



Independent
Evaluation Office
GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY



Guidelines for Reporting on Completed Enabling Activities

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About These Guidelines

- i. Summary.** An enabling activity is a project for the preparation of a plan, strategy, or report to fulfill commitments under the relevant Global Environment Facility (GEF) environmental convention (GEF 2018). The [GEF Evaluation Policy](#) (2019) requires that GEF-financed projects be evaluated at the end of implementation. These guidelines are aimed at supporting GEF Agencies in reporting on completed enabling activities.
- ii. Output.** GEF Agencies will follow these guidelines to prepare a completion memorandum for a completed enabling activity. The completion memorandum will be in English and will be submitted to the GEF Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) through the GEF Portal. The memorandum may be prepared as a separate document or included within the report prepared for submission to the relevant GEF convention.
- iii. Applicability.** These guidelines are applicable to enabling activities financed through the GEF Trust Fund, the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF), and—where applicable—other GEF-administered trust funds.¹ They are applicable to all enabling activities that are funded by GEF grants of up to \$2.0 million. They are also applicable to multicountry enabling activities whose total GEF grants exceed \$2.0 million, but where the subgrant for each of the participating countries is less than or equal to \$2.0 million.² For an enabling activity processed as a full-size project (i.e., the total GEF grant exceeds \$2.0 million), the guidance in the [GEF Guidelines for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of Full-Size Projects](#) applies.
- iv. Precedence.** These guidelines are the first official guidance issued by the GEF IEO on reporting on completed enabling activities. They are effective January 1, 2024.

¹ In August 2006, the GEF Council decided that all GEF operational policies, procedures, and governance structures are to be applied to the LDCF and the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF) unless the LDCF/SCCF Council decides otherwise (GEF 2006). Accordingly, the LDCF and the SCCF currently apply the [GEF Evaluation Policy](#).

² In many cases, the enabling activities of several participating countries are grouped together in a single project to reduce costs.

1. Introduction

- 1. Mandate.** Minimum Requirement 3 of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) [Evaluation Policy](#) (GEF IEO 2019) requires that all GEF-financed projects be evaluated at the end of their implementation and the findings documented in a report sent to the GEF Independent Evaluation Office (IEO).
- 2. Definition and scope.** The GEF [Project and Program Cycle Policy](#) defines an enabling activity as “a project for the preparation of a plan, strategy or report to fulfill commitments under a Convention” (GEF 2018, 3). An enabling activity usually involves a GEF grant of up to \$2.0 million. While an enabling activity may spur actions that subsequently generate global environmental benefits, such benefits are unlikely to be realized at the end of implementation—and, when achieved, are often difficult to attribute to GEF support.
- 3.** Therefore, resources devoted to reporting on a completed enabling activity need to be in line with the scope of the supported activity and the level of the support; in most instances, a short memorandum of two to three pages would be sufficient. The memorandum may be submitted as a separate document or incorporated within the report submitted to the respective convention secretariat. A completion memorandum of enabling activities will report on whether the planned outputs of the evaluated activity were delivered and if the GEF grant was properly used. Where evident, it will also report on global environmental benefits, other outcomes, and unintended effects of the evaluated activity.
- 4. Purpose of the guidelines.** These guidelines are aimed at supporting GEF Agencies in preparing a completion memorandum for completed enabling activities. They explain [roles and responsibilities](#) across the GEF partnership in carrying out the reporting, the [contents](#) of the completion memorandum, and arrangements for its [submission and use](#).

2. Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 GEF Agencies

Output: product or service that results from the completion of activities implemented within a project or program (GEF IEO 2019).

Outcome: an intended or achieved short- or medium-term effect of a project or program's outputs (GEF IEO 2019).

5. Every GEF Agency that has implemented a GEF-financed enabling activity implemented in a single country will do the following:
 - a. **Prepare** a completion memorandum within three months of completion of the enabling activity.
 - b. **Ensure** that the completion memorandum provides a reliable and clear account of implementation of activities, delivery of [outputs](#), stakeholder involvement, time taken, resource utilization, and lessons. Where applicable, it should report on project [outcomes](#), including unintended positive and negative outcomes.
 - c. **Submit** the completion memorandum to the GEF IEO through the GEF Portal within six months after project completion.
6. **Format.** Agencies are encouraged to prepare a completion memorandum as a self-evaluation by the project team. The completion memorandum may be prepared as a separate report or, where applicable, incorporated within a report, strategy, or action plan prepared as an output of the enabling activity and submitted to the relevant convention secretariat.
7. **Multicountry enabling activities.** Reporting on an enabling activity that involves multiple countries may be challenging at implementation completion given disparities across countries in activity scheduling and start-up. Waiting until all activities in all participating countries are completed may make it difficult to compile information, as Agency staff may move on after activity completion. Therefore, Agencies may need greater flexibility in reporting on completion of such activities. An Agency may use one of the following options for reporting:
 - a. **Unified memorandum on full completion.** Prepare a unified memorandum within three months of completion of project activities in all the participating countries.
 - b. **Interim reporting.** Report on activities within a participating country by incorporating this information in the country's communications report to the respective convention. When project activities in all participating countries

are complete, the Agency will provide a compiled financial summary of resource utilization along with a table providing links to the individual reports submitted to the relevant convention secretariat.

- c. **Unified memorandum on partial completion.** Prepare a unified completion memorandum when activities in at least two-thirds of the participating countries are complete, clearly listing all the participating countries and the status of use of finances and delivery of outputs.¹

2.2 Evaluators

8. The evaluators² will do the following:
 - a. Use these guidelines in preparing the completion memorandum.
 - b. Ensure that the information provided in the memorandum is accurate.
 - c. Be impartial and present a balanced account consistent with evidence.
 - d. Abide by the [GEF Evaluation Office Ethical Guidelines](#).

¹ In such situations, information on the final status of resource utilization will be included in the communications report submitted to the respective convention secretariat for the countries in which activities are not complete at the point of memorandum preparation. This communications report will also be submitted through the GEF Portal as an annex to the completion memorandum.

² As used here, “evaluator” refers to the person preparing the completion memorandum. Because independent evaluation of enabling activities is not required, completion memorandums are expected to be self-evaluations. The project manager may draft the memorandum, as much of the required information would be readily available to him or her.

3. Content of the Completion Memorandum

9. The completion memorandum will address the following.
10. **General information.** The memorandum will provide general information about the project including project name, GEF project ID, country or countries covered, GEF Agency, executing agency, project milestones (e.g., start date, expected completion date, actual completion date), relevant GEF convention, objectives, activities, and implementation arrangements.
11. **Outputs and outcomes.** The memorandum will describe the expected outputs of the project and discuss how these are important to enable generation of global environmental benefits. It will provide an account of the outputs delivered and the factors that affected delivery. Most enabling activities may not achieve outcomes at the end of implementation. However, where an outcome is evident—including unintended outcomes—it should be reported.
12. **Implementation.** The memorandum will describe how the enabling activity was implemented. It will discuss the role of the GEF Agency and its executing partners in implementation of project activities. It will provide information on how the [stakeholders](#) were engaged in the process. It will also discuss the challenges faced during implementation and how these were addressed.
13. **Utilization of financing.** The memorandum will provide an account of the use of GEF financing provided for the project, including a breakdown by major line items. Where applicable, it will also provide information on promised and materialized [cofinancing](#).
14. **Lessons.** The memorandum will discuss lessons from the enabling activity, describing aspects of the enabling activity that worked well and those that did not, and implications for future work.
15. **Annex.** The memorandum should provide the project output (i.e., the report to the relevant convention secretariat) as an annex. Alternatively, the completion memorandum may be incorporated within the document prepared to fulfill the commitments to the relevant convention. In such instances, a separate annex will not be necessary.

Stakeholder: an individual or group that has an interest in a GEF-financed activity or is likely to be affected by it, such as local communities, indigenous peoples, civil society organizations, and private sector entities (GEF 2017).

Cofinancing: financing that is additional to GEF financing and that supports implementation of a GEF-financed activity and achievement of its objectives (GEF 2018).

4. Memorandum Submission and Use

4.1 Submission

16. GEF Agencies will submit the completion memorandum through the GEF Portal within six months of completion of an enabling activity. Where the information sought in the completion memorandum has been integrated in the document prepared to fulfill the commitments to the relevant convention, a separate completion memorandum is not necessary; instead, submission through the GEF Portal of the report provided to the convention secretariat will be sufficient.
17. The GEF IEO will track and report on submission of completion memorandums for enabling activities approved from GEF-8 onwards.

4.2 Use

18. The GEF IEO will aggregate and synthesize information presented in the completion memorandums to assess and report on performance of the GEF enabling activity portfolio. It will develop knowledge products based on the information provided in the memorandums. The Office will publicly share the completion memorandums and publish the data sets based on these reports.

References and Resources

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The Office undertakes independent evaluations at the strategic level. These evaluations typically focus on cross-cutting themes, such as focal area-wide topics or integrated approaches to delivering global environmental benefits. The IEO presents a GEF-wide annual performance report and also undertakes institutional evaluations, such as assessing GEF governance, policies, and strategies. The Office's work culminates in a quadrennial comprehensive evaluation of the GEF.

The Office cooperates with professional evaluation networks on developing evaluation approaches, setting standards, and delivering training—particularly with regard to environmental evaluation and evaluation at the interface of environment and socioeconomic development. We also collaborate with the broader global environmental community to ensure that we stay on the cutting edge of emerging and innovative methodologies.

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