GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY
INVESTING IN OUR PLANET

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Agenda Item 12

EVALUATION OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN THE GEF (2020)

(Prepared by the Independent Evaluation Office of the GEF)

Recommended Council Decision

The Council, having reviewed document GEF/E/C.59/04, *Evaluation of Knowledge Management in the GEF (2020)* and the Management Response, endorses the following recommendations:

1. The GEF partnership should develop a clear KM strategy.

2. The GEF partnership should invest in a technical solution that strengthens the KM system.

ASGM   artisanal and small-scale gold mining

CFI   Coastal Fisheries Initiative

GEF   Global Environment Facility

GOLD   Global Opportunities for Long-term Development of ASGM Sector program

GPSC   Global Platform for Sustainable Cities

IEO   Independent Evaluation Office

IAP   Integrated Approach Pilot

PMIS   Project Management Information System

QAE   Quality at entry

STAP   Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel

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1.   Knowledge is an important resource of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) that supports its strategic objectives to address global environmental concerns. Effective approaches to managing knowledge can help members of the GEF partnership and broader stakeholders in identifying good practices and solutions for the environmental issues and in their replication and scaling up, thus increasing the GEF's impact. At the same time, lack of effective approaches to knowledge management can lead to duplication of effort, missed opportunities, and failure to learn from the experience across the GEF partnership.

2.   This report presents the findings of an evaluation carried out by the GEF Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) in 2020 to assess Knowledge Management (KM) in the GEF partnership as an update to the 2017 KM evaluation. The objectives of this evaluation are (1) to assess the effectiveness of the GEF KM approach in strengthening the use of knowledge across the GEF partnership in relation to GEF's mandate to achieve global environmental benefits, and (2) to identify any systemic issues that should be considered in KM in planning for GEF-8. The evaluation will contribute to the Seventh Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF (OPS7) and identify lessons for the next replenishment phase.

3.   This evaluation applied a mixed methods approach and included the following methodological components: (a) semi-structured interviews with 51 members of the GEF partnership; (b) an online survey that was administered across the GEF partnership and to external stakeholders and received 658 responses; (c) a Quality-at-entry review of 69 GEF-6 and GEF-7 projects to assess the application of the GEF project cycle knowledge and learning requirements; (d) a case study on the knowledge platform of the Sustainable Cities IAP; (e) document and literature review.

Key Findings

Since 2017 progress has been made at each step of the KM process from the knowledge capture to its application across the GEF partnership, but awareness and use of new initiatives and developments is a limitation.

4.   In knowledge capture (collecting information from GEF projects and programs), the introduction of the GEF Portal as a replacement of the Project Management Information System (PMIS) is seen by stakeholders as a positive change that improves data collection and transparency. However, the Portal is not yet a KM tool, as it does not provide a functionality to aggregate and extract lessons and good practices across projects on specific themes, focal areas, or geographic regions that would allow partners to learn from each other and scale up good practices. The World Bank Group provides the infrastructure for all technology systems at the GEF, and the timing of the development of several features may be beyond the control of the GEF. The GEF IEO evaluation on the Portal will examine these issues further.

5.	In knowledge development, the GEF partnership has continued to transform data and information into usable products, such as "Good Practice Briefs", the Kaleo "Ask the Expert" tool, and through the programming approaches, such as the Integrated Approach Pilots (IAPs), however there is a remaining need for a standard approach or guidance on transforming data and information into usable formats that can be shared. A concern highlighted by stakeholders is the accessibility and curation of knowledge products whereby the products could be easily searched and accessed.

6.	In knowledge sharing and dissemination (activities to communicate knowledge), the introduction of e-learning courses through the GEF Academy, the ongoing KM activities, such as "Knowledge Days" during the Expanded Constituency Workshops, as well as the use of learning and knowledge platforms in programs have supported stakeholders across the partnership. The GEF communications team also actively disseminates knowledge through dissemination events and the website, but based on interviews, links between KM and communication could be strengthened. At the same time, the awareness of knowledge products and services by key audiences, implementing partners, and country focal points is a limiting factor.

7.	In knowledge application, the use of knowledge has improved with KM requirements and guidance on KM activities expected at various stages in the GEF project cycle. This has been accompanied by guidance on good practice criteria for the KM section in project documents which have been developed, discussed, and shared with GEF Agencies. The Agencies are positive about the project-level guidance on KM, although they seek more details and examples.

8.	GEF programmatic approaches incorporate knowledge and learning. The GEF-6 and -7 programs, such as Integrated Approach Pilots (IAPs) and Impact Programs, have developed program-level approaches to KM and funded coordination projects that include learning and knowledge platforms to facilitate the sharing of knowledge across projects, countries, and agencies. This approach was also seen in other GEF-6 and GEF-7 programs, such as the Global Opportunity for Long-Term Development of the ASGM Sector (GOLD) program and the Coastal Fisheries Initiative (CFI) program. The use of central learning and knowledge platforms is not new to the GEF and did exist beyond programs in certain focal areas and cross-cutting themes, such as international waters (IW:LEARN) and gender (the GEF Gender Partnership).

Despite the progress observed since 2017, challenges and limitations were identified in project-level KM, overall KM strategy, and the role of GEF Agencies and countries.

9.	Capturing data and information from GEF projects and programs. The first recommendation of the 2017 KM evaluation focused on improving capture and availability of project-level documentation, from a KM perspective, and its subsequent use. The move toward a fully online management of the project data and information was a positive step, together with the increased integration of KM within project proposals. However, these steps have not yet resulted in a full optimization of project-level KM.

10.   GEF KM strategy. The second recommendation of the 2017 KM evaluation focused on the development of a work plan on KM and learning and an appropriate resource envelope by the GEF Secretariat and the KM Advisory Group. Since 2017, no work plan or strategy has been developed; rather reference is made to the 2015 KM Approach Paper for guidance. After November 2017, the KM Advisory Group has met only once (in June 2019). Several stakeholders interviewed also noted that the KM Advisory Group was not fully used in guiding KM within the GEF partnership.

11.   The KM role of GEF Agencies was an issue raised in the 2017 KM evaluation, where it was found that many Agencies relied on their own KM systems and could not draw on knowledge from other GEF Agencies. As confirmed by the interviews, since 2017 progress has been made on the Agencies' role in KM role within the partnership, mainly attributing to a greater emphasis on KM in project design and the new programming approaches, including IAPs and Impacts Programs. At the same time, there are a number of areas where improvements are still needed, including: the need to facilitate the integration of lessons from previous into new projects, both within and between GEF Agencies; a stronger peer-to-peer exchange between Agencies (for example, as seen in IAPs); the need for exchange between staff with KM responsibilities, possibly through the KM Advisory Group; further guidance on KM at the project-level for GEF Agencies, including recent examples on how to design a good knowledge management component in GEF projects.

12.   At the country level, knowledge exchange and learning are taking place through participation in "Knowledge days", GEF constituency meetings, other related events, and through the use of GEF KM products. Based on the survey and interview results, the new KM initiatives since 2017 were appreciated at the country level, although not all country-level stakeholders were aware of the available KM services and products. GEF operational and political country focal points and other country-level stakeholders were in agreement that the following areas still needed improvement: (1) support for GEF country focal points to take a more active role in KM, such as providing examples of their potential KM role with GEF Agencies and country partners, ensuring that they have access to information on the GEF portfolio, good practices, and partners; (2) continuing the online dialogue within and between countries, which is even more important because of the COVID-19 situation; (3) increased targeted promotion of existing GEF KM services and products at the country level where they have been shown to be valuable (e.g. GEF E-learning courses, Good Practice Briefs).

Conclusions and recommendations

13.   **Conclusion 1: The GEF partnership continued to make progress in KM during GEF-7.** The 2017 KM evaluation found that substantial progress in KM had been made during GEF-6. This progress has continued in GEF-7 with an increase in knowledge and learning activities including KM in project design and implementation, recently developed KM services and products such as good practice briefs, the use of KM in programs, including in IAPs and Impact Programs, and outreach and training efforts in person and on-line. However, the stakeholder

survey clearly points to gaps that exist in the awareness of the various initiatives launched across the partnership.

14.   **Conclusion 2: The IAPs/IP and new programming approaches have increased the relevance of knowledge and learning activities within the GEF partnership, though limitations exist.** This evaluation confirmed that the focus on KM within the IAPs, the GOLD and CFI programs, along with other initiatives in focal areas and cross-cutting issues, such as IW: Learn and the GEF Gender Partnership, have led to an increase in knowledge and learning activities with opportunities for improved exchange and learning between GEF Agencies, projects, and implementing partners. The creation of thematic platforms in the IAPs fosters cross-agency and cross-country knowledge exchange, but the absence of an overall GEF KM system, such as the proposed GEF Knowledge Exchange Hub, GEF knowledge and learning continue to be dispersed.

15.   **Conclusion 3: The systemic issues raised in 2017 have been partially mitigated but continue to persist.** The 2017 KM evaluation found three longstanding systemic issues that were barriers to progress in KM: (1) the availability of an information management system to capture and provide access to knowledge; (2) KM project-level guidance; and (3) the capacity to connect with GEF Agency systems and platforms. In some respects, these issues have been partially mitigated; the GEF Portal has improved compared to the previous PMIS although it has very limited KM capabilities so far; KM project-level guidance has been increased and is showing early results. The capacity to connect with GEF Agency systems and platforms has not changed since the previous evaluation, although the knowledge components of the IAPs demonstrate, to some extent, how KM can work effectively across and between Agencies and the partnership.

16.   **Recommendation 1: The GEF partnership should develop a clear KM strategy.** Within the planning toward GEF-8, a group dedicated to KM, or the KM Advisory group, should advise the GEF Secretariat on developing a partnership-wide KM strategy with clear priorities and focus. The strategy would need to be supported by the necessary resources and endorsement of the GEF Council. The strategy should set out the KM priorities and define the roles and responsibilities across the GEF partnership including the role of the KM Advisory group. Supported by an action plan, the strategy should set out principles and standards for the KM steps: knowledge capture, development, sharing, dissemination, and application articulated in reinforced project-level guidelines, requirements, and common KM metrics.

17.   **Recommendation 2: The GEF partnership should invest in a technical solution that strengthens the KM system.** At the operational level, a common approach is needed to guide the KM steps supported by a technical solution which can support KM needs: the ability to capture KM data, lessons, and good practices and to present them in a usable and accessible format for both GEF stakeholders and externally. This would require either enhancing the KM capabilities of the new Portal or building a GEF Knowledge Exchange Hub as previously proposed by the GEF Secretariat. Processes need to put into application the principles and standards set out in the strategy for each KM step: capture and storage knowledge in a uniform and accessible form; exchange of knowledge between the GEF Secretariat and agencies;

collation and curation of knowledge in comparable and usable formats to increase accessibility and avoid fragmentation.

I.   INTRODUCTION

1.   This report presents the findings of an evaluation carried out by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) to assess Knowledge Management (KM) in the GEF partnership as an update to the 2017 KM Evaluation[1].

2.   The objectives of this evaluation are (1) to assess the effectiveness of the GEF KM approach in strengthening the use of knowledge across the GEF partnership in relation to GEF's mandate to achieve global environmental benefits, and (2) to identify any systemic issues that should be considered in KM in planning for GEF-8. The evaluation will contribute to the Seventh Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF (OPS7) and identify lessons for the next replenishment phase.

3.   The methodology for the evaluation included the following major components:

(a)   Semi-structured interviews were held with 51 members of the GEF partnership: 11 staff of the GEF Secretariat; 17 staff from 10 GEF Agencies' coordination units; 4 GEF Country Political and/or Operational Focal points, one representative of the GEF Civil Society network; 15 implementing partners of the Sustainable Cities Integrated Approach Pilot (IAP); the project manager of IW:LEARN; one staff member and the Chair of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP).

(b)   An online survey was administered in English to GEF stakeholders (GEF national focal points, country focal points of multilateral environmental conventions, representatives of civil society organizations, project partners and staff, GEF Agencies country and regional staff, GEF Secretariat, and STAP); 658 responses were received.

(c)   A Quality-at-entry (QAE) review of project documentation of 69 projects covering GEF-6 and GEF-7. [2] The QAE was based on seven criteria previously developed by the KM team of GEF Secretariat with two additional criteria added.[3]

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[1] GEF IEO. 2017. The Evaluation of Knowledge Management in the GEF. 2017:
https://www.gefieo.org/evaluations/evaluation-knowledge-management-km-gef-2017
[2] Mainly the CEO endorsement document in addition to available project documentation including Project Proposals and Project Implementation Reports.
[3] The seven criteria used were: 1. An overview of existing lessons and best practice that informs the project concept with proper references and links to relevant documents; 2. Plans to learn from existing relevant projects, programs, initiatives, and evaluations with proper references and links to relevant documents; 3. Proposed processes to capture, assess, and document information, lessons, best practice , and expertise generated during implementation; 4. Proposed tools and methods for knowledge exchange, learning and collaboration (at both program and project levels if a program); 5. Proposed knowledge outputs to be produced and shared with stakeholders (at both program and project levels if a program); 6. A brief discussion on how knowledge and learning will contribute to overall project/program impact and sustainability; 7. Plans for strategic communications; and additional two criteria: 8. Proposed budget for KM activities; and 9. Proposed timeline for KM.

(d)   A case study on the knowledge platform of the Sustainable Cities IAP (Cities-IAP) based on interviews, document reviews, and a QAE analysis of all Cities-IAP projects (14 projects).

(e)   Document and literature review relevant to KM within the GEF partnership, including previous KM studies and reports of the GEF Secretariat, IEO, and STAP; IEO reports; GEF Council documents; and GEF Secretariat guidelines and policies.

4.   The list of the persons interviewed is included in annex A. The responses to the online survey are included in annex B. The sampling and criteria for the quality-at-entry review are discussed in annex C.

II.   BACKGROUND: EVALUATION OF KM IN THE GEF, 2017

5.   The 2017 IEO KM evaluation acknowledged the progress made in KM during GEF-6 based on the GEF 2020 strategy[4] which emphasized "strategically generating knowledge" as a priority for the future of the partnership. A higher priority was given to KM during GEF-6, with the establishment and funding of a dedicated KM work stream within the Secretariat that rolled out a range of KM activities guided by a 2015 KM approach paper[5] and a KM Advisory Group.

6.   The 2017 KM evaluation noted that the GEF partnership fulfilled the role of a knowledge provider within the broader international environmental community but played less of a role as a knowledge broker that would systematically organize and share knowledge produced by different parts of the partnership.

7.   The 2017 evaluation also noted that within the GEF partnership, KM was found to have a particular complementary role, considering that many members of the partnership (notably GEF Agencies) already have KM systems, policies, and approaches in place. Compared to four similar partnerships, the GEF has placed less emphasis on a common approach to managing knowledge across the partnership and leveraging the potential of all members, including Agencies, countries, and civil society.

8.   The 2017 KM evaluation concluded that systemic issues were barriers to knowledge sharing, including the limited availability of an information management system to capture and provide access to project-level documentation; the absence of guidance on KM for GEF-supported projects and programs throughout the project cycle; and the limited capacity within the GEF Secretariat to connect with GEF Agencies' knowledge systems and platforms and to create the enabling environment for partnership-level learning and collaboration across the GEF portfolio.

9.   The 2017 KM evaluation made two recommendations:

(a)   To the GEF Secretariat: to place a higher priority on improving the quality and availability of project-level documentation from a KM perspective, including lessons learned during design and implementation.

(b)   To the GEF Secretariat and KM Advisory Group: to develop a work plan to connect across GEF Agency KM systems, generate knowledge products, and organize learning activities across focal areas, agencies, and cross-cutting themes with a proposed resource envelope and mechanisms to disseminate knowledge.

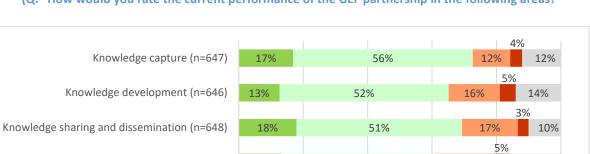## III.   PROGRESS IN KM WITHIN THE GEF PARTNERSHIP SINCE 2017

10.   Since the last IEO evaluation in 2017, the GEF Secretariat has launched several new learning and KM initiatives: the introduction of the GEF Academy that currently includes two e-

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[4] GEF. 2014. GEF2020 – Strategy for the GEF. GEF/A.5/10. May 15, 2014
[5] GEF. 2015. GEF Knowledge Management Approach Paper. GEF/C.48/07/Rev.01. May 11, 2015

courses, the Good Practice Briefs as pilots, the launch of the GEF Portal, the strengthening of KM guidance for project proposals and the project cycle, and the Kaleo "Ask the Expert" tool. Other initiatives continued from the previous replenishment phase, such as greater integration of KM in programmatic approaches, including IAPs, and the "Knowledge Days" during the Expanded Constituency Workshops. These recent initiatives were guided by the 2015 KM approach paper and road map, and not by a KM strategy or plan.

11.   To assess the current pulse of KM performance across the GEF partnership, an online survey asked stakeholders to rate the performance of the GEF partnership on the various steps in the knowledge management process from knowledge capture through to knowledge application, referred to as

   (a)   Knowledge capture: collecting data and information from GEF projects and programs through planning, monitoring, reporting, evaluation, and other processes;

   (b)   Knowledge development: transforming GEF data and information into usable formats that can then be shared;

   (c)   Knowledge sharing and dissemination: activities to communicate knowledge to audiences and making it accessible, through events, publications, and platforms;

   (d)   Knowledge application: the use of available GEF knowledge in current and future GEF and non-GEF projects and programs and policies and elsewhere.

12.   The survey results are presented in figure 1 and show that knowledge capture and dissemination were perceived as strong areas of performance by 70 percent of respondents; about one-quarter of the respondents perceived the application of knowledge from GEF projects as the weakest area.

Figure 1: Perceptions of KM in the GEF Partnership
(Q. "How would you rate the current performance of the GEF partnership in the following areas?"

Area	4-Excellent	3-Good	2-Poor	1-Very poor	Don't know/ No opinion
Knowledge capture (n=647)	17%	56%	12%	4%	12%
Knowledge development (n=646)	13%	52%	16%	5%	14%
Knowledge sharing and dissemination (n=648)	18%	51%	17%	3%	10%
Knowledge application (n=643)	13%	48%	18%	5%	16%

The stakeholders interviewed and surveyed for this evaluation broadly agreed that progress has been made since 2017 in strengthening KM across the partnership with appreciation for the new initiatives and developments. Progress was highlighted at each step of the KM process, but awareness and use of these initiatives was identified as a limitation.

13.   **Knowledge capture: collecting data and information from GEF projects and programs**. The 2017 KM evaluation reported on the limitations in the GEF on capturing data and information from GEF projects and programs as reflected in the first of the above-mentioned recommendation. In mid-2018, the GEF Portal was introduced as a replacement for the existing Project Management System (PMIS). As seen in figure 2, 86 percent of stakeholders surveyed were using the GEF Portal/PMIS with 52 percent rating the portal as "Very useful." Based on interviews and comments in the survey, stakeholders saw the GEF Portal as an improvement over the PMIS, given that it helped to transition the GEF from email-based approval and review system to a system of direct entry by GEF Agencies and technical review of project and program proposals, with the capability to manage documents and data on GEF-supported projects and programs. They noted that the Portal improved data collection and transparency. However, stakeholders were consistent in their view that it was not yet a KM tool, because it did not provide the functionality to aggregate and extract good practices across projects on specific themes, focal areas, or geographic regions that would allow countries and Agencies to learn from each other and scale up good practices. In addition, stakeholders experienced issues with respect to using the Portal such as difficulties in logging in and navigating the portal. The World Bank Group provides the infrastructure for all technology systems at the GEF, and the timing of the development of several features may be beyond the control of the GEF. The GEF IEO evaluation on the Portal will examine these issues further.

14.   **Knowledge development: transforming GEF data and information into usable formats that can be shared.** The GEF Secretariat piloted "Good Practice Briefs" to share good practices from GEF projects and programs in collaboration with GEF Agencies; to date, five briefs have

been produced.[6] As seen in figure 2, 44 percent of stakeholders surveyed found them "Very useful" although 24 percent responded that they were "Not aware/have not used" the briefs. The Kaleo "Ask the Expert" tool was launched in mid-2018 and, to date, has had 310 active users with 2,052 answers provided by the GEF Kaleo knowledge base; 792 new questions were asked and 777 expert answers were provided.[7] As seen in figure 2, although appreciated by stakeholders surveyed who have used it, Kaleo was not known or used by approximately half of the respondents. The 2017 KM Evaluation found that the GEF Partnership was prolific in producing knowledge products, and a concern highlighted by stakeholders both in 2017 and in 2020 was the accessibility and curation of products, whereby they could be easily accessed, searched, highlighted from a platform or a portal that would not necessarily store all this information, but would provide an easy-to-use gateway to the various knowledge products and services available to the GEF Partnership and broader audiences.

15. **Knowledge sharing and dissemination: activities to communicate knowledge.** A new initiative of the GEF Secretariat was the introduction of the GEF Academy that currently includes two e-courses "Introduction to the GEF" and "Gender and Environment" (available in English, French, and Spanish). As seen in figure 2, 38 percent of stakeholders surveyed found the courses "Very useful" although about one-third (34 percent) responded that they were "Not aware/have not used" the courses. According to the GEF Secretariat, as of November 2020, 2,367 participants registered, and 822 completed the "Introduction to the GEF" e-course. Several stakeholders interviewed found the introductory course useful for themselves or colleagues, particularly those new to the partnership, for example, a new implementing project manager or a country focal point. According to the GEF Secretariat, 15,526 participants registered, and 1,324 participants completed the "Gender and Environment" e-course, as of June 2020. Other ongoing KM activities for sharing knowledge included "Knowledge Days" during the Expanded Constituency Workshops, as well as other targeted training workshops, such as GEF introduction seminars. The Communications and Outreach team of the GEF Secretariat also supports knowledge sharing and dissemination through the publication of knowledge products, the GEF website, dissemination during events such as conference of parties' meetings, and stakeholder engagement through a variety of channels including social media. Based on interviews, links between KM and communication within the GEF could be strengthened.

16. **Knowledge application: Using the available knowledge in current and future GEF projects.** The inclusion of a KM section within the project templates existed since GEF-6 but was reinforced in mid-2017 with the specification that KM-related projects and program expenditures were eligible for GEF funding.[8] This was further strengthened in 2020 with guidance on KM activities required at various stages in the GEF project cycle.[9] This has been accompanied by guidance on good practice criteria for the KM section of the documents which have been developed, discussed, and shared with GEF Agencies. Agency staff interviewed were

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[6] Five Good Practice Briefs have been published to date: https://www.thegef.org/topics/knowledge-learning.
[7]7 User statistics provided by the GEF Secretariat.
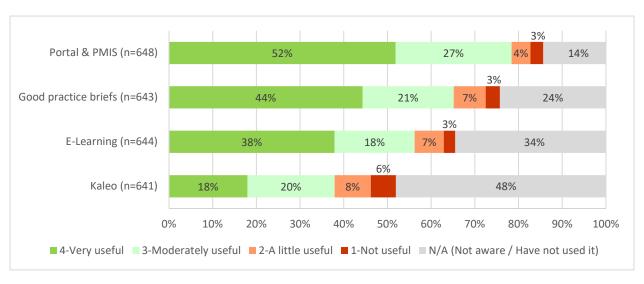[8] Guidelines on the Project and Program Cycle Policy (GEF/C.52/Inf.06/Rev.01, June 9, 2017).
[9] Guidelines on the Project and Program Cycle Policy (2020 Update) (GEF/C.59/Inf.03, July 20, 2020).

positive about this increased guidance on KM at the project-level, although they sought more detailed guidance (see further in paragraphs 22 and 23).

17.   **GEF programmatic approaches incorporate knowledge and learning.** New programmatic approaches have been introduced during GEF-6, such as IAPs during GEF-6 and Impact Programs during GEF-7. IAPs and Impact Programs developed program-level approaches to KM and funded coordination child projects that include learning and knowledge platforms to facilitate the sharing of knowledge across participating projects, countries, cities, and agencies. This approach was not limited to the IAPs and Impact Programs (discussed further in section IV, "KM embedded in GEF Programs"), but was also seen in other programs such as the Global Opportunity for Long-Term Development of the ASGM Sector (GOLD) program (see Box 1) and the Coastal Fisheries Initiative (CFI) program (GEF ID 9060, GEF-6). The use of central learning and knowledge platforms is not new to the GEF and did exist prior to GEF-6 in certain focal areas and cross-cutting themes, such as for International Waters (IW: Learn) and gender (the GEF Gender Partnership). IW:LEARN, the knowledge management initiative of the International Waters focal area, is presented in Box 2.

Figure 2: Usefulness of GEFKM Products and Services
(Q. "How would you rate the usefulness of the following new GEF knowledge products and services")

Box 1: The GOLD program

A good example of project- and program-level knowledge management (KM) is found within the GEF's interventions in the artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) sector with the Global Opportunities for Long-term Development of ASGM Sector (GOLD) program ((GEF ID 9602, GEF-6). GOLD has seven child projects plus a global KM "hub" project, active in eight countries. The GEF Independent Evaluation Office 2020 evaluation of GEF's interventions in ASGM highlighted the following findings on KM:

- GOLD responded to lessons learned from completed GEF projects in the ASGM sector. The global KM hub responded to the lesson from previous interventions which had noted that knowledge and lessons were not shared between ASGM projects within and between countries.
- Common KM activities were seen within each child project and linked to the global KM hub, with appropriate adaptation to contexts.
- The focus on global KM is leading to good collaboration among child projects and to the inclusion of a more diverse group of stakeholders in the gold supply chain than previous initiatives. Child project implementation teams were able to point to specific examples of learning and constructive sharing with their peers.

Areas were identified where more KM collaboration was needed between GOLD and other GEF programs. For example, the World Bank-implemented Africa Environmental Health and Pollution Management Program (EHPMP; GEF ID 9444) had a major ASGM component with also a global KM project with a very similar goal: creating a knowledge platform on ASGM issues. At the same time, according to the GEF Secretariat, the GOLD's global project is actively engaged in the knowledge hub that is being developed by the EHPMP program since EHPMP was CEO endorsed in 2020. The EHPMP is designed for a broader range of artisanal and small-scale mining, beyond gold mining.

18.   Surveyed stakeholders were asked to assess their use and satisfaction with KM within the GEF partnership. By stakeholder group, satisfaction and use were highest with country focal points, implementing partners, GEF Council Members or Alternates (including staff), and International Environment Conventions (Secretariats and others). However, the highest levels of "Not aware/have not used" (excluded from figure 3) were seen with external stakeholders and implementing partners.
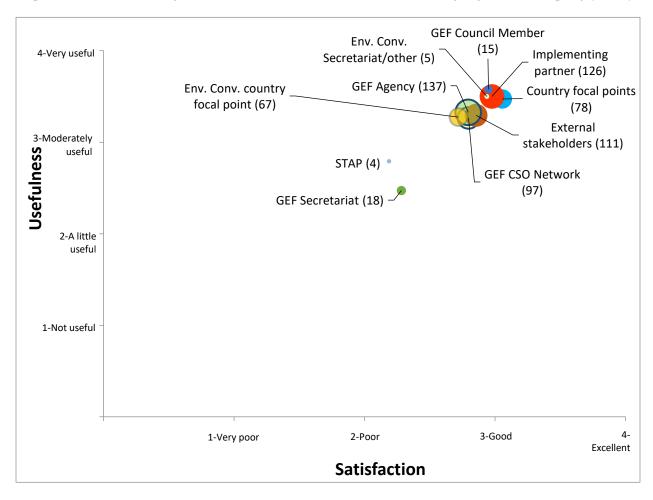
Note: Numbers in parentheses indicate number of responses per group.

Box 2: IW:LEARN

Several GEF IEO evaluations have recognized IW:LEARN, the unique and effective knowledge management initiative in the international waters focal area[10]. IW:LEARN is the International Waters Learning Exchange and Resource Network that has been supported by the GEF through a series of projects since 1999. It was established to help improve transboundary water management across the globe by collecting and sharing good practices, lessons learned, and innovative solutions across the GEF's international waters portfolio.

The IW:LEARN website (https://www.iwlearn.net/) gathers data and deliverables from individual projects, makes available case studies, guidance and tools for better management of transboundary waters. In addition, IW:LEARN hosts the biannual GEF international waters conference to facilitate

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[10] The Second Overall Performance Study of the GEF (OPS2), 2002; the Third Overall Performance Study of the GEF (OPS3), 2005; the Fourth Overall Performance Study of the GEF (OPS4), 2010; the Fifth Overall Performance Study of the GEF (OPS5), 2014; the Sixth Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF (OPS6), 2018.

cross-sectoral and portfolio-wide learning and knowledge sharing. IW:LEARN also supports practitioners through trainings, regional and global dialogues and workshops, project twinning and exchanges.

The latest – fourth - phase of IW:LEARN (GEF ID 5729) was implemented from 2016 to 2020 and was co-executed with a sister project (LME:LEARN, GEF ID 5278) which had a special focus on large marine ecosystems (LME) and their coasts. Together, these two projects aim to promote learning among project managers, country officials, implementing agencies, and other partners in the GEF international waters projects.

During the fourth phase, IW:LEARN has scaled up its partnership by closely collaborating with GEF Agencies and other international organizations as implementing partners. The network expanded its thematic coverage to include cross-cutting themes such as economic valuation of marine and freshwater ecosystems, benefits sharing, transboundary legal and institutional frameworks. It has also sought to strengthen efforts on private sector engagement, for example, by organizing a series of regional dialogues that involved representatives of the business community. IW:LEARN has developed blended learning approaches that combine open online courses (MOOCs) and in-person workshops. According to the IW team, as of November 2020, 8,421 people registered for the large marine ecosystems course, and 110 people registered for the transboundary freshwater security course. Following regional training workshops and two international waters conferences in 2016 and in 2018, 47 projects reported adopting or replicating at least one new approach or concept. As a result of twinning exchanges, 12 GEF international waters projects adopted new management approaches or replicated practices[11].

The terminal evaluation of the two projects (Elliot 2020) and interviews conducted within this current evaluation identified the following lessons:
- Explicit minimum KM requirements and products that each project must produce and share (such as results and experience notes) facilitate portfolio-level knowledge sharing and learning.
- The IW:LEARN website is one of the key services (together with the GEF's international waters conferences, targeted training workshops, twinning exchange, guidance and tools) that has been valued by its stakeholders as reported in several evaluations and surveys.
- Being flexible and demand-driven, involving the IW:LEARN stakeholders (project managers, country officials, implementing agencies and partners) in design, steering committee, and implementation (e.g. as trainers and knowledge providers) of IW:LEARN ensures its responsiveness to stakeholder needs.
- Results frameworks for knowledge events, such as the results framework of the Ninth International Waters Conference, supports transparency and accountability of these events.
- Breaks in continuity between successive phases (there was a gap of nearly 23 months between the third and the fourth phase) can have a negative effect, in particularly on the iwlearn.net website. A permanent solution is needed for hosting and maintaining the website

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[11] Elliot, T. 2020. Terminal Evaluation. International Waters Learning Exchange and Resource Network (IW:LEARN), GEF Project ID 5729; and Strengthening Global Governance of Large Marine Ecosystems and their Coasts through Enhanced Sharing and Application of LME/ICM/MPA Knowledge and Information Tools (LME:LEARN), GEF Project ID 5278. GEF, UNDP, UNEP.

> so that it continues to function and maintain relevance in any period between IW:LEARN phases.
>
> The new phase is currently in the planning stage (IW:LEARN 5, GEF ID 10374) with the objective to facilitate replication of good practices across GEF international waters projects, including projects across all focal areas in Small Island Developing States.

Despite the progress observed since 2017, challenges and limitations were identified in this evaluation in project-level KM, overall KM strategy, and the role of GEF Agencies and countries.

19.   **Capturing data and information from GEF projects and programs and using knowledge in future projects and programs**. The first recommendation of the 2017 KM evaluation focused on improving the capture and availability of project-level documentation, from a KM perspective, and its subsequent use. The MOPAN 2017-2018 assessment of the GEF (MOPAN 2019) also noted:

> "Much of GEF's knowledge is fragmented, difficult to access and underutilized... project knowledge [is] inconsistently integrated in repositories, thereby limiting accessibility..." [12].

The move toward a fully online management of the project data and information was a positive step, together with the increased integration of KM within project proposals. However, these steps have not yet resulted in a full optimization of project-level KM.

20.   A 2018 study by STAP reiterated its recommendations from an earlier 2015 STAP study that KM needs to be embedded more systematically into the project cycle, offering guidance on improving this aspect in the project preparation[13],[14] . The QAE of project documentation found that most projects did explain their KM tools and outputs in their project documentation (table 1); and the STAP 2018 study found that although this information remains superficial, significantly more KM information was available in the project documentation of GEF-6 compared to that in GEF-5. The QAE study of GEF-6 and GEF-7 projects confirmed that information on KM does vary in project documentation, and that stronger KM is seen in projects where the parent project sets out a clear KM strategy and roles for child projects, noted in several programs, for example, the GOLD and CFI programs, in addition to the IAPs (see further section IV, "KM embedded in GEF Programs").

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[12] Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN). 2019. MOPAN 2017–2018 assessments. Global Environment Facility (GEF). Published May 2019.
[13] STAP (2018), Managing knowledge for a sustainable future. (GEF/STAP/C.54/Inf.02, June 8, 2018).
[14] STAP (2015). Knowledge Management in the GEF: STAP Interim Report. (GEF/STAP/C.48/Inf.03/Rev.01, May 22, 2015).

Table 1: Quality at entry study of GEF-6 and GEF-7 project documentation – compliance with nine KM criteria (n=69 projects)

	1. Lessons learnt/good practices integrated	2. Plans to learn from knowledge	3. Processes to capture knowledge	4. Tools/methods for knowledge exchange/learning	5. Knowledge outputs	6. KM contribution to project sustainability	7. Comms. plans	8. KM budget	9. KM timeline
Compliance of all projects	85%	94%	99%	100%	96%	81%	62%	66%	26%

21.   As shown in table 1, the integration of lessons learned and good practices from past projects in project documentation was satisfactory at 85 percent; although the 2019 MOPAN Assessment found "sharing of lessons learned and their incorporation into new intervention designs [occurs] on a more informal basis."

22.   On the issue of further guidance on KM at the project level for GEF Agencies, there was a recognition from GEF Agencies that guidance had gradually improved, notably with the addition of KM guidance to the 2020 Guidelines on the Project and Program Cycle Policy. GEF Agencies commented that they thought the guidance could be more developed and cited the guidance on terminal evaluations and the soft guidelines on climate screening as examples of the level of detail needed. Based on the survey and interviews, the following information would be helpful to further specify in project- and program-level guidance on KM:

(a)   The "what"/focus: Acknowledgement that a project's or program's knowledge management activities need to focus on clear issues (often technical) to help specific target beneficiaries that face a specific challenge;

(b)   The "why"/connection to objectives: Recognition that knowledge management is to contribute to program/project objectives and, in some instances, to broader learning about experimental and innovative approaches. Examples of how projects included knowledge management in their theory of change;

(c)   The "who"/target audiences: Guidance/examples on target audiences, including country or local and global;

(d)   Sustainability: Guidance/examples on how knowledge products and services can be sustained after project/program completion;

(e)   Examples: Recent examples on how to design a good knowledge management component in GEF projects.

23.   Stakeholder comments on the survey further reinforced the need for improving project-level KM as illustrated by the following quotations:

(a)   "With each GEF activity/project we implement we have not had an opportunity to learn of how/which GEF knowledge and lessons have informed project implementation or future project designs. The GEF knowledge/lessons probably stay

at higher project coordination level and do not trickle down to on-the-ground implementers." Implementing partner.

(b) "A lot more could be done to improve the ongoing capture and exchange of good practices and lessons learned along the entire project cycle and not only at the end-of-project evaluation." International Environmental Convention.

(c) "An idea would be to add a question in the PIF form where Agencies are asked if knowledge/ lessons learned from previous projects were used in developing this new project and if so, how, and what knowledge/ lessons." GEF Council Member.

24. Stakeholders interviewed anticipated that the GEF Portal would play a large role in project-level KM; 79 percent of stakeholders surveyed agreed that the Portal did provide them with project knowledge useful for their work; 70 percent agreed that the KM content and systems in the GEF were useful in project design and implementation (figure 4). At the same time, stakeholders also recognized that the GEF Portal was currently not functioning as a KM tool, as described in paragraph 13 ("Knowledge capture: collecting data and information from GEF projects and programs").

25. The GEF Secretariat had previously recognized this limitation in accessing project-level lessons and good practices. In its Status Report on KM to the GEF Council in May 2017, the GEF Secretariat proposed a solution with the development of a GEF Knowledge Exchange Hub "a Collaboration and Learning Platform accessed via the GEF website, linked to PMIS and partner KM platforms, and providing a home for thematic and cross-cutting GEF communities of practice."[15] To date, this proposal has not been implemented. The 2017 KM evaluation also found that four similar public partnership organizations had focused and invested more in their KM technical solutions than the GEF had invested in its KM technical solutions. [16]

26. **GEF KM strategy.** The second recommendation of the 2017 KM evaluation focused on the development of a work plan on KM and learning and an appropriate resource envelope by the GEF Secretariat and the KM Advisory Group. The absence of a work plan or higher-level strategy was noted by the MOPAN 2017-2018 assessment of the GEF (MOPAN 2019) and the 2015 STAP study[17]. Since 2017, no work plan or strategy has been developed; rather, reference is made to the 2015 KM Approach Paper for guidance. Based on the 2015 Approach Paper, an action plan and roadmap were developed which guided the GEF Secretariat in their KM

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[15] GEF (2017), Status Report on KM, 52nd GEF Council Meeting, May 23-25, 2017, Washington D.C. (GEF/C.52/Inf.08, April 25, 2017). Also proposed was a knowledge repository, a document management system and library, and GEF Communities of Practice (p. 13).

[16] The approach to KM of the following four organizations was reviewed in the 2017 KM evaluation: CIF Climate Investment Fund (, Green Climate Fund, Global Partnership for Education, and Global Vaccine Alliance.

[17] STAP (2015). Knowledge Management in the GEF: STAP Interim Report. (GEF/STAP/C.48/Inf.03/Rev.01, May 22, 2015).

activities. However, a KM work plan or strategy has not been discussed in detail by the KM Advisory Group since 2017.[18]
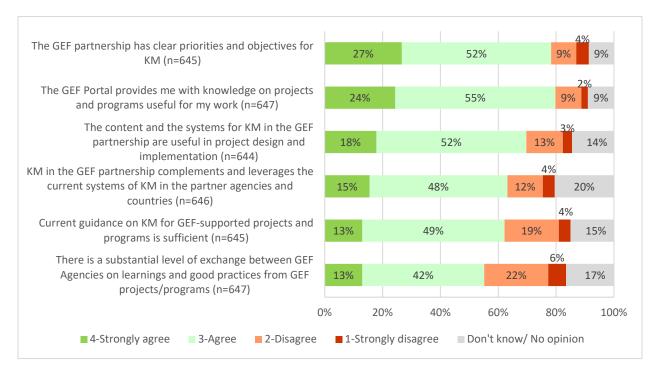
27.   Between October 2015 and November 2017, the KM Advisory Group meeting was usually held following the GEF Council meetings. After November 2017, the KM Advisory Group has met only once (June 2019) and were not held adjacent to four GEF Council meetings (54th, 55th, 57th, 58th Council meetings). This drop-in activity by the KM Advisory Group was commented on by several GEF stakeholders who also noted that the KM Advisory Group was not fully being used in guiding KM within the GEF partnership.

28.   The 2017 KM evaluation found that the GEF Secretariat had fewer staff members dedicated to KM as compared with four similar partnership organizations and the KM budget was lower (in real figures about $2 million annually), but within the range of the other organizations as a percentage of total administrative budget at 9 percent.. In 2020, the KM team consists of one dedicated full time and three part time staff members at the Secretariat. The Secretariat emphasizes leveraging the KM know-how and resources across the GEF partnership to carry out its KM mandate. The budget figures were not made available for this evaluation.

29.   The 2017 KM evaluation found that the current KM approach did not place sufficient focus on ensuring some standardization in creating, storing, categorizing, and organizing the knowledge generated. The increased KM guidance was seen as a positive development in this area but the trend toward distinct knowledge platforms for programs, focal areas, and themes suggests a further fragmentation of storage of knowledge generated by the GEF partnership.

30.   Seventy nine percent of stakeholders agree that the GEF partnership does have clear priorities and objectives for KM as shown in figure 4. Stakeholders interviewed, in general, thought that despite the many recent and ongoing KM initiatives, a common approach to and strategy for KM was lacking, and that at the minimum there was a need to update the 2015 KM Approach Paper. The development and planning for the GEF-8 were cited by several stakeholders as an opportunity to "re-set" the KM approach and strategy of the GEF partnership.

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[18] Based on a review of topics and presentations of the KM Advisory Group since 2017 (three meetings: May 25, 2017; 30 November 2017; and 13 June 2019):
https://www.thegef.org/news/events?f%5B0%5D=field_event_type%3A866.

31.   **GEF Agency role in KM**. As indicated in figure 4, 28 percent of respondents noted that the level of exchange between GEF Agencies on learning and good practices from GEF projects and programs was not substantial. There was a higher level of agreement on the leveraging of the current systems of KM in partner agencies and countries (63 percent).

32.   The KM role of GEF Agencies was an issue raised in the 2017 KM evaluation, where it was found that many agencies relied on their own KM systems and could not draw on knowledge from other GEF Agencies. In 2017, some examples were identified where there was a cross-agency exchange, notably through knowledge/learning platforms (e.g. IW: Learn). Since 2017, additional examples have been seen, notably with the inclusion of stronger KM approaches in several programs (such as GOLD and CFI programs) and the IAPs that facilitated an exchange between agencies.

33.   GEF Agencies' staff interviewed agreed that progress had been made on their KM role within the partnership since 2017, mainly attributing this to a greater emphasis on KM in project design and the new programming approaches, including the IAPs and Impact Programs. Although Agencies differed widely in their own KM capacities, needs, and systems, there was general agreement on the following areas where they thought improvements were still needed in relation to their role as Agencies (verified with the 35 comments from GEF Agency staff surveyed on improvements), including:

(a)   The need to facilitate the integration of lessons learnt and good practices from previous GEF projects into new projects, both within and between GEF Agencies;

(b)   A stronger peer-to-peer/south-to-south exchange between Agencies both at the national and regional levels (as seen in IAPs, see further in section "KM embedded in GEF Programs");

(c)   An enhanced exchange between KM staff with KM responsibilities within GEF Agency teams, possibly through the KM Advisory Group;

(d)   Further guidance on KM at the project level for GEF Agencies. As seen in figure 4, although 62 percent of stakeholders surveyed agreed that current guidance on KM for GEF projects was sufficient, nearly one-quarter disagreed (23 percent).

34.   **KM role at the country-level.** At the country level, knowledge exchange and learning is taking place through participation in "Knowledge days," GEF Constituency Days, other related events, and consulting and using GEF KM products. Based on the survey and interview results, the new KM initiatives since 2017 were appreciated at the country level, although the interviews confirmed that not all country-level stakeholders were aware of the available KM services and products, as seen also in the large percentage of "Not aware /Have not used" (figure 2). At the same time, as seen above, country-level stakeholders, such as GEF country focal points and implementing partners, were some of the highest users of GEF KM products and services.

35.   Country focal points and other country-level stakeholders were in agreement in the following areas where they thought improvements were still needed at the country-level KM (verified with the 30 comments from stakeholders surveyed on country-level KM):

(a)   A more active role and support for GEF country focal points in KM, such as providing examples and good practices of their potential KM role with GEF Agencies and country partners; ensuring that they have access to information and an exchange with country partners;

(b)   More sharing and exchange at the country and local levels, including between projects and agencies;

(c)   Continue with further online dialogue within and between countries (that has been increased because of the COVID-19 situation);

(d)   Increase promotion of existing GEF KM services and products at the country level where they have been shown to be valuable (e.g., GEF E-learning courses, Good Practice Briefs).

IV.   KM EMBEDDED IN GEF PROGRAMS

36.   Three IAPs were introduced in GEF-6, designed to implement integrated programming as a means of achieving systematic change at scale by addressing the major drivers of global environmental degradation in a holistic way. The three IAPs were on sustainable cities, food security in Sub-Saharan Africa, and commodity supply chains.[19] The IAPs were followed by Impact Programs in GEF-7 in the areas of food, land use and restoration, sustainable cities, and sustainable forest management.[20] This evaluation focuses on the IAPs as they were being implemented at the time of the evaluation (April to November 2020) whereas the Impact Programs were in the planning stage.

37.   A major difference between the IAPs and previous GEF programming was the integration of "hub projects" that function as capacity-building, coordination, and knowledge-support platforms or networks toward the child projects. The IEO's Formative Review of the IAPs (2018) reported that many stakeholders interviewed thought that the hub-supported knowledge platforms were the most innovative feature of the IAPs, as they supported learning and exchanges on innovations, ideas and projects [21]. Further, 71 percent of stakeholders surveyed by the formative review indicated that the IAPs had more potential for knowledge exchange between projects compared to past GEF programmatic approaches in which they were involved.

38.   The present evaluation confirmed these previous findings that the inclusion of knowledge platforms within the IAPs did result in greater knowledge and learning activities compared to past GEF programmatic approaches. However, it should be recognized that previous GEF approaches, in certain focal areas and cross-cutting themes where a priority has been placed on KM, such as International Waters and gender, have also resulted in comparable KM activities. Further, several other programs of GEF-6 and GEF-7 were found to have strong and consistent KM integrated across their programs, for example, the GOLD and CFI programs.

39.   Drawing mainly on the in-depth review of the Cities-IAP (see Box 3: The Sustainable Cities Integrated Approach Pilot), the following are the early impressions of the knowledge and learning components of the IAPs compared with previous GEF approaches, based on ongoing activities:

   (a)   A better integration of KM within the overall IAP program-level and child project designs, as seen by referencing in child projects the central knowledge platforms and

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[19] Titles and GEF IDs: Sustainable Cities IAP (GEF ID 9077); Fostering Sustainability and Resilience for Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa—An Integrated Approach (GEF ID 9070); Taking Deforestation out of Commodity Supply Chains (GEF ID 9072).

[20] GEF (2018), GEF-7 Replenishment Programming Directions (GEF/R.7/19, April 2, 2018).

[21] IEO (July 2018), Formative Review of the Integrated Approach Pilot Programs (Evaluation Report No. 126).

activities and making the necessary links between the central platforms and child projects;

(b)   Greater opportunities for exchange and sharing between child projects, GEF Agencies, implementing partners, and country-level stakeholders; for example, as seen in the learning events organized within countries and at the regional and global levels by the "Resource team" of the Cities-IAP;

(c)   Increased capacity in knowledge development through transforming data and information into usable formats for sharing; for example, the creation of central knowledge platforms, such as through the Global Platform for Sustainable Cities (GPSC), the online portal (www.thegpsc.org) that centralized, curated, and disseminated knowledge from the Cities-IAP;

(d)   Greater opportunities for child projects and implementing partners to present and share their project tools and innovations at regional and global levels for potential scaling up and replication, as seen in the annual global meetings of the Cities-IAP, where projects presented their successes, challenges, and innovations;

(e)   Increased ability of the central knowledge platform and resource team to reach child projects and implementing partners with global concepts, tools, and learnings, encouraging potential efficiencies and common approaches; for example, through the Cities-IAP promoting a common Urban Sustainability Framework among cities;

(f)   More outreach to external stakeholders to share knowledge and learnings generated by the IAPs, such as within the Cities-IAP, holding sharing and learning events at the national level with non-participating cities and opening up their national knowledge platforms to non-participating cities.

40.   Recognizing that the IAPs were pilots, a few limitations were also identified within the knowledge and learning approaches of the IAPs, primarily the Cities IAP, which provides useful lessons for future impact programs:

(a)   Variations in KM approaches used in the child projects, pointing to the absence of an overall KM strategy for the IAP pilot;

(b)   The IAPs had positive integration of KM across their projects, but lacked common metrics on knowledge and learning, making it challenging to demonstrate their contribution to overall project objectives;

(c)   The varying start and end times of the parent, child, and stand-alone projects meant that the opportunities for the knowledge and learning could not be fully capitalized upon;

(d)   The online knowledge platforms developed for the IAPs provide a rich collection and collation of knowledge resources in their thematic area, consolidated across projects

and agencies. These include the Global Platform for Sustainable Cities (GPSC) for cities, Resilient Food Systems (RFS) for food security in Africa, and the Good Growth Partnership (GGP) for commodities. However, in the absence of a central GEF Knowledge Exchange Hub or a similar solution that would provide a central getaway and links to various products and services (discussed in paragraph 25), the potential for GEF-wide knowledge sharing and learning is limited.

41. The question of the sustainability of knowledge platforms and communities developed during the IAPs was raised by stakeholders interviewed, who were concerned about their continuation once the IAPs conclude. In the case of the Cities-IAP there was a natural successor with the cities Impact Program, where involved stakeholders confirmed that the IAP platform and community would be integrated within the new Impact Program.

Box 3: The Sustainable Cities Integrated Approach Pilot

The Sustainable Cities Integrated Approach Pilot (Cities-IAP) comprised a parent (GEF ID 9077), 11 child projects at the country level, a child project for the Sustainable Cities Global Platform (GEF ID 9162), and a stand-alone project "resource team," (GEF ID 9666).The Cities-IAP supported 28 cities across 11 countries and reached a broader network of cities and stakeholders globally.

In their design, the projects showed good compliance with the knowledge management (KM) criteria in their project documentation as seen in the table summarizing the study of the 14 projects' quality at entry. The majority make a reference to the central Sustainable Cities platform. The program framework document of the parent project (ID 9077) sets out the role of the Sustainable Cities platform but does not describe in depth an overall KM strategy or approach for the IAP (this was also raised by the GEF's Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel in their review of project documentation).

Table 2: Quality at entry study of Cities-IAP projects—compliance with nine knowledge management criteria (n=14 projects)

	1. Lessons learnt / good practices integrated	2. Plans to learn from knowledge	3. Processes to capture knowledge	4. Tools / methods for knowledge exchange / learning	5. Knowledge outputs	6. KM contribution to project sustainability	7. Comms. plans	8. KM budget	9. KM timeline
Compliance of all projects	86%	100%	100%	100%	100%	92%	43%	86%	43%

The Global Platform for Sustainable Cities (GPSC) with its online portal (www.thegpsc.org) functioned as the central knowledge hub of Cities-IAP. The platform had three main activity areas: providing knowledge and tools to the cities; facilitating training and targeted support to the cities; and connecting cities through networking and events. The Resource Team project comprising the World Resources Institute, Cities Climate Leadership Group (C40), and Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI) supported the Sustainable Cities platform, mainly in the "connecting cities" area. The project

focused on facilitating peer-to-peer exchanges between cities through different formats including workshops, in-person and online events, and training.

Within the 11 countries, knowledge and learning activities were mainly carried out at the city level where the project activities were being implemented. Knowledge and learning activities varied per project and included: training and capacity building for city partners, documenting and sharing of lessons learnt and good practices, development of national online platforms (in China, India, and Brazil), national-level and regional exchanges (e.g. participating cities and non-participating cities) and global-level exchanges. Many projects also produced mapping and diagnostic tools that they shared (or planned to share) with other child projects and wider.

The interaction for knowledge and learning between projects and stakeholders occurred in four main directions:

- *From the central level to the projects and stakeholders ("downwards"):* The platform disseminated and shared centrally produced resources such as the Urban Sustainability Framework, and the Resource Team conducted training and briefings on good practices, guidance, and lessons for topics relevant to sustainable cities with the main audience being project and city partners.
- *From the project to the central level ("upwards"):* Projects and city partners shared their good practices, lessons and tools that were published on GPSC platform and/or presented in Cities-IAP or external events. *From projects to projects ("sideways"):* Exchanges and sharing between projects, for example, for United Nations Industrial Development Organization child projects, city and project officials of Dakar, Senegal had an exchange visit with their counterparts in Malacca, Malaysia.
- *From the Cities-IAP to external audiences ("outwards"):* The GPSC platform resources and some events were open to external audiences; at the country level, learning events were held for non-participating cities and national online platforms extended to include all cities.

The overall feedback from virtually all Cities-IAP stakeholders was that the approach taken did lead to greater knowledge and learning activities compared to other programmatic approaches (the GEF or other organizations), as this city official commented:

> The learning and exchange opportunities of the Cities-IAP were better than any other multilateral project I have been involved in; it had a range of partners, participants and cross-cutting issues that I have not seen elsewhere.

The project and city partners were very positive in the opportunities available "sideways" and "upwards" to participate in the regional and global events. The project stakeholders also saw value in being able to exchange views and present their projects externally; for example, to non-participating cities. This was seen as important for extending the reach and impact of Cities-IAP. The usefulness of the "downward" knowledge and learning depended upon both the topics/subjects and the given stakeholders. For example, an urban planning official would find relevance in most subjects; a specialist in air pollution would have very specific interests.

Cities-IAP stakeholders also identified limitations with the KM approach:

- Priority actions and topics had to be adjusted as the Cities-IAP progressed, in the absence of a planned KM approach. This implied that some of the "downward" events, approaches, and resources were not always what the projects and city partners would have prioritized. For

example, a city official explained that their colleagues would have needed more specific support in applying a given guideline rather than a more generic briefing that was offered. This has been integrated into the Cities Impact Program, where there will be more "applied learning labs" as new actions by the Resource team.

- There were differences in the KM approaches, activities and indicators across child projects as described in the documentation (CEO Endorsement), making it difficult to establish a clear link to the overall Cities IAP objectives, aggregate KM performance, and obtain budgets for joint knowledge and learning activities.
- The IAPs were pilots and offer lessons for the impact programs. One such lesson is on timing. The varying start and end dates of the Cities-IAP projects meant that opportunities were lost for knowledge sharing and learning. For example, when the Resource Team started their learning events in 2018, not all child projects were fully set up; consequently, a key audience was missed.

42.   Based on these findings and those of the 2017 KM evaluation, the following is the IEO assessment of the current state of KM within the GEF partnership, illustrating the progress seen from 2017 on KM steps and key aspects:

Table 3: Assessment of the state of knowledge management within the GEF partnership, 2017–20: Key aspects

Key KM aspect	Status in 2017	Status in 2020	Progress to date	Gaps identified:
Common KM strategy for the partnership	yellow	red	The 2015 KM Approach paper and road map has provided guidance for KM activities.	Comprehensive KM strategy with definition, priorities, roles and responsibilities, action plan.
KM integration within programs	red	yellow	New programming approaches such as the IAPs and select programs have shown increased KM integration.	Systematic KM approaches and consistent set of KM indicators absent in some programs.
knowledge capture: *Capturing of data and information from GEF projects and programs*	red	yellow	The ability to capture basic project data and information has improved with the move towards an online system.	Ability to capture KM data, lessons, good practices, outputs. Common approach to storing knowledge.
Knowledge development: *the transforming of data and information into usable products*	yellow	yellow	The GEF has continued to transform data and information into usable products; new programming approaches such as the IAPs have led to more transformation.	Standard approach and guidance on transforming GEF data and information into usable formats that can be shared.
Knowledge sharing and dissemination: *the communicating of knowledge to audiences*	yellow	green	The KM sharing and dissemination of the GEF Secretariat and new programming approaches has led to increased sharing.	Awareness of KM products/services by key audiences within GEF partnership; implementing partners and country focal points. Increase in collaboration with the communications team in the GEF to enhance outreach.
Knowledge application: *the use of knowledge in current and future GEF and non-GEF programs and projects*	red	yellow	The use of knowledge has improved with KM requirements and project cycle guidance.	Detailed KM guidance and examples of project-level KM
KM technology	red	red	Current technology to support KM is insufficient; GEF Portal has very limited KM features.	Technical solution to support KM needs.

Note*:* Color coding for progress assessment: red = low; yellow = medium; green = high.

VI.　CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

43.　**Conclusion 1: The GEF partnership continued to make progress in KM during GEF-7.**
The 2017 KM evaluation found that substantial progress in KM had been made during GEF-6.
This progress has continued in GEF-7 with an increase in knowledge and learning activities
including KM in project design and implementation, recently developed KM services and
products such as good practice briefs, the use of KM in programs, including in IAPs and Impact
Programs, and outreach and training efforts in person and on-line. However, the stakeholder
survey clearly points to gaps that exist in the awareness of the various initiatives launched
across the partnership.

44.　**Conclusion 2: The IAPs/IP and new programming approaches have increased the
relevance of knowledge and learning activities within the GEF partnership, though limitations
exist.** This evaluation confirmed that the focus on KM within the IAPs, the GOLD and CFI
programs, along with other initiatives such as IW: Learn and the Gender Partnership, have led
to an increase in knowledge and learning activities with opportunities for improved exchange
and learning between GEF Agencies, projects, and implementing partners. The creation of
thematic platforms in the IAPs fosters cross-agency and cross-country knowledge exchange, but
the absence of an overall GEF KM system, such as the proposed GEF Knowledge Exchange Hub,
GEF knowledge and learning continue to be dispersed.

45.　**Conclusion 3: The systemic issues raised in 2017 have been partially mitigated but
continue to persist.** The 2017 KM evaluation found three longstanding systemic issues that
were barriers to progress in KM: (1) the availability of an information management system to
capture and provide access to knowledge; (2) KM project-level guidance; and (3) the capacity to
connect with GEF Agency systems and platforms. In some respects, these issues have been
partially mitigated; the GEF portal has improved compared to the previous PMIS although it has
very limited KM capabilities so far; KM project-level guidance has been increased and is
showing early results. The capacity to connect with GEF Agency systems and platforms has not
changed since the previous evaluation, although the knowledge components of the IAPs
demonstrate, to some extent, how KM can work effectively across and between Agencies and
the partnership.

46.　**Recommendation 1: The GEF partnership should develop a clear KM strategy.** Within
the planning toward GEF-8, a group dedicated to KM, or the KM Advisory group, should advise
the GEF Secretariat on developing a partnership-wide KM strategy with clear priorities and
focus. The strategy would need to be supported by the necessary resources and endorsement
of the GEF Council. The strategy should set out the KM priorities and define the roles and
responsibilities across the GEF partnership including the role of the KM Advisory group.
Supported by an action plan, the strategy should set out principles and standards for the KM
steps: knowledge capture, development, sharing, dissemination, and application articulated in
reinforced project-level guidelines, requirements, and common KM metrics.

47.　**Recommendation 2: The GEF partnership should invest in a technical solution that
strengthens the KM system.**　At the operational level, a common approach is needed to guide

the KM steps supported by a technical solution which can support KM needs: the ability to capture KM data, lessons, and good practices and to present them in a usable and accessible format for both GEF stakeholders and externally. This would require either enhancing the KM capabilities of the new Portal or building a GEF Knowledge Exchange Hub as previously proposed by the GEF Secretariat. Processes need to put into application the principles and standards set out in the strategy for each KM step: capture and storage knowledge in a uniform and accessible form; exchange of knowledge between the GEF Secretariat and agencies; collation and curation of knowledge in comparable and usable formats to increase accessibility and avoid fragmentation.

The interviews were held between July and November 2020. The interviewees are listed alphabetically by stakeholder group.

A.1 GEF Agencies—coordination units

- Alexandra Ortega, IDB-GEF Technical Specialist, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)
- Annette Killmer, Project Team Leader, IDB
- Arunkumar S. Abraham, Senior Environment Specialist, Asian Development Bank (ADB)
- Ayanleh Daher Aden, Senior Environment and Climate Finance Officer–AfDB-GEF Coordinator, African Development Bank (AfDB)
- Cecilia Guerra, Senior Executive, Sustainability and Climate Change, Development Bank of Latin America (CAF)
- Guirane Ndiyare, Economist, AfDB
- Herve Lefeuvre, Senior Director, GEF Relations and GEF Coordinator, World Wildlife Fund (WWF-US)
- Jonky Tenou, Task Manager, Food Security IAP,   International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
- Julia Guarino, Coordinator, GEF Project Agency, Conservation International
- Lucy Martins, Communications Consultant, IFAD
- Nancy Bennet, Results Management and Evaluation Advisor, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- Nina Zetsche, Industrial Development Officer, Partnerships Coordination Division, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)
- Orissa Samaroo, Senior Director, GEF Policy and Project Management, GEF Project Agency, Conservation International
- Pradeep Kurukulasuriya, Executive Director and Coordinator, Global Environmental Finance, UNDP
- Rosario Catalina Narciso, ADB and GEF Portfolio Management Officer, ADB
- Shaanti Kapila, Senior Operations Officer, the World Bank Group
- Vannia Rodríguez Chávez, Executive, Directorate of Development Cooperation Funds, CAF

A.2 GEF Civil Society Organizations Network

- Sano Akhteruzzaman, Chair

A.3 GEF Country Operational/Political Focal Points (and members of their staff)

- Enzo Ronald Aliaga Rossel, Alternate Operational Focal Pont, Ministry of Environment and Water, Bolivia
- Graciela Soledad Miret Martinez, Operational Focal Point, Director of Strategic Planning, Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, Paraguay

- Jakhongir Talipov, Operational Focal Point, Chief Specialist, International Cooperation and Projects Department, State Committee for Ecology and Environment Protection, Republic of Uzbekistan
- Tran Hong Ha, Political Focal Point, Minister, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Viet Nam

A.4 GEF Secretariat

- Aloke Barnwal, Senior Climate Change Specialist; Sustainable Cities; Programs Unit
- Alua Kennedy, Communications Officer, Front Office
- Christian Severin, Senior Environmental Specialist; International Waters Coordinator, Programs Unit
- Gustavo Fonseca, Director of Programs, Programs Unit
- Ikuko Matsumoto, Knowledge and Policy Officer, Policy, Partnerships, and Operations Unit
- Jean-Marc Sinnassamy, Senior Environmental Specialist; Food Security IAP, Programs Unit
- Mohamed Imam Bakarr, Lead Environmental Specialist; Strategic Programming Initiatives (IAPs and Major Programs), Programs Unit
- Paul Hartman, Senior Environmental Specialist; Commodities IAP, Programs Unit
- Robert Bisset, Head of Communications, Front Office
- Sonja Teelucksingh, Senior Environmental Specialist, Policy, Partnerships, and Operations Unit
- Yasemin Biro, Knowledge Management Coordinator, Policy, Partnerships, and Operations Unit

A.5 Implementing partners – International Waters

- Mish Hamid, Project Manager, IW:LEARN

A.6 Implementing partners – Sustainable Cities IAP

- Alejandra Kemper, Project Manager, UNDP (Paraguay Cities Project, GEF ID 9127)
- Alessandra Péres, Deputy Secretary (former), Brasilia Federal District, Brazil (Brazil Cities project, GEF ID 9142)
- Alexia Cujus, UNIDO (Senegal Cities project, GEF ID 9123)
- Beth Olberding, Research Analyst, WRI Ross Center for Sustainable Cities, World Resources Institute (WRI) (Resource Team project (C40, ICLEI and WRI), GEF ID 9666)
- Clara Fernandez, Project Manager, UNIDO, (Côte d'Ivoire Cities project, GEF ID 9130)
- Fatin Ali Mohamed, Industrial Development Officer, UNIDO, (Côte d'Ivoire Cities project, GEF ID 9130)
- Katarina Barunica, Project Manager, UNIDO (Malaysia and India Cities projects, GEF IDs 9147 and 9323)
- Liana Strydom, Assistant-Director: Development Planning and Facilitation, City of Johannesburg Municipality, South Africa (South Africa Cities project, GEF ID 9145)

- Lincoln Landon Lewis, Urban Development Analyst, the World Bank Group (GPSC project, GEF ID 9162)
- Mariana Orloff, Senior Manager, Global Platform for Sustainable Cities - Urban Development, WRI Ross Center for Sustainable Cities, WRI (Resource Team project (C40, ICLEI and WRI), GEF ID 9666)
- Marie Houffouet, Project Coordinator, UNIDO (Côte d'Ivoire Cities project, GEF ID 9130)
- Mark Draeck, Industrial Development Officer, Department of Energy, UNIDO (Senegal Cities project, GEF ID 9123)
- Nicholas Dehod, Project Associate, UNIDO (Senegal Cities project, GEF ID 9123)
- Tomasz Pawalec, Consultant, UNIDO (Malaysia and India cities projects, GEF IDs 9147 and 9323)
- Xueman Wang, Senior Urban Specialist, the World Bank Group (GPSC project, GEF ID 9162 and China Cities project, GEF ID 9223)

A.7 Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel

- Guadalupe Duron, Program Officer
- Rosina Bierbaum, Chair

The survey was open between September 9 and 27, 2020 and was sent to 4,312 respondents: GEF partnership members, including GEF Agencies, GEF Council and Alternates, GEF country operational and political focal points, GEF Civil Society Organization Network, GEF Secretariat, GEF Trustee, implementing partners and projects, International Environmental Conventions (secretariats and national focal points), Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (Panel and Secretariat). In addition, the survey was sent to 9,030 external stakeholders not directly involved in GEF programming and operations, including national and local government officials, civil society organizations, private sector, and media organizations, whose contacts were obtained from the GEF Secretariat.

Q 1. What best describes the type of organization where you work? (If several categories apply, choose the main one)

	Number of Responses	%
Governmental organization	228	35%
Non-governmental organization/civil society organization / community-based organization	213	32%
Multilateral / bilateral organization (UN, etc.)	165	25%
Education/academia institution	24	4%
Other	11	2%
Private for profit	11	2%
Media	6	1%
Total	658	100%

Q2. What best describes part of the GEF Partnership where you work / are a member? (If several categories apply, choose the main one)

	Number	%
GEF Agency	137	21%
Implementing partner for GEF project/program	126	19%
External Stakeholder	111	17%
GEF CSO Network	97	15%
GEF Country Operational/Political Focal Point (including members of their staff)	78	12%
International Environmental Convention - country focal point (including members of their staff)	67	10%
GEF Secretariat	18	3%
GEF Council Member or Alternate (including members of their staff)	15	2%
International Environmental Convention - other (including Convention Secretariat)	5	1%
Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP)	4	1%
Total	658	100%

Q3. Please indicate the region where you currently live:

	Number	%
Sub-Saharan Africa	175	27%
Latin America and the Caribbean Region	132	20%
East Asia and the Pacific	88	13%
North America	69	10%
South Asia	60	9%
East Europe and Central Asia	49	7%
Western Europe	48	7%
Middle East and North Africa	37	6%
Total	658	100%

Q4. How would you rate the usefulness of the following new GEF knowledge products and services?

	Not useful	A little useful	Moderately useful	Very useful	Not aware/ Have not used it	Total
GEF project-level information as found in the GEF Portal and previously in the Project Management Information System (PMIS)	3%	4%	27%	52%	14%	648
E-learning courses of the GEF Academy (Introduction to the GEF; Gender and the Environment)	3%	7%	18%	38%	34%	644
Kaleo "Ask the expert" tool on the GEF website	6%	8%	20%	18%	48%	641
GEF Good practice briefs (for example, Green Infrastructure for a Climate Resilient Society in Vietnam; Integrated Coastal Watershed Conservation in Mexico)	3%	7%	21%	44%	24%	643

Q5. Please indicate to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know/ No opinion	Total
"The GEF partnership has clear priorities and objectives for knowledge management"	4%	9%	52%	27%	9%	645

	Very poor	Poor	Good	Excellent	Don't know/ No opinion	Total
"The GEF Portal provides me with knowledge on projects and programs useful for my work"	2%	9%	55%	24%	9%	647
"Current guidance on knowledge management for GEF-supported projects and programs is sufficient"	4%	19%	49%	13%	15%	645
"There is a substantial level of exchange between GEF Agencies on learnings and good practices from GEF projects and programs"	6%	22%	42%	13%	17%	647
"The content and the systems for knowledge management in the GEF partnership are useful in project design and implementation"	3%	13%	52%	18%	14%	644
"Knowledge management in the GEF partnership complements and leverages the current systems of knowledge management in the partner agencies and countries"	4%	12%	48%	15%	20%	646

Q. 6. Since 2017, have you seen any improvements in how the GEF partnership meets the knowledge needs of the following stakeholders?

	None at all	A little	Some	A lot	Don't know/ No opinion	Total
Civil society partners	6%	14%	34%	24%	22%	618
Environmental stakeholders in general	4%	15%	38%	28%	16%	625
GEF Agency staff	4%	11%	25%	21%	38%	626
GEF Council members and alternates and their staff	4%	11%	22%	18%	45%	627
GEF Country focal points and staff	5%	10%	28%	26%	32%	638
GEF Project staff	5%	11%	29%	20%	35%	621
GEF Secretariat staff	4%	9%	21%	19%	47%	619
International environmental conventions – country focal points and staff	5%	12%	28%	21%	34%	634
International environmental conventions - Secretariats	4%	9%	28%	20%	39%	629
Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) - Panel and Secretariat	6%	9%	25%	14%	47%	628

Q7. How would you rate the current performance of the GEF partnership in the following areas?

	Very poor	Poor	Good	Excellent	Don't know/	Total

					No opinion	
Knowledge capture: collecting data and information from GEF projects and programs through planning, monitoring, reporting, evaluation and other processes	4%	12%	56%	17%	12%	647
Knowledge development: transforming GEF data and information into usable formats that can then be shared	5%	16%	52%	13%	14%	646
Knowledge sharing and dissemination: activities to communication knowledge to audiences and making it accessible, including events, publications and platforms	3%	17%	51%	18%	10%	648
Knowledge application: the use of available GEF knowledge in current and future GEF and non-GEF projects and programs, policies and elsewhere	5%	18%	48%	13%	16%	643

Q8. This survey has been on how knowledge and lessons - related to GEF projects and programs - are shared and used by environmental actors in countries and regions. Please add here any comments or suggestions for strengthening knowledge management in the GEF partnership: (Open-ended).

1. Sampling

Sampling of GEF-6 and GEF-7 **programs** was treated separately as only GEF-6 programs had child projects that had been CEO approved/endorsed at the time of analysis (April 2020).

The criteria for selection of programs (including program framework documents (PFDs) and corresponding child projects) aimed to secure a representative sample of their diversity. The criteria used were as follows:

- Focal area
- Regional mix
- Agency mix

GEF-7: 4 out of 11 programs were selected based on the following distribution:

GEF-7 programs		
Focal area	**Regional mix**	**Agency mix**
1. Multi focal area	1. Global & 4 regions	1. 8 agencies
		2. 4 agencies
2. Multi focal area	2. Global & 3 regions	3. 4 agencies
	3. Global & 3 regions	
3. Climate change	4. 2 regions	4. 2 agencies
4. Chemical and waste		

GEF-6: 5 out of 15 programs were selected based on the following distribution:

GEF-6 programs					
Focal area	**#**	**Regional mix**	**#**	**Agency mix**	**#**
Multi focal area	2	1. Global & 4 regions	1	7/8 agencies	1
	1			3/4 agencies	
Biodiversity	1	2. Global & 3 regions	1		1
	1	3. Global & 2 regions		6 agencies	
Climate change		4. 2 regions	1	3 agencies	1
Chemical and waste					
		5. 1 region	1	2 agencies	1
			1		1

In summary, the following programs were analyzed:

	GEF-7	GEF-6	Totals
PFDs	4	5	9
Child projects	0	32	32
Totals	4	37	**41**

As for stand-alone projects, there were 14 GEF-7 and 365 GEF-6 projects that reached CEO approval/endorsement as of April 2020. The criteria for selection of stand-alone projects were the same as for the selection of programs to secure a representative sample of focal areas, regional mix, and agency mix. Twenty-eight projects were selected based on the following distribution:

GEF-6&7 stand-alone projects					
Focal area	*#*	*Regional mix*	*#*	*Agency mix*	*#*
Climate Change	10	1 region	20	Single agency	26
Multi Focal Area	8	2 regions	4	Multiple agencies	2
Biodiversity	4	3 regions	2		
Chemicals and Waste	2	4 regions	2		
International Waters	2				
Land Degradation	2				

In total, 41 PFD & child projects and 28 stand-alone projects were analyzed: **69 grand total**.

2. Criteria

The following documents were analyzed as part of the quality-at-entry review of each sampled project: requests for CEO endorsement / approval, and available project documentation, including project proposals (agency project documents) and project implementation reports. In requests for CEO endorsement /approval the main data was drawn from the KM section; at the same time other sections were also reviewed for any relevant information (as pointed out in the 2017 STAP review[22], information on KM is spread throughout the document). Available additional documentation, such as project proposals, were also reviewed. Based on the GEF Secretariat's

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[22] STAP (5 February 2017), Draft report "*Systematic analysis of how Agencies have responded to the new KM requirements in the PIF template*".

good practice criteria for projects, the following criteria were used (with the addition of two extra criteria on budget and timeline):

Criteria	Y/N
1. An overview of existing lessons and best practice that inform the project concept with proper references/links to relevant documents	
2. Plans to learn from existing relevant projects, programs, initiatives & evaluations with proper references/links to relevant documents	
3. Proposed processes to capture, assess, and document information, lessons, best practice & expertise generated during implementation	
4. Proposed tools and methods for knowledge exchange, learning & collaboration (at both program and project levels if a program)	
5. Proposed knowledge outputs to be produced and shared with stakeholders (at both program and project levels if a program)	
6. A brief discussion on how knowledge and learning will contribute to overall project/program impact and sustainability	
7. Plans for strategic communications	
8. Proposed budget for KM activities	
9. Proposed timeline for KM activities	

On this basis, an overall score (out of 9) was given to each project reviewed with a cumulative score made for each of the nine criteria.