



Independent  
Evaluation Office  
GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY

Enhancing global environmental benefits  
through excellence in evaluation





# Evaluating Global Environmental Benefits: Lessons from the GEF

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# Outline

- 1 GEF and the global environment**
- 2 Evaluating performance and impact**
- 3 Innovative approaches**
  - Land degradation and value for money**
  - Transformational change**
  - Additionality**
- 4 Conclusions**



## SECTION 1

# GEF and the Global Environment

# Scale







**Climate  
change**



**International  
waters**



**Chemicals  
and waste**



**Biodiversity**



**Forests**



**Land  
degradation**

# Strategic relevance

**Conventions.** Main funding mechanism for:



Also relevant to the



**Countries**

More than  
**140**  
recipient  
countries

Support for  
middle  
income  
countries  
remains  
important

Support to  
**LDCs and  
SIDS**  
has increased





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## SECTION 2

# Evaluating Performance and Impact

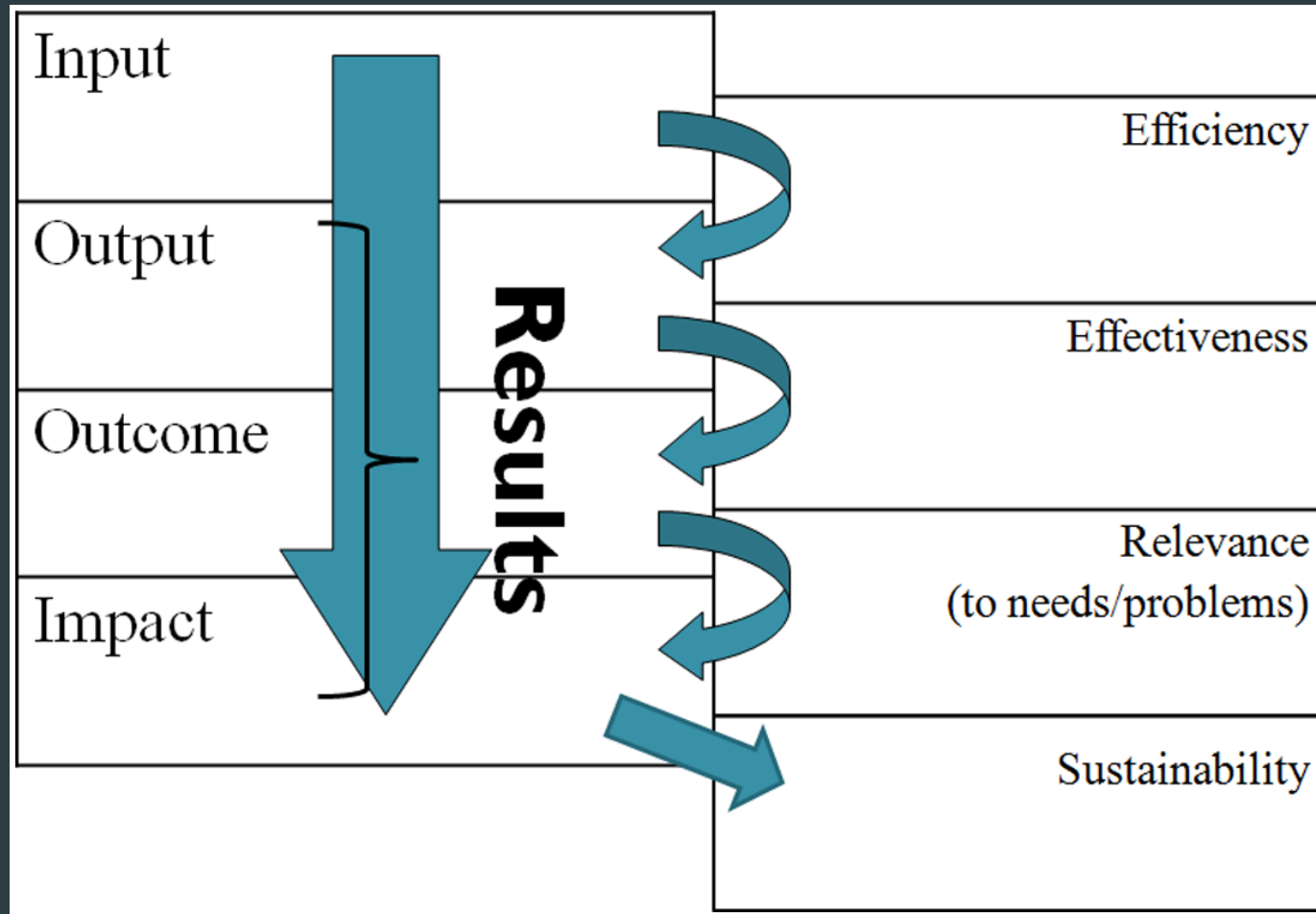


# Role of evaluation

- ▶ Evaluation is judgment made of the relevance, appropriateness, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of development efforts, based on agreed criteria and benchmarks among key partners and stakeholders
- ▶ It involves a rigorous, systematic and objective process in the design, analysis and interpretation of information to answer specific questions
- ▶ It provides assessments of what works and why, highlights intended and unintended results, and provides strategic lessons to guide decision-makers and inform stakeholders



# Evaluation criteria





## Objective

To provide solid  
evaluative evidence  
to inform the  
replenishment  
negotiations for

**GEF-7**

## Methodology

**29** evaluations  
and studies

Mix of qualitative and  
quantitative approaches  
including geospatial  
analysis

Formative approaches  
to evaluate ongoing  
programs

## Limitations

**Limitations  
imposed by  
data and  
timing**



Site visits to all regions





# Performance and Impact



Satisfactory outcomes



of projects have outcomes that are likely to be sustained

## Drivers of good performance:

- Project design
- Quality of implementation and execution
- Materialized co-financing

- Performance and sustainability of outcomes > in middle income countries
- Institutional capacity challenges in Africa



## PERFORMANCE AND IMPACT

# Broader adoption and transformational change



of projects achieved  
**broader adoption**



of projects achieved  
**environmental stress reduction**

### Mechanisms for broader adoption:

- + Mainstreaming and replication
- Scaling-up and market change

### Success factors for transformational change:

- Clear ambition in designs
- Addressing market reforms through policies
- Mechanisms for financial sustainability
- Quality of implementation and execution
- May be achieved by projects of different size



## FOCAL AREA STUDIES

# Common findings

*Relevant to conventions*

*Strong performance ratings on outcomes with limited variation*

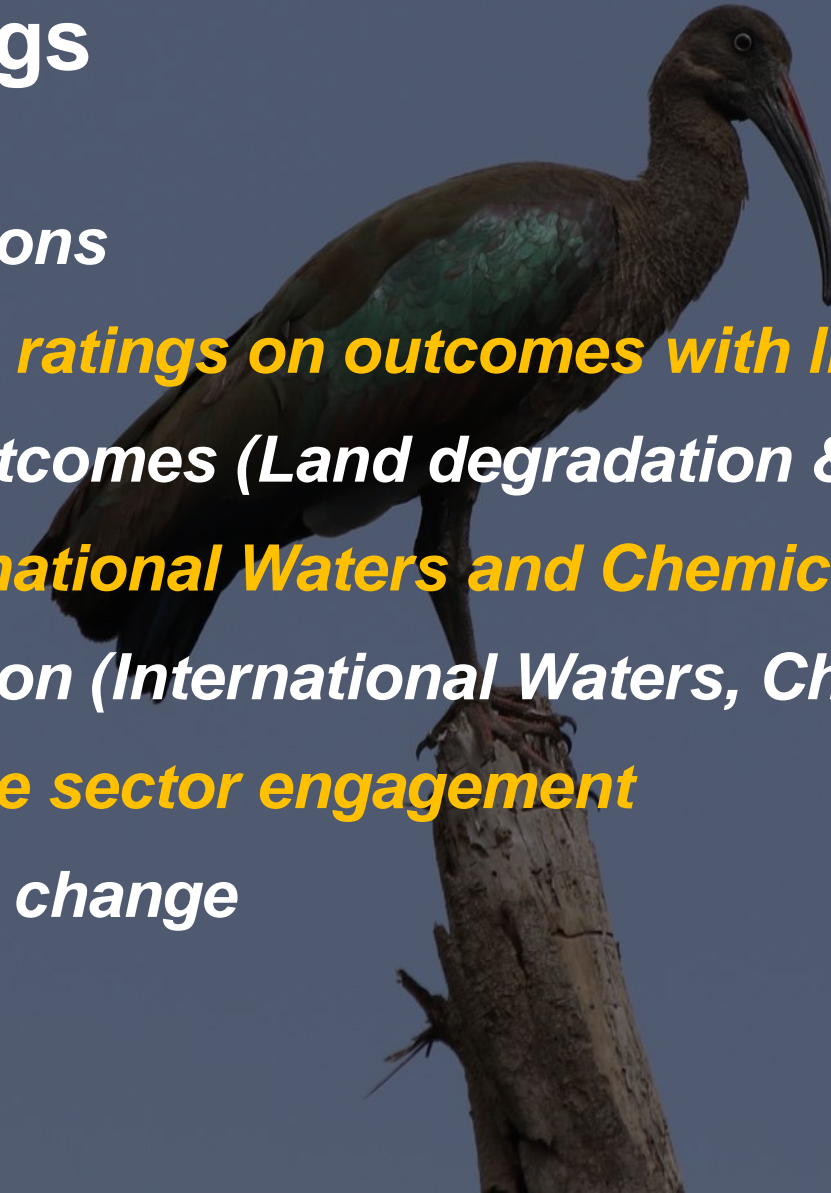
*Sustainability of outcomes (Land degradation & Biodiversity)*

*M&E Design (International Waters and Chemicals)*

*M&E Implementation (International Waters, Chemicals and Multifocal)*

*Variation in private sector engagement*

*Transformational change*





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## SECTION 3

# Innovative Approaches







# Land Degradation and Value for Money



## LAND DEGRADATION

# Evolution of the strategy

### GEF-1-2

Operational Program on Integrated Ecosystem Management

LD seen as a

“linkage activity”

### GEF-3

Operational Program on SLM.

LDFA

established as a focal area.

GEF the financial mechanism for the UNCCD.

### GEF-4

Focal area strategy on LDFA  
Shift towards multifocal and programmatic approaches

### GEF-5

Focal area strategies linked with the UNCCD's 10 year strategy

### GEF-6

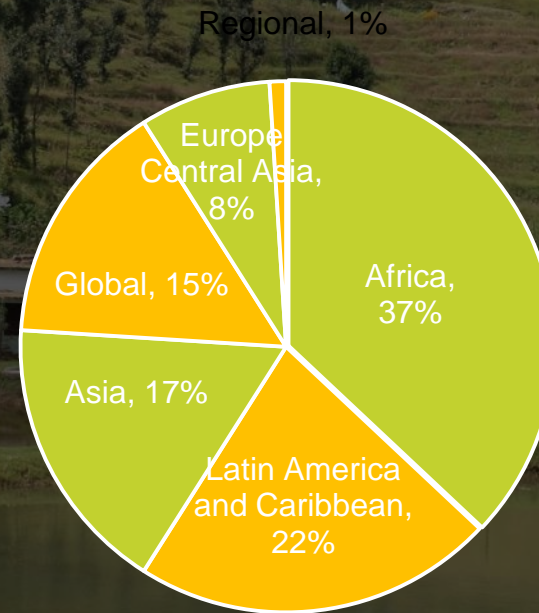
Focal area strategies alignment towards LDN



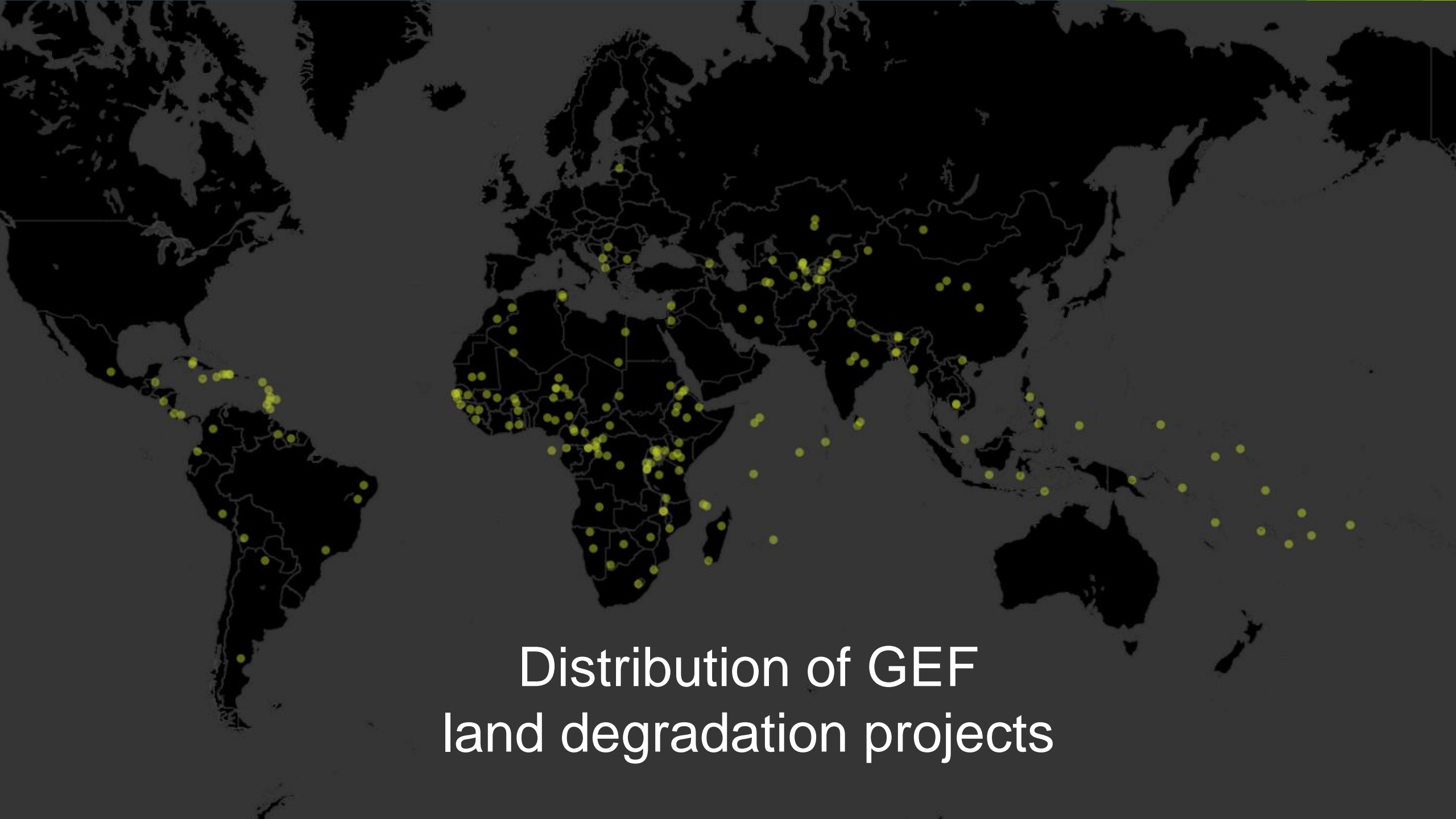
# LAND DEGRADATION Portfolio

**\$3.4 billion**  
**618 projects**  
**with an LD**  
**component**  
(58% multifocal)

**Cofinancing**  
**20.4**  
**billion**



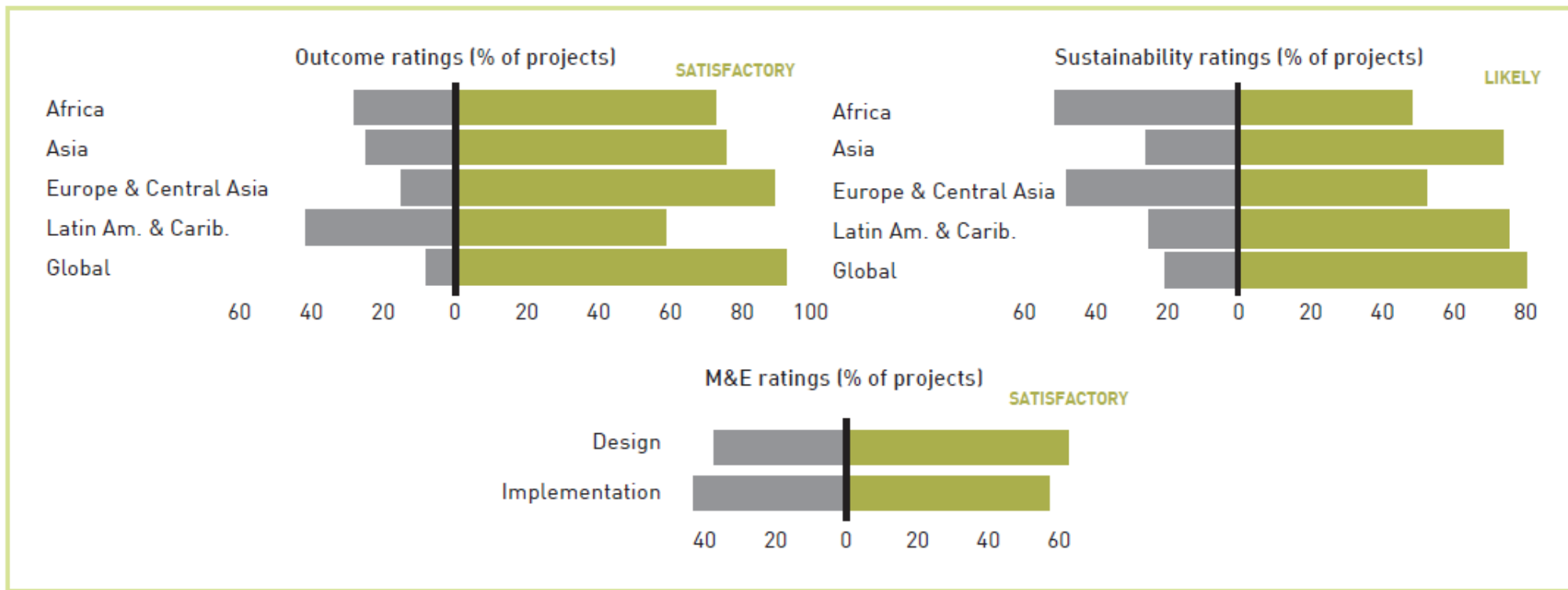
**Shift towards**  
**integrated**  
**landscapes**



Distribution of GEF  
land degradation projects



# Results: Performance



# Impact assessment

## Mixed methods and triangulation of findings

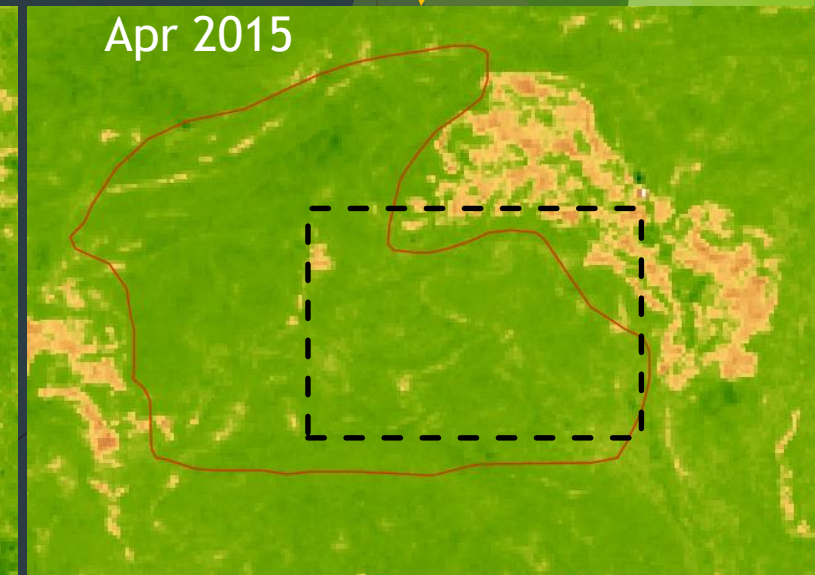
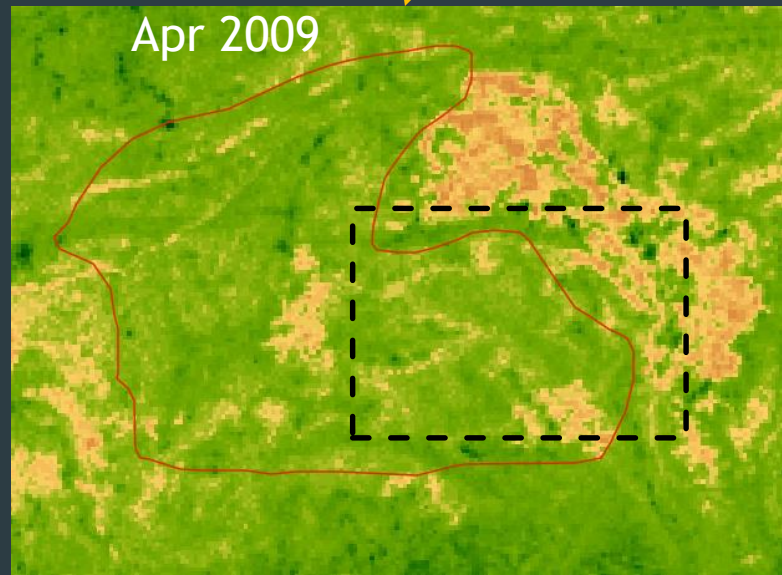
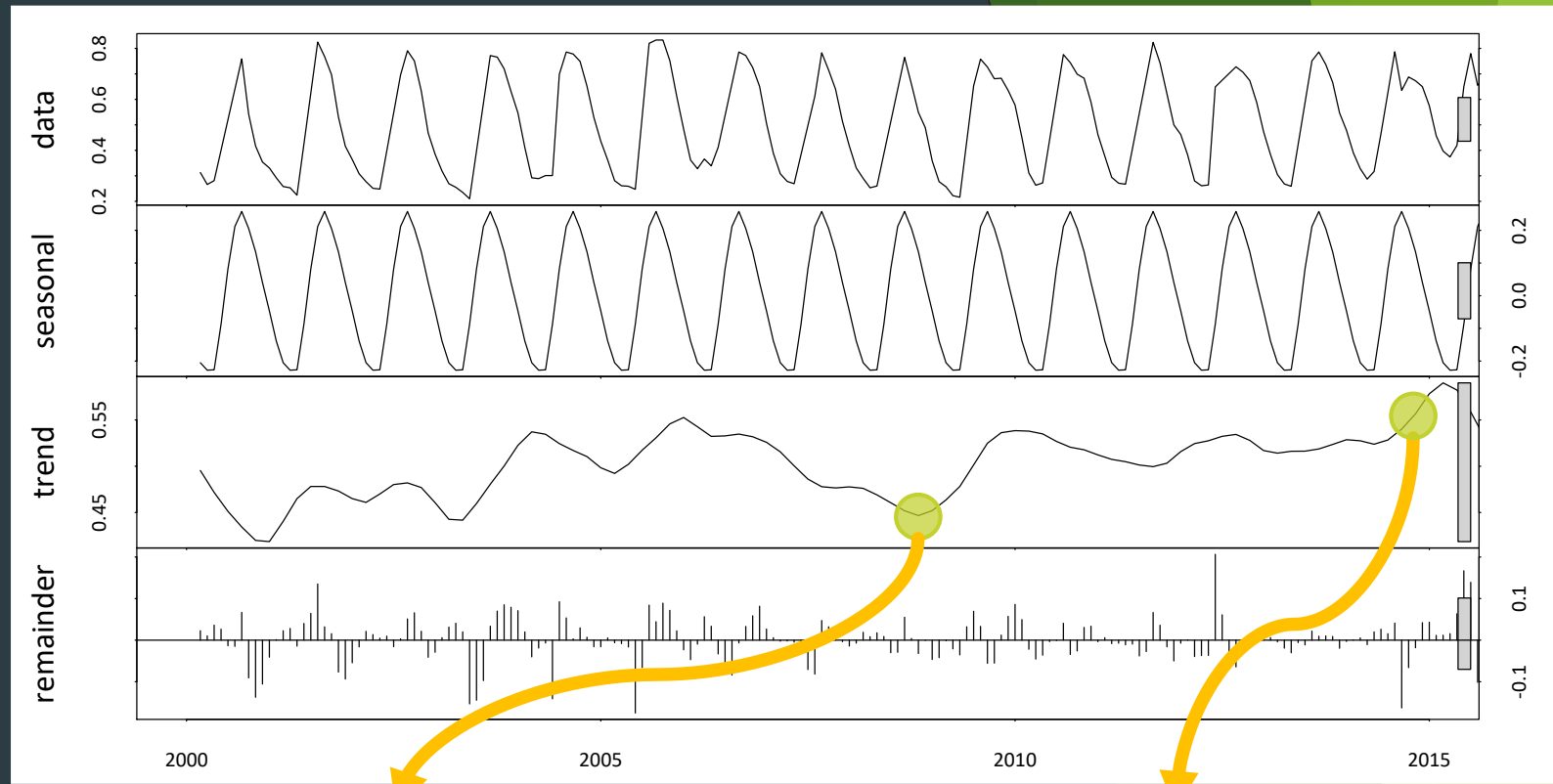


Apr 2009



# Impact assessment

## Mixed methods and triangulation of findings

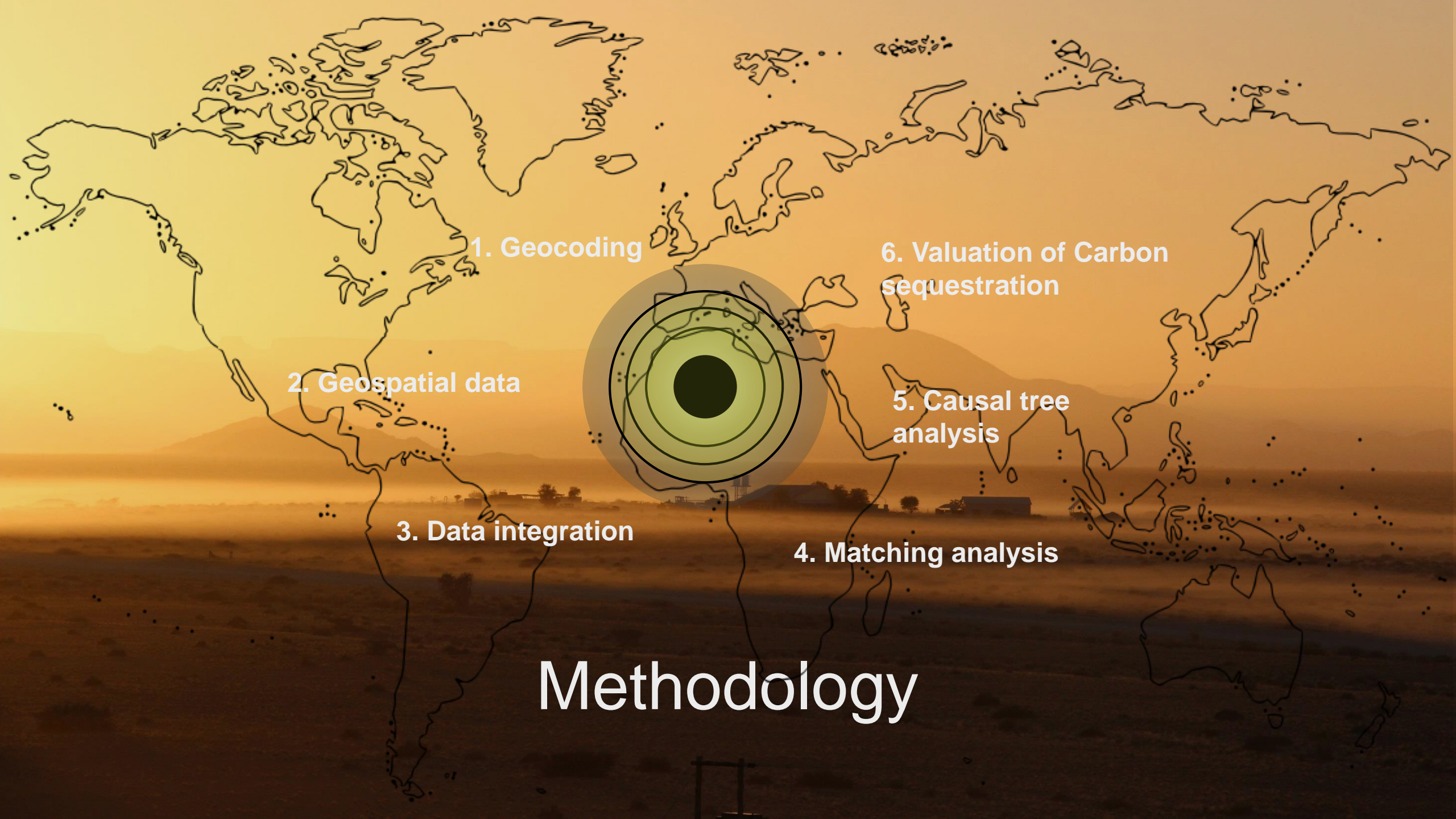


## LAND DEGRADATION

# Value for money analysis: 3 main objectives

- 1 Impact of GEF land degradation interventions?
- 2 Factors associated with the environmental outcomes?
- 3 Value for money in terms of carbon sequestered?





1. Geocoding

2. Geospatial data

3. Data integration

4. Matching analysis

6. Valuation of Carbon  
sequestration

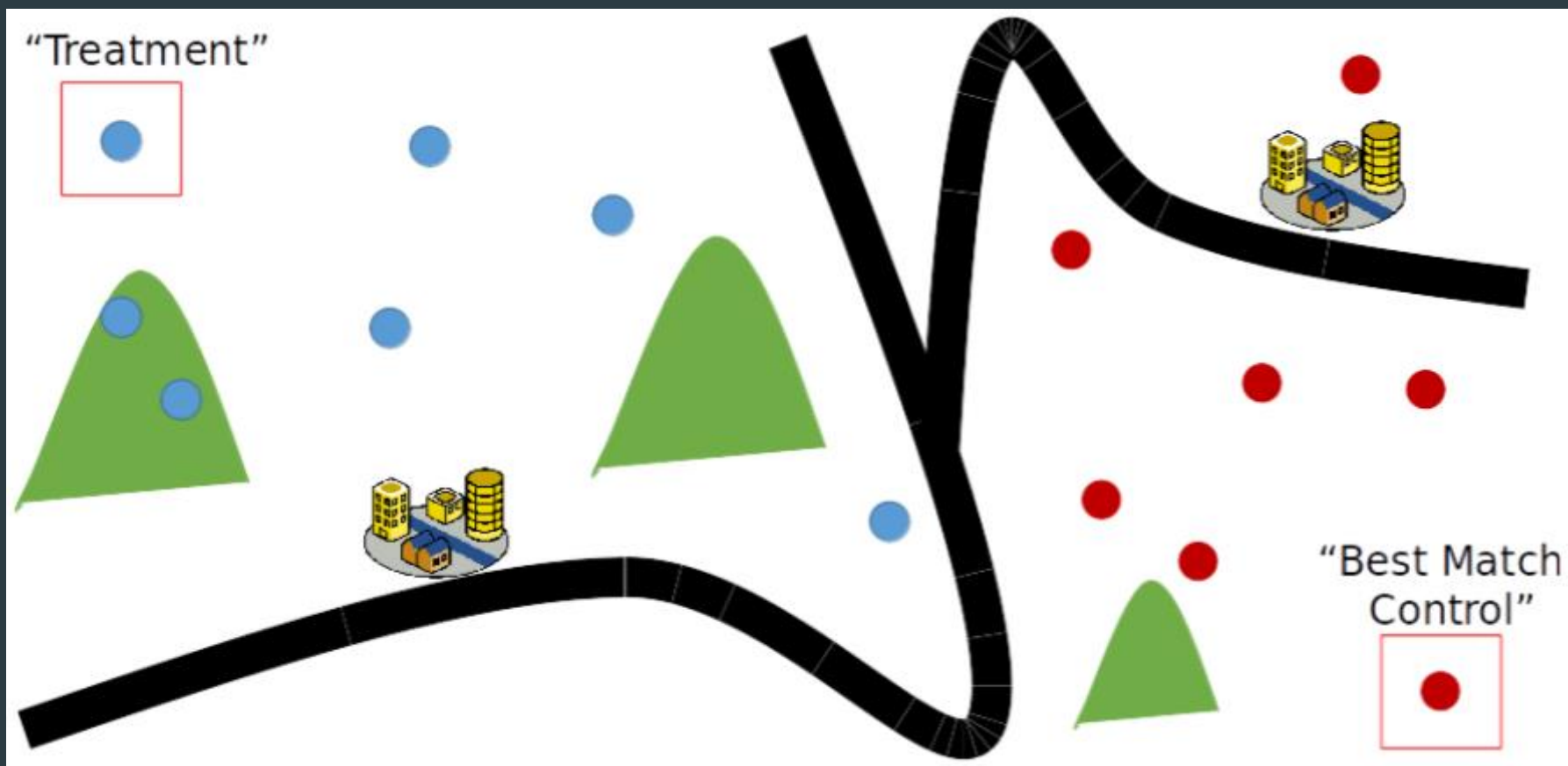
5. Causal tree  
analysis

Methodology



## LAND DEGRADATION

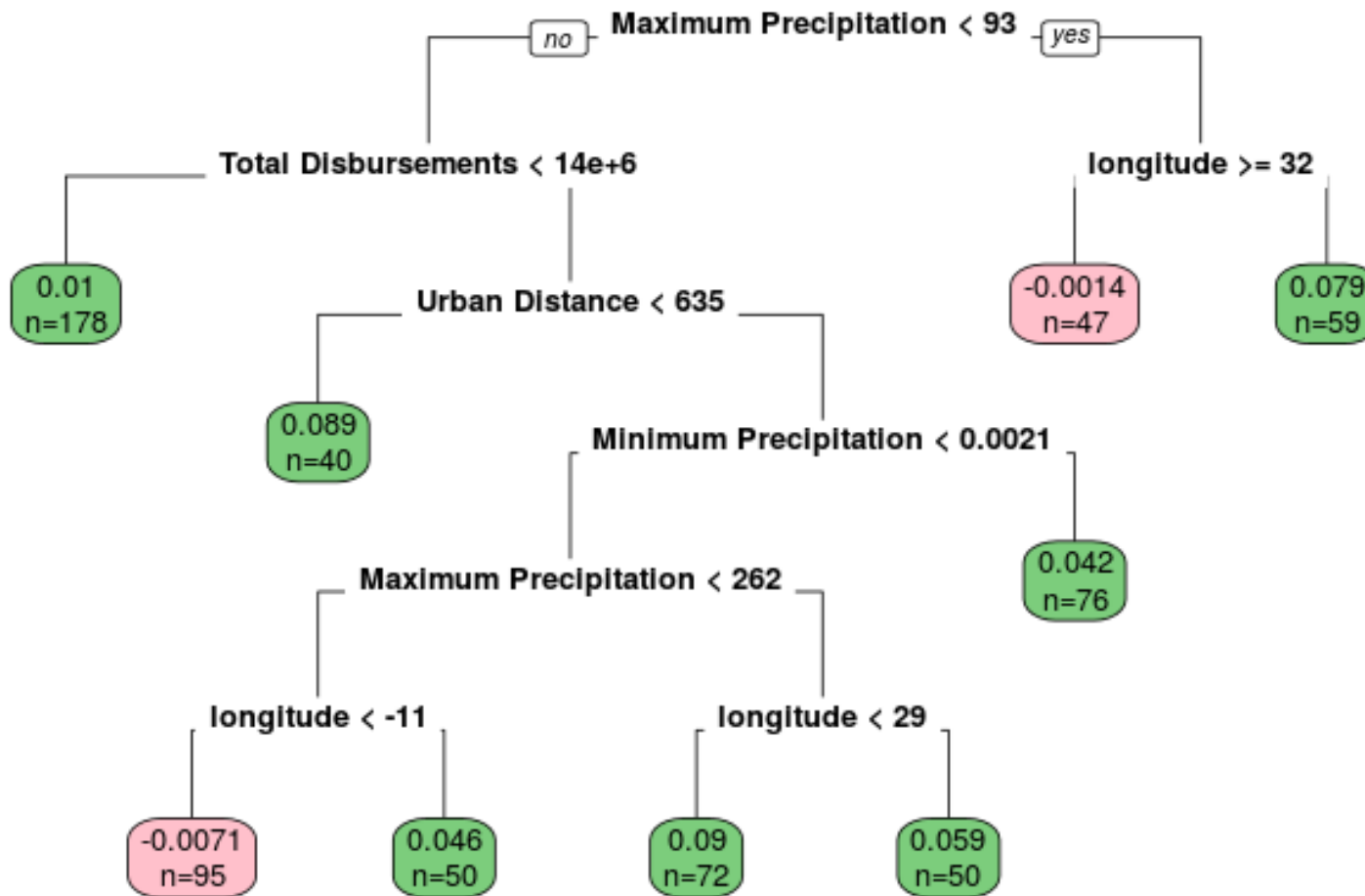
# Quasi-experimental method





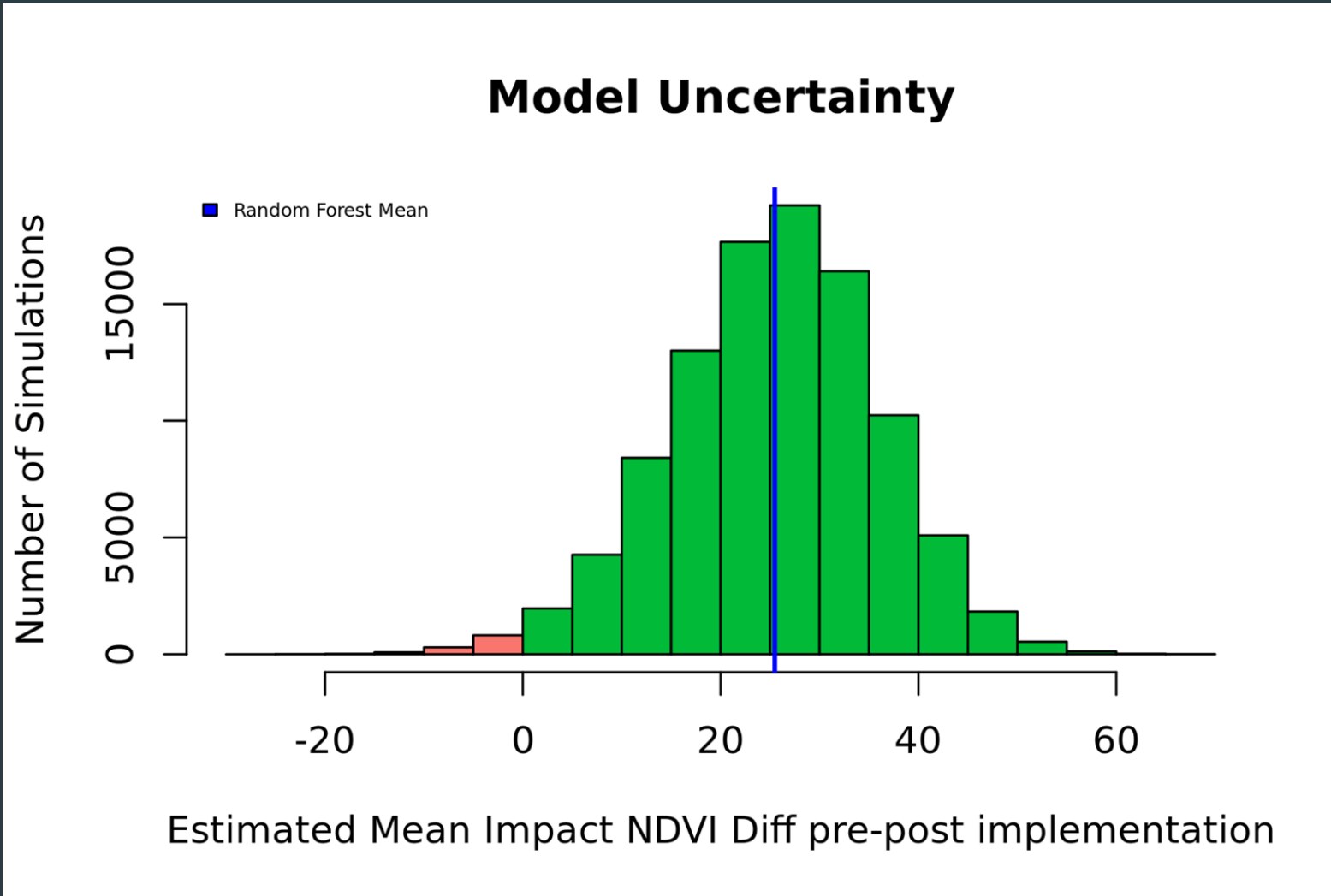
## LAND DEGRADATION

# Machine learning and causal tree



## LAND DEGRADATION

# Repeated model simulation





## LAND DEGRADATION

### Value for money

\$1:1.08

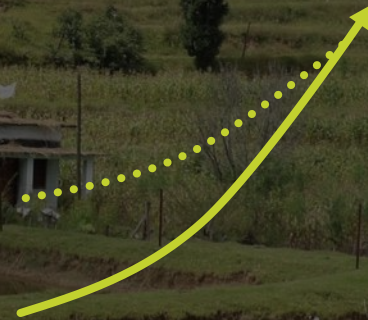
43.52  
tC/ha



Lag time of  
4.5 to 5.5 years  
for impacts to be  
observed

Access to electricity  
associated with  
higher impact

Higher impact  
observed in areas with  
poor initial conditions



Vegetation  
productivity



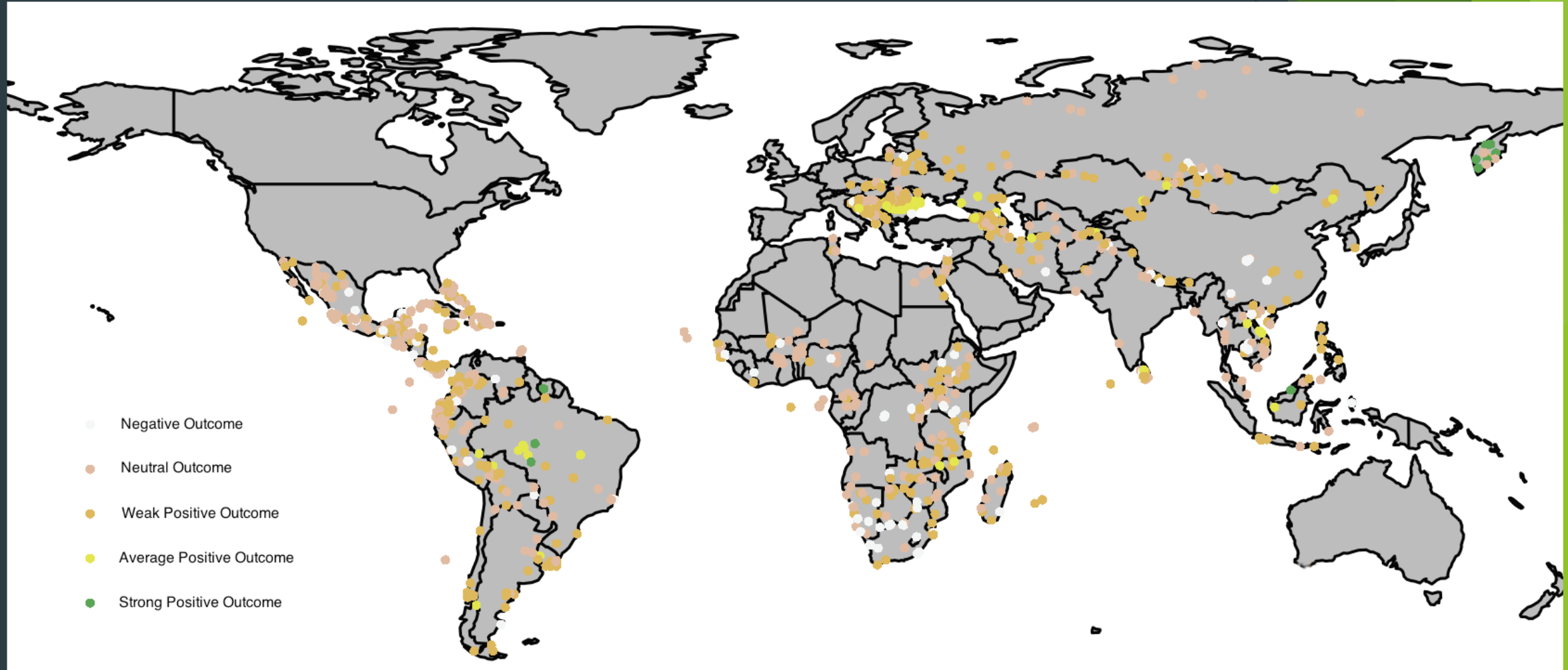
forest loss and  
land fragmentation



## LAND DEGRADATION

# Bang for the buck

**\$1:1.08**





# Land degradation

## Strategy

Shift towards **integrated landscape**

Shift from linkages towards  
land degradation **neutrality**



**Climate risks, contextual factors,  
restoration**

## Portfolio

High level  
of effort in

**Africa**

Addresses the  
local  
socioeconomic  
**drivers**



A photograph of two hippos swimming in a body of water, likely a lake or river. The water is calm and reflects the surrounding environment. In the background, several dead, skeletal trees stand in the water, their trunks partially submerged. The sky is a pale blue, and distant hills are visible on the horizon. The overall scene is serene and natural.

# Transformational Change & Additionality



# Transformational change

- ▶ Deep, systemic, and sustainable change with large-scale impact
- ▶ Criteria:
  - (1) Relevance
  - (2) Depth of change
  - (3) Scale of change
  - (4) Sustainability
- ▶ Eight cases purposefully selected

## PERFORMANCE AND IMPACT

# Examples: transformational change

### Uruguay

Wind power  
2008: 0%  
2016: 33%

### Africa

1.3 mln – quality  
solar lanterns;  
  
Private market  
transformed

### Amazon

13.2 mln ha –  
strict protection  
10.8 mln ha –  
sustainable use

### China

Wind power  
2005: 1.3 GW  
2015: 129.3 GW

### Namibia

98% PAs improved;  
  
Doubled number of  
wild dogs, leopards,  
cheetahs, lions  
(2004–12)



# Areas of GEF's Additionality

## Specific Environmental Additionality

- ▶ Value added to achieve global environmental benefits

## Legal/Regulatory Additionality

- ▶ Transforming legal/regulatory forms to support environmental sustainability

## Institutional Additionality/Governance Additionality

- ▶ Support to existing institution to efficient/sustainable transformation

## Financial Additionality

- ▶ Incremental cost from national/local benefits to global environmental benefits

## Socio-economic Additionality

- ▶ Livelihood and social benefits through GEF activities

## Innovation Additionality

- ▶ Technology and knowledge



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## SECTION 4

# Conclusions





# Conclusions on the GEF

## RELEVANCE

1. Serves multiple conventions and broad range of environmental issues
2. Strong Support to LDCs and SIDS

## PERFORMANCE

3. Long history of good performance
4. Ability to address linkages and synergies between focal areas

## TRANSFORMATIONAL

5. Ability to Create an enabling environment in countries through legal and regulatory reforms
6. Delivers innovative financial models and risk-sharing approaches

# Lessons for evaluation



**Partner with  
global institutions**

**Use mixed  
approaches  
and methods**



**Continue exploring  
new technology**



**Approach evaluation  
as a dynamic  
learning process**





# Implications for evaluation

- ▶ Evaluation: How? Why? Under what conditions?  
Dynamic!
- ▶ Must look beyond individual projects
- ▶ Define system boundaries
- ▶ Methodological rigor and credibility, adaptability
- ▶ Unintended consequences
- ▶ Do interventions make a difference?

Sustainable development lens!

Thank you!

<http://www.gefieo.org>