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Agenda Item 07

LDCF/SCCF ANNUAL EVALUATION REPORT 2025

(Prepared by the Independent Evaluation Office of the GEF)

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ABBREVIATIONS

AER	Annual Evaluation Report
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AfDB	African Development Bank
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
GEF	Global Environment Facility
LDCF	Least Developed Countries Fund
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MTR	Midterm review
PIR	Project implementation report
SCCF	Special Climate Change Fund
SME	Small or medium-sized enterprise
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. **The LDCF/SCCF Annual Evaluation Report 2025 presents a comprehensive assessment of 33 completed climate change adaptation projects, revealing strong performance alongside structural challenges.** This assessment, prepared by the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), draws on terminal evaluations submitted between September 2022 and December 2024, covering projects implemented from May 2011 to March 2024 across GEF-4 to GEF-7 replenishment periods. The portfolio includes 20 projects funded by the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF), 8 projects funded by the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF), and 5 multitrust fund projects, providing $200.9 million in GEF financing and $1.6 billion in cofinancing. Projects were primarily implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP; 9 projects), the World Bank (8), and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and the African Development Bank (AfDB; 4 each), with geographic concentration in Africa (18 projects) and Asia (7). Agriculture and sustainable livelihoods were the most frequently targeted themes, reflecting the Funds' continued focus on resilience building in climate-vulnerable sectors.

2. **Project outcomes show promising results, but sustainability remains a concern across the portfolio**. A substantial 88 percent of projects achieved outcome ratings within the satisfactory range (moderately satisfactory, satisfactory and highly satisfactory). Notably, no projects received unsatisfactory ratings. However, none achieved the highest sustainability ratings (highly likely or likely), with 57 percent rated as only moderately likely to be sustainable. The 2025 cohort demonstrated a 9-percentage-point improvement in sustainability prospects compared to the Annual Evaluation Report (AER) 2023. Financial sustainability emerged as the most significant risk to the continuation of project outcomes, affecting 67 percent of completed projects. This underscores the foundational importance of robust financial mechanisms in sustaining long-term impact. Institutional risks accounted for 18 percent, followed by environmental (9 percent), social (3 percent), and other risks (3 percent). Projects that successfully embedded activities within national systems, engaged private sector partners, and secured broad stakeholder support were notably more likely to attract follow-up funding and sustain outcomes. Projects aligned with national and regional policies showed nearly twice the rate of follow-up funding compared to standalone initiatives, creating natural pathways for continuation beyond project completion.

3. **A persistent implementation gap exists between monitoring and evaluation (M&E) design and execution.** While 83 percent of projects received satisfactory ratings for M&E design, only 50 percent achieved satisfactory ratings for M&E implementation—a substantial 16-percentage-point decline from the AER 2023. This pattern of stronger design than implementation appears consistently across previous AERs, indicating a systemic challenge, characterized by difficulties in translating well-designed M&E plans into effective, on-the-ground execution. Contributing factors

include limited institutional capacity, insufficient resource allocation, and weak mechanisms for operationalizing M&E frameworks. The assessment found that projects with robust M&E systems demonstrated superior adaptive management capabilities and stronger outcome performance. Comprehensive monitoring frameworks directly contributed to implementation effectiveness and long-term sustainability, enabling evidence-based adjustments throughout project lifecycles.

4. **Gender integration demonstrates a strong correlation with project success, with a clear relationship between gender-responsive approaches and superior outcomes.** Since the GEF Council's approval of the GEF Policy on Gender Equality in 2017 (GEF 2017), all approved LDCF and SCCF projects have included gender analysis and a specific gender action plan in their design, marking a significant policy shift toward institutionalizing gender considerations. The AER 2025 shows positive progress in gender mainstreaming, with 76 percent of projects including gender analysis in their design, though only 39 percent implemented a specific gender action plan. Projects that systematically embedded gender considerations in their frameworks, utilizing gender-disaggregated data and gender-specific indicators, consistently outperformed others. Innovative approaches such as gender-inclusive sanitation facilities, women-led cooperatives, and prioritization of women's leadership in decision making correlated with stronger project outcomes. This pattern was particularly pronounced in sustainable livelihood and agricultural initiatives, where women's participation proved instrumental in driving adoption of climate-resilient practices. Notably, the three projects with the lowest gender ratings also performed poorly in overall outcomes, suggesting that gender integration is not merely a compliance requirement but a fundamental effectiveness factor.

5. **Scaling up climate adaptation initiatives remains challenging, with projects facing multiple barriers to broader adoption.** The review found that 67 percent of assessed projects included scaling mechanisms in their initial design, with 60 percent of these demonstrating some success in implementation. Partnership engagement proved crucial, with national government agencies (89 percent) and local communities (64 percent) being the most commonly involved stakeholders. However, four categories of barriers consistently impeded scaling efforts: administrative challenges (39 percent), funding sustainability gaps (30 percent), external disruptions like political instability (21 percent), and market-related barriers (10 percent). Distinct regional patterns in scaling challenges emerged: Eastern Europe and Central Asia face predominantly administrative hurdles (60 percent), Asia struggles primarily with external disruptions (63 percent), Africa shows a more balanced distribution of challenges, and global projects contend mainly with external disruptions (67 percent). Despite demonstrated potential in select initiatives, systemic challenges persist in attributing LDCF/SCCF contributions to catalyzing private climate finance, limiting knowledge transfer and replication of successful models.

6. **Adaptive management proved essential for navigating implementation challenges, though many projects struggled to maintain projected performance through completion.** Of the 31 projects with available documentation, 55 percent received lower final ratings at completion compared to midterm reviews, while only 16 percent improved their ratings. This pattern suggests that midterm reviews tended to be overly optimistic, with projections not materializing in final outcomes since target achievement is often backloaded in the final implementation phase. The Africa region showed a lower application of adaptive management, accounting for 70 percent of projects with declining performance while making up 55 percent of the overall portfolio. Projects with built-in flexibility mechanisms, such as contingency planning, adjustable implementation schedules, and mechanisms for reallocating resources or redesigning components in response to new risks, demonstrated greater resilience against contextual shifts, from political transitions to extreme weather events.

7. **The assessment identifies five interconnected drivers of climate adaptation success that provide a blueprint for future interventions.** First, projects with deep community involvement fostered greater ownership and resilience, with local stakeholders continuing adaptation practices beyond the project lifecycle. Second, flexible implementation frameworks, such as those allowing for activity reprioritization, adaptive budget reallocation, revision of outputs based on real-time feedback, conflict sensitivity tools and decision-making authority at local levels, enabled projects to navigate unforeseen challenges more effectively than rigid approaches, particularly in climate-vulnerable environments. Third, alignment with national and regional policies created institutional pathways for continuation, with policy-aligned projects securing follow-up funding at nearly twice the rate of standalone initiatives. Fourth, gender-responsive approaches consistently correlated with superior project outcomes, particularly in sustainable livelihood and agricultural initiatives. Finally, comprehensive monitoring frameworks directly contributed to implementation effectiveness and long-term sustainability, enabling evidence-based adjustments throughout project implementation. These interconnected drivers suggest that successful climate adaptation requires integrated approaches that combine local ownership, strategic flexibility, institutional integration, social inclusion, and robust learning mechanisms.

8. **Scaling up and sustainability are deeply intertwined with how well implementation is carried out.** Projects demonstrating strong implementation performance consistently achieved higher sustainability ratings and greater scaling impact. The assessment found that embedding projects within government systems, fostering diverse stakeholder partnerships, and establishing local revenue mechanisms significantly enhanced institutional capacity and financial sustainability. Similarly, projects that aligned with national and regional policies created natural pathways for continuation, securing follow-up funding at nearly twice the rate of standalone initiatives.

9. Based on the findings and conclusions, the AER 2025 makes one recommendation:

To achieve sustained and transformative impact from climate change adaptation interventions, the GEF Partnership—including the Secretariat, Agencies, and participating countries—must place greater emphasis on identifying and addressing implementation-related barriers to scaling up adaptation efforts under the LDCF and SCCF through coordinated action. While strong project design is critical, scaling and sustainability ultimately depend on effective implementation and execution. This requires strengthening implementation support systems, such as technical backstopping and access to knowledge resources; tailoring strategies to regional contexts; and streamlining procedures to minimize delays. By working collaboratively within their respective roles, the Secretariat, Agencies, and countries can significantly improve delivery and maximize adaptation outcomes.

1 BACKGROUND

1. **The LDCF/SCCF AER 2025, prepared by the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), presents an assessment of project outcomes and their sustainability, and quality of project monitoring and evaluation (M&E).** This assessment reviews ratings and information from 33 terminal evaluations submitted since the Annual Evaluation Report (AER) 2023, covering projects with terminal evaluations from September 2022 to December 2024,[1] aligning with the shift to biennial reporting for the Annual Performance Report (APR) and the GEF Management Action Record (MAR). The MAR tracks progress in implementing management action plans endorsed by the LDCF/SCCF Council. The evaluations were reviewed by the GEF IEO, evaluation offices of GEF Agencies, or both, with detailed review guidelines available in Annex A.

2. **The AER 2025 evaluates three strategic dimensions across the portfolio: gender considerations, scaling up, and adaptive management.** In assessing gender, the evaluation reviews the integration of gender analysis, the implementation of gender action plans, the quality of gender-related reporting, and the tangible results achieved through these efforts. For scaling up, the analysis examines plans and opportunities for expansion while identifying four key barriers: administrative challenges, sustainability gaps, external disruptions, and market-related obstacles. Finally, the review of adaptive management focuses on how projects have adjusted their strategies and implementation in response to changing conditions, ensuring continued relevance and effectiveness.

2 PROJECTS IN THE 2025 AER COHORT

3. **The AER 2025 cohort comprises 33 projects, including 20 funded exclusively by the LDCF, 8 by the SCCF, and 5 multitrust fund projects (table 2.1).** Collectively, these projects represent a total investment of $200.9 million, complemented by $1.6 billion in cofinancing.[2] In terms of approval replenishment periods, 26 projects were approved during GEF-5, 5 during GEF-6, 1 under GEF-4, and 1 under GEF-7. A complete list of projects with their ratings is available in Annex B.

[1] Since the AER 2025 cohort includes a diverse range of projects spanning GEF-5 to GEF-7, the analysis examines an implementation period from May 2011, when the first project in the cohort disbursed funds, to March 2024, when the most recently completed project concluded.

[2] Throughout the report, grant funding includes LDCF/SCCF/GEF amounts approved at CEO endorsement, plus project preparation grants. Agency fees are excluded.

Table 2-1:Funding by source of the AER 2025 cohort

Fund source	Number of projects	Funding (million $)	Cofinancing (million $)
LDCF	20	110.2	665.3
SCCF	8	37.8	260.7
MTF[a]	5	52.9	681.9
TOTAL		**200.9**	**1,607.9**

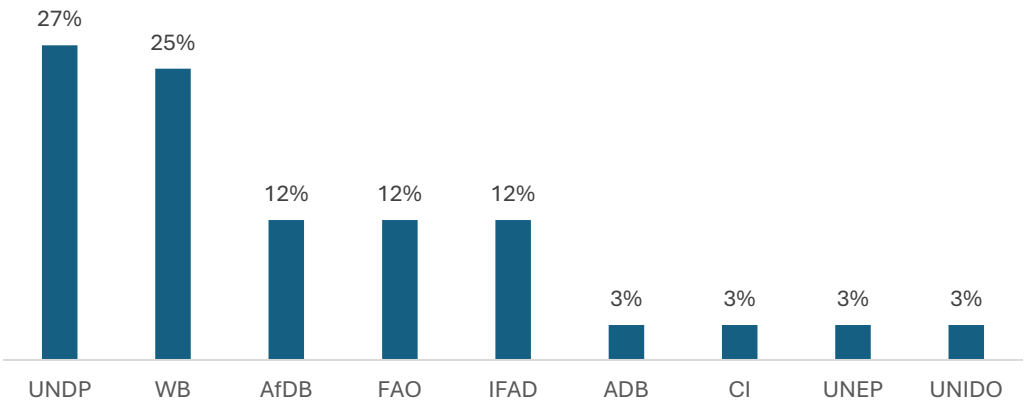
Source: GEF IEO terminal evaluation review data set.

Notes: MTF = multitrust fund.

[a] Of the five MTF projects, three were developed with support from the LDCF and the GEF Trust Fund, one received support from the SCCF and the GEF Trust Fund, and one was funded by both the LDCF and SCCF.

4. **Of the 33 projects, 9 were implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and 8 by the World Bank.** The African Development Bank (AfDB), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) each implemented four projects. Meanwhile, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Conservation International, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) implemented one project each (figure 2.1).

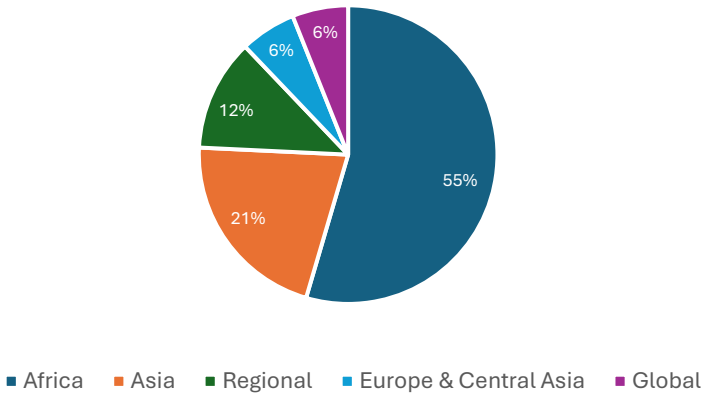
Figure 2-1: Distribution by lead Agency for projects in the AER 2025 cohort



Source: GEF IEO terminal evaluation review data set.

5. **Of the 33 projects, 27 were implemented at the national level, with 18 in the African region, 7 in Asia, and 2 in Europe and Central Asia.** Among the remaining six, two were global, while four were regional—two in Europe and Central Asia and two in Africa (figure 2.2).

Figure 2-2: Geographical distribution in the AER 2025 cohort (n = 33)



Source: GEF IEO terminal evaluation review data set.

6. The projects addressed climate change adaptation and resilience through a variety of interventions and in multiple sectors (figure 2.3).

(a) The most represented theme in the AER 2025 cohort is **agriculture**, with eight projects. All of them were implemented nationally. Of these, five were implemented in Africa, two in Europe and Central Asia, and one in Asia.

(b) Seven projects focused on **sustainable livelihoods**, and of these, four were implemented at the national level in Africa, and two in Asia. One project was implemented globally.

(c) Four projects focused their interventions on **coastal zone management**; three of them were regionally implemented (two in Africa and one in Europe and Central Asia) and one at the national level in Vanuatu.

(d) Three projects focused on **disaster risk management**: one project in Niger, one in Afghanistan, and one regional in Asia.

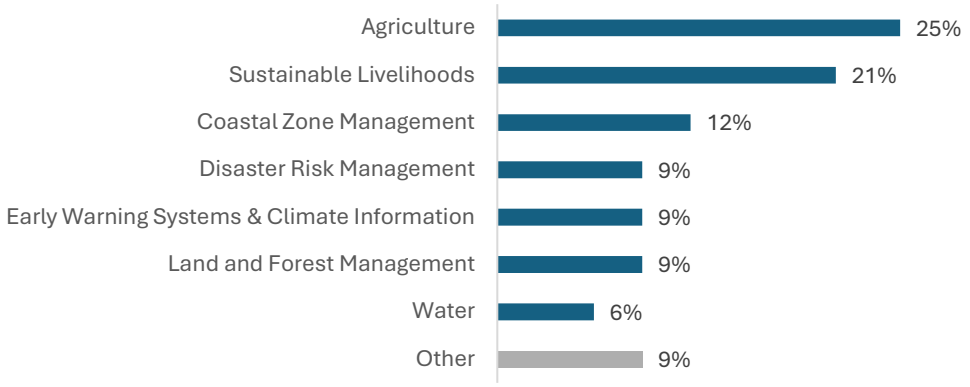
(e) Three projects addressed **early warning systems and climate information** at country level: one in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, one in Lao People's Democratic Republic, and one in Guinea.

(f) Three projects focused on **land and forest management** at country level: one in Nigeria, one in Rwanda, and one in Sudan.

(g) Two projects addressed **water** issues: one in Uganda and one in Sierra Leone.

7. Lastly, the AER 2025 cohort includes three projects focused on other themes: a project in Kiribati on **food security**, a project in Senegal focused on addressing capacity gaps for adjusting the **National Adaptation Plan**, and one implemented globally focused on the **incubation and acceleration of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)**. Compared to the AER 2023, agriculture remains the most represented theme (GEF IEO 2024). Sustainable livelihoods projects have increased, especially in Africa, highlighting a strengthened focus on community resilience. These shifts suggest a growing emphasis on integrated resilience-building efforts rather than sector-specific interventions.

Figure 2-3: Distribution by main intervention theme of the AER 2025 cohort



Source: GEF IEO terminal evaluation review data set.

3 FINDINGS

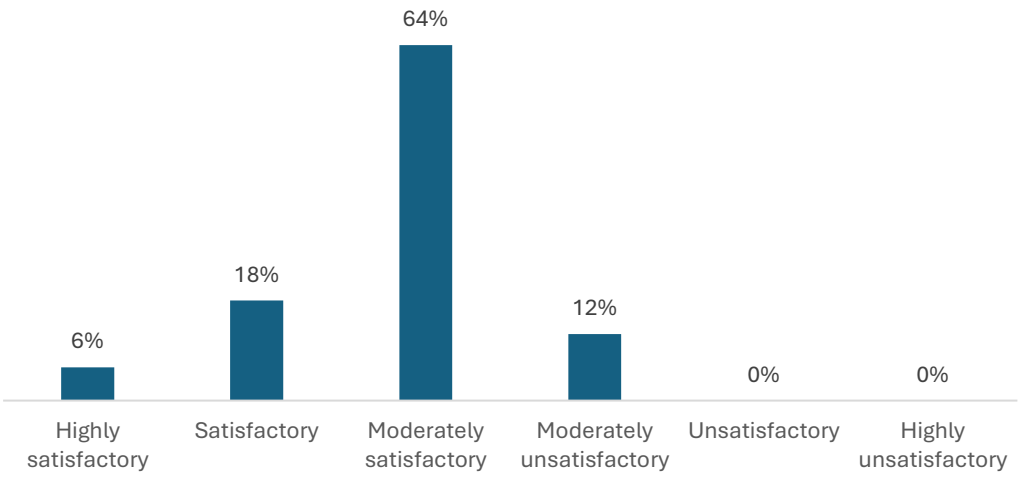
3.1 OUTCOMES AND SUSTAINABILITY

Distribution of outcome and sustainability ratings

8. Project performance analysis reveals that 88 percent (29 of 33) of projects were rated in the satisfactory range[3]. Using the six-point evaluation scale (highly satisfactory to highly unsatisfactory), the distribution was: 2 projects (6 percent) rated highly satisfactory, 6 projects (18 percent) satisfactory, 21 projects (64 percent) moderately satisfactory, and 4 projects (12 percent) moderately unsatisfactory (figure 3.1). Significantly, no projects received unsatisfactory or highly unsatisfactory ratings. While AER 2025 demonstrates robust overall performance with 88 percent of projects in the satisfactory range, the concentration in the "moderately satisfactory" category (64 percent) indicates potential areas for enhancement.

[3] The satisfactory range includes moderately satisfactory, satisfactory and highly satisfactory.

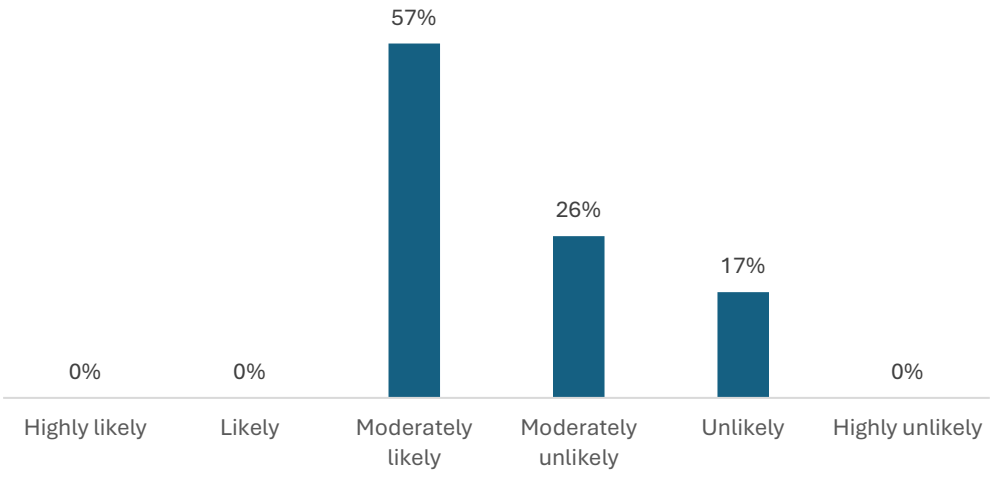
Figure 3-1: Distribution of outcome ratings in the AER 2025 cohort (n = 33)



Source: GEF IEO terminal evaluation review data set.

9. **Of the 23 projects evaluated with sustainability ratings available, 57 percent were rated moderately likely to be sustainable.** No projects achieved the highest ratings of highly likely or likely. The remaining projects were distributed toward the lower end of the sustainability spectrum, with 26 percent (6 projects) rated as moderately unlikely and 17 percent (4 projects) rated as unlikely (figure 3.2). None received the lowest rating of highly unlikely. This distribution suggests that while most rated projects show moderate potential for sustainability, there remains substantial room for improvement, as no projects achieved the top two sustainability tiers.

Figure 3-2: Distribution of sustainability ratings in the AER 2025 cohort (n = 23)

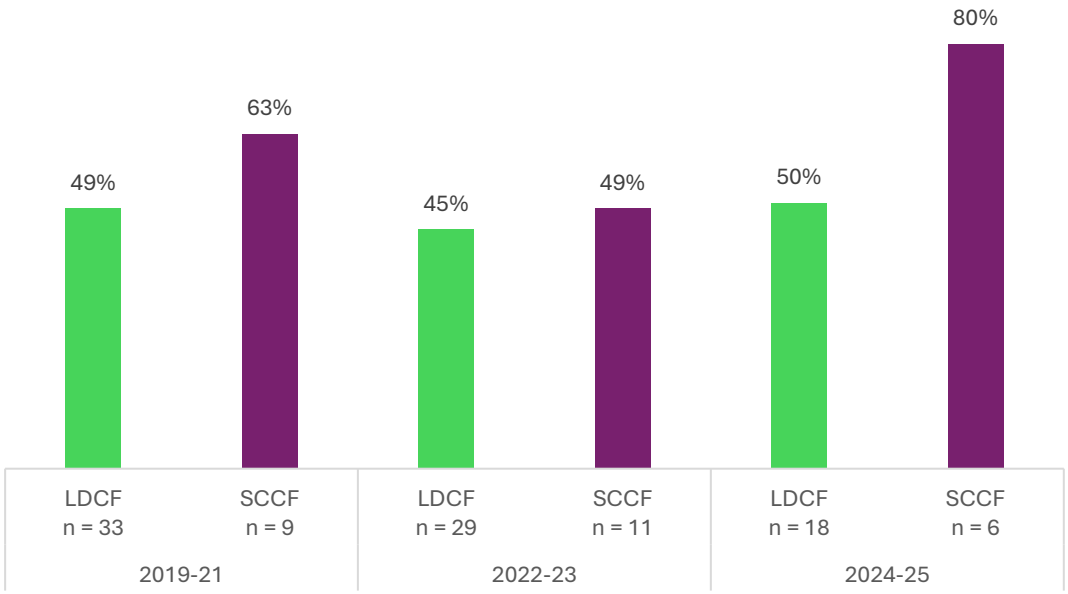


Source: GEF IEO terminal evaluation review data set.

Trends in sustainability ratings

10. **Analyzing trends in outcome sustainability for the 23 LDCF and SCCF projects for which sustainability ratings were available (figure 3.3), the AER 2025 cohort of LDCF projects showed a 5-percentage-point increase in likely sustainable ratings compared to the 2022–2023 average.** The higher sustainability ratings for the SCCF projects in the AER 2025 resulted from their emphasis on local ownership, institutional collaboration, and context-specific solutions, although the ratings were available for only six SCCF projects, making the sample size notably small. By partnering closely with national governments and embedding climate resilience into national policies, projects like Climate Resilience Through Conservation Agriculture (GEF ID 4366, IFAD) and Increasing Productivity and Adaptive Capacity in Mountain Areas of Morocco (GEF ID 5685, IFAD) ensured alignment with long-term development priorities. Community empowerment through targeted training and participatory approaches enabled farmers and local stakeholders to adopt and sustain climate-smart practices, while substantial cofinancing (e.g., $28 million in Morocco) reduced dependency on external funding. Additionally, projects like the Adaptation SME Accelerator Project (GEF 10296, Conservation International) effectively leveraged private-sector innovation and scalable business models, blending public and private resources to drive market-based solutions. Factors such as strong governance, financial resilience, adaptive local engagement, and scalable innovation were identified in these projects that collectively fostered environments where climate resilience could thrive beyond project timelines. Historically, SCCF projects have tended to achieve higher sustainability ratings than LDCF projects, largely due to the greater risks and constraints associated with LDCF interventions.

Figure 3-3: Evolution of sustainability ratings of LDCF/SCCF projects, 2019-21 through 2024-25 (percentage of projects rated in the "likely" range)



Source: GEF IEO terminal evaluation review data set.

Notes: One project (GEF ID 5113) received funding from both the LDCF and the SCCF and is therefore represented in both fund categories in this graph.

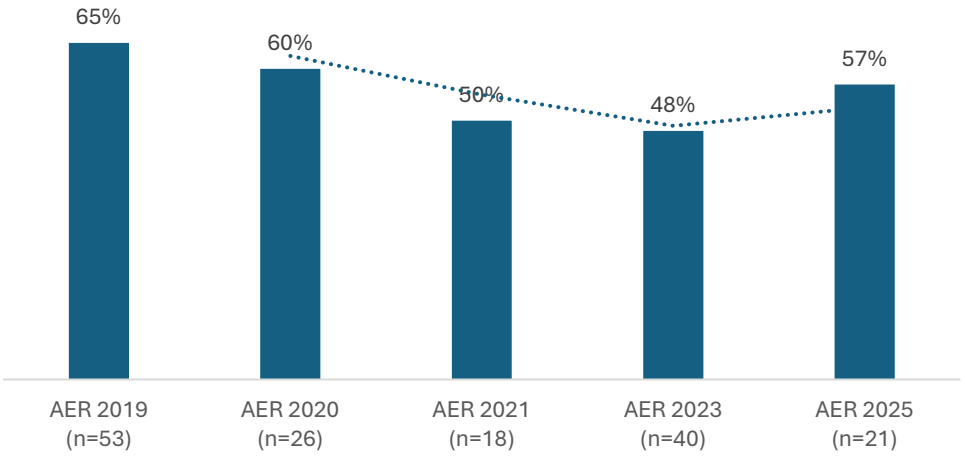
11. **Sustainability ratings declined from the AER 2019 through the AER 2023, but this trend reversed in the AER 2025.** Figure 3.4 highlights this shift, showing a 9-percentage-point increase in projects rated within the likely range between AER 2023 and AER 2025. To explore potential drivers of this improvement, the GEF IEO analyzed the regional distribution of LDCF/SCCF interventions across previous AER cohorts, but the examination found no statistically significant patterns. The predominant thematic focus areas in AER 2025—agriculture, sustainable livelihoods, and coastal zone management—remain consistent with those of previous AERs. However, their implementation has evolved, with a growing emphasis on integrated resilience-building efforts rather than isolated sector-specific interventions.

12. **It is important to note that projects within the AER 2025 cohort closely align with those of the AER 2023 cohort, reflecting similar implementation contexts, funding cycles, and design frameworks.**[4] The primary distinction between the two cohorts lies in the timing of terminal

[4] The AER 2025 and AER 2023 cohorts are comparable across several key attributes. Both cohorts primarily consist of projects approved from GEF-5 to early GEF-7 cycles, reflecting similar programming priorities and operational guidance. The distribution of GEF Agencies is also consistent. In terms of funding, the average LDCF/SCCF grant amount per project remains within a comparable range and both cohorts feature similar thematic concentrations.

evaluation validations, with the 2025 cohort undergoing validation later than the 2023 cohort. This temporal discrepancy introduces uncertainty in interpreting sustainability trends, as observed differences in outcomes may reflect procedural variations in evaluation scheduling rather than substantive shifts in project performance. For instance, shorter post-implementation observation periods for the 2025 cohort could limit the visibility of long-term impacts, while delayed terminal evaluation validations might artificially affect results. To mitigate this ambiguity, sustained monitoring across subsequent AER cycles is critical. Over time, longitudinal data will help disentangle genuine improvements in sustainability from administrative aspects, ensuring trends are grounded in sustainable outcomes rather than temporal procedural factors.

Figure 3-4: Evolution of sustainability ratings in the likely range for LDCF/SCCF projects



Source: GEF IEO terminal evaluation review data set.

13. **Further examination of projects rated in the likely range for sustainability reveals a strong correlation between sustainability ratings and overall project performance.** All projects assessed as likely sustainable at closure also achieved overall outcome ratings in the satisfactory range. By contrast, among projects with outcomes rated in the unsatisfactory range, only 30 percent demonstrated similar sustainability potential. This pattern highlights the interconnected nature of project execution quality and long-term sustainability, reinforcing the evident principle that without delivering strong immediate outcomes, there is little to sustain.

Factors influencing project sustainability

14. **Multiple critical factors influence the sustainability of project outcomes after completion, as consistently demonstrated through multiple GEF IEO evaluation findings.** These determinants include the quality of project preparation, country-specific contextual factors, strength of government support, standards of implementation and execution, and successful mobilization of cofinancing. Examining outcome sustainability specifically in the 2025 cohort illustrates a disparity

commonly observed in LDCs (GEF IEO 2022a), while 62 percent of projects achieved sustainability ratings in the likely range, the overall GEF portfolio demonstrated substantially stronger performance with 75 percent achieving such ratings.

15. **Financial sustainability is the predominant risk factor in the 2025 AER cohort of terminal evaluations, affecting 67 percent of completed projects.** This is followed by institutional risks (18 percent), environmental risks (9 percent), and social risks (3 percent). The COVID-19 pandemic was identified as a relevant long-term sustainability risk in only one project.

16. **Financial mechanisms serve as fundamental pillars for ensuring sustained project outcomes.** This importance is exemplified by the project Strengthening Hydro-Meteorological and Climate Services (GEF ID 5451, World Bank), which highlights the development of a business plan aimed at improving revenue generation and the establishment of collaborative frameworks through memorandums of understanding (MoUs) and the National Framework for Climate Services. These mechanisms ensure coordination among stakeholders and secure government budgetary commitments, directly aligning with the 2025 cohort's findings on the need for localized revenue systems and institutional collaboration for long-term sustainability. Additionally, community ownership models with contributory mechanisms are illustrated by the project Building Resilience to Climate Change in the Water and Sanitation Sector (GEF ID 5204, AfDB), which emphasizes community engagement through water user committees (WUCs). The project established capital contributions from communities, such as financial or labor inputs for infrastructure construction, and trained local artisans in operations and maintenance. These mechanisms empower communities to directly finance and manage infrastructure, such as multipurpose valley tanks. The implementation of water user fees and community-led maintenance plans under WUCs has sustained the functionality of irrigation systems and climate-resilient infrastructure well beyond project completion.

17. **Furthermore, strategic approaches that embed projects within existing government systems and foster private-sector partnerships significantly enhance institutional capacity and resource continuity, addressing two primary dimensions of sustainability risk simultaneously.** For instance, the project Rural Development Program for Mountain Zones in Morocco (GEF ID 5685, IFAD) exemplifies how multiple critical factors can align to enhance outcome sustainability. As documented in the terminal evaluation, the project demonstrated remarkable resilience despite initial implementation delays and external challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic. Key sustainability determinants included strong government ownership, effective mobilization of cofinancing from multiple sources, and high-quality implementation that achieved 101 percent of targets with 96 percent financial execution. The project's attention to building capacity of producer organizations and local institutions was particularly noteworthy, with 13,542 beneficiaries receiving training in sustainable agricultural practices and resource management. These factors contributed to tangible

impacts, including an 18 percent reduction in poverty and 24 percent increase in beneficiary household incomes—with innovations like safflower cultivation being scaled up by regional authorities—illustrating how proper implementation can establish the foundation for sustainable outcomes beyond project completion.

18. **Additionally, projects that aligned climate adaptation efforts with national and regional policies had a higher likelihood of achieving long-term impact and institutionalization.** The evidence across the AER 2025 cohort demonstrates that interventions designed in harmony with existing policy frameworks achieved more substantial outcomes and better sustainability ratings. This integration created natural pathways for continuation after project completion, as activities were absorbed into ongoing government programs and budgetary processes. These findings emerged consistently across diverse geographical and political contexts. The Senegal River Basin Climate Change Resilience Development Project (GEF ID 5133, World Bank) effectively coordinated transboundary water resource management among multiple countries. The West Balkans Drina River Basin Management Project (GEF ID 5723, World Bank) strategically elevated climate adaptation considerations into a comprehensive transboundary Strategic Action Plan (SAP), establishing an innovative governance framework that systematically integrated flood and drought mitigation measures across multiple jurisdictions, and creating an institutional architecture that continues to drive coordinated climate action well beyond the project's formal conclusion.

19. **A consistent lesson across multiple projects is that deep community engagement enhances long-term sustainability.** Projects that actively involved local communities in both planning and implementation fostered greater ownership and resilience. The analysis of completed projects reveals that community-driven approaches resulted in more sustainable outcomes, with local stakeholders continuing adaptation practices beyond the project lifecycle. This pattern emerged consistently across geographical regions and intervention types, suggesting that meaningful participation serves as a fundamental sustainability driver rather than merely a procedural requirement. The Climate Change Adaptation Project, Phase I (GEF ID 3243, World Bank) in the Philippines demonstrated how participatory climate adaptation efforts increased local commitment and knowledge retention. The project Strengthening Agro-climatic Monitoring and Information Systems in Lao PDR (GEF ID 5462, FAO) strategically deployed community radio broadcasts as a high-impact communication channel, dramatically expanding access to critical agro-climatic information across remote regions while systematically overcoming digital divides that had previously isolated vulnerable farming communities from essential early warning systems and agricultural advisories.

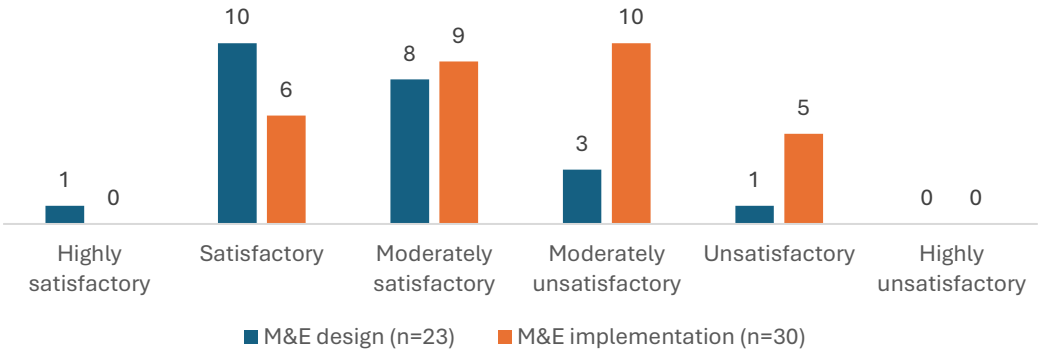
3.2 MONITORING AND EVALUATION DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

20. **Figure 3.5 illustrates the distribution of ratings for M&E design and implementation in the AER 2025 cohort.** Among the 23 projects with available M&E design ratings at terminal evaluation,

19 projects (83 percent) received ratings in the satisfactory range, representing a 5-percentage-point decrease from the AER 2023. For M&E implementation, of the 30 projects with available ratings, 15 projects (50 percent) were rated in the satisfactory range, marking a substantial decline of 16-percentage points compared to the AER 2023.

21. **A persistent pattern emerges where M&E implementation ratings consistently fall below M&E design ratings, suggesting a systemic gap between design ambitions and implementation realities.** This pattern is also observed in previous AERs. The project Southeast Europe Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (GEF ID 4515, World Bank), which aimed to increase access to catastrophe insurance in eastern Europe, exemplifies this pattern. While the project's design included appropriate elements for establishing a regional reinsurance facility, the M&E framework suffered from a fundamental misalignment: measuring insurance penetration rates rather than access to insurance products. This misalignment created unrealistic expectations since the project lacked authority to mandate the government actions necessary to drive insurance adoption. This case illustrates how even technically sound projects can face implementation challenges when M&E frameworks fail to align with the project's actual objectives and capabilities. Similarly, the project Enhancing Resilience of the Agricultural Sector in Georgia (ERASIG; GEF ID 5147, IFAD) highlighted the importance of clearly distinguishing specific indicators from baseline project indicators when LDCF/SCCF funding is integrated into existing programs. While blending with existing programs can improve efficiency and financial sustainability, the lack of differentiated M&E frameworks makes it difficult to assess the specific contributions of the GEF family of funds' funding.

Figure 3-5: Distribution of M&E design and implementation ratings in the AER 2025 cohort



Source: GEF IEO terminal evaluation review data set.

22. **Projects with robust M&E systems demonstrated superior adaptive management capabilities and stronger outcome performance.** The examination of completed projects in the AER 2025 cohort reveals that comprehensive M&E frameworks directly contributed to implementation effectiveness and long-term sustainability. The data show a substantial performance gap, with

projects implementing strong M&E practices scoring higher on sustainability ratings compared to those with inadequate monitoring mechanisms. This pattern was consistent across regions and intervention types, indicating that systematic data collection and analysis serves as a foundational element for successful climate adaptation interventions. The correlation between M&E quality and project outcomes underscores that measurement systems function not merely as reporting tools but as essential management instruments that enable evidence-based adjustments and strategic refinements throughout implementation. The Strengthening Agro-climatic Monitoring and Information Systems in Lao PDR (GEF ID 5462, FAO) project illustrates how initial M&E challenges—particularly delayed baseline data collection—can compromise timely adaptation. After midterm adjustments to its monitoring approach, the project successfully implemented a farmer-feedback mechanism that significantly improved local ownership of climate information services. The project CCA Growth: Implementing Climate Resilient and Green Economy Plans in Highland Areas in Ethiopia (GEF ID 6967, UNDP) exemplifies excellence in M&E implementation. The project established a multitiered monitoring system that combined quantitative metrics with qualitative assessments from community stakeholders. This approach enabled systematic documentation of climate adaptation practices and created feedback loops between implementation and planning. By integrating community-level monitoring with district and national reporting systems, the project facilitated vertical knowledge exchange and built local capacity for climate data collection. The comprehensive M&E framework not only tracked immediate outputs but assessed longer-term adaptation outcomes, creating an evidence base that directly informed the scaling of successful interventions across eight additional districts beyond the initial target.

3.3 GENDER CONSIDERATIONS

23. **All 33 projects of the AER 2025 cohort were reviewed to identify the inclusion and quality of gender components at design and during implementation.** Gender analyses[5] in projects continue to provide valuable information on gender differences in needs, roles, responsibilities, and opportunities for equal participation and leadership of women and men.

Inclusion of gender components at project design and implementation

24. **All terminal evaluations included some discussion of gender outcomes or inclusion, though contributions to gender equity during implementation were often not fully captured in project design documents.** The assessment found that 76 percent of projects incorporated a gender analysis in their design, with 39 percent also featuring a specific gender action plan. However, 24 percent of projects did not include a gender analysis (table 3.1). One successful example is the project

[5] A gender analysis is a critical examination of how differences in gender norms, roles, power structures, activities, needs, opportunities, and rights affect men, women, girls, and boys in a certain situation or context. It includes collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data and gender information to understand gender differences and gaps, determine gender-differentiated impacts and risks, identify measures to avoid adverse gender impacts, and uncover and act on opportunities to address gender gaps and inequalities relevant to the activity (GEF Policy on Gender Equality; GEF 2017).

Strengthening the Resilience of Rural Livelihoods and Sub-national Government Systems to Climate Risks and Variability in Benin (GEF ID 5904, UNDP), where a participatory gender action plan gave rise to women-led income-generating activities. This initiative significantly increased women's incomes by 30 percent and enhanced their inclusion in management and leadership roles within the community. Conversely, missed opportunities were identified. For example, the ERASIG project lacked a gender analysis, resulting in limited benefits for women, particularly in climate adaptation efforts. The absence of gender considerations in agricultural activities reinforced existing inequities rather than addressing them.

Table 3-1:Gender analysis in projects' design in the AER 2025 cohort

Gender analysis	# and % of projects
A gender analysis was conducted and is shared in the available documents.	12 (36%)
Documents indicate that a gender analysis was conducted, but results are not shared.	13 (39%)
No gender analysis is mentioned in the available documents.	8 (24%)

Source: GEF IEO terminal evaluation review data set.

Gender-related actions

25. **The assessment of terminal evaluations reveals that 39 percent of projects (13 projects) implemented a gender action plan, while 91 percent (30 projects) included at least gender-disaggregated indicators.** Although a high percentage of projects incorporated gender analysis, public documentation of gender action plans was available for only 24 percent of projects, highlighting opportunities to enhance documentation practices in future project cycles (table 3.2). A positive example is the project Enhancing the Adaptation Capacities and Resilience to Climate Change in Rural Communities (GEF ID 5632, UNDP), which established women's multifunctional centers featuring solar-powered mills and literacy programs. These centers addressed both climate resilience and gender-specific barriers to education and income generation. Additional interventions included multifunctional platforms with solar fields benefiting women's groups, market gardening perimeters with solar pumps for women's groups, rice cultivation activities around micro-dams involving women, and small livestock activities targeting female beneficiaries. These represent innovative, climate-resilient income-generating activities specifically designed to empower women. However, some interventions fell short of their intended outcomes. For instance, in the project Protecting Urban Areas Against the Impacts of Climate Change in Vanuatu (GEF ID 9197, ADB), the implementation of gender-responsive infrastructure—such as footpaths and improved washing areas—was undermined by low female participation (27 percent). While the project incorporated universal access features and gender equality awareness training for workers

and communities, participation constraints, including the absence of female facilitators, limited its overall impact and responsiveness in the benefited areas.

Table 3-2: Gender action plan in projects' design in the AER 2025 cohort

Gender action plan	# and % of projects
A gender action plan was conducted and is shared in the available documents.	8 (24%)
The documents indicate that a gender action plan was conducted, but the results are not shared.	5 (15%)
No gender action plan is mentioned in the available documents.	20 (61%)

Source: GEF IEO terminal evaluation review data set.

26. **When examining gender components across different GEF replenishment periods, clear progress emerges.** All GEF-6 and GEF-7 projects incorporated gender-specific indicators beyond basic disaggregation, while only 50 percent of GEF-5 projects did the same. Implementation of gender action plans also shows improvement, with 38 percent of GEF-5 projects conducting such plans, compared to 40 percent of GEF-6 and 100 percent of GEF-7 projects (table 3.3). This upward trend aligns with the GEF Council's 2017 approval of the GEF Policy on Gender Equality (GEF 2017), after which all approved LDCF and SCCF projects included gender analysis and a specific gender action plan at design.

27. **However, these findings should be interpreted cautiously due to small sample sizes in later replenishment periods—only five projects from GEF-6 and one from GEF-7 were analyzed.** This limited representation prevents drawing definitive conclusions about broader trends. Despite apparent progress in newer projects, the need to deepen gender perspectives throughout GEF project design and implementation remains essential.

Table 3-3: Gender indicators in projects' design in the AER 2025 cohort

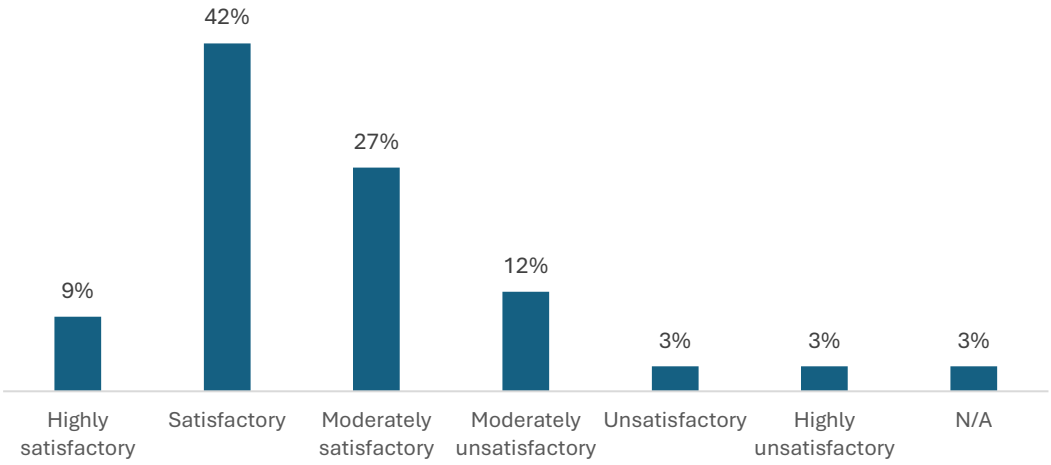
Indicators	# and % of projects
Both gender-disaggregated and gender-specific indicators are included.	18 (55%)
Gender-disaggregated indicators are included.	12 (36%)
Neither gender-disaggregated nor gender-specific indicators are included.	3 (9%)

Source: GEF IEO terminal evaluation review data set.

Gender components ratings and outcomes

28. **Among the AER 2025 cohort, 78 percent of the projects were in the satisfactory range for their gender components or activities.** There were only three projects (9 percent) rated as highly satisfactory for their gender results (figure 3.6).

Figure 3-6: Distribution of gender components results in the AER 2025 cohort (n = 33)



Source: GEF IEO terminal evaluation review data set.

29. **Gender integration drives superior project performance and measurably amplifies impact across interventions.** A detailed examination suggests that gender-responsive projects systematically embedded gender considerations into their frameworks, utilizing gender-disaggregated data and gender-specific indicators to monitor women's participation and benefits. Exemplary projects such as Enhancing Sustainability and Climate Resilience of Forest and Agricultural Landscape and Community Livelihoods (GEF ID 9199, UNDP) in Bhutan and the global Adaptation SME Accelerator Project (GEF ID 10296, Conservation International) conducted gender analyses and developed gender action plans, providing structured approaches to addressing gender disparities. The SME Accelerator Project surpassed its target for women-led SMEs, ensuring women occupied leadership roles in economic innovation, while the Sustainability and Climate Resilience

project in Bhutan leveraged gender analysis to design targeted women's interventions. Despite lacking a formal gender action plan, the Adapting Afghan Communities to Climate-Induced Disaster Risks project (GEF ID 6914, UNDP) demonstrated the efficacy of gender-disaggregated data by achieving over 70 percent female participation in a complex context. In contrast, three projects with the lowest gender ratings were also rated unsatisfactory for outcomes. None had an available gender analysis or gender action plan, all corresponding to the GEF-5 replenishment period.[6]

30. **Projects with gender-responsive approaches consistently achieve higher outcome ratings and broader societal benefits.** Analysis of the AER 2025 cohort reveals a clear correlation between gender integration and superior project outcomes. Projects incorporating comprehensive gender analyses and action plans consistently outperformed those lacking these elements, with gender-integrated projects demonstrating higher outcome ratings than gender-blind interventions. This performance differential was particularly pronounced in sustainable livelihood and agricultural initiatives, where women's participation drove adoption of climate-resilient practices. The Livestock and Rangeland Resilience Program (GEF ID 5651, IFAD) in Sudan successfully combined gender empowerment with climate adaptation, increasing women's leadership in climate-smart agriculture. This inclusive structure created culturally appropriate pathways for women's engagement in decision making regarding climate adaptation and extended to governance structures, systematically integrating women into community disaster-management committees and providing them meaningful roles in resilience planning.

Good practices and innovation in gender interventions

31. **The assessment of gender components in projects included an analysis of good practices and innovative approaches, highlighting how gender-responsive interventions enhance project effectiveness and promote inclusive development.** Findings indicate that integrating gender perspectives through targeted strategies—such as gender-inclusive sanitation facilities, women-led cooperatives, and livelihood programs—significantly strengthens project outcomes. Prioritizing women’s leadership and decision-making roles, including representation in committees and the promotion of women-led SMEs, further amplifies these benefits. Conversely, the absence of a gender strategy or failure to address structural barriers can undermine the project’s impact and hinder achievement of its objectives.

32. **Innovative gender-inclusive approaches have been successfully implemented across various projects, leading to notable achievements in female participation.** For instance, the project Building Resilience to Climate Change in the Water and Sanitation Sector (GEF ID 5204, AfDB) in

[6] The Southeastern Europe and Caucasus Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (GEF ID 4515, World Bank) in the Europe and Central Asia region focused on disaster risk management; the Strengthening Hydro-Meteorological and Climate Services project (GEF ID 5451, World Bank) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo focused on early warning systems and climate information; Reducing Vulnerability of Banana Producing Communities to Climate Change (GEF ID 5603, UNIDO) in Uganda focused on sustainable livelihoods.

Uganda introduced gender-inclusive sanitation facilities with menstrual hygiene management, which significantly improved school enrollment and retention rates for girls. Additionally, women were trained in masonry and rainwater harvesting, fostering economic empowerment and sustainability. In Zambia, the Climate Resilient Livestock Management Project (GEF ID 5394, AfDB) implemented a Pass-On Gift Scheme[7], expanding the reach of the project. Similarly, Sudan's Livestock and Rangeland Resilience Program integrated Gender Action Learning Systems (GALS) and technology adoption, such as liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) units to reduce women's workload, which resulted in strong gender outcomes, including over 12,000 jobs for women and significant leadership representation.

33. **However, some projects encountered challenges in effectively integrating gender perspectives, leading to implementation obstacles.** The regional project Enhancing Climate Change Resilience in the Benguela Current Fisheries System (GEF ID 5113, FAO) in Africa lacked a gender analysis at the design stage, as it was not a requirement at the time. This gap affected the project's ability to enhance female participation, despite some improvements after the midterm evaluation. Likewise, the ERASIG project in Georgia did not include a gender approach, limiting benefits for women and failing to address gender-specific climate adaptation needs. Additionally, projects such as Strengthening Hydro-Meteorological and Climate Services (GEF ID 5451, World Bank) in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Reducing Vulnerability of Banana Producing Communities to Climate Change Through Banana Value Added Activities (GEF ID 5603, UNIDO) in Uganda struggled with gender mainstreaming, as women were underrepresented in technical teams and productive activities.

34. **Many projects successfully integrated gender-responsive mechanisms, yielding positive experiences and exceeding gender targets.** In the Climate Change Adaptation Project, Phase I (GEF ID 3243, World Bank) in the Philippines, women-led fisherfolk organizations reinvested increased income from modern fish pots into micro-loans for members, creating a sustainable cycle of financial support within the community. The project Climate Resilience Through Conservation Agriculture (GEF ID 4366, IFAD) in Moldova exceeded gender targets by supporting women's inclusion in farmer field schools, achieving an impressive 419 percent increase in female participation. In Kiribati, the project Enhancing National Food Security in the Context of Global Climate Change (GEF ID 5414, UNDP) integrated women into nontraditional economic activities, such as tourism and fisheries management, achieving a remarkable 4:1 ratio of women to men in training participation. Similarly, the Adapting Afghan Communities project ensured that each village had both male and female lead farmers, enhancing women's access to capacity-building and livelihood interventions.

[7] The Pass-On Gift Scheme was structured to encourage farmers to pass on the offspring of animals to other women,

35. **Several projects actively promoted women's leadership and decision-making roles, further strengthening gender outcomes.** The project Building Resilience to Climate Change in the Water and Sanitation Sector in Uganda mandated that at least one-third of Water User Committee members be women and provided leadership training for women in the construction and maintenance of rainwater harvesting systems. The project Livestock and Rangeland Resilience Program (GEF ID 5651, IFAD) achieved 76 percent female representation in leadership positions within village development committees, demonstrating robust gender integration in decision making. Similarly, the project Increasing Productivity and Adaptive Capacity in Mountain Areas of Morocco (GEF ID 5685, IFAD) surpassed targets for women's leadership positions, supporting their involvement in new economic sectors such as beekeeping and saffron farming. The Adapting Afghan Communities project promoted balanced committee composition to enhance women's representation in governance structures. Additionally, the Adaptation SME Accelerator Project supported SMEs that had a woman founder, at least 51 percent ownership by women, or women in executive management or board positions.

36. **Projects that proactively addressed gender disparities and social inclusion achieved higher outcome ratings and broader societal benefits.** The analysis of the AER 2025 cohort reveals a clear correlation between gender-responsive approaches and superior project outcomes. Projects incorporating comprehensive gender analyses and action plans consistently outperformed those lacking these elements, with gender-integrated projects demonstrating higher outcome ratings compared to gender-blind interventions. This performance differential was particularly pronounced in sustainable livelihood and agricultural initiatives, where women's participation proved instrumental in driving adoption of climate-resilient practices. The evidence suggests that gender integration represents not merely a compliance requirement but a fundamental effectiveness factor that enhances project impact across multiple dimensions. The Livestock and Rangeland Resilience Program (GEF ID 5651, IFAD) in Sudan successfully combined gender empowerment with climate adaptation, increasing women's leadership in climate-smart agriculture.

37. **Overall, these findings highlight the importance of structured gender strategies and innovative interventions in fostering women's empowerment, improving project sustainability, and ensuring inclusive development.** The integration of gender-responsive approaches across various sectors has proven to be a key driver of enhanced participation, economic empowerment, and leadership opportunities for women, reinforcing the long-term impact of GEF-funded initiatives.

3.4 SCALING UP

38. **Scaling up development projects involve systematic expansion, replication, and institutionalization of successful interventions to enhance their reach, impact, and sustainability.** This process includes building on proven approaches, integrating lessons learned, and fostering

partnerships to extend benefits to a broader population or geographic area. Key mechanisms for scaling up include strengthening institutional capacities to sustain and mainstream interventions, fostering policy reforms to create enabling regulatory environments, mobilizing technical and human resources, and leveraging innovation to enhance efficiency and adaptability. By embedding projects within long-term development strategies and securing multistakeholder engagement, scaling up ensures that successful initiatives move beyond pilot stages to achieve transformative and lasting change.

39. **Projects in the AER 2025 cohort were reviewed to assess the extent to which interventions incorporated mechanisms for scaling up, expanded their reach, and established effective partnerships for long-term sustainability.** The review of project documentation at the design and implementation stages made it possible to identify whether projects included explicit strategies for replication, institutional integration, or policy alignment to extend their impact beyond the initial intervention. Such approaches could include knowledge dissemination, capacity-building efforts, policy reforms, technological innovations, multistakeholder collaborations, and the integration of successful models into national development plans. Box 6.1 presents the three dimensions of assessment for the review of scaling up of climate finance components.[8]

[8] This assessment aligns with recent literature on climate finance effectiveness. As noted by Pauw et al. (2021, p. 117), "Successful climate finance approaches require not only initial funding but systematic assessment of leverage mechanisms, partnership dynamics, and scalability barriers to ensure long-term sustainability of interventions."

Box 6.1: Rating taxonomy of scaling up

The assessment of scaling up climate finance components included three dimensions:

- **Integration of scaling strategies in project design.** Based on a review of project documents, a rating was assigned to projects on a five-point scale, ranging from "to a very small extent" to "to a very large extent." Projects rated as "to a very large extent" provide detailed information on their scaling framework, including replication strategies, institutional integration, policy linkages, and mechanisms for expanding interventions beyond the initial scope. These projects clearly articulate pathways for sustaining and broadening impact.
- **Measurable framework for scaling results.** Based on a review of the results framework and terminal evaluations, a rating was assigned to projects on a five-point scale, ranging from "to a very small extent" to "to a very large extent." Projects rated as "to a very large extent" include robust M&E systems with specific indicators that ensure the evaluability of scaling efforts. Indicators track not only expansion in geographic coverage and beneficiaries reached but also institutional adoption and policy integration that sustain project outcomes.
- **Scaling effectiveness ratings.** Based on a review of terminal evaluations, a rating was assigned to projects on a six-point scale, ranging from "highly satisfactory" to "highly unsatisfactory." Components rated as "highly satisfactory" demonstrate successful replication, strong institutional buy-in, effective stakeholder engagement, and integration into broader development policies or programs. These projects also provide evidence of sustained impact beyond the project duration, based on both qualitative and quantitative findings from terminal evaluations.

40. **The evaluation identified scaling mechanisms embedded in the initial design of 67 percent (22 projects) of assessed projects (figure 3.7).** At project completion, 60 percent (13 projects) of this subset of projects demonstrated some kind of success in implementing these mechanisms, indicating that deliberate scaling approaches incorporated during project formulation substantially increase the likelihood of broader adoption and impact amplification (figure 3.8).

Figure 3-7: Integration of scaling-up funding mechanisms in AER 2025 cohort

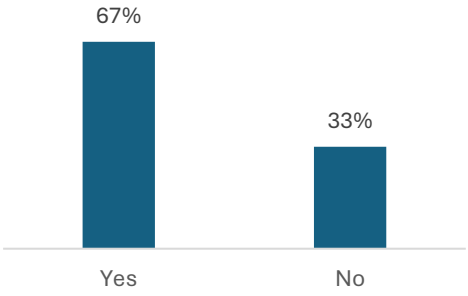
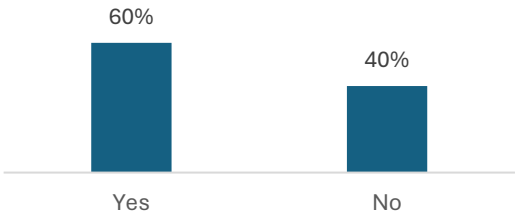


Figure 3-8: Success in leveraging scaling-up funding in AER 2025 cohort



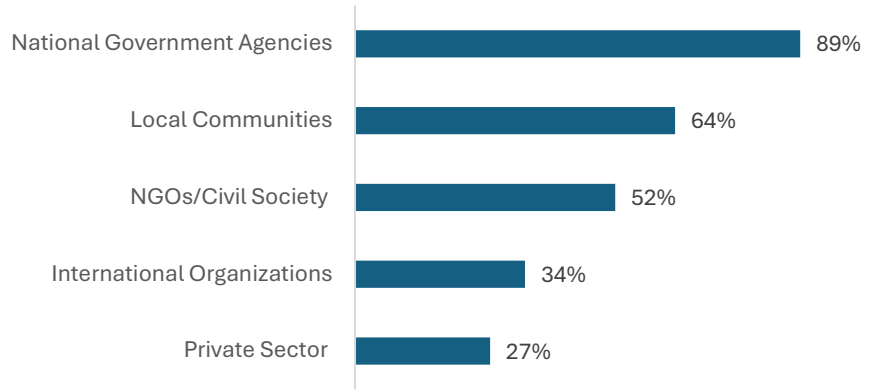
Source: GEF IEO terminal evaluation review data set.

41. **Successful scaling requires a coordinated effort addressing multiple factors.** These include leveraging the complementary strengths, networks, and resources of various stakeholders (from government agencies providing policy frameworks and cofinancing, to local communities ensuring contextual relevance, to private-sector entities offering innovative financing mechanisms) creating the collaborative context necessary for both expanding financial flows and enhancing their impact across different scales of climate action. Figure 3.9 shows a clear pattern in active partnership engagement (that is, partners demonstrating substantive engagement rather than those listed as stakeholders without documented evidence of contributions to project outcomes) across the portfolio. National government agencies are most frequently engaged as active partners (89 percent), reflecting the essential role of government ownership in project implementation. Local communities follow at 64 percent, highlighting the importance of grassroots engagement for sustainable outcomes. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations are involved in 52 percent of projects, serving as crucial intermediaries. International organizations (34 percent) and private-sector entities (27 percent) are represented less frequently but provided potentially valuable partnership types, with private-sector engagement showing room for growth in future project designs.

42. **Strategic scaling of climate adaptation initiatives requires coordinated approaches, government ownership, and diverse stakeholder collaboration.** The project Strengthening Agroclimatic Monitoring and Information Systems to Improve Adaptation to Climate Change and Food Security in the Lao People's Democratic Republic (GEF ID 5462, FAO) demonstrated successful scaling. This initial effort expanded through a new project—Scaling up Local and National Level Decision Making for Climate Resilience in the Agricultural Sector of Lao PDR (SAMIS-2)—financed by the Green Climate Fund (GCF). SAMIS-2 built upon its predecessor's achievements by institutionalizing climate-responsive planning and decision-making tools within national

frameworks. The Lao government's investments beyond GCF funding demonstrated strong government ownership as a key factor in scaling success. Notably, this case also exemplifies effective coherence and complementarity between multilateral climate funds, in line with the GEF-GCF Long-Term Vision for enhanced coordination. Through strengthened institutional capacity and expanded financial mechanisms, the project revealed how strategic partnerships—particularly with national agencies and local communities—enhanced both impact and long-term sustainability.

Figure 3-9: Distribution of active partnership types in project implementation



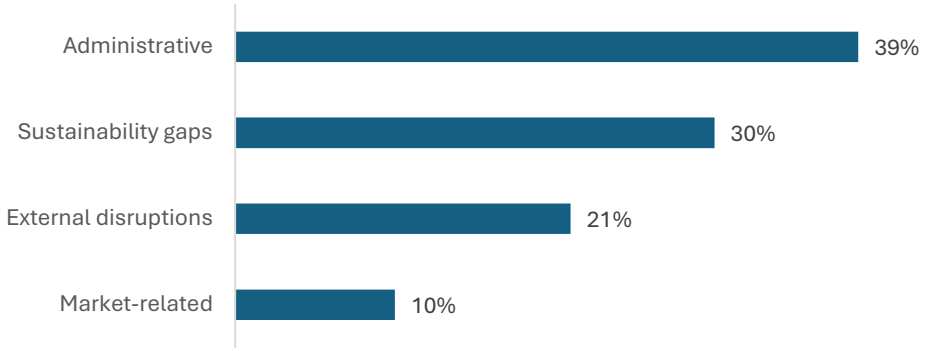
Source: GEF IEO terminal evaluation review data set.

[a] Active partnerships refer to collaborative relationships where, according to terminal evaluations, partners demonstrated substantive engagement in at least one outcome-level intervention of a project. This classification excludes nominal or passive partnerships where entities were merely listed as stakeholders without documented contribution to project outcomes.

43. Based on project documents, in the review of barriers to scaling up project activities, several clear trends emerge across the portfolio of LDCF/SCCF projects. The most prevalent scaling up barriers can be categorized into four main groups—administrative and procedural barriers, funding sustainability gaps, external disruptions, and market and demand-related barriers[9]—with administrative challenges and funding gaps being particularly dominant (figure 3.10).

[9] **Administrative and Procedural Barriers:** Encompasses institutional inefficiencies, bureaucratic processes, delayed disbursements, procurement complications, and coordination challenges that impede timely financial flows and effective utilization.
Funding Sustainability Gaps: Refers to discontinuities between initial project capitalization and long-term financial needs, including insufficient recurrent funding for operations and maintenance, limited government budget allocations for continuation, and dependency on external funding beyond the project lifecycle.
External Disruptions: Comprises unpredictable events and contextual factors outside direct project control, including political instability, economic volatility (inflation, currency devaluation), security challenges, and global disruptions like pandemics that affect financial planning and implementation.
Market and Demand-Related Barriers: Involves challenges in creating financially self-sustaining mechanisms, including limited market demand for project services, insufficient private-sector engagement, low willingness-to-pay among beneficiaries, and underdeveloped financial ecosystems for adaptation solutions.

Figure 3-10: Primary financing barriers to project scale-up



Source: GEF IEO terminal evaluation review data set.

44. **Administrative barriers represent the most significant obstacle to scaling up.** Approximately 39 percent of projects reported challenges related to administrative and institutional complexity, delayed disbursements, and bureaucratic inefficiencies. For instance, the project Southeastern Europe and Caucasus Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (GEF ID 4515, World Bank) encountered "administrative heaviness and cumbersome procedures" and "rigid criteria for grant allocation hampering budget consumption," while the project Enhancing Climate Change Resilience in the Benguela Current Fisheries System (GEF ID 5113, FAO) faced "seriously slow disbursement procedures." These administrative constraints significantly impede timely implementation and reduce the efficiency of available funding. While such barriers are often linked to processes within the GEF and its Agencies, in many cases they also reflect country-level bureaucratic hurdles that lie beyond the GEF's direct influence.

45. **Limited financing for expansion represents the second major barrier category, with roughly 30 percent of projects citing difficulties in securing adequate resources for systematic replication and institutional mainstreaming.** The Climate Change Adaptation Project, Phase I (GEF ID 3243, World Bank) specifically mentioned a "lack of long-term commitment from financing institutions" to support project replication across additional regions, while the Climate Adaptation in Wetlands Areas project (GEF ID 5489, FAO) encountered challenges in "mobilizing sufficient capital for geographic expansion" and "securing resource pathways for scaling successful interventions." This pattern reveals a critical gap between pilot project implementation and the substantial investments needed to achieve transformative scale. Conversely, the Livestock and Rangeland Resilience Program in Sudan offers a positive example of effective scaling through resource mobilization, successfully implementing a co-management approach that enabled expansion by leveraging 8 percent of funding contributed directly by communities. Despite facing significant challenges including currency devaluation, high inflation, and account freezing for eight months in 2019, the

project established mechanisms for broader replication through water-paid services[10] and community contributions, demonstrating how strategic partnerships and diversified funding can facilitate scaling beyond pilot sites even in fragile contexts.

46. **External disruptions also emerged as a significant barrier, affecting about 21 percent of projects.** These included political instability: the regional Senegal River Basin Climate Change Resilience Development Project experienced "coups in Mali and Guinea" and economic volatility; the Livestock and Rangeland Resilience Program mentioned above faced "currency devaluation and high inflation"; and the project Enhancing Climate Change Resilience in the Benguela Current Fisheries System (GEF ID 5113, FAO) noted the COVID-19 "pandemic's impact on tourism revenue and shifting of resources to health/social protection sectors." Such disruptions create unpredictable implementation environments that complicate financial planning and sustainability. Market and demand-related barriers were identified in approximately 10 percent of the projects, with project GGW: Nigeria Erosion and Watershed Management Project (GEF ID 4907, World Bank) highlighting "lack of demand for catastrophe insurance products" and "low willingness of consumers to pay for optional insurance products." These barriers point to challenges in developing financially sustainable climate adaptation solutions that can attract consistent funding beyond the initial grant period.

47. **The GEF IEO analysis found distinct regional patterns in scaling up challenges.** The Eastern Europe and Central Asia region faces predominantly administrative barriers (60 percent), while Asia struggles primarily with external disruptions (63 percent). Africa shows a more balanced distribution of challenges, with administrative barriers slightly higher (35 percent) but with nearly equal representation across other categories, reflecting the highly challenging context in the continent. Global projects contend mainly with external disruptions (67 percent) and administrative challenges (33 percent). These regional variations point to the need for context-specific approaches to address the predominant finance barriers to scaling up in each area. While these patterns provide useful directional insights, they are drawn from a relatively small sample in Asia (7 projects) and in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (2 projects) and should be interpreted with caution. These regional variations nonetheless highlight the importance of context-specific approaches to address the predominant barriers to scaling up climate finance.

48. **The assessment identified systemic challenges in attributing LDCF/SCCF contributions to catalyzing private climate finance, despite demonstrated potential in select initiatives.** The Nigeria Erosion and Watershed Management Project exemplified this gap: while it facilitated Nigeria's inaugural Green Bond and attracted private capital, its terminal evaluation lacked clear metrics to

[10] Water-paid services refer to services that are financed through user fees or tariffs, such as municipal or rural water supply systems where users pay for access, irrigation systems maintained through fees from farmer cooperatives, or public-private partnerships where payment-for-services schemes are used to ensure sustainability.

isolate the Funds' catalytic role. This ambiguity of attribution obscures the LDCF/SCCF's impact on de-risking investments and limits the replication of blended finance models. Notably, the project underutilized SCCF resources to structure or guarantee the bond, missing an opportunity to establish a scalable template for leveraging public funds to unlock private capital in adaptation sectors. Such gaps hinder donor recognition of the Funds' full value proposition and constrain knowledge transfer to other contexts.

49. **Analysis of the LDCF/SCCF portfolio indicates limited integration of strategic financing instruments aimed at mobilizing private capital and institutional investment.** The use of financial de-risking tools—such as concessional lending, first-loss capital, or performance-based grants—remains largely undocumented, making it difficult to assess their effectiveness within the adaptation finance space. Similarly, while technical assistance is frequently provided, its connection to the development of investable climate finance products, such as sovereign green bonds or adaptation-linked loans, is often implicit rather than intentional. In the absence of deliberate design features, opportunities to scale private-sector engagement—especially in countries with shallow capital markets and high perceived risks—appear underutilized.

3.5 ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

50. **The GEF defines adaptive management as a structured, iterative process of decision making that emphasizes learning and adaptation in the face of uncertainty.** This approach involves setting clear management objectives, implementing actions, monitoring outcomes, and adjusting strategies based on new information and changing conditions. By continuously integrating feedback and learning from experiences, adaptive management aims to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of environmental projects.[11]

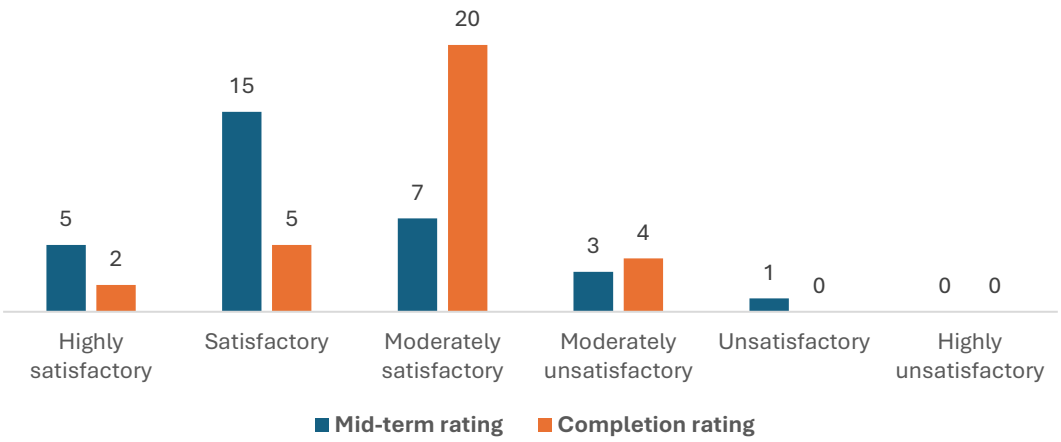
51. For this analysis, the outcome ratings assigned in the midterm reviews (MTRs), project implementation reports (PIRs), and terminal evaluations of LDCF/SCCF projects were reviewed. The evolution of these ratings throughout the project lifecycle was assessed to identify trends, improvements, or setbacks in implementation and performance. This approach allowed for an examination of how adaptive management has influenced final outcomes.

52. **Of the 31 projects with available documentation, 55 percent (17 projects) received a lower final rating at completion compared to their PIR and MTR ratings. Among the remaining projects, 16 percent (five projects) improved their ratings, while 29 percent (nine projects) stayed the same (figure 3.11).** This downward trend suggests patterns in adaptive management implementation. The decline in project ratings may stem from implementation challenges, fundamental design flaws, or operational and administrative delays. Additionally, the timing of the MTRs may have contributed

[11] https://www.thegef.org/publications/adaptive-management-and-learning-fact-sheet

to the downturn—in some cases, reviews conducted relatively late in the project cycle could have limited opportunities for course correction, resulting in insufficient time to implement significant improvements before project completion.

Figure 3-11: Shift in project performance ratings from midterm to completion in AER 2025 cohort projects with available ratings (n=31)



Source: GEF IEO terminal evaluation review data set.

53. **In the assessment, a key pattern emerged: since target achievement is often backloaded in the final implementation phase, MTRs and PIRs tended to be overly optimistic, with projections not materializing in final outcomes.** This highlights the need for rigorous adaptive management by implementing and executing partners throughout the project lifecycle, even when interim evaluations indicate satisfactory progress. For instance, the Climate Resilient Livestock Management Project (GEF ID 5394, AfDB) exemplifies this trend. Its 2020 MTR revised targets downward, reducing rangeland restoration from 4,500 ha to 2,500 ha due to budget constraints, yet final outcomes still fell short. Key indicators, such as reduced greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from infrastructure, saw 0 percent progress against a 100 percent target, despite midterm optimism about measures like biogas digesters. The final assessment cited unresolved challenges, including delayed infrastructure utilization and incomplete GHG impact assessments, risks that the MTR had underestimated. This emphasizes how MTRs may overlook systemic risks (e.g., slow adoption of new technologies, contractor delays), leading to overstated progress. Conversely, the Bhutan project Enhancing Sustainability and Climate Resilience of Forest and Agriculture Landscape (GEF ID 9199, UNDP) demonstrates how effective midterm interventions can drive improvement. The project team successfully implemented MTR recommendations by strengthening the mainstreaming reference group, enhancing stakeholder collaboration, and improving knowledge management. These timely

adjustments helped overcome challenges in operationalizing the integrated landscape management approach and institutional coordination, ultimately leading to a final rating of highly satisfactory.

54. **The analysis revealed a lower application of adaptive management in the Africa region.** Of the 17 projects with declining final ratings compared to their implementation reports, 12 were implemented in Africa, accounting for 70 percent of projects with deteriorating performance. While Africa represented the largest share of the portfolio (55 percent), the disproportionately high concentration of underperforming projects underscores persistent institutional and capacity challenges in the region.

55. Given the dynamic nature of climate adaptation projects, implementation frameworks that incorporate flexibility have proven more effective in responding to unforeseen challenges and shocks. Projects that incorporated flexibility into their design were better positioned to navigate shocks and changing conditions. The AER 2025 cohort provides multiple examples where adaptive management approaches enabled projects to overcome implementation barriers and external disruptions. Projects with built-in flexibility mechanisms demonstrated resilience against contextual shifts, from political transitions to extreme weather events, maintaining progress toward objectives despite changing circumstances. The evidence indicates that adaptive capacity is a critical success factor in climate-vulnerable environments. The project Enabling Climate Resilience in the Agriculture Sector in Madagascar (GEF ID 5233, AfDB) successfully applied phased implementation and flexible financing mechanisms to adjust to climate-induced changes. The Promoting Innovative Finance and Community Based Adaptation project in Senegal (GEF ID 5867, UNDP) demonstrated effective adaptive management in action. When its planned Climate Development Fund faced barriers, the team pivoted to partner directly with microfinance institutions supporting women's groups, resulting in 76 percent of communities reporting increased income—well above the 45 percent midterm projection. By implementing all 11 MTR recommendations, implementation delays decreased by 40 percent in the final phase. The project's success highlights how incorporating contingency mechanisms (15 percent of budget reserved for adaptive responses) and regular scenario planning enables climate resilience projects to navigate uncertainties and achieve better outcomes despite changing circumstances.

56. **The analysis of final ratings compared to MTRs highlights the critical role of supervision reports in project performance.** In some cases, PIR and MTR evaluations identified issues early, enabling strategic adjustments that improved final outcomes. In others, they confirmed that well-performing projects were on track, providing valuable insights to sustain good practices. A strong example of this case is the Promoting Innovative Finance and Community-Based Adaptation project, which, as noted above, successfully implemented all 11 MTR recommendations. Key actions included organizing a joint mission with key stakeholders to strengthen coordination and securing an agreement with Cauris Microfinance to enhance funding. Additionally, improvements to quality

control mechanisms ensured that project documents met financial requirements before approval. These adaptive measures contributed to the project's successful completion.

57. **Adaptive management in LDCF/SCCF projects faces various challenges and limitations that can affect its effectiveness.** Limited financial and human resources, along with technical capacity constraints, restrict the in-depth analysis of PIR and MTR data and the implementation of necessary adjustments. Additionally, institutional resistance to change can delay or obstruct key modifications, particularly when they challenge existing plans or require shifts in stakeholder priorities.

58. **Additionally, while PIRs and MTRs provide valuable insights into project performance, they do not capture all factors influencing final outcomes.** External dynamics, such as political and economic shifts or unforeseen environmental events, can significantly impact performance. Furthermore, long-term sustainability depends not only on adaptive measures during implementation but also on post-project institutional commitment and additional funding. Therefore, adaptive management should extend beyond these reports, incorporating a broader and more flexible approach that considers both internal and external factors to enhance effectiveness and sustainability.

59. **Supervision reports alone are insufficient to drive significant performance improvements.** The decline in final project ratings suggests that, while these reports offer valuable recommendations, their impact is often inadequate to resolve structural or implementation issues. Strengthening monitoring mechanisms and ensuring the effective integration of report recommendations into project management is crucial to enhancing outcomes.

4 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 CONCLUSIONS

60. **The LDCF/SCCF portfolio demonstrates strong scaling-up intentions at design, yet faces implementation barriers that limit transformative impact.** The assessment reveals that the majority of projects (67 percent) include elements of scaling up in their initial design, showing clear intention to expand successful interventions beyond pilot stages. However, shortcomings emerge during implementation, with administrative challenges (39 percent), funding sustainability gaps (30 percent), external disruptions (21 percent), and market-related barriers (10 percent) consistently impeding broader adoption. While some factors lie outside the GEF's direct control, many administrative and institutional barriers fall within the sphere of influence of the GEF and its Agencies. These implementation challenges not only affect immediate project outcomes but fundamentally constrain long-term sustainability and scaling potential.

61. **Scaling up and sustainability are deeply intertwined with how well implementation is carried out.** Projects demonstrating strong implementation performance consistently achieved higher sustainability ratings and greater scaling impact. The assessment found that embedding projects within government systems, fostering diverse stakeholder partnerships, and establishing local revenue mechanisms significantly enhanced institutional capacity and financial sustainability. Similarly, projects that aligned with national and regional policies created natural pathways for continuation, securing follow-up funding at nearly twice the rate of standalone initiatives.

62. **Regional variations in barriers to scaling up suggest the need for context-specific implementation approaches.** With Eastern Europe and Central Asia facing predominantly administrative barriers (60 percent), Asia struggling primarily with external disruptions (63 percent), and Africa showing a balanced distribution of challenges, a one-size-fits-all implementation approach proves insufficient. The assessment revealed that projects tailored to regional administrative contexts and equipped with flexible management frameworks consistently demonstrated greater resilience and effectiveness in overcoming implementation barriers, suggesting that implementation strategies must be adapted to specific regional constraints.

4.2 RECOMMENDATION

63. Based on the findings and conclusions, the AER 2025 makes one recommendation:

To achieve sustained and transformative impact from climate change adaptation interventions, the GEF Partnership—including the Secretariat, Agencies, and participating countries—must place greater emphasis on identifying and addressing implementation-related barriers to scaling up adaptation efforts under the LDCF and SCCF through coordinated action. While strong project design is critical, scaling and sustainability ultimately depend on effective implementation and execution. This requires strengthening implementation support systems, such as technical backstopping and access to knowledge resources; tailoring strategies to regional contexts; and streamlining procedures to minimize delays. By working collaboratively within their respective roles, the Secretariat, Agencies, and countries can significantly improve delivery and maximize adaptation outcomes.

5 MANAGEMENT ACTION RECORD

64. The MAR has been presented annually to the GEF Council since June 2006. It is the main accountability mechanism to monitor and report on progress in the implementation of recommendations from evaluations prepared by the GEF IEO. Prior to 2021, the Council endorsed the recommendations, and the GEF IEO tracked their implementation. The GEF Secretariat provided

a management response to the IEO evaluations and recommendations, but the specific actions included in the management response were not endorsed by the Council.

65. As a follow-up to the professional peer review of the GEF's independent evaluation function (PRP 2019), the GEF approach to the MAR was revised. GEF management now responds to each GEF IEO evaluation recommendation with an action plan, and the Council comments on and endorses this plan. The GEF IEO then tracks progress in its implementation. The GEF Council began to endorse management action plans in June 2021.

66. The management response to a GEF IEO recommendation indicates whether it agrees with the recommendation. Where management agrees with a recommendation—including instances where it partially agrees—it is expected to identify specific actions, along with a time frame, where appropriate, to address it. In instances where management disagrees with a recommendation, it is not expected to provide an action plan to address the recommendation.

5.1 RATINGS APPROACH

67. For each of the recommendations for which implementation of the management's action plan is tracked, GEF management is invited to provide self-ratings on progress in implementation along with commentary as necessary. Ratings and commentary on tracked recommendations are also provided by the GEF IEO for validation. The scale for assessing the level of implementation of the management action plan is analogous to that used in earlier MARs. However, the description of the ratings has been updated to reflect the revised MAR process. The implementation progress ratings are as follows:

- **High**. The management action plan for the relevant recommendation has been fully implemented.
- **Substantial**. The management action plan for the relevant recommendation has largely been implemented or most actions have been implemented, but some aspects/actions have not been fully implemented.
- **Medium**. Some of the actions listed in the management action plan have been implemented, but not to a significant degree. While some of the specified actions have been implemented, there is only limited progress in implementation of the key specified actions.
- **Negligible**. Specified actions have not yet been implemented, or the progress made so far is negligible.
- **Not rated**. Sufficient information on implementation is not available to allow an assessment of progress.

- **N/A**. Not applicable may be used when subsequent decisions taken by the GEF Council supersede the management action plan.

68. The evaluation recommendations and the related management action plans may be graduated or retired from the MAR for one or more of the following reasons:

- **Graduated** due to high or, where appropriate, substantial level of progress in implementation of management's action plan.
- **Retired** because the evaluation recommendation and related action plan is not relevant anymore, or further progress on implementation of the action plan is unlikely. An automatic reason for retirement is if a recommendation and related action plan have been covered in the MAR for five years.

5.2 LDCF/SCCF MAR 2025

69. MAR 2025 for the LDCF/SCCF tracks progress in implementation of management's action plans for one GEF IEO recommendation for the 2020 LDCF Program Evaluation (GEF IEO 2022b) and three recommendations for the Evaluation of GEF Support to Climate Information and Early Warning Systems (CIEWS, GEF IEO 2025).

LDCF program evaluation

70. **GEF IEO recommendation: Continue to enhance the likelihood of the sustainability of outcomes.** The GEF Secretariat and the GEF Agencies should continue to carry out relevant actions in project design and implementation as highlighted in the GEF Council document "Towards Greater Durability of GEF Investments" (GEF 2019). This should entail giving more emphasis to the project and context factors identified by this evaluation as affecting the sustainability of outcomes during project design and implementation.

71. **Level of GEF management's agreement and its response including specified actions: Agreed.** The Secretariat acknowledges the GEF IEO's recommendation to continue to enhance the likelihood of sustainability of outcomes. In this regard, the Secretariat will continue to carry out relevant actions in project design and implementation as highlighted in the Council document "Towards Greater Durability of GEF Investments," as recommended by the IEO and will continue to urge Agencies to emphasize contextual factors affecting sustainability outcomes (GEF 2020). No time frame was indicated.

72. **GEF Secretariat's assessment of progress in implementation of its action plan: High.** The LDCF continues to implement all elements of the GEF-8 climate change adaptation strategy that directly speaks to durability of design and implementation. Complementary to the successful regional workshops in the previous fiscal year that enhanced country ownership and capacity

building, the GEF Secretariat is continuing to enhance stakeholder consultations in line with current GEF policies and guidelines and promoting local community involvement to improve project ownership and accountability. This is to foster partnership for inclusion and operationalize whole-of-society approach, a key principle outlined in GEF-8 strategy. It advocates for robust theories of change within the country context for durable adaptation.

73. The current active portfolio of GEF-8 demonstrates progress in integrating durability principles into project design and implementation. For example, the GEF-8 LDCF project in Bhutan emphasizes capacity building through local universities to ensure long-term sustainability and fully aligns with new urban development policy. Similarly, the GEF-8 LDCF Project in Nepal includes local government representatives in project steering committees. These approaches highlight the integration of durability into the GEF-8 LDCF/SCCF portfolio.

74. **The GEF IEO's validation of reported implementation progress: High.** The IEO recognizes the Secretariat's continued efforts under GEF-8 to enhance the likelihood of the sustainability of outcomes through actions in project design and implementation as highlighted in the Council document Towards Greater Durability of GEF Investments. This recommendation will be graduated.

Support to CIEWS

75. **GEF IEO recommendation 1: GEF projects should shift their focus from solely providing early warning information to fostering early actions during disaster events.** GEF projects ought to prioritize data usability and ensure that both national and local plans are in place. This involves establishing effective communication systems and providing the necessary knowledge of how to respond once a warning is issued. To overcome the last mile challenge, GEF projects must prioritize community engagement, capacity building, and the development of tailored communication strategies to address the specific needs and challenges of remote and vulnerable communities.

76. **Level of GEF management's agreement and its response including specified actions: Partially agreed.** The GEF Secretariat and the GEF Agencies should continue to explore strategies to enhance the financial sustainability of CIEWS components. The significant costs associated with the operation and maintenance of CIEWS initiatives require a tailored approach to secure long-term financing to enable their continued success beyond the project's completion. Recognizing the complexities of engaging the private sector and acknowledging their potential role, particularly in LDCs, GEF projects are encouraged to support efforts to create an enabling environment for the private sector in developing innovative adaptation solutions derived from CIEWS. This is especially important considering the multiple applications and increasing advantages that CIEWS offers to several sectors, including transportation, agriculture, tourism, finance, and insurance.

77. **GEF Secretariat's assessment of progress in implementation of its action plan: Substantial.** In alignment with LDCF and SCCF mandates, the GEF Secretariat has continued to engage with OFPs, Agencies, and global and regional partners to support early warning action in the face of climate variability and extremes, in conjunction with support for CIEWS. This has included approval and development of new projects that foster early action to reduce climate vulnerabilities and risks, as well as overcoming "last mile" challenges, including by prioritizing community engagement, and the development of tailored communication strategies to address the specific needs and challenges of remote vulnerability communities.

78. **The GEF IEO's validation of reported implementation progress: Substantial.** The IEO notes the progress made by the GEF Secretariat in approving and developing new projects that foster early action and address "last mile" challenges. The IEO will monitor the portfolio to assess continued efforts.

79. **GEF IEO recommendation 2: The GEF Secretariat, the GEF Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel, and the GEF Agencies should continue aligning indicators with established good practices.** GEF projects should adopt the most fitting indicators in line with World Meteorological Office guidelines and informed by international good practices and lessons learned from past experiences. These indicators would effectively measure the success of CIEWS interventions, serve as a roadmap for future interventions, and provide information to global results frameworks. Furthermore, for effective monitoring, GEF projects should set minimum standards for measuring and tracking CIEWS components at the project level. In alignment with ongoing efforts to streamline and simplify the GEF results framework, this approach emphasizes repurposing existing indicators at the project level rather than introducing new ones. The overarching goal is to enhance the quality of measurement and tracking of the application of CIEWS components, ensuring that interventions are well-informed and impactful.

80. **Level of GEF management's agreement and its response including specified actions: Partially agreed.** While indicators for CIEWS do not align with the focal areas of the GEF Trust Fund, as part of its ongoing efforts to improve capture of socio-economic wellbeing and adaptation benefits, it will explore integrating best practices related to CIEWS indicators in the GEF Trust Fund. The results frameworks of the LDCF and SCCF, however, do include indicators for CIEWS. The Secretariat updates its LDCF/SCCF indicators every four years, as it launches the next adaptation programming strategy. The indicators are revised in accordance with best adaptation practice and in alignment, where possible, with the indicators of other climate funds, while adhering to the principle of streamlining the results framework in order to prevent overburdening of GEF Agencies and countries. The GEF Secretariat will revisit, and may update, the LDCF/SCCF indicators that will accompany the adaptation programming strategy for the 2026-2030 period, including indicators for CIEWS.

81. **GEF Secretariat's assessment of progress in implementation of its action plan: Substantial.** In preparation for development of the new LDCF/SCCF programming strategy for the 2026-2030 period, the Secretariat has prepared and convened in depth Technical Advisory Group meetings. These meetings included substantial discussion on CIEWS, as well as implications for impact monitoring and indicators. These meetings benefitted from the insights of key actors in the CIEWS and climate adaptation impact monitoring. Further consultations have also been held with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change authors and other stakeholders.

82. **The GEF IEO's validation of reported implementation progress: Medium.** The IEO notes the GEF Secretariat's preparation for new programming strategy and will continue tracking the development of indicators for CIEWS.

83. **GEF IEO recommendation 3: The GEF Secretariat and the GEF Agencies should continue to explore strategies to enhance the financial sustainability of CIEWS components.** The significant costs associated with the operation and maintenance of CIEWS initiatives require a tailored approach to secure long-term financing to enable their continued success beyond the project's completion. Recognizing the complexities of engaging the private sector and acknowledging their potential role, particularly in LDCs, GEF projects are encouraged to support efforts to create an enabling environment for the private sector in developing innovative adaptation solutions derived from CIEWS. This is especially important considering the multiple applications and increasing advantages that CIEWS offers to several sectors, including transportation, agriculture, tourism, finance, and insurance.

84. **Level of GEF management's agreement and its response including specified actions: Partially agreed.** The LDCF and SCCF projects which support CIEWS include strengthening of institutional capacity of meteorological agencies and mainstreaming their services with sectors such as agriculture. This has often led to robust government institutions which have been continuing to monitor and provide climate and weather data after project completion. Regarding the private sector, engagement has been primarily in the application and use of climate data in sectors where private sector actors are active. The GEF Secretariat is supporting countries in piloting innovative CIEWS based and private sector led adaptation solutions and creating enabling policy environments, including in the agriculture advisory and climate risk insurance sectors. It will continue to identify more such opportunities for private sector engagement in CIEWS, including through the Challenge Program for Adaptation Innovation. As such, the GEF Secretariat welcomes highlighting the importance of continuing to ensure that GEF support for CIEWS includes purposeful financial sustainability strategies to enable the medium and long-term functioning and use of the systems.

85. **GEF Secretariat's assessment of progress in implementation of its action plan: Substantial.** The GEF Secretariat has continued to identify opportunities for private sector engagement in CIEWS.

This has included launching a third round of the Challenge Program for Adaptation Innovation, with a focus on innovation and enabling sector creation for private sector engagement for the private sector in developing innovative adaptation solutions across sectors. This also includes the development of blended finance vehicles which potential to invest in enterprises that provide and use CIEWS.

86. **The GEF IEO's validation of reported implementation progress: Medium.** The IEO acknowledges the GEF Secretariat's efforts to engage the private sector in CIEWS through the Challenge Program and the development of blended finance vehicles. While these may help address financial sustainability, it may be limited in scope. The IEO will continue to monitor the progress of these efforts.

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7 ANNEXES

ANNEX A: GUIDELINES FOR REVIEW OF TERMINAL EVALUATION REPORTS

1. The assessments in the terminal evaluation reviews will be based primarily on the information presented in the terminal evaluation report. If insufficient information is presented to assess a specific issue, the review preparer will indicate so in that section and may elaborate further under the "Quality of Terminal Evaluation Report" section. If the reviewer possesses first-hand information (e.g., field visits), it should be included only under "Additional independent information available to the reviewer." All relevant independent information will be taken into account when verifying ratings.

Criteria for outcome ratings

2. Based on the information provided in the terminal evaluation report, the terminal evaluation review will make an assessment of the extent to which the project's major relevant objectives were achieved or are expected to be achieved,[12] relevance of the project results, and the project's cost-effectiveness. The ratings on the outcomes of the project will be based on performance on the following criteria:[13]

- **Relevance.** Extent to which the project outcomes aligned with the GEF focal area strategies, country priorities, beneficiary needs, and the mandates of the GEF Agency and its executing partners.
- **Effectiveness.** Extent to which the project outcomes were achieved relative to initial targets, including contributions to global environmental benefits and management of unintended consequences.
- **Efficiency.** Cost-effectiveness of the project in delivering results, including assessment of cost/time versus output/outcome relationships.

3. An overall rating will be provided according to the achievement and shortcomings in the three criteria, ranging from highly satisfactory, satisfactory, moderately satisfactory, moderately unsatisfactory, unsatisfactory, highly unsatisfactory, and unable to assess.

4. The reviewer of the terminal evaluation will provide a rating under each of the three criteria (relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency). Relevance of outcomes will be rated on a binary

[12] *Objectives* are the intended physical, financial, institutional, social, environmental, or other development results to which a project or program is expected to contribute (OECD DAC 2002).

[13] *Outcomes* are the likely or achieved short-term and medium-term effects of an intervention's outputs. Outputs are the products, capital goods, and services that result from a development intervention; these may also include changes resulting from the intervention that are relevant to the achievement of outcomes (OECD DAC 2002). For the GEF, environmental outcomes are the main focus.

scale: a satisfactory or an unsatisfactory rating will be provided. If an unsatisfactory rating has been provided on this criterion, the overall outcome achievement rating may not be higher than unsatisfactory. Effectiveness and efficiency will be rated as following:

- **Highly satisfactory.** Outcomes exceed targets; project highly relevant, coherent, and cost-effective.
- **Satisfactory.** Outcomes meet targets; project relevant, coherent, and cost-effective.
- **Moderately satisfactory.** Outcomes generally close to targets; projects are mostly relevant, coherent, and cost-effective.
- **Moderately unsatisfactory.** Outcomes lower than expected; shortcomings in relevance, coherence, or efficiency.
- **Unsatisfactory.** Outcomes not achieved or project not cost-effective or coherent.
- **Highly unsatisfactory.** Negligible achievement or significant negative impacts outweigh benefits.
- **Unable to assess.** Insufficient information available.

5. The calculation of the overall outcomes score of projects will consider all three criteria, of which relevance criterion will be applied first; the overall outcome achievement rating may not be higher than unsatisfactory. The second constraint that is applied is that the overall outcome achievement rating may not be higher than the effectiveness rating. The third constraint that is applied is that the overall rating may not be higher than the average score of effectiveness and efficiency criteria calculated using the following formula:

Outcomes = (b + c) ÷ 2

6. In case the average score is lower than the score obtained after application of the first two constraints, then the average score will be the overall score. The score will then be converted into an overall rating with mid values being rounded up upwards.

Impacts

7. Has the project achieved impacts, or is it likely that outcomes will lead to the expected impacts? Impacts will be understood to include positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention. They could be produced directly or indirectly and could be intended or unintended. The terminal evaluation review's preparer will take note of any mention of impacts, especially global environmental benefits, in the terminal evaluation report, including the likelihood that the project outcomes will contribute to their achievement. Negative impacts mentioned in the terminal evaluation report should be noted and

recorded in section 2 of the terminal evaluation reviews template in the subsection on "Issues that require follow-up." Although project impacts will be described, they will not be rated.

Criteria for sustainability ratings

8. Sustainability will be understood as the likelihood of continuation of project benefits after completion of project implementation (GEF 2000). To assess sustainability, the terminal evaluation reviewer will identify and assess the key risks that could undermine continuation of benefits at the time of the evaluation. Some of these risks might include the absence of or inadequate financial resources, an enabling legal framework, commitment from key stakeholders, and enabling economy. The following four types of risk factors will be assessed by the terminal evaluation reviewer to rate the likelihood of sustainability of project outcomes: Financial risks: Availability and adequacy of financial resources to sustain project benefits; Sociopolitical risks: Stakeholder ownership and supportive political context; Institutional framework and governance risks: Strength and adequacy of legal, policy, and institutional frameworks; Environmental risks: Environmental threats that may undermine project benefits.

9. The reviewer will provide a sustainability rating as follows:

- **Highly Likely (6).** Negligible risks; benefits expected to continue and long-term objectives likely to be achieved.
- **Likely (5).** Some risks present but minor in probability or impact; benefits likely to continue.
- **Moderately Likely (4).** Moderate risks; benefits more likely to continue than abate.
- **Moderately Unlikely (3).** Significant risks; benefits likely to abate if risks materialize.
- **Unlikely (2).** High risks likely to cause loss of project benefits.
- **Highly Unlikely (1).** Major risks already materialized or imminent; benefits not expected to continue.
- **Unable to assess.** Insufficient information available.
- **Not applicable.** This dimension is not applicable to the project.

Starting in April 2025, the GEF IEO validates sustainability ratings using a six-point scale. Prior to that, the GEF-IEO validated sustainability ratings using a four-point scale. Likelihood of sustainability rating on six-point scale: 6=Highly Likely; 5=Likely; 4=Moderately Likely; 3=Moderately Unlikely; 2=Unlikely; 1=Highly Unlikely; blank=Unable to assess or not rated. Likelihood of sustainability rating on four-point scale: 4=Likely; 3=Moderately Likely; 2=Moderately Unlikely; 1=Unlikely; blank=Unable to assess or not rated.

Criteria for assessment of quality of project M&E systems

10. GEF projects are required to develop M&E plans by the time of work program inclusion, to appropriately budget M&E plans, and to fully carry out the M&E plan during implementation. Project managers are also expected to use the information generated by the M&E system during project implementation to improve and adapt the project to changing situations. Given the long-term nature of many GEF projects, projects are also encouraged to include long-term monitoring plans that measure results (such as environmental results) after project completion. Terminal evaluation reviews will include an assessment of the achievement and shortcomings of M&E systems.

- **M&E design.** Project should have a sound M&E plan to monitor results and track progress in achieving project objectives. An M&E plan should include a baseline (including data, methodology, and so on), SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely) indicators and data analysis systems, and evaluation studies at specific times to assess results. The time frame for various M&E activities and standards for outputs should have been specified. Questions to guide this assessment include: In retrospect, was the M&E plan at entry practicable and sufficient (sufficient and practical indicators identified; timely baseline; targets created; effective use of data collection; analysis systems including studies and reports; practical organization and logistics in terms of what, who, and when for M&E activities)?

- **M&E implementation.** The M&E system was in place and allowed the timely tracking of results and progress toward project objectives throughout the project. Annual project reports were complete, accurate, and with well-justified ratings. The information provided by the M&E system was used to improve and adapt project performance. An M&E system should be in place with proper training for parties responsible for M&E activities to ensure that data will continue to be collected and used after project closure. Question to guide this assessment include: Did the project M&E system operate throughout the project? How was M&E information used during the project? Did it allow for tracking of progress toward project objectives? Did the project provide proper training for parties responsible for M&E activities to ensure data will continue to be collected and used after project closure?

- **Other questions.** This includes questions on funding and whether the M&E system was a good practice.
    - Was sufficient funding provided for M&E—in the budget included in the project document?

- Was sufficient and timely funding provided—for M&E during project implementation?
- Can the project M&E system be considered—a good practice?

11. A number rating 1–6 will be provided for each criterion according to the achievement and shortcomings, with highly satisfactory = 6, satisfactory = 5, moderately satisfactory = 4, moderately unsatisfactory = 3, unsatisfactory = 2, highly unsatisfactory = 1, and unable to assess = no rating. The reviewer of the terminal evaluation will provide a rating under each of the three criteria (M&E design, M&E plan implementation, and M&E properly budgeted and funded) as follows:

- **Highly satisfactory.** There were no shortcomings in that criterion of the project M&E system.
- **Satisfactory.** There were minor shortcomings in that criterion of the project M&E system.
- **Moderately satisfactory.** There were moderate shortcomings in that criterion of the project M&E system.
- **Moderately unsatisfactory.** There were significant shortcomings in that criterion of the project M&E system.
- **Unsatisfactory.** There were major shortcomings in that criterion of the project M&E system.
- **Highly unsatisfactory.** There was no project M&E system.

The rating for M&E during implementation will be the overall rating of the M&E system:

Rating on the Quality of the Project Monitoring and Evaluation System = b

Criteria for assessment of quality of terminal evaluation reports

12. The ratings on quality of terminal evaluation reports will be assessed using the following criteria:

- The report presents an assessment of all relevant outcomes and achievement of project objectives in the context of the focal area program indicators, if applicable.
- The report was consistent, the evidence presented was complete and convincing, and ratings were well substantiated.
- The report presented a sound assessment of sustainability of outcomes.

- The lessons and recommendations are supported by the evidence presented and are relevant to the portfolio and future projects.
- The report included the actual project costs (totals, per activity and per source) and actual cofinancing used.
- The report included an assessment of the quality of the M&E plan at entry, the M&E system used during implementation, and whether the information generated by the M&E system was used for project management.

13. A number rating 1–6 will be provided for each criterion according to the achievement and shortcomings with highly satisfactory = 6, satisfactory = 5, moderately satisfactory = 4, moderately unsatisfactory = 3, unsatisfactory = 2, highly unsatisfactory = 1, and unable to assess = no rating.

Each criterion to assess the quality of the terminal evaluation will be rated as follows:

- **Highly satisfactory.** There were no shortcomings in the terminal evaluation on this criterion.
- **Satisfactory.** There were minor shortcomings in the terminal evaluation on this criterion.
- **Moderately satisfactory.** There were moderate shortcomings in the **terminal evaluation on this criterion.**
- **Moderately unsatisfactory.** There were significant shortcomings in the terminal evaluation on this criterion.
- **Unsatisfactory.** There were major shortcomings in the terminal evaluation on this criterion.
- **Highly unsatisfactory.** There were severe shortcomings in the terminal evaluation on this criterion.

14. The first two criteria (of all relevant outcomes and achievements of project objectives, and report consistency and substantiation of claims with proper evidence) are more important, and, therefore, have been assigned a greater weight. The quality of the terminal evaluation reports will be calculated by the following formula:

Quality of the Terminal Evaluation Report = 0.3 × (a + b) + 0.1 × (c + d + e + f)

The total number will be rounded and converted to the scale of highly satisfactory to highly unsatisfactory.

Assessment of processes affecting attainment of project outcomes and sustainability

15. This section of the terminal evaluation review will summarize the factors or processes related to implementation delays and cofinancing that may have affected attainment of project results. This section will summarize the description in the terminal evaluation on key causal linkages of these factors:

- **Cofinancing and project outcomes and sustainability.** If there was a difference in the level of expected cofinancing and actual cofinancing, what were the reasons for it? To what extent did materialization of cofinancing affect project outcomes or sustainability, or both? What were the causal linkages of these effects?
- **Delays and project outcomes and sustainability.** If there were delays, what were the reasons for them? To what extent did the delay affect project outcomes or sustainability, or both? What were the causal linkages of these effects?
- **Other causal factors.** Additional implementation or contextual factors affecting results.

ANNEX B: OUTCOME, SUSTAINABILITY, AND M&E RATINGS OF COMPLETED LDCF AND SCCF PROJECTS IN AER 2025

GEF ID	GEF replenishment period	Fund	Agency	Project title	Country	Grant (M$)	Outcome rating	Sustainability rating	M&E design at entry rating	M&E plan implementation rating
3243	GEF-4	SCCF	World Bank	Climate Change Adaptation Project, Phase I	Philippines	5.2	MS	MU	S	MU
4366	GEF-5	SCCF	IFAD	Climate Resilience Through Conservation Agriculture	Moldova	2.9	S	MU	MS	MS
4515	GEF-5	SCCF	World Bank	Southeastern Europe and Caucasus Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (SEEC CRIF)	Regional	4.2	S	L	S	MS
4907	GEF-5	MTF	World Bank	GGW: Nigeria Erosion and Watershed Management Project (NEWMAP)	Nigeria	5.7	S	ML	S	S
4934	GEF-5	SCCF	UNEP	Enhancing Capacity, Knowledge and Technology Support to Build Climate Resilience of Vulnerable Developing Countries	Global	3.8	MS	ML	S	MU
4952	GEF-5	MTF	World Bank	Landscape Approach to Forest Restoration and Conservation (LAFREC)	Rwanda	4.2	S	ML	MS	S
5113	GEF-5	MTF	FAO	Enhancing Climate Change Resilience in the Benguela Current Fisheries System	Regional	3.9	HS	MU	HS	HS

GEF ID	GEF replenishment period	Fund	Agency	Project title	Country	Grant (M$)	Outcome rating	Sustainability rating	M&E design at entry rating	M&E plan implementation rating
5133	GEF-5	MTF	World Bank	Senegal River Basin Climate Change Resilience Development Project	Regional	5.3	S	ML	S	S
5147	GEF-5	SCCF	IFAD	Enhancing Resilience of Agricultural Sector in Georgia (ERASIG)	Georgia	10.9	S	ML	MU	MS
5204	GEF-5	SCCF	AfDB	Building Resilience to Climate Change in the Water and Sanitation Sector	Uganda	8.0	MS	NR	NR	U
5209	GEF-5	LDCF	AfDB	Building Resilience to Climate Change in the Water and Sanitation Sector	Sierra Leone	5.7	S	MU	MS	MU
5233	GEF-5	LDCF	AfDB	Enabling Climate Resilience in the Agriculture Sector in the Southwest Region of Madagascar	Madagascar	7.0	MS	MU	S	S
5394	GEF-5	LDCF	AfDB	Climate Resilient Livestock Management Project	Zambia	8.7	MS	MU	MS	MS
5414	GEF-5	LDCF	UNDP	Enhancing National Food Security in the Context of Global Climate Change	Kiribati	4.0	MS	U	MS	MU
5436	GEF-5	LDCF	World Bank	Disaster Risk Management and Urban Development Project	Niger	3.8	S	L	S	S
5451	GEF-5	LDCF	World Bank	Strengthening Hydro-Meteorological and Climate Services	Congo DR	4.5	HS	ML	S	S
5462	GEF-5	LDCF	FAO	Strengthening Agro-climatic Monitoring and Information Systems to	Lao PDR	8.0	MS	MU	S	MS

GEF ID	GEF replenishment period	Fund	Agency	Project title	Country	Grant (M$)	Outcome rating	Sustainability rating	M&E design at entry rating	M&E plan implementation rating
				Improve Adaptation to Climate Change and Food Security in Lao PDR						
5489	GEF-5	LDCF	FAO	Climate Adaptation in Wetlands Areas (CAWA)	Lao PDR	8.4	MS	MU	S	MS
5603	GEF-5	SCCF	UNIDO	Reducing Vulnerability of Banana Producing Communities to Climate Change Through Banana Value Added Activities - Enhancing Food Security and Employment Generation	Uganda	5.5	MS	MU	S	MS
5632	GEF - 5	LDCF	UNDP	Enhancing the Adaptation Capacities and Resilience to Climate Change in Rural Communities in Analamanga, Atsinanana, Androy, Anosy, and Atsimo Andrefana	Madagascar	5.7	S	ML	S	S
5651	GEF - 5	LDCF	IFAD	Livestock and Rangeland Resilience Program	Sudan	3.8	MS	ML	S	MU
5685	GEF - 5	SCCF	IFAD	Increasing Productivity and Adaptive Capacity in Mountain Areas of Morocco (IPAC-MAM)	Morocco	4.2	S	ML	MS	S
5723	GEF - 5	SCCF	World Bank	West Balkans Drina River Basin Management Project	Regional	3.9	HS	MU	HS	HS

GEF ID	GEF replenishment period	Fund	Agency	Project title	Country	Grant (M$)	Outcome rating	Sustainability rating	M&E design at entry rating	M&E plan implementation rating
5782	GEF - 5	LDCF	FAO	Adapting Agriculture to Climate Change in the Gambia	Gambia	5.3	S	ML	S	S
5867	GEF - 5	LDCF	UNDP	Promoting Innovative Finance and Community Based Adaptation in Communes Surrounding Community Natural Reserves (Ferlo, Niokolo Koba, Senegal River Bas Delta & Saloum Delta), Senegal	Senegal	10.9	S	ML	MU	MS
5904	GEF - 5	LDCF	UNDP	Strengthening the Resilience of Rural Livelihoods and Sub-national Government System to Climate Risks and Variability in Benin	Benin	8.0	MS	MU	S	MS
6914	GEF - 6	LDCF	UNDP	Adapting Afghan Communities to Climate-Induced Disaster Risks	Afghanistan	8.4	MS	MU	S	MS
6967	GEF - 6	LDCF	UNDP	CCA Growth: Implementing Climate Resilient and Green Economy plans in highland areas in Ethiopia	Ethiopia	5.5	MS	MU	S	MS
6991	GEF - 6	LDCF	UNDP	Senegal National Adaptation Plan	Senegal	5.7	S	ML	S	S
8023	GEF - 6	LDCF	UNDP	Strengthening Climate Information and Early Warning Systems for Climate Resilient Development and Adaptation to Climate Change in Guinea	Guinea	3.8	MS	ML	S	MU

GEF ID	GEF replenishment period	Fund	Agency	Project title	Country	Grant (M$)	Outcome rating	Sustainability rating	M&E design at entry rating	M&E plan implementation rating
9197	GEF - 5	LDCF	ADB	Protecting Urban Areas Against the Impacts of Climate Change in Vanuatu	Vanuatu	4.2	S	ML	MS	S
9199	GEF - 6	MTF	UNDP	Enhancing Sustainability and Climate Resilience of Forest and Agricultural Landscape and Community Livelihoods	Bhutan	3.9	HS	MU	HS	HS
10296	GEF - 7	SCCF	CI	Adaptation SME Accelerator Project (ASAP)	Global	5.3	S	ML	S	S

Source: GEF IEO terminal evaluation review data set.

Note: Grant is LDCF/SCCF/GEF funding approved at CEO endorsement, plus PPG. Agency fees are excluded. Outcome, M&E design, and M&E implementation ratings are reported on a six-point rating scale: Highly Satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S), Moderately Satisfactory (MS), Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), Unsatisfactory (U), and Highly Unsatisfactory (HU). Sustainability ratings are reported on a four-point rating scale: Likely (L), Moderately Likely (ML), Moderately Unlikely (U). Any category may also be Not rated (NR) or rated Unable to assess (UA). ADB = Asian Development Bank; AfDB = African Development Bank; CI = Conservation International; FAO = Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; IDB = Inter-American Development Bank; LDCF = Least Developed Countries Fund; SCCF = Special Climate Change Fund; UNDP = United Nations Development Programme; UNEP = United Nations Environmental Programme.