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Foreword

The Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) and the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF) were established in 2001 under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to, respectively, support the climate adaptation efforts of least developed countries (LDCs) and help vulnerable nations address the negative impacts of climate change. The LDCF is mandated to finance LDCs' preparation of national adaptation programs of action and implementation of priority projects under these national programs. The SCCF finances activities, programs, and measures related to climate change that complement those funded by resources allocated to the Global Environment Facility (GEF) climate change focal area and by bilateral and multilateral funding. Since 2022, the SCCF has been emphasizing the adaptation needs of small island developing states and strengthening technology transfer, innovation, and private sector engagement.

The GEF Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) is pleased to present the LDCF/SCCF Annual Evaluation Report (AER) 2023. The report provides an account of the performance of the completed LDCF/SCCF projects, an assessment of vulnerabilities addressed, and the Management Action Record (MAR). AER 2023 benefited from feedback from the GEF Agencies and the GEF Secretariat. The report's main objective is to assess the project outcomes and sustainability, and quality of project monitoring and evaluation and gender considerations for the cohort of LDCF/SCCF projects completed since AER 2021. It shows that a

vast majority of the projects are well implemented and deliver their expected outcomes—although sustainability of results remains a significant challenge. The LDCF/SCCF AER 2023 also includes an assessment of the extent to which interventions reduced vulnerability and climate-related risk, increased resilience, and prevented maladaptation. It found positive results, but lower scores than the overall project outcomes.

The MAR tracks progress in the implementation of the GEF management's action plan that was endorsed by the LDCF/SCCF Council. MAR 2023 for the LDCF/SCCF reports on one evaluation for which progress in implementation is rated as medium.

AER 2023 was presented to the LDCF/SCCF Council as an information document during its June 2023 meeting. Through this report, the GEF IEO intends to share the findings and lessons from the assessment with a broader audience in order to inform future LDCF and SCCF programming.



Juha I. Uitto
Director, GEF Independent Evaluation Office

Acknowledgments

The Least Developed Countries Fund/Special Climate Change Fund (LDCF/SCCF) Annual Evaluation Report (AER) 2023 was led by Anna Viggh, Senior Evaluation Officer in the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), with the support of Rasec Niembro, IEO Evaluation Analyst.

The preparation of the AER 2023 benefited from guidance and oversight provided by Juha Uitto, Director of the IEO; quality control was provided by Geeta Batra, IEO Chief Evaluation Officer. The study team was supported by Juan Jose Portillo, Senior Operations Officer, who provided operations/administrative oversight. Karen Holmes edited the report; Nita Congress

designed and laid out the publication and provided editorial quality control.

The AER 2023 relies on information provided by GEF partner Agencies through terminal evaluations and terminal evaluation reviews prepared by their offices. We acknowledge the support received from the Agencies and the GEF Secretariat.

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

Abbreviations

| | | | |
|------------|---|----------------|---|
| AER | annual evaluation report | IPCC | Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change |
| APR | annual performance report | LDCF | Least Developed Countries Fund |
| CEO | Chief Executive Officer | M&E | monitoring and evaluation |
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations | MAR | management action record |
| GEF | Global Environment Facility | SCCF | Special Climate Change Fund |
| IDB | Inter-American Development Bank | UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| IEO | Independent Evaluation Office | UNEP | United Nations Environment Programme |

Executive summary

The Least Developed Countries Fund/Special Climate Change Fund (LDCF/SCCF) Annual Evaluation Report (AER) 2023, prepared by the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), presents an assessment of project outcomes and sustainability, quality of project monitoring and evaluation (M&E), gender considerations, and vulnerabilities addressed for the cohort of LDCF/SCCF projects completed since AER 2021. Additionally, the AER includes a summary of the GEF Management Action Record (MAR) tracking progress in the implementation of the GEF management's action plan that was endorsed by the LDCF/SCCF Council. AER 2023 includes 44 projects, 31 financed by the LDCF, including 2 multitrust fund projects; and 13 financed by the SCCF, 2 of which are multitrust fund projects. The AER 2023 cohort has a value of \$257 million in LDCF/SCCF/GEF funding, and \$1.18 billion in materialized cofinancing.

The most represented theme in the AER 2023 cohort is agriculture, which pertains to nine projects or 20 percent of the portfolio. Eight projects focused on climate information and early warning systems, seven on water resources management, six on sustainable livelihoods, five on the improvement of coastal zone management, and four on disaster risk management, three on land and forest management, and one on low-carbon and climate-resilient technology transfer. The cohort also includes one global project that supported the formulation of national adaptation plans.

Regarding outcomes, 91 percent (40 of the 44 projects) were rated in the satisfactory range, an improvement of 13 percentage points compared to AER 2021. On the six-point scale from highly satisfactory to highly unsatisfactory, 2 projects were rated as highly satisfactory, 19 as satisfactory, and 19 as moderately satisfactory; 4 were rated moderately unsatisfactory. No projects were rated unsatisfactory or highly unsatisfactory.

Of the 41 projects with ratings available for M&E design at the time of the evaluation, 87 percent (36) were rated in the satisfactory range, an increase of 14 percentage points over the AER 2021 cohort. In terms of M&E implementation, 66 percent (29 of the 44 projects for which ratings were available) were rated in the satisfactory range, an improvement of 9 percentage points over the 2021 AER.

For the 40 projects for which sustainability ratings were available, 19 (47 percent) were rated in the likely range. On the four-point scale from likely to unlikely of having project outcomes sustained, 2 projects were rated as likely, 17 as moderately likely, 19 as moderately unlikely, and 2 as unlikely; 4 projects were not rated. It is relevant to note that since AER 2019, there has been a negative trend in sustainability ratings over time. Projects rated in the likely range dropped 17 percentage points from AER 2019 to AER 2023. This decline is primarily driven by the LDCF; projects in least developed countries face greater risks, financing constraints, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and sociopolitical challenges.

From an analysis of terminal evaluations of completed projects overall, risks to sustainability were identified as due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These risks were mainly related to the inability to complete activities during implementation that would have supported sustainability. Aside from travel restrictions to avoid the spread of the virus, supply chain disruptions and staffing issues also caused delays related to COVID-19, as noted in evaluations.

Because LDCF and SCCF projects are focused on countries' climate change adaptation needs, it is useful to compare their likely sustainability with other projects with similar characteristics. Projects from the Adaptation Fund share a similar approach and guidance for rating outcomes and likelihood of sustainability. For 17 projects supported by the Adaptation Fund rated for sustainability and outcome achievement, 59 percent were rated in the likely range for sustainability and 82 percent in the satisfactory range for overall outcome achievement.

The higher sustainability ratings for the Adaptation Fund projects could be explained as an effect of the mix of countries where most of the projects were implemented. For instance, of the 17 Adaptation Fund projects assessed, only 5 (29 percent), were implemented in least developed countries, compared to 70 percent of the AER 2023 portfolio. Further, the Adaptation Fund projects were implemented from 2011 to 2019; the assessment thus does not reflect the potential sustainability effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

All AER 2023 projects were reviewed for inclusion and quality of gender components. In all 44 terminal evaluations, there was some discussion of gender outcomes or gender inclusion. More than half of the projects (61 percent) included a gender analysis in their project design, with 7 percent also sharing a separate document containing a completed gender analysis. Thirty-nine percent of the projects did not include a gender analysis. Furthermore, 75 percent of the projects in the AER 2023 cohort approved in GEF-6

included some type of gender analysis—a significant increase in the percentage of projects conducting gender analyses in the project design and planning stages compared to GEF-5 projects (53 percent).

Only five projects (11 percent) presented some evidence of developing a specific gender action plan in the implementation stage. The assessment of terminal evaluations shows that 33 projects (75 percent) included at least one gender-related action, including project outputs, activities, or sex-disaggregated indicators. Nine projects specified actions at the objective and component (higher) level, and 24 at the activity and output (lower) level. Analysis found that seven of the nine projects (77 percent) with gender actions at the higher level achieved results in the satisfactory range, as did 75 percent of those with gender actions at the lower level.

Projects in the AER 2023 cohort were reviewed against the working definition of vulnerability to climate change. Climate change was defined as the degree to which a system is susceptible to, or unable to cope with, adverse effects of climate change, including climate variability and extremes. The assessment included the extent to which interventions reduced vulnerability and climate-related risk, increased resilience, and prevented maladaptation.

Project documentation was reviewed to determine whether an analysis of the factors that contribute to vulnerability was done in the project design phase. Such an analysis could have included both the direct and indirect effects of climate change, as well as nonclimate stressors (e.g., land use change, habitat fragmentation, pollution, and invasive species). The review identified a high level of prioritization of vulnerability to climate change in most of the projects' logical frameworks. Specifically, 43 percent of the projects reviewed include a specific goal of reducing vulnerability in their main objectives, while 21 percent of projects include this goal at the component level, 18 percent at an outcome level,

11 percent at the output level, and 7 percent at the activity level.

Assessment of outcome achievement on projects' vulnerability reduction components is overall positive, but lower than overall project outcome ratings. Seventy-two percent (32 projects) were assessed in the satisfactory range for vulnerability reduction components, compared to 91 percent of overall project outcomes in the satisfactory range. Twenty-two percent (10 projects) were rated in the unsatisfactory range, compared to 9 percent for overall project ratings. Seven terminal evaluations cite as reasons for a lower score on these components a lack of rigorous work in the appraisal stage, specifically in the definition of baselines (which inhibited the effective measurement of impacts); an absence of a tailored scaling-up strategy based on lessons from previous projects; and no solid evidence that stakeholders used the services developed by the projects.

A synthesis of lessons learned from the AER 2023 projects is included in this year's report. Lessons learned from terminal evaluations were classified into four categories: exit strategies and institutional commitments, cofinancing, vulnerability indicators, and commitment of key stakeholders. The main lessons follow:

- It is important that projects have clear exit strategies and follow-up commitments to ensure sustainability.
- Five projects noted that the concept of cofinancing applied to GEF projects (including the GEF Trust Fund, LDCF, and SCCF) remains poorly understood or dealt with by multiple stakeholders. It needs to be clarified to all stakeholders.
- The results framework should clearly reflect appropriate indicators to measure outcomes of addressing vulnerability issues, especially those linked to non-infrastructure components (capacity building, awareness, policy, planning, and dissemination activities).

- Identifying champions of change, especially in communities and local organizations, is critical. These people can be key resource points, as well as important influencers of behavior change among their peers.

The AER ends with a summary of the GEF MAR. The GEF's approach to the MAR was revised in response to the Professional Peer Review of the Independent Evaluation Function of the Global Environment Facility. One change is that GEF management responds to each GEF IEO evaluation recommendation with an action plan, and the GEF Council comments on and endorses this action plan. The GEF IEO then tracks progress in implementation of the GEF management's action plan. In the wake of the revised MAR process, the GEF Council began to endorse management's action plans in June 2021. The 2023 MAR is the first one prepared using the revised approach.

The 2023 MAR for the LDCF/SCCF tracks progress in implementation of management's action plan for one GEF IEO recommendation. This recommendation, from the 2020 LDCF Program Evaluation, is "Continue to enhance the likelihood of the sustainability of outcomes."

The GEF Secretariat assessed progress in implementation of its action plan in addressing this recommendation as substantial. In GEF-8, the GEF Secretariat is implementing dedicated programs intended to enhance the quality at entry and sustainability of LDCF projects as recommended by the 2020 evaluation.

The GEF IEO's validation of reported implementation progress was rated as medium. The launch of the dedicated programs (communications and visibility enhancements, outreach and capacity support for least developed countries' and small island developing states' planning and programming, and organizational learning and coordination) in GEF-8 and other ongoing efforts is acknowledged. The GEF IEO will track the implementation of the dedicated programs in line with the four main themes articulated by the Council (GEF

2019)—theory of change, multistakeholder processes, stakeholder involvement, and adaptive learning—as well as the Secretariat’s continued efforts to urge

Agencies to emphasize contextual factors affecting the sustainability of outcomes.



1

Introduction

1.1 Background

The Least Developed Countries Fund/Special Climate Change Fund (LDCF/SCCF) Annual Evaluation Report (AER) 2023, prepared by the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), presents an assessment of project outcomes and their sustainability, and quality of project monitoring and evaluation (M&E). The assessment is based on an analysis of the ratings and information provided in terminal evaluations. Additionally, the AER includes a summary of the GEF Management Action Record (MAR) tracking the progress in implementation of the GEF management's action plans that have been endorsed by the LDCF/SCCF Council. To align with the changes in reporting on the Annual Performance Report and the MAR which are moving to a biennial reporting schedule, this year's AER assessment encompasses 44 terminal evaluations, covered for the first time, and submitted since APR 2021. These terminal evaluations were reviewed by the IEO or by the evaluation offices of the GEF Agencies, or both. See annex A for details on the guidelines for review of terminal evaluation reports.

Additionally, projects were reviewed against indicators of gender considerations in design and implementation, with results presented. These indicators include evidence of inclusion of gender analysis, a gender action plan, reporting, and related results.

AER 2023 also presents an assessment of vulnerabilities addressed by projects. Terminal evaluations were mined to examine vulnerability to climate change, defined as the degree to which a system is susceptible to, or unable to cope with, adverse effects of climate change, including climate variability and extremes. Moreover, projects were assessed for the level of priority given to addressing vulnerability, for the inclusion of indicators in their results framework, and for reporting the related outcomes.

A synthesis of lessons learned from the AER 2023 cohort of completed projects is also part of this year's AER.

1.2 Completed projects in the AER cohort

AER 2023 includes 44 projects—31 financed by the LDCF, including 2 multitrust fund projects; and 13 financed by the SCCF, of which 2 are multitrust fund projects. The AER 2023 cohort has a shared value of \$257 million in LDCF/SCCF/GEF funding, and \$1.18 billion in materialized cofinancing ([table 1.1](#)).¹ Forty of the projects assessed were approved during GEF-5, and 4 were approved during GEF-6. The full list of projects along with their ratings is presented in annex B.

Table 1.1 Funding by source of the AER 2023 cohort

| Source | No. of projects | Funding | Cofinancing ^a |
|------------------------------|-----------------|------------|--------------------------|
| | | Million \$ | |
| LDCF | 31 | 182 | 592 |
| SCCF | 13 | 55 | 270 |
| Multitrust fund ^b | 4 | 20 | 313 |
| Total | | 257 | 1,175 |

Source: GEF IEO terminal evaluation review data set.

a. Information on realized cofinancing is available for 41 projects.

b. Of the four multitrust fund projects, two are LDCF with the GEF Trust Fund and two are SCCF with the GEF Trust Fund.

Twenty-eight of the 44 projects were implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 9 were implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), 4 were implemented by the World Bank, 2 were implemented

¹Throughout the report, grant funding includes LDCF/SCCF/GEF amounts approved at CEO endorsement, plus project preparation grants. Agency fees are excluded. Information on realized cofinancing is available for 41 projects.

by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), and 1 project was implemented by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) ([table 1.2](#)).

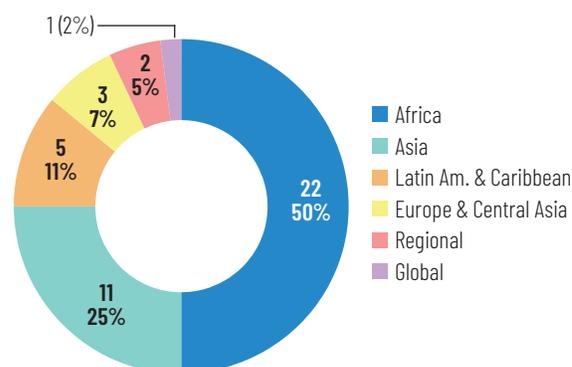
Table 1.2 Distribution by lead Agency for projects in the AER 2023 cohort

| Lead Agency | No. of projects | % of projects |
|-------------|-----------------|---------------|
| UNDP | 28 | 64 |
| FAO | 9 | 21 |
| World Bank | 4 | 9 |
| IDB | 2 | 4 |
| UNEP | 1 | 2 |
| Total | 44 | 100 |

Source: GEF IEO terminal evaluation review data set.

Forty-one of the 44 projects were national-level projects: 22 of these were implemented in countries in the Africa region, 11 in the Asia region, 5 in the Latin American and Caribbean region, and 3 in the Europe and Central Asia region. Of the remaining three projects, two were implemented regionally in the Latin America and the Caribbean region, and one was implemented globally ([figure 1.1](#)).

Figure 1.1 Regional distribution in the AER 2023 cohort



Source: GEF IEO terminal evaluation review data set.

Note: n = 44.

The projects addressed climate change adaptation and resilience through a variety of interventions and in multiple sectors ([table 1.3](#)).

Table 1.3 Distribution by main intervention theme of the AER 2023 cohort

| Intervention theme | No. of projects |
|---|-----------------|
| Agriculture | 9 |
| Climate information/early warning systems | 8 |
| Water resources management | 7 |
| Sustainable livelihoods | 6 |
| Coastal zone | 5 |
| Disaster risk | 4 |
| Land and forest | 3 |
| Others | 2 |
| Total | 44 |

Source: GEF IEO terminal evaluation review data set.

- The most represented theme in the AER 2023 cohort is agriculture, with nine projects. Of these, seven were implemented in Africa, one in Latin America and the Caribbean, and one in Europe and Central Asia.
- Eight projects focused on climate information and early-warning systems, and of these, seven were implemented in Africa and one in Asia.

- Seven projects focused their interventions on water resources management; four implemented in Africa, two in Latin America and the Caribbean, and one in Europe and Central Asia.
- Six projects focused on sustainable livelihoods: four in Asia and two in Africa.
- Five projects addressed coastal zone management: three in Asia, two in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Four projects focused on disaster risk management, with two in Asia, one in Africa and one in Europe and Central Asia.
- Three projects addressed land and forest management: one project in Zambia, one in Haiti, and one in Bangladesh.

Lastly, the AER 2023 cohort includes two projects focused on other themes: a regional project in Latin America and the Caribbean focused on low-carbon and climate-resilient technology transfer, and one global project supported the formulation of national adaptation plans (NAPs).

2

Findings

2.1 Outcomes and sustainability

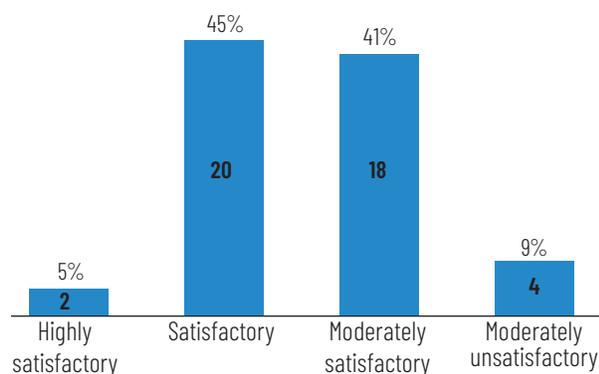
Distribution of outcome and sustainability ratings

Regarding outcomes, 91 percent (40 of the 44 projects) were rated in the satisfactory range, an improvement of 13 percentage points compared to AER 2021. The distribution of outcome ratings is shown in [figure 2.1](#). On the six-point scale from highly satisfactory to highly unsatisfactory, 2 were rated as highly satisfactory, 20 projects were rated satisfactory for achievement of outcomes, 18 were rated moderately satisfactory, and 4 were rated moderately unsatisfactory. No projects were rated unsatisfactory or highly unsatisfactory. The results of AER 2023 are comparable to the outcome ratings of all the projects from trust funds managed by the GEF that were included in the 2023 Annual Performance Report (APR 2023), which has 91 percent of its projects with outcomes rated in the satisfactory range.

In terms of sustainability ratings ([figure 2.2](#)), 19 projects of 40 with ratings available were rated in the likely range (47 percent). On the four-point scale from likely to unlikely, 2 projects were rated likely, 17 projects were rated moderately likely, 19 projects were rated moderately unlikely, 2 projects were rated unlikely, and 4 projects were not rated.

The ratings for sustainability of outcomes in AER 2023 cohort are lower than those for the projects from trust funds managed by the GEF included in the 2023 APR. The latter has 77 percent of its projects in the likely range (that is, projects rated likely or moderately likely), compared to 47 percent in the AER 2023 cohort. These numbers are primarily driven by the LDCF, where projects face greater risks to sustainability because of greater financing constraints and sociopolitical challenges in least developed countries.

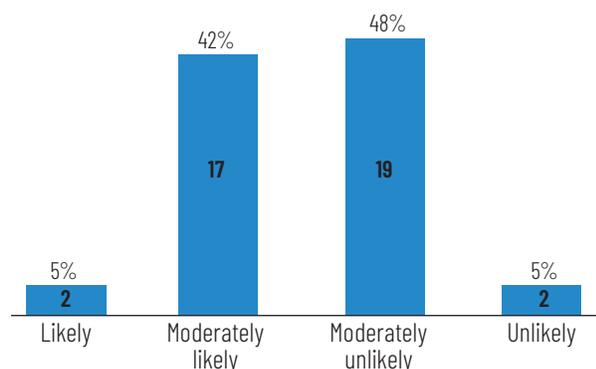
Figure 2.1 Distribution of outcome ratings in the AER 2023 cohort



Source: GEF IEO terminal evaluation review data set.

Note: $n = 44$. No projects were rated unsatisfactory or highly unsatisfactory.

Figure 2.2 Distribution of sustainability ratings in the AER 2023 cohort



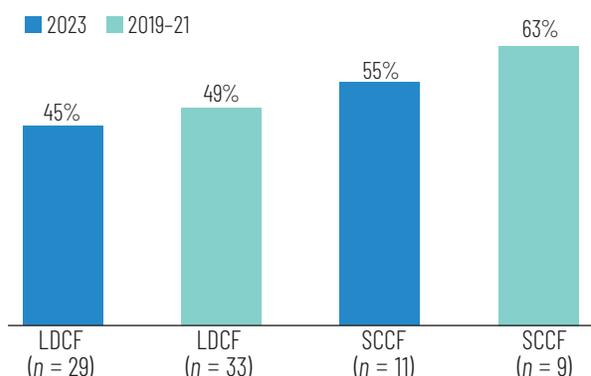
Source: GEF IEO terminal evaluation review data set.

Note: $n = 40$.

Trends in sustainability ratings

Analyzing the evolution of the sustainability of outcomes of the LDCF and the SCCF from 2019 to 2023 ([figure 2.3](#)), the share of the LDCF portfolio in the AER 2023 cohort rated in the likely range decreased by 4 percentage points compared to the average of the 2019–21 period, while the 2023 SCCF cohort rated in the likely range also dropped 8 percentage points. Historically, the SCCF has shown higher ratings on

Figure 2.3 Evolution of sustainability ratings of LDCF/SCCF projects, 2019–23

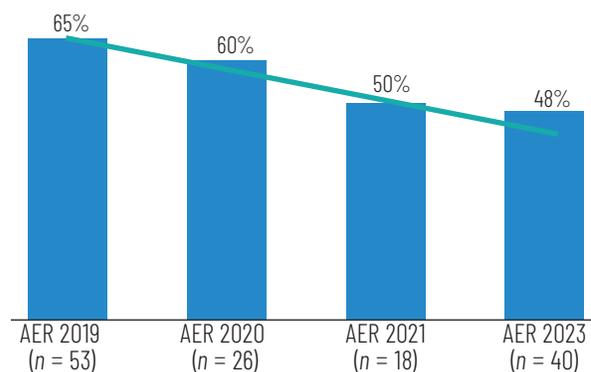


Source: GEF IEO terminal evaluation review data set.

sustainability than the LDCF, explained mainly by the greater risks, financing constraints, and sociopolitical challenges in least developed countries, as noted above.

Since the 2019 AER, there has been a negative trend in the sustainability ratings over time. As shown in [figure 2.4](#), the number of projects in the likely range has dropped 17 percentage points from AER 2019 to AER 2023. An analysis was made of the regional distribution of interventions from LDCF/SCCF projects in previous AER cohorts, seeking insight into potential factors influencing sustainability outcomes; nevertheless, the

Figure 2.4 Trend in cohort sustainability ratings in the likely range, AER 2019 through AER 2023



Source: GEF IEO terminal evaluation review data set.

variance is not significant. Also, the most represented thematic areas in the AER 2023 (agriculture, climate information and early-warning systems, and water resources management) appear to be consistent with previous AERs.

From an analysis of this year's cohort of terminal evaluations of completed projects, risks to sustainability were identified as due to the COVID-19 pandemic and mainly related to the inability to complete activities during implementation that would have supported sustainability. Aside from travel restrictions to avoid the spread of the virus, supply chain disruptions and staffing issues were other causes of delays related to COVID-19 noted in evaluations.

For instance, the terminal evaluation of the regional project, Climate Change Adaptation in the Eastern Caribbean Fisheries Sector (GEF ID 5667, FAO), suggested that better contingency plans should be in place for reaching people on the ground in extreme circumstances (e.g., COVID-19), and these should include a variety of solutions to maintain interpersonal engagement. While virtual engagement was necessary due to COVID-19 restrictions and allowed project activities to continue, its limitations as a way to engage with beneficiaries and communities were evident; it could not replace in-person engagement with people who might not all have access to or be comfortable with virtual platforms, and this affected achievement and sustainability outcomes.

A deeper analysis of the 19 projects rated in the likely range of sustainability shows that higher sustainability ratings at project completion are associated with higher project outcomes ratings. Furthermore, all projects that were rated in the likely sustainable range at closure also had overall project outcomes in the satisfactory range, compared to 71 percent of the projects with outcomes in the unsustainable range.

Factors influencing project sustainability

Insights obtained from previous IEO evaluations indicate that the likelihood of outcome sustainability at project completion is influenced by the quality of project preparation, country context, government support, quality of implementation and execution, and materialization of cofinancing. For instance, leveraging experiences from the Strategic Country Cluster Evaluation of the Least Developed Countries (SCCE LDC; GEF IEO 2022b) shows that project performance in least developed countries is lower than in the overall GEF portfolio. Analysis of APR data available at the time showed that completed projects in least developed countries are rated lower than the overall GEF portfolio on all performance indicators. For sustainability of outcomes, 46 percent of least developed country projects were rated in the likely range, compared with 63 percent in the overall GEF portfolio.

The SCCE LDC also found that financial sustainability is a challenge in most of the least developed countries. Of the four dimensions of sustainability—financial, institutional, environmental, and political—financial sustainability is rated the lowest in least developed countries. Seventy-two percent of projects in the 2019 APR cohort of projects completed from 2007 to 2014 were rated in the likely range for sustainability of outcomes in the overall GEF portfolio compared with 65 percent in least developed countries. This finding points to the importance of elaborating financial arrangements in the project design that can continue, after project completion, to deliver ongoing benefits. Where past outcomes were not sustained, a lack of financial support for the maintenance of infrastructure or follow-up, a lack of sustained efforts from the executing agency, inadequate political support, including limited progress on the adoption of legal and regulatory measures, low institutional capacities of key agencies, low stakeholder buy-in, and flaws in

the theory of change of projects were also reported as contributing factors.

The review of terminal evaluations and the post-completion site visits for country case studies conducted for the SCCEs found that many GEF interventions include income-generating activities to link local community benefits to improved environmental management. This approach has been found to lead to tangible outcomes in least developed countries, but it alone does not guarantee success. Community livelihood interventions in least developed countries are more likely to succeed if they are, in fact, alternative livelihoods; are well designed; have a positive environmental-socioeconomic nexus; and meet the needs of beneficiaries. Interventions are more likely to be sustainable if they are market oriented and are integrated into development plans and budget.

Sustainability of LDCF/SCCF projects compared with similar projects

Considering that LDCF and SCCF projects are focused on countries' climate change adaptation needs, it is pertinent to also compare their likely sustainability with that of other projects that have similar characteristics. Projects from the Adaptation Fund share a comparable approach and funding process.¹ The Adaptation Fund has similar guidance for rating outcomes and their likelihood of sustainability (AF 2011).

Among Adaptation Fund projects with available sustainability ratings, 59 percent were rated in the likely range, while the overall outcome achievement rating was in the satisfactory range for 82 percent of them (AF-TERG 2021b). However, information was available for only 17 projects, implemented from 2011 to 2019, which prevents the analysis

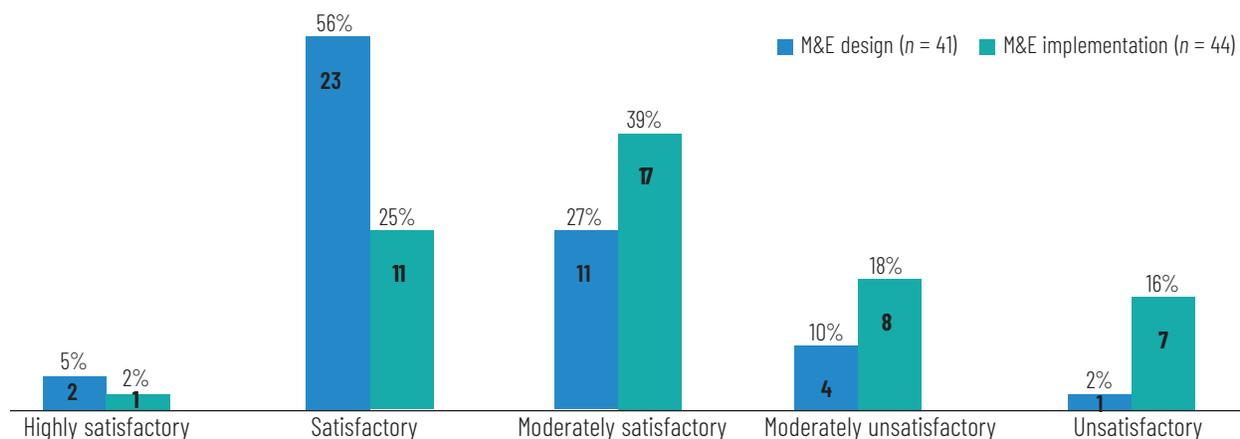
¹The [Adaptation Fund](#) is an international fund that finances projects and programs aimed at helping developing countries adapt to the harmful effects of climate change. It is set up under the Kyoto Protocol of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

of the potential sustainability effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The difference between the sustainability outcomes of the Adaptation Fund and LDCF/SCCF can be explained as an effect of the mix of countries where most of the projects were implemented. For instance, for the 17 Adaptation Fund projects assessed, only 5 (29 percent) were implemented in least developed countries, while in the LDCF/SCCF AER 2023 portfolio, 70 percent of the projects were.

Also, insights retrieved from the Mid-term Review of the Medium-Term Strategy of the Adaptation Fund (AF-TERG 2021a) show that sustainability is a persistent concern during the entire project cycle. Specifically, of 99 project proposals that were not approved by the Adaptation Fund Board from 2010 to 2020, 20 mentioned the sustainability of the projects as one of the main reasons for that decision. Besides the 59 percent of the projects that were rated in the likely sustainable range of 17 completed projects mentioned previously, an exploration of 24 project monitoring mission reports indicates that at least 13 (54 percent) highlighted the issue of the sustainability of the project and included specific risks to sustainability that cannot be disregarded if the outcomes achieved are to be sustained.

2.2 M&E design and implementation

[Figure 2.5](#) presents the distribution of ratings for M&E design and implementation in the AER 2023 cohort. Of the 41 projects with ratings available for M&E design at the time of the terminal evaluation, 36 projects were rated in the satisfactory range (88 percent), increasing 15 percentage points from the 2021 AER. In M&E implementation, of the 44 projects with ratings available, 29 projects were rated in the satisfactory range (66 percent), increasing 9 percentage points from the 2021 AER.

Figure 2.5 Distribution of M&E design and implementation ratings in the AER 2023 cohort

Source: GEF IEO terminal evaluation review data set. No projects were rated highly unsatisfactory.

Interestingly, compared to the ratings of the GEF Trust Fund projects approved in the same GEF replenishment, the percentage of projects in the AER 2023 cohort in the satisfactory range in M&E design is very similar, 88 percent (AER 2023) versus 84 percent (GEF Trust Fund). Despite this similarity, there are important differences among the M&E ratings in the implementation phase, because while 81 percent of projects in the GEF Trust Fund achieved a rating in the satisfactory range, only 66 percent in the AER 2023 cohort attained such a rating.

2.3 Gender considerations

Gender analyses in projects continue to provide valuable information on gender differences in needs, roles, responsibilities, and opportunities for equal participation and leadership of women and men.²

² A gender analysis is a critical examination of how differences in gender norms, roles, power structures, activities, needs, opportunities, and rights affect men, women, girls, and boys in a certain situation or context. It includes collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data and gender information to understand gender differences and gaps, determine gender-differentiated impacts and risks, to identify measures to avoid adverse gender impacts, and to uncover and act on opportunities to address gender

Inclusion of gender components at project design and implementation

All 44 projects of the AER 2023 cohort were reviewed to identify the inclusion and quality of gender components at design (table 2.1) and during implementation, as well as gender results (figure 2.6). In all terminal evaluations there was some discussion of gender outcomes or gender inclusion, and there are gender contributions in the implementation phase that are not captured in project design documents. The assessment demonstrates that most of the projects (62 percent) included a gender analysis in their project design, and 7 percent of them also shared a separate gender analysis document. Thirty-nine percent of the projects did not include a gender analysis.

Gender-related actions

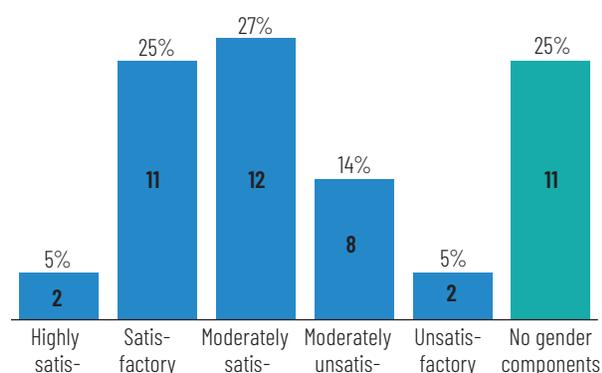
The assessment of terminal evaluations show that 33 projects (75 percent) included at least one gender-related action, including project outputs, activities, or sex-disaggregated indicators. However, the assessment

gaps and inequalities relevant to the activity (GEF Policy on Gender Equality; GEF 2017).

Table 2.1 Gender considerations in projects' design in the AER 2023 cohort

| Design stage component | No. of projects | % of projects |
|--|-----------------|---------------|
| A gender analysis was conducted, but results are not shared | 24 | 55 |
| A gender analysis was conducted and is shared in a separate document | 3 | 7 |
| No gender analysis is mentioned in available documents | 17 | 39 |
| Project included a gender action plan or equivalent | 5 | 11 |
| Projects' results framework included gender disaggregated indicators | 19 | 43 |
| Projects' results framework included gender specific indicators | 14 | 32 |
| No gender indicators are mentioned in the available documents | 11 | 25 |

Source: Project documents.

Figure 2.6 Distribution of gender components results in the AER 2023 cohort

Source: GEF IEO terminal evaluation review data set.

Note: $n = 44$.

of the results framework of GEF-6 projects shows that only 25 percent of the projects included gender-specific indicators,³ compared to 22 percent in GEF-5. This demonstrates that even though there has been progress in terms of including a gender mainstreaming framework in project designs, there is a need to further integrate these gender components

³ Gender-sensitive indicators go beyond the simple disaggregation of sex and allow for the measurement of changes in the relations between women and men in a certain policy area, program, or activity, as well as changes in the status or situation of women and men.

into the project results framework and to focus the gender metrics on empowerment and equality.

Because there are only three projects from GEF-6 in the analysis, the finding should not be considered a trend based on this sample. Only five projects (11 percent) presented some evidence of developing a specific gender action plan in the implementation stage that led to the execution of additional gender-related actions, including project outputs, activities, or collecting gender-specific indicators.

Gender components by higher versus lower levels of project design

Gender components in design vary across projects, from a higher level of objectives and outcomes to lower levels, such as outputs and activities. For instance, projects such as Strengthening the Resilience of Women Producer Groups and Vulnerable Communities in Mali (GEF ID 5192, UNDP) had as the primary objective to “Enhance women producer group’s adaptive capacities to secure livelihoods production from climate impacts and increase socioeconomic resilience in Malian vulnerable communes,” which is considered a high-level gender component.

In contrast, in other cases, such as the project Strengthening Climate Information and Early Warning Systems in Cambodia to Support Climate Resilient Development and Adaptation to Climate Change (GEF ID 5318, UNDP), the project implemented a gender-focused field-level activity providing capacity building to 21 women, which is considered an activity-level gender component. Of the 33 projects with gender-related actions, 9 were at the objective and component level and 24 at the activity and output level.

Insights from findings in terminal evaluations show that of the 9 projects with gender components at the higher level, 7 (77 percent) achieved results in the satisfactory range, while of the 24 projects with gender components at the lower level, 19 (75 percent) achieved results in the satisfactory range.

Projects with higher-level gender results include:

- Strengthening the Adaptive Capacity and Resilience of Rural Communities Using Micro Watershed Approaches to Climate Change and Variability to Attain Sustainable Food Security (GEF ID 4434, FAO) in Cambodia;
- Building Adaptive Capacity to Catalyze Active Public and Private Sector Participation to Manage the Exposure and Sensitivity of Water Supply Services to Climate Change in Sierra Leone (GEF ID 4599, UNDP);
- Integrating Climate Resilience into Agricultural and Pastoral Production for Food Security in Vulnerable Rural Areas through the Farmers Field School Approach (GEF ID 4702, FAO) in Niger;
- Integrating Climate Resilience into Agricultural and Pastoral Production for Food Security in Vulnerable Rural Areas through the Farmers Field School Approach (GEF ID 5014, FAO) in Burkina Faso;
- Scaling Up Community Resilience to Climate Variability and Climate Change in Northern Namibia, with a Special Focus on Women and Children (GEF ID 5343, UNDP);

- Reducing the Vulnerability of Cambodian Rural Livelihoods through Enhanced Sub-national Climate Change Planning and Execution of Priority Actions (GEF ID 5419, UNDP); and
- Strengthening Capacities of Rural Aqueduct Associations (ASADAS) to Address Climate Change Risks in Water Stressed Communities of Northern Costa Rica (GEF ID 6945, UNDP).

For example, the rural livelihoods project in Cambodia was designed to reduce the vulnerability of rural people, especially in women-headed households. By the project's completion, 6,745 households, or 112 percent of the target value (with 74 percent women), had been mobilized and supported with resilient agriculture techniques and water management-related activities. Beneficiaries reported a 29 percent increase in income.

Another positive outcome was identified in the Namibia project, which aimed to scale up community resilience to climate variability and climate change in northern Namibia, with a special focus on women and children. By the end of the project, climate-smart agricultural practices had been introduced to households. For instance, 220 micro-drip irrigation systems were installed. Such gardens directly benefited an estimated total of 7,039 women by producing fresh vegetables to diversify their livelihoods.

Good practices and innovation tools

The assessment for gender components also included an examination of best practices and innovation tools. From this analysis, the most relevant insights showed that improved access to resources (i.e., water and firewood) was an effective way to empower women, especially in rural areas. Projects illustrating this relationship include:

- Reducing Vulnerability from Climate Change in the Foothills, Lowlands and the Lower Senqu River Basin (GEF ID 5075, UNDP) in Lesotho; and
- Strengthening the Resilience of Rural Livelihood Options for Afghan Communities in Panjshir, Balkh, Uruzgan and Herat Provinces to Manage Climate Change-induced Disaster Risks (GEF ID 5202, UNDP) in Afghanistan.

Several projects demonstrated prioritization of women's participation in the activities and consultations:

- Adaptation to Climate Impacts in Water Regulation and Supply for the Area of Chingaza-Sumapaz-Guerrero (GEF ID 4610, IDB) in Colombia;
- India: Sustainable Livelihoods and Adaptation to Climate Change (GEF ID 4901, World Bank);
- Strengthening Capacity for Climate Change Adaptation through Support to Integrated Watershed Management Programme in Lesotho (GEF ID 5124, FAO); and
- GGW Natural Resources Management in a Changing Climate in Mali (GEF ID 5270, World Bank).

Nevertheless, the assessment indicates a need to advance to a higher level of incorporating gender components in project design and promote a transformational shift from participation to empowerment.

Another critical insight is that even if the number of female staff members on project implementation teams was noteworthy, it is essential to include women in activities involving direct participation with beneficiaries, such as facilitators or other field positions. This proved to be a critical factor affecting women's involvement in project activities in:

- Building Adaptive Capacity to Catalyze Active Public and Private Sector Participation to Manage the Exposure and Sensitivity of Water Supply Services to Climate Change in Sierra Leone (GEF ID 4599, UNDP);

- Strengthening Capacities of Agricultural Producers to Cope with Climate Change for Increased Food Security through the Farmers Field School Approach (GEF ID 5433, FAO) in Mozambique; and
- Strengthening Capacities of Rural Aqueduct Associations' (ASADAS) to Address Climate Change Risks in Water Stressed Communities of Northern Costa Rica (GEF ID 6945, UNDP).

An innovative tool identified was the development of a gender-sensitive climate risk assessment conducted with participatory tools to mainstream gender in climate disaster preparedness (Community Disaster Risk Management in Burundi; GEF ID 4990, UNDP). This assessment was helpful in including gender inputs in the first step of implementing actions to establish community-based early-warning systems.

Lastly, it is important to highlight the need to collect more effectively gender-specific data in the initial stage of projects to guide and monitor project interventions. This was positively correlated with gender results assessed in terminal evaluations of:

- Mainstreaming Ecosystem-based Approaches to Climate-resilient Rural Livelihoods in Vulnerable Rural Areas through the Farmer Field School Methodology (GEF ID 5503, FAO) in Senegal;
- The Southeast Europe and Central Asia Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (GEF ID 6915, World Bank); and
- Supporting Climate-resilient Livelihoods in Agricultural Communities in Drought-prone Areas (GEF ID 6960, UNDP) in Turkmenistan.

3

Vulnerability considerations

The term “vulnerability,” according to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and incorporated in the GEF Programming Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change for the LDCF and SCCF (GEF 2018a), is defined as the propensity or predisposition to be adversely affected. Vulnerability encompasses a variety of concepts and elements, including sensitivity or susceptibility to harm and lack of capacity to cope and adapt (IPCC 2014). This vulnerability is determined by the presence and extent of three factors: exposure, sensitivity, and adaptive capacity. Overall, a system is considered vulnerable to climate change if it has high exposure, high sensitivity, and low adaptive capacity.

Vulnerability of ecosystems and people to climate change differs substantially across and within regions, driven by patterns of intersecting socioeconomic development, unsustainable ocean and land use, marginalization, and historical and ongoing patterns of inequity. According to the United Nations, approximately 3.3–3.6 billion people live in places that are highly vulnerable to climate change. A high proportion of species is vulnerable to climate change. Human and ecosystem vulnerability are interdependent, and current unsustainable development patterns are increasing the exposure of ecosystems and people to climate hazards (IPCC 2022).

Projects in the AER 2023 cohort were reviewed to assess the extent to which interventions reduced vulnerability and climate-related risk, increased resilience, and avoided maladaptation¹ (box 3.1). The review of project documentation made it possible to identify whether an analysis of the factors that contribute to vulnerability was done in the project design phase. Such an analysis could include both the direct and indirect effects of climate

¹ Maladaptation refers to actions that may lead to increased risk of adverse climate-related outcomes, including via increased greenhouse gas emissions, increased or shifted vulnerability to climate change, more inequitable outcomes, or diminished welfare, now or in the future. Most often, maladaptation is an unintended consequence.

Box 3.1 Rating taxonomy of vulnerability components in AER 2023

The assessment of vulnerability components included three dimensions:

- **Vulnerability analysis in the project’s design.** Based on a review of the project documents, a rating was assigned to projects on a five-point scale, ranging from “to a very small extent” to “to a very large extent.” Projects rated as “to a very large extent” present detailed information on the vulnerability framework of the project, including whether and how each of the three components of vulnerability (exposure, sensitivity, and adaptive capacity) were considered, if non-climate stressors were considered in the assessment, the geographic location covered by the assessment, and whether the identified components of vulnerability are clearly described in the project design.
- **Measurable framework of vulnerability reduction results.** Based on a review of the results framework and the

terminal evaluation, a rating was assigned to projects on a five-point scale, ranging from “to a very small extent” to “to a very large extent.” Projects rated as “to a very large extent” present monitoring and evaluation systems with specific indicators that ensure evaluability of the interventions that address vulnerability. Indicators should be specific, measurable, attributable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART).

- **Vulnerability components ratings.** Based on a review of the terminal evaluations, a rating was assigned to projects on a six-point scale, ranging from “highly satisfactory” to “highly unsatisfactory.” Components rated as “highly satisfactory” present results commensurate with the expected outcomes (as described in project documentation) and the problems the project was intended to address; these also show a likely level of sustainability based on the quantitative and qualitative information provided in terminal evaluations.

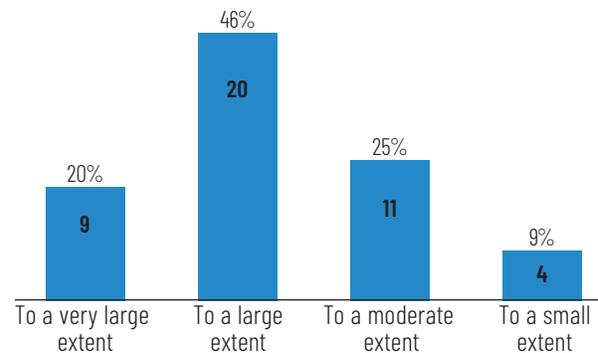
Source: Assessment analysis.

change, as well as nonclimate stressors (e.g., land use change, habitat fragmentation, pollution, and invasive species).

3.1 Distribution of vulnerability considerations in projects

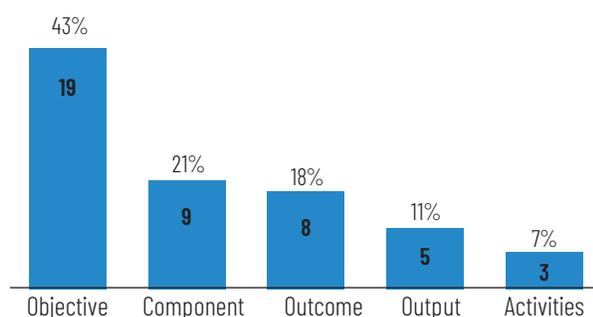
The review found a consistent analysis of the vulnerability framework in 66 percent of the projects. [Figure 3.1](#) presents the distribution of the extent to which projects define the vulnerability to climate change that they seek to reduce. The review identified a high level of prioritization of vulnerability to climate change in most of the projects’ logical frameworks. Analyzing the highest level where projects include a vulnerability framework assessment, 43 percent of the projects reviewed include

Figure 3.1 Inclusion of vulnerability analysis in project design of AER 2023 cohort



Source: Project documents. No project designs were rated as including vulnerability analysis to a very small extent.

a specific goal to reduce vulnerability in their main objective, while 21 percent have it at a component level, 18 percent at an outcome level, and 18 percent at a lower level, such as output or activity ([figure 3.2](#)).

Figure 3.2 Level of vulnerability prioritization in project design of AER 2023 cohort

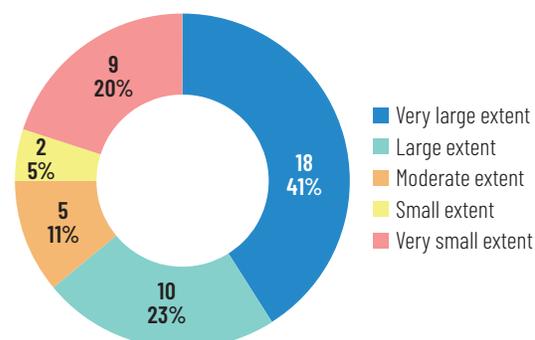
Source: Project documents.

3.2 Indicators of vulnerability

Projects' results frameworks were also reviewed for the inclusion of indicators that measure vulnerability interventions. Aligned with the previous findings, the reduction of vulnerabilities was explained in terms of measurable results to a large or a very large extent in 62 percent of the projects ([figure 3.3](#)).

This number may be explained by the fact that in 2014, the Adaptation Monitoring and Assessment Tool (AMAT) was introduced to measure progress toward achieving the outputs and outcomes established at the portfolio-level results framework.² The AMAT was aligned with the GEF Programming Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change for the LDCF and the SCCF (GEF 2018a), which had as objective 1 "Reduction of vulnerability to the adverse impacts of climate change, including variability, at local, national, regional and global level." Even

²In 2018, the Updated Results Architecture for Adaptation to Climate Change Under the Least Developed Countries Fund and The Special Climate Change Fund (2018-2022) (GEF 2018b) was introduced. This framework replaced the Adaptation Monitoring and Assessment Tool.

Figure 3.3 Extent of a measurable framework of vulnerability reduction results in the AER 2023 cohort

Source: Project documents.

Note: n = 44.

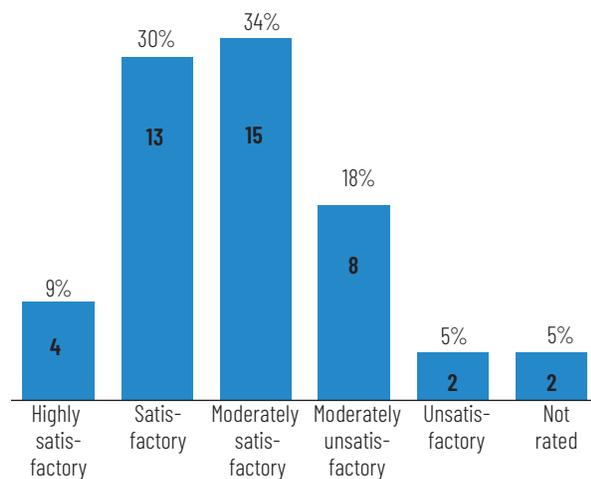
if the analysis of the AER 2023 cohort did not find an extended use of the indicators proposed, it is evident that the tool provided useful guidance for adaptation projects and provided a framework for addressing the overall outcome of a project considering LDCF/SCCF goals, promoting a balance between comprehensiveness and ease of use.

The review also enabled identification of specific indicators used by the AER 2023 cohort that stand out as successful and could be replicated for future interventions. A summary of the most significant categories and their indicators is presented in [table 3.1](#).

Rating of vulnerability components

The vulnerability components were rated based on information retrieved from terminal evaluations, which provided data on their specific results and performance. The distribution presented in [figure 3.4](#) shows a positive score; however, it shows a lower score than the overall project outcomes ([figure 2.1](#)). Thirty-three projects were assessed in the satisfactory range (73 percent compared to 91 percent for overall project outcome ratings), although most of them counted in the moderately satisfactory rating. Ten projects (22 percent)

Figure 3.4 Distribution of vulnerability components ratings in the AER 2023 cohort



Source: GEF IEO terminal evaluation review data set.

Note: $n = 44$. No project vulnerability components were rated as highly unsatisfactory.

were rated in the unsatisfactory range (compared to 9 percent for overall project ratings).

Considering the limitations in terms of the number of projects and the scope of the assessment, it is difficult to provide the main factors that may explain the lower score for the vulnerability components. However, seven terminal evaluations point out a lack of rigorous work in the appraisal stage, specifically in the definition of baselines (which constrained the effective measurement of impacts), an absence of a tailored scaling-up strategy based on lessons from previous projects, and no solid evidence that stakeholders used the services developed by the projects.

The assessment also reviewed the evidence on whether projects contributed to reducing people's vulnerability to the adverse impacts of climate change. Most of the projects (70 percent) provided data demonstrating some type of contribution to reducing vulnerability. A summary of some of the contributions is presented in [table 3.2](#).

The inference analysis of the vulnerability components in AER 2023 projects concludes that vulnerability and risk

assessments are key tools to inform identification of adaptation needs and are required to strengthen the adaptation rationale of project activities. Additionally, two terminal evaluations pointed out that locally adapted solutions have the highest potential to address specific local adaptation needs—the climate resilience project in Niger (GEF ID 4702, FAO) and Enhancing Capacities of Rural Communities to Pursue Climate Resilient Livelihood Options in the São Tomé and Príncipe Districts of Caué, Me-Zochi, Príncipe, Lemba, Cantagalo, and Lobata (CMPLCL; GEF ID 5184, UNDP).

Another important conclusion is that reducing vulnerabilities can also mean new income and opportunities, not just costs. The development of climate change resilience capacities, structures, and interventions need not necessarily only be about creating costs—including those related to sustainability—but can also create opportunities for community empowerment and income generation, as in the climate change adaptation project in Lesotho (GEF ID 5124, FAO) and the Community Resilience to Climate and Disaster Risk in Solomon Islands project (GEF ID 5581, World Bank).

For example, the project Economy-wide Integration of Climate Change Adaptation and DRM/DDR to Reduce Climate Vulnerability of Communities in Samoa (GEF ID 5417, UNDP) improved livelihood conditions in Samoa: 640 families were assessed as high-vulnerable and thus selected as beneficiaries. The terminal evaluation showed that the project's support to address household vulnerabilities also led to the development of microenterprises spanning varied activities (vegetable gardens, plantations, fishing, and mixed cropping). At the time of the evaluation field mission, this additional income generated savings of \$913 per family.

At an institutional level, the participation of government organizations in activities related to reducing vulnerability is more effective and sustainable when it is clearly included in the mandate of public institutions. Two terminal evaluations pointed out the need not only to improve government capacity but to integrate responsibilities

Table 3.1 Vulnerability indicators on the AER 2023 cohort

| Category | Indicator | Target | Project |
|-------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Community-based interventions | Community involvement AER monitoring vulnerability in Malawi | Community agreed upon a set of indicators in participatory M&E and conducted monthly and quarterly monitoring and reported to district council | GEF 4797, UNDP: Climate Proofing Local Development Gains in Rural and Urban Areas of Machinga and Mangochi Districts |
| | % change in vulnerability of local community to climate risks in Angola | Achieve a 70% score in the vulnerability reduction assessment (VRA) at the end of the project | GEF ID 5177, UNDP: Promoting Climate-resilient Development and Enhanced Adaptive Capacity to Withstand Disaster Risks in Angola's Cuvélai River Basin |
| | % change in local community vulnerability to climate risks through perception-based research in São Tomé and Príncipe | 50% of VRA score at the end of the project | GEF ID 5184, UNDP: Enhancing Capacities of Rural Communities to Pursue Resilient Livelihood Options in the São Tomé and Príncipe Districts of Caué, Príncipe, Lembá, Cantaglo, and Lobata (CMLCL) |
| | Number of people benefiting from improved flood management through implementation of hard and soft measures for protection of community assets in Samoa | At least 12,000 people benefited from protection of community assets | GEF ID 5417, UNDP: Economy-wide Integration of Climate Change Adaptation and DRM/DRR to Reduce Climate Vulnerability of Communities in Samoa |
| Risk management | Catastrophe risk insurance developed under the project is available through local insurance industry in Kazakhstan | Catastrophe modeling risk is developed and available at the end of the project | GEF ID 6915, World Bank: Southeast Europe and Central Asia Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility |
| | Change in frequency of fire across all districts in Zambia | Fires reduced by 25% | GEF ID 5435, UNDP: Promoting Climate Resilient Community-based Regeneration of Indigenous Forests in Zambia's Central Province |
| | Number of staff trained on risks of climate-induced economic losses in Tunisia | Target not specified | GEF ID 5105, UNDP: Addressing Climate Change Vulnerabilities and Risks in Vulnerable Coastal Areas of Tunisia |
| Planning | % of targeted communities demonstrating capacity to implement community-based disaster risk management/vulnerability and adaptation plans to manage impacts of natural hazards and climate change in Solomon Islands | At least 80% of targeted communities demonstrate capacity | GEF ID 5581, World Bank: Community Resilience to Climate and Disaster Risk in Solomon Islands Project |
| | Use of climate-driven vulnerabilities and cost-effective planning to inform implementation of the Land Rehabilitation Programme in Lesotho | Climate-driven vulnerabilities and cost-effective planning are used to inform the implementation of appropriate climate-smart ecosystem rehabilitation and management measures | GEF ID 5075, UNDP: Reducing Vulnerability from Climate Change in the Foothills, Lowlands, and the Lower Senqu River Basin |
| | Development of a comprehensive national coastal vulnerability assessment to inform integrated coastal management policy and planning in Timor-Leste | A comprehensive coastal vulnerability assessment is developed and used to inform policy and planning | GEF ID 5671, UNDP: Building Shoreline Resilience of Timor-Leste Protect Local Communities and the Livelihoods |

Source: Project documents.

Table 3.2 Contributions of projects in the AER 2023 cohort to reduce vulnerabilities

| Category | Project contribution |
|---------------------------|---|
| Capacity building | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 countries received tailored support to advance their National Adaptation Plan process. Project: Assisting non-LDC Developing Countries with Country-driven Processes to Advance National Adaptation Plans (GEF ID 5683; UNEP, UNDP) • GIS-based tools have been developed and successfully disseminated and made available to municipalities and other users. Project: Technology transfer for Climate Resilient Flood Management in Vrbas River Basin (GEF ID 5604, UNDP) • Community radio farming programs had an impact not only on best-practice climate change adaptation techniques (e.g., climate-smart agriculture), but also provided a forum for promoting forest conservation and generating a sustainable income from it. Project: Promoting Climate Resilient Community-based Regeneration of Indigenous Forests in Zambia's Central Province (GEF ID 5435, UNDP) |
| Water management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water availability per capita was improved with more than 500 liters/person/day. Project: Strengthening Capacities of Rural Aqueduct Associations (ASADAS) to Address Climate Change Risks in Water Stressed Communities of Northern Costa Rica (GEF ID 6945, UNDP) • Approximately 44,814 people now have access to safe drinking water as a result of the construction of 35 water facilities. Project: Building Adaptive Capacity to Catalyze Active Public and Private Sector Participation to Manage the Exposure and Sensitivity of Water Supply Resources to Climate Change in Sierra Leone (GEF ID 4599, UNDP) |
| Risk management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tool developed by the project (CatMonitor) provides scientifically proven information about the vulnerability of dwellings to earthquake risk. Project: Southeast Europe and Central Asia Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (GEF ID 6915, World Bank) • Communities implemented their top priority investments to address natural hazards and climate change while receiving financial and technical support from the Project Management Unit. Project: Community Resilience to Climate and Disaster Risk in Solomon Islands Project (GEF ID 5581, World Bank) • The Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment identified ways to reduce vulnerability to climate change, such as making vessel landing sites safer, increasing discussions with the country's coastal protection unit, and promoting productive diversification practices. Project: Climate Change Adaptation in the Eastern Caribbean Fisheries Sector (GEF ID 5667, FAO) |
| Protective infrastructure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An operational community-based system has been installed with effective receipt of weather and hydrological information, including tracking and reporting of extreme events. Project: Community Disaster Risk Management in Burundi (GEF ID 4990, UNDP) • Protective infrastructure such as protection walls, and irrigation infrastructure such as canal intake, have reduced the loss and damage caused by floods. Project: Strengthening the Resilience of Rural Livelihood Options for Afghan Communities in Panjshir, Balkh, Uruzgan, and Herat Provinces to Manage Climate Change-induced Disaster Risks (GEF ID 5202, UNDP) • 1,665 households (83 percent of target population) had their livelihoods enhanced due to the improved and new infrastructure (boreholes, wells, and thresholds). Project: Supporting Rural Community Adaptation to Climate Change in Mountain Regions of Djibouti (GEF ID 5332, UNDP) |

in government agencies, regardless of the individuals in charge, which are often affected by a high turnover of officeholders—Building Shoreline Resilience of Timor-Leste to Protect Local Communities

and their Livelihoods (GEF ID 5671, UNDP) and the climate-resilient livelihoods project in Turkmenistan (GEF ID 6960, UNDP).

4

Synthesis of lessons learned from completed projects

Terminal evaluations were reviewed for projects in the AER 2023 cohort to draw out lessons learned. Most lessons relate to standard good-practices elements in project design and implementation. Lessons identified specifically from components linked to vulnerability were also extracted. Lessons were classified into the following categories: exit strategies and institutional commitments, cofinancing, vulnerability indicators, and commitment of key stakeholders.

4.1 Exit strategies and institutional commitments

As mentioned in previous AERs, lessons learned on providing for sustainability were systematically brought up. Twelve projects emphasized the importance of clear exit strategies and follow-up commitments to ensure sustainability. For instance, the Climate Proofing Local Development Gains in Rural and Urban Areas of Machinga and Mangochi Districts project (GEF ID 4797, UNDP) in Malawi included a lesson on the importance of a comprehensive exit strategy focused on institutional and financial mechanisms for sustainability from the project's design stages. This is essential because if the exit plan is developed at the design stage, it is usually well integrated into general project implementation.

4.2 Cofinancing

Five projects noted that the concept of cofinancing applied to GEF projects (including GEF Trust Fund, LDCF and SCCF) remains poorly understood or dealt with by multiple stakeholders. The Strengthening Capacities of Agricultural Producers to Cope with Climate Change for Increased Food Security through the Farmers Field School Approach project (GEF ID 5433, FAO) in Mozambique states that the scope and responsibilities of

cofinancing need to be clarified to all actors involved, including the government and other partners, to avoid any misinterpretation that limits or hinders their achievement of objectives. Also, the terminal evaluation of the Integrating Climate Resilience into Agricultural and Pastoral Production for Food Security in Vulnerable Rural Areas Through the Farmers Field School Approach project (GEF ID 5014, FAO) in Burkina Faso found that it is important to communicate the co-financing commitment to all stakeholders to prevent any misunderstandings that could impede the expected outcomes of the activities that are not financed by the GEF.

4.3 Vulnerability indicators

Six terminal evaluations mentioned the need for the results framework to clearly reflect appropriate indicators for measuring the outcomes of addressing vulnerability issues, especially those linked to non-infrastructure components (capacity building, awareness, policy, planning, and dissemination activities). For instance, the terminal evaluation of the project Effective and Responsive Island-level Governance to Secure and Diversify Climate Resilient Marine-based Coastal Livelihoods and Enhance Climate Hazard Response Capacity (GEF ID 4714, UNDP) in Tuvalu observed that to ensure an accurate vulnerability framework in a project, it is crucial that expected results, indicators, and targets related to vulnerability be determined during the formulation of the project. Once it is part of the project strategy (log-frame) and of the monitoring framework, components addressing vulnerability become part of the project's implementation and of reporting project progress.

Additionally, not all indicators of vulnerability components established in the appraisal are realistic and measurable. For example, the project Promoting Climate-resilient Development and Enhanced Adaptive Capacity to

Withstand Disaster Risks in Angola's Cuvelai River Basin (GEF ID 5177, UNDP) determined that the vulnerability results framework should not be built around indicators requiring expensive, demanding, complex, and time-consuming activities, especially when baselines are not clearly defined.

4.4 Commitment of key stakeholders

Identifying champions of change, especially in communities and local organizations, is critical. These people can be a key resource point, as well as important influencers of behavior change among their peers. Overall, it is essential not to underestimate the need for a strong political champion. Projects have limited prospects of success without the government's backing, and they require an internal advocate to move them forward.

For example, the regional project, Climate Technology Transfer Mechanisms and Networks in Latin America and the Caribbean (GEF ID 4880, IDB), identified that an engagement strategy is needed to define clear sustainability lines and institutional commitments related to the monitoring of the investments made. Also, the Strengthening Land & Ecosystem Management Under Conditions of Climate Change in the Niayes and Casamance Regions—Republic of Senegal project (GEF ID 5566, UNDP) showed that the lack of a committed focal point at the local level affected the project's outcome in terms of the number of beneficiaries and their subsequent mobilization to complete the activities successfully.

5

Management Action Record

The Management Action Record (MAR) has been presented annually to the GEF Council since June 2006. It is the main accountability mechanism to monitor and report on the progress in implementation of recommendations of evaluations prepared by the GEF IEO. Prior to 2021, the Council endorsed the recommendations, and the GEF IEO tracked implementation of the recommendations. The GEF Secretariat provided a management response to the IEO evaluations and recommendations, but the specific actions included in the management response were not endorsed by the Council.

As a follow-up to the Professional Peer Review of the Independent Evaluation Function of the Global Environment Facility (PRP 2019), the GEF approach to the MAR was revised. As part of this revision, GEF management responds to each GEF IEO evaluation recommendation with an action plan, and the Council comments on and endorses this action plan. The GEF IEO then tracks progress in implementation of the GEF management's action plan. In the wake of the revised MAR process, the GEF Council began to endorse management's action plans in June 2021. The 2023 MAR is the first MAR that is being prepared using the revised approach.

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

5.1 Rating approach

For each of the recommendation for which implementation of the management's action plan is tracked, GEF Management was invited to provide self-ratings on the

progress in implementation along with commentary as necessary. Ratings and commentary on tracked recommendations are also provided by the GEF IEO for validation.

The scale for assessing the level of implementation of the management action plan is analogous to that used in earlier MARs. However, the description of the ratings has been updated to reflect the revised MAR process. The implementation progress ratings are as follows:

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

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

- **Graduated** due to high or, where appropriate, substantial level of implementation of the management's action plan; and
- **Retired** because the evaluation recommendation and related action plan are not relevant anymore, or further progress on implementation of the action plan is unlikely. An automatic reason for retirement

would be if a recommendation and the related action plan have been reported on in the MAR for five years.

5.2 LDCF/SCCF MAR 2023

MAR 2023 for the LDCF/SCCF tracks progress in implementation of management's action plan for one GEF IEO recommendation for the 2020 LDCF Program Evaluation (GEF IEO 2022a). One recommendation from the 2020 LDCF Program Evaluation and one recommendation from the 2021 SCCF Program Evaluation (GEF IEO 2022b) were excluded from the MAR because the management response—despite being in broad agreement with the recommendation—did not include concrete actions that could be tracked.

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

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

GEF Secretariat’s assessment of progress in the implementation of its action plan: rated as substantial. In the GEF-8 period, the GEF Secretariat is implementing dedicated programs which aim to enhance the quality at entry and sustainability of LDCF projects, as recommended by this evaluation. Of particular relevance is the dedicated program on outreach and capacity support for country planning and programming, and another program on organizational learning and coordination.

The GEF Secretariat is organizing subregional workshops with least developed country representatives, technical personnel, civil society organizations, and GEF Agencies to help raise capacity and facilitate stakeholder engagement and coordination. These factors have been identified as contributing to sustainability.

The Secretariat also provides relevant, science-based guidance to Agencies to elevate the likelihood of sustainability of LDCF programming, such as the GEF Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) guidance on climate risk management, and information on GEF policies designed to ensure the robustness and sustainability of project outcomes, which are regularly communicated to Agencies (such as on stakeholder engagement and gender equality). These guidelines and policies are also directly communicated to countries through expanded constituency workshops, national dialogues, and Introduction Seminars. These measures, as well as the GEF Secretariat’s project/program review process, which includes both technical and policy review followed by a review by STAP, aim at ensuring strong project design.

Some measures identified in the IEO’s 2020 LDCF evaluation are beyond the scope of direct GEF Secretariat influence, namely “insufficient capacity of the project team, staff turnover and delays in recruitment” and “weak project management.” These issues pertain to weaknesses at the Agency or country level that the GEF Secretariat has no means or mandate to oversee. We hope also that evaluators will recall the very difficult circumstances in which LDCF projects tend to be implemented.

The GEF IEO’s validation of reported implementation progress: rated as medium. The launching of the dedicated programs—communications and visibility enhancements, outreach and capacity support for LDCF and small island developing states (SIDS) planning and programming, organizational learning and coordination) in GEF-8—and other ongoing efforts is acknowledged.

The GEF IEO will track the implementation of the dedicated programs, in line with the four main themes of the durability document: (1) theory of change, (2) multistakeholder processes, (3) stakeholder involvement, and (4) adaptive learning, as well as the Secretariat’s continuation of urging Agencies to emphasize contextual factors affecting sustainability of outcomes.

Performance criteria and rating scales

The evaluators will rate project performance on the following criteria: outcomes, sustainability, implementation, execution, M&E design, and M&E implementation. The rated dimensions are described along with a description of the level of performance for a specific rating. In most instances, actual performance may not fully correspond to any of the rating descriptions. Therefore, a rating will be based on the description that provides the best fit based on the evidence. Where available evidence is insufficient to provide rate performance, the performance will be rated as unable to assess.

A.1 Outcome rating

The overall rating of the project outcome will be based on the following criteria:

- **Relevance and coherence.** The evaluators will assess the extent to which the project outcomes aligned with the GEF focal areas/operational program strategies, country priorities, needs of the beneficiaries, and mandates of the Agencies. They will assess the extent to which the project is compatible with other relevant projects and programs being undertaken in the recipient country. The evaluators will assess if the project is well-targeted and the extent to which the project design is appropriate for delivering the expected outcomes. They will assess internal coherence by determining the extent to which there is alignment among the

project's theory of change, governance structure, activities, and M&E system.

- **Effectiveness.** The evaluators will consider the extent to which project outcome achievements were commensurate with the ex ante targets. They will weigh the extent to which the project made the expected level of contributions to global environmental benefits. They will also consider the overall progress in achieving the long-term objectives. They will also consider the unintended consequences of the project and the extent to which they add to, or negate, project benefits.
- **Efficiency.** The criterion is focused on the extent project was cost-effective in delivering its intended results. The evaluators will consider the project's cost/time versus output/outcomes equation, and, where feasible, compare it to alternatives. They will also consider the extent to which project activities were completed in a timely manner.

Project outcome rating will be based on the extent to which the expected outcomes were achieved, and the extent to which it was relevant and cost effective. A six-point rating scale is used to assess outcome. The top three ratings comprise the satisfactory range and the bottom three (excluding unable to assess) the unsatisfactory range:

- **Highly satisfactory.** The outcomes exceed targets, and they are highly relevant and cost effective.
- **Satisfactory.** Level of outcomes achieved meets targets. The outcomes are relevant and cost effective.

- **Moderately satisfactory.** Level of outcomes achieved was generally close to the targets. Majority of the targets were met or almost met but some were not. The outcomes are generally relevant and cost effective.
- **Moderately unsatisfactory.** Overall, the level of outcomes achieved is lower than targets, although some outcomes were substantially achieved. The outcomes are generally relevant but not sufficient given the costs or alternatively generally cost-effective but not adequately relevant.
- **Unsatisfactory.** The expected outcomes were not achieved, or achievement was substantially lower than expected, and/or the achieved outcomes are not relevant. Alternatively, the outcome was cost ineffective compared to alternatives.
- **Highly unsatisfactory.** Negligible level of outcomes were achieved and/or the project had substantial negative consequences, that outweigh its benefits.
- **Unable to assess.** The available information does not allow an assessment of the level of outcome achievement

A.2 Sustainability rating

The rating for likelihood of sustainability will be based on the probability of occurrence of a risk and the magnitude/severity of its effects on continuation of net benefits when it materializes. The assessment also considers resilience of the project benefit stream to the likely risks. The assessment will assess likelihood of continuation over a time frame reasonable for the given project. At the time of the evaluation, a project may not face the consequences of the risk materializing, or the risk may be just beginning to materialize. The assessment should be based on the evidence of risks, available at the time of evaluation. Most risks may be categorized as financial, sociopolitical, institutional, and environmental risks.

- **Financial resources.** The evaluators will assess the likelihood that financial resources will be available to continue the activities that sustain project benefits and risks associated to its availability. For example, support for income-generating activities that support environmentally friendly behavior, regular government budget allocations for the activities supported by the GEF project, and trends that suggest that in the future adequate financial resources for sustaining the project outcome will be available or conversely unavailable.
- **Sociopolitical.** The evaluators will assess the extent to which social or political risks may undermine the longevity of project outcomes. They will assess the extent to which the level of stakeholder ownership is insufficient to allow for project outcomes/benefits to be sustained. They will assess the extent to which the interests of key stakeholders are aligned to support continuation of the project benefit flow. They will assess the extent to which there is sufficient public/stakeholder awareness in support of the long-term objectives of the project.
- **Institutional framework and governance.** The evaluators will assess if the legal framework, policies, governance structures and processes pose any threat to the continuation of project benefits. While assessing these risks, the evaluators will consider if the required systems for accountability and transparency, and the required technical and institutional know-how, are in place.
- **Environmental.** The evaluators will assess if there are any environmental risks that can undermine the future flow of project benefits. The evaluators should assess whether certain activities in the project area will pose a threat to the sustainability of project outcomes. For example, project outcome may be especially vulnerable to climate change risks. Similarly, biodiversity-related gains made by a project targeting marine protected areas may be affected by an increase in pollutant accumulation.

In providing an overall sustainability rating, other risks that are important but do not fall in these categories also need to be considered. Considering the probability of incidence of all relevant risks, and magnitude of effect/severity, the reviewer will provide a rating for the overall likelihood of sustainability using the following four-point scale:

- **Likely.** Either there is negligible risk to continuation of benefits or there are some risks, but the magnitude of their effect is too small and/or the probability that they will materialize is too small. Overall, it is likely that the net benefits of the project will continue.
- **Moderately likely.** There are some risks to sustainability, and they may have some effect on continuation of benefits if they materialize. However, probability of materialization of these risks is low. Net benefits are more likely to continue than abate.
- **Moderately unlikely.** There are significant risks to sustainability. The effect on continuation of benefits would be substantial if these risks materialize and the probability of materialization of these risks is significant. Overall, net benefits of the project are likely to abate.
- **Unlikely.** There are severe risks to sustainability. These risks have either already materialized and halted accrual of net benefits or have high probability of materialization and will halt accrual of net benefits when they materialize. Therefore, overall, it is unlikely that net benefits will continue to accrue, and the long term intended impacts of the project will be achieved.
- **Unable to assess.** Unable to assess the expected incidence and magnitude of risks to sustainability.

A.3 Implementation and execution ratings

The performance of the GEF Agency and of the executing agency will be considered separately ([table A.1](#)). A GEF Agency that implements a project is responsible for activities related to a project's identification, concept preparation, preparation of detailed proposal, project start-up, oversight and supervision, completion, and evaluation. The Agency is also, overall, responsible for efficient utilization of project inputs and delivery of project outputs. The performance of the GEF Agency will be considered to rate the quality of implementation.

GEF activities are executed on the ground by the executing agencies. The executing agencies are involved in the management and administration of the project's day-to-day activities under the overall oversight and supervision of a GEF Agency. The executing agencies are responsible for the appropriate use of funds, as well as the procurement and contracting of goods and services following the regulations of the GEF Agency. The performance of the project's executing agency/agencies will be considered to rate the quality of execution.

A.4 Project M&E ratings

The M&E arrangements will be rated at the project level. This will include both M&E arrangements vested in the coordinating project, and arrangements at the child project level to contribute to project M&E. The quality of project M&E will be assessed in terms of:

- **Design.** The review will assess quality of the M&E plan at CEO endorsement/approval. It will consider the extent to which the M&E plan was practical and well-thought through. It will assess the extent to which the M&E plan addresses the project's theory of change, GEF M&E requirements, incorporates

Table A.1 Scale for rating implementation and execution

| Rating | Implementation (GEF Agency) | Execution (executing agency/agencies) |
|---------------------------------|--|---|
| Highly satisfactory | Performance of the GEF Agency was exemplary. Project preparation and implementation were robust. The Agency ensured that the relevant GEF policies were applied in project preparation and implementation. Project supervision was strong – the Agency identified and addressed emerging concerns in a timely manner. The GEF Agency ensured that project implementation stayed on track and was completed in time. | Performance of the executing agency/agencies was exemplary. The execution of project activities was timely and of high quality. Relevant GEF policies and requirements were adhered to. Guidance from the GEF Agency was followed and corrective actions, if required, were taken promptly. The executing agency also undertook measures to mitigate risks to sustainability and is taking steps to support follow-up to the project. Completed project activities in time. |
| Satisfactory (S) | Performance of the GEF Agency met expectations and did not have any salient weakness. Project preparation and implementation were robust, and relevant GEF policies were applied. The GEF Agency supervised the project well – it identified and addressed emerging concerns in a timely manner. The GEF Agency ensured that project implementation was on track. | Performance of the executing agency met the expectations and was without any salient weakness. The execution of project activities was timely and of good quality. Relevant GEF policies and requirements were applied. Guidance from the GEF Agency was followed. The executing agency also undertook measures to mitigate risks to sustainability of project outcomes. |
| Moderately Satisfactory (MS): | Overall, the performance of the GEF Agency met expectations. Project preparation and implementation were adequate and relevant GEF policies were applied although there are some weak areas. The GEF Agency supervised the project adequately – it identified and addressed emerging concerns although some concerns may be inadequately addressed. Project implementation had minor delays and may have had a few dropped activities. | Performance of the executing agency had some weaknesses but, overall, it met the expectations. The execution of project activities was generally timely but with some instances of delay. Relevant GEF policies and requirements were applied although some minor slip-ups may also have been observed. Guidance from the GEF Agency was followed and problems were fixed. There are some areas where the performance of the executing agency was below par, although overall the executing agency's performance was adequate. |
| Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): | Overall, the GEF Agency did not meet expectations although there were some areas of solid performance. Project preparation and implementation had weaknesses although these were not too severe. Project supervision was somewhat weak. Although most emerging concerns were identified, many remained unaddressed or inadequately addressed. Project implementation was delayed, and a few activities were dropped or reduced in scale because of issues that were largely under the control of the GEF Agency. | While there were some areas of solid performance, the overall performance of the executing agency did not meet expectations. The execution of project activities was delayed. The observed capacities of the executing agency were a limitation of project execution. Several slip ups in application of GEF policies and requirements were observed. Guidance from the GEF Agency was generally followed and problems were fixed but usually such actions were not timely. There are several areas for improvement in execution. |
| Unsatisfactory (U): | The GEF Agency did not meet the expected level of performance. Project preparation and implementation were weak. Emerging concerns were not identified by the GEF Agency in time and remained unaddressed or inadequately addressed. M&E implementation was weak – activities were not implemented in time or were not undertaken. Project implementation was delayed, and several activities were dropped or were reduced in scale. | The executing agency did not meet expectations. Execution of project activities was delayed and at least some activities were dropped due to factors largely under the control of the executing agency. Many slip-ups were observed in application of GEF policies and requirements. Guidance from the GEF Agency was not put into practice or was applied with considerable delay. |

Table A.1 Scale for rating implementation and execution (continued)

| Rating | Implementation (GEF Agency) | Execution (executing agency/agencies) |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): | There were severe shortcomings in the quality of implementation. The GEF Agency mismanaged project implementation and its supervision was poor. Emerging concerns were not identified in time, including those that should have been obvious. Although instances of mismanagement were discovered, corrective actions were not undertaken. Project activities were poorly implemented, and several had to be dropped. | There were severe shortcomings in project execution. There were several instances of mismanagement. Emerging concerns were not addressed in time, including those that should have been obvious. Most activities were very poorly executed, experienced delays, and had activities dropped. GEF policies and requirements were not applied. |
| Unable to assess (UA) | The available information is not sufficient to allow rating of performance. | The available information is not sufficient to allow rating of performance. |

applicable core indicators and tracking tools, and provides baseline information. It will discuss whether the indicators specified to track environmental, gender, socio-economic, and other results, are appropriate (specific, measurable, achievable/attributable, relevant/realistic, and time-bound, timely, trackable and targeted—SMART). For child projects and coordinating projects under a programmatic framework, the review will assess how the well M&E plan aligns with and is likely to contribute to the program M&E plan.

- **Implementation.** The review will assess the extent to which the M&E system operated as planned. Where applicable, it will consider if weaknesses in the M&E plan were addressed in time. It will consider if data on specified indicators was gathered systematically and as per schedule. It will consider the extent to which data on relevant GEF core indicators/

corporate results indicators and/or tracking tools was analyzed and reported. It will consider the extent to which the methodological approaches used to analyze data were appropriate. It will consider the extent to which resources allocated for M&E were sufficient. It will also consider the extent to which the information from M&E system was used to improve project implementation and effectiveness. For child projects (including coordinating child projects) under a programmatic framework, the review will assess how the well M&E activities of the project aligned with and contributed to the program M&E.

Quality of M&E on these two dimensions will be assessed separately on a six-point scale ([table A.2](#)).

Table A.2 Scale for rating quality of M&E design and implementation

| Rating | M&E plan | M&E implementation |
|---------------------------------|--|--|
| Highly satisfactory (HS) | The project M&E plan is a good practice and did not have any weaknesses – its alignment with the project theory of change is robust. Complete baseline data has been provided. The specified indicators were appropriate, and arrangements for the M&E plan implementation were adequate. Overall, the M&E plan exceeds expectations and is exemplary. | The M&E plan implementation was excellent. Weaknesses in the M&E plan, if present, were addressed promptly. M&E activities were conducted in a timely manner, and data from M&E was used to improve project implementation. Overall, M&E implementation exceeded expectations and was exemplary. |
| Satisfactory (S) | The project M&E plan was robust and did not have any or had only minor weaknesses – the alignment with the project theory of change is robust. Baseline data provided or its collection is planned at project start. The specified indicators were appropriate, and arrangements for M&E plan implementation were adequate. The plan meets expectations. | The M&E plan implementation was generally as per the plan. Weaknesses in M&E were addressed in a timely manner. M&E activities were conducted in a timely manner, and data from M&E was used in improving project implementation. Overall, M&E implementation meets expectations. |
| Moderately Satisfactory (MS): | On balance, the project M&E plan was solid. The specified indicators were generally appropriate, and arrangements for M&E plan implementation were adequate. The alignment of the M&E plan with the project theory of change is solid. There were areas where the M&E plan could be strengthened but, overall, the plan was adequate. | The M&E plan implementation was generally as per the plan. Weaknesses in M&E were generally addressed although some weaknesses remained. Some M&E activities were delayed. M&E data was used for reporting but had little use in improving project implementation. Overall, M&E implementation meets expectations with some areas of low performance. |
| Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): | Overall, a weak M&E plan although it had strengths in some areas. The specified indicators were generally appropriate but additional indicators were required to adequately capture project results and/or arrangements to gather data on indicators were not adequate. The alignment with the project theory of change is somewhat weak. The plan needs several improvements to meet expectations. | The M&E plan implementation was weak and/or did not address the weaknesses in the M&E plan. Most M&E activities were completed – some of them were either dropped or delayed. M&E data was not reported in a timely manner – there is little evidence to suggest that the data was used to improve project implementation. Overall, M&E implementation does not meet expectations although there are some areas where the performance is adequate. |
| Unsatisfactory (U): | The M&E plan had severe shortcomings. The alignment with the project theory of change is weak. No baseline data was provided nor any indication that it would be collected at project start. Indicators do not adequately address project outcomes and other results; for several results, relevant indicators have not been specified. There are gaps in arrangements for M&E plan implementation – no budget or an inadequate budget was provided for M&E. | The M&E plan implementation was flawed and/or did not address severe weaknesses of the M&E plan. Several M&E activities were either dropped or were incomplete. The data collection methodology was not sound. M&E data was not reported in a timely manner – there is little evidence to suggest that the data was used to improve project implementation. M&E implementation does not meet expectations. |
| Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): | No M&E plan was prepared. | No, or negligible, M&E activity was implemented other than conduct of the project evaluation. |
| Unable to assess (UA) | Unable to assess because project documents are not available. | Unable to assess as the terminal evaluation does not cover M&E implementation adequately. |

Ratings of completed LDCF and SCCF projects

| GEF ID | GEF period | Fund | GEF Agency | Title | Country | Grant (mil \$) | Rating | | | |
|--------|------------|------|------------|---|--------------|----------------|----------|-----------------|------------|-----------|
| | | | | | | | Outcomes | Sustain-ability | M&E design | M&E impl. |
| 4434 | GEF-5 | LDCF | FAO | Strengthening the Adaptive Capacity and Resilience of Rural Communities Using Micro Watershed Approaches to Climate Change and Variability to Attain Sustainable Food Security | Cambodia | 5.2 | MS | MU | S | MU |
| 4599 | GEF-5 | LDCF | UNDP | Building Adaptive Capacity to Catalyze Active Public and Private Sector Participation to Manage the Exposure and Sensitivity of Water Supply Services to Climate Change in Sierra Leone | Sierra Leone | 2.9 | S | MU | MS | MS |
| 4610 | GEF-5 | SCCF | IDB | Adaptation to Climate Impacts in Water Regulation and Supply for the Area of Chingaza - Sumapaz - Guerrero | Colombia | 4.2 | S | L | S | MS |
| 4700 | GEF-5 | LDCF | UNDP | Integrating Community-based Adaptation into Afforestation and Reforestation Programmes in Bangladesh | Bangladesh | 5.7 | S | ML | S | S |
| 4702 | GEF-5 | LDCF | FAO | Integrating Climate Resilience into Agricultural and Pastoral Production for Food Security in Vulnerable Rural Areas through the Farmers Field School Approach | Niger | 3.8 | MS | ML | S | MU |
| 4714 | GEF-5 | LDCF | UNDP | Effective and Responsive Island-level Governance to Secure and Diversify Climate Resilient Marine-based Coastal Livelihoods and Enhance Climate Hazard Response Capacity | Tuvalu | 4.2 | S | ML | MS | S |

| GEF ID | GEF period | Fund | GEF Agency | Title | Country | Grant (mil \$) | Rating | | | |
|--------|------------|----------------|------------|--|-----------------------------|----------------|----------|-----------------|------------|-----------|
| | | | | | | | Outcomes | Sustain-ability | M&E design | M&E impl. |
| 4775 | GEF-5 | GET, MTF, SCCF | FAO | Promotion of Climate-smart Livestock Management Integrating Reversion of Land Degradation and Reduction of Desertification Risks in Vulnerable Provinces | Ecuador | 3.9 | HS | MU | HS | HS |
| 4797 | GEF-5 | LDCF | UNDP | Climate Proofing Local Development Gains in Rural and Urban Areas of Machinga and Mangochi Districts | Malawi | 5.3 | S | ML | S | S |
| 4880 | GEF-5 | GET, MTF, SCCF | IDB | Climate Technology Transfer Mechanisms and Networks in Latin America and the Caribbean | Latin America and Caribbean | 10.9 | S | ML | MU | MS |
| 4901 | GEF-5 | SCCF | World Bank | India: Sustainable Livelihoods and Adaptation to Climate Change (SLACC) | India | 8.0 | MS | NR | NR | U |
| 4958 | GEF-5 | LDCF | UNDP | Climate Risk Finance for Sustainable and Climate Resilient Rainfed Farming and Pastoral Systems | Sudan | 5.7 | S | MU | MS | MU |
| 4971 | GEF-5 | LDCF | UNDP | Adapting Natural Resource Dependent Livelihoods to Climate induced Risks in Selected Landscapes in Burkina Faso: the Boucle du Mouhoun Forest Corridor and the Mare d'Oursi Wetlands Basin | Burkina Faso | 7.0 | MS | MU | S | S |
| 4990 | GEF-5 | LDCF | UNDP | Community Disaster Risk Management in Burundi | Burundi | 8.7 | MS | MU | MS | MS |
| 5004 | GEF-5 | LDCF | UNDP | Strengthening Climate Information and Early Warning Systems in São Tomé and Príncipe for Climate Resilient Development and Adaptation to Climate Change | São Tomé and Príncipe | 4.0 | MS | U | MS | MU |
| 5014 | GEF-5 | LDCF | FAO | Integrating Climate Resilience into Agricultural and Pastoral Production for Food Security in Vulnerable Rural Areas Through the Farmers Field School Approach | Burkina Faso | 3.8 | S | L | S | S |
| 5015 | GEF-5 | LDCF | UNDP | Implementing Urgent Adaptation Priorities Through Strengthened Decentralized and National Development Plans | Malawi | 4.5 | HS | ML | S | S |
| 5049 | GEF-5 | LDCF | UNDP | Adaptation to Climate Change in the Coastal Zone in Vanuatu | Vanuatu | 8.0 | MS | MU | S | MS |
| 5075 | GEF-5 | LDCF | UNDP | Reducing Vulnerability from Climate Change in the Foothills, Lowlands and the Lower Senqu River Basin | Lesotho | 8.4 | MS | MU | S | MS |

| GEF ID | GEF period | Fund | GEF Agency | Title | Country | Grant (mil \$) | Rating | | | |
|--------|------------|----------------|------------|---|-----------------------|----------------|----------|-----------------|------------|-----------|
| | | | | | | | Outcomes | Sustain-ability | M&E design | M&E impl. |
| 5105 | GEF-5 | SCCF | UNDP | Addressing Climate Change Vulnerabilities and Risks in Vulnerable Coastal Areas of Tunisia | Tunisia | 5.5 | MS | MU | S | MS |
| 5124 | GEF-5 | LDCF | FAO | Strengthening Capacity for Climate Change Adaptation through Support to Integrated Watershed Management Programme in Lesotho | Lesotho | 3.6 | S | ML | MS | MS |
| 5177 | GEF-5 | LDCF | UNDP | Promoting Climate-resilient Development and Enhanced Adaptive Capacity to Withstand Disaster Risks in Angola's Cuvelai River Basin | Angola | 8.2 | MU | MU | MU | MU |
| 5184 | GEF-5 | LDCF | UNDP | Enhancing Capacities of Rural Communities to Pursue Climate Resilient Livelihood Options in the São Tomé and Príncipe Districts of Caué, Me-Zochi, Príncipe, Lemba, Cantagalo, and Lobata (CMLPLCL) | São Tomé and Príncipe | 4.0 | S | MU | S | MS |
| 5192 | GEF-5 | LDCF | UNDP | Strengthening the Resilience of Women Producer Group's and Vulnerable Communities in Mali | Mali | 5.5 | MS | MU | MS | MS |
| 5202 | GEF-5 | LDCF | UNDP | Strengthening the Resilience of Rural Livelihood Options for Afghan Communities in Panjshir, Balkh, Uruzgan and Herat Provinces to Manage Climate Change-induced Disaster Risks | Afghanistan | 9.0 | S | MU | S | MS |
| 5270 | GEF-5 | GET, LDCF, MTF | World Bank | GGW Natural Resources Management in a Changing Climate in Mali | Mali | 8.4 | MS | NR | NR | U |
| 5318 | GEF-5 | LDCF | UNDP | Strengthening Climate Information and Early Warning Systems in Cambodia to Support Climate Resilient Development and Adaptation to Climate Change | Cambodia | 4.9 | S | ML | S | MS |
| 5332 | GEF-5 | LDCF | UNDP | Supporting Rural Community Adaptation to Climate Change in Mountain Regions of Djibouti | Djibouti | 5.4 | MS | MU | S | MU |
| 5343 | GEF-5 | SCCF | UNDP | Scaling Up Community Resilience to Climate Variability and Climate Change in Northern Namibia, with a Special Focus on Women and Children | Namibia | 3.1 | MS | MU | MS | MS |

| GEF ID | GEF period | Fund | GEF Agency | Title | Country | Grant (mil \$) | Rating | | | |
|--------|------------|----------------|------------|---|--------------------|----------------|----------|-----------------|------------|-----------|
| | | | | | | | Outcomes | Sustain-ability | M&E design | M&E impl. |
| 5380 | GEF-5 | GET, LDCF, MTF | UNDP | Increasing Resilience of Ecosystems and Vulnerable Communities to CC and Anthropic Threats Through a Ridge to Reef Approach to BD Conservation and Watershed Management | Haiti | 9.1 | S | ML | S | S |
| 5417 | GEF-5 | LDCF | UNDP | Economy-wide Integration of Climate Change Adaptation and DRM/DRR to Reduce Climate Vulnerability of Communities in Samoa | Samoa | 12.3 | S | ML | S | MS |
| 5419 | GEF-5 | LDCF | UNDP | Reducing the Vulnerability of Cambodian Rural Livelihoods through Enhanced sub-national Climate Change Planning and Execution of Priority Actions | Cambodia | 4.6 | S | ML | S | S |
| 5433 | GEF-5 | LDCF | FAO | Strengthening Capacities of Agricultural Producers to Cope with Climate Change for Increased Food Security through the Farmers Field School Approach | Mozambique | 9.0 | S | ML | HS | S |
| 5435 | GEF-5 | LDCF | UNDP | Promoting Climate Resilient Community-based Regeneration of Indigenous Forests in Zambia's Central Province | Zambia | 3.9 | MU | MU | U | U |
| 5503 | GEF-5 | LDCF | FAO | Mainstreaming Ecosystem-based Approaches to Climate-resilient Rural Livelihoods in Vulnerable Rural Areas through the Farmer Field School Methodology | Senegal | 6.2 | MS | MU | MS | U |
| 5566 | GEF-5 | LDCF | UNDP | Strengthening Land & Ecosystem Management Under Conditions of Climate Change in the Niayes and Casamance regions- Republic of Senegal | Senegal | 4.1 | MS | ML | MU | U |
| 5581 | GEF-5 | LDCF | World Bank | Community Resilience to Climate and Disaster Risk in Solomon Islands Project | Solomon Islands | 7.3 | MS | NR | NR | U |
| 5604 | GEF-5 | SCCF | UNDP | Technology Transfer for Climate Resilient Flood Management in Vrbas River Basin | Bosnia-Herzegovina | 5.0 | S | ML | S | S |

| GEF ID | GEF period | Fund | GEF Agency | Title | Country | Grant (mil \$) | Rating | | | |
|--------|------------|------|------------|--|---|----------------|----------|-----------------|------------|-----------|
| | | | | | | | Outcomes | Sustain-ability | M&E design | M&E impl. |
| 5667 | GEF-5 | SCCF | FAO | Climate Change Adaptation in the Eastern Caribbean Fisheries Sector | Regional: Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago | 5.5 | MS | ML | MS | MS |
| 5671 | GEF-5 | LDCF | UNDP | Building Shoreline Resilience of Timor-Leste to Protect Local Communities and their Livelihoods | Timor-Leste | 7.0 | MU | U | S | U |
| 5683 | GEF-5 | SCCF | UNDP | Assisting non-LDC Developing Countries with Country-driven Processes to Advance National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) | Global | 4.5 | MS | ML | S | MS |
| 6915 | GEF-6 | SCCF | World Bank | Southeast Europe and Central Asia Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility | Kazakhstan | 5.0 | S | NR | NR | MU |
| 6945 | GEF-6 | SCCF | UNDP | Strengthening Capacities of Rural Aqueduct Associations' (ASADAS) to Address Climate Change Risks in Water Stressed Communities of Northern Costa Rica | Costa Rica | 5.0 | S | ML | S | S |
| 6955 | GEF-6 | SCCF | FAO | Strengthening the Adaptive Capacity to Climate Change in the Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector | Chile | 2.5 | MU | MU | MU | MU |
| 6960 | GEF-6 | SCCF | UNDP | Supporting Climate Resilient Livelihoods in Agricultural Communities in Drought-prone Areas | Turkmenistan | 3.0 | S | MU | S | MS |

Source: GEF IEO terminal evaluation review data set.

Note: **Fund:** LDCF = Least Developed Countries Fund; GET = GEF Trust Fund; MTF = multitrust fund; SCCF = Special Climate Change Fund. **GEF Agency:** CI = Conservation International; FAO = Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; IDB = Inter-American Development Bank; UNDP = United Nations Development Programme; UNEP = United Nations Environmental Programme. **Grant:** Grant is LDCF/SCCF/GEF funding approved at Chief Executive Officer endorsement, plus project preparation grant (PPG); Agency fees are excluded. **Rating:** Outcomes, M&E design, and M&E implementation ratings are reported on a six-point scale: HS = highly satisfactory; S = satisfactory; MS = moderately satisfactory; MU = moderately unsatisfactory; U = unsatisfactory; HU = highly unsatisfactory. Sustainability ratings are reported on a four-point scale: L = likely; ML = moderately likely; MU = moderately unlikely; U = unlikely. NR = not rated; UA = unable to assess.

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