Independent Evaluation Office
GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY

Evaluation of the Expansion of the GEF Partnership

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FULL REPORT

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Foreword

The independent overall performance studies of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) are undertaken to provide evaluative evidence to inform the replenishment on the achievements and results of the GEF. This evaluation is an input to Sixth Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF (OPS6). It assesses the effects of the expansion that the GEF partnership has undergone. It also assesses the extent to which the present structure of the GEF partnership meets the needs of its key stakeholders.

The evaluation found the expansion of the GEF partnership has provided the GEF increased access to new Agencies' networks and capacities, increased choices for recipient countries, and led to greater competition among GEF Agencies. It also shows that the GEF partnership is still adjusting to its recent round of expansion and that further expansion during the GEF-7 period may not be useful.

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Several GEF stakeholders, including the GEF operational focal points, the Secretariat, the Agencies, and civil society organizations, provided valuable inputs through interviews and participation in the online survey. The GEF Secretariat provided feedback on the draft report of the evaluation.

The GEF IEO is grateful to all these individuals and institutions for their contributions. Final responsibility for this report remains firmly with the Office.

Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AfDB	African Development Bank
BOAD	West African Development Bank (Banque Ouest Africaine de Developpement)
CAF	Development Bank of Latin America (Corporación Andina de Fomento)
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CI	Conservation International
CSO	civil society organization
EBRD	European Bank of Reconstruction and Development
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FECO	Foreign Economic Cooperation Office, Ministry of Environmental Protection of China
FUNBIO	Brazilian Biodiversity Fund (Fundo Brasileiro para a Biodiversidade)
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
MDB	multilateral development bank
OFP	operational focal point
PIF	project identification form
PMIS	Project Management Information System
SIDS	small island developing states
STAR	System for Transparent Allocation of Resources
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
WWF-US	World Wildlife Fund–US

The GEF replenishment periods are as follows: pilot phase: 1991–94; GEF-1 1995–98; GEF-2: 1999–2002; GEF-3: 2003–06; GEF-4: 2006–10; GEF-5: 2010–14; GEF-6: 2014–18; GEF-7: 2018–22.

All dollar amounts are U.S. dollars unless otherwise indicated.

Executive summary

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) was established in 1991, with the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme, and the World Bank acting as its implementing Agencies for GEF-funded activities. Since then, the GEF partnership has gone through two rounds of Agency expansion. The first round of expansion, which took place from 1999 to 2006, added seven more Agencies, including four regional multilateral development banks and three United Nations organizations. The second round of expansion, which took place from 2013 to 2015, led to the inclusion of eight more Agencies, including three national agencies, two subregional agencies, and three international civil society organizations.

At its October 2015 meeting, the GEF Council requested the GEF Independent Evaluation Office to conduct a survey of GEF Agencies and recipient countries on the GEF partnership's current structure. This evaluation was conducted in response to the GEF Council's request. It assesses the extent to which the GEF partnership's current structure meets the needs of its key stakeholders, optimizes delivery of GEF programs and activities, and promotes country ownership and presents the emerging results of the second round of expansion. The evaluation was conducted in November 2015–May 2017.

The evaluation has the following conclusions:

- As a result of the second round of expansion, Agency choice has increased for the GEF focal area and most recipient countries. However, the chemicals and waste focal area, small island developing states, and fragile states are relatively underserved.
- Expansion of the GEF partnership has led to an increase in competition for GEF resources in most countries.
- During GEF-6, the new Agencies garnered an 8-percent share of the GEF portfolio, which is reasonable given that the new Agencies are present in fewer countries and do not cover the GEF focal areas as comprehensively as the older Agencies do.
- The evidence to assess the differences between the projects designed by the new Agencies and projects designed by other Agencies remains weak. Nonetheless, a review of the two groups' fully developed project proposals suggests some areas where differences may exist.
- The expansion has enhanced country ownership, but the gain is modest and varies among countries.
- The operational focal points are generally satisfied with GEF Agencies' performance in delivering the expected services. Most operational focal points view the original Agencies' (the United Nations Development Programme,

the United Nations Environment Programme, and World Bank) capacities and quality of services more favorably than those of other Agencies.

- For some GEF Agencies, especially the multilateral development banks, the relative importance of the GEF partnership has diminished despite the continued mutual relevance of mandates.
- The recent expansion led to efficiency gains through capacities to implement smaller projects at lower cost and reduced project fees. However, it also led to increased costs of managing the partnership and temporary inefficiencies due to the new Agencies' learning curve.
- Key GEF stakeholders such as the GEF operational focal points, convention focal points, and GEF–Civil Society Organization Network members assess the GEF to be effective in delivering on its environmental mandate.

The GEF partnership is still adjusting to its recent expansion. While gains have been made in terms of increased access to the new Agencies' networks and capacities, increased choice and competition, and reduction in Agency fees, the costs of managing the partnership have increased.

Key stakeholders differ on the subject of further expansion of the GEF partnership. The majority of the operational focal points and a plural majority of the convention focal points that participated in the online survey called for either maintaining or decreasing the number of Agencies, whereas the majority of civil society organizations called for further increases. The existing GEF Agencies indicate that further expansion is likely to diminish the relative importance of the GEF partnership for them. Most Agencies indicated that they incur fixed costs when participating in the GEF partnership and may not be able to recover these costs if they are no longer able to access the same level of GEF resources as previously.

In addition, this evaluation has identified some gaps in terms of focal area coverage and country coverage. These gaps may be addressed by selectively bringing on board Agencies to address these gaps or by encouraging the existing Agencies to develop capacities in these areas and work with greater coordination and cooperation.

There is considerable variation in the perspective of key stakeholders on further expansion of the GEF partnership. Although some evidence of the recent expansion's effect is emerging, it is premature to assess its long-term impact. Drawing more informed conclusions on this front will be possible in a few years. Therefore, maintaining the number of GEF Agencies at their present level is appropriate for the GEF-7 period.

1: Background, key questions, and methodology

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) was established in 1991, with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the World Bank as its implementing Agencies. Since then the partnership has gone through two rounds of Agency expansion.

The first round of expansion, which aimed to provide recipient countries more choice, bring new expertise and networks to the GEF, and tap additional cofinancing resources, took place in 1999–2006 (GEF 1999). It added seven Agencies: four regional development banks—the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the African Development Bank (AfDB), the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)—and three United Nations (UN) organizations—the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). The second round of expansion took place in 2013–2015. In addition to advancing the aims of the first expansion, the second expansion prioritized accreditation of national agencies as GEF Agencies.[1] The second expansion added eight more Agencies—Conservation International (CI), the Development Bank of Latin America (CAF), the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), the Foreign Economic Cooperation Office, Ministry of Environmental Protection of China (FECO), the Brazilian Biodiversity Fund (FUNBIO), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the West African Development Bank (BOAD), and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF-US)—increasing the total to 18 Agencies. Of these, three are national agencies.

At its October 2015 meeting, the GEF Council requested the GEF Independent Evaluation Office to "conduct a survey across GEF Partner Agencies and recipient countries on the current structure of the GEF partnership, and make recommendations based on the results of this survey to feed into the planned review of the health of the GEF partnership as part of the Sixth Overall Performance Study of the GEF (OPS6)" (GEF 2015). The Office undertook this evaluation to respond to the Council's request. The evaluation assesses the extent to which the GEF partnership's present structure meets its key stakeholders' needs, optimizes delivery of GEF programs and activities, and promotes country ownership, and evaluates the emerging results of the second round of expansion.

A preliminary report based on emerging findings of the evaluation was presented to the GEF Council at its June 2016 meeting. This report updates the preliminary report's findings, accounting for additional data and analysis of several issues including

[1] See the policy recommendations of the negotiations for the GEF-5 replenishment (GEF 2010d) and GEF (2010b).

GEF project portfolio, feedback from operational focal points (OFPs), and emerging results of the expansion.

1.1 Key questions

The evaluation sought to answer the following questions:

- To what extent do the GEF Agencies provide access to new capacities and networks to deliver on the GEF's environmental agenda?
- To what extent do the Agencies, especially those added during the second round of expansion, support the GEF in facilitating priority actions in countries with capacity constraints?
- To what extent are the Agencies able to service the recipient countries' needs?
- What are the factors that enable and/or hinder the Agencies in being effective in their role?
- What are the emerging results of the second round of expansion?

1.2 Methodology

The evaluation started in November 2015. It employs the following methods and tools:

- **Desk review.** The reviewed documents include past evaluations conducted by the Independent Evaluation Office and other independent sources; GEF Council documents on broadening the GEF partnership; and notes from the interviews conducted for the Process Evaluation of the Expansion of the GEF Partnership, which the Office also undertook. The GEF Agencies' annual reports and their websites were also reviewed to assess the scale of their operations and the GEF share of their portfolios.
- **Quality at entry review.** The evaluation included a quality at entry review to compare the design of the projects prepared by the second-round GEF Agencies with those prepared by the other GEF Agencies. The medium-size and full-size projects, which were Council approved after June 1, 2012, and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) endorsed/approved before March 31, 2017, were considered for the review. In all, 839 projects met the criteria. All 15 GEF projects by the second-round GEF Agencies were reviewed. Of the 824 projects prepared by the other Agencies, a random sample of 30 projects was drawn for comparison. An instrument was applied to gather information on project design–related attributes.
- **Interviews.** Several key stakeholders, including the Agency and GEF Secretariat staff, GEF OFPs, and GEF–Civil Society Organization (CSO) Network members, were interviewed. Annex A lists the individuals interviewed, and annex B lists the guiding questions. In all, 66 individuals representing key stakeholders, which include GEF Agencies, GEF Secretariat, OFPs, and GEF-CSO Network members, were interviewed (table 1.1). Several individuals were interviewed on more than one occasion.

TABLE 1.1 **Number of respondents to surveys**

Respondent category	Number
Interviews, including teleconferences	66
GEF Agencies	39
GEF Secretariat	18
Others	9
Online surveys	150
GEF OFPs	32
Convention focal points	49
GEF-CSO Network	69
Total respondents	216

- **Online survey.** Online surveys were administered to gather perceptions of the GEF OFPs, convention focal points, and GEF-CSO Network members. The convention focal point and GEF-CSO Network surveys were administered in February–March 2016. The GEF OFP survey was first administered in the February–March period. However, only 22 OFPs responded, and so the OFP survey was re-administered in November 2016 to ensure greater participation. In all, 10 additional OFPs participated, increasing the total number of OFP responses to 32. In total, 150 individuals participated in these three online surveys (table 1.1).[2]
- **Project Management Information System (PMIS) database.** The cut-off date used for analysis of the PMIS database was December 31, 2016. Data on country characteristics, such as small island developing states (SIDS), least developed countries, fragile states, and landlocked countries, and on Agency characteristics, such as country presence, portfolio size, and other parameters, were merged with the PMIS project data set to facilitate analysis.

The term "Agencies" is used in this report to refer to all 18 agencies that have been accredited to implement GEF activities. The three Agencies that have been part of the GEF partnership since its inception are referred to as the "original Agencies." The Agencies brought on board during the subsequent expansions of the GEF partnership are distinguished based on the round of expansion during which they were included. Where appropriate, for brevity, the Agencies brought on board during the second round of expansion have been referred to as "new Agencies."

1.3 Limitations

The quality at entry review comparing project designs by two sets of Agencies is constrained by the new Agencies' small number of project proposals (15) that had received CEO endorsement/approval by the cut-off date for the analysis. Furthermore, this group of projects comprises only project proposals prepared by the international CSOs (IUCN, CI, and WWF-US), which limits the validity of the findings. While the online survey captures the participants' perspectives, low response rates may make considering the responses as representative of the respective stakeholder group difficult. Detailed interviews with a wider range of stakeholders mitigated this limitation.

[2] The number of actual responses was 178. After excluding duplicate submissions and those where none of the substantive questions were answered, 150 unique survey participants remained.

2: Findings

2.1 Access to new capacities and networks

The GEF partnership's expansion has increased the number of the Agencies that address environmental concerns related to GEF focal areas. Both rounds of expansion increased the Agency choices available in each GEF focal area at the overall partnership level. In addition, the expansion also increased the choices available to the recipient countries for programming GEF resources. Nonetheless, variations exist in terms of focal area coverage. Most GEF Agencies included in the second round of expansion cover the biodiversity, climate change, and land degradation focal areas. Only three of the eight new Agencies cover the chemicals and waste focal area (table 2.1).

FOCAL AREA COVERAGE

The three original Agencies covered all GEF focal areas (table 2.1). Of the seven first-round Agencies, only FAO covers all GEF focal areas, whereas the others cover fewer focal areas. While they all cover climate change, EBRD and UNIDO do not cover biodiversity, ADB and IFAD do not cover international waters, and EBRD and UNIDO do not cover land degradation. Only two of these Agencies—FAO and UNIDO—cover the chemicals and waste focal area.

All eight second-round Agencies cover the climate change focal area, and seven cover the biodiversity focal area. Only three of these Agencies, of which two are national agencies, provide coverage for the chemicals and waste focal area. Among the second-round Agencies, the national agencies and

TABLE 2.1 Focal area coverage by number of Agencies

GEF Agency (number)	Biodiversity	Climate change	International waters	Land degradation	Chemicals and waste
Original Agencies (3)	3	3	3	3	3
First-round expansion (7)	5	7	5	5	2
Second-round expansion (8)	7	8	4	5	3
National Agencies	3	3	1	2	2
Regional/subregional banks	1	2	0	0	0
International CSOs	3	3	3	3	1
Total (18 Agencies)	15	18	12	13	8

SOURCES: Accreditation applications, GEF project portfolio, and Agency websites.

international CSOs provide broader coverage of the GEF focal areas than the regional/subregional banks—BOAD and CAF—which tend to focus on biodiversity and/or climate change. Annex C provides more information on coverage of focal areas by Agency.

As of December 31, 2016, 33 project proposals by the new Agencies had their project identification form (PIF) approved. Of the new Agencies, the first four to be accredited—WWF-US, CI, IUCN, and DBSA—account for most of the new Agencies' share in the portfolio. In terms of focal area coverage, biodiversity (10 projects), climate change (6 projects), and multifocal area (11 projects) are represented among the new Agencies' PIF-approved projects. This distribution is broadly in line with the patterns at the GEF portfolio level.

CAPACITIES AND NETWORKS

The eight new Agencies added in the second phase of expansion provide access to additional capacities and networks. However, on average the new Agencies tend to cover fewer countries than the other Agencies (table 2.2 and annex table C.3). Of the 143 countries eligible to receive GEF funds during GEF-6, the new Agencies cover 136 countries (95 percent).[1] Much of this coverage is due to IUCN, which has relatively limited presence in countries where it does not have offices (table 2.2).[2] Of the other Agencies that were already part of the partnership before the second phase of expansion, FAO, IFAD, UNDP, UNIDO, and the World Bank cover all or almost all of the GEF recipient countries (annex table C.3).

The OFP online survey gathered the OFPs' perceptions of the second round of expansion. Sixty percent of the respondents noted that the second round of expansion has substantially or fully increased coverage of new geographical areas within their countries (table 2.3).

[1] None of the new Agencies has a presence in Afghanistan, Belarus, Cuba, South Sudan, Uzbekistan, or the Republic of Yemen.

[2] The country presence list for IUCN was generated based on the information provided at its website. The data on country coverage accounted for the country coverage of IUCN's activities for each of the listed regions. For each region, the website sometimes listed in detail the countries and projects where the organization is working, and sometimes it listed the countries where it has national committees. If only countries where IUCN has offices are considered, the coverage decreases significantly.

TABLE 2.2 Country coverage by new Agencies

Agency	Type	Country coverage		
		Number	Percentage (n = 143)	Region/country
BOAD	Subregional	8	6	West Africa
CAF	Regional	17	12	Latin America and the Caribbean
CI	International CSO	62	43	Global
DBSA	National	1	1	South Africa
FECO	National	1	1	China
FUNBIO	National	1	1	Brazil
IUCN	International CSO	127	89	Global
WWF-US	International CSO	50	35	Global

SOURCES: Accreditation applications, websites, and GEF list of countries eligible for receiving GEF grants for GEF-6.

TABLE 2.3 OFP perceptions on the realization of expected results from the second round of expansion

Expected results	Achieved fully or substantially			Moderately achieved or not achieved		
	Fully	Substantially	Total	Moderately	Not	Total
Overall achievement of expansion objectives	6 (23)	8 (31)	14 (54)	11 (42)	1 (4)	12 (46)
Competition among GEF Agencies	4 (15)	14 (52)	18 (67)	6 (22)	3 (11)	9 (33)
Efficiency in GEF operations	4 (15)	12 (46)	16 (62)	6 (23)	4 (15)	10 (38)
Access to new technical capacities to address environmental concerns	5 (19)	8 (30)	13 (48)	12 (44)	2 (7)	14 (52)
Choice in selecting an Agency for a GEF project	6 (23)	11 (42)	17 (65)	8 (31)	1 (4)	9 (35)
Country ownership of GEF activities	5 (19)	6 (23)	11 (42)	13 (50)	2 (8)	15 (58)
Capacity development of national institutions	6 (24)	5 (20)	11 (44)	12 (48)	2 (8)	14 (56)
Coverage of new geographical areas within a country	7 (28)	8 (32)	15 (60)	9 (36)	1 (4)	10 (40)

SOURCE: Online survey.

NOTE: *n* = 31. Figures in parentheses are percentages. "Unable to assess" and "not applicable" responses were excluded when calculating the percentages for different categories.

The GEF Secretariat staff interviewed for this evaluation indicate that, although the new Agencies are less proficient at managing GEF resources, they are likely to improve with experience. Some Secretariat program managers also noted that while the new Agencies are quite adept at addressing some priorities of the GEF focal areas, gaps exist in their coverage. The OFP online survey findings indicate that OFPs perceive the new Agencies to be less adept than other Agencies in providing services related to the GEF activity cycle. OFPs were asked to identify for each GEF focal area the GEF Agency that is best positioned to implement GEF projects. They identified the new Agencies to be best positioned for a focal area in only 4 percent of the instances. This is much lower than what the focal area and country coverage of new Agencies would suggest.[3] In comparison, an original Agency (UNDP, UNEP, or the World Bank) was listed as the best-positioned Agency in 78 percent of instances, and the first-round additions were identified to be the best positioned in 18 percent of instances. The convention focal point survey had a similar result: The respondents to this survey identified the new Agencies, the original Agencies, and the first-round additions to be the best positioned for their respective focal area (or convention) in 4, 78, and 18 percent of instances, respectively.

[3] In terms of numbers, the original Agencies account for 17 percent (3 of 18), the first-round Agencies for 39 percent (7 of 18), and the new Agencies for 44 percent (8 of 18) of the total number of GEF Agencies. However, this is not a good reference point because the levels of country and focal area coverage differ among Agencies. When the self-reported recipient country and focal area coverage of an Agency is accounted and weighted for accordingly for the 32 countries whose OFPs participated in the OFP online survey, the original Agencies account for 38 percent, the seven first-round Agencies 40 percent, and the new Agencies 22 percent of the focal area coverage choice available in recipient countries. Had the OFPs' preference for the Agencies been consistent with contingent probabilities, the survey results should have followed the projected pattern, i.e., the new Agencies would have been identified as the best positioned in about 22 percent of instances.

Interviews with different stakeholders indicate that the original Agencies may be perceived as better positioned for focal area programming because of their experience, global presence, capacities within the countries covered (especially true for UNDP and the World Bank), and comprehensive coverage of the GEF focal areas. In comparison, the new Agencies don't have a deep track record in implementing GEF activities and do not cover focal areas comprehensively. Nonetheless, the new Agencies have considerable strengths within certain components of the focal areas. During the interviews the GEF Secretariat program managers listed several of such components, such as forest restoration work (IUCN), use of community-based approaches in addressing artisanal mining–related concerns and commodities supply chain work (CI, WWF-US), expansion of protected area network (FUNBIO), environmental projects focused on indigenous communities (CI, FUNBIO), and mainstreaming of environmental concerns in infrastructure projects (BOAD, CAF, DBSA). Forty-three percent of the OFPs felt that the second round of expansion has provided countries enhanced access to new technical capacities to address environmental concerns, indicating their appreciation of the capacities the new Agencies provide.

The GEF Secretariat program managers acknowledge the new Agencies' ability to work at multiple scales and develop project ideas quickly. They find that the new Agencies' strong network with partners on ground helps them to work efficiently and avoid delays during implementation. This also enables the new Agencies—especially the international CSOs and national organizations—to implement projects that are of a smaller scale or require intensive supervision at the local level. Their continued presence at the national and subnational levels also increases their ability to ensure post-completion follow-up of a given project.

COMPARISON OF PROJECT DESIGN

To compare design features of the projects prepared by the new Agencies with those prepared by the other Agencies, a sample of CEO endorsed/approved projects prepared by these groups of Agencies was reviewed. All 15 new Agency projects that were CEO endorsed/approved by March 31, 2017, were reviewed.[4] These were compared with a representative sample of the 30 CEO endorsed/approved projects prepared by other Agencies during the period new Agencies have been active within the GEF partnership.

All 15 new-Agency projects that were reviewed were designed by the three international CSOs, and 10 (67 percent) of these are global and regional projects. Given the overrepresentation of CSOs and global and regional projects, these projects are not representative of the likely long-term new-Agency portfolio.[5] Despite the inherent problems in drawing strong conclusions based on such a limited sample, some differences among the two groups are salient (table 2.4).

[4] The CEO endorsement/approval stage is more appropriate for comparison of quality at entry of project design because the project design presented in the project documents is the most evolved at this point. While PIF approval stage would have increased the number of observations, little information on project design features would have been available at that stage.

[5] Already, when the portfolio is expanded to include PIF-approved projects, the share of the CSOs and of global and regional projects declined. However, PIF-approved projects cannot be used as a basis for comparison of the design because at the PIF approval stage the project design is not fully developed and sufficient details on key design parameters are not available.

TABLE 2.4 Comparison of project design features: new Agencies vis-à-vis other Agencies

Feature	New Agencies	Other Agencies
Number of sampled projects	15 (*n* = 15)	30 (*n* = 824)
Agencies represented in the sample	CI (7), IUCN (4), WWF-US (4)	UNDP (13), UNEP (5), UNIDO (4), WB (3), FAO (2), IDB (2), EBRD (1)
Number of global and regional projects	10 (67%)	6 (20%)
Average GEF grant for sampled projects (million $)	3.2	3.3
Median of cofinancing ratios of projects	3.3	4.6
Average cofinancing ratio	5.0	7.7
Project replicates an approach piloted elsewhere outside the project area	7%	10%
Project scales up an approach piloted elsewhere outside the project area	27%	7%
Project mainstreams an approach piloted elsewhere outside the project area	20%	0%
Project design includes activities to develop policy/legal/regulatory measures for government to adopt	13%	60%
Key stakeholders were consulted during preparation of the project	100%	100%
Project design includes arrangements to consult key stakeholders during project implementation	100%	100%
Project design accounts for the key risks involved in the project and includes measures to mitigate them	100%	90%
Project documents have specified Indicators to assess project results for all key areas	100%	90%
Specified indicators are appropriate for assessing project results	100%	60%
Project results framework includes indicators to monitor gender concerns	67%	60%
Private sector organizations are among the key beneficiaries of the project	7%	33%
Lead executing agency of the project is a CSO	53%	10%

NOTE: WB = World Bank.

New-Agency projects are more likely to have a CSO as lead executing agency than other Agencies (53 versus 10 percent). New-Agency project designs are also more likely to incorporate indicators that are appropriate for tracking project results (100 percent versus 60 percent of projects). However, new-Agency projects are less likely to include activities to develop the legal, policy, and regulatory framework of the recipient countries than those of other Agencies (13 versus 60 percent).

One of the expected benefits of the expansion of the GEF partnership is the GEF's enhanced ability to raise cofinancing (GEF 2010b). The data show that CEO endorsed/approved projects by the new Agencies mobilized cofinancing commitments of 5.0 dollars per dollar of GEF grant. This is close to the 6:1 ratio for the GEF project portfolio mandated by the GEF Co-financing Policy (2014), but somewhat lower than the 7.7:1 ratio generated by the other Agencies' 30 projects.[6] The ratio more or less remains in the same range when the pool of

[6] The cofinancing ratio for the other Agencies remains more or less the same at 7.5:1 when the data for the entire sample universe of 824 projects are taken into account.

new-Agency projects is enhanced by inclusion of PIF-approved projects. Thus, the data so far provide little support that the new Agencies enhance the GEF's ability to raise cofinancing. However, the data do suggest that they may help access a more diverse set of cofinancing partners.

The new Agencies represented in the sample (CI, IUCN, and WWF-US) mobilize a relatively higher share from community-based organizations or nongovernmental organizations, bilateral organizations, and private foundations (55 versus 8 percent). In comparison, the other Agencies tend to mobilize a greater share from the government and public sector and multilateral organizations (71 versus 20 percent). In terms of cofinancing ratios, the cofinancing mobilized by the new Agencies is lower than that by the other Agencies. Annex D compares the projects of these two groups of Agencies in more detail.

2.2 Country coverage and choice

GEF (2010d), which called for the (second round of) expansion of the GEF partnership, notes that an increase in number of Agencies "could provide countries with more choice." To assess the extent to which the number of GEF Agencies has increased at the country level, each GEF Agency's country presence was accounted for based on self-reported data. However, an Agency's presence in a given country does not mean that the presence is intensive, that coverage of GEF focal areas is comprehensive, and that experience in the country is sufficiently long. Therefore, although a GEF Agency may be currently present in a country, the national stakeholders may not perceive it to be active (within the country) or may not be aware of its presence. The evaluation gathered data on whether an Agency is active in a given country through the OFP online survey. The data from this survey were used as an indicator of the extent to which recipient countries' choice in selecting Agencies has changed due to the expansion.

The Agencies' self-reported data show that the recent expansion of the GEF partnership has, on average, resulted in the presence of about two additional Agencies per recipient country (table 2.5). Compared with other recipient countries, the data show that about two more agencies are present in countries with a GEF System for Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR) allocation of $20 million or more. The data also show that, although the second round of expansion led to more GEF Agencies across all GEF recipient categories, the least developed countries, SIDS, fragile countries, and landlocked countries experienced only modest increases in Agency presence.

The GEF OFPs' perceptions of whether a GEF Agency is active in the given relevant country is probably a better indicator of whether a GEF OFP is aware of the Agency's work on ground and whether the Agency is regarded as an option to service the country's needs. Table 2.6 compares the survey findings with the Agencies' self-reported data on country presence. The comparison shows that the OFPs in the 32 countries identified an average of two fewer active Agencies than the Agencies' self-reported country presence.

Different country groups differed substantially in terms of active Agencies gained through the second round of expansion. For example, a country with more than $20 million in GEF STAR allocation for GEF-6 on average experienced an increase of two to three Agencies as a result of expansion. In comparison, about one in two SIDS and one in three fragile economies experienced an additional active Agency in their country. IUCN drove much of the increase in self-reported Agency presence in SIDS. Of the 38 SIDS countries that were eligible for GEF STAR allocation, IUCN was present in 35 (92 percent); however, of the seven OFPs from

TABLE 2.5 Average number of GEF Agencies in recipient countries for GEF-6

Country group	No. of countries	Original Agencies (3)	1st round expansion Agencies (7)	2nd round expansion Agencies (8)	Total Agencies (18)
Country groups based on special characteristics					
Least developed countries	47	2.6	3.9	1.6	8.1
Fragile	32	2.4	3.8	1.5	7.7
SIDS	38	2.4	3.6	1.6	7.6
Landlocked	34	2.7	4.1	1.6	8.4
Country groups based on GEF-6 STAR Allocation					
≤ $7 million	49	2.4	3.7	1.5	7.6
$7–10 million	35	2.7	4.0	1.8	8.5
$10–20 million	33	2.7	4.0	1.6	8.3
$20+ million	26	2.8	4.4	2.9	10.2
All countries	143	2.6	4.0	1.9	8.5

SOURCE: GEF PMIS.

TABLE 2.6 Number of GEF Agencies in recipient countries: Agency self-reported data versus OFP perceptions

Country group	No. of countries	Original Agencies (3)		1st round expansion Agencies (7)		2nd round expansion Agencies (8)		Average no. of Agencies	
		Self-reported	OFP survey	Self-reported	OFP survey	Self-reported	OFP survey	Self-reported	OFP survey
Country groups based on special characteristics									
LDCs	8	2.4	2.8	3.8	2.4	1.3	0.9	7.4	6.0
Fragile	7	2.6	2.6	3.4	2.1	1.3	0.3	7.3	5.0
SIDS	7	2.6	2.7	3.3	1.4	1.1	0.6	7.0	4.7
Landlocked	5	2.7	2.8	4.2	2.4	1.5	1.0	8.3	6.2
Country groups based on GEF-6 STAR allocation									
≤ $7 million	8	2.8	2.9	3.4	2.3	1.4	0.6	7.5	5.9
$7–10 million	10	2.6	2.6	3.8	2.2	1.6	0.7	8.0	5.5
$10–20 million	6	2.8	3.0	4.3	2.8	1.7	1.3	8.8	7.2
$20+ million	8	3.0	3.0	4.5	3.5	3.8	2.5	11.3	9.0
OFP survey countries	32	2.8	2.8	4.0	2.7	2.1	1.3	8.8	6.8

SOURCES: Online survey; GEF PMIS.

NOTE: LDCs = least developed countries.

SIDS who participated in the online survey only two identified IUCN as an active Agency in their country. Thus, increase in country coverage and choice due to the second round of expansion is uneven across countries, and the effective increase is more modest in countries that face capacity constraints.

Although the self-reported data on Agencies' country presence is a somewhat optimistic indicator of the active Agencies in a country, especially first- and second-round Agencies, the data may provide useful insights into change in programming choices available for different focal areas in recipient countries. Table 2.7, which is based on the Agencies' self-reported data, summarizes this information. While availability of choices for most GEF focal areas seems to have improved, the increase is clearly limited for the chemicals and waste focal area: 65 percent of the GEF recipient countries experienced no increase in agency choice for this focal area.

2.3 GEF portfolio and Agency shares

The share of Agencies within the GEF portfolio may be assessed in terms of their share in GEF grants as the lead Agency or as the GEF project funds they manage.[7] Table 2.8 presents the data based on the share as lead Agency, and annex table C.5 presents these data based on actual resources managed. The share (as lead Agency) of the three original Agencies in the GEF project portfolio has declined from 100 percent in the Pilot Phase to 69 percent in GEF-5. The three original Agencies have experienced different trends (table 2.8). UNEP increased its share from a modest 3 percent during the Pilot Phase to 13 percent during the GEF-5 period. The share of UNDP has generally moved within a narrow range from 30 to 38 percent, although the figures for the GEF-6 period so far indicate that UNDP's share for the GEF-6 period may be somewhat lower. The World Bank's share declined from 64 percent in the Pilot Phase to 20 percent in GEF-5. The figures for the GEF-6 period thus far show some uptick in the World Bank's share as lead Agency; however, this increase disappears when the figures are adjusted based on the actual funds implemented (see annex table C.5).

[7] This includes funds that they manage as co-Agency in a jointly implemented project, but deducting the funds that are co-managed by other Agencies for a joint project that they lead.

TABLE 2.7 Increase in GEF Agency choice in recipient countries from the second round of expansion, by focal area

Focal area	No increase	Increase by at least 1	Increase by at least 2	Increase by at least 3	Increase by at least 4	Increase by at least 5
Biodiversity	7 (5)	136 (95)	77 (54)	34 (24)	11 (8)	1 (1)
Climate change	7 (5)	136 (95)	84 (59)	35 (24)	11 (8)	1 (1)
International waters	8 (6)	135 (94)	75 (52)	29 (20)	1 (1)	0 (0)
Land degradation	8 (6)	135 (94)	75 (52)	29 (20)	2 (1)	0 (0)
Chemicals and waste	93 (65)	50 (35)	2 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Any focal area	7 (5)	136 (95)	84 (59)	35 (24)	11 (8)	1 (1)

SOURCES: GEF PMIS; survey of Agency websites; survey of Agency applications for accreditation.
NOTE: *n* = 143. Figures in parentheses are percentages.

TABLE 2.8 GEF project portfolio by lead Agency and replenishment period (million $)

Agency	Pilot	GEF-1	GEF-2	GEF-3	GEF-4	GEF-5	GEF-6[a]	Total
World Bank	453.6 (64)	794.0 (66)	1,022.4 (58)	1,394.6 (53)	751.7 (29)	824.4 (20)	540.9 (26)	5,781.5 (38)
UNDP	240.0 (34)	358.6 (30)	552.1 (31)	855.3 (33)	979.3 (38)	1,484.8 (36)	596.1 (28)	5,066.2 (33)
UNEP	19.0 (3)	43.7 (4)	182.7 (10)	266.3 (10)	330.5 (13)	531.0 (13)	277.6 (13)	1,650.9 (11)
Subtotal, original Agencies	712.6 (100)	1,196.3 (100)	1,757.2 (99)	2,516.2 (96)	2,061.5 (79)	2,840.1 (69)	1,414.6 (67)	12,498.6 (82)
UNIDO	—	—	10.7 (1)	17.1 (1)	167.8 (6)	280.7 (7)	116.6 (6)	593.0 (4)
FAO	—	—	—	12.1 (0)	69.4 (3)	347.4 (8)	130.7 (6)	559.6 (4)
IFAD	—	—	—	26.2 (1)	79.2 (3)	74.6 (2)	119.4 (6)	299.4 (2)
ADB	—	—	6.4 (0)	43.3 (2)	79.3 (3)	75.6 (2)	49.3 (2)	253.9 (2)
AfDB	—	—	—	—	12.8 (0)	199.3 (5)	60.5 (3)	272.5 (2)
EBRD	—	—	—	—	47.1 (2)	60.9 (1)	28.2 (1)	136.2 (1)
IDB	—	—	—	15.3 (1)	86.1 (3)	187.4 (5)	27.0 (1)	315.8 (2)
Subtotal, 1st round expansion	—	—	17.1 (1)	114.0 (4)	541.6 (21)	1,225.9 (30)	531.7 (25)	2,430.3 (16)
CI	—	—	—	—	—	17.7 (0)	25.2 (1)	42.9 (0)
DBSA	—	—	—	—	—	—	30.5 (1)	30.5 (0)
IUCN	—	—	—	—	—	6.3 (0)	68.5 (3)	74.9 (0)
WWF-US	—	—	—	—	—	24.5 (1)	31.6 (1)	56.2 (0)
BOAD	—	—	—	—	—	—	2.7 (0)	2.7 (0)
CAF	—	—	—	—	—	9.7 (0)	—	9.7 (0)
FUNBIO	—	—	—	—	—	—	13.4 (1)	13.4 (0)
FECO	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Subtotal, 2nd round expansion	—	—	—	—	—	58.3 (1)	172.0 (8)	230.3 (2)
Total	712.6	1,196.3	1,774.2	2,630.3	2,603.1	4,124.3	2,118.4	15,159.2

SOURCE: GEF PMIS as of December 31, 2016.

NOTE: — = not applicable. Figures in parentheses are percentages of the GEF total for each replenishment period. Data include funding from the GEF Trust Fund, the Special Climate Change Fund, and the Least Developed Countries Fund. Figures for GEF-6 will change as the replenishment period is still under implementation.

The share of the seven first-round Agencies was 1 percent during the GEF-2 period. This increased to 30 percent during GEF-5. While partial figures for GEF-6 indicate a drop in share, the share remains substantial. Among the first-round Agencies, FAO and UNIDO have managed to gain significant share. Although IFAD managed to gain a 6-percent share as lead Agency for the GEF-6 period, its share in terms of the resources it actually manages is lower (see table 2.8 and annex table C.5).

The first second-round Agency (WWF-US) came on board in December 2013. The three new Agencies (WWF, CI, and IUCN) that were accredited before the end of GEF-5 (June 2014) were able to receive approvals for GEF activities during the GEF-5 period. Their combined share was about 1 percent of the GEF-5 portfolio. During GEF-6, when all of the new Agencies came on board, their combined share increased to 8 percent. This is substantial given that the new Agencies provide limited coverage and less than four years have passed since the first second-round Agency came on board.

During the GEF-6 period, the new Agencies have participated in several jointly implemented programs and projects as co-implementers. Examples include programs such as the Coastal Fisheries Programme (CI, WWF-US), the Food Security Integrated Approach Pilot (CI), the Global Partnership on Wildlife Conservation and Crime Prevention for Sustainable Development (IUCN, WWF-US), the Commodity Supply Chains Integrated Approach Pilot (CI, WWF-US), the Sustainable Cities Integrated Approach Pilot (DBSA); and the Amazon Sustainable Landscapes Program (WWF-US). Although examples of the new Agencies leading a jointly implemented project or a program exist, such examples are fewer. Exceptions include the Restoration Initiative program led by IUCN and the Sustainable Management of Madagascar's Marine Resources project led by WWF-US.

The experience of the seven first-round Agencies indicates how the portfolios of the new Agencies may evolve. The first-round Agencies made modest progress in gaining a foothold in the GEF portfolio during GEF-2 and GEF-3 when they were gradually accredited as GEF Agencies. At that point they faced several disadvantages, such as lack of experience in securing and managing GEF resources, lack of corporate budget, and restricted access to focal area funds. As their experience increased and the elimination of the corporate budget created a level playing field, the share of the first-round Agencies increased substantially during the GEF-4 period (table 2.8). While the absence of a corporate budget and restricted access to focal areas is not a concern for the new Agencies, they tend to have limited experience in securing and managing GEF resources, and this disadvantage may only be mitigated over time.

The PMIS data also show that the first-round Agencies' increase in share came at the expense of the World Bank, whereas UNDP and UNEP more or less maintained their share. However, as past Independent Evaluation Office analyses have also indicated, other reasons for the World Bank's loss in share may include fallout of the implementation of the Resource Allocation Framework (later renamed STAR), elimination of the corporate budget for the three original Agencies, reduction in Agency fees, and increased availability of internal resources within the multilateral development banks (MDBs) to address climate change and other environmental challenges. Increasing shares of the new Agencies will naturally reflect in the form of a decrease in the shares of the other Agencies.

2.4 Country ownership

The GEF Instrument requires GEF-supported activities to be country driven. Further, the second round of expansion of the GEF partnership was expected to align the GEF partnership with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and promote the agreed measures of the Accra Agenda for Action in GEF operations (GEF 2010b). Both the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda emphasize the importance of the principle of country ownership in aid effectiveness. The second round of expansion has enhanced country ownership, but the gain is modest and varies among countries.

The new Agencies may be classified into three different categories: national agencies (DBSA, FECO, and FUNBIO), regional or subregional agencies (BOAD and CAF), and international CSOs (CI, IUCN, and WWF-US). Recipient countries perceive each of these groups differently. The national agencies tend to receive strong support from the respective

OFPs in South Africa, China, and Brazil. The OFPs view accreditation of the national agencies as an instrument to build these and other national institutions' capacities and to facilitate better alignment of GEF activities with national priorities. For example, South Africa's OFP expects DBSA's accreditation as a GEF Agency to increase competition among the national institutions and to motivate others to adopt global best practices. Similarly, Brazil's OFP noted that inclusion of FUNBIO in the GEF partnership has strengthened country ownership because FUNBIO understands, and is aligned with, country priorities. Even in situations where the national GEF Agencies may not be the best positioned, OFPs have shown willingness to provide them with exposure to new environmental issues so that they deepen their capacities to tackle such issues.

BOAD and CAF, which are regional/subregional development banks, applied for GEF accreditation at the request of their member countries. BOAD and CAF report that they receive good support from the OFPs because the OFPs are familiar with their work. BOAD and CAF also report that they have a strong relationship not only with the finance ministries, but also with other ministries and sectors that they have worked with through their lending operations. BOAD also reported that in three of the eight countries that they cover, the GEF OFP or the political focal point is based in the finance ministry, which makes it easier for them to leverage their existing relationships and networks to support GEF activities. What distinguishes the regional and subregional agencies from the national agencies is that no presumption of alignment with the national priorities exists for the former as is the case for the latter.

International CSOs applied for accreditation with endorsement from at least one of the GEF country OFPs. In addition, they have had a relatively long track record of undertaking activities focused on addressing environmental concerns in several countries. However, this does not ensure that they would receive strong support in all the countries that they cover. Two of the three international CSOs reported having experienced difficulties in gaining endorsement from the OFPs for their proposals. Several GEF Secretariat staff also acknowledged the challenges that the international CSOs face in generating support in recipient countries. They also point out that in some countries the international CSOs' past involvement in policy advocacy work may not inspire OFPs' confidence in their new role as Agencies. Most Secretariat staff who were interviewed opine that these challenges will be mitigated as the international CSOs gain more experience as GEF Agencies and are able to strengthen their working relationships with the OFPs. Despite difficulties in gaining government support, GEF-CSO Network members appraise international CSOs favorably.

The recipient country experience of the second round of expansion of the GEF partnership varies substantially. Only three countries (Brazil, China, and South Africa) have gained exposure through a national Agency. The national and the regional/subregional Agencies combined cover only 19 percent (27) of the GEF recipient countries. Most countries that have experienced an increase in Agency choice have done so through the international CSOs. The OFP online survey findings indicate that achievement of the expected results of the second round of expansion in terms of "country ownership of GEF activities" and "capacity development of national institutions" is so far relatively modest, wherein most OFPs indicated that these objectives not been achieved or have been only moderately achieved (table 2.3).

2.5 Competition

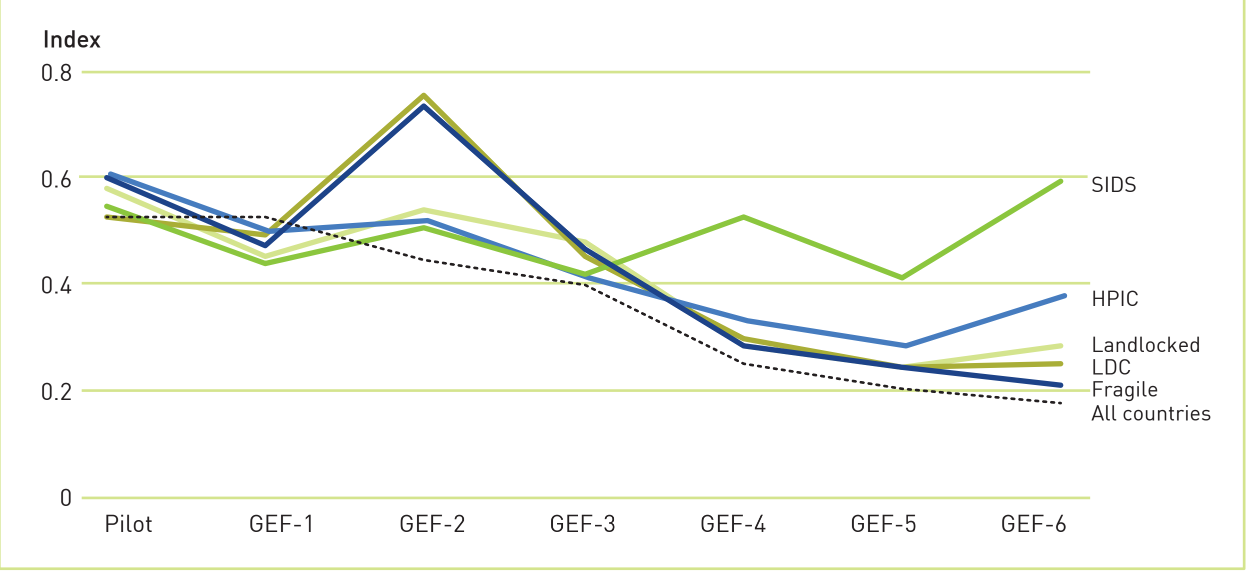
GEF IEO (2014a) addresses concerns related to competition for GEF resources, noting that increases in the number of Agencies and in member countries and GEF mandates have led to greater competition for GEF resources. An analysis of the Agencies in the GEF portfolio shows that this is indeed the case.

The Herfindahl-Hirshman Index is a commonly accepted measure of market concentration with values ranging from 0 to 1, with 0 indicating perfect competition and 1 indicating perfect monopoly. Figure 2.1 presents changes in the index for the GEF project portfolio through various GEF replenishment periods. The index is presented for the global portfolio and for various groups of countries that have special characteristics. The analysis shows that the level of concentration in the project portfolio share, as measured by the Herfindahl-Hirshman Index, has declined from GEF-1 onward. The decline has been steady, and most country groups with special characteristics, with the exception of SIDS, also show a declining pattern since GEF-2.

Recipient countries have perceived the increase in competition for GEF resources. Sixty-seven percent of the OFPs reported that the second round of expansion has fully or substantially achieved "greater competition among Partner Agencies" (table 2.3). Although the GEF-6 figures cover only part of the period, the data so far indicate a further decrease in concentration in Agency share.

GEF IEO (2014a) notes that the GEF Agencies acknowledge the case for making GEF more inclusive by increasing the number of Agencies. However, several indicated that too much emphasis on competition may now be eroding the underlying principles of partnership and undermining collaboration. The information gathered for the current evaluation is consistent with the assessment presented in GEF IEO (2014a). In general, Agency staff and GEF Secretariat program managers see merit in increased competition because it forces Agencies to be more responsive to country needs and become more efficient.

FIGURE 2.1 Herfindahl-Hirshman Index by country category



SOURCE: GEF PMIS.
NOTE: HPIC = heavily indebted poor country; LDC = least developed country.

However, they also point out that the increase in the number of Agencies may be bringing competition to a point where it is counterproductive and discourages collaboration. For example, several respondents—including GEF Secretariat and new Agency staff—point out that the increased number of Agencies is leading to more lobbying for GEF projects at the country level. OFPs may therefore need to deal with requests from a large number of Agencies and may not have adequate time to assess the relative merits of these requests. As a result, the Agency that the recipient countries eventually choose may not always be the best suited for the task. Agencies also pointed out instances where they had worked on a proposal after receiving a go-ahead from the respective OFP, only to learn later that another Agency had received the OFP endorsement letter even though they had not been notified about the decision. While prevalence of such instances is difficult to determine, the inference is that at least in some instances competition is leading to situations that strain relationships among Agencies and OFPs. The Agency respondents called for greater transparency from the OFPs in assessing their comparative advantage and in making decisions on project allocations.

The competition for OFP attention is also in part due to STAR, which has assigned greater authority to the OFPs to determine the programming of the country allocations for GEF focal areas covered by STAR. UN agencies seem to have been less affected as they have maintained close interactions with the OFPs. In comparison, the MDBs have struggled to maintain strong interactions with the OFPs and have therefore had varied success in working with them to develop project proposals that utilize country allocations. The staff of the MDBs that are GEF Agencies reported that the MDBs have been more effective in managing their relationships with OFPs in countries where an OFP is based in the finance ministry than in countries where the OFP is in the ministry responsible for environmental issues. PMIS data support this claim, showing that MDBs indeed have a larger share of GEF funding in countries where nonenvironmental ministries host the OFPs.

The new Agencies have not previously competed for GEF resources. Their perspective on competition is based on their actual experience in competing for GEF resources after onboarding compared with their expectations before accreditation. None of the staff interviewed from the national Agencies (DBSA, FECO, and FUNBIO) reported having faced excessive competition. Although their share in the GEF-6 portfolio within the countries for which they are accredited remains small, they see this as a function of the delays experienced in the accreditation process: by the time they were brought on board (especially FECO and FUNBIO), much of the STAR allocation for their respective countries had already been programmed. They noted the interest of some of the other GEF Agencies in collaborating with them for joint projects. Further, strong and sustained OFP support makes them confident that they are better placed for programming during GEF-7. The other GEF Agencies also emphasized their willingness to work with the national Agencies on joint projects because of complementarity. However, some respondents from the other Agencies pointed out instances where the national Agencies have not collaborated with other Agencies to develop projects where they could have added immense value. They also pointed out instances where OFPs preferred selecting a national Agency where another GEF Agency would probably have been more appropriate.

Regional and subregional agencies such as BOAD and CAF noted that they had strong relationships with the OFPs. However, they are still in the preliminary stages of their interactions with the OFPs and therefore had not yet formed an opinion on how competition is affecting them.

During the GEF-6 period, the international CSOs have so far gained a combined share of 5 percent, which is substantial. Despite this substantial gain, the CSOs report facing greater than expected competition in accessing resources through STAR country allocations. The data lend this some support as two-thirds (67 percent) of the GEF resources accessed by the international CSOs through approved projects up to December 31, 2016, was for global and regional projects. In most countries the OFPs have a long-standing working relationship with the original Agencies, which are often viewed as best positioned to undertake GEF projects in different focal areas. Therefore, the international CSOs have struggled to get a break. These disadvantages for CSOs are likely to be mitigated as they gain more experience and are able to develop stronger relationships.

2.6 Quality of services

GEF Agencies provide several important services to recipient countries (annex table C.4).[8] Table 2.9 presents OFP perceptions of the overall quality of delivery by Agencies for the six services for which OFPs were asked to provide feedback. Most OFPs responded that the Agencies are performing satisfactorily in delivering these services. The level of satisfaction with Agency performance seems to be relatively high for services such as project preparation, project supervision and monitoring, and assistance with GEF national portfolio formulation. Although most ratings were in the satisfactory range, some respondents were unsatisfied with Agency follow-up on projects and with timeliness in communicating project implementation progress. The OFPs also noted in their comments that the Agencies should consult more with them during project preparation.

The online survey asked the OFPs to identify the Agencies that deliver the most value or are best positioned to address select performance parameters. Table 2.10 presents these findings, showing that for all parameters most OFPs pointed out one of the three original Agencies as delivering the best value or as best positioned to deliver. Although one or more of the first-round Agencies were mentioned as delivering the best value or as best positioned on certain performance parameters (table 2.10), in general the first-round Agencies had substantially fewer mentions than the original Agencies. Nonetheless, several OFPs recognized their strengths in implementing projects, demonstrating reliability, undertaking medium-size projects, engaging the private sector, and working on projects focused on local communities.[9] Given that the OFPs may not yet have had sufficient exposure to the new Agencies' work, naturally this group was not mentioned on most parameters—however, at least in some instances, OFPs did identify the new Agencies as delivering best value or being best positioned for projects focused on the private sector (BOAD, WWF-US), on local communities (WWF-US), and on capacity

[8] The OFP online survey asked respondents to assess the six services listed in the survey in terms of their importance to the country. These six services were assessed to be "very important" or "important" by almost all of the respondents (annex table C.4). The respondents also had the option of specifying any other service that they considered to be important. The respondents did not specify additional services, although some emphasized some aspects of the discussed services in their comments.

[9] IDB for full-size projects (1 respondent); AfDB (1), FAO (3), and UNIDO (1) for medium-size projects; UNIDO for programmatic approaches; AfDB, FAO, and IFAD for engaging the private sector; FAO for engagement of local communities and projects focused on capacity building.

TABLE 2.9 OFP perceptions of quality of services provided by GEF Agencies

Parameter	Satisfactory range				Unsatisfactory range			
	HS	S	MS	Total	MU	U	HU	Total
Overall performance of the GEF Agencies	4 (13)	15 (48)	9 (29)	28 (90)	2 (6)	0 (0)	1 (3)	3 (10)
Assistance in formulation of GEF national portfolio	7 (27)	13 (50)	6 (23)	26 (100)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Preparation of new project proposals	10 (31)	16 (50)	5 (16)	31 (97)	1 (3)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (3)
Supervision and monitoring of project proposals	8 (25)	16 (50)	7 (22)	31 (97)	1 (3)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (3)
Developing capacities of the national executing agencies	3 (10)	17 (59)	6 (21)	26 (90)	1 (3)	2 (7)	0 (0)	3 (10)
Supporting follow-up activities upon project completion	5 (16)	18 (56)	4 (13)	27 (84)	3 (9)	2 (6)	0 (0)	5 (16)
Timely communication of project implementation progress	5 (16)	13 (41)	10 (31)	28 (88)	1 (3)	1 (3)	2 (6)	4 (13)

SOURCE: Online survey.

NOTE: *n* = 32. HS = highly satisfactory; S = satisfactory; MS = moderately satisfactory; MU = moderately unsatisfactory; U = unsatisfactory; HU = highly unsatisfactory. Figures in parentheses are percentages. "Unable to assess" and "no one stands out" responses were excluded when calculating the percentages for different categories.

TABLE 2.10 OFP perceptions of the GEF Agencies that deliver most value on select parameters (%)

Parameter	Original Agencies (3)	1st round expansion Agencies (7)	2nd round expansion Agencies (8)	None stand out
Agency that is most:				
Responsive to country needs	83 (25)	7 (2)	0 (0)	10 (3)
Active	78 (25)	13 (4)	0 (0)	9 (3)
Reliable	70 (21)	17 (5)	0 (0)	13 (4)
Effective in project preparation	77 (24)	6 (2)	0 (0)	16 (5)
Effective in project Implementation	61 (19)	16 (5)	3 (1)	19 (6)
Effective in post-implementation follow-up	66 (19)	7 (2)	0 (0)	28 (8)
Agency that is best positioned to undertake:				
Full-size projects	84 (27)	6 (2)	0 (0)	9 (3)
Medium-size projects	66 (21)	22 (7)	3 (1)	9 (3)
Programs	72 (23)	3 (1)	0 (0)	25 (8)
Projects focused on the private sector	41 (13)	16 (5)	13 (4)	31 (10)
Projects focused on local communities, especially indigenous people and women	61 (19)	16 (5)	13 (4)	10 (3)
Projects focused on capacity building	75 (24)	6 (2)	6 (2)	13 (4)

SOURCE: Online survey.

NOTE: *n* = 32. Figures in parentheses are number of responses. "Unable to assess" responses were excluded when calculating the percentages for different categories.

building (WWF-US) and project implementation, in their respective countries.

Among the Agencies, most OFPs identified UNDP as delivering the best value or being best positioned in almost all categories pertaining to project preparation, underscoring a strong OFP preference for the organization. Most OFPs identified the World Bank as the Agency that is most effective in project implementation. The World Bank was also mentioned several times for delivering the best value or being best positioned in terms of being the most reliable, being effective in project preparation, undertaking full-size projects and programs, and engaging with the private sector. Although UNEP did not emerge as the most-mentioned Agency in any of the performance categories, it was acknowledged for being the most active and reliable and for being best positioned to undertake medium-size projects and programs and capacity-building activities. OFP perceptions of the different Agencies' strengths are important because this perception affects their choice for developing project ideas. Strong preference for the three original Agencies also indicates the effort needed from the new Agencies to be considered.

Of the 32 OFPs who participated in the online survey, in response to the question "which Agency is best positioned to undertake projects focused on the private sector," 10 OFPs (31 percent) chose the response "none stands out." In response to the question "which Agency is best suited for undertaking programs," eight (25 percent) chose "none stands out." The reasons for these responses regarding private sector projects and undertaking programs need to be better understood and tracked.

2.7 GEF as the partner of choice

GEF Agencies value the resources that GEF provides to generate global environmental benefits. They view the GEF support for environmental activities to be complementary to their own operations. Most of the Agencies also acknowledge that well-regulated competition among them is important to address the needs of the recipient countries efficiently and effectively. However, for several Agencies, especially MDBs, the relative importance of the GEF partnership has diminished despite its continued relevance to their respective mandates.

Although the Agencies compete for GEF resources, the GEF in turn competes to be their partner of choice. An important consideration for a GEF Agency may be the extent to which GEF funding contributes to its work program. Table 2.11 compares the scale of its Agencies' annual work programs and GEF's share of those programs. GEF funding accounts for 5–30 percent of the UN organizations' total funding and 0.1–1 percent of the MDB portfolios. MDB and UN organization portfolios are not directly comparable because the former consists primarily of loans and the latter of grants. However, this vast difference in the magnitude of the share of GEF funding within the portfolios of the two groups indicates that, inter alia, the GEF may face a greater challenge in getting attention from the MDBs' top management than that of the UN organizations.

During interviews, MDBs noted the importance of GEF funding in helping them unlock large-scale investment opportunities in projects that address environmental concerns. Given that GEF resources primarily take the form of grants, inclusion of a GEF grant component may make the financing package more attractive to the recipient countries. However, the benefits of including a GEF grant in the package must be balanced with the transaction

TABLE 2.11 Scale of operations and share of GEF funding by Agency

Agency	Estimated scale of Agency's annual work program ($)	GEF funding as a share of Agency expenditure/budget (%)
MDBs		
ADB	≈ 20–22 billion	≈ 0.1
AfDB	≈ 5–7 billion	≈ 1
EBRD	≈ 11–12 billion	≈ 0.2
IDB	≈ 10–12 billion	≈ 0.5
World Bank Group	≈ 50 billion	≈ 0.5
UN organizations		
FAO	≈ 1 billion	≈ 10
IFAD[a]	≈ 1 billion	≈ 5
UNDP	≈ 4.3 billion	≈ 10
UNEP	≈ 0.5–0.8 billion	≈ 30
UNIDO	≈ 0.35 billion	≈ 25

SOURCES: GEF PMIS; ADB 2014a, 2014b; AfDB 2014, 2015; EBRD 2014, 2015; FAO 2013; IDB 2014, 2015; IFC 2013, 2015; UNDP Transparency Portal (https://open.undp.org); UNEP 2014, 2015, 2016; UNIDO 2015; and World Bank 2015.

a. Like the MDBs and unlike the other UN organizations, IFAD has a sizable lending operation.

costs involved in accessing the grant and other financing alternatives that may be available. In the past decade or so, several MDBs have dedicated substantial funds to their climate finance lending portfolios (e.g., ADB and the World Bank). Several of them, e.g., ADB and the World Bank, have also internally managed sources of grants that may be used for environmental projects. World Bank's Independent Evaluation Group (2013) cites the advent of these internally available funding alternatives as one of the reasons for diminished World Bank–GEF partnership, despite high compatibility and mutual relevance of mandates.

Another important challenge in maintaining the MDBs' interest in GEF activities is the transaction cost of accessing GEF grants. The MDBs are strong in designing and implementing projects at scale, i.e., projects that require large-scale funding. However, with the advent of STAR in GEF-4, the opportunities to develop investment projects have declined. For example, only 41 percent of the GEF recipient countries had a GEF-6 STAR country allocation of more than $10 million and only 18 percent had an allocation greater than $20 million. Frequent changes in project cycle–related requirements (including reporting requirements) and reduced predictability of GEF resources also increases the transaction costs. Several MDB staff acknowledged the progress being made in reducing transaction costs involved in the project preparation process through "harmonization," but reported that in several other aspects these costs have remained. The increased focus on programmatic approaches for GEF support is also appreciated as a measure that has addressed scale-related concerns.

The MDBs continue to be important partners for the GEF because they are in a better position to mainstream GEF priorities in development activities at scale. They leverage considerable levels of cofinancing and provide GEF access to strong technical capacities to address environmental challenges. Therefore, the GEF must find ways to retain and enhance their interest and participation.

UNDP and UNEP have been part of the GEF partnership since its inception. As noted earlier, through the course of GEF history UNDP has had a fairly stable share (generally 30–38 percent[10]), and UNEP was able to increase its share. FAO and UNIDO, which were brought on board during the first round of expansion, also managed to increase their shares, to 8 percent and 7 percent, respectively, during GEF-5. The share of IFAD, which along with being a UN agency is also a financial institution, has been 2–3 percent until GEF-5.

Taken as a group, the share of UN agencies has increased from 37 percent during the Pilot Phase to 66 percent in GEF-5. What has especially benefited the UN agencies, especially UNDP, has been the advent of STAR. Despite the substantial increase in the number of Agencies after the first and second rounds of expansion, UNDP has been able to retain its relatively high share in the GEF portfolio because of its country presence, comprehensive coverage of the GEF focal areas, and strong working relationship with the GEF OFPs. Other UN agencies have advanced their shares in focal areas where they have a comparative advantage, although their overall coverage of GEF focal areas and recipient countries is not as comprehensive as that of UNDP. FAO gained share in the biodiversity, climate change (adaptation), and land degradation focal areas. UNIDO made gains in the climate change (mitigation) and chemicals and waste focal areas. The increasing share of the UN organizations indicates their continued strong interest in GEF partnership. Looked at from another perspective, as table 2.11 shows, GEF support accounts for 10–30 percent of the UN Agencies' program resources, excluding IFAD. Therefore, that the UN organizations have tended to show greater interest in the GEF partnership is not surprising. Although they expressed concerns about a gradual decline in project fees and changing project cycle–related requirements, UN agencies have in general made greater efforts to adapt to GEF policies and processes.

The new Agencies are keen to develop their GEF project portfolios. Most of the new Agencies were not included in country-level programming for GEF-6, as several countries had already committed the STAR country allocation resources for GEF-6 by the time they started approaching the OFPs for project proposals. Nonetheless, all the new Agencies have now had experience in preparing and submitting a PIF, and by December 31, 2016, seven of them had gotten a project approved. In general, new Agencies have found that getting a project approved has been more difficult than they anticipated.

BOAD and CAF's experience with the GEF project cycle remains very limited, because they were among the last to come on board during the second round of expansion. International CSOs, which were among the first to come on board during the second round and have already secured several PIF approvals for global and regional projects, have found obtaining support in most countries for national projects difficult. Some of this is because the OFPs have a fairly positive perception of the older GEF Agencies' performance (table 2.10) and are more familiar with their work. The relative inexperience of the international CSOs vis-à-vis the older Agencies in dealing with the GEF project cycle is another reason why OFPs have been relatively cautious in endorsing their proposals. Most of the concerns related to this learning curve are likely to be mitigated as the new Agencies gain more experience.

Most new Agencies report that to be cost effective and provide the full range of services expected, they will need to have a GEF portfolio of around $15–30 million of new GEF funds per year. Achieving this level of funding will push some of the new

[10] This is based on the approved projects that have been led by UNDP and excludes the resources UNDP manages for the GEF Small Grants Programme.

Agencies, especially international CSOs, closer to their GEF funding ceiling, which several indicate is not quite fair, given that some UN Agencies access GEF funds at levels higher than the ceiling applicable to the new Agencies. The GEF's attractiveness as a partner of choice for new Agencies depends on the extent to which they feel included in the partnership, are treated fairly, and are able to develop their portfolios.

2.8 Expansion and efficiency

The GEF-5 replenishment participants expected the GEF partnership's expansion to reduce the overhead costs of resource delivery. The evidence available so far indicates that the efficiency gains in some areas may be balanced or even outweighed by the cost increases in others. Information asymmetry on costs incurred by the Agencies and in project execution makes determining the net gains or losses in fiscal terms difficult.

The older GEF Agencies (the original Agencies and those from the first round of expansion) are mandated to provide corporate services to the GEF, whereas new Agencies are not. Due to these different expectations, the project fee rate for GEF Agencies is pegged at 9.5 percent for projects with GEF grants less than $10 million and 9 percent for those above that threshold. A uniform rate of 9 percent applies for grants that the new Agencies manage. During GEF-6, the effective project fee rate for the new Agencies is 9.0 percent, whereas it is 9.25 percent for the other Agencies. Given the new Agencies' small overall footprint in the GEF portfolio, so far the net savings based on the difference in project fee for GEF-6 so far is $0.29 million.[11]

Although new Agencies need not provide support for corporate activities, most of them, especially the international CSOs, have been involved in these of their own volition. They indicate that nonparticipation in GEF corporate activities puts them at a disadvantage—for example, they will not be aware of likely changes in GEF policies and guidelines and will not be able to prepare accordingly. Thus, at least some of the new Agencies are incurring costs for providing corporate services, although they are not being compensated for doing so.

As noted earlier, the recent expansion has led to an increase in the transaction costs associated with the new Agencies' learning curve. Although individual experiences vary and some GEF Secretariat program managers have experienced no change in their work load, they generally report having to spend more time in upstream consultations and post-PIF submission back and forth on proposals. Due to lesser familiarity with GEF project cycle requirements, new Agencies take more time to develop proposals. Some of the new Agencies have addressed this by hiring staff with experience of working on GEF activities. Most respondents from the GEF Secretariat and the new Agencies assess the difficulties in project preparation to be a part of the learning process and expect it to be less of a bottleneck in future.

Inclusion of new Agencies, especially international CSOs, will likely enhance the GEF's ability to undertake projects that involve a smaller amount of funding. Although an increase in the funding ceiling for medium-size projects to up to $2.0 million is likely to increase the choice available to countries for undertaking such projects. The GEF program managers generally see the new Agencies as nimble and flexible. They believe that once

[11] The savings apply only to projects that involve GEF funding of less than $10 million. Up to December 31, 2016, in all 15 GEF-6 projects, which accounted for $58.48 million in GEF grants and were individually less than $10 million in GEF grants, had been approved. At a rate of 0.5 percent the savings due to these projects will be $0.292 million.

the new Agencies gain more experience, they would be able to address the project cycle requirements efficiently.

Broadly, OFP choice and competition for GEF resources are perceived to have increased (table 2.3). For most countries this may be useful from a cost-effectiveness perspective. However, some OFPs felt that the increase in choice of agencies has led to an increase in their transaction costs, as they are now required to manage relationships with more Agencies. Some also indicated a risk exists of spending more time in managing relationships than in strategic planning for the GEF portfolio. Some Agencies and a few Secretariat staff also expressed apprehension that the need to interact with more Agencies may put pressure on the OFPs to endorse projects that involve smaller GEF grant amounts so that all GEF Agencies active in a country can implement at least one project. Whether, and the extent to which, these issues are experienced should be tracked.

At another level, managing a partnership of 18 Agencies requires more time and attention from GEF management. Senior GEF management must now divide its "bandwidth" among a greater number of Agencies to make sure that GEF priorities continue to gain Agency management's attention. Interactions have become more time consuming: Several focal area coordinators at the GEF Secretariat and Agency staff noted that the focal area task force meetings and other interagency platforms are becoming difficult to manage and that having a constructive exchange of ideas is often difficult due to the increased number of participants.

2.9 Overall perceptions of GEF effectiveness

GEF stakeholders that are part of the GEF partnership assess the GEF to be effective in delivering on its environmental mandate. Among the stakeholders, OFPs tend to rate the GEF's overall effectiveness higher than do the convention focal points or CSOs.

The evaluation gathered perceptions of GEF effectiveness in generating global environmental benefits. While key stakeholders, such as OFPs, convention focal points, and CSOs, were contacted through an online survey, Agency and GEF Secretariat staff were interviewed. All these stakeholder groups are directly or indirectly involved in GEF activities. They all assess the GEF partnership to be effective in delivering global environmental benefits. Several Agencies noted the impressive track record of addressing important environmental concerns along with the ability to mobilize resources from different sources and partners. Of the stakeholders covered through online survey and who rated GEF performance, 100 percent of OFPs, 95 percent of convention focal points, and 88 percent of CSOs rated GEF performance in generating global environmental benefits to be in the "effective" range (table 2.12). The OFPs tend to provide higher ratings than the others. Although an overwhelming majority of CSOs rated the GEF performance to be in the "effective" range, they tended to be slightly more cautious in their assessment.

2.10 Perceptions of the scope for the partnership's expansion

The evaluation also gathered perceptions of further scope for the GEF partnership's expansion. Among the stakeholders surveyed, most OFPs and CSOs either called for the number of Agencies to be maintained or decreased, or were unable to assess. The GEF-CSO Network was the only group where the majority of respondents (51 percent) were in favor of a further increase in the number of GEF Agencies (table 2.13).

Most respondents at the GEF Secretariat and Agencies opined that at this juncture, where the

TABLE 2.12 Stakeholder ratings of effectiveness of GEF partnership in generating global environmental benefits

Rating	OFPs	Convention focal points	CSOs
Effective range	100 (30)	95 (37)	88 (56)
Highly effective	23 (7)	13 (5)	11 (7)
Effective	47 (14)	51 (20)	23 (15)
Moderately effective	30 (9)	31 (12)	53 (34)
Ineffective range	0 (0)	5 (2)	13 (8)
Moderately ineffective	0 (0)	3 (1)	9 (6)
Ineffective	0 (0)	3 (1)	2 (1)
Highly ineffective	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (1)
Unable to assess (no. of responses)	1	7	5
Total number of respondents	31	46	69

SOURCE: Online survey.

NOTE: Figures in parentheses are numbers of responses. The calculation of percentages excludes "unable to assess." Percentages may not total 100 because of rounding.

TABLE 2.13 Stakeholder perspectives on further change in the number of GEF Agencies

Response	OFPs	Convention focal points	CSOs
Number of Agencies should be increased	32 (10)	20 (9)	51 (35)
Number of Agencies should be maintained	52 (16)	39 (17)	31 (21)
Number of Agencies should be decreased	10 (3)	9 (4)	4 (3)
Unable to assess	6 (2)	32 (14)	13 (9)
Total	100 (31)	100 (44)	100 (68)

SOURCE: Online survey.

NOTE: Figures in parentheses are numbers of responses.

long-term effects of the second round of expansion remain to be understood, the GEF should maintain and not increase the number of Agencies. When the effects become clear, a more informed decision may be made. Among other reasons provided for not increasing the number of Agencies at this juncture are the following: the GEF partnership has become too complex; the GEF replenishment has not increased, without which sustaining the interest of the new Agencies and preventing fragmentation of resources may be difficult; a need exists for better understanding of the comparative advantage of the different Agencies and their roles going forward; and an assessment is required of the new Agencies' implementation capacities and the realization of the intended benefits of the expansion, including enhanced coverage, capacity development, and efficiency .

The few respondents who were open to further expansion noted that opportunities may exist to include some national agencies and/or international agencies that address an important gap that the present suite of Agencies cannot address. Examples of these include coverage of the chemicals and waste focal area, coverage of the Pacific SIDS, or a national Agency in an emerging economy. However, these respondents suggested that any further expansion should be linked to the replenishment for the GEF-7 period.

3: Discussion and recommendation

3.1 Discussion

This evaluation has identified some gaps in terms of focal area and country coverage. These gaps may be addressed by selectively bringing on new Agencies to address these gaps, or by encouraging the existing Agencies to develop capacities in these areas and to work with greater coordination and cooperation.

Although some evidence of the recent expansion's effects is emerging, it is still too early to assess its long-term impact. In a few years, drawing more informed conclusions on this front will be possible.

3.2 Recommendation

Maintain the number of GEF Agencies at their present level for the GEF-7 period. Maintaining the number at their present level is appropriate because the partnership is still adjusting to the inclusion of eight new Agencies and it is still too early to assess its long term impacts. The question of further expansion may be reopened again when data on the effects of expansion on environmental results on the ground become available and/or a change occurs in the level of resources available for GEF programming.

Annex A: Stakeholders interviewed

Name	Title	Institution, unit	Date
Recipient countries			
Zaheer Fakir	OFP, South Africa	Department of Environmental Affairs	Feb. 20, 2015
Julius Ningu	OFP, Tanzania	Director of Environment	Sept. 28, 2015
Vitor de Lima Magalhaes Tania Delfino Ribeiro	OFP, Specialist in Public Policy and Gov. Management General Coordination for External Financing, Brazil	Secretariat of International Affairs; Ministry of Planning, Budget and Management	Mar. 10, 2016
Civil society organizations			
Harvey Keown	Managing Director	Africa Foundation for Sustainable Development	Feb. 17, 2016
Ryan Jooste	Director	All for Africa Foundation	Feb. 19, 2016
Tonderai Chikono	Senior Partnership Negotiator/ Manager	National Partnership in Development Office, Humana People to People in South Africa	Feb. 19, 2016
Jaime Bastos	Executive Director	IPANEMA, Brazil	Mar. 9, 2016
Luiza Nunes Alonso	Volunteer	FUNDHAM, Brazil	Mar. 10, 2016
GEF Agencies			
Jean Yves Pirot	Director	IUCN	Jan. 8, 2015
Lilian Spijkerman Orissa Samaroo	Vice President —	CI	Jan. 9, 2015
Nomsa Zondi	Policy Advisor	DBSA (Windhoek)	Feb. 17, 2015
Noluthando Moledi	Senior Analyst	DBSA (Windhoek)	Feb. 18, 2015
Michelle Layte	Manager	Green Fund Secretariat, DBSA	Feb. 20, 2015
Orissa Samaroo Marion Deudon Kelly Polk	Senior Manager — —	CI	Mar. 6, 2015
Saphira Patel	Head Operations Evaluation Unit	DBSA	Feb. 12, 2016
Backson Sibanda	M&E Consultant DBSA	Director Bactha Consulting	Feb. 15, 2016
Olympus Manthata	Investment Manager	Green Fund, DBSA	Feb. 15, 2016
Mohale Rakgate	General Manager	Project Preparation Funds, DBSA	Feb. 15, 2016
Miguel A. Morales Orissa Samaroo	Vice President Senior Manager	CI	
Chris Warner	Senior Natural Resource Management Specialist	World Bank	
Dominique Kayser	Senior Operations Officer	Implementing Agency Coordination Unit, World Bank	Mar. 3, 2016
Gomez Garcia Palao	Senior Executive	CAF	
Fabio Leite	GEF Coordinator	FUNBIO	Mar. 7, 2016

Name	Title	Institution, unit	Date
Rosa Lemos de Sa Manuel Serrao Fabio Leite	Secretary General Director of Programs GEF Coordinator	FUNBIO	Mar. 7, 2016
Alexandria Vaina	Internal Auditor	FUNBIO	Mar. 8, 2016
Fernanda Marques	Coordinator	Donations National and International, FUNBIO	Mar. 8, 2016
Erica Polverari	Coordinator	Legal Obligations, FUNBIO	Mar. 8, 2016
Helio Hara	Gender Focal Point	FUNBIO	Mar. 8, 2016
Alexandre Ferrazoli	Safeguards Natural Habitat	FUNBIO	Mar. 8, 2016
Daniella Leite	Safeguards, Indigenous Peoples	FUNBIO	Mar. 8, 2016
Xiao Xuezhi Chen Haijun	Technical Director General Director	FECO	Mar. 10, 2016
Rosenely Diegues Peixoto	Programme Analyst & GEF Advisor	UNDP, Brazil Office	Mar. 10, 2016
Denise Hamu	Brazil Office Representative	Brazil Country Office, UNEP	Mar. 10, 2016
Ben Almani Almany Mbengue	Director Principal Financial Analyst	Climate Finance, BOAD	Mar. 14, 2016
Jean Yves Pirot	Director	IUCN	Mar. 15, 2016
David McCauley	Senior Vice President, Policy and Government Affairs	WWF-US	Mar. 31, 2016
Nessim Ahmad Bruce Dunn	Director, Environment and Social Safeguards GEF Coordinator	ADB	Apr. 7, 2016
Gustavo Marino	Director	Investment Sector Division, FAO	Apr. 8, 2016
Karin Shepardson Dominique Kayser Christopher Warner	Program Manager Senior Operations Officer Senior NRM Specialist	World Bank	Apr. 11, 2016
Juergen Hierold	GEF Coordinator	UNIDO	Apr. 12, 2016
Adriana Dinu	GEF Executive Coordinator	UNDP	Apr. 12, 2016
Brennan VanDyke	GEF Executive Coordinator	UNEP	Apr. 22, 2016
GEF Secretariat			
Kenneth King	Deputy CEO (former)	GEF Secretariat	Feb. 5, 2015
Ulrich Apel	Senior Environmental Specialist	GEF Secretariat	Feb. 11, 2015
Leah Bunce Karrer	Senior Environmental Specialist	GEF Secretariat	Feb. 20, 2015
Mark Zimsky	Senior Biodiversity Specialist	GEF Secretariat	Feb. 24, 2015
Yoko Watanabe	Senior Biodiversity Specialist	GEF Secretariat	Mar. 4, 2015
Monique Barbut	CEO (former)	GEF Secretariat	Mar. 30, 2015
Christine Roehrer Omid Parzikar	Lead RBM Specialist —	GEF Secretariat	Mar. 2, 2016
Ulrich Apel	Senior Environmental Specialist	GEF Secretariat	
Mark Zimsky	Senior Biodiversity Specialist	GEF Secretariat	Mar. 7, 2016
David Rodgers	Senior Climate Change Specialist	GEF Secretariat	
Jean-Marc Sinnassamy	Senior Environmental Specialist	GEF Secretariat	
Jaime Cavaliers	Senior Environmental Specialist	GEF Secretariat	Mar. 8, 2016
Henry Salazar	Senior Operations Officer	GEF Secretariat	Mar. 9, 2016
Mohamad Imam Bakarr	Lead Environmental Specialist	GEF Secretariat	
Ibrahima Sow	Senior Environmental Specialist	GEF Secretariat	Mar. 16, 2016
Anil Sookdev	Coordinator	GEF Secretariat	Mar. 24, 2016
Naoko Ishii	CEO, GEF	GEF Secretariat	Apr. 5, 2016

Annex B: Guiding questions for key stakeholders

B.1 Guiding questions for new Agencies

- In your assessment, what is the value that your organization adds to the GEF partnership?
- Are there specific areas within GEF focal areas and focal area strategies where you are making or will be able to make significant contributions?
- To what extent is being a GEF Agency adding value to your institution?
- In what ways has being a GEF Agency affected your organization's
  - Policies and processes
  - Institutional capacities?
- To what extent and how has involvement in the GEF partnership changed how your key stakeholders view your organization?
- What are the emerging results of your participation as a GEF Agency? Are there any results that are not yet evident but might become apparent later?
- After becoming accredited as a GEF Agency, how effective has the onboarding process been for your organization? To what extent and in what form have you received support from the GEF Secretariat to facilitate your onboarding?
- To what extent is it easy for you to get relevant information on GEF activities, policies, and procedures from the GEF website? Are there areas where you feel an information gap exists?
- Do you have a team in place to focus on the GEF portfolio? How this team is structured (staff deployed and its place within the organizational hierarchy), and how does it operate? What are its annual expenses?
- How is the evaluation function reflected in the organizational hierarchy? To what extent is it independent of the unit within the organization that oversees development and implementation of the GEF projects?
- How do you interact with the operational focal point and the GEF Secretariat in developing new project ideas?
- What has been your experience with the process of developing GEF project proposals? How has the experience been in seeking endorsement from the operational focal point?
- How have the interactions with the GEF Secretariat been during the project appraisal process? To what extent has the feedback from the program managers in Washington, DC, been useful? To what extent are they responsive?
- Does your organization have a targeted GEF portfolio size in mind? What level of GEF portfolio would help make your institutional

engagement in the GEF partnership cost effective?

- To what extent has competition among GEF Agencies increased due to recent expansion of the partnership? To what extent is this competition healthy or, conversely, counterproductive?
- To what extent has the partnership's expansion increased the choices available to the operational focal points?
- To what extent is the GEF partnership, including GEF Agencies, effective in delivering global environmental benefits, which is the GEF's main mandate?
- Should the number of GEF Agencies be increased, maintained, or decreased? Why? (If yes, what types of agencies should be included?)

B.2 Guiding questions for Agencies

- What are the areas where your Agency offers a comparative advantage to the GEF?
- What has the effect of participation in the GEF partnership been on your Agency?
- What has the effect of the increase in the number of GEF Agencies been on your Agency's relationship to the GEF? In what ways has this increase affected its participation in GEF activities?
- For the original Agencies only: How does the effect of the first round of increase in GEF Agencies (from the original three to 10 Agencies) compare with that of the latest round (10 to 18 Agencies)?
- Are there areas where you are experiencing or foresee greater competition, or where greater opportunities have been unlocked, as a result of the increase in GEF Agencies?
- To what extent has competition among GEF Agencies increased due to the increase in GEF Agencies? To what extent is this competition healthy or, conversely, counterproductive?
- To what extent has the increase in the number of GEF Agencies increased the choices available to the operational focal points? How has expansion affected your Agency's relationship with the OFPs?
- To what extent has the increase in the number of GEF Agencies affected the choices available to the GEF Secretariat for focal areas that are not covered under STAR and for the set-asides? To what extent has the expansion affected your Agency's relationship with the GEF Secretariat program managers?
- Within the context of gradual decrease in Agency project fees, what have been the efforts that your organization has made in recent years to reduce the costs of its GEF operations? How has the expansion of the GEF partnership affected the costs of your GEF operations?
- To what extent is the GEF partnership, including GEF Agencies, effective in delivering global environmental benefits, which is the GEF's main mandate?
- How has the recent increase in GEF Agencies affected the GEF partnership's ability to deliver on its mandate of generating global environmental benefits?
- Should the number of GEF Agencies be increased, maintained, or decreased? Why?

B.3 Guiding questions for program managers

- What value do the new Agencies add to the GEF partnership?

- To what extent have the measures adopted by the Secretariat to facilitate onboarding of the new Agencies been adequate?
- How has expansion of the GEF partnership affected your work as ____? In your opinion how is the expansion affecting the work of the other program managers whose work you are familiar with?
- To what extent and in what ways do the proposals submitted by the new Agencies differ in quality from those submitted by the older Agencies?
- Is there a difference in the level of effort required at your end for upstream consultations in developing the proposals (pre-PIF submission)?
- To what extent do the proposals submitted by the new Agencies address new environmental concerns and/or are innovative? Have you come across proposals from the new Agencies that are unlikely to have been developed by the older Agencies? Could you share some examples?
- In the past year or so, to what extent do you see an evolution in your interactions with the new Agencies?
- As a result of the expansion, what has been the effect on efficiency of GEF operations, competition among agencies for GEF resources, and country ownership of GEF activities?
- Should the number of GEF Agencies be increased, maintained, or decreased, and why?

Annex C: Supplementary tables

TABLE C.1 Focal area coverage through expansion

GEF Agency (number)	Biodiversity	Climate change	International waters	Land degradation	Chemicals and waste
Original Agencies (3)	3	3	3	3	3
UNDP	1	1	1	1	1
UNEP	1	1	1	1	1
World Bank	1	1	1	1	1
First-round expansion (7)	5	7	5	5	2
ADB	1	1	0	1	0
AfDB	1	1	1	1	0
EBRD	0	1	1	0	0
FAO	1	1	1	1	1
IDB	1	1	1	1	0
IFAD	1	1	0	1	0
UNIDO	0	1	1	0	1
Second-round expansion (8)	7	8	4	5	3
National Agencies	3	3	1	2	2
DBSA	1	1	0	1	1
FECO	1	1	1	1	1
FUNBIO	1	1	0	0	0
Regional/subregional banks	1	2	0	0	0
BOAD	0	1	0	0	0
CAF	1	1	0	0	0
International CSOs	3	3	3	3	1
CI	1	1	1	1	0
IUCN	1	1	1	1	0
WWF-US	1	1	1	1	1
Total (18 Agencies)	15	18	12	13	8

NOTE: This table was prepared based on information from several sources. For the original Agencies and those added during the first round of expansion, the actual GEF portfolios of the Agency were taken into account and corroborated with the information provided in GEF (2007). For the Agencies added through the second round of expansion, GEF (2012) and interviews with Agency and Secretariat staff were used as sources.

TABLE C.2 Effect of second round of expansion on Agency choice for countries

Country group	Countries with no increase or increase of 1 Agency (n = 59)	Countries with increase of at least 2 Agencies (n = 84)	All GEF recipient countries (n = 143)
LDCs	23 (39)	24 (29)	47 (33)
Fragile	15 (25)	17 (20)	32 (22)
SIDS	19 (32)	19 (23)	38 (27)
Landlocked	17 (29)	17 (20)	34 (24)

NOTE: LDCs = least developed countries. Figures in parentheses are percentages.

TABLE C.3 Number of GEF recipient countries covered by Agencies

Agency	1995–2001	2007–13	2014–continuing
GEF total	147 (100)	148 (100)	143 (100)
World Bank	133 (90)	141 (95)	133 (93)
UNDP	147 (100)	148 (100)	143 (100)
UNEP	104 (71)	109 (74)	100 (70)
UNIDO	n.a.	138 (93)	135 (94)
FAO	n.a.	148 (100)	143 (100)
IFAD	n.a.	137 (93)	139 (97)
ADB	n.a.	40 (27)	41 (29)
AfDB	n.a.	59 (40)	58 (41)
EBRD	n.a.	27 (18)	24 (17)
IDB	n.a.	28 (19)	27 (19)
CI	n.a.	n.a.	62 (43)
DBSA	n.a.	n.a.	1 (1)
IUCN	n.a.	n.a.	127 (89)
WWF-US	n.a.	n.a.	50 (35)
FUNBIO	n.a.	n.a.	1 (1)
FECO	n.a.	n.a.	1 (1)
CAF	n.a.	n.a.	17 (12)
BOAD	n.a.	n.a.	8 (6)

NOTE: n.a. = not applicable. Figures in parentheses are percentages.

TABLE C.4 OFP perceptions

Service provided/results expected	Very important	Important	Somewhat important	Not important	Not applicable/ unable to assess	Total responses
Importance of services GEF Agencies provide						
Assistance in formulation of GEF national portfolio	17 (53)	8 (25)	4 (13)	1 (3)	2 (6)	32 (100)
Project preparation	24 (75)	7 (22)	1 (3)	0 (0)	0 (0)	32 (100)
Project supervision and monitoring	19 (59)	11 (34)	2 (6)	0 (0)	0 (0)	32 (100)
Developing capacities of the national executing agencies	22 (69)	8 (25)	2 (6)	0 (0)	0 (0)	32 (100)
Support for follow-up activities upon project completion	17 (53)	11 (34)	2 (6)	0 (0)	2 (6)	32 (100)
Timely communication of implementation progress	25 (78)	5 (16)	1 (3)	1 (3)	0 (0)	32 (100)
Importance of results that may be expected from the second-round expansion of the GEF partnership						
Competition among GEF Agencies	17 (53)	10 (31)	3 (9)	2 (6)	0 (0)	32 (100)
Efficiency in GEF operations	12 (38)	15 (47)	3 (9)	2 (6)	0 (0)	32 (100)
New technical capacities to address environmental concerns	18 (56)	11 (34)	2 (6)	1 (3)	0 (0)	32 (100)
Choice in selecting a GEF Agency for a GEF project	21 (66)	8 (25)	2 (6)	1 (3)	0 (0)	32 (100)
Ownership of the GEF activities	17 (53)	7 (22)	3 (9)	2 (6)	3 (9)	32 (100)
Capacity development of national Institutions	18 (56)	6 (19)	4 (13)	1 (3)	3 (9)	32 (100)
Coverage of new geographical areas within the country	12 (38)	9 (28)	3 (9)	3 (9)	5 (16)	32 (100)

SOURCE: Online survey.

NOTE: Figures in parentheses are percentages.

TABLE C.5 GEF project portfolio, by Agency (in million $ funds managed by Agencies)

Lead Agency	Pilot	GEF-1	GEF-2	GEF-3	GEF-4	GEF-5	GEF-6	Total
World Bank	453.6 (64)	819.6 (69)	1,002.6 (57)	1,376.7 (52)	750.0 (29)	824.4 (20)	388.1 (18)	5,614.8 (37)
UNDP	240.0 (34)	316.8 (26)	547.5 (31)	841.9 (32)	962.0 (37)	1,475.0 (36)	753.9 (36)	5,137.1 (34)
UNEP	19.0 (3)	59.9 (5)	184.8 (10)	288.7 (11)	328.7 (13)	538.7 (13)	253.2 (12)	1,673.1 (11)
Original Agencies	712.6 (100)	1,196.3 (100)	1,735.0 (98)	2,507.2 (95)	2,040.7 (78)	2,838.1 (69)	1,395.2 (66)	12,425.0 (82)
UNIDO	n.a.	n.a.	10.7 (1)	17.1 (1)	187.7 (7)	282.9 (7)	142.8 (7)	641.2 (4)
FAO	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	16.1 (1)	75.9 (3)	350.0 (8)	145.7 (7)	587.7 (4)
IFAD	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	26.2 (1)	79.2 (3)	74.6 (2)	83.8 (4)	263.9 (2)
ADB	n.a.	n.a.	28.6 (2)	43.3 (2)	79.1 (3)	72.7 (2)	46.6 (2)	270.3 (2)
AfDB	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	12.8 (0)	199.3 (5)	59.5 (3)	271.5 (2)
EBRD	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	34.3 (1)	61.0 (1)	36.9 (2)	132.3 (1)
IDB	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	20.3 (1)	93.5 (4)	187.4 (5)	47.2 (2)	348.4 (2)
First-round additions	n.a.	n.a.	39.3 (2)	123.0 (5)	562.5 (22)	1,228.0 (30)	562.5 (27)	2,515.3 (17)
CI	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	19.6 (0)	38.3 (2)	57.9 (0)
DBSA	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	35.6 (2)	35.6 (0)
IUCN	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	6.3 (0)	31.6 (1)	38.0 (0)
WWF-US	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	22.6 (1)	37.2 (2)	59.9 (0)
BOAD	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	2.7 (0)	2.7 (0)
CAF	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	9.7 (0)	n.a.	9.7 (0)
FUNBIO	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	13.4 (1)	13.4 (0)
FECO	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	1.8 (0)	1.8 (0)
Second-round additions	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	58.3 (1)	160.6 (8)	218.9 (1)
Total	712.6	1,196.3	1,774.2	2,630.3	2,603.1	4,124.3	2,118.4	15,159.2

SOURCE: GEF PMIS as of September 30, 2016.

NOTE: n.a. = not applicable. Figures in parentheses are percentages of the GEF total for the respective replenishment period. Data include funding from the GEF Trust Fund, the Least Developed Countries Fund, and the Special Climate Change Fund.

Annex D: Design features and cofinancing of projects by new and other Agencies

TABLE D.1 Design features of CEO endorsed/approved projects

Feature	New Agencies	Other Agencies
Number of sampled projects	15	30
Agencies represented in the sample	CI (7), IUCN (4), WWF-US (4)	UNDP (13), UNEP (5), UNIDO (4), WB (3), FAO (2), IDB (2), EBRD (1)
Global projects	8 (53%)	4 (13%)
Regional projects	2 (13%)	2 (7%)
National projects	5 (33%)	24 (80%)
Projects within a programmatic framework	2 (13%)	1 (3%)
Average GEF grant for sampled projects	$3.2 million	$3.3 million
Cofinancing ratio for sampled projects	5.0	7.7
Median of cofinancing ratios	3.3	4.6
Full-size projects	6 (40%)	14 (47%)
Average GEF grant for full-size projects	$5.6 million	$5.6 million
Cofinancing ratio for full-size projects	5.7	6.8
Median of cofinancing ratios for full-size projects	3.1	5.2
Medium-size projects	9 (60%)	16 (53%)
Average GEF grant for medium-size projects	$1.5 million	$1.3 million
Cofinancing ratio for medium-size projects	3.1	11.0
Median of cofinancing ratio for medium-size projects	3.3	4.0
Project pilots a new approach in the project area	53%	50%
Project replicates an approach piloted elsewhere outside the project area	7%	10%
Project scales up an approach piloted elsewhere outside the project area	27%	7%
Project mainstreams an approach piloted elsewhere outside the project area	20%	0%
Project promotes new technology(s) that had never been used in the country/region	0%	3%
Project supports a direct follow-up of a preceding GEF project; e.g. next phase	0%	7%
Project design includes activities to develop policies/legal/regulatory measures for government to adopt	13%	60%

Feature	New Agencies	Other Agencies
Project design includes activities aimed at influencing policies/legal/ regulatory environment of the country	27%	60%
Project design includes activities aimed at improving administration/ enforcement	53%	73%
Project documents identifies the key stakeholders of the project	100%	100%
Key stakeholders were consulted during preparation of the project	100%	100%
Project design includes arrangements to consult key stakeholders during project implementation	100%	100%
Project documents present a gender analysis	87%	80%
A gender analysis presented, and it identifies a gender-related concern	87%	73%
A gender analysis is presented, and a concern is identified and addressed in project design	87%	73%
Project documents describe the key risks involved in the project	100%	100%
Project design accounts for the key risks involved in the project and includes measures to mitigate them	100%	90%
Project documents have specified Indicators to assess project results for all key areas	100%	90%
Specified indicators are appropriate for assessing project results	100%	60%
Project results framework includes indicators to monitor the identified gender concern/s	67%	60%
Private sector organizations are key stakeholders of the project	67%	80%
Private sector organizations are among the key beneficiaries of the project	7%	33%
The project activities will promote regulatory measures that will require compliance by the private sector	33%	27%
Private sector organizations were consulted in preparation of the project	53%	50%
A private sector organization is the lead executing agency of the project	0%	0%
A private sector organization is a co-executing agency of the project	0%	0%
Lead executing agency of the project is a CSO	53%	10%

TABLE D.2 Sources of promised cofinancing at CEO endorsement

Source	Projects by new Agencies (*n* = 15)			Projects by other Agencies (*n* = 30)		
	Aggregate cofinancing (million $)	Per dollar of GEF grant ($)	Share (%)	Aggregate cofinancing (million $)	Per dollar of GEF grant ($)	Share (%)
CBO/NGO	38.7	0.82	16	27.2	0.3	4
Government/public sector	14.9	0.31	6	304.3	3.1	40
Multilateral	33.1	0.70	14	233.5	2.4	31
Bilateral	27.4	0.58	12	31.6	0.3	4
Private foundation	63.2	1.33	27	0.6	0.0	0
Private sector	0.6	0.01	0	29.5	0.3	4
Others/unspecified	60.5	1.27	25	130.1	1.3	17
Total	238.4	5.02	100	756.8	7.7	100

SOURCES: GEF PMIS and project documents.

NOTE: CBO = community-based organization; NGO = nongovernmental organization.

TABLE D.3 Share of promised cofinancing at CEO endorsement by mandate of contributor

Mandate of cofinancing contributor	Projects by new Agencies (*n* = 15)		Projects by other Agencies (*n* = 30)	
	Aggregate cofinancing (million $)	Share (%)	Aggregate cofinancing (million $)	Share (%)
Global environment focused	40.6	17	46.1	6
Local environment focused	12.5	5	185.8	25
Environment is one of the priorities	103.0	43	269.2	36
No environmental focus	71.1	30	153.5	20
Unable to assess	11.3	5	102.2	14
Total	238.4	100	756.8	100

SOURCES: GEF PMIS and project documents.

TABLE D.4 Promised cofinancing at CEO endorsement from implementing and executing Agencies

Agency type	Projects by new Agencies (*n* = 15)		Projects by other Agencies (*n* = 30)	
	Aggregate cofinancing promised (mil. $)	Per dollar of GEF grant ($)	Aggregate cofinancing promised (mil. $)	Per dollar of GEF grant ($)
GEF Agency	28.19	0.59	161.45	1.64
Lead	28.19	0.59	155.08	1.58
Joint	0	0.00	6.37	0.06
Executing agency	32.90	0.69	355.47	3.62
Lead	10.36	0.22	87.51	0.89
Joint	22.54	0.47	267.96	2.73

SOURCE: GEF PMIS.

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