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INVESTING IN OUR PLANET

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KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

GEF INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OFFICE

FULL REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report presents the findings of an external needs assessment on the use of the GEF Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) evaluation reports/products and the knowledge needs of key stakeholders, carried out in August-September 2015. A document review, online surveys (820 responses) and semi-structured interviews (48) were carried out covering all geographic regions and all parts of the GEF Partnership, in addition to external stakeholders such as civil society, academia and governments.

Findings

2. The IEO evaluation reports and products were widely known, consulted and used by the Council Members and GEF Partnership, and slightly less by external stakeholders. More than eighty percent of survey respondents reported that they used the reports with one third using them a “great deal” or “very much”. The most frequently consulted reports were the Fifth Overall Performance Study (OPS5) and Annual Performance Reviews (APRs). More than ninety percent of survey respondents rated the evaluation reports positively on satisfaction criteria with only the “Process of stakeholder engagement” rated below ninety percent. The GEF Secretariat rated all criteria significantly lower than other groups.

3. The assessment found that evaluation reports mainly served as a contribution to decision-making, projects/programs preparation/adjustment and for improving understanding of environmental issues, GEF projects, programs or processes.

4. The most significant and consistent usage was by Council Members. The GEF Secretariat was the least satisfied and inconsistent in its usage. Agencies used the evaluation reports in different ways, often reflecting the various staff roles. Country focal points were amongst the most satisfied users whereas GEF CSO Network members were the lowest users. External audiences tended to use the reports as learning tools on environmental methodology, trends and issues, but also to understand lessons from GEF and its overall effectiveness. Factors that influenced usage included participation in the evaluation process, confidence in the methodology used, and timeliness.

5. The main ways that stakeholders learnt about GEF IEO evaluation reports and products was through the GEF IEO website, email announcements and direct contact with the GEF IEO. Relatively lower levels of awareness of evaluation reports was reported amongst project and program staff of Agencies. Although well aware of the GEF IEO and its functions, examples were seen where GEF Secretariat staff were unaware of a given evaluation report that was potentially relevant to their work. This was thought to be linked to their lack of involvement in the given evaluation process and/or systematic efforts of the GEF IEO to inform them.

6. The preferred channels for stakeholders to learn of GEF IEO evaluations were mainly email announcements, the GEF IEO website, newsletter and thematic workshops and webinars. Four-page briefs, signposts (2 pages) the evaluation reports and synthesis notes discussing lessons from several evaluations were highlighted by survey respondents as the most useful products.

7. Stakeholders proposed that the GEF IEO should move away from static publications to dynamic forms that could be re-used and packaged in various formats; to combine and compare data, lessons and good practices from multiple evaluation reports. It was suggested that the GEF IEO should focus its knowledge work and products on subject/themes of focal areas and cross-cutting themes, stakeholder-tailored products, lessons on project design and implementation, and specific geographic/regional focuses.

Conclusions and recommendations

8. **Conclusion 1:** Reports have played a significant role in decision-making and priority setting for the GEF Council. However, at the same time, the needs assessment showed that the potential for use of evaluation reports by the GEF Secretariat was currently not fully optimized. **Recommendation 1:** The GEF IEO should consider further how to reinforce and systematize the participation of the GEF Secretariat in the evaluation process, in addition to boosting the general participatory approach with other stakeholders, while maintaining independence

9. **Conclusion 2:** Timeliness of evaluation reports was a factor found to be important in facilitating use. The timing of the OPS5 was key to ensuring its use in the replenishment cycle. At the same time, the nature of the evaluation reports, such as Country Portfolio Evaluations, in their current form, had less potential interest today.

Recommendation 2: The GEF IEO should consider further issues of timing, notably: what type of OPS product could be produced earlier in the replenishment cycle; how can Country Portfolio Evaluations be made more relevant to projects and programs currently underway or planned.

10. **Conclusion 3:** The assessment found that the GEF Agencies had the potential to play an important role in the dissemination of evaluation reports and their findings within their organizations.

Recommendation 3: The GEF IEO should explore further how it could collaborate with implementing Agencies on the dissemination of its evaluation reports and products within their organizations to relevant field program/project managers.

11. **Conclusion 4:** Awareness of the GEF IEO evaluation reports was generally positive. At the same time, not all priority stakeholders were aware of relevant evaluation reports.

Recommendation 4: The GEF IEO should consider communicating more systematically in its planning and scheduling evaluations, using the dissemination channels and products desired by stakeholders and ensuring that the GEF IEO website is able to support awareness and learning.

12. **Conclusion 5:** Insights were provided into the themes desired by stakeholders for knowledge management. The key will be to “unlock” the knowledge found in the evaluation reports.

Recommendation 5: In designing its knowledge management approach, the GEF IEO should consider the findings of this assessment, notably the preferences stated on themes.

13. **Conclusion 6:** The form of knowledge management, both documenting and sharing is also important. The desire for greater collaboration across the GEF Partnership was also highlighted.

Recommendation 6: The GEF IEO should consider different forms of storing and sharing knowledge, both static and dynamic. Collaboration in knowledge management should be explored further and possible concretized by a pilot project involving the interested partners.

1. INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

14. This report presents the findings of an externally carried out needs assessment on the use of the GEF IEO evaluation reports and products. The assessment had two main objectives: 1) An assessment of the use of IEO evaluations by different groups of stakeholders; and 2) An assessment of the knowledge needs and preferred forms and modes of communication to increase the use and influence of IEO evaluations.

15. This assessment was carried out in August-September 2015 by an external evaluation consultant Glenn O'Neil with the support of Kseniya Temnenko, Knowledge Management Officer, and Marie-Constance Manuella Koukoui, Executive Assistant, from the GEF IEO.

16. The methodology used for the assessment comprised of a document review, online surveys and semi-structured interviews. Three surveys were administered to 1) GEF Council members and alternates; 2) the GEF Partnership (GEF Secretariat, GEF Agencies, STAP, Country operational and political focal points, GEF CSO Network, and secretariats of International Environmental Conventions); and 3) external stakeholders. A total of 820 responses were received, covering all geographic regions and all parts of the Partnership. The survey results were triangulated with 48 semi-structured interviews and discussions with members of the GEF Council, GEF Secretariat, Agencies, STAP and CSO Network. A list of persons interviewed is included in Annex 1. Demographic information on survey respondents is in Annex 2.

2. FINDINGS

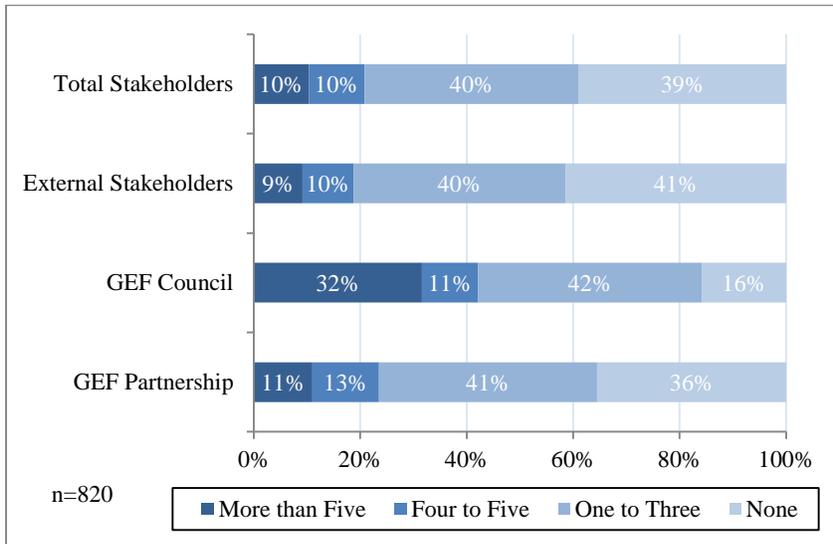
2.1 Use of IEO evaluation reports and products

17. This section responds to the first objective of the assessment by considering frequency of use, satisfaction with evaluation reports and types of use by main stakeholder group. Factors that were found to influence use are also described.

Frequency

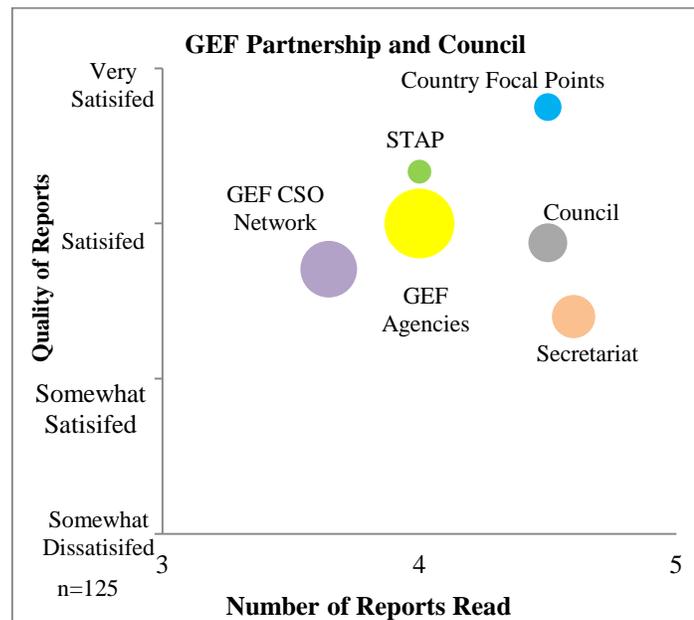
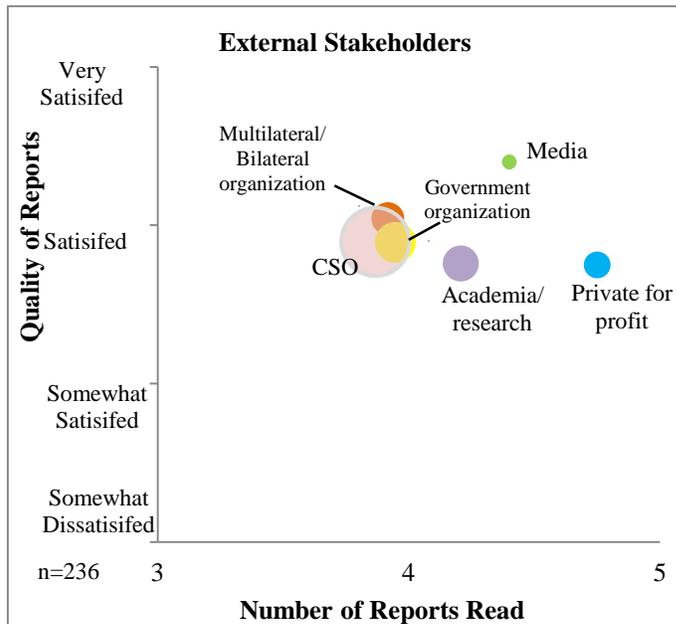
18. The IEO evaluation reports and products were widely known and consulted by the Council Members and GEF Partnership, and slightly less by external stakeholders, according to the survey and interview data. Sixty percent of the survey respondents had read at least one or more of the GEF IEO evaluations, with twenty percent having read four or more, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Number of GEF IEO evaluation reports read



19. Based on the survey data, figures 2 and 3 show “The number of reports read” and “Satisfaction with the report quality” by stakeholder group, split between the GEF Partnership (and Council) and external stakeholders. Within the GEF Partnership, Council Members, the GEF Secretariat and Focal Points consulted the most evaluation reports and CSO Network the least; the least satisfied with the report quality were the GEF Secretariat. Externally, Private for profit agencies consulted the most reports and CSOs the least. Satisfaction with quality also varied but not significantly as seen in Figure 2.

Figures 2 & 3: Number of reports read by satisfaction with the report quality by stakeholder group; GEF Partnership and External (size of bubbles indicative of number of survey responses)

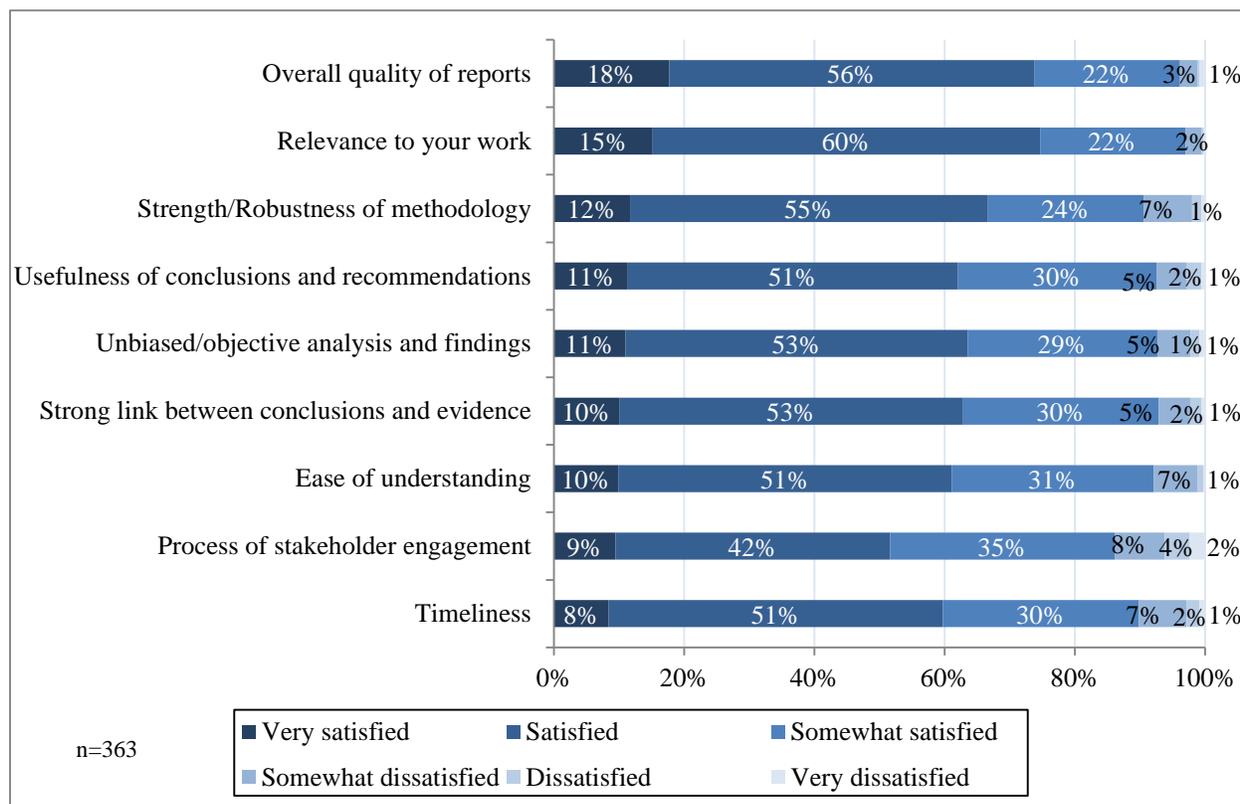


20. Overall, the reports most frequently consulted were the Fifth Overall Performance Study (OPS5) and Annual Performance Reviews (APRs) with variations seen in the usage of other evaluation reports by stakeholder group as discussed below under “Use”.

Satisfaction

21. In terms of overall satisfaction, more than ninety percent of survey respondents were satisfied with the “Quality”, “Relevance”, “Robustness”, “Usefulness”, “Unbiased”, “Strong link” and “Ease of understanding”. The “Process of stakeholder engagement” was the only criteria with positive satisfaction levels below ninety percent (eighty-six) followed by “Timeliness” at ninety percent. Aside from stakeholder engagement, for the other eight factors there was a statistically significant difference (at the 0.05 level) between the ratings by the GEF Secretariat and the other groups of the GEF Partnership, with the Secretariat rating them all lower. The interviews confirmed a certain level of dissatisfaction of the GEF Secretariat with the evaluation reports and process that impacted negatively on their usage, as discussed further below.

Figure 4: Satisfaction criteria – all stakeholders



Evaluation Use

22. In terms of usage of evaluations, the large majority of stakeholders surveyed or interviewed had used the evaluation reports: of the survey respondents, over eighty percent reported they had used the reports with one third using them a “great deal” or “very much”. The assessment found that the most significant and consistent usage was by Council Members,

where the large majority of those surveyed or interviewed (22 out of 25 Council Members and staff) had used the evaluation reports, and many in significant ways, as described below.

23. Overall, some 170 examples of use were provided by survey and interview respondents. As detailed in Table 1, most examples of use were concerning the OPS5, followed by mid-term/performance evaluations, the APRs and thematic evaluations.

24. Some respondents provided details of how they used the reports, as detailed in Table 1. These examples indicate that the reports were found mainly to serve as a contribution to decision-making, projects/programs preparation/adjustment and for improving understanding of environmental issues, GEF projects, programs or processes.

Table 1: Examples of use of GEF IEO evaluation reports provided by stakeholders

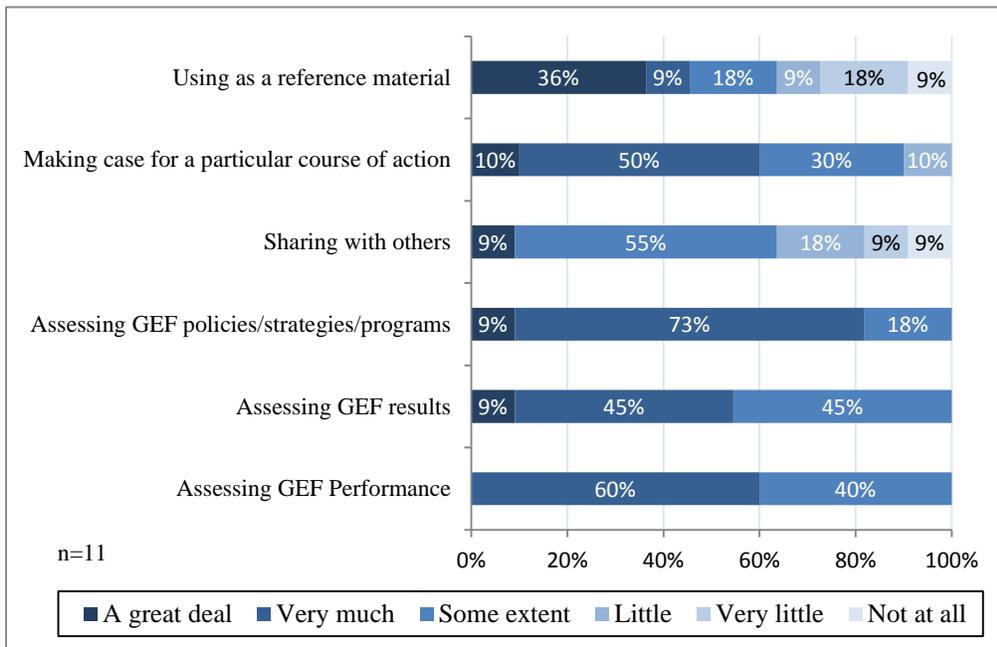
Report type	Main types of use mentioned	No. reported
OPS5	Support GEF replenishment within governments; shape government decisions and positions on GEF; shape GEF priorities and programs; support understanding of environmental trends and issues.	46
Mid-term/performance	Understand internal processes (such as STAR); adapt GEF processes; adjust own programs (e.g. for small grants program).	27
APR	Support stakeholders in assessing GEF performance; draw lessons and compare performance of Agencies.	25
Thematic	Support learning on issues; contribute to GEF strategies; contribute to strategies/programs of Agencies, governments and CSOs.	25
Country portfolios	Contribute to program/project preparation of agencies, governments and CSOs; support analysis and understanding of country-level issues.	20
Impact	Contribute to program/project preparation of Agencies, governments and CSOs; support understanding of GEF contribution.	15
LDCF/SCCF Annual Evaluation Reports (AER)	Provide information on projects funded; support understanding of GEF priorities.	10
OPS5 sub-studies	Provide insights into environmental issues.	4

25. A limited number of examples were also found of non-use that is, where an evaluation report could have had a useful input or contribution but did not. For example, the GEF Secretariat did not fully utilize a thematic report to shape its future policies and priorities as it did not agree with the focus of the report or the conclusions made; a country portfolio report was found to be potentially beneficial to Agency project staff but they were not aware of its existence.

26. Further analysis on use is now provided by the main stakeholder groups.

27. **GEF Council Members** used the reports, notably OPS5 and APR, to support their assessment of the GEF's performance, results and strategies. As seen in figure 5, 100 percent of all Council Members that responded to this survey question reported this type of use.

Figure 5: Use of IEO Evaluation reports – GEF Council Members

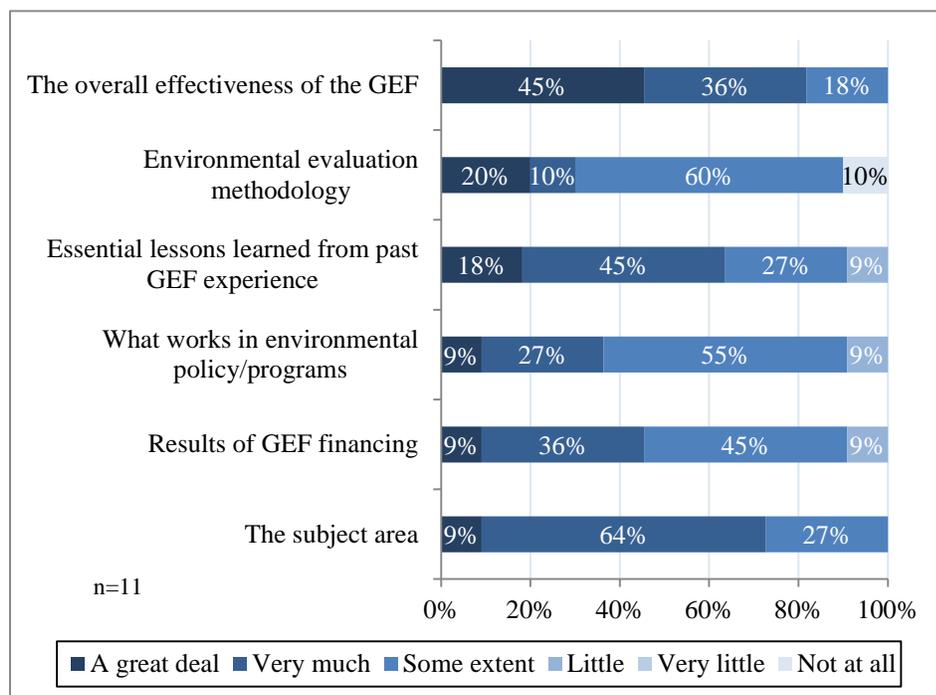


28. The interviews confirmed that the reports fed into the positions and decisions of Council Members that then influenced the strategic direction of the GEF. Reports were also used to maintain support for the GEF within national governments and provide input into national environmental policies, as this Council Member explained:

“The OPS and APR are important for my daily work. They are very credible as they offer a critical view and I use them when I consult with parliamentarians, ministry staff and stakeholders such as environmental NGOs. They are also used by our relevant parliamentary committees, such as climate change. Thematic reports are forwarded to the relevant technical specialists in the ministries who consider their relevance for national policies and priorities.”

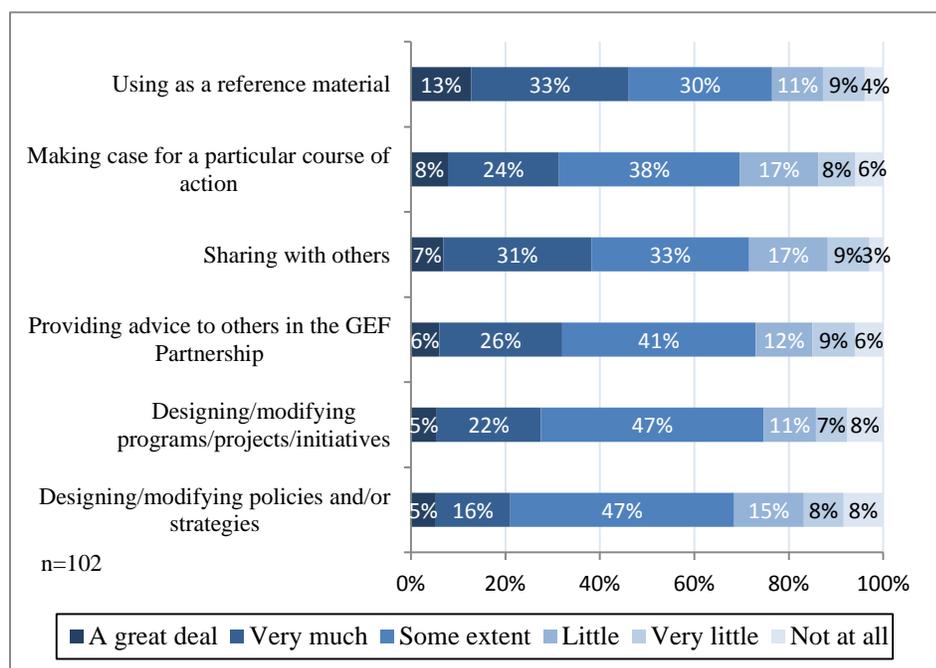
29. Council Members also reported that the evaluation reports supported them in their understanding of certain areas, notably the overall effectiveness of the GEF as seen in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Use of evaluation reports for learning – GEF Council Members



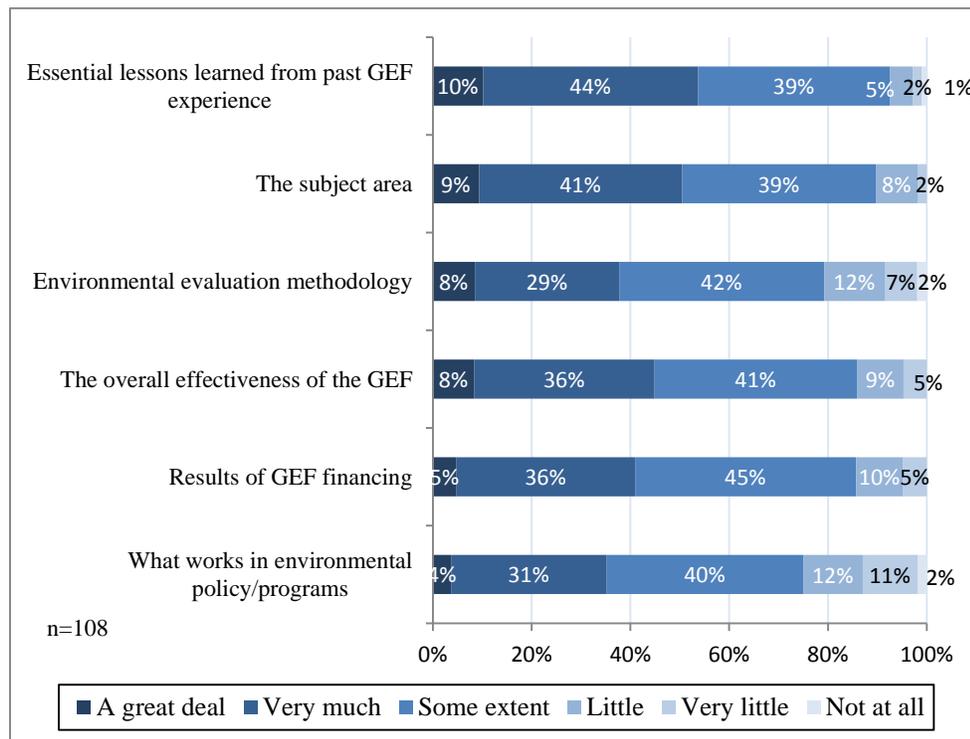
30. The **GEF Partnership** used mainly the APRs, OPS5 and thematic reports, although use varied between the different groups as described below. Overall, their main use as reported in the survey was as reference material, making a case for a particular course of action and sharing with others, as illustrated in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Use of evaluation reports – GEF Partnership



31. In terms of increasing understanding, staff of the GEF Partnership rated as highest “Essential lessons learned from past GEF experience” and “Subject area” as seen in Figure 8. When examining a breakdown by the different groups of the GEF Partnership, there is a statistically significant difference (at the 0.05 level) between the criteria ratings of the GEF Secretariat and the other groups, with the GEF Secretariat rating them all significantly lower.

Figure 8: Use of evaluation reports for learning – GEF Partnership



32. The **GEF Secretariat** used the full scope of IEO reports and consulted the highest number of reports, but was the least satisfied, as shown in Figure 3. It was found that there were inconsistencies as to how the Secretariat staff actually used the reports. As equally there were examples seen where staff reported using the reports to develop and adjust strategies and processes (for example from the *Process Evaluation of the Expansion of the GEF Partnership* to the *Impact Evaluation on Climate Change Mitigation*), examples were seen where the same or similar reports were not used. As discussed further below, factors that influenced usage centered on participation in the evaluation process, confidence in the methodology and timeliness (factors rated lower by the GEF Secretariat as described above). However, there was a recognition amongst staff that the GEO IEO was aware of these issues and have adjusted their approach in the past year, notably on participation as this Secretariat staff member described:

“Before we had little interaction with the evaluations; independence was stressed but the flipside was that evaluations were often of little value to the Secretariat. But it is starting to change. For a recent impact evaluation we participated in different steps and it was an effective mechanism for us to learn also. So when it is published, I already know about it and will more likely use it”

33. **GEF Agencies** used the evaluation reports in different ways, often reflecting the various staff roles. For example, Agency staff with GEF coordination roles were often interested in the APR and OPS as it provided an independent assessment of their performance compared to other Agencies. Evaluation units of Agencies were often interested in thematic and program evaluations (e.g. the *Joint GEF-UNDP Evaluation of the Small Grants Program*) and what guidance could be drawn from them for their own programs and evaluations. Agency project/program managers were often interested in thematic evaluations that identified trends, lessons and best practices relevant to their interests. However, it was thought that this latter group were not being reached sufficiently to date, as this Agency staff commented:

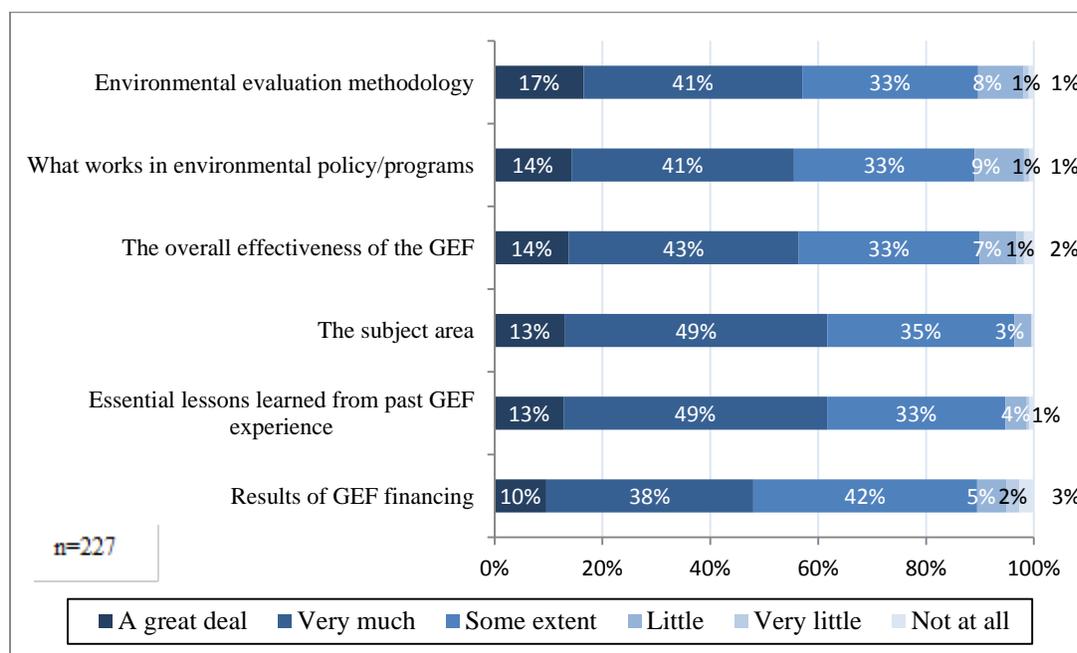
“There is a lot being published that is not reaching our field staff, our own and GEF evaluation reports. These staff are pressed for time but there are opportunities to reach them if the material and format are right. The lessons for terminal evaluations found in APR 2014 are a good example. They are simple but resonate as they are based on a huge body of GEF and agency evidence – but they need to come out of the report and into a simpler format”.

34. **Country operational and political focal points** were amongst the most satisfied users of the evaluation reports according to the survey results (Figure 3). Examples of use provided by focal points mentioned the *Least Developed Country Fund (LDCF)/Special Climate Change Fund (SCFF)* AERs and Country Portfolio Evaluations. Focal points reported using these reports to monitor the progress of projects in their own countries and as inputs into their national strategies and planning.

35. **GEF CSO Network** were the lowest users of evaluation reports compared to other groups, according to the survey results (Figure 3). Members of the Network were interested in evaluation reports related to their country, focal area or that had a direct interest for them, such as the *Joint GEF-UNDP Evaluation of the Small Grants Program*. In the survey, members of the CSO Networks and CSOs in general commented that they thought that more consultation should be carried out with them and other stakeholders in the evaluation process.

External audiences were canvassed by the online survey and constituted seventy-one percent of all survey responses (n=579). Fifty-one percent identified themselves as representing CSOs with thirty percent from Africa. Compared to the Council Members and the GEF Partnership, thematic reports were more consulted by these groups, followed by APRs and the LDCF/SCCF AERs. As illustrated in Figure 9, these audiences tended to use evaluation reports as learning tools on environmental methodology, trends and issues, but also to understand lessons from GEF and its overall effectiveness.

Figure 9: Use of evaluation reports for learning – External stakeholders



36. The reports also supported an understanding of the contribution and results of the GEF for the environment in their country or region or in a focal area of interest. The following quotes from external survey respondents illustrate the variety of use and learning from the evaluation reports:

“The APR helps our organization draw lessons and make decisions on how best to improve the work as we invest in environmental issues”. CSO, Africa

“The APR is very useful as it helps one to see how everyone performs in that particular period. With that in mind, it helps to ensure that planned activities for the next period is set in motion to ensure that it is achieved. Also, given the direction globally, it can help inform stakeholders, or assist them to also comply in any way they are lagging behind”. Multilateral/bilateral organization, East Asia and the Pacific

“GEF Country Portfolio Evaluation: Moldova (1994–2009) was used in addition to internal evaluation of our organization for revising the approach for projects' preparation and implementation”. CSO, Western Europe

Factors of influence on use

37. Factors of influence that could enable or impede the use of evaluation reports were identified in the interviews and discussions, with only a limited number of survey respondents mentioning these specifically in their responses (less than five respondents). The following table details the factors of influence mentioned:

Table 2: Factors of influence on use

Factor	Enabling / Impeding	Description	Mentioned by
Champions for evaluation	Could be enabling if capitalized upon	Within Agencies and the GEF Secretariat, several key roles were identified, such as knowledge management staff of Agencies and focal area specialists of the Secretariat that could act as “knowledge brokers” for the evaluations. They were seen as being crucial to filtering evaluation findings and getting them to broader audiences within their organizations. However, this was reliant on their participation in the evaluation process and/or their awareness of the relevant evaluations.	Agencies, GEF Secretariat
Independence	Enabling but could be impeding if it overruled participation	The independence of the evaluations was seen as key to their credibility, particularly for the work of Council Members in assessing the GEF’s performance. However, GEF Secretariat and Agencies were of the opinion that independence should not mean an absence of participation that could then impact on their use of evaluation reports.	Agencies, Council Members, GEF Secretariat
Organizational / contextual factors	Enabling and impeding	Organizational factors mentioned that could influence the use of evaluation reports included the “appetite” for evaluation and how it was used within organizations (i.e. Agencies or governments). The lack of time and information overload were also mentioned as impeding use. Contextual factors mentioned included the rapidly changing environmental technologies and settings that meant that evaluations of past projects could be of less interest and use.	Agencies, Council Members, GEF Secretariat
Institutional incentives and accountability	Enabling and impeding	Several reports, such as the OPS5 and APR had clear incentive and accountability roles that enabled their use, i.e. they were a key tool for Council Members to assess GEF performance and for Agencies to assess and compare their own performance. Country Portfolio Evaluations were an example where incentives were lacking for stakeholders to consider their findings as they were more broadly targeted.	Agencies, Council Members, CSO Network, GEF Secretariat
Participation in the evaluation process	Enabling	As mentioned above, participation in the evaluation process was seen as key to facilitating use, notably for Agencies, the CSO Network and GEF Secretariat. This has been recognised by the GEF IEO and a more participative approach adopted in the past year. A pilot approach to extended stakeholder consultation for Country Portfolio Evaluations also reported positive results.	Agencies, CSO Network, GEF Secretariat
Relevance	Enabling and impeding	Relevance was an issue mostly for the GEF Secretariat in that the selection of the focal areas, processes and countries by the GEF IEO for evaluation influenced their consequent use.	GEF Secretariat
Robustness of methodology and consequent findings	Enabling and impeding	How the evaluation methodology was perceived by stakeholders influenced their use of the consequent findings, conclusions and recommendations. This assessment found that this perception varied from individual to individual and evaluation to evaluation; in general Council Members were more confident in the methodologies used with the GEF Secretariat less so.	Agencies, Council Members, GEF Secretariat
Timeliness	Enabling and impeding .	Delivering the OPS to match the GEF replenishment cycle was seen as key in order to influence GEF strategies and priorities. Several Council Members commented that OPS5 was delivered too late to fully use its potential. Thematic/Impact Evaluations were less time-driven whereas Country Portfolio Evaluations were thought by some to be too retroactive to be of full use.	Agencies, Council Members, GEF Secretariat

2.2 Assessment of Knowledge Needs

38. This section responds to the second objective of the assessment and examines the awareness of evaluation reports, preferred channels and products in addition to identifying knowledge needs of stakeholders.

Awareness

39. The survey indicated that the main ways that stakeholders learn about GEF IEO evaluation reports and products is through the GEF IEO website, email announcements and direct contact with the GEF IEO (notably for Council Members in preparation for Council meetings). The website was the main way that external stakeholders learnt about the evaluation reports and products.

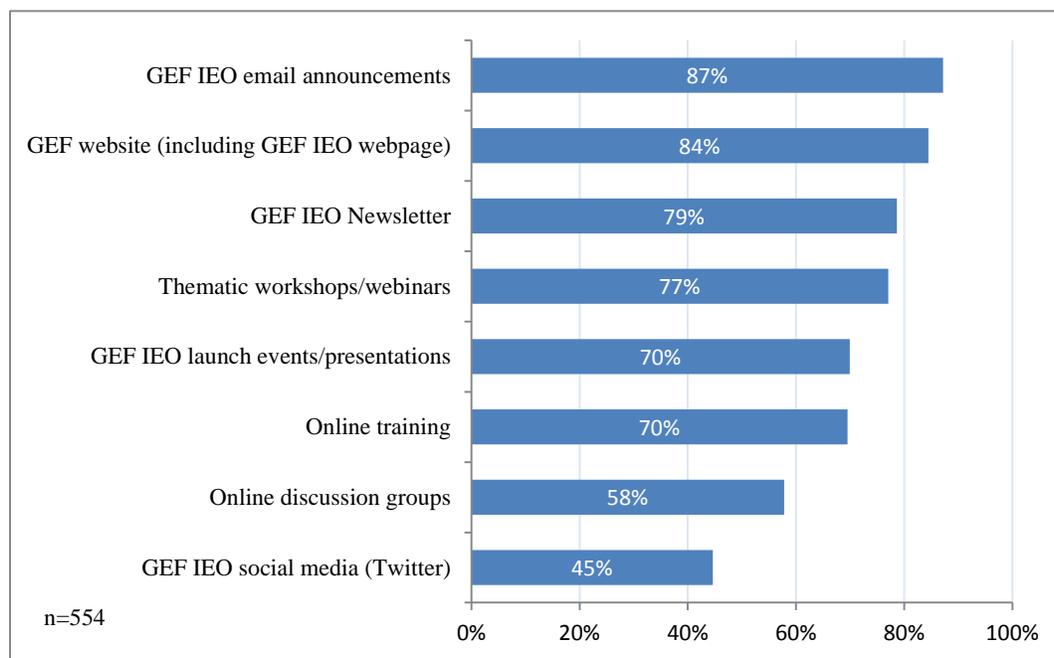
40. Low awareness of evaluation reports was reported particularly amongst project and program staff of Agencies, according to Agencies and the GEF Secretariat. It was commented that there were not enough efforts to reach this group by both Agencies and the GEF IEO, in terms of outreach and suitable products.

41. Given their proximity, the staff of GEF Secretariat were well aware of the GEF IEO and its functions. However, examples were seen where Secretariat staff were unaware of a given evaluation report that was potentially relevant to their work. Discussions indicated this was linked to their lack of involvement in the given evaluation process and/or systematic efforts of the GEF IEO to inform them of the evaluation schedule, reports and products.

Channels

42. As illustrated in Figure 10, the preferred channels for stakeholders to learn of GEF IEO evaluations were mainly email announcements, the GEF IEO website, newsletter and thematic workshops and webinars.

Figure 10: Preferred channels - all stakeholders (showing top three rating points of six point scale)



43. The recently launched newsletter (sent by email) was commented on favorably in interviews by stakeholders (Council Members and Agencies) as being an efficient way of keeping them informed of the latest reports and products.

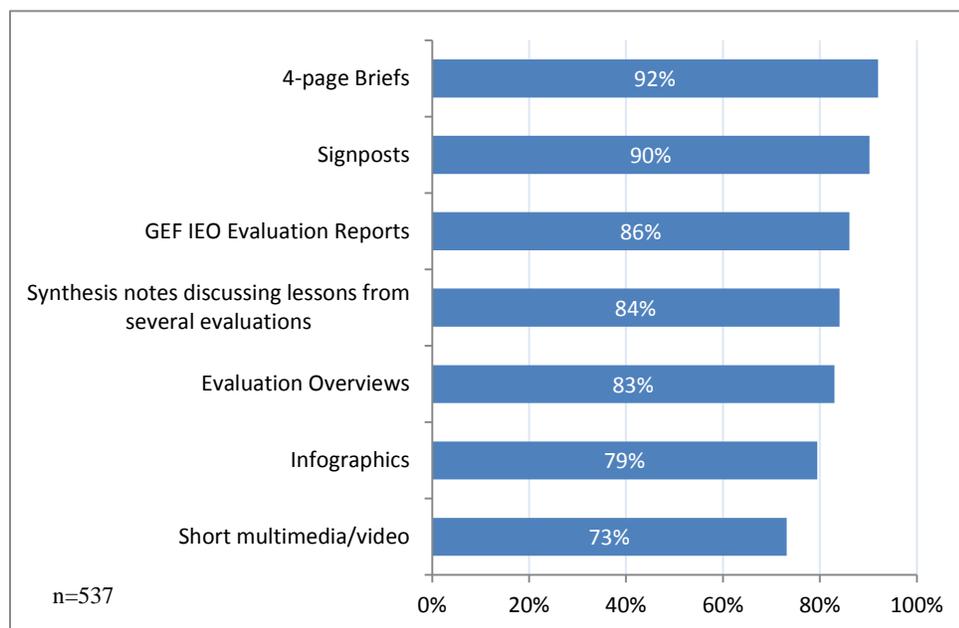
44. The website was seen as being a key tool that according to persons interviewed was currently not fully optimized in terms of ease of finding evaluation reports (lack of searchable database), links with other GEF areas (e.g. not finding links to the evaluation reports in the GEF project database) and in displaying key learnings and messages from evaluations.

45. In addition to the online channels, stakeholders interviewed emphasized the importance of using workshops and webinars to share and discuss evaluation reports. Aside from using these channels as participatory tools for the evaluation process, it was also suggested that these channels would be more relevant to stakeholders if focusing on themes and lessons drawn from a range of reports rather than a single report, as discussed further below.

Products

46. Four-page briefs, signposts (2 pages) the evaluation reports and synthesis notes discussing lessons from several evaluations were highlighted by survey respondents as the most useful products for them, as seen in Figure 11. Stakeholders, notably Council Members, emphasized in the interviews that the “classic” evaluation report format was still of value and important as a reference document to understand the various findings and supporting data, when needed. However, Council Members and other stakeholders interviewed also stressed the need to produce summarized information of the evaluation reports in order to increase their influence and use across their organizations, thus the preference for two and four page summaries as seen in Figure 11.

Figure 11: Preferred products - all stakeholders (showing top three rating points of six point scale)



47. Aside from static and printed (pdf) documents, stakeholders proposed that knowledge generated by evaluations should move away from being presented in static publications to dynamic forms such as online databases that could be re-used by stakeholders and packaged in various formats including thematic workshops, lessons notes, interactive features (e.g. maps displaying progress and results) and communities of practice. This was also linked to the desire that the GEF IEO go one step further from re-packing singular evaluation reports into summaries to extracting, combining and comparing data, lessons and good practices from multiple evaluation reports. A cited example of this practice was the lessons for terminal evaluations found in the 2014 APR.

Knowledge needs identified

48. The assessment directly asked stakeholders in the surveys and interviews where they thought the GEF IEO should focus its knowledge work during the next three years. Over 750 suggestions were made by stakeholders as summarized in Table 3. The main themes suggested by stakeholders are noted, as are the levels of responses between the GEF Partnership (including Council) and external stakeholders.

49. As illustrated in Table 3, stakeholders suggested the GEF IEO should focus its knowledge work and consequent products on the following:

- Subject/themes of focal areas and cross-cutting themes;
- Stakeholder-tailored, such as best practices or comparisons across agencies;
- Lessons on project design and implementation;
- Specific geographic/regional focuses.

50. There was also more interest in the Integrated Approach Pilots (IAPs) within the GEF Secretariat compared to external stakeholders. The contrary was seen for Monitoring and Evaluation topics.

51. In the discussions with stakeholders and based on survey comments, it was proposed that lessons, good practices and comparable data could be drawn from the evaluation reports on these themes and areas. For example, good practices seen where GEF-funded projects used community-based interventions or compiling of indicators used in the same or comparable focal areas. It should be noted that the majority of survey respondents did not provide further details of their needs, simply writing “cross cutting themes” or “project management”, for example.

Table 3: Suggested themes – knowledge needs of stakeholders

Theme area	Main sub-themes/topics mentioned*	GEF partnership		External stakeholders	
		No.	%	No.	%
Cross-cutting themes and focal areas	Cross-cutting, strategy, policy, focal areas, climate change, biodiversity, community-based interventions, gender, water and agency-specific lessons.	97	41%	223	38%
project management	Program/project management and implementation, program/project development, project sustainability, partner and stakeholder performance/involvement.	57	24%	182	31%
Results	GEF contribution, comparative advantage of agencies (and their expansion), project impact, project replication and effectiveness of small grants.	23	10%	27	5%
Monitoring and evaluation	Data, methods and indicators (best practices for focal areas).	14	6%	59	10%
Integrated Approach Pilots (IAP)	IAP compared to traditional/singular approach.	11	5%	5	1%
Other	Need for knowledge sharing, need for more communication and need for increased stakeholder involvement.	19	8%	55	9%
Not clear or relevant	N/A	17	7%	33	6%
Totals:		238	100%	584	100%

*Sub-themes/topics are listed where there were at least five persons making this suggestion.

52. Knowledge management within the GEF partnership was an area recognized as needing further attention by stakeholders interviewed. There was a general consensus that more collaboration in this area was possible and desired between Agencies, STAP and the GEF Secretariat. It was commented that this was necessary for the GEF to maintain its positioning as a key reference on sustainable environmental development.

3. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

53. Based on the above findings, the following six conclusions and consequent recommendations are made. The recommendations are for consideration by the GEF IEO.

54. **Conclusion 1:** The needs assessment illustrated positively that the approach of the GEF IEO has resulted in its reports playing a significant role in decision-making and priority setting for its priority client, the GEF Council. However, at the same time, the needs assessment showed that the potential for use of evaluation reports by arguably the second priority client, the GEF Secretariat, was not being fully optimized. As described above, this was found largely due to the lack of their participation in the evaluation process. This has improved in the past year and should be further developed (also for broader stakeholders) while finding a necessary balance with the independence of the evaluation function.

55. **Recommendation 1:** To encourage further use of evaluation reports within the GEF Partnership, the GEF IEO should consider how to reinforce and systemize the participation of the GEF Secretariat in the evaluation process, in addition to boosting the general participatory approach with other stakeholders, while maintaining independence.

56. **Conclusion 2:** Timeliness of evaluation reports was a factor also found to be important in facilitating use. The timing of the OPS was key to ensuring its use in the replenishment cycle which has been recognized by the GEF IEO, even if it is challenging to see how an OPS could be delivered earlier. The nature of the evaluation reports, such as Country Portfolio Evaluations that are focused on examining past projects and programs would require a re-think on making them more relevant.

57. **Recommendation 2:** The GEF IEO should consider further issues of timing in its planning and scheduling of evaluations, notably: what type of OPS product could be produced earlier in the replenishment cycle; how can Country Portfolio Evaluations be made more relevant to projects and programs currently underway or planned.

58. **Conclusion 3:** The assessment found that the Agencies had the potential to play an important role in the dissemination of evaluation reports and their findings within their organizations; several examples were seen where Agency staff were already doing this to reach field program/project managers and this potential could be explored further. Care would need to be taken to ensure that the content and form is appropriate and relevant for such managers, that is, that the pertinent information is extracted from the reports, summarized and presented attractively.

59. **Recommendation 3:** The GEF IEO should explore further how it could collaborate with Agencies on the dissemination of its evaluation reports and products within their organizations to relevant field program/project managers.

60. **Conclusion 4:** Awareness of the GEF IEO evaluation reports and products was generally positive, given also the survey responses seen globally and from civil society, academia and governments. This in itself illustrates the interest and the potential amongst a broader range of environmental stakeholders. At the same time, not all priority stakeholders were aware of

relevant evaluation reports. Key tools, such as the website, were also not fully supportive to building awareness.

61. **Recommendation 4:** The GEF IEO should consider communicating more systematically in its planning and scheduling (i.e. use of a communication plan of action for each report), matching the channels and products desired by stakeholders and ensuring that its website is able to support awareness and learning (see paragraph 45 for suggestions).

62. **Conclusion 5:** The assessment provided insights into the themes desired by stakeholders for knowledge management (table 3), focusing on focal area and cross-cutting topics, project management, stakeholder-tailored and geographic-specific themes and consequent products. The GEF IEO clearly has a rich source of evaluation reports and data to be able to draw out common lessons and practices; key will be to “unlock” the knowledge in these reports.

63. **Recommendation 5:** in designing its knowledge management approach, the GEF IEO should consider the findings of this assessment, notably the preferences stated on themes.

64. **Conclusion 6:** The form of knowledge management is also important; the ability to go beyond static publications and to use dynamic formats, whether they be online databases (datasets), resources and communities or offline workshops and discussions. The desire for collaboration across the GEF Partnership and to explore different forms of storing and sharing the knowledge was also highlighted.

65. **Recommendation 6:** The GEF IEO should consider different forms of storing and sharing knowledge, both static and dynamic. Collaboration in knowledge-management should be explored further and possible concretized by a pilot project involving the interested partners (e.g. GEF Secretariat, STAP and Agencies), such as joint events, publications or databases/datasets.

ANNEX 1: LIST OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED

The following persons were interviewed and/or participated in group discussions for this assessment.

Council Members, alternates and support staff

Name	Position	Constituency	Date of interview / discussion
Rebecca Fisher	Environmental Economist, U.S. Department of the Treasury	United States (support staff)	18 September 2015
Leonardo Martinez-Dias	Deputy Assistant Secretary for Environment and Energy, U.S. Department of the Treasury	United States	18 September 2015
Marcelo Martinez	Under- Coordinator for Sustainable Development Ministry of External Relations, Brazil	Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador	8 September 2015
Myra Patai	Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Immigration, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration, Cook Islands	Cook Islands, Fiji, Indonesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu	16 September 2015
Stefan Marco Schwager	Head, International Climate and Biodiversity Finance and the GEF Federal Office for the Environment, Switzerland	Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan	17 September 2015
Leander Treppel	Senior Advisor Federal Ministry of Finance, Austria	Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Hungary, Luxembourg, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Turkey	7 September 2015

GEF Partnership

GEF Secretariat		
Name	Position	Date of interview
Chizuru Aoki	Lead Environmental Specialist	16 September 2015
Ulrich Apel	Senior Environmental Specialist	17 September 2015
Mohamed Bakarr	Lead Environmental Specialist	15 September 2015
Yasemin Biro	Senior Environmental Specialist	18 September 2015
Jaime Cavelier	Senior Biodiversity Specialist	14 September 2015
Gustavo Fonseca	Program Director	15 September 2015
Claude Gascon	Manager, Programs Unit	17 September 2015
Elwyn Grainger-Jones	Director of Strategies and Operations	16 September 2015
Ian Grey	Senior Environmental Specialist	14 September 2015
Naoko Ishii	CEO	16 September 2015
Rawleston Moore	Senior Climate Change Specialist	16 September 2015
David Rogers	Senior Climate Change Specialist	15 September 2015
Christian Severin	Senior Environmental Specialist	22 September 2015
Xiaomei Tan	Climate Change Specialist	14 September 2015

Agencies			
Name	Position	Agency	Date of interview / discussion
Ashwin Bhouraskar	Evaluation Officer	FAO	22 September 2015
Melba Alvarez	Evaluation communication and KM officer, Independent Office of Evaluation	IFAD	15 September 2015
Mahamat Assouyouiti	GEF Coordinator	AfDB	22 September 2015
Luisa Belli	Evaluation Officer	FAO	22 September 2015
Nancy Bennet	Results Management and Evaluation Advisor	UNDP	17 September 2015
Michael Collins	GEF Coordinator	IABD	15 September 2015
Adriana Dinu	Executive Coordinator and Director a.i.	UNDP	17 September 2015
Bruce Dunn	GEF Coordinator	ADB	22 September 2015
Ilaria Firmian	KM officer, Environment and Climate Change Division	IFAD	15 September 2015
Juergen Hierold	GEF Coordinator	UNIDO	15 September 2015
Estibalitz Morras Dimas	Evaluation communication and KM officer, IOE	IFAD	15 September 2015
Jean-Yves Pirot	Head, GEF Coordination Unit	IUCN	22 September 2015
Marta Simonetti	Registry Senior Manager	EBRD	15 September 2015
Mike Spilsbury	Director, Evaluation Office	UNEP	17 September 2015
Brennan Van Dyke	GEF Executive Coordinator	UNEP	24 September 2015
Kelly West	Senior GEF Portfolio Manager	UNEP	24 September 2015
Nick York	Director, Country, Corporate and Global Evaluations	World Bank	17 September 2015

GEF CSO Network			
Name	Position	Organization	Date of interview
Faizal Parish	Central Focal Point	Global Environment Centre, Malaysia	18 September 2015

STAP		
Name	Position	Date of interview
Rosina Bierbaum	Chairperson	16 September 2015
Thomas Hammond	STAP Secretary	16 September 2015

GEF IEO		
Name	Position	Date of interview / discussion
Geeta Batra	Deputy Director and Chief Evaluation Officer	14 September 2015
Carlo Carugi	Senior Evaluation Officer	17 September 2015
Nita Congress*	Editor	16 September 2015
Malac Kabir	Research Assistant	14 September 2015
Juan Portillo	Senior Operations Officer	14 September 2015
Kseniya Temnenko	Knowledge Management Officer	14 September 2015
Juha Ilari Uitto	Director	14 September 2015
Anna Viggh	Senior Evaluation Officer	14 September 2015

*External consultant to the GEF IEO

ANNEX 2: SURVEY DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Total number of survey responses by main groups		
	No.	%
External Stakeholders	579	73
GEF Council	24	3
GEF Partnership	217	26
Total	820	100

What best describes a part of the GEF Partnership where you work/are a member? (GEF Partnership Survey)		
	No.	%
GEF Secretariat	29	14
GEF Agency	78*	38
STAP	6	3
Country OFP/PFP	31	15
GEF CSO Network	48	23
International Environmental Convention	14	7
Total	206	100

What GEF Agency do you work for? (GEF Partnership Survey)		
	No.	%
The World Bank	18	22
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	14	17
United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)	14	17
United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP)	11	14
International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)	7	9
Inter-American Development Bank (IADB)	6	7
International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)	4	5
Asian Development Bank (ADB)	2	3
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)	2	3
World Wildlife Fund (WWFUS)	2	3
Development Bank for Southern Africa (DBSA)	1	1
Total	81*	100

*Total number reporting the name of their Agency in the GEF Partnership survey is 81. This number is higher than the number reporting that they work for the GEF Agency (78) due to responses of the Trustee and SGP program staff.

What best describes the institution where you work? (Survey of External Stakeholders)		
	No.	%
Civil Society Organization	263	51
Governmental organization	79	15
Academia/research	70	14
Private for profit	42	8
Multilateral/Bilateral organization (UN, etc.)	41	8
Media	19	4
Total	514	100

Which region are you located in? (GEF Council, GEF Partnership, and External Stakeholders Survey)		
	No.	%
Africa	227	29
Latin America and the Caribbean Region	126	16
Western Europe	92	12
North America	86	11
South Asia	73	9
East Asia and the Pacific	72	9
Eastern Europe and Central Asia	68	9
Middle East and North Africa	43	6
Total	787	100

What best describes your role in your organization? (GEF Partnership Survey and External Stakeholders Survey)		
	No.	%
Manager	414	62
Program Staff	147	22
Operations/Communications/Policy staff	84	12
Support staff	20	3
Other	16	2
Total	681	100