

Evaluation of GEF support to climate information and early warning systems

Audit Trail

Comments on Draft Evaluation Report – December 2023

GEF Secretariat Comments		
Paragraph # / Referenced text	Comments	Response and action taken
3 <i>“The GEF addresses the effects of climate change in its programming strategies, particularly concerning adaptation.”</i>	SEC: The impacts of climate change on the project’s viability in the future have to be addressed by all projects and project design aiming for resilience to CC, not only adaptation programming (LDCF/SCCF). Also, many countries across the globe, especially in the "global south", are vulnerable to current and past baseline fluctuations in seasonal and year to year weather patterns and lack e.g. storage to buffer against floods and droughts, early warning to trigger preparedness. Climate change has <i>added</i> to the historic/existing state of being vulnerable to extreme events with poorer countries, and within that, poorer population segments are generally being affected the most.	The statement has been modified to encompass not only adaptation programming but all GEF projects.
4 Reference to inclusion of CIEWS in GEFTF Strategy: <i>“CIEWS are noted in all the adaptation strategies of the GEF programming</i>	The wording is confusing. There are no “adaptation strategies of the GEF programming directions” per se. Climate risks and resilience are mainstreamed in all focal areas and IPs in the GEF programming directions. However, there is the LDCF/SCCF strategy. CIEWS has been a key element of the LDCF and SCCF strategy, and several hundred million dollars from LDCF and SCCF have gone into support for CIEWS. Please refer to their strategies as well (<i>“GEF programming strategy on adaptation to climate change for the</i>	The text has been revised to explicitly delineate the nuances of LDCF and SCCF strategies.

GEF Secretariat Comments		
Paragraph # / Referenced text	Comments	Response and action taken
<i>directions and were one of the eminent four priority themes in the strategy for 2022–2026.”</i>	<i>least developed countries fund and the special climate change fund”) as an example from the LDCF or SCCF portfolio may also be suitable in this paragraph. Both the LDCF and SCCF portfolio results frameworks include indicators on CIEWS.</i>	
12 Critical considerations, particularly (c) Sustainability	It is important to explicitly highlight the critical consideration of financial sustainability of any investments in CIEWS, be it with GEF support or otherwise, given the all-too-common tendency of CIEWS to decrease their effectiveness after external funding runs out. All CIEWS support needs to have a financial sustainability strategy, preferably involving both public and private sector sources of finance. As such, consider separating “sustainability” into financial and physical sustainability.	Physical, and financial sustainability are inherently interconnected and mutually influential. Sustainability encompasses environmental, social, and economic aspects, and trying to separate physical and financial sustainability overlooks the integrated nature of these dimensions. Integrating both aspects allow for a more comprehensive and forward-thinking approach that considers the long-term viability and success of CIEWS projects. Nevertheless, the critical consideration of financial sustainability is mentioned in the report, and it has been highlighted as recommendation #3.
14 <i>“The report is limited to climate change adaptation...”</i>	Support to early warning and disaster preparedness, e.g., in lower latitudes in Africa, is an urgent need even <i>without</i> the increase of extreme events due to climate change. This is not only an adaptation issue. Parts of Africa/lower latitude countries have naturally high climatic variability and have lacked the means to build resilience and disaster preparedness.	The sentence has been adjusted to improve clarity in the text.
21 <i>“Case studies. To complement the portfolio analysis and to better understand</i>	This is a very small number to build conclusions on. Can Costa Rica, Tanzania, and Tonga provide a representative sample?	The case studies were chosen not through a representative sample but instead based on a rigorous and methodical criterion for country selection, including (i) diversity of GEF funds; (ii) representation from various Agencies; (iii) consideration of diverse country conditions; and

GEF Secretariat Comments		
Paragraph # / Referenced text	Comments	Response and action taken
<i>how systems work in practice, four projects in three countries addressing CIEWS were selected as case studies."</i>		(iv) different stages of development and implementation of CIEWS projects. This deliberate approach aimed to glean deeper insights into specific aspects of the projects at the field level, ensuring a more nuanced understanding that goes beyond a broad overview. For more information see Annex III.
24 <i>"...lack of clear identification of CIEWS projects in the GEF portfolio since CIEWS are not specifically part of GEF's mandate"</i>	<p>Let us not confuse "GEF" with "GEF Trust Fund". CIEWS is indeed part of the GEF's LDCF and SCCF mandate, and such projects are identified as clearly as other adaptation projects are. Please specify "GEF Trust Fund" in cases where the statement does not apply to LDCF and SCCF.</p> <p>This needs more differentiation: i.) it is clearly part of the LDCF/SCCF mandate; ii.) drought resilience, for e.g., is very much linked to land degradation and water security (LD), and flood and drought management and cooperation is often an early entry point to address threats to people and the environment across countries (IW) and factors to be addressed to avoid migration and conflicts (implicit in CCA, LD and IW).</p>	<p>The statements have been revised to improve clarity and avoid confusion between "GEF" and "GEF Trust Fund."</p> <p>Furthermore, the text has been adjusted to focus the limitation on identifying CIEWS components on the GEF portal.</p>
30	There seems to be some switching back and forth between "GEF" and the LDCF/SCCF. The LDCF and SCCF are a part of the "GEF". If IEO means "GEF Trust Fund" and not "GEF", then this should be clearly stated.	The statements have been revised to improve clarity and avoid confusion between "GEF" and "GEF Trust Fund."
Table 1	<p>This is an interesting and informative analysis.</p> <p>Please make clear to the reader that this table refers to the LDCF/SCCF adaptation strategy, not the GEF TF programming strategy.</p>	Table 1 has been revised to avoid confusion between the LDCF/SCCF adaptation strategy and the GEF TF programming strategy.

GEF Secretariat Comments		
Paragraph # / Referenced text	Comments	Response and action taken
32 <i>“The GEF portfolio includes a variety of CIEWS projects, distributed across different GEF funding cycles. Specifically, there are three projects ...”</i>	Please make it clear where/when you refer to the LDCF/SCCF adaptation strategy and when to the GEF TF programming strategy. MENTION THE EVALUATION PORTFOLIO	The text has been modified and the term “evaluation portfolio” has been incorporated.
33 <i>“Furthermore, the evaluation team identified 29 projects, comprising a substantial 54 percent of the portfolio, in which early warning systems and climate information services were integrated as joint interventions.”</i>	Is this finding based on a sample (only projects that have undergone TE) or the whole portfolio, as one would guess the percentage would be higher than 54 (perhaps, 85%?)? If it is based on the set of projects that have already undergone TEs, please specify in this paragraph, or state clearly in a preceding paragraph that all subsequent analysis presented is of the set of GEF TF, LDCF, and SCCF projects that have undergone TE.	The aggregate of these projects constitutes the entirety of the evaluation portfolio. The classification information for these projects does not derive from TEs but rather from CEO endorsement documents and other relevant materials in the approval stage.
36 & Figure 8	Now that the SCCF-A is focused on SIDS, it would be nice to see SIDS as a separate regional grouping in the pie chart. MENTION HOW MANY SIDS BUT NOT IN THE GRAPH.	Since the graph classifies countries by region, and SIDS are included in multiple regions, no alterations have been made to Figure 8.
Figure 8	The title does not specify whether the figure depicts the GEF Trust Fund, LDCF or SCCF portfolio. Is it covering all three?	The figure covers the three funds (GEF Trust Fund, LDCF, SCCF). It has been modified to “Geographic distribution of LDCF, SCCF and GEF

GEF Secretariat Comments		
Paragraph # / Referenced text	Comments	Response and action taken
		Trust Fund financing in the evaluation portfolio” to provide more clarity.
38 & Figure 8 <i>“Approximately four percent (three projects) were financed by the GEF Trust Fund”</i>	If 5 % of projects are in LAC and only 4 % of projects are financed by the GEF TF, then it seems surprising that of the three case study countries/ four projects selected for detailed analysis, one is Costa Rica and one, the Songwe basin, is a GEF TF project. As mentioned before, this does not seem to be a sample that is indicative of most of the portfolio.	The case studies were chosen not through a representative sample but instead based on a rigorous and methodical criterion for country selection, including (i) diversity of GEF funds; (ii) representation from various Agencies; (iii) consideration of diverse country conditions; and (iv) different stages of development and implementation of CIEWS projects. This deliberate approach aimed to glean deeper insights into specific aspects of the projects at the field level, ensuring a more nuanced understanding that goes beyond a broad overview. For more information see Annex III.
Table 3 Column: <i>“GEF financing amount”</i>	Please add “\$ million” to the column heading.	The heading has been edited as suggested.
40 <i>“CIEWS projects demonstrate strong alignment with GEF and LDCF/SCCF strategies”</i>	Please change “GEF” to “GEF Trust Fund”.	The text has been edited as suggested.
43 <i>“One of these interventions was the design and</i>	Would this be “mud avalanches”? no glaciers/snow	The sentence has been adjusted to improve clarity in the text.

GEF Secretariat Comments		
Paragraph # / Referenced text	Comments	Response and action taken
<i>implementation of an early warning system for the five communities most exposed to sudden events (floods, avalanches) due to hydrometeorological conditions in the municipality of Upala.”</i>		
51 <i>“The utilization of innovative approaches in GEF projects has been limited.”</i>	<p>Much of the early CIEWS portfolio has been focused on supporting LDCs with basic, reliable technology, e.g., automatic weather stations, and its O&M, which was lacking or weak. The SCCF, which supported non-LDCs, has been able to support more innovative CIEWS activities (e.g., as part of the Southeast Europe and Caucasus Regional Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility).</p> <p>Please note that CIEWS itself is innovative in many regions where the support is provided. Therefore, it is recommended that a sentence acknowledging this solution/service itself as a technology innovation be added in paragraph 51.</p> <p>Also, starting from GEF-7, the LDCF-SCCF “Challenge Program for Adaptation Innovation” has supported some very innovative projects in CIEWS, which use mobile apps, drones, and other interesting technology.</p> <p>It would be useful to include reflection on the presence or absence of innovative strategies to ensure long term financing of CIEWS, including with the private sector.</p>	<p>Paragraph 51 emphasizes a decline in innovative approaches from 22 percent during the design phase to 5 percent at the terminal evaluation stage. Additionally, the paragraph outlines the innovative approaches adopted by projects within the evaluation portfolio, and the text has been complemented with supplementary information.</p>

GEF Secretariat Comments		
Paragraph # / Referenced text	Comments	Response and action taken
57 <i>“...examples where the installed equipment ceases to function effectively post-project completion, often due to insufficient funding and an inadequate operation and maintenance framework.”</i>	In GEF project reviews of CIEWS projects, agencies are asked to consider and budget for O&M of the equipment and automated weather stations, as equipment failure and lack of recalibration is a commonly known source of CIEWS project failure. However, the needed budgeting for O&M is context specific and GEF relies on its agencies for this determination.	The report assessed the evaluation portfolio comprehensively. In this context, the issue of insufficient funding for Operation and Maintenance (O&M) was identified across various Agencies. This finding can serve as a valuable lesson for GEF SEC in shaping future projects. No action taken.
57 <i>“In such cases, the reported total of installed equipment may not accurately reflect the operational reality. Furthermore, the total count of beneficiaries, as reported by the projects, may be derived from the general population within the project's geographic area rather than those individuals who genuinely have access to CIEWS data.”</i>	One of the projects cited (GEF ID 9420) is still under implementation. The final numbers reported by the project (equipment and beneficiaries) have not yet been reported via a TE.	The language has been amended accordingly without including project GEF ID 9420 but considering the evidence collected in the Tanzania Case Study.

GEF Secretariat Comments		
Paragraph # / Referenced text	Comments	Response and action taken
59	It would be useful to present some specific examples of gender inclusivity in the context of CIEWS-related activities in this paragraph.	Examples of gender integration are included in the following paragraph (paragraph 60).
61 <i>“A comparative analysis of gender components across GEF phases reveals a shift in priorities. Notably, these components received less emphasis during GEF-3 and GEF-4 (Figure 23). However, there was a consistent improvement in prioritization during GEF-5 and GEF-6, reaching a substantial 43 percent in project design during GEF-7”</i>	The observation that earlier GEF projects performed less well on gender mainstreaming has arisen in other IEO reviews and was linked to the fact that GEF institutional policy on gender, and on gender mainstreaming, had not yet gone into effect. We suggest clarifying the link here as well to provide some context for the reader.	Text has been added on the timing of the approval of the GEF Policy on Gender Equality and its implementation to provide more context.
63 <i>“Government collaboration, particularly with meteorological</i>	Along with meteorological departments, also consider adding “as well as departments providing disaster preparedness and response to communities, including humanitarian agencies such as the Red Cross/Red Crescent.”	The text has been modified as suggested.

GEF Secretariat Comments		
Paragraph # / Referenced text	Comments	Response and action taken
<i>departments, is a fundamental factor..."</i>		
66 <i>"Despite these benefits, GEF projects often lack a systematic and comprehensive integration of climate information and early warning systems into broader disaster risk management strategies."</i>	Use of the word "often" makes this a strong statement, in which case the paragraph would benefit from project examples where this opportunity (to integrate with DRM strategies) was missed. In the absence of examples, we would suggest the word "often" be removed.	The language has been adjusted accordingly.

GEF Secretariat Comments		
Paragraph # / Referenced text	Comments	Response and action taken
70 <i>“Projects in the portfolio exhibited promising sustainability ratings. The specific outcomes of CIEWS in the long term cannot be ensured.”</i>	It would be useful to have further analysis of financial sustainability aspects and if this is being assured by the projects.	Physical, and financial sustainability are inherently interconnected and mutually influential. Sustainability encompasses environmental, social, and economic aspects, and trying to separate physical and financial sustainability overlooks the integrated nature of these dimensions. Integrating both aspects allow for a more comprehensive and forward-thinking approach that considers the long-term viability and success of CIEWS projects. Nevertheless, the critical consideration of financial sustainability is mentioned in the report, and it has been highlighted as recommendation #3.
73 <i>“First, there is a prevailing perception in some cases that climate information services should be financed exclusively through public funds.”</i>	This sentence is inconsistent with the title of the paragraph. Globally, there are a very few countries (only developed) where private sector is investing in CIEWS. It is a public service, and noninvestment by the private sector shouldn’t be seen as a gap. The evaluation could better focus on the engagement of the private sector in deriving new services for communities.	The text has been modified to enhance clarity.
Section 5 Conclusions	The conclusions miss one of the key benefits, which are strengthening the institutional capacity of the met offices in the target countries in their ability to use CIEWS. The majority of the	The strengthening of the institutional capacity of the met offices is mentioned in the report (par. 49, 50, 63, 67). This benefit now has been included as a conclusion in paragraph 81.

GEF Secretariat Comments		
Paragraph # / Referenced text	Comments	Response and action taken
	LDCF and SCCF projects focus on this aspect, as the baseline in the countries was quite weak at the time of intervention.	
74 <i>“...demonstrated a strong alignment with GEF and LDCF/SCCF strategies”</i>	Please revise to “demonstrated strong alignment with GEF Trust Fund and LDCF/SCCF strategies”.	The text was adjusted to outline the distinction between "GEF" and the "GEF Trust Fund" in the report.
78 <i>“...the long term sustainability of their outcomes remain uncertain”.</i>	This evaluation would be strengthened by a recommendation related specifically to strengthening financial sustainability of the project interventions.	Recommendation #3 was adapted to focus on strengthening financial sustainability of CIEWS interventions.
82 <i>“The GEF Secretariat, STAP and Agencies should develop indicators that align more consistently with established good practices.”</i>	The GEF adaptation results framework aims to be streamlined to reduce the reporting burden on countries and agencies and also aims to align, where possible, with the results frameworks of the other multilateral climate funds. An expanded set of indicators for each theme and sector of the LDCF/SCCF support is not desirable or practical.	The text was amended to provide more clarity in the spirit of the recommendation, which is not focused on increasing the number of indicators but the quality of them by aligning them to established good practices.
83 <i>“...initiatives, exploring private sector participation in the long-term</i>	Considering the WB climate hazard map (cited in the report) and the fact that the heavy impacts of CC are often in LDCs and fragile countries and often affect rural and marginal communities, the expectation for substantial private sector finance is, in theory, good, but in practice is limited.	The recommendation was adjusted to recognize the challenges in involving the private sector in projects. It is crucial to underscore that successful cases have already demonstrated the feasibility of such engagement. Moreover, the expanding commercial use of climate

GEF Secretariat Comments		
Paragraph # / Referenced text	Comments	Response and action taken
<i>financing of CIEWS interventions could be a viable route to strengthen the sustainability of GEF's investments."</i>		information presents a substantial and growing opportunity to attract the private sector, offering potential contributions to financial sustainability.