The Journey to RIO +20:

Gathering Evidence on Expectations for the **GEF**

GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY
EVALUATION OFFICE

THE JOURNEY TO RIO

Gathering Evidence on Expectations for the GEF

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FOREWORD

What would happen if we were to compare the expectations at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 to the achievements of the Global Environment Facility (GEF)? This is the question I discussed with the Chief Executive Officer of the GEF in 2011. We thought it would be a good idea to do this comparison, as the GEF played an important role in the Rio discussions, and in the years after Rio the GEF has gathered a lot of evaluative evidence on its achievements. Having said this, it is not easy to do such a comparison. After all, the expectations were a cloud of opinions, uttered in a great variety of circumstances, some with a high level of common understanding, but others highly contentious and politically sensitive.

The GEF Evaluation Office surely is not mandated to "evaluate" the Rio expectations. What were these expectations exactly? Are we putting words in the mouths of stakeholders that they will not recognize? And if we were to formulate them so that stakeholders would recognize them, who are we to judge them? Were they realistic and pragmatic, or were they serving political goals? And even if we can identify them, how could we judge the GEF on the extent to which it has met expectations that have no legal standing in the GEF?

These questions have not led us to give up on this review of expectations versus fulfillment. Rather they have led us to adopt a light-hearted approach with a serious undertone, but one that would leave the judgment to the reader. This review takes the reader on a journey through time and the world to visit places of interest where expectations were formulated and where evaluative evidence was presented. Like any travel agency interested in client satisfaction, we leave the rating of this comparison to the traveler.

We make no judgment, as we are not mandated and ultimately not qualified to judge the achievements of the GEF on the basis of expectations whispered in the corridors of international negotiations, and sometimes forcefully pronounced in speeches and statements. For a change, the Evaluation Office has only suggestions to offer. And we hope our travelers enjoy the experience, and that the journey is interesting and entertaining for them. If on the way they gather some additional ideas and notions — and evaluative evidence — on some of the biggest issues of our time, so much the better.

Rob van den Berg
Director, Evaluation Office

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EXPECTATION REVIEW

The task of identifying, in 2012, what expectations were held for the Global Environment Facility (GEF) at the time of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), also known as the Earth Summit, held in Rio de Janeiro June 1992, made for a kaleidoscopic and complex journey through time, through space, through the minds of many fascinating individuals, and through the corridors of many intriguing institutions.

To settle into the UNCED period, the time traveler must touch down when the GEF restructuring was approved in Geneva, March 1994, and then maybe continue back to 1972, at the UN Conference for Human Development in Stockholm that created the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

At none of these locations or times was an explicit or concise list of expectations offered by the personalities or organizations envisioning financial mechanisms for global environmental conservation. Some aspirations and expectations for the GEF were whispered between indigenous peoples and nongovernmental organization (NGO) staff at the Global Forum; others were shouted between North and South at UNCED PrepCom meetings; some surfaced between lines of text in Agenda 21 albeit with little trace elsewhere. Yet others lingered in the corridors of GEF's three main Implementing Agencies. We call these statements, whispers, shouts, and intimations the **Rio Expectations**.

On the way to Brazil for Rio+20, each expectation is assessed to determine if, to what extent, and how it has been fulfilled since the original Earth Summit. Evidence on how these expectations were met has been compiled from Overall Performance Studies (OPSs) delivered at various GEF meetings and assemblies from New Delhi to Punta del Este. We hope you enjoy the journey.

PREPARATIONS

Traveling through the GEF's complex and winding history, the resulting set of Rio Expectations is depicted here as nine vivid destinations (see Itinerary in table 1). For each, an expedition into its formulation and fulfillment follows. The **formulation** sections explain by whom and how those expectations were expressed, taking you back to the originating time and place through quotes and anecdotes. The **evidence** sections explore how the GEF Overall Performance Studies and other evaluations have attempted to compile evidence on fulfillment (if at all). The **fulfillment** sections explore if and to what extent each Rio Expectation was fulfilled, using a four-star system of strong fulfillment, fulfillment, partial fulfillment, and no fulfillment (see box 1). As the trip draws to a close, **souvenirs** of the journey are displayed and arranged to compare, contrast, and summarize the nine Rio Expectations as they stand today.

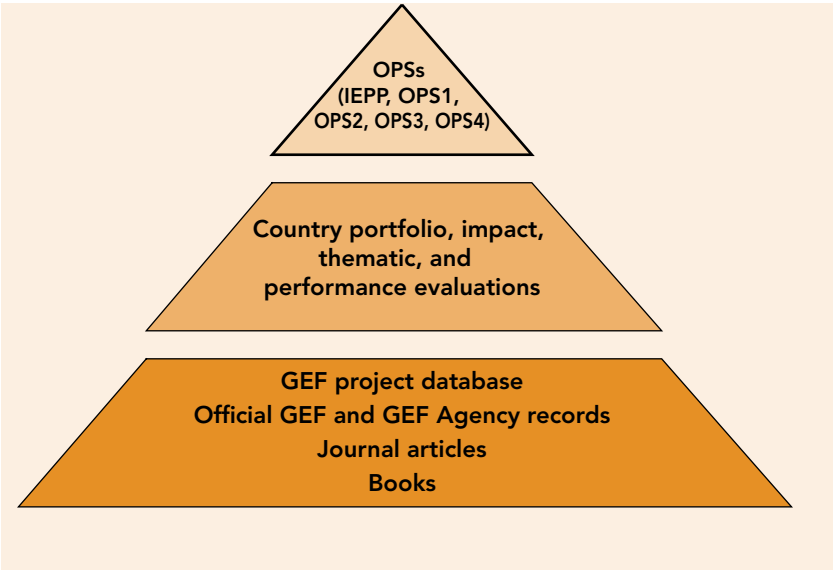
• • •

BOX 1: THE STAR SYSTEM

TABLE 1: YOUR ITINERARY TO RIO EXPECTATIONS

Rio Expectation: That the GEF would…	Destination
1. Provide additional funding	Paris, France (March 1990)
2. Address national priorities	Washington, D.C., USA (April 1992)
3. Respond to and support conventions	Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire (December 1992)
4. Enhance international cooperation	Cartagena, Colombia (December 1993)
5. Mainstream sustainable development in a new green economic order	New Delhi, India (April 1998)
6. Be given adequate funds to manage	Beijing, China (October 2002)
7. Contribute to global environmental benefits	Cape Town, South Africa (August 2006)
8. Engage nongovernmental organizations	Punta del Este, Uruguay (May 2010)
9. Foster innovation	Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (June 2012)

FIGURE 1: EVIDENCE FOR RIO EXPECTATION FULFILLMENT



The Rio Expectations were formulated by various combinations of stakeholders. We isolated four such groups: developing countries, NGOs, donors, and the three original GEF Implementing Agencies—the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNEP, and the World Bank. The Rio Expectations were located in and extracted from the pages of hundreds of official documents from UNCED, the GEF, and others; historical accounts; journal articles; and book chapters.

Evidence for Rio Expectation fulfillment was compiled from the series of independent Overall Performance Studies of the GEF, including the independent evaluation of its pilot phase (the IEPP). The OPSs summarize available evidence across topics evaluated. They present synthesized and comparative evidence based on a larger body of detailed evidence below the meta-analysis level. When there are no visible linkages between hard evidence and fulfillment (because the OPS series was never tasked to track fulfillment of the Rio Expectations), what this review was able to glean is necessarily qualitative. That which is out of reach to the present review, due to access and time, can be assumed to support the information visible and presented in the OPS series. It is this visible evidence that helps us understand Rio Expectation fulfillment (figure 1).

For the curious traveler, all methodological details on selection, formulation, and the assessment of fulfillment are provided in the annexes to this report.

Finally, bon voyage…

THE JOURNEY

DESTINATION:
PARIS, FRANCE

Rio Expectation 1: Provide additional funding

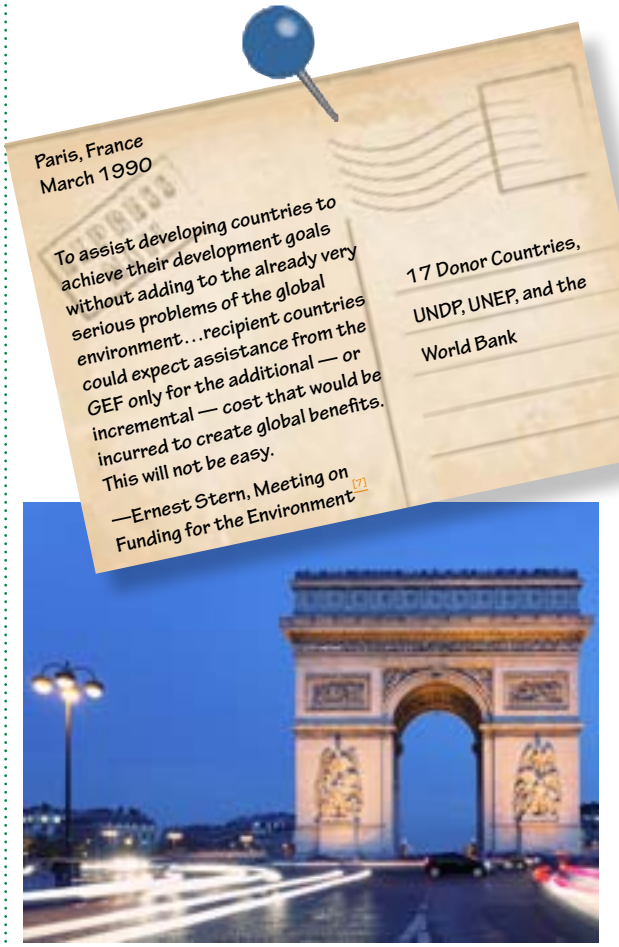
Formulation. The expectation that the GEF would provide "new and additional" funding sources was an oft-heard refrain at the 1992 Earth Summit. Indeed, insistence on additionality had been expressed even earlier at preparatory meetings about the GEF — for instance, in September 1989, where "so the story goes," the French finance minister, Pierre Bérégovoy, "put on the table a proposal that in one fell swoop eclipsed all others and resulted in the GEF" because it was backed by an offer of real money.[7] The notion of "additional" funding had also been discussed earlier in Paris in 1990 during a meeting of donors and Implementing Agencies.

The largest number of documented sources suggested that the provision of additional funding was a main expectation for the GEF. Developing countries expressed this expectation most frequently, and at least eight donors voiced a similar assumption. For example, then–prime minister John Major made a public statement at UNCED that "the British Government is ready to commit new and additional resources through the GEF."[11]

On the part of developing country stakeholders, the message was unwavering. At the UNCED closing statements, the president of UNCED, Brazil's president Fernando Collor, declared "we must be able to rely upon a system of financial mechanisms to channel new and additional resources…to respond to the needs of developing countries"[12] UNCED's most official product, Agenda 21, specifically states that the GEF must be restructured to "Ensure new and additional financial resources on grant and concessional terms, in particular to developing countries."[13] New and additional financing was thus an expectation that was firmly embedded in the Rio outcome.

The question raised by this expectation is, additional to what? At UNCED, it was estimated that, beyond national and other investment, developing countries needed $125 billion to implement Agenda 21 over each of three years.[13] This sum was expected to be **additional to multilateral and bilateral official development assistance** (ODA) — including for environmental protection — and should not replace any other existing funding mechanisms (see note 1). More recent documents have determined the level of additional funds needed to be much higher (this is explored later in the discussion under adequate funds). Clearly, calculations of additional funds changed with time and growing urgency.

Evidence. Evaluation of the GEF pilot phase called any effort to assess this additionality "appropriate" but "exceedingly difficult."[8] Using the strict definition of "beyond regular ODA,"



OPS4 confirmed that between 4 and 23 percent of total GEF funds have been additional to ODA. However, both ODA funding of environmental issues and donor funding to the GEF have essentially declined since the GEF's first replenishment period (GEF-1, 1995–98) — and 45 percent of GEF funding is not considered to be ODA.[5] From the donors' perspective, as long as ODA increased each year, all real replenishments to the GEF are considered additional — even when they do not provide an increase over the previous replenishment period's level. G77 countries and China take the opposite perspective; they would like to restrict additional funding to that above ODA.

The expectation of additionality can also be explored in light of the **principle of common but differentiated responsibility** to protect the environment, and among donors, **burden sharing**. OPS1 agreed that donor commitment to contribute to the GEF was based on recognition of their "historic responsibility,"[2] a principle acknowledged in the preamble of the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), claiming "common but differentiated responsibilities" of developing and industrial countries,[14] based on different histories of consumption of natural resources. A donor scorecard was created by OPS4 to detail the extent to which GEF donors contribute more to the GEF than to the United Nations, the International Development Association, or ODA and the extent to which they are timely payers of their pledges. While Canada took the lead in this analysis, Belgium, Luxembourg, and Switzerland followed closely behind. The priority that some donors give their contributions to the GEF could be seen as evidence of additional funding.

Fulfillment level. The expectation that the GEF would provide additional funding is only partially fulfilled. Before the GEF can provide, it must first receive funding from the donors. Although enshrined in the official GEF mandate, the provision of adequate funds is not directly within the mechanism's circle of influence. Prior to GEF-5 (2010–14, when funding increased by more than 50 percent), the GEF had "not been very effective in mobilizing resources" that could contribute to this additionality.[5] Most importantly, two different interpretations of additionality — as part of ODA versus on top of ODA — have made the concept of additional funds unhelpful in determining allocations for the GEF.

The notion of common but differentiated responsibilities is still relevant today, and mindful of the rapidly increasing costs of global environmental problems, two stars are suggested for **partial fulfillment** of this expectation.

★★☆☆

DESTINATION:
WASHINGTON, D.C., USA

Rio Expectation 2: Address national priorities

Formulation. Urging the GEF to meet the needs, objectives, and priorities of developing countries is the second most frequently voiced Rio Expectation. It was articulated most frequently by developing countries and least by NGOs. Developing countries argued that the choice of the GEF's main programming areas — biodiversity and climate change — was a luxury for rich nations that excluded the plight of the poor. Agenda 21 declares that GEF funding should be "…in accordance with national development objectives, priorities and plans."[13] The chief argument of the GEF Implementing Agencies against addressing national priorities was that the innovative focus on global benefits was the main selling point of the GEF concept to donors.[15]

Official GEF text reflecting this expectation aligns the GEF to national priorities "designed to support sustainable development."[3] This elucidation assumed that such national priorities already existed — which was clearly not the case in the majority of countries in 1992 (donor countries included), and/or that countries would benefit from their design. The GEF would employ **enabling activities** to support countries in developing both environmental and environmentally conscious priorities, while meeting the obligations of and reporting to the conventions.[2] These GEF activities produce plans and strategies in response to communication obligations of the conventions; they also encourage integration of environmental convention objectives into national economic programs and sectors within the context of sustainable development efforts.

Evidence. As OPS3 clearly articulated, the "GEF's focus should be placed on countries where political will exists. In countries where it is not sufficient, efforts should be spent on building political will, not on actual projects."[4] Evidence suggests that building, or enabling, that political will should lead to greening national priorities — and, more importantly, that the GEF has been catalytic in influencing national agendas, policies, and implementation plans across the globe.[3] OPS4 declared that the provision of seed money to develop or green national priorities through enabling activities was emerging as the GEF's most important role.[5] This was not unexpected, given that countries, as signatories to the conventions, are thereby required to ensure that global environmental concerns are reflected in their national regulatory frameworks, policies, and strategies. In addition, OPS4 presented country-level evidence, gathered through the recent evaluation modality of country portfolio evaluations that included mapping support to national priorities established over time.

Fulfillment level. GEF has fulfilled this expectation. Because support to national priorities

is officially enshrined in GEF's mandate, further integration of sustainable development into country policies and agendas is to be expected as circumstances in countries allow and evolve. Three stars are suggested for **fulfillment** of this expectation.

★★★☆

DESTINATION:
ABIDJAN, CÔTE D'IVOIRE

Rio Expectation 3: Respond to and support conventions

Formulation. This expectation (see note 2) is the third most frequently expressed, and the one expressed most often by donors.

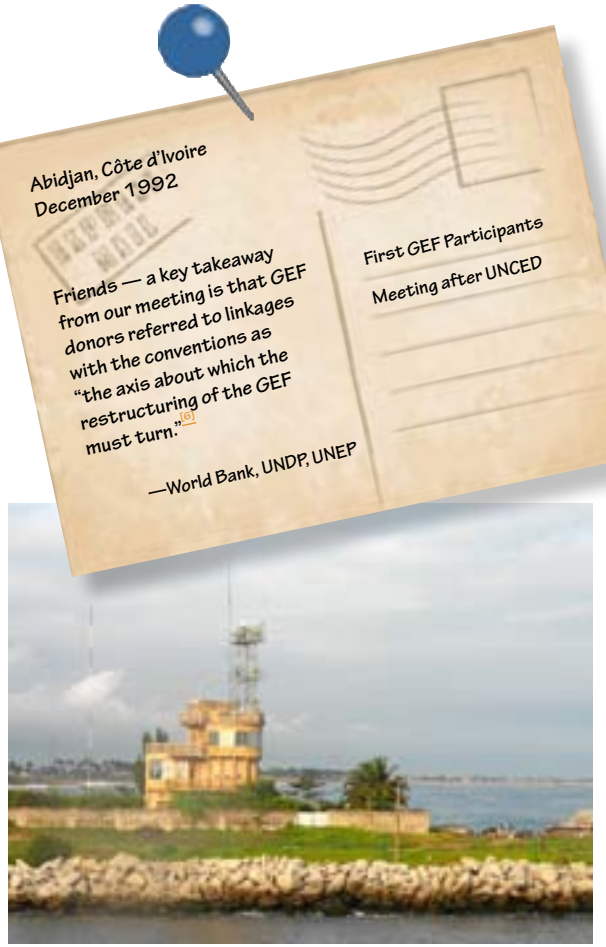
Based on the precedent set with the Montreal Protocol, the possibility of using the GEF as an "umbrella mechanism," "plug-in," or "modular receptacle" for additional resources linked to specific conventions was already being considered before Rio 1992.[7] [16] [17] Both of the conventions signed at UNCED named the GEF as their interim financial mechanism, pending appropriate restructuring (Article 30 of the Convention on Biological Diversity[18] and Article 11 of the UNFCCC[14]).

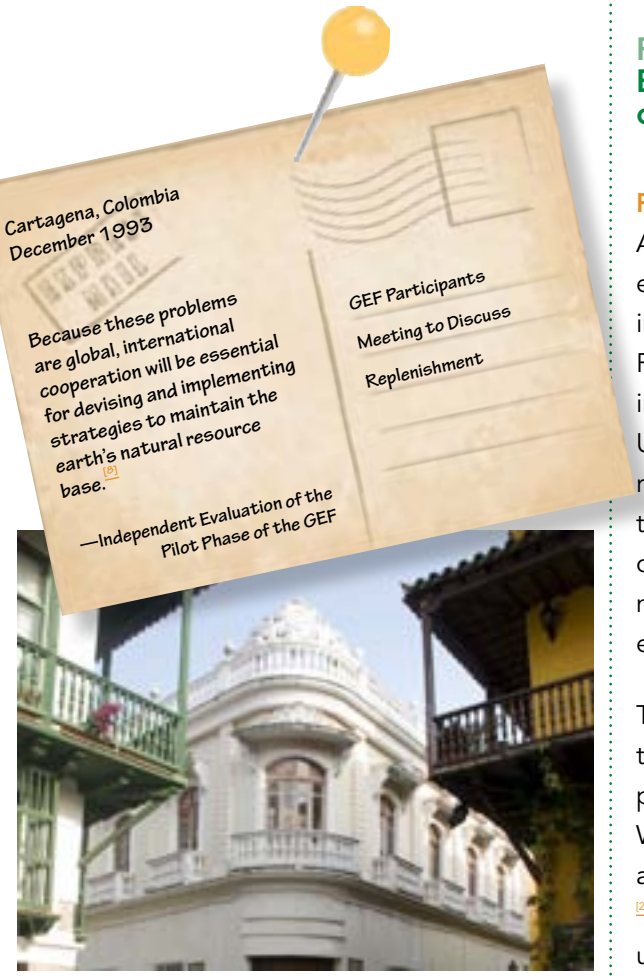
Despite its apparent popularity, this expectation met with plentiful opposition. During UNCED,[19] India and China openly claimed that the GEF — which was seen as too closely aligned to the World Bank — was an inappropriate mechanism for convention funding, and it was in support of conventions that developing countries were most vocal about needing a new "green fund."[20] UNEP, discontented with the GEF, also went on record calling it an infeasible alternative to support the conventions.[15] In fact, most parties accepted the need — and many wanted to be the home for — a funding mechanism for the conventions, and the GEF became the solution of compromise.

Evidence. Interest in assessing the GEF's work with the conventions appears to have increased gradually with each new GEF cycle. During GEF-2 (1999–2002), the GEF was called the "world's only 'multi convention' funding mechanism," and in 1996, convention work became the GEF's number one Operational Principle.[21] As OPS4 pointed out, although the number of conventions the GEF supports had risen — along with the volume of guidance to apply (a table charted the number of clauses included in each guidance note) — no comparable increase in funds had been given to the GEF for accomplishing this, its main task.[5] Each of the OPSs have, in turn, provided ample evidence from interviews, surveys, and a thorough review of documents that GEF support has been responsive to the conventions despite all odds. The OPSs have also proposed recommendations to make the GEF even more responsive, including the suggestion of its receiving clearer and more concise guidance from the conventions.

Fulfillment level. OPS4 demonstrated clearly that although the GEF had followed guidance, the conventions had actually provided more guidance than could be followed giving the GEF's level of funding. Compounding the issue of volume, the convention guidance also lacked precision and clear priorities. Even so, the GEF has achieved **strong fulfillment** of this Rio Expectation and four stars are suggested.

★★★★





DESTINATION: CARTAGENA, COLOMBIA

Rio Expectation 4: Enhance international cooperation

Formulation. Implementing Agencies and donors held highest this expectation of enhancing international cooperation. Proceedings from a hearing held in Washington, D.C., before the U.S. House of Representatives recorded repeated references to the GEF as "the glue which cements the process of international cooperation on the environment."[22]

The GEF was a pioneer effort to capitalize on a paradigmatic partnership between Bretton Woods institutions (see note 3) and the United Nations.[23] [24] [25] [26] [27] The World Bank often held up this union when responding to critiques of its dominant and independent status vis-à-vis the UN.[28] [29] Rather than allow the creation or proliferation of agencies, many stakeholders hoped this partnership would strengthen existing institutions and capitalize on the interaction between them for the benefit of the global environment.[17] It was sometimes suggested that proliferation should be replaced by mainstreaming (see note 4), thereby broadening the influence of the environment inside each Implementing Agency and partner instead of expanding the number of entities involved.

Evidence. A deep-seated Rio Expectation held the promise that the World Bank–United Nations alliance, as well as an alignment of interests between Northern and Southern constituencies, would usher in a bright new future in international cooperation for the benefit of the environment. The GEF has never been driven or charged to assess just how successful this mechanism of international cooperation was, nor to describe the factors of its success or failure. Nevertheless, formation of this unparalleled partnership was in itself an epic moment in institutional history, and much of the GEF's success can be credited — at least in part — to the enduring strength of this union. Going forward, new national and regional institutions will be accredited and eligible to implement GEF-financed environmental projects, marking a significant expansion of the GEF family.

Fulfillment level. The GEF has partially fulfilled the Rio Expectation to enhance international cooperation. OPS3 recognized the importance of international cooperation when the concept was heightened to a critical rank as one of three "catalytic factors" that would eventually lead the GEF to achieving global environmental benefits (the other two were **leveraging** and **innovation**). Based on this and the continued partnership between World Bank and the United Nations, two stars are suggested for **partial fulfillment** of this expectation.

★★☆☆

DESTINATION:
NEW DELHI, INDIA

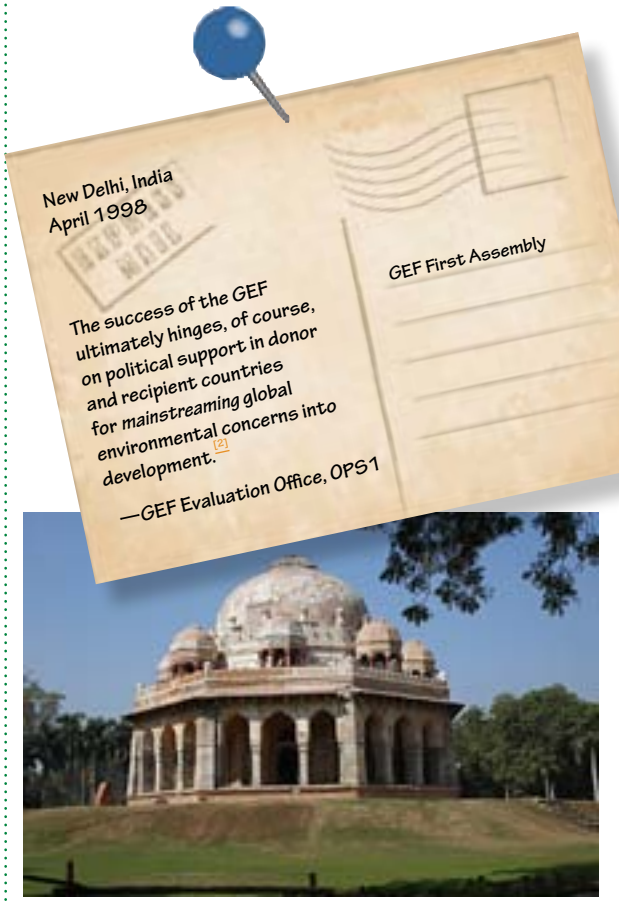
Rio Expectation 5: Mainstream sustainable development within a new green economic order

Formulation. This expectation is the fifth most frequently expressed overall and the single most commonly voiced by NGO stakeholders. Despite recurrent calls on record during UNCED for an "overhaul of the trade and lending institutions,"[30] none of Agenda 21's five official products allude directly to a new "green economic order" that would integrate the environmental pillar into the sustainable development (see note 5) concept of social, economic, and environmentally balanced development. As early as 1991 during the start-up of the GEF, developing nations became "more strident in demanding that at least some of [the] GEF's resources be spent on sustainable development problems."[20] For example, environmental principles put forth by G77 countries at the June 1991 Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Beijing highlighted the need "to establish a new and equitable international economic order conducive to the sustained and sustainable development of all countries, thereby creating the conditions necessary for global cooperation to protect the environment."[31] At the next year's Rio Conference, the GEF captured most of the attention in this regard; in fact, it appears that more attention was paid to the mechanism than to the resources required for sustainable development.

An essential element in this new green economic order that mainstreams sustainable development is the expectation that donor countries would reduce their own environmental impact — for example, lowering their greenhouse gas emissions, etc. How can developing countries take proposed green changes seriously if donor countries do not set strong — let alone successful — examples back home?[27] [31]

Classical, biblical, and folkloric images were evoked to portray this expectation (see note 6): the GEF was expected — not least by the United States — to be the environment's "Trojan horse," a surge for the environment from inside the World Bank[26] [34] [35] (see note 7). Others described UNDP as expecting the GEF to act as "David against the 'Goliath' of the entire international economic system."[32] Lastly, "although [the GEF] is charged with resolving what is a capitalist-driven crisis of the commons, it nevertheless relies on and promotes that system as the silver bullet capable of turning the tide of ecological destruction globally."[36]

Evidence. As it is clearly beyond the GEF's official mandate, no GEF evaluation has attempted to compile evidence for the new green economic order in any detail. OPS4 did highlight exemplary green reform in the international waters focal area, launching a discussion of "the will and the way" that advised on how to forge the political will of recipient (but not donor)



countries.[5] The study determined progress thereon to be "reasonable but inadequate."[21]

OPS4 also thoroughly explored the issue of mainstreaming the environment as part of its review of the GEF model of foundational support, demonstration, and investment. The model assumes an organic growth in funding to countries until a concern for global environmental issues has been fully incorporated and mainstreamed in the national sustainable development agenda. Although some of the larger recipients of GEF funding are clearly moving in this direction, OPS4 states, "it is also obvious that many countries are still a long way from graduating from the GEF."[5] In this context, one of the main conclusions of OPS4 was that "GEF support is relevant to both national environmental and sustainable development priorities."[5] Evidence from the country portfolio evaluations and the OPS4 country case studies, as well as reviews of terminal evaluations of enabling activities, demonstrates that countries have used GEF support to introduce new policies and to develop the requisite environmental legislative and regulatory frameworks.

Beyond the issue of national agendas, during the GEF-4 replenishment period (2006–10), a report was commissioned in which the GEF Secretariat compiled accounts from nine agencies on how they saw the history, status, and future for mainstreaming environmental considerations within their organizations. Unfortunately, the cover note did not define the term, nor did the GEF make comparisons, conclusions, and suggestions across the set.[37] While this does not qualify as evaluative evidence, it adds color and texture to the mainstreaming being explored through GEF history.

Fulfillment level. The GEF regards sustainable development as part of its mandate and has made reasonable contributions to this expectation. Quite visibly beyond the command of any single entity, the concept of catalyzing a new green economic order — considered too ambitious, too complex, or politically charged by many — is simply not recognized as a GEF responsibility that can be held up for official or independent scrutiny. In 2012, while the world has not transferred to a global green economic order, GEF projects attest that this greening shift does occur at the local and regional levels and can grow to affect global economies. Twenty years of GEF projects demonstrate how the mechanism has financed solutions to global environmental problems through tangible, local efforts that help sow the seeds of a new green economy (see box 2). The expectation of catalyzing a new green economic order that mainstreams sustainable development has been **partially fulfilled**, and two stars are suggested.

★★☆☆

BOX 2: SOWING THE SEEDS OF GREEN ECONOMIES

"I am convinced that the seeds of green economies are hidden in plain sight. They are everywhere we look. What they lack is the nurturing soil that will grow the individual seeds into a fully fledged forest. At the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the accumulated portfolio of local, regional and global projects built with our partners over the past twenty years shows us how those seeds can become a towering canopy, protecting lives and livelihoods, and the precious natural resources on which they depend… We have a job to do: to tend the garden of a green economy and to sow the seeds that will flower into a sustainable environmental future."

— Monique Barbut[9]

DESTINATION:
BEIJING, CHINA

Rio Expectation 6: Be given adequate funds to manage

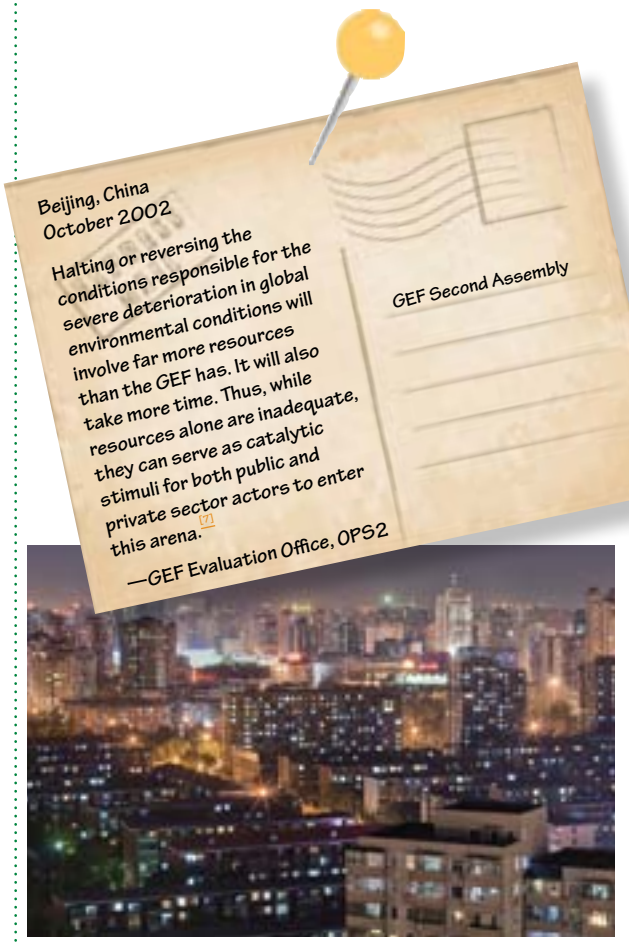
Formulation. Developing countries were by far the staunchest supporters of this Rio Expectation, while Implementing Agency stakeholders were silent on the issue of fund adequacy. Donors paid at least lip service to the need for adequate funds. As one of the few donors expressing adequacy, the prime minister of Norway, Gro Harlem Brundtland, reported in her official UNCED speech that Norway was "disappointed by the lack of adequate financial commitments made to date at UNCED."[11] Agenda 21 highlights the objective to provide "financial resources that are both adequate and predictable." Both the biodiversity and climate change conventions call for "adequate" funding.

The tone of most articulations, except those made by the NGOs, is matter of fact, as if everyone agreed what *adequate* meant, or as if it had to be said even if not believed. The unresolved, ominous question was what constitutes *adequate*?

The UNCED process produced an estimate of an annual $125 billion from donors to meet the objectives laid out in Agenda 21. To set this figure in a broader context, more recent documents have determined the level of "adequate" to be much higher. The well-known Stern review,[38] as only one example, estimates the annual costs of achieving stabilization of carbon dioxide emissions alone (to between 500 and 550 parts per million) at roughly 2 percent (see note 8) of global gross domestic product. In U.S. dollar equivalents for 2010, this represents $1.3 trillion per year for "adequate" funding for the environment. Like the calculations of *additional* funds discussed at our Paris sojourn (see Rio Expectation 1), calculations of *adequate* funds change with time and growing urgency. GEF funding wasn't sufficient then, is even less sufficient now — and at any rate, such sums have never been donated to protect the environment.

Evidence. OPS4 is the only evaluation to examine this expectation. Not officially recognized as part of the GEF mandate, a thematic evaluation has never proposed a deliberate compilation of evidence to help track adequacy, but many studies have determined that funds for the environment have decreased steadily since 1996.[5] When the proportion is estimated, the sad trend is that each subsequent replenishment period of the GEF barely obtained half of 1 percent (see note 9) of what Rio deemed an adequate envelope to implement Agenda 21. If we were to change the denominator to one of the more recent figures of cost, adequate funding would become almost negligible.

For its own efforts, the GEF succeeded in mobilizing an increase of more than 50 percent in its fifth replenishment. Although this accomplishment is laudatory,



it falls far short of meeting the Rio Expectation that sufficient and adequate funding would be made available for developing countries. An argument could be made, however, that this expectation has been at least partially transferred to the new Green Climate Fund (see note 10).

Fulfillment level. This Rio Expectation has not been fulfilled; donors have never given "adequate" funds to the GEF or to any other mechanism to deal with the scale of environmental problems in the world. Evidence suggests that the GEF has been able to play an adequate role in addressing certain of these problems, but the expectation at Rio of adequately funding solutions to the problems certainly did not materialize. While each replenishment process entails lobbying for adequate resources for GEF strategies and modalities, the GEF on its own has not been able to influence the general level of funding for solving environmental problems in the world. Despite its recent success in mobilizing funding, one star, indicating **no fulfillment** of this expectation, is awarded.

DESTINATION:
CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

Rio Expectation 7: Contribute to global environmental benefits

Formulation. This expectation was clearly stated in the UNCED documents that were signed by all participants, and it can thus be seen as one of the strongest expectations regarding the GEF (see note 11). However, the only stakeholder group explicitly focusing on the expectation of global environmental benefits was the Implementing Agencies. It could be argued that the complexity and broad scope of this expectation precluded the other groups from engagement.

The GEF was "designed to explore ways of assisting developing countries to implement measures that specifically protect the global (as distinct from the 'local') environment."[6] It is primarily for this focus on global rather than local benefits that the GEF was considered avant-garde — on the cutting edge of financing for the environment. It is interesting to note that donors, who were supposed to see this as the selling argument for the GEF, were rarely documented as expressing its importance. The developing countries felt that global benefits could not be separated from local ones. At UNCED, the president of Tanzania, Ali Hassan Mwinyi, eloquently stated that the unfortunate distinction between global and national benefits "is enshrined in the current operations of the GEF, whose mandated scope covers only the issues of global…one cannot tackle them effectively without first tackling their root causes at the national and local levels."[11]

A GEF historian reports that "the best case for concessional finance can be made for investments whose benefits accrue to more than one country, or for that matter, to all of humanity."[7] Agenda 21 states that "UNCED should…identify ways and means of providing additional financial resources for measures directed towards solving major environmental problems of global concern" and that the "GEF is designed to achieve global environmental benefits."[13] Developing countries, however, often expressed opposition to a focus on global concerns, referring to them as a luxury of the rich; their main concern is a corollary to this expectation — to address *national* priorities. (Revisit Rio Expectation 2.)

Evidence. The independent evaluation of the GEF pilot phase variously described the process of quantifying global benefits as "lacking," "imprecise," "inflated," "indirect," and "qualitative."[8] The global environmental benefits expectation is intricately linked to another one calling for GEF to fund the "incremental" (see note 12) costs of activities — the portion of costs that turns a national effort into one with global significance. The issue is complex and paradoxical: evidence attests to strong environmental benefits at the micro level generated by GEF projects across the globe. The challenge remains

to upscale those benefits to the global level; as stated by OPS4, GEF alone is unable to halt or reverse downward environmental trends at this macro level.

OPS4 developed a useful method of assessment that provides the most evidence for global impact achievement. One of its main conclusions was that 70 percent of GEF-funded projects show moderate to solid progress toward impact.[5] The system proposed to compile evidence for this expectation — as a major GEF mandate and goal — is the most advanced of any proposed for a Rio Expectation.

Fulfillment level. Despite sobering indications of the state of the environment, the GEF is partially fulfilling the expectation that it will contribute to global environmental benefits — even if the global environmental benefits are themselves often not visible on a macro level or are not able to turn into global trends on their own, such as when a few species are saved from extinction. This expectation is enshrined in the official GEF mandate. Based on the visible progress at the local level, two stars are suggested for **partial fulfillment**.

DESTINATION:
PUNTA DEL ESTE, URUGUAY

Rio Expectation 8: Engage nongovernmental organizations

Not among the most frequently voiced, this expectation gains its importance from being broadly held by all stakeholder groups, except for the developing countries. Perhaps surprisingly, the most frequent holders of this expectation are donor countries. UNCED opened with official speeches such as that of Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers of the Netherlands, who declared that "In order to put these [Agenda 21] objectives in practice, it has been decided… to strengthen the existing UN agencies, namely UNDP, UNEP and the GEF as a major new funding mechanism… calling for involvement of NGOs in the decision-making process."[11]

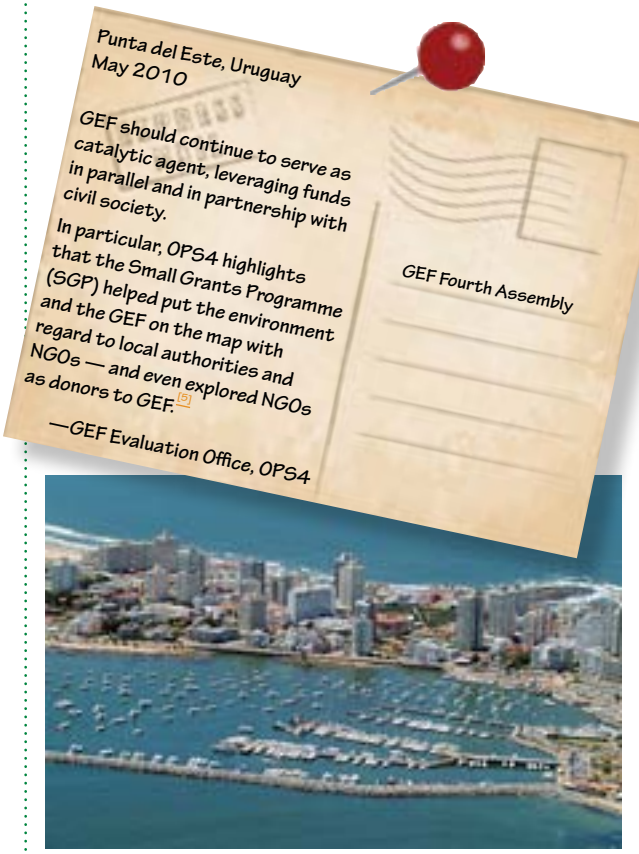
Prior to Rio, NGO actors often protested vehemently against their exclusion from the GEF as implementing agencies.[20]

The United States echoed this sentiment in fiscal year 1993, with Congress stipulating that "procedures allowing public participation must exist before funds could be given to the GEF."[39] Agenda 21 is fully dedicated to "Strengthening the role of non-governmental organizations: as partners for sustainable development."[13]

Local NGOs were acknowledged to be as important — if not more so — than international NGOs. Their involvement was considered to be "critical to a [GEF] project's success because they are often able to serve as effective intermediaries between local communities and governments."[40] Given this emphasis, it was expected that NGOs would have a role to play in the post-UNCED GEF.[20] This expectation was intertwined with that of the GEF's capturing and including local/indigenous voices (see note 13).

Evidence. More an enabling tool than an official part of the GEF mandate, this Rio Expectation has never benefited from a specific body of evidence. Guided by a cornucopia of studies, "the issuance of guidelines on stakeholder participation in GEF-financed projects" was determined by OPS1 to be "one of the most significant accomplishments… providing the basis for one of the most extensive and far-reaching policies on public involvement in projects anywhere."[2] GEF-3 also noted the contributions of NGOs: "nonfinancial support, including technical expertise, management capacity, equipment and technology, and other in-kind contributions." For example, the maturation of the GEF's Small Grants Programme was seen to have increased the access of smaller, national NGOs to GEF activities.[4]

More recently, and as part of the GEF's mandate to accredit new institutions to serve as GEF project implementing partners, the governing Council of the GEF has launched an accreditation process for new national, regional, and civil society agencies. Upon completion of the process, these agencies will be eligible to implement



GEF-financed environmental projects, marking a significant expansion of the GEF's family of partner organizations. For the first time in its 21-year history, the GEF will be able to work directly with national, regional, and civil society partners on environmental projects.

This strong record is regularly contested. As only one example, the 2009 Midterm Evaluation of the GEF Resource Allocation Framework (RAF) cited NGOs' general discontent with the new and complicated RAF process — a process on whose development they were neither consulted and for whose presumed opportunities they were not optimistic.[41] While greater weight was accorded to countries in the RAF, participation by civil society appears, in fact, to have decreased.

Fulfillment level. The GEF has partially fulfilled this expectation. Documented evidence points to the strong and often unprecedented inclusion of NGOs at multiple levels of GEF processes. Evidence is less forthcoming, however, that attests to the inclusive nature of GEF processes as seen from the field — the realities of civil society members of the GEF family. Two stars representing **partial fulfillment** are thus suggested for this expectation.

★★☆☆

FINAL DESTINATION:
RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL

Rio Expectation 9: Foster innovation

Formulation. The expectation that the GEF would foster innovation was expressed most frequently by Implementing Agencies and, to a lesser extent, by donors. The GEF pilot was called "a loose aggregate of different activities, a set of projects that are really a variety of experiments."[42] Other terms used by stakeholders to imply innovation include "experimental,"[32] [42] "path-breaking" and "demonstrative,"[29] [39] "pilot,"[43] and "risk-taking."[44] Innovation was used to refer to at least two discrete concepts: **innovative institutions** (organization, structure, actor) and **innovative investments** (approaches or activities). Although the latter is the most common, scholars have reviewed the GEF from the point of view of international law and organization and there alone identified three innovations in the GEF: "(1) novel institutional arrangements; (2) a novel machinery for the implementation of international agreements; and (3) a novel decision-making structure."[24]

The GEF's Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel has long encouraged innovation as the "menu of technologies" that needed to be expanded in pursuit of least-cost solutions.[8] However, nowhere in the GEF literature was a definition of "innovation" to be found and, as quoted in the February 1992 issue of *GEFwatch*, the GEF's monthly newsletter, "innovation boils down to semantics."[23] Innovation and replication appear to be inversely related in their occurrence in GEF history. Through the GEF replenishment periods, as innovation wanes, replication expands.

Evidence. The IEPP argued that innovation was needed "for [the] GEF to carve its own niche," but also to satisfy donors "that the limited amount of the GEF money be used to stimulate new types of activities." OPS1 suggested a study be conducted on the replicability of GEF projects. OPS2 was cautious in its assessment of replication, noting that it "is difficult to ascertain the extent of replication since it is not being systematically monitored in the GEF." Yet OPS2 found some encouraging evidence from completed and ongoing projects. For example, in the biodiversity focal area, a number of GEF projects attracted the positive attention of governments, conservationists, and local populations, which led to some replication of project activities elsewhere. OPS2 also highlighted a "strong continuing commitment" for innovation with clear indication of progress, with special promise shown by the Small Grants Programme and climate change (but lacking for land degradation). It suggested that the GEF speed up recognition of success (and therefore readiness to replicate) and more systematically encourage innovation during project design.[21] OPS3 gave equal and pronounced attention to both innovation

BOX 3: GEF AS INNOVATOR

"Any impression that the GEF on its own would be able to solve global environmental problems needs to be qualified immediately. The problems are immense. Any solution would need the strong involvement of many other actors. For all of these problems, the GEF contribution needs to be seen in its proper perspective as a catalyst or innovator rather than as the direct purveyor of international public goods. Development and demonstration of innovative technologies and methodologies that lead to replication is a critical component of catalysis in the GEF. Although replication is not equally applicable to all projects in the GEF portfolio, for many GEF projects the replication of outcomes is often the goal, which signals that market barriers have been removed."

—OPS3[4]

and replication, stressing that together they formed a single catalyst for achieving GEF results (see box 3). However, OPS3 noted that because GEF project selection and knowledge sharing were ad hoc, it did not facilitate innovation or replication with existing tools such as the RAF.

OPS4 introduced a different perspective; it analyzed the catalytic role of the GEF, which included innovation as "demonstration of new approaches" and replication as "investment" meant to upgrade and upscale approaches that had been proven to work. It categorized all projects into three groups: foundation, demonstration, and investment.[5] Using this categorization, demonstration projects dominate, averaging 62 percent of the total GEF portfolio and receiving slightly more emphasis in recent replenishment periods.

The GEF continues to explore its role in innovation, and OPS5 is expected to contribute further evidence for innovation and replication.

Fulfillment level. Not only is fostering innovation within reasonable control of the GEF, but useful indicators have been developed that hint at its importance and growth through GEF replenishment periods.

The GEF achieved strong fulfillment of this Rio Expectation.

Although all actors agreed that innovation was a core element of the GEF's pilot phase, it is less certain if innovation was expected to remain pivotal in its evolution post-UNCED. Based on analysis of the GEF mission, it is not regarded as part of the official GEF mandate. However, it is considered an essential tool or strategy for success. In fact, in the methodological framework for the upcoming OPS5, innovation is portrayed as an implementation strategy within the realm of demonstration that should lend support to the GEF theory of change.[45] Four stars are awarded for **strong fulfillment** of this Rio Expectation.

SOUVENIRS FROM THE JOURNEY

An inherent problem from the start of this journey was the lack of any clear articulation of the expectations of the GEF or the level at which the GEF's performance overall for these expectations would be assessed. In other words, no targets or goals were originally set at the level of the entire GEF.[48] From this expedition back to the Rio Earth Summit which set out to qualitatively explore original hopes and assumptions for the GEF — that is, the Rio Expectations — the following are souvenir reminders for future contemplation.

Although not a single expectation was shared across all four stakeholder groups, the GEF was expected to serve purposes that incalculably transcend the realms of fund management, global environmental benefits, and sustainable development. Responding to the urgency of the moment — with strong parallels to that felt today — many individuals and groups placed high hopes on the GEF as problem solver and Earth saver.

Based on the compilation of evidence from the OPS evaluation series and other reviewed sources, fulfillment of the nine Rio Expectations has been assessed and ranked on a four-star system (see table 2).

Evidence highlights two expectations as achieving strong fulfillment: that the GEF would support the conventions and that the GEF would foster innovation. One other Rio Expectation achieved fulfillment: that the GEF would address national priorities. Five more achieved partial fulfillment, and one registered no visible achievement: that the GEF would being given adequate funds.

To further illuminate these assessments, three other perspectives on Rio Expectations highlight whether or not they were enshrined in the official GEF **mandate**, how much **evidence** of their fulfillment has been compiled, and what level of **influence** or control the GEF wields over their fulfillment.

TABLE 2: LEVELS OF FULFILLMENT

Ranking	Fulfillment	Expectation
★★★★	Strong fulfillment	• Support conventions • Foster Innovation
★★★	Fulfillment	• Address national priorities
★★	Partial fulfillment	• Provide additional funding • Contribute to global environment benefits • Enhance international cooperation • Engage nongovernmental organizations • Mainstream sustainable development in a new green economic order
★	No fulfillment	• Be given adequate funds to manage

Mandate. Derived from an analysis of the GEF objectives as summarized in official documents such as the GEF Instrument and Operational Principles, the goal of the GEF was determined to be that it serve as a "mechanism for international collaboration to secure global environmental benefits."[46] Three categories of Rio Expectations surface:

- **Mandated** — six Rio Expectations were absorbed into the GEF mandate, with a very specific reference appearing in the purpose/mission or principles

- **Enabling** — two Rio Expectations were not enshrined in the mandate but are largely and repeatedly referred to by public GEF documents as tools or strategies avidly applied to achieve objectives (engage NGOs and foster innovation)

- **Not mandated** — one Rio Expectation appears in no official GEF document (be given adequate funds to manage)

Evidence. The scope of this review did not permit a dive below the OPS level to discover the greater evidence of fulfillment that may well exist in the body of the specific evaluations.

It is also challenging to register fulfillment completely when deliberate OPS investment was not made — because the expectation was not absorbed into the mandate, was outside the OPS scope, or constrained budgets and resources mitigated against compiling hard evidence for a specific Rio Expectation. Nevertheless, the visibility of harder evidence through the OPS meta-analysis lens satisfactorily explains the levels of fulfillment across the expectations.

Influence. Clearer than any other issue is that the GEF's influence over so many expectations is limited. The GEF cannot be everything to everybody. All stakeholders and critics may need to temper their expectations against, above all, the (in) adequacy of funds the GEF has been given to manage.

The GEF was founded 20 years ago on a ground-breaking idea to preserve and protect the environment with the planet's very first pure focus on the global environment, and a promise, by historical polluters, to keep developing countries' priorities in clear view and to change from within, without proliferation. At this moment 20 years later, can the GEF identify and seize on contemporary opportunities at Rio+20 to revisit some of these expectations?

Despite all odds, the GEF has made progress toward achieving the expectations on which it was founded. Going forward, it must be recognized that in order to meet existing and emerging expectations, the GEF has to be adequately funded. Stakeholders must earnestly join together to map a more carefully charted journey to preserve and protect the environment.

NOTES

1. Although it is understandable that leveraging cofinancing may in some respects compensate for the lack of "additional," these terms do not capture the concept of additionality as used during the Earth Summit, and therefore cannot contribute toward fulfillment of this Rio Expectation.
2. Tenets necessary for balancing economic growth with environmental constraints were incorporated in international environmental agreements (conventions) on biodiversity (the Convention on Biological Diversity) and climate change (the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change); both were open for signature at UNCED.
3. The Bretton Woods Institutions are the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). They were set up at a meeting of 43 countries in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, in July 1944. Their aims were to help rebuild the shattered post-war economy and to promote international economic cooperation. At that time, the United Nations organization did not yet exist, although its foundation had already been foreshadowed well before 1944. Thus, when the IMF and World Bank were established, their relationship to the still-nonexistent UN organization was naturally left open and vague, even though the terms of reference for both indicated that there would be some relationship. Despite the fact that the IMF and the World Bank are no different in legal status from the rest of the UN specialized agencies, in reality it is recognized that they enjoy a different and virtually independent status. Hence, in discussion a distinction is made between two different systems: the Bretton Woods system and the UN system. While legally incorrect — there is only one single UN system — this distinction corresponds to the facts of life. The Bretton Woods system is not only de facto independent but is actually dominant and immensely more powerful than the UN system.[49]
4. The expectation that the GEF would contribute to mainstreaming gained only 17 formulations and was triangulated by all stakeholder groups except developing countries.
5. Sustainable development is most commonly defined as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It is upheld with three distinct pillars — sociopolitical, economic, and environmental — weakness in any of the three will cripple or obstruct progress. Despite many differing definitions, most, if not all, UNCED participants acknowledged that the main theme of the Earth Summit was sustainable development.
6. At least two of these images are clearly linked to the issue of mainstreaming in the United Nations and the World Bank; see Rio Expectation 4.
7. NGO stakeholders did not use words sparingly. At the GEF consultation in Geneva in December 1991, they articulated the position that the World Bank was the worst possible choice to house the GEF.[32] [33]
8. Stern had originally estimated 1 percent and revised the figure in 2008.
9. Even if an estimated 12 percent multilateral cofinancing (out of the full cofinancing of $37.6 billion from the pilot to OPS4) is added to the sum for the life of the GEF, the global average given to the GEF to manage is 0.53 percent.
10. The Green Climate Fund is in the process of being set up and holds the potential for serving as a channel for the level of funding that was expected in Rio.
11. The concept of "global environmental benefits" was vague during the Rio negotiations in 1992, and has evolved substantially. The May 1992 "Beyond the Pilot" document notes, "there are many instances where it is difficult to distinguish global and national environmental benefits and therefore, some degree of flexibility in interpreting such benefits is required."[3]
12. The expectation for the GEF to fund incremental costs did not qualify as a Rio Expectation for the purposes of this analysis. Although a total of 21 formulations were tallied, it was not triangulated (three sources minimum) outside of the Implementing Agency and generic categories.
13. The expectation of capturing local/indigenous voices was among the original set of 29, but received no more than 13 formulations; it was triangulated only by NGOs and donors.

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