mention them. Other climate finance mechanisms?! Bilateral? IDA? Etc. Grant vs, loan?	No action taken.
96	While efforts to mobilize funding before graduation can help ensure graduating LDC countries receive all the support for which they are eligible, one stakeholder interviewed also	That gives the wrong signal towards graduation. I would look for support outside the LDCF.	This has been removed.

Paragraph or page	Context in which comment is made	Comments	Response and action taken
	suggested additional leeway for continued LDCF funding to graduated countries for some period could ensure a smoother transition.	Given it is the LDCF/SCCF council, I would see value in a set-aside in the SCCF for graduated LDCs.	
100	Past GEF IEO Annual Performance Reports have found that the first projects received by GEF phase tend to have better performance, while performance regresses towards the average as more projects become available (GEF IEO 2018a).	Any idea of the driver? Better support in developing proposals?!	No information on drivers is provided in Annual Performance Reports. No action taken.
102	Half of all completed NAPA implementation and NAP projects did not show evidence of developed approaches being taken up on a regional/national scale.	Does this refer to a 'larger than project' scale? I am wondering why first regional here.	This is from the description of the catalytic effect, consistent with the one used in the 2016 LDCF evaluation.
102	The 2016 LDCF Program Evaluation found that for projects with lower performance on scaling up, additional financing would be required to ensure scaling up, which was also seen in projects reviewed for this evaluation (GEF IEO 2018b). For projects reviewed in 2020, roughly a quarter did achieve scaling up from a large to a very large extent, a higher share than for projects reviewed in 2016, where only two of the eleven projects reviewed were rated in this range (18 percent.)	Why does it refer to 'this evaluation' and then talks about 202?	Language has been edited.
105	Sixty percent of completed projects built foundations for larger scale projects.	Worth making the link to the strategic objectives / pillars, given two of them link to enabling conditions / enabling environment.	No action taken.
108	The share of projects reviewed in 2016 with sustainability ratings in the likely range was higher than for projects reviewed in 2020, with a sample of 11 projects and 72 percent rated in the likely range, compared to 50 percent of the	What if you look at the sustainability by the GEF phase in which they started? The time of receiving a TE is not the best divider.	Section has been amended.

Paragraph or page	Context in which comment is made	Comments	Response and action taken
	30 projects reviewed in 2020 with sustainability ratings available in the likely range.		
123	Interviews with GEF Agencies identified two common challenges faced by LDCF projects are the comparatively less developed nature of banking and private sectors within LDCs, and the broader difficulty of attracting private sector interest and investment towards adaptation-focused work. In combination, these two factors arguably make private sector engagement even more challenging for LDCF projects when compared to other GEF funding mechanisms.	I still think there is a need to separate engagement w local and international private sector.	No action taken.
127	Projects had lower levels of success on being instrumental in developing longer-term partnerships, where 32 percent of projects were found to have done so from a large to a very large extent, in developing new cost sharing approaches/leveraging new resources, where 28 percent of projects were found to have done so from a large to very large extent, and in building on the traditional knowledge and practices of local communities.	Note you earlier found this has gone down in GEF-7. I know you are looking here at completed projects, but people might see it as contradictory.	No action taken. This section is clear in its discussion of completed projects.
Rec 1 p.55	Proposed Recommendation 1: The GEF Secretariat and GEF Agencies should ensure that the GEF Gender Equality Policy and related guidance is operationalized including the development and implementation of gender action plans.	and agencies are further briefed on the new gender requirements for TEs.	Recommendation language has been revised.
Pg. 55	In response to recommendations in general	Proposed Recommendation 4: The LDCF/SCCF Council should consider to earmark a small amount of SCCF funding for	No action taken. This would be more pertinent to the SCCF evaluation.

Paragraph or page	Context in which comment is made	Comments	Response and action taken
		those LDCs who are graduating and have no longer access to the LDCF.	
GEF IEO internal reviewer			
6	Response to cutoff date listed	Sept. 1 st or Sept.30? A date should also have the day, not just month and year. Also, the cutoff date is mentioned eight times in the report. In my opinion once is enough.	Date added. Given the delay in presenting this evaluation due to the COVID pandemic, some developments in the portfolio that occurred following the cutoff date are included. The cutoff date is therefore repeated throughout for clarity.
18	Mention of external peer reviewer in report	Please mention also the internal peer reviewer., as this is standard quality assurance IEO practice	This mention has been added.
Page 8	Overall comment on meta-assessment	I miss the assessment elements in this section, which is mostly a comprehensive, descriptive list of findings and recommendations from previous evaluations. What are the findings and recommendations that cut throughout all these studies that really matter for this evaluation? Is there anything that wasn't looked at, or that should have been looked at? I would consider either re-titling the section or adding assessment elements where appropriate into the text, to make this section more functional to the report.	Section has been retitled "Literature Review."
44	Comment in response to sentence: "For recently approved projects reviewed (n = 25), 15 (60 percent) contribute to the biodiversity focal area, and 16 (64 percent) to land degradation focal areas"	This sentence is redundant. It merely repeats information presented in Table 4. I would remove it.	No action needed. Information presented in the table is explained in the text.
Table 4 p.18	Table 4 Title: Other Focal Areas to which LDCF Projects Potentially Contribute	Potential only refers to recent projects. I would delete 'potentially'	Information is presented at design stage; therefore, these are potential contributions.

Paragraph or page	Context in which comment is made	Comments	Response and action taken
52	In response to statement: “The evaluation’s assessment of effectiveness focused on identifying the extent to which LDCF projects were aligned with and supported delivery of the GEF’s three adaptation strategic objectives and two strategic pillars, and on the general performance of LDCF-supported projects. A combination of portfolio analysis, interviews and aggregation of the GEF’s Annual Performance Report (APR) ratings supported the assessment.”	This is confusing, alignment with priorities, strategic objectives and the like is usually part of relevance analysis, not effectiveness. Isn’t this repeating part of the relevance assessments in the previous section?	The language has been amended to reflect that this section focuses more on delivery of strategic objectives and pillars, rather than alignment.
54	In response to statement: “These newer projects are particularly well-aligned with the first two objectives: 22 of the 25 projects are aligned with objective 1 from a large to very large extent, and 20 of the projects are aligned with objective 2 from a large to very large extent. Alignment is still relatively strong with the third objective: 16 of the 25 projects are aligned with that objective from a large to very large extent.”	This repeats data shown in figure 8, it should rather discuss these data. The paragraph should also quote the figure between brackets.	Reference to figure 8 is now included in paragraph.
57	In response to sentence “Several interviewees also noted that institutional capacities also benefited from the fact that the LDCF approach—and indeed adaptation more broadly—necessitated a degree of cross-sector, cross-Ministry coordination that was not prevalent prior to LDCF support.”	I would mention that this is true more broadly with GEF support, it is not peculiar to LDCF. We heard in several country portfolio evaluations that GEF support introduced cross-ministerial coordination and work habits that were unknown before.	No action needed. This is not within the scope of the evaluation.
60	In response to sentence “The great majority of LDCF projects are well implemented and executed. The GEF’s APR provides some insight into the effectiveness of the LDCF portfolio since 2016. The APR provides an annual aggregation of terminal evaluation ratings against several	How does these ratings compare with GEF overall ratings? The 2016 evaluation highlighted that LDCF ratings outperformed GEF overall ratings. I would insert a sentence or two to say if that’s still the case or not.	No action needed. Overall GEF portfolio ratings are not the focus of the evaluation.

Paragraph or page	Context in which comment is made	Comments	Response and action taken
	criteria, including criteria that are of direct relevance to project effectiveness. Figure 10 below summarizes relevant APR ratings for all completed LDCF projects”		
88	Comment on footnote “A limitation in this analysis are the data gaps, particularly on project implementation dates, in the GEF Secretariat project level data available on the GEF Portal. Where possible, project dates provided by agencies or in project implementation reports were included to fill in data gaps. Projects with missing or with inaccurate dates (start date before approval date) were eliminated from consideration.”	I would move the text in this footnote to the limitations section earlier in the report.	A mention has been added to the limitation section. The footnote remains in place as it is specific to this analysis.
93	In response to sentence: “A webinar for stakeholders providing an overview of the new process may improve efficiency.”	I would not include recommendation sounding sentences in the finding sections.	Language has been amended.
95	In response to sentence “Four countries—Cape Verde, Equatorial Guinea, Maldives, and Samoa—have graduated from LDC status since the LDCF was established. Two additional countries, Angola and Vanuatu, are currently scheduled to graduate during the GEF-7 period, while three more are scheduled to graduate in 2023 and 2024. ¹ ”	How about Bangladesh?	Bangladesh is not yet scheduled for graduation (it may be recommended in 2021 if it continues to meet the criteria.) The names of the three other countries scheduled have been added for clarity.
98	In response to sentence “The review first looked at the extent to which LDCF support to NAPA implementation and NAP projects has been catalytic in the following ways:”	I would state that this way of looking at catalytic effects follows a defined specific LDCF framework, it’s part of the design of the fund.	This way of looking at catalytic effects has been used in past IEO analysis outside of LDCF, it is not specific to the LDCF framework.

¹ Source: UNFCCC website, Timeline of country’s graduation from the LDC category; <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/least-developed-country-category/ldc-graduation.html> accessed October 2020.

Paragraph or page	Context in which comment is made	Comments	Response and action taken
112	In response to sentence “Project terminal evaluations were much more likely to list context related factors which hindered likelihood of project sustainability than factors which contributed to it. Thirteen of the 34 projects reviewed noted some form of natural disaster which occurred during project implementation as a hindering factor in likely sustainability of benefits. Other context related factors noted as hindering sustainability included financial shocks, political unrest or changes in government experienced during implementation, as well as poor infrastructure within the country. Context factors noted as helping to achieve sustainability of outcomes were the strong presence of other donors in country, and a stable government.”	This just repeats what is in table 11	Information presented in the table is further explained in the text. No action needed.
113	In response to sentence “Insufficient capacity of the project team, staff turnover and delays in recruitment, weak project design and weak project management were the most frequently noted project related factors hindering likely sustainability of project outcomes. Alternatively, effective stakeholder engagement, and effective coordination between executing partners were the most frequently noted factors contributing to achieve likely sustainability of project outcomes. “	This as well. Redundant.	Information presented in the table is further explained in the text. No action needed.
121	In response to sentence “Alignment with and contributions to the new GEF adaptation strategic pillars were less pronounced though, although this was partly explained by the	I would avoid using relevance language (alignment with priorities, strategies, objectives and the like) when discussing effectiveness.	The language has been amended.

Paragraph or page	Context in which comment is made	Comments	Response and action taken
	recentness of the pillar revisions (2018), which have yet to have a marked influence on LDCF project design.”		
122	In response to sentence “However, there is a knowledge gap around the gender-related results of LDCF projects, and of the extent to which gender analyses and action plans influence gender-related results.”	I saw the track change, I actually prefer the direct, clear language that was replaced with this text: “only a limited number of projects had developed gender analyses and action plans”.	We do not have full knowledge on how many projects have developed gender analyses and action plans, as reporting is incomplete. This is why we are focusing on the knowledge gap as an issue.