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Evaluation of the GEF support to Sustainable Forest Management

Approach Paper
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Acronyms

GEF	Global Environment Facility
CBIT	Capacity Building Initiative for Transparency
IP	Impact Program
IAP	Integrated Approach Pilot
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreement
OPS-7	Seventh Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF
PFD	Program Framework Document
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
SLM	Sustainable Landscape Management
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
STAR	System for Transparent Allocation of Resources

Table of Contents

1. Background	4
1.1 Introduction	4
1.2 The dynamic global forest context	5
1.3 GEF's evolving SFM portfolio	8
2. Purpose, conceptual framework, and design of the evaluation	16
2.1 Evaluation criteria and key evaluation questions	16
3. Evaluation Methodology	19
3.1 Limitations	19
3.2 Phases of the evaluation	20
3.2.1 Phase 1: Development of the evaluation framework	20
3.2.2 Phase 2: Stakeholder consultation	21
3.2.3 Phase 3: Case studies	22
3.2.5 Phase 4: Evaluation synthesis and communication of findings	23
4. Work plan	25
Annex 1 – Draft Outline of the Evaluation Report	27
Annex 2: Illustrative Evaluation Matrix	28

1. Background

1. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) is a multilateral financial mechanism established on the eve of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit to help tackle our planet's most pressing environmental problems. Since then, the GEF has provided \$21.1 billion in grants and mobilized \$114 billion in co-financing for more than 5,000 projects in 170 countries¹. The GEF has become an international partnership of 183 countries, international institutions, civil society organizations, and the private sector to address global environmental issues. Guided by multilateral environmental conventions, notably the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the GEF provides a financial mechanism for these international conventions. GEF grants are available to developing countries and countries with economies in transition to meet the objectives of the multilateral environmental conventions in five focal areas – Biodiversity, Climate Change, Chemicals & Waste, Land Degradation, and International Waters. Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) is not a focal area of the GEF but a major outcome of work done in these areas.
2. The GEF's Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) is collaborating with the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) to assess the performance of the GEF SFM portfolio and to provide insights and lessons on the GEF support for future forest-related interventions. The study will use the revised OECD DAC framework and focus on interventions since the pilot phase (GEF1). The evaluation will assess the outcomes and impact concerning nine results areas – UNFF's seven 'thematic elements of SFM'², plus rights and equality, and scientific knowledge – and about contemporary issues of relevance (COVID-19, green recovery); will assess the guidance from relevant Conferences of the Parties (COPs) and the Agenda 2030 with respect to SFM; and, regarding international best practices, and knowledge.

1.1 Introduction

3. This document sets out the proposed approach to evaluating GEF's support to SFM. The evaluation is a *unique opportunity* as the portfolio covers:
 - Over 500 projects
 - Over almost 30 years
 - Most of the world's major tropical forest biomes
 - Many partner agencies and countries
 - Diverse governance regimes
 - Engagement with indigenous peoples, local communities, and businesses
 - Multiple projects operating modalities and project sizes
 - Learning and evolution of objectives and focal themes across all GEF phases

¹ <https://www.thegef.org/about-us>

² Seven Thematic Elements of SFM have been identified by the UN Forum on Forests as common to all the regional and international criteria for assessing SFM: 1) extent of forest resources; 2) biological diversity; 3) forest health and vitality; 4) protective functions of forests; 5) productive functions of forests; 6) socio-economic functions; and 7) legal policy and institutional framework. (United Nations 2007)

4. Although the focus and quality of baseline data and monitoring have varied, there has been a consistent focus on *forest protection, restoration, and sustainable use*. Therefore, this diverse portfolio offers considerable learning about how people and nature can thrive together in forest contexts. It will provide significant inputs to inform the 7th Comprehensive Evaluation of GEF: *identifying GEF's SFM results, performance, and comparative advantages*.
5. The evaluation is of potential broader value, too. The evaluation is expected to make important observations on the evolution of best practices in SFM and clear demonstrations of what has been achieved that can be mainstreamed into future policy and practice across many countries. Indigenous peoples and local communities are rightly demanding greater rights, security, livelihood opportunities, and recognition of their stewardship of forests. There is increasing coherence of international demand for greater action for forests to help tackle the twin climate and nature' emergencies,' each coming to a head in 2021 with the Climate COP and the Biodiversity COP, respectively. Whether through societal pressure or political enlightenment, there are new national policy openings for transformative shifts in the way forests are managed. *This evaluation is important and timely, providing evidence of wide potential use to GEF and partners. Therefore, it will be forward-looking to inform upcoming decisions while also drawing on evidence from past projects on results and performance.*

1.2 The dynamic global forest context ³

6. Forests are essential to life on our planet, so it is no surprise that they have been central to GEF's work since its establishment. Forests cover 31 percent of the global land area. They host most of the world's *terrestrial biodiversity*. For example, 80 percent of amphibian species, 75 percent of bird species, and 68 percent of mammal species are found in forests, while 60 percent of all vascular plants are found in tropical forests alone.
7. The one-third of forests that are primary forests, where ecological processes are not significantly disturbed, are especially significant. And while people have inhabited forests for millennia, they have taken to deforesting it on a grand scale in recent decades – some 420 million ha have been *deforested* in the last 30 years, much of it primary. While there has recently been a 33% reduction in global deforestation rates (comparing 2015-20 with the decade to 2010), 10 million ha of forest were still lost in each of the last five years. Agricultural expansion is the prevailing driver of deforestation and forest fragmentation. Large-scale commercial agriculture (primarily cattle, soya bean, and oil palm) accounted for 40 percent of tropical deforestation between 2000 and 2010, but subsistence agriculture also for another 33 percent.
8. Forests naturally remove about a third of all fossil fuel emissions from the atmosphere each year – some 11.7 billion tons of CO₂. So, if the world's forests didn't exist, there would be a lot more CO₂ in the atmosphere, the oceans would be considerably more acidified, and climate change would already be catastrophic. Yet the scale of deforestation, forest degradation (including forest fires), and peatland burning already

³ Principal references for this section are FAO and UNEP 2020; IEO 2017; Macqueen and Mayers 2020; and NYDF Assessment Partners 2019.

outweigh the scale of regeneration, tree planting, forest management, and releases, on average, about *5.5 billion tons of CO₂* to the atmosphere each year. The emissions are further compounded by the foregone sequestration of hundreds of millions of tons of CO₂ that deforested areas would have provided each year had they been left uncleared.

9. Deforestation has caused major *losses of forest biodiversity*: of 60,000 tree species, 20,000 are classified as threatened by IUCN, and 1,400 are critically endangered. Populations of monitored forest animals fell by 53 percent between 1974 and 2014. It has also realized material *risks to food security, water security, and energy security*, since forests underpin many ecological processes upon which most sectors and many people's jobs, livelihoods, and health depend especially in rural areas. *Resilience* is lost with the loss of: forest insects, bats and birds that pollinate crops; extensive forest root systems that prevent soil erosion; mangroves that provide resilience against coastal flooding; the carbon storage described above; and wild foods that sustain 1 billion people.
10. 1.3 billion people live in forests, notably *indigenous peoples and local forest-dependent communities*. There is increasing evidence that when granted local control, they protect forests better than industrial-scale companies and generally outperform governments in carbon storage, biodiversity protection and avoiding deforestation (Macqueen and Mayers 2020). For example, conservative estimates of the gross annual value of smallholder crop, fuelwood, timber, and non-timber products from forests lie between US\$869 billion and US\$1.29 trillion – substantially larger than the gross annual value of the largest companies. Yet over 250 million people living in forests and savannahs have incomes of less than USD 1.25 per day.
11. The majority of new infectious diseases affecting people, including Ebola, AIDs and the SARS-CoV2 virus that caused the current COVID-19 pandemic, are zoonotic and their emergence is often linked to forest loss and increased human exposure to wildlife. The role of forests in *health* is thus at last gaining recognition.
12. Approaches used to manage forests in protected areas are evolving. 18 percent of the world's forest area, over 700 million hectares, falls within protected areas such as national parks and reserves (IUCN categories I–IV) even if these areas are not yet fully representative of all forest ecosystems. "Other effective area-based conservation measures" (OECMs) were introduced into Aichi Biodiversity Target 11, providing for many other ways of recognizing biodiversity conservation outside protected areas. Meanwhile, protected area policies are faced with increasing public challenges being made to the systems, structures, and practices that embody systemic racism; and the evidence of conservation's prejudiced and exclusionary roots where indigenous peoples and local communities were often evicted from newly established protected areas depriving people of ancestral customary rights and access to resources.
13. The role of forests is prioritized in a large and increasingly coherent set of international environment and development agreements. Moreover, there is *action on these proliferating agreements*. New finance and investment vehicles are growing and becoming mainstream for forests' climate change roles, although less so for biodiversity. Governments have increasingly enacted legislation and/or financial incentives to halt deforestation and the trade in products resulting from deforestation, as well as to invest in restoring degraded forests: the Bonn Challenge to restore 350 million ha of degraded forest lands by 2030 is reckoned to be on target, with 210 million ha already pledged.

14. *Progress towards SFM* is not easy to measure as no single quantifiable characteristic fully describes its many social, environmental, and economic dimensions. The proportion of forest area under long-term management plans is one measure used by FAO – with coverage now estimated to be 54 percent. The area under independent forest certification schemes is a second (overlapping) measure – globally, around 11 percent of forests are certified, although only 6 percent of this is in the tropics. However, these measures do not capture progress by communities and small enterprises for which formal planning and certification are less appropriate. For them, progress is about *empowering accountable local organizations* that provide *governance and management at a landscape level* and *inclusive supply chains*. In addition to a trend to recognize and deploy local traditional knowledge, innovations at the local level – such as forest integrity assessment checklists for biodiversity – are increasingly helping small-scale operators be effective forest managers.
15. An increasing number of businesses have mainstreamed forest *certification* and timber and food product supply chain certification to attest to sustainability. A few food businesses are following this by eliminating deforestation commodity chains – although food demand and production systems remain the biggest threat to forests and public benefits.
16. While *finance for forests* appears to have broadly risen over the last two decades, it is still low relative to the potential of forests to sustain us. Tropical forests can provide up to 30 percent of the climate change mitigation needed to meet the Paris Agreement's objectives. Yet finance for forests in countries where deforestation is a significant problem accounts for just over one percent of global mitigation-related development funding. In 2019 the New York Declaration on Forests Assessment Partners reviewed progress in financial provision – looking at "green finance" aligned with forest and climate goals, and comparing it with "grey finance" to land use sectors which have an unclear but potentially negative impact on forests. They found grey finance for agriculture is 15 times more than green finance for forests, indicating the large economic incentives in sectors driving deforestation. Green finance for forests was under USD 22 billion in 2019, an increase of only 9 percent since 2017 following years of declining funding from 2010-2017. Support to address deforestation to and protect forests in tropical countries now comprises less than 1.5 percent — only USD 3.2 billion — of the USD 256 billion committed by multilateral institutions and developed country donors since 2010 to climate change mitigation. Support for REDD+ implementation is particularly lacking beyond the GEF, GCF and FIP. The renewables sector alone has received over 100 times more committed finance than forests.
17. Moving forward, there is increasing recognition of the need for *transformative action* – reform to shift from business-as-usual 'deforestation-driven economies' to 'conservation-driven' standing forest economies that support people and nature thriving together. This economic challenge is associated with an institutional challenge: the need to move away from siloed approaches to forests to being able to assess nexus issues and to manage associated synergies and trade-offs. The recent Global Biodiversity Outlook 5 and current IPBES work are getting to grips with such transformations and trade-offs – bringing prospects closer for realizing forests' potential to achieve simultaneously the SDGs for poverty, hunger, health, water, energy, climate and biodiversity.

1.3 GEF's evolving SFM portfolio

18. Since the pilot phase, the GEF has provided support to partner countries for Sustainable Forest Management (SFM). GEF support to forests over the years can be grouped into three categories plus international cooperation (deployed from GEF-5):
- (1) Protection: Maintenance of forest resources (forest conservation)
 - (2) Management: SFM and sustainable use of forests
 - (3) Restoration: Forest and landscape restoration
 - (4) Regional and global cooperation on SFM
19. Although SFM is not itself a focal area, SFM initiatives have been supported through GEF focal area interventions for Biodiversity (BD), Climate Change (CC) and Land Degradation (LD) and, increasingly, multi-focal projects covering more than one of these three focal areas. Since REDD+ was formalized with the Warsaw Framework in 2013, the GEF has also increasingly provided resources for REDD+ developing country pilot projects to reduce emissions from forested lands.

The GEF SFM Portfolio comprises of both projects under specific SFM programs since GEF-4 and many other projects that were not part of these programs but also address many of the UNFF's thematic SFM elements. Building upon a database developed by the GEF Secretariat, a brief analysis of the entire SFM portfolio to date follows below:⁴

20. *Distribution of SFM projects and grants across the GEF phases:* over the past three decades, the GEF has invested in 533 SFM projects (including REDD+) with a total of USD\$ 3.3billion in grants (Table 1). As of September 2020, GEF-4 has the largest number of SFM projects (129 projects, 24% of total projects), followed by GEF-5 (104, 20%). Reflecting GEF's increasing focus on an integrated approach to address the reality of the multiple potential benefits of the forests – and especially since GEF-5, when an SFM financial incentive was used as a catalyst to integrate BD, CC and LD – SFM projects have mainly been larger and implemented as multi focal area projects. This contributed to GEF-5 and GEF-6 having the largest share of SFM grants (GEF-5 at 22% and GEF-6 at 18%).

Table 1: Distribution of SFM projects and grants across GEF phases				
GEF phase	SFM projects		SFM grants	
	Number	% of SFM portfolio	GEF grant (million \$)	% of SFM portfolio
GEF Pilot	18	3.38%	82.7	3%
GEF-1	28	5.25%	234.5	7%
GEF-2	62	11.63%	295.6	9%
GEF-3	75	14.07%	358	11%
GEF-4	129	24.20%	455.6	14%
GEF-5	104	19.51%	699.6	22%
GEF-6	67	12.57%	585.9	18%
GEF-7	50	9.38%	548.7	17%
Total	533	100	3,260.6	100
Note: GEF grants in this table include project grant amount and PPG. GEF-7 is still ongoing, four Impact Programs that are working on forest issues are included in this calculation, they are: 1. Amazon Sustainable				

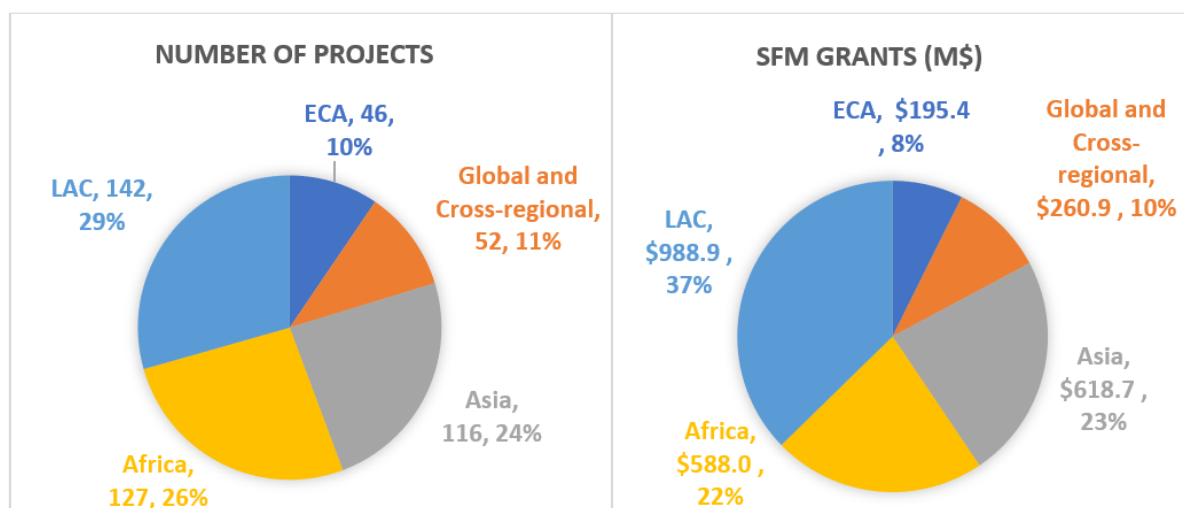
⁴ This analysis was based on data that was immediately available. The analysis will be further developed in relevant fields as the evaluation progresses.

Landscapes Program (GEF ID 10198). 2. Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration (FOLUR) Impact Program (GEF ID 10201); 2. The Congo Basin Sustainable Landscapes Impact Program (CBSL IP); 3. Sustainable Forest Management Impact Program on Dryland Sustainable Landscapes (GEF ID 10206); 4. The Congo Basin Sustainable Landscapes Impact Program (CBSL IP) (GEF ID 10208).

21. *Distribution of SFM projects and grants across regions from pilot phase to GEF-6:*

Figure 1 shows how Latin America & the Caribbean (LAC) have had both the largest number of SFM projects (142) and the largest amount of SFM funding (\$ 988.9 million), amounting to 29% and 37%, respectively. This is followed by Africa in terms of numbers of projects (127), albeit with a much smaller share of funding (\$588 million, 22% of total SFM funding). Asia has fewer projects (116) but more funding (\$618.7 million, 23%) than Africa.

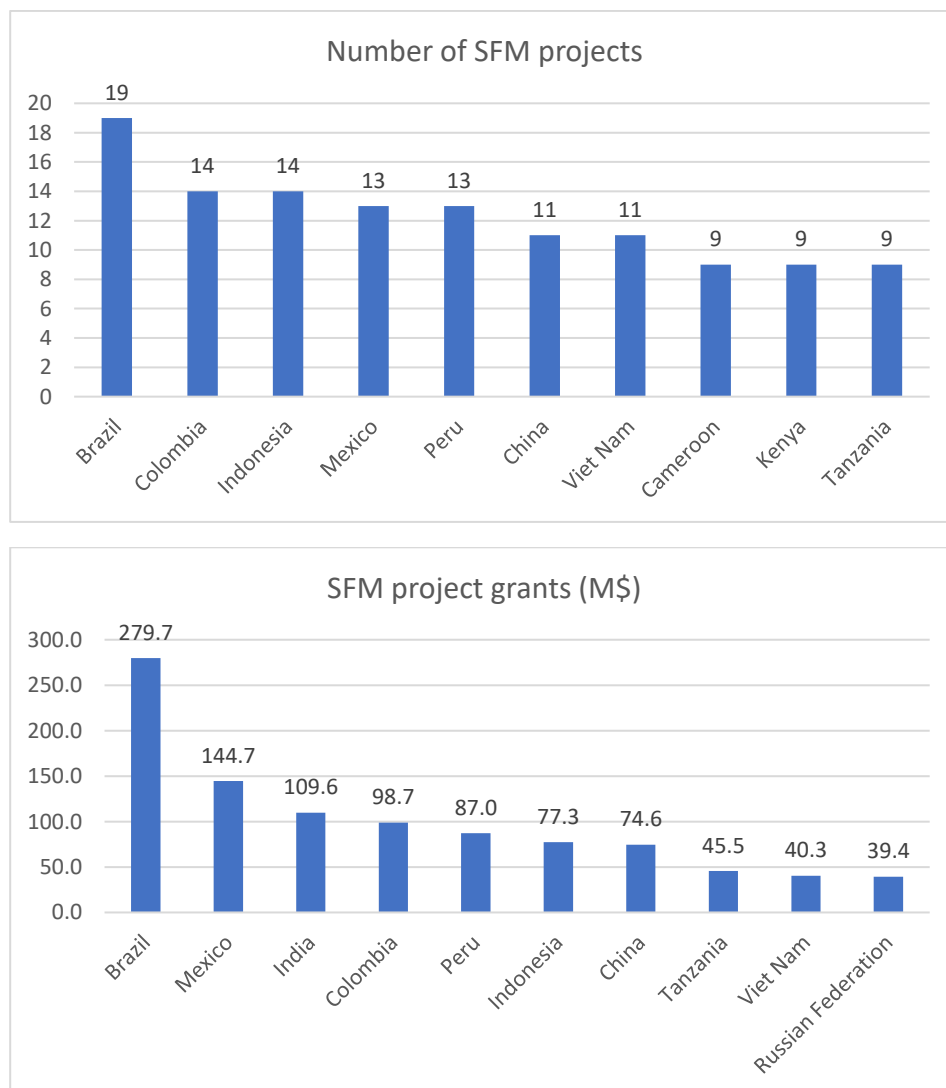
Figure 1: Distribution of SFM projects and grants across regions



Note: SFM projects from the pilot phase to GEF-6 are included in the calculation.

22. *Top Ten Country Recipients of SFM Projects and GEF Grants from the pilot phase until GEF-6:* Figure 2 shows the ten countries with largest number of SFM projects and grants. Between them, they have 129 projects totaling \$ 1,013million (36% of all funding for SFM). These ten countries all participated in the main REDD+ funds.

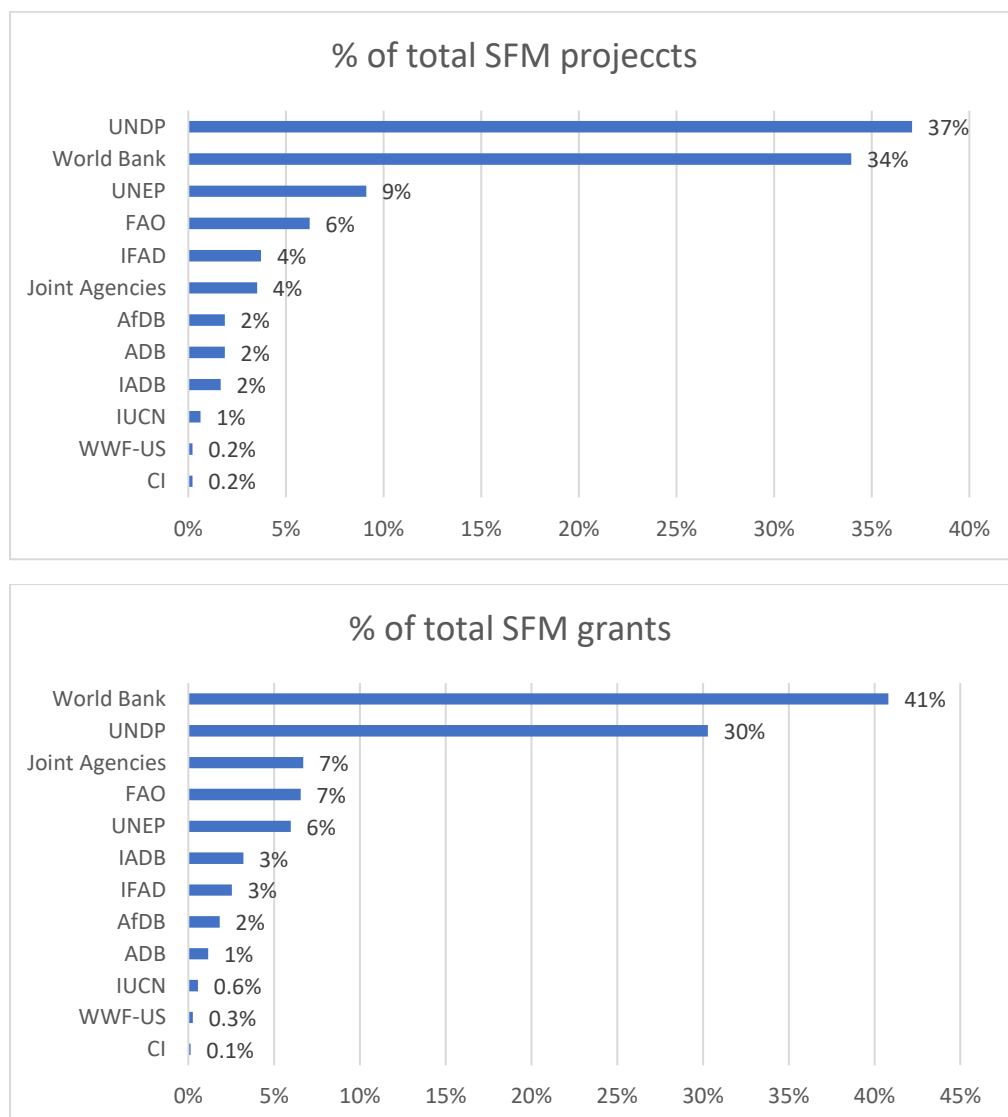
Figure 2: Ten countries with largest number of SFM projects and GEF grants



Note: national SFM projects from the pilot phase to GEF-6 are included in the calculation.

23. *Distribution of SFM Projects and GEF Grants by Agency from the pilot phase until GEF-6:* Majority of the SFM projects (83%) were implemented by the three original GEF Agencies – UNDP, the World Bank, and UNEP, amounting to 77% of total SFM funding (Figure 3). UNDP has managed the largest share of SFM projects (37%), the World Bank has the largest grant amount (41%). For the projects with joint Agencies, the most common agency combination is UNDP and World Bank.

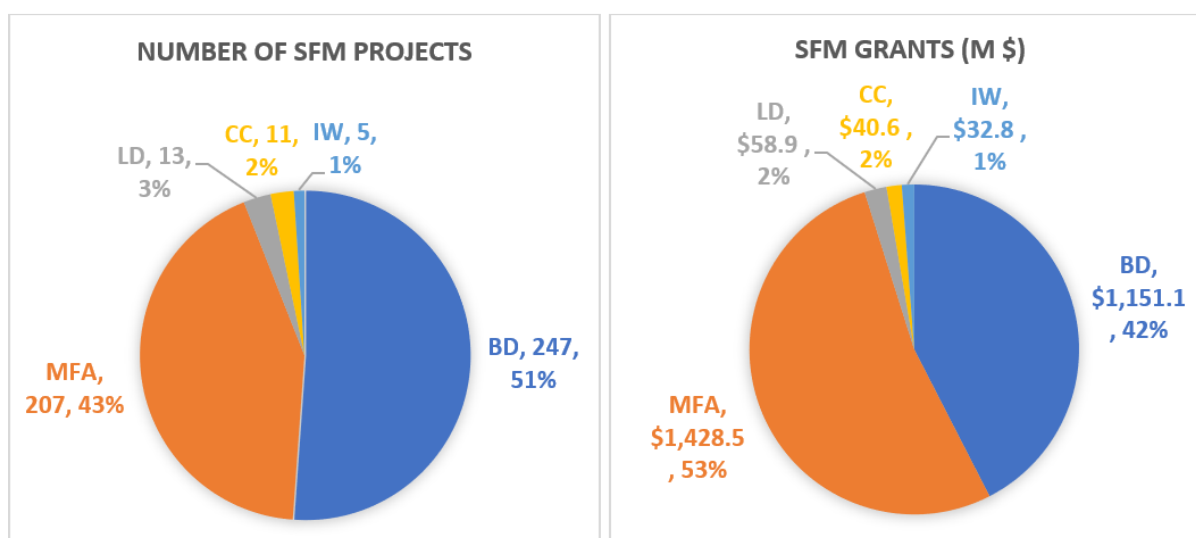
Figure 3: Distribution of SFM projects and grants by Agency



Note: SFM projects from the pilot phase to GEF-6 are included in the calculation.

24. *Distribution of SFM Projects and GEF Grants by Focal Area from the pilot phase until GEF-6:* projects in the biodiversity focal area have been an important means for addressing SFM. Figure 4 shows that the largest share of SFM projects are in the biodiversity focal area, with 51% of projects and 42% of SFM funding. Multifocal area projects account for 43% of projects and 53% of funding.

Figure 4: Distribution of SFM projects and grants by focal area

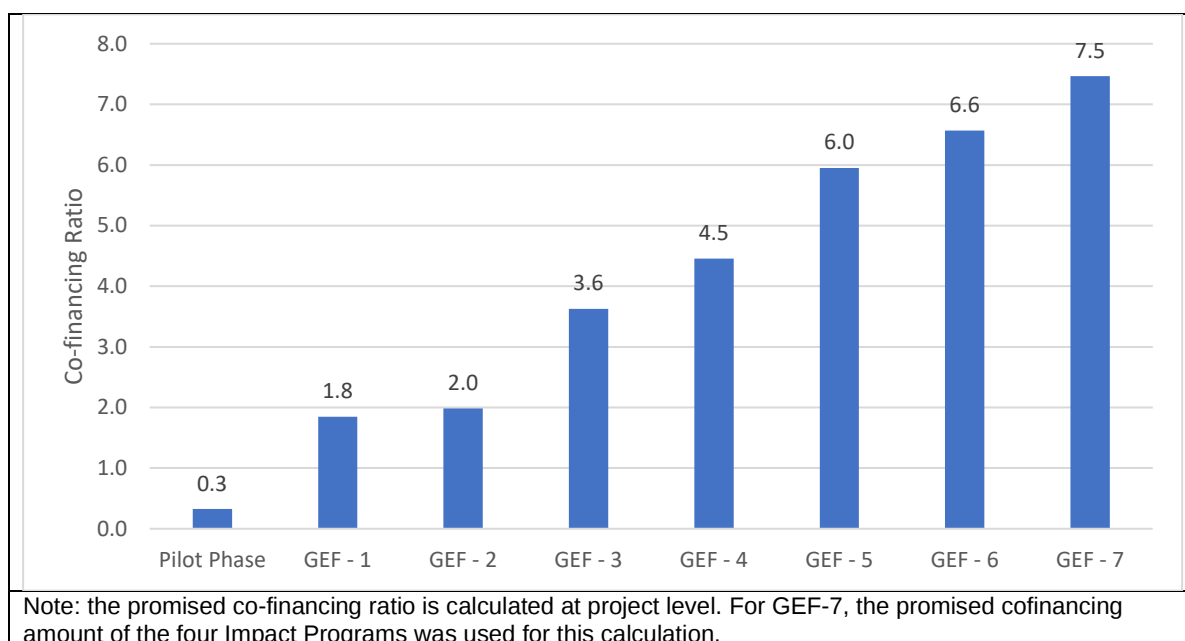


Note: SFM projects from the pilot phase to GEF-6 are included in the calculation.

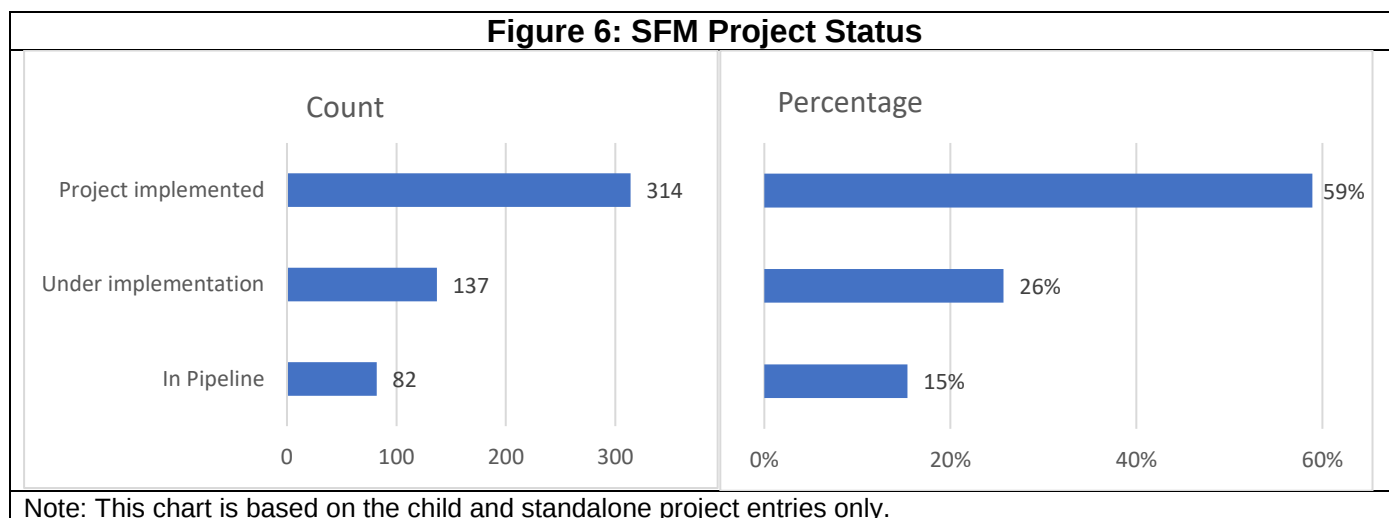
25. *Co-Financing of SFM projects:* Figure 5 shows how the ratio of promised co-financing to the total of GEF SFM grants has risen steadily and reached 6.6 in GEF-6. This may be compared with an average ratio of 5.9 across the whole GEF portfolio (IEO 2017).

Figure 5: Co-Financing Ratio for SFM projects

Calculated as promised co-financing per \$ of GEF Grant across the GEF Phases (\$)



26. *Implementation Status of SFM projects:* Figure 6 shows that a large number of GEF SFM projects have already been completed (314, or 59% of the total GEF SFM projects). With an additional 137 projects under implementation (26% of the total), this number of projects provides a substantial basis of completed experience to evaluate.



27. *Evolution of the GEF SFM portfolio over the GEF phases:* Some key moments in the evolution of SFM over more recent GEF phases are highlighted in Box 1. An initial analysis of this and the data above suggests that, over progressive GEF phases, GEF's SFM interventions have become increasingly ambitious and comprehensive in their scope and objectives and more integrated and collaborative in their management. Several broad trends can be observed. Each trend is potentially transformative but comes with challenges that the evaluation will explore:

- *A focus on biomes – not simply individual forests:* Ensuring effective control over larger areas and more governance regimes, and engaging more countries and more stakeholders
- *Attention to ecosystem integrity, connectivity, and function – not simply the area protected:* Assessing and addressing forest functions, connectivity, and all ecosystem services, not just a few
- *More countries per project – not just one:* Getting to grips with complex political economy opportunities and risks, the lower ability of low-forest-cover countries and SIDS to access support, as well as significant coordination needs
- *Multiple sectors – not just forestry or agriculture:* Engaging with more economic and business drivers and assuring effective cross-sector coordination
- *More commodities and value chains – not just one:* Ensuring private sector representation, in-country business support, business transparency, and accountability
- *More implementing partners managing bigger grants – not just one agency:* Developing collaborative approaches that are efficient, work for country partners including essential smaller players, and build transformative capacity
- *More and more diffuse beneficiaries – not just a single group:* Recognizing, engaging, and disaggregating all beneficiaries, notably the marginalized and difficult to reach and improving their livelihood links to forests

- *More benefits sought by beneficiaries – not only MEA goals:* Understanding and tracking synergies and trade-offs between benefits and the conditions that apply
- *Tackling underlying causes – not simply delivering immediate outcomes:* Analysing and tackling often elusive and political root causes (some global causes are outside GEF's mandate, and some underlying causes at the national level are outside GEF's reach)
- *Harnessing time-bound opportunities emerging from the MEAs – for example, REDD+ became a strategic focus for GEF-5 and has shifted towards other important schemes for SFM such as restoration*
- *Higher governance ambitions – not only revising policies and laws:* Creating political and societal demand for transformative change; especially in increasingly fragile countries and governance contexts where there is conflict or insecure rights and tenure
- *Greater innovation and risk – not simply more of the same:* Keeping on top of the learning and managing the knowledge from the evolving GEF SFM portfolio, and balancing innovation and risk

Box 1: Highlights in the more recent evolution of GEF approaches to SFM

GEF4

- Introduced the need for a more strategic approach to SFM, building on good but 'fragmented' previous work, focusing not only on outcomes in the forest but also root causes and barriers to progress.
- Drew attention to the importance of tackling land degradation 'including deforestation,' and sustainable land management 'including SFM.'
- Introduced the *Tropical Forest Account* in 2007 – the GEF's pilot financial incentive for SFM

GEF5

- Aimed to deliver multiple benefits at many levels, enabling wide expansion beyond the protected area focus to date (the BD focal area had supplied 68% of all forest funding before GEF5)
- Embraced climate change mitigation (with a tactical focus that tried to harness time-bound opportunities such as REDD+), integrated watershed management, certification of forest products, payments for ecosystem services (PES), and strengthening sustainable ('alternative') livelihoods for people dependent on forest resources.
- Introduced a systemic *SFM/REDD+ financial incentive*, providing dedicated funding for forest-related objectives and targets. This encouraged countries to invest portions of their GEF funds for BD, CC and LD in fully integrated, multi-focal area SFM projects and programs. It added up to \$1 for every qualifying \$3 of STAR resources. During GEF-5, over 80 countries took advantage of the mechanism.
- Aimed to further converge forest investments in more efficient and cost-effective programs, combining resources into Multi-Focal Area programs.

GEF6

- Cornerstone was the SFM financial incentive program – a total GEF grant of \$825 million for the expected results of 844 MT CO₂e mitigated emissions and 284 M ha under improved management. Project selection emphasized to include those with the biggest potential results
- Strongly recognized the importance of rights, tenure, local institutions, and the role of indigenous peoples and women in SFM, with a big push on mainstreaming gender equality and women's empowerment.
- Emphasized integrated approaches at the landscape level, embracing ecosystem and livelihood principles.
- Introduced SFM-focused integrated approach pilots (IAPs), including a 3-country Amazon program.
- Made links to (urban) drivers of change. An IAP pilot on "Taking Deforestation out of Commodity Supply Chains" aimed to bring 23 million hectares of land under SFM and mitigate 80 million tCO₂e.

GEF7

- SFM strategy has large-scale and transformative ambition, recognizing SFM as a '*dynamic and evolving concept*' (citing UNGA 2008). Instead of 'fragmented multiple small projects with little potential for biome-level outcomes,' the strategy is multiple countries, value chains, and players collaborating at scale.
- Focus on the biome level 'where concerted SFM focusing on forest integrity and functioning can truly transform development.' SFM Impact Programs (IPs) are introduced for three transboundary forest biomes: Amazon, Congo and Drylands, and a Food Systems, Land Use, and Restoration FOLUR IP.
- However, focal areas still 'remain the central organizing framework in the GEF-7 delivery model'.

NB, the final evaluation, will explore this evolution, including phases earlier than GEF-4, in more detail.

2. Purpose, conceptual framework, and design of the evaluation

28. The *purpose* of this evaluation is to assess the performance of the GEF SFM portfolio and to provide insights and lessons for future forest-related interventions based on evaluative evidence generated by the analysis. This evaluation will be the first independent review of the GEF support to SFM initiatives. The *objectives* are to:

- Assess the *relevance and coherence* of SFM initiatives, including the formative assessment of the newer GEF forest relevant IAPs and IPs
- Assess *effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impacts* of the GEF's SFM portfolio
- Present a *synthesis of SFM results* and early impacts
- Identify *challenges; lessons learned, and good practices* in SFM initiatives

In terms of *learning*, after nearly three decades of forest-related work, the evaluation aims to learn what GEF's big-picture outcomes have been in terms of the understanding, policy, governance, and practice of SFM. Furthermore, GEF's impact on forests, forest-related environmental services, forest-dependent people, and economies will be explored.

2.1 Evaluation criteria and key evaluation questions

29. The evaluation will use the revised OECD DAC framework to develop the evaluation criteria and key evaluation questions. *Evaluation criteria will include* relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability – supplemented by impacts and coherence (from revised 2019 OECD norms). The OECD DAC criteria will be complemented by an additional one: equity, a core principle of Agenda 2030.

30. Also, the evaluation will draw on GEF's lessons on transformational change (IEO 2018) and sustainability:

- *Transformational change* is defined as 'engagements that help achieve deep, systemic, and sustainable change with large-scale impact' – that 'flip' market and (government) systems. The evaluation will look at the ambition, mechanisms, internal and external conditions of success, and the scale of results.
- *Sustainability* looks at ultimate environmental (and social and economic) impacts and sustaining governance and institutions (GEF intermediate outcomes).

However, the infrequency of post-completion evaluations means there is not extensive evidence of impact.

31. The evolution of the GEF's SFM approach (section 1.3), i.e., towards increasing complexity of ambition and scope, plus our brief analysis of the dynamic global context for SFM (section 1.2), suggests initial portfolio-level evaluation questions. However, to gain a greater understanding of GEF impact in particular and effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and coherence, specific case-level questions will also be investigated through in-depth case studies. Both sets of questions cover (a) GEF accountability based on GEF strategy and programming directions (the main emphases through the GEF phases) and (b) GEF learning (lessons from how it did the work). These questions listed below are tentative and will evolve through the evaluation.
32. Data collection methods to address such questions will include portfolio analysis, qualitative thematic analysis of key project documents (including PIF, CEO endorsement/approval, PIRs and MTRs, terminal evaluations, terminal evaluation reviews); analysis of relevant evaluations and OPS conducted by the GEF IEO; key informant interviews (KIIs) with sector experts and GEF stakeholders who have a broad and extended understanding of GEF's work in forests.
33. In terms of outcomes and impact, the evaluation will refer to nine results areas. These are the UNFF's seven 'thematic elements of SFM' (which were based on the standard criteria of SFM across several regional processes); plus scientific knowledge results (building and using the SFM knowledge base); plus equality including indigenous peoples and gender results (which are central to Agenda 2030). The UNFF's seven themes are a useful measure because a) they provide a more detailed breakdown of forest activities than GEF focal area objectives, b) the themes have been in use with wide acceptance internationally, c) they are used on a recurring basis by the FAO within its Global Forest Resource Assessment.
34. Illustrative evaluation questions for both the portfolio level and (more provisionally) the project level are laid out in Table 2. The context of working in partnership with the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) is taken into account. Candidate methods and data sources to investigate the questions are listed and specified in Annex 2 in the illustrative evaluation matrix.

Table 2. Key evaluation questions

Criterion	Portfolio level	Case level – projects and programs (provisional)
Relevance	- How well has the GEF SFM portfolio <i>responded</i> to the MEAs, to the evolving international rationale and priorities for SFM, and to diverse national actors' priorities? - In what ways has the GEF SFM portfolio <i>understood</i> stakeholder perspectives, demands and decisions affecting forests?	- How responsive have longer-running GEF initiatives on SFM been to changing contexts and priorities at international level? - How well have particular GEF projects responded to often competing and changing national priorities and rationales for SFM?
Coherence	- How has GEF managed its multi-objective/ partner/ country/ beneficiary roles, to ensure <i>integrated and focused</i> action? - What <i>approaches</i> to coherence and integration have worked well in terms of funding envelope, duration of intervention, coordination, interdisciplinarity, risk management,	- How well have GEF SFM projects complemented or left gaps with the objectives and operational modalities of other interventions on SFM (including UN, World Bank, bilateral, civil society and business programs)? - How well do the operational modalities of GEF SFM projects at national level usefully work with or undermine in-country policy and institutional frameworks and power structures regarding SFM?

	partnership and notably work with the CPF, and management systems?	How well have GEF SFM projects complied with GEF and Convention policies and guidelines on stakeholder engagement, gender equality and working with indigenous peoples, and overcoming relevant barriers?
Impact	- What are the most significant aggregated results of the GEF SFM portfolio? - To what extent has GEF support contributed to transformational change? - To what extent has GEF support leveraged additional resources and created new partnership for transformational change?	- To what extent have GEF SFM projects delivered better forest management in its three main categories of: (i) protection, (ii) sustainable management and use (iii) restoration – and thereby contributed to delivering environmental GPGs (such as forest extent, health and vitality, biodiversity, carbon, water)? - To what extent have GEF SFM projects delivered improved livelihoods of forest-dependent people through improved productive and socio-economic functions of forests
Effectiveness	- What are the <i>top-line contributions</i> of the full GEF SFM Portfolio to the SFM results areas?⁵ How well have they drawn out and developed GEF's <i>comparative advantages</i>? - In what ways has the GEF SFM portfolio <i>influenced stakeholders'</i> perspectives, demands and decisions affecting forests? - With which <i>policy entry points and actors</i> in-country and internationally has GEF been most/least effectively engaged? - What approaches have been particularly effective in <i>tackling the drivers of forest degradation</i> in different contexts including remote, conflict and fragile situations?	- To what extent have the specific comparative advantages of GEF SFM projects, relative to other external interventions and conditions (including both enablers and barriers), been recognized and used to improve impact? - To what extent have lessons about GEF SFM processes relating to forest stakeholder engagement and empowerment, proposal design and implementation, monitoring and final evaluation been learned to improve the delivery of impact over time? - To what extent have innovations on successful delivery of GEF SFM projects been tracked, documented, spread and taken up by other programs? - To what extent have the specific comparative advantages of GEF SFM projects, relative to other external interventions and conditions (including both enablers and barriers), been recognized and used to improve impact?
Efficiency	- How efficiently has GEF <i>channeled finance for SFM and leveraged further financing</i>, including through GEF financial incentives? Has the GEF SFM Portfolio led to structural changes towards transformative forest investment and markets? - How well have GEF innovations contributed to <i>SFM assessment, metrics, monitoring and transparency (CBIT etc.)</i>? - How effectively has the GEF <i>learned</i> about success and failure in SFM, shared its learning, and ensured its uptake?	- How cost-efficient have GEF SFM projects been in delivering SFM and avoided deforestation over their lifetime, and is there evidence of increasing efficiency as enabling conditions have been put in place? - How much and what types of co-funding and public or private finance leverage has been secured by GEF SFM project interventions? - How far do GEF SFM projects meet anticipated time deadlines and cost estimates and have lessons been learned about the ideal duration and budget envelope for maximum efficiency?
Sustainability	- How far has the GEF contributed to transformative, resilient and enduring improvements in <i>governance frameworks, institutions and markets</i>? - Is there evidence of <i>sustained forest and livelihood outcomes due to improved policies and institutional approaches</i>?	Institutional sustainability. Do legal frameworks, policies, governance structures and processes, management plans, and stakeholder capacities support the continuation of benefits following the project? Where there are risks, is provision for mitigation adequate?

⁵ 1) extent of forest resources; 2) biological diversity; 3) forest health and vitality; 4) protective functions of forests; 5) productive functions of forests; 6) socio-economic functions; 7) legal policy and institutional framework; 8) equality; and 9) knowledge

	Do they support future needs such as preventing pandemics?	- Financial and market sustainability. What provisions are in place to ensure that income/finance will be available to enable stakeholders to continue the activities to sustain benefits following the project? How far have market failures been addressed? - Sociopolitical sustainability. Do stakeholders see it in their interest that the project benefits continue to flow? Where social or political risks may undermine the longevity of project outcomes, is provision for mitigation adequate? - Environmental sustainability. Are there any activities that present environmental risks that may undermine the future flow of project benefits, and is provision for mitigation adequate?
Equity	- How far has the GEF SFM Portfolio addressed the <i>underlying problems of inequality</i> between groups that constrain SFM? - How well has GEF activity <i>reached, benefitted and empowered</i> different groups of men and women among indigenous peoples and communities?	To what extent have GEF SFM projects reached, benefited and empowered different groups of men and women among forest-dependent indigenous peoples and local communities, and improved the equality with which forest-related costs and benefits are distributed?

3. Evaluation Methodology

35. The evaluation will employ a mixed-methods approach that includes both quantitative and qualitative methods. The review will consist of extensive document review, including existing literature and evaluative evidence, detailed analysis of data sets on the SFM portfolio, and interviews with a range of stakeholders involved in SFM interventions and the policy context such as UNFF and CPF. Case studies will complement this to assess in qualitative terms the outcomes generated by SFM projects and, as far as possible, estimate their impact. Additionally, geospatial analyses will be used to assess relevance and results in select cases.
36. The evaluation will adopt a flexible approach to assess the evolution of the portfolio over the seven GEF phases. The analysis will be guided by both the OECD DAC criteria and the key dimensions of transformative change highlighted above.
37. This evaluation will explore synergies with other evaluations being conducted in the context of OPS-7, such as the Formative Evaluation of the GEF Integrated Approach to Address the Drivers of Environmental Degradation and other evaluations that are assessing cross-cutting themes relevant to SFM.

3.1 Limitations

38. The GEF has evolved over the years, increasingly integrating social aspects into its priorities and implementation. But it is expected that the extent and rate at which gender and other social inclusion concerns are systematically addressed by project documentation will vary. Moreover, direct engagement with forest dependent women and men of GEF SFM portfolio projects, and direct assessment of results in terms of reach, benefit and empowerment of different groups, will necessarily be limited due largely to the COVID-19 pandemic – a difficulty exacerbated by the likely large scale of the case studies and portfolio and the concomitant thinly spread engagement that would result. The evaluation, therefore, will focus on case studies, relying primarily

on analyzing project documents, supplemented where possible by key academic and grey literature pertinent to the cases, and triangulating with key informant interviews with representatives of organizations of forest-dependent women and men where possible.

39. The evaluation methodology will be adapted according to the types of data found in project documentation, the availability of key informants, and the feedback received from key stakeholders. Thus, the phases and tools proposed will be adapted during the evaluation. GEF SFM portfolio project documentation, including project proposal and design documents and M&E reports (PIRs, MTRs, TEs, TE reviews), will be drawn on for the evaluation and insights and experiences shared through key informant interviews. While data limitations may constrain portfolio-wide findings – not all of the UNFF's SFM elements are routinely monitored – the evaluation will use the most standardized data and indicators currently reported e.g. core indicators reported after GE F6, and common indicators that can be found in final evaluations of GEF1-GEF5 projects, supplemented by publicly-available information e.g. remote-sensed data.
40. The data assessed to date assessment are qualitative and quantitative, but with a strong prevalence of qualitative data. However, these quantitative data found are not standardized across the projects. The absence of standardized ratio-level data limits the options available in terms of quantitative evaluation methodologies that could be used for the desk review and comparative study. Simultaneously, the evaluation expects to use robust qualitative methods for the systematic coding of text and thematic analysis. GEF 7 has recently started, and therefore, most projects do not have adequate documentation about their results and lessons learned.

3.2 Phases of the evaluation

41. The evaluation will consist of four phases: 1) Development of the evaluation framework; 2) Stakeholder consultation; 3) Case studies; 4) Evaluation synthesis and communication of findings.

3.2.1 Phase 1: Development of the evaluation framework

42. The evaluation framework will be developed in collaboration with key GEF stakeholders. To achieve this will require: an initial literature review of GEF and non-GEF documents on SFM and major schemes promoting improved forest management such as REDD+, PES, and forest restoration; relevant contextual analysis; review of theories of change and/or logframes of the relevant initiatives supported by the GEF; desk-based review of the portfolio. This will build on the questions provisionally suggested at 2.1.
43. *Literature review:* The initial literature review will include *analysis of available GEF documents* on GEF SFM projects (M&E reports, such as terminal and mid-term evaluations, PIF and CEO endorsement documents, project implementation reports, and other project-related documents, along with the program management database); and *analysis of non-GEF documents* describing key information, assumptions and discourses in selected countries and internationally that framed GEF project design, or could have/should have framed it, and that later on could have or should have led to design modifications.
44. *Portfolio desk-based review:* The review will map all grants and countries covered by GEF support in relation to the three overarching categories: forest protection,

sustainable management and use of forests (forest production landscape); and forest restoration. In terms of effectiveness, the evaluation will look at outcomes related to responsibilities and rights, markets and income, technical knowledge, and institutional capabilities. In terms of impact and longer-term outcomes, observable changes may relate to the nine SFM areas: the extent of forest resources; biological biodiversity; forest health and vitality; productive functions of forest resources; protective functions of forests; socio-economic processes of forests; legal policy and institutional framework; scientific knowledge; and equality and gender.

45. At the portfolio level, the evaluation team will review evidence produced by the implementing agencies in the form of terminal and mid-term evaluations, terminal evaluation review forms, PIF and CEO endorsement documents, and the OPS evaluations conducted by the GEF IEO. This wealth of information will be analyzed through a desk review to compare different cases and explore the effectiveness, sustainability, and coherence of different projects supported by the GEF. Whenever possible standardized quantitative data, such as core indicators for GEF6 onwards, will be used to describe the aggregated results of the whole portfolio.

3.2.2 Phase 2: Stakeholder consultation

46. To understand GEF's comparative advantage and additionality and the relevance, coherence and efficiency of GEF's support, the evaluation will gather primary data about the perceptions of stakeholders from implementing agencies, key in-country actors, and the GEF Secretariat. The stakeholder consultation will focus on the key questions and will be analyzed against the evaluation framework. A mix of qualitative and quantitative data will be gathered during this phase. The stakeholder consultation will involve a stakeholder segmentation analysis; Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), notably of stakeholders with a long history of engagement with the portfolio; and a stakeholder survey.
47. *Stakeholder analysis:* The evaluation team will develop a brief stakeholder segmentation analysis at the beginning of the second phase of the exercise to identify:
 - *Primary intended users* of the evaluation – people who will make decisions based on evaluation findings – including GEF Council, MEA CoPs and secretariats, GEF donors and co-funding partners, and GEF staff
 - *Secondary users of the evaluation* – people who will learn and be inspired by the evaluation's findings – policymakers, opinion-formers, practitioners, and others working on forests and global environmental issues
 - *People directly affected by decisions made* during or after the evaluation – staff of GEF-supported Implementing Agencies; staff of programs/projects; participants and beneficiaries of programs/projects
 - *Interests of these stakeholders* in the findings of the GEF-SFM evaluation
 - *Power* of these stakeholders to support (or to hinder) follow up and actions in response to the GEF-SFM evaluation and facilitate the uptake of findings
48. *Key Informant Interviews (KIIs):* Key Informant Interviews will be held to validate the evaluation framework developed during the first phase. It will generate hypotheses

about how stakeholders perceive GEF's relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness and additionality⁶, and associated assumptions.

49. *Stakeholder survey*: after the initial consultative phase with key informants, the evaluation team will develop a stakeholder survey to test the hypothesis emerging from the qualitative thematic analysis of the Key Informant Interviews.

3.2.3 Phase 3: Case studies

50. Case studies will enable in-depth exploration of outcomes and impacts, enabling conditions and constraints, and a comparison of GEF modalities in the given context. They will also potentially identify examples that GEF could develop into compelling 'stories of change'. Five in-depth case studies will be conducted by combining data collection and data analysis methodologies, such as: a desk-based review of documents; review of theories of change of the initiatives funded by the GEF and selected for the case studies; and key informant interviews.
51. *Case selection strategy*. Given the broad scope of the evaluation, the *most typical cases* (as opposed to the *most likely/least likely cases*⁷) will be selected. Most typical cases will entail identifying common types of intervention funded by the GEF over the portfolio's seven phases. To determine the typical cases, the evaluation will use a stratified purposive sampling approach. Because it will be possible to investigate only a small number of cases in detail, it is impossible to do stratified random sampling that would represent the whole portfolio. However, sampling most typical cases by following a stratified purposive approach is suitable to compare results and lessons across the portfolio. Thus, a standard case sampling is considered the best proxy for representativeness across the entire GEF portfolio.
52. *Case selection criteria*: to select cases for in-depth investigation the evaluation will consider:
53. (a) *Geography*. Projects will be categorized into geographic clusters – covering key regions and nations that received GEF support and major biomes. To illustrate, a provisional geographical selection that could yield important insights relevant to the evolution both of SFM (1.2) and the GEF portfolio (1.3) is:
 - Brazil or Colombia - *Amazon Sustainable Landscape Program*. This could cover *forest protection – HCV biodiversity emphasis, climate and REDD+ emphasis*
 - Vietnam - *GMS-FBP Greater Mekong region Forests and Biodiversity projects*. This could cover *forest protection – biodiversity emphasis*
 - DR Congo – *CBSP Strategic Program for SFM in the Congo Basin*. This could cover *sustainable use of forests – community forestry production emphasis*
 - Burkina Faso or Mali in the *Sahel* – *Great Green Wall Sahel and West Africa Program* or a *dryland Restoration Initiative project*. This could cover *dryland forests/woodlands sustainable forest management – restoration emphasis*

⁶ IEO 2020 pointed to 6 GEF additionalities: environmental, legal, institutional, financial, socio-economic, innovation. Only environmental additionality is prominently recorded in documentation.

⁷ NB *most likely and least likely cases* help to identify the greatest achievements and key lessons learnt and can test GEF theories of change against best- and worst-case scenarios. But they may deliver a skewed view of GEF impact which is neither typical nor generalizable to the whole portfolio.

- Indonesia – SFM Program Framework. This could cover *sustainable forest management – emphasis on taking deforestation out of commodities*
- SIDS – São Tomé and Príncipe or Timor Leste? [resource constraints: to discuss with IEO]

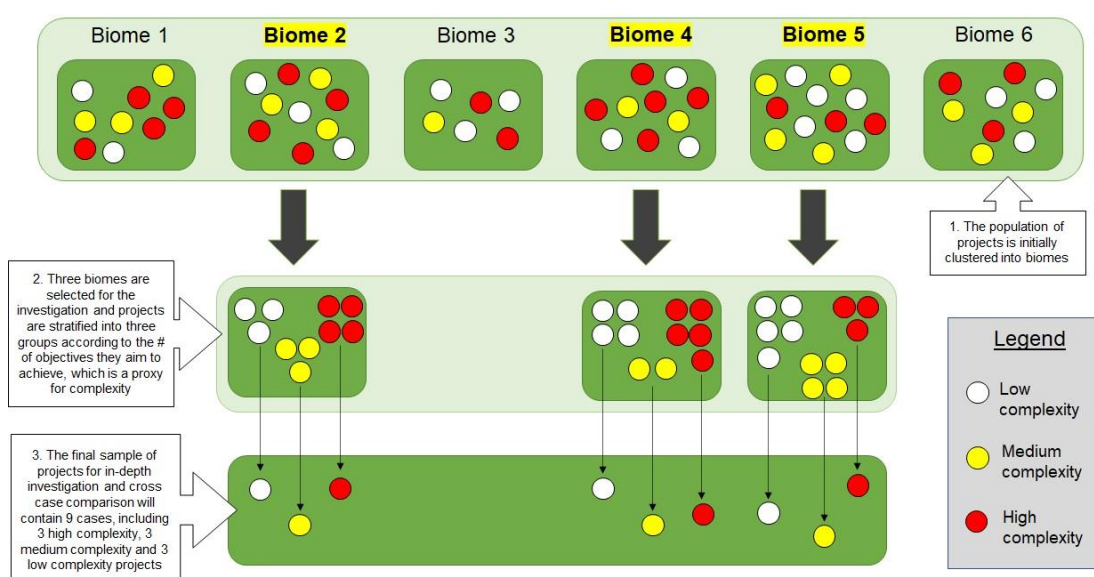
54. (b) *Complexity*: After the initial geographic categorization, the evaluation will select three of the major biomes for further investigation and divide the population of cases within each biome according to one main variable: *the number of objectives pursued by the projects*. This choice draws from the analysis of the evolution of the GEF portfolio over the seven phases, which shows a trend to increase the number of objectives and actors and, thus, the project's complexity. It is assumed that this is the main factor affecting the projects' effectiveness, impact, coherence, and sustainability.

55. (c) *Policy themes*: Besides, cases that will address at least one or more of the following issues will also be examined:
- Dependence on forests (for livelihoods, business, or national economies)
 - Forest/poverty problem hotspots (major drivers and manifestations)
 - Major GEF themes past, present, and future (e.g. recent REDD+, trend to restoration and MFA...)

Figure 7 summarizes how the sample of cases will be stratified.

Figure 7. Case study selection

[NB Figure to be edited: 'selection of policy themes' will be reflected in 'final sample' box 3]



3.2.5 Phase 4: Evaluation synthesis and communication of findings

56. With the development of a clear evaluation framework, including key evaluation questions and sub-questions and triangulation of data collection and analytical methods, the evaluation will use the different types of evidence available from GEF's documentation to draw transparent evaluative conclusions. Evaluation outputs will include:

- A detailed evaluation report including technical appendices with the full detail in support of the findings (see Annex 1 for an outline)

- A Strategic Brief with recommendations and policy pointers with key messages addressing top-line issues will be developed. The Strategic Brief will cover GEF's SFM legacy to date, impacts, and challenges, lessons learned effective modalities and good practices in implementing SFM initiatives.
57. *Quality Assurance*: Consistent with GEF IEO's quality assurance practice, two quality assurance measures will be adopted for this evaluation. The first is a Reference Group, composed of representatives from the GEF Secretariat, GEF Agencies, and STAP who will provide feedback and inputs throughout the evaluation process and facilitate access to information and appropriate contacts. The second is a Peer Review Panel, consisting of selected evaluators from GEF Agency Evaluation Offices, evaluation organizations, and recognized experts who will provide feedback on the draft report.
58. *Communication strategy*: Particular attention will be paid to communicating the evaluation results. A communication strategy will be developed and reviewed during the course of the evaluation as findings emerge. Its *purpose* is to ensure good engagement in the evaluation and maximize the use of evaluation findings by relevant stakeholders. The evaluation's communication strategy will be iterative, reviewed, and revised during the evaluation as findings emerge. Its *objectives* are:
- To understand and take into account the needs, priorities, and concerns of different stakeholders
 - To acquire perspectives on what will be considered a credible, quality, and useful evaluation
 - To inform evaluation planning and engagement during and after the evaluation
 - To facilitate quality data collection and interpretation through accessing stakeholder help
 - To manage risks in handling contested issues and sensitive findings
 - To ensure results are accessible to stakeholders, well disseminated, and used by them
59. *The communications work will focus on designing and producing the evaluation products, their timing and format* informed by the needs and priorities of the intended audiences (above):
- Identifying stakeholders' possible roles in the evaluation e.g. data or opinion provider; making judgments or decision based on the findings of the evaluation; becoming an agent of change for the next round of investments funded by the GEF; promoting the use of evaluation findings to improve practice
 - Identifying communications activities, their timing, and the most effective formats to present the evaluation data – likely to cover:
 - profiling the evaluation, its purpose and approach
 - engaging stakeholders – who, at what points of the evaluation, for what purposes?
 - disseminating the findings – to whom and when in what format?
 - influencing uptake and decisions – products and formats that facilitate the uptake of findings

4. Work plan

60. The full evaluation process covers the period between July 2020 and June 2021. The initial work plan presented in Table 3 may be adapted as the assessment progresses.

Table 3: GEF SFM portfolio evaluation work plan

Phase 1: Inception – development of evaluation framework	
Deliverable and activities	Date
Preliminary design and scope of the assessment	July - September 2020
Review of literature, program documents	August - October 2020
Draft approach paper	September 2020
Portfolio desk-based review	September – December 2020
Data Cleaning	Sept – October 2020
Finalization of the evaluation framework	October - November 2020
Communication plan	October - November 2020
Final approach paper	November 2020
Phase 2: Stakeholders' consultation	
Deliverable and activities	Date
Stakeholder analysis	Nov - Dec 2020
Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), data gathering and write up	Nov - Dec 2020
Key Informant interviews, qualitative thematic analysis	Nov - Dec 2020
Stakeholders' survey design	December 2020
Stakeholders' survey administration and analysis	Dec 2020 - Jan 2021
Communication plan review	January 2021
Short report on stakeholders survey and consultation	January 2021
Phase 4: Case studies	
Deliverable and activities	Date
Case studies design	Nov - Dec 2020
Document review	Nov - Dec 2020
KIIs data gathering and write up	Dec 2020 - Jan 2021
KIIs thematic analysis	Jan 2021
Analysis of cases	Jan – Feb 2021
Development of preliminary findings - notes	Feb 2021
Communication plan review	Feb 2021
Write up findings of five cases, short report on case studies	Feb 2021
Phase 5: Evaluation synthesis and communication of findings	
Deliverable and activities	Date
Analysis of findings against evaluation framework	Feb – March 2021
Draft evaluation report	Feb – March 2021
Communication plan review	March 2021
Strategic brief	April 2021
Presentation of findings to stakeholders	April 2021
Final edited evaluation report	April 2021

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Annex 1 – Draft Outline of the Evaluation Report

Executive Summary of key findings, lessons learned, and recommendations

Acknowledgements

Abbreviations and acronyms

1. **Introduction – purpose and context**

- Purpose of this evaluation
- Context for the evaluation –
 - Evolving forests context – global trends, challenges and opportunities
 - Evolving GEF support to forest priorities – SFM portfolio – objectives, theory of change and their evolution

2. **Conceptual framework and design**

- Objectives and scope
- Key criteria and evaluation questions
- Assessment of available data
- Methodology adopted – rationale and description
 - Portfolio analysis
 - Case studies
 - Key informant interviews and stakeholder survey
 - Data collection protocols and quality control
 - Mitigating methodological and data limitations
- Process and timeline

3. **Synthesis of the evaluative evidence**

- Results – relevant to 7 UNFF SFM elements, plus equality and knowledge outcomes
 - Portfolio-level, modality and program/project-level (case study) results
 - Trends over time
 - Factors affecting progress
- GEF performance, transformational impact and sustainability – summary of findings on relevance, coherence, impact, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability
- GEF strategy, institutional issues and comparative advantage [transformative change, innovation, scaling up, additionality]
 - Trends over time
 - Factors affecting GEF capability
- Lessons – [program parameters, managing integrated programs, theory of change...]
- Conclusions [including key messages for OPS-7]

4. **Recommendations**

For the GEF, GEF projects, and GEF partnerships on future forest-related interventions

References

Annexes

Annex 2: Illustrative Evaluation Matrix

Key Questions: (a) portfolio level and (b) project level (in blue)	Data and Indicators	Sources	Methods and Tools
1. RELEVANCE			
1.1 How well has the GEF SFM portfolio <i>responded</i> to the MEAs, to the evolving international rationale and priorities for SFM, and to diverse national actors' priorities? (Portfolio level)	Documentary evidence of GEF policies and processes addressing MEAs, the evolving SFM priorities and, the relevant national and forest needs	GEF Programming Directions Convention Guidance Documents PIF and CEO endorsement documents GEF SFM dataset	Theory of change review GEF documents review Literature review OPS Portfolio review Key informant interviews with GEF SFM stakeholders
1.2 In what ways has the GEF SFM portfolio <i>considered stakeholder</i> perspectives, demands and decisions affecting forests? (Portfolio level)	Level of satisfaction of GEF SFM stakeholders with the GEF objectives, processes and policies as compared to similar initiatives	GEF SFM Stakeholders feedback	Key informant interviews with GEF SFM stakeholders Stakeholders' survey (TBD)
1.3 How responsive have longer-running GEF initiatives on SFM been to changing contexts and priorities at international level? (Project level)	Changes in portfolio and major initiatives reflecting changing international policy context (e.g. Rio conventions and SDGs); international forest commitments; and other major international discourses.	Previous evaluations conducted by the GEF IEO – OPS IF and CEO endorsement documents Terminal evaluations Key informants, including forest sector	Case studies Literature review Project documents review Key Informant Interviews
1.4 How well have particular GEF projects responded to often competing and changing national priorities and rationales for SFM? (Project level)	Project documents and results reflect priorities of national development plans, NBSAPs, NDCs, national forest/land use plans/forums Perceptions of stakeholders	National policies and plans Terminal evaluations MTRs PIFs/PPGs Key project and policy stakeholders	Case studies Project documents review Key informant interviews with GEF SFM stakeholders at the project/country level
2. COHERENCE			

2.1 How has GEF managed its multi-objective/partner/country/beneficiary roles, to ensure <i>integrated and focused</i> action? (Portfolio level)	Extent to which all 9 SFM results areas and major forest biomes are addressed by the SFM portfolio Level of satisfaction of GEF SFM stakeholders and sector experts on SFM processes and policies to address integration	GEF SFM Stakeholders feedback Sector experts including forest experts, economists and social inclusivity experts GEF dataset	Key informant interviews with GEF SFM stakeholders Portfolio review
2.2 What approaches to coherence and integration have <i>worked well</i> in terms of funding envelope, duration of intervention, coordination, interdisciplinarity, risk management, partnership and notably work with the GEF, and management systems? (Portfolio level)	Extent to which integrated projects have performed well in terms of coordination, interdisciplinarity, risk management and management system, in comparison to non-integrated projects	GEF SFM Stakeholders feedback Terminal evaluations Terminal evaluation review forms Mid-term evaluations if available PIF and CEO endorsement documents	Key informant interviews with GEF SFM stakeholders Portfolio analysis Factor analysis or QCA (TBD) Qualitative thematic analysis
2.3 How well have GEF SFM projects complemented or left gaps with the objectives and operational modalities of other interventions on SFM (including UN, World Bank, bilateral, civil society and business programs)? (Project level)	Analysis of Operational and learning arrangements with other programs	Project design documents Terminal evaluations of projects investigated Terminal evaluation review forms Mid-term evaluations if available PIF and CEO endorsement documents Key informants, inc forest sector experts	Case studies Literature review Key Informant Interviews QCA (TBD) Qualitative thematic analysis
2.4 How well do the operational modalities of GEF SFM projects at national level usefully work with or undermine in-country policy and institutional frameworks and power structures regarding SFM? (Project level)	Engagement with national planning, learning and monitoring processes and capabilities Perceptions of SFM projects' stakeholders	Key informants, inc forest sector GEF Programming Directions Terminal evaluations Mid Term reviews if available PIF and CEO endorsement documents	Case studies Process tracing (TBD) Literature review Key Informant Interviews
2.5 How well have GEF SFM projects complied with GEF and Convention policies and guidelines on stakeholder engagement, gender equality and working with indigenous peoples, and overcoming relevant barriers? (Project level)	Participation and engagement of different groups of women and men (inc indigenous peoples) as stakeholders, in shaping investments [Further indicators from GEF Policies and Evaluations e.g. Gender Mainstreaming in the GEF 2017; Evaluation of GEF engagement with indigenous peoples]	GEF policies Project proposal and design documents MTRs and terminal evaluations/reviews Key informants, inc forest sector gender and social inclusion experts, members of the Indigenous Peoples	Case studies Document review Key informant Interviews with project stakeholders and sector experts Gender/social inclusion assessment/audit using desk review,

		Advisory Group to the GEF, representatives of women and men from IPLC communities and their rights organizations and activists	
3 IMPACT			
3.1 What are the most significant aggregated results of the GEF SFM portfolio? (Portfolio level)	[Indicators that can be aggregated at the portfolio level e.g. ha, tC, spp, revenues) to be decided after the approach paper is published.]	Terminal Evaluations Terminal evaluation review forms PFI and CEO endorsement documents GEF stakeholders websites, policies and guidance Key Informant Interviews with GEF SFM stakeholders OPS	Desk portfolio review
3.2 To what extent has GEF support contributed to transformational change? (Portfolio level)	Perceptions of what has led to deep and systemic change, 'flipping' market and government systems and achieving scale in results	Key Informant Interviews Stakeholders survey OPS	Key Informant Interviews Stakeholders survey
3.3 To what extent has GEF support leveraged additional resources and created new partnerships for transformational change? (Portfolio level)	Co-financing leveraged by GEF support # of new partnerships resulted from GEF support	Terminal Evaluations Terminal evaluation review forms PFI and CEO endorsement documents GEF stakeholders websites, policies and guidance Key Informant Interviews with GEF SFM stakeholders OPS	Desk portfolio review Key Informant Interviews
3.4 To what extent have GEF SFM projects delivered <i>better forest management</i> in its three main categories of (i) protection, (ii) sustainable management and use, (iii) restoration – and thereby contributed to the protective functions of forests in delivering environmental GPGs (such as forest extent, health and vitality, biodiversity, carbon, water)? (Project level)	Aggregate geospatial data on: Additional ha. (and % land) under forest protection (IUCN category), sustainable use, SFM (certified) by country/biome Ha. avoided deforestation Key biodiversity gains (KBAs covered, rare/threatened/endemic species gains)	Key stakeholders from projects selected for case studies Terminal Evaluations of projects selected for the case studies PFI and CEO endorsement documents of projects selected for the case studies Observational data from site Visits	Case Studies Review of project documents Geospatial Analysis

	Forest carbon saved, sequestered and traded tC Aggregate outcome ratings over time Perceptions of stakeholders	Geospatial data	
3.5 To what extent have GEF SFM projects delivered <i>improved livelihoods</i> of forest-dependent people through improved productive and socio-economic functions of forests (Project level)	Additional volume and range of goods/services Beneficiary types, numbers, location Business numbers, sizes and revenues Change in household incomes Perceptions of stakeholders	Key stakeholders from projects selected for case studies Terminal Evaluations of projects selected for the case studies PFI and CEO endorsement documents of projects selected for the case studies Observational data from site Visits Geospatial data	Case studies Review of secondary data on livelihoods of forest dependent people in locations selected for the case studies Geospatial Analysis Key Informant Interviews with forest sector experts, social sector experts and economists.
4 EFFECTIVENESS			
4.1 What are the <i>top-line contributions</i> of the full GEF SFM Portfolio to the SFM results areas ⁸ ? How well have they drawn out and developed GEF's <i>comparative advantages</i> ? (Portfolio level)	Extent to which the SFM GEF portfolio has delivered outcomes against the nine SFM outcome areas	Terminal Evaluations of projects selected for the case studies PFI and CEO endorsement documents of projects selected for the case studies Key Informant interviews with forest experts, social experts and economists	Portfolio review Outcome harvesting Qualitative thematic analysis QCA (TBD) Key informant interviews
4.2 In what ways has the GEF SFM portfolio <i>influenced stakeholders'</i> perspectives, demands and decisions affecting forests? (Portfolio level)	Extent to which stakeholders have adapted their programs/projects/practices to respond to SFM outcome areas	Terminal Evaluations Terminal evaluation review forms PFI and CEO endorsement documents GEF stakeholders websites, policies and guidance Key Informant Interviews with GEF SFM stakeholders	Process tracing Qualitative thematic analysis of project documents Key Informant Interviews

⁸ 1) extent of forest resources; 2) biological diversity; 3) forest health and vitality; 4) protective functions of forests; 5) productive functions of forests; 6) socio-economic functions; 7) legal policy and institutional framework; 8) equality; and 9) knowledge

4.3 With which <i>policy entry points and actors</i> in-country and internationally has GEF been most/least effectively engaged? (Portfolio level)	Number and proportion of projects in the SFM GEF portfolio addressing forest-related policies and key points in the policy-cycle Analysis of actors engaged with the GEF	Terminal Evaluations Terminal evaluation review forms Mid-term evaluations if available PFI and CEO endorsement documents GEF stakeholders websites, policies and guidance Key Informant Interviews with GEF SFM stakeholders OPS	Portfolio review Process tracing (TBD) Qualitative thematic analysis of project documents
4.4 What approaches have been particularly effective in tackling the <i>drivers of forest degradation</i> in different contexts including remote, conflict and fragile situations? (Portfolio level)	Extent to which SFM funded projects have addressed the nine SFM outcome areas. Baselines and analyses of enabling conditions of SFM and drivers of degradation.	Terminal evaluations Terminal evaluation review forms Mid-term evaluations if available PIF and CEO endorsement documents OPS	Outcome harvesting Portfolio analysis Factor analysis or QCA (TBD) Qualitative thematic analysis
4.5 To what extent have the specific comparative advantages of GEF SFM projects, relative to other external interventions and conditions (including both enablers and barriers), been recognized and used to improve impact? (Project level)	Alignment with other interventions and conditions in project design, management and monitoring Articulation of GEF comparative advantages in project design, management and monitoring Development of relevant partnerships	PFI and CEO endorsement documents of projects selected for the caser studies Mid Term Reviews if available terminal evaluations, Observational data from site visits GEF stakeholders feedback	Case studies Key Informant Interviews with sector experts Key informant interviews with GEF SFM stakeholders
4.6 To what extent have lessons about GEF SFM processes relating to forest stakeholder engagement and empowerment, proposal design and implementation, monitoring and final evaluation been learned to improve the delivery of impact over time? (Project level)	Lessons identified in project monitoring and evaluation Reflection of (cumulative) GEF lessons in project design, management and monitoring documents [Aggregate effectiveness ratings over time]	PFI and CEO endorsement documents of projects selected for the caser studies Mid Term Reviews if available terminal evaluations Observational data from site visits GEF stakeholders feedback	Case studies Desk review of project documents
4.7 To what extent have innovations on successful delivery of GEF SFM projects been tracked, documented, spread and taken up by other programs? (Project level)	Reflection on GEF innovations in project monitoring Take-up of effective GEF innovations in project design	PFI and CEO endorsement documents of projects selected for the caser studies Mid Term Reviews if available terminal evaluations	Case studies Desk review of project documents Review of documents of other relevant programs (non SFM)

		Observational data from site visits GEF stakeholders feedback	
4.8 To what extent have the specific comparative advantages of GEF SFM projects, relative to other external interventions and conditions (including both enablers and barriers), been recognized and used to improve impact? (Project level)	Alignment with other interventions and conditions in project design, management and monitoring Articulation of GEF comparative advantages in project design, management and monitoring Development of relevant partnerships	Project proposal and design documents MTRs and terminal evaluations/reviews Observational data from site visits GEF stakeholders	Case studies Process Tracing (TBD) Key Informant Interviews with GEF funded project stakeholders
5 EFFICIENCY			
5.1 How <i>efficiently</i> has GEF channeled <i>finance for SFM and leveraged further financing</i> , including through GEF financial incentives? Has the GEF SFM Portfolio led to structural changes towards transformative forest investment and markets? (Portfolio level)	Amount of further financing leveraged Analysis of the role played by the GEF in leveraging further financing	Terminal evaluations Terminal evaluation review forms Mid-term evaluations if available PIF and CEO endorsement documents GEF SFM stakeholders	Portfolio review Comparative study Key informant interviews with GEF stakeholders
5.2 How <i>well</i> have GEF innovations contributed to SFM assessment, metrics, monitoring and transparency (CBIT etc.)? (Portfolio level)	Adoption of SFM assessment mechanisms including MRV in countries covered by SFM portfolio	Terminal evaluations Terminal evaluation review forms Mid-term evaluations if available PIF and CEO endorsement documents GEF SFM stakeholders	Portfolio review Comparative study Key informant interviews with GEF stakeholders
5.3 How has the GEF <i>learned about success and failure</i> in SFM, shared its learning, and ensured its uptake? (Portfolio level)	Evidence of lessons learnt taken up in key project documents and follow up processes in response to MEL findings and recommendations	Terminal Evaluations Terminal evaluation review forms PFI and CEO endorsement documents GEF stakeholders websites, policies and guidance Key Informant Interviews with GEF SFM stakeholders	
5.3 How cost-efficient have GEF SFM projects been in delivering SFM and avoided deforestation over their lifetime, and is there evidence of increasing efficiency as enabling conditions have been put in place? (Project level)	Incremental impacts/\$ spent (see indicators at 3 above) between GEF phases, and between original and follow-up projects Stakeholder perceptions of GEF incentives and disincentives	Project records Terminal evaluation review forms Mid-term evaluations if available PIF and CEO endorsement documents	desk review of project documents; Case studies Key Informant Interviews with SFM GEF project stakeholders

		GEF SFM stakeholders GEF stakeholders	
5.4 How much and what types of co-funding and public or private finance leverage has been secured by GEF SFM project interventions? (Project level)	\$ co-funding over given period \$ public and private finance leverage achieved and secure for post-project	Project records Terminal evaluation review forms Mid-term evaluations if available PIF and CEO endorsement documents GEF SFM stakeholders	desk review of project documents Case studies with SFM GEF project stakeholders
5.5 How far do GEF SFM projects meet anticipated time deadlines and cost estimates and have lessons been learned about the ideal duration and budget envelope for maximum efficiency? (Project level)	Proportion of delayed, cancelled, over-budget projects	Project records Terminal evaluation review forms Mid-term evaluations if available PIF and CEO endorsement documents GEF SFM stakeholders	desk review of project documents Case studies Key Informant Interviews with SFM GEF project stakeholders
6 SUSTAINABILITY			
6.1 How far has the GEF contributed to <i>transformative, resilient and enduring improvements</i> in governance frameworks, institutions and markets? (Portfolio level)	Evidence of transformative and sustainable changes in national (as well as relevant local to global) governance and institutions through GEF interventions	Terminal evaluations Terminal evaluation review forms Mid-term evaluations if available PIF and CEO endorsement documents GEF SFM stakeholders	Portfolio review Comparative study (qualitative thematic analysis or QCA) Key informant interviews with GEF stakeholders
6.2 Is there evidence of <i>sustained forest and livelihood outcomes due to improved policies and institutional approaches</i> ? Do they support future needs such as preventing pandemics? (Portfolio level)	Gap analysis re the 9 SFM results areas	Terminal evaluations Terminal evaluation review forms Mid-term evaluations if available PIF and CEO endorsement documents GEF SFM stakeholders	Portfolio review Comparative study (qualitative thematic analysis or QCA) Key informant interviews with GEF stakeholders

6.3 <i>Institutional sustainability</i> . Do legal frameworks, policies, governance structures and processes, management plans, and stakeholder capacities support the continuation of benefits following the project? Where there are risks, is provision for mitigation adequate? (Project level)	Forest management plans and arrangements in place Capacity built (no. of people or organizations) Perceptions of stakeholders	Project proposal and design documents Terminal evaluation review forms Mid-term evaluations if available PIF and CEO endorsement documents GEF SFM stakeholders	Document Analysis Case studies Key Informant Interviews
6.4 <i>Financial sustainability</i> . What provisions are in place to ensure that income/finance will be available to enable stakeholders to continue the activities to sustain benefits following the project? (Project level)	Financial plans, investment/market arrangements, and/or ongoing payment schemes in place	Project proposal and design documents Terminal evaluation review forms Mid-term evaluations if available PIF and CEO endorsement documents GEF SFM stakeholders	Document Analysis Case studies Key Informant Interviews
6.5 <i>Sociopolitical sustainability</i> . Do stakeholders see it in their interest that the project benefits continue to flow? Where social or political risks may undermine the longevity of project outcomes, is provision for mitigation adequate? (Project level)	New or revised laws/regulations, policies, plans, and systems supporting SFM in place Perceptions of stakeholders on ability to handle forest trade-offs and risks	Project proposal and design documents Terminal evaluation review forms Mid-term evaluations if available PIF and CEO endorsement documents GEF SFM stakeholders	Document Analysis Case studies Key Informant Interviews
6.6 <i>Environmental sustainability</i> . Are there any activities that present environmental risks that may undermine the future flow of project benefits, and is provision for mitigation adequate? (Project level)	Environmental risk assessment	Environmental experts Terminal evaluation review forms Mid-term evaluations if available PIF and CEO endorsement documents	Document Analysis Case studies Key Informant Interviews
7 EQUITY			
7.1 How far has the GEF SFM Portfolio addressed the underlying problems of inequality between groups that constrain SFM? (Portfolio level)	Extent to which human rights, equity and gender issues have been addressed in key GEF policy documents and processes in relation to SFM funding	GEF Programming Directions Convention Guidance Documents Previous evaluations conducted by the GEF IEO – OPS IF and CEO endorsement documents Terminal evaluations Key informants, inc forest sector	Gender and equity assessment KIs

7.2 How well has GEF activity <i>reached, benefitted and empowered</i> different groups of men and women among indigenous peoples and communities? (Portfolio level)	Representation in portfolio Beneficiary numbers, types and disaggregated benefits	Previous evaluations conducted by the GEF IEO OPS Terminal evaluations Key informants	Gender and equity assessment KIs
7.3 To what extent have GEF SFM projects reached, benefited and empowered different groups of men and women among forest-dependent indigenous peoples and local communities, and improved the equality with which forest-related costs and benefits are distributed? (Project level)	Assessment of local needs, risks, capacity/knowledge, gender and social inclusion and access provision in project design, mgt and monitoring Articulation of gender-specific objectives and outcomes Articulation of empowerment objectives and outcomes for marginalized group Involvement of women and IPs in GEF project management Reflection of gender and IP needs in relevant national policies and plans Beneficiaries and benefits disaggregated by gender, ethnicity Perceptions of stakeholders	Key stakeholders from projects selected for case studies Terminal Evaluations of projects selected for the case studies PFI and CEO endorsement documents of projects selected for the case studies Observational data from site visits Geospatial data Representatives of women and men from IPLC communities and their rights organizations and activists Key informants, inc forest sector gender and social inclusion experts	Case studies Review of secondary data on livelihoods of forest dependent people in locations selected for the case studies Key Informant Interviews with local intersectionality experts