Independent Evaluation Office
GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY

GEF Support to Sustainable Forest Management

Volume 2: Detailed Description of the GEF SFM Portfolio

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EVALUATION OF GEF SUPPORT TO

SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT

VOLUME 2: DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE GEF SFM PORTFOLIO

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Summary: Detailed explanation of the portfolio

Portfolio summary: At the time of this assessment the status of SFM projects was: 314 projects completed implementation (49 percent), 138 projects under implementation (22 percent), and 188 projects in the pipeline (29 percent). This amounted to a total of 640 projects in the portfolio, with a total value of *$3.654 billion* in GEF grant, and XXX billion in cofinancing. The average grant size is *$4.58 million* (median), with a standard deviation from the mean of *$5.46 million,* while the largest grant made is *$60.33 million.* GEF–7 has the largest proportion of SFM projects (25 percent) and funds (26 percent), while Latin America is the region which has received more grants (28 percent), and funds (34 percent). Thus, unsurprisingly Brazil and Colombia are the top two countries in terms of number of SFM projects (3 percent of all SFM projects, respectively), and they are also among the top three recipients of SFM funds together with Mexico (Brazil = 8 percent, Mexico = 5 percent, Colombia = 4 percent). In terms of lead Agencies, the World Bank, UNDP, and FAO have greater proportions of SFM funds (with 35 percent, 28 percent, and 11 percent respectively), and the highest share of projects (28 percent, 34 percent, and 12 percent respectively).

Portfolio evolution: The SFM portfolio has a strong evolutionary trend in terms of funding, objectives, and increasing number of lead Agencies. While engagement of countries and stakeholders has not increased steadily over time. On the one hand, SFM approaches and funding have become more complex and diverse over time; the SFM portfolio has become more integrated by investing more on multifocal areas, steadily increasing grants' cofinancing over GEF replenishment periods, and improving the proportion of projects and funds managed by different lead Agencies. On the other hand, multi-country projects represent only one-third of the portfolio, and they have only been substantially funded during GEF-7. Thus, the multi-country approach has only properly kicked off during the last GEF replenishment period.

243 completed projects (out of a total of 314) have had terminal evaluations. These were assessed, to create an SFM portfolio impact review, from which we offer the following observations:

Geographic and political relevance: The spread of SFM grants is only partially geographically relevant because it seems to underfund a considerable numbers of hotspot countries, and among them are some countries with vast forest areas that are suffering from high deforestation rates such as Congo DR, Angola, and Cambodia. On the other hand, the majority of projects were aligned (75 percent) or partially aligned (11 percent) with relevant government priorities. In terms of stakeholder engagement, we found that the top three positive factors were: (1) effective monitoring, evaluation, and learning system; (2) multiple stakeholder analysis and active stakeholder engagement; and (3) project design based on lessons learnt from previous initiatives.

Stakeholder engagement: We found that 73 percent of SFM projects have engaged between 2 and 4 stakeholder groups, 16 percent between 0 and 1, and 11 percent have engaged 5 groups. The top three factors positively affecting stakeholder engagement were: 1) strong monitoring evaluation and learning system and development of project logic; 2) multiple stakeholder analysis and active stakeholder engagement; and 3) project design based on lessons learnt from previous initiatives. Participatory monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) has been beneficial in clarifying the project design, increasing ownership of projects' objectives, and ensuring collaboration during project implementation.

Coherence and integration: The portfolio has better integrated multiple environmental aims over time, and has developed an increased tangible focus on socioeconomic benefits. In terms of multi-environmental objectives, despite an initial strong focus on biodiversity, the GEF SFM portfolio has progressively transitioned toward multifocal area projects (n=282), which now constitute 44 percent of the SFM portfolio. The remaining 56 percent of the portfolio is addressing single-focal areas, and it is unevenly balanced toward biodiversity (n=288, 45 percent). The integration of socio and environmental aims during SFM project implementation has produced tangible results: 75 percent of projects (n=182) analyzed during the portfolio impact review addressed both environmental and social outcome areas. Thus, overall, the SFM portfolio has performed well in terms of integration of social and environmental aims during project implementation.

Trade-offs and synergies: Successful trade-off mitigation measures employed by projects included: the creation of new employment opportunities, diversification of existing jobs, and the roll-out of trainings in alternative livelihoods. Stakeholder engagement was often used as an effective mitigation strategy. SFM projects have also facilitated synergies, new partnership and agreements. Stakeholder consultation and investing in existing initiatives were pivotal in enabling new alliances and synergistic actions. One the negative side, a few projects have failed to address trade-offs and have created challenges: some activities were detrimental to local livelihoods, and others have created threats to the sustainability of land management systems and undermined biodiversity conservation efforts. Project initiatives deemed by terminal evaluations to have caused harm were often associated with a lack of consultation with local communities.

Impact: We have identified the following tangible contributions of the GEF's work which can be aggregated at portfolio level: at least **78 million ha of forests under new protected areas (PAs) or improved PA management, 1.9 million ha of forests restored, and 139,000 jobs created.** The figures reported in this section should be considered a minimum for the GEF SFM portfolio as a whole because they relate only to the 243 projects with terminal evaluations (out of 640 total), and because most evaluations barely touched on some of the likely impact areas. In terms of transformative change, 52 of 243 projects **(21.4 percent) were evaluated as having achieved transformative change**. Elements of GEF additionality included: socioeconomic benefits produced by innovative methods and approaches; Institutional improvements enabled by capacity development activities; increased financial flows for project activities; and replication strategies allowing for greater environmental impacts.

Effectiveness: During the impact portfolio review we have identified 5 main environmental and 11 main socioeconomic outcome areas addressed by GEF SFM grants which reported tangible results.

Environmental outcome areas	**Socioeconomic outcome areas**
Forest protection and improved forest management in 63% of projects (n = 154)	Increased income in 55% of projects (n = 133)
Biodiversity gains of many types identified for 41% of projects (n = 100)	Community empowerment in 52% of projects (n = 127)
Soil and water and other protective functions identified for 25% of projects (n = 60)	Gender equality in 37% of projects (n = 89)

Forest restoration, 19% of projects (n = 46)	Reduced conflict in 28% of projects (n = 68)
CO_2 emissions mitigated 15% of projects (n = 37)	Indigenous empowerment in 25% of projects (n = 60)

Table 1: Top 10 environmental and socioeconomic outcome areas addressed by GEF SFM portfolio

Terminal evaluations found that project characteristics that positively affected effectiveness were: 1) well-designed monitoring and evaluation systems; 2) stakeholders' engagement fostering local ownership; 3) integration of lessons learned from previous projects, mid-term reviews and needs assessment; 4) adaptive management; and 5) positive role played by the implementing agency and strong project teams. In contrast, the most widespread internal challenges related to: 1) poor MEL; 2) over-ambitious project design; 3) delays caused by either poor capacity of implementing Agencies or to project's procurement processes; 4) financial management and cofinancing. Other hindering factors included: poor capacities of lead Agencies, lack of stakeholder engagement from project design; lack of communication; lack of capacities of project and government staff; and high turnover of government and project staff.

Innovative approaches: Innovations in the socioeconomic sphere mostly related to market-change adoption mechanisms which are deployed to encourage sustainable production and use, and certification mechanisms. Environmental innovations instead referred to forest management technology, which is often achieved through small scale-project implementation, and the introduction of new systems, methods, and approaches. In a few cases, innovation was specifically related to project design, management and implementation. In most of the projects that have successfully introduced innovative practices, the involvement of local communities during the project cycle was key. Other factors positively affecting innovations were: partnerships building; adoption of new techniques, approaches and methods; considerable investment in research; co-development of local activities; innovative management practices; and capacity building.

Cost effectiveness: We developed an indicative top-level cost-benefit analysis by looking at the three main impact aggregated figures versus the amount of money spent in grants of low, medium and high size.[1] We have found that grants of lower size had a return on investment of at least 64.59K ha of forest protected per $ million, 65.5 ha of forest restored per $ million, and 618 jobs per $ million. Grants of medium size instead had an ROI of 88.97K ha of forest protected per $ million, 3,486 ha of forest restored per $ million, and 110 jobs per $ million. Finally grants of higher size had an ROI of 59.44K ha of forest protected per $ million, 687 ha of forest restored per $ million, and 92 jobs per $ million. Overall, we can conclude that low-funding grants are very effective in securing new jobs, and do comparatively well in forest protection, while the best investment for forest protection and restoration was made with medium funding grants. Surprisingly the high-size grants do not excel in any of the three aggregated impact categories. We have conducted a similar top-level analysis also for transformative grants and we

[1] To conduct this exercise, we divided GEF SFM grants into three different spending categories which were based on the actual funding distribution of the projects sampled for the impact portfolio review. The three categories were: 1st quartile (from $555k to $1m) = Low; 1st to 3rd quartile (from $1m to $5.75m) = medium; above 3rd quartile (from $5.75m to $39.51m) = High. In calculating the three categories we have made sure that there were no overlapping grants.

have found that generally it was more likely to achieve transformative change with high-funding grants but small-grants provided greater value for money.

Time efficiency: The GEF SFM portfolio seems to have a very long approval process (see figure 1 below), which can limit the accessibility of grants. On average it took an SFM proposal 2 years, 3 months, and 29 days from PIF approval to receive the first grant disbursement. In terms of projects' end we have found that on average grants are extended for about one year from the expected project-end date.

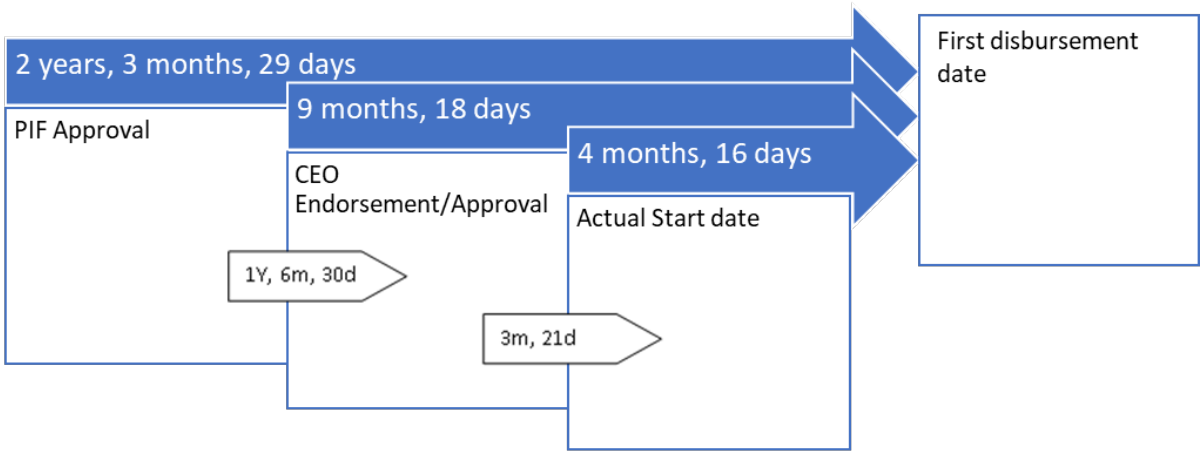

Figure 1: Life of SFM grants approval – time analysis

Sustainability: 48 percent of terminal evaluations (n=116) mentioned that the activities were able to create the conditions to sustain themselves past the life of the project in terms of economic, social, institutional and/or environmental sustainability. 41 percent of terminal evaluations (n = 100) mentioned significant changes in national and local institutions that have enabled the establishment of good natural resources management practices and facilitated the adoptions of sustainable livelihoods strategies. Knowledge creation and dissemination were deemed to be successful to create institutional sustainability in 100 projects, while 32 terminal evaluations mentioned catalysing as a successful approach to support the scaling-up of project's activities, network building and securing new funds. Despite the efforts of implementing Agencies and their partners, often contextual conditions were not favorable to changes in policies and institutions necessary for sustainability. Forty-one projects encountered challenges in promoting law and policy enforcement, policy improvement and addressing policy gaps. In these cases, processes of change were negatively affected by legal failures and delays, lack of political support, failure of agreements, and conflicts.

Equity: The GEF Gender response is characterized by four key moments: Adoption of the Policy on gender mainstreaming between 2011 and 2012; adoption of the Gender Equality Action Plan in 2014; adoption of policy on gender equality in 2017; and adoption of guidelines on core and sub indicators (including gender-related ones) in 2019. During the impact portfolio review we have found significant association between GEF replenishment periods and SFM grants conducting a gender analysis, confirming that grants approved from GEF-5 onwards were more likely to conduct such exercises.

However, gender action plans do not have any significant association with GEF replenishment periods. We have also found that grants conducting gender analysis and adopting action plans are more likely to achieve gender-positive results.

1. Scope and Methodology

1.1 Topics covered

This portfolio review covers two main assessments: descriptive statistics related to all 640 projects funded in the SFM portfolio, plus a portfolio impact review of the 243 completed projects that have had terminal evaluations (out of a total of 314 completed projects).

1.2 Data

The descriptive portfolio review analyzed information related to funding, time of project approval and closure, and geographic distributions of all SFM projects awarded at the time of this assessment. The data set analysed below covers all GEF replenishment periods to date (Pilot through GEF-7). Parent projects were removed to avoid duplication with their subsidiary child projects, resulting in a total of 640 projects (child and standalone).[2] The portfolio impact review has analysed the 243 terminal evaluations commissioned by implementing Agencies,[3] addressing 77 percent of all completed SFM projects, to identify the aggregated impact, effectiveness, coherence, equity, and sustainability of the portfolio.

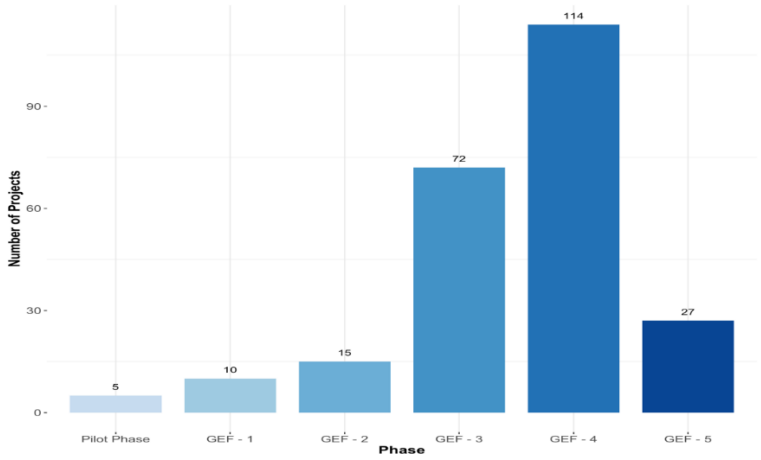

Figure 2: Portfolio impact review - distribution of replenishment periods

A pilot review was conducted on 30 terminal evaluations to inform the impact review methodology, the choice of the sampling approach, and the final selection of questions for the guiding framework of the assessment—the questions drawing also on the Evaluative Framework in our Approach Paper and

[2] For each project, total grant amount was calculated as the CEO amount plus the total of Project Preparation Grant (PPG) funds (PPG amount plus PPG fee). Of the 640 projects, CEO amount was unavailable for 109 projects (103 of which were GEF-7). In this case, PIF Amount was used. When CEO amount and PIF amount were not available (n=18), the project was counted in project totals, but not in financial calculations. In summary: *Total Grant Amount= CEO Amount (PIF if not available) + PPG Total (PPG Amount + PPG Fee).*

[3] English (n= 222), French (n= 9), Spanish (n=12).

questions that emerged from key informant interviews. The review was conducted by eight analysts who gathered relevant evidence through a standardized semi-structured form. During the pilot it was found that the accessibility and usefulness of those terminal evaluations that were conducted during the pilot and the first two replenishment periods of the GEF were limited. Thus, we have subsampled 30 of the 99 available terminal evaluations from Pilot to GEF-2. Subsampling was done through semi-random, stratified sampling to ensure the distribution of GEF replenishment period, global region, and funding was representative (figure 3).

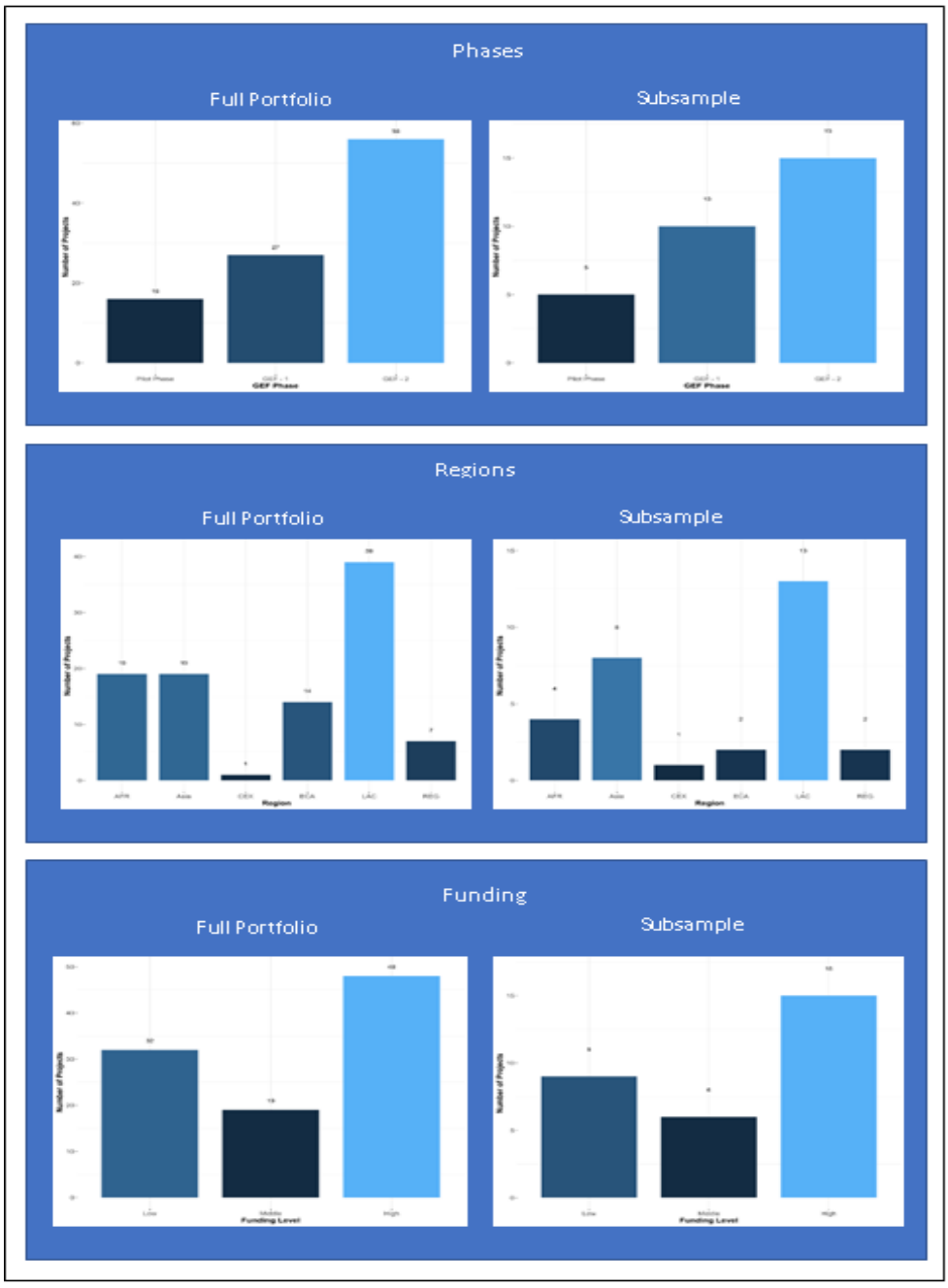

Figure 3: GEF Pilot through GEF-2 Total Distributions vs Subsample Distributions

1.3 Limitations

The quality of the terminal evaluations was uneven. During the pilot phase of the impact portfolio review we have observed poorer quality of evaluations conducted during the first GEF replenishment periods. Also, terminal evaluations were available for the pilot and the first five GEF replenishment periods only, thus it is not possible to make an informed assessment of the evolution of the entire GEF SFM portfolio up to GEF-7 in terms of impact, effectiveness, coherence, sustainability, and equity. Aggregation of impact and effectiveness results at the portfolio level has suffered from a few challenges: a lack of standardized indicators and standards for projects conducted before GEF-5, and the different ways in which results and challenges were reported by terminal evaluations. These terminal evaluations often confused outcomes, outputs, and activities, which has often made it impossible to distinguish between project's aims and activities, and tangible outcomes. Data gathered by lead Agencies and their partners and reviewed by terminal evaluations are often affected by uneven monitoring, evaluation, and learning capacities—meaning that a wide range of projects have neither produced evidence about their contribution to sustainable forest management and use, nor produced useful lessons about areas for improvement.

2. Portfolio summary and its evolution

At the time of this assessment the status of SFM projects was: 314 projects completed implementation (49 percent), 138 projects under implementation (22 percent), and 188 projects in the pipeline (29 percent). This amounted to a total of 640 projects in the portfolio, with a total value of *$3.654 billion.* The average grant size is *$4.58 million* (median), with a standard deviation from the mean of *$546 million,* while the largest grant made is *$60.33 million.* GEF-7 has the largest proportion of SFM projects 25 percent) and funds (26 percent), while Latin America is the region which has received more grants (28 percent), and funds (34 percent). Thus, unsurprisingly Brazil and Colombia are the top two countries in terms of number of SFM projects (3 percent of all SFM projects respectively), and they are also among the top three recipients of SFM funds together with Mexico (Brazil = 8 percent, Mexico = 5 percent, Colombia = 4 percent). In terms of lead Agencies, the World Bank, UNDP and FAO have greater proportions of SFM funds (with 35 percent, 28 percent, and 11 percent respectively), and the highest share of projects (28 percent, 34 percent, and 12 percent respectively).

2.1 Portfolio summary

For the purposes of this evaluation, we analyzed data of all 640 projects recorded in the SFM active portfolio data set. As shown in figure 3, at the time of this assessment the status of SFM projects was: 314 projects implemented (49 percent), 138 projects under implementation (22 percent), and 188 projects in the pipeline (29 percent).

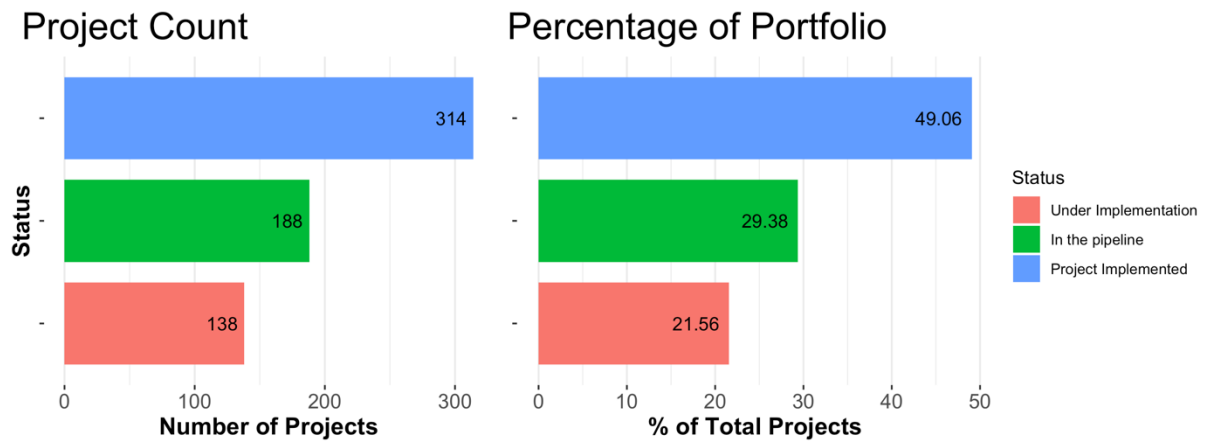

Figure 4: Distribution of SFM projects by project status

Funding distribution: The total value of the portfolio *is $3.654 billion*. The average grant size is *$4.58 million* (median), with a standard deviation from the mean of *$5.46 million* (mean = *$5.85 million*). The value of the smallest grant is *$555K*, while the maximum is *$60.33 million*. However, half of the grants fall between *$2.45* million (1st quartile) and *$7.34 million* (3rd quartile). The 25 percent of low-size grants range between *$555k* and *$2.45 million*; while the high-size grants range between *$7.34 million* and *$60.33 million.* Figure 5 below represents the distribution of projects' funded value.

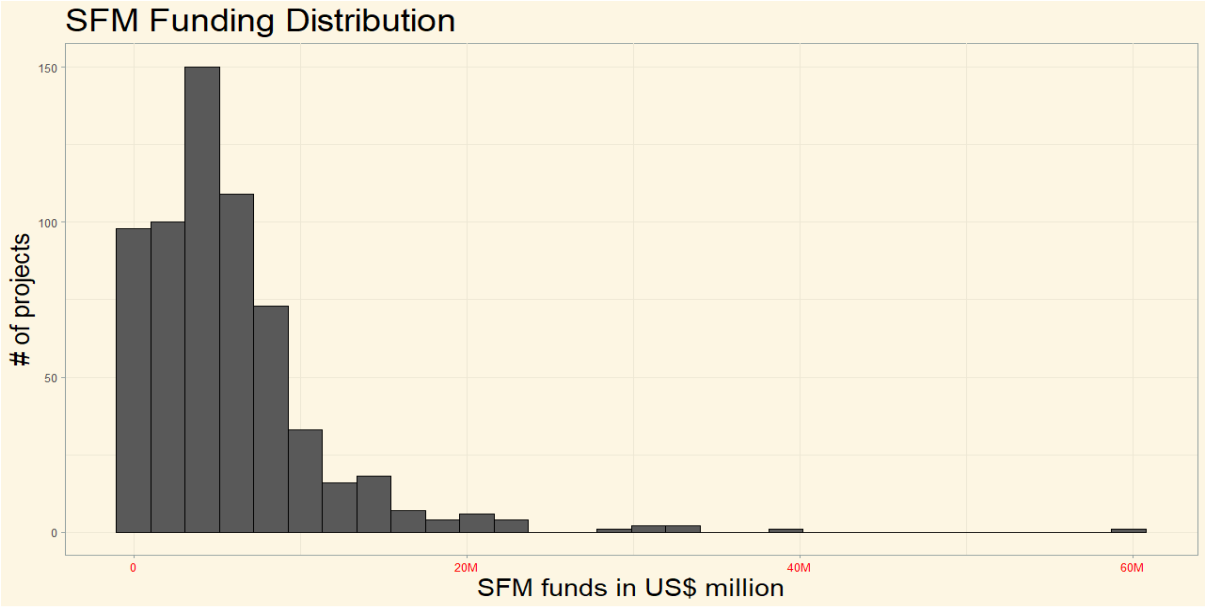

Figure 5: Funding distribution GEF SFM portfolio

Distribution of SFM projects and grants across the GEF replenishment periods: Over the past three decades, the GEF has invested in 640 SFM projects. As of May 2021, GEF-7 has the largest number of SFM projects (157 projects, 24 percent of total projects), followed by GEF-4 (129, 20 percent). Reflecting the GEF's increasing focus on an integrated approach to address the reality of the multiple potential benefits of the forests – and especially since GEF-5, when an SFM financial incentive was used as a catalyst to integrate BD, CC and LD – SFM projects have mainly been larger and implemented as multi

focal area projects. This contributed to GEF-5, GEF-6, and GEF-7 having the largest share of SFM funds (19 percent, 16 percent, and 26 percent, respectively).

GEF Replenishment period	SFM Grants		SFM Projects	
	GEF Grant (million $)	% of SFM Funds	Count	% of SFM portfolio
GEF - 7	943.1	26%	157	25%
GEF - 5	699.6	19%	104	16%
GEF - 6	585.9	16%	67	10%
GEF - 4	455.6	12%	129	20%
GEF - 3	358.0	10%	75	12%
GEF - 2	295.6	8%	62	10%
GEF - 1	234.5	6%	28	4%
Pilot	82.7	2%	18	3%

Table 2: Distribution of SFM projects and grants across GEF replenishment periods

Distribution of SFM projects and grants across regions from the GEF Pilot to GEF-7: Table 3 and figure 6 show how Latin America & the Caribbean (LAC) have had both the largest number of SFM projects (181) and the largest amount of SFM funding (*$1.24 billion*), amounting to 28 percent and 34 percent, respectively. This is followed by Africa in terms of numbers of projects (174), albeit with a much smaller share of funding (*$878 million*, 24 percent of total SFM funding). Asia has fewer projects (156) and slightly less funding (*$856.6 million*, 23 percent) than Africa.

Region	SFM Grants		SFM Projects	
	GEF Grant (million $)	% of SFM Funds	Count	% of SFM portfolio
Latin America	1242.5	34%	181	28%
Africa	878.9	24%	174	27%
Asia	856.6	23%	156	24%
Regional	276.7	8%	43	7%
ECA	264.1	7%	63	10%

Global	136.1	4%	23	4%

Table 3: Distribution of SFM projects and grants across regions

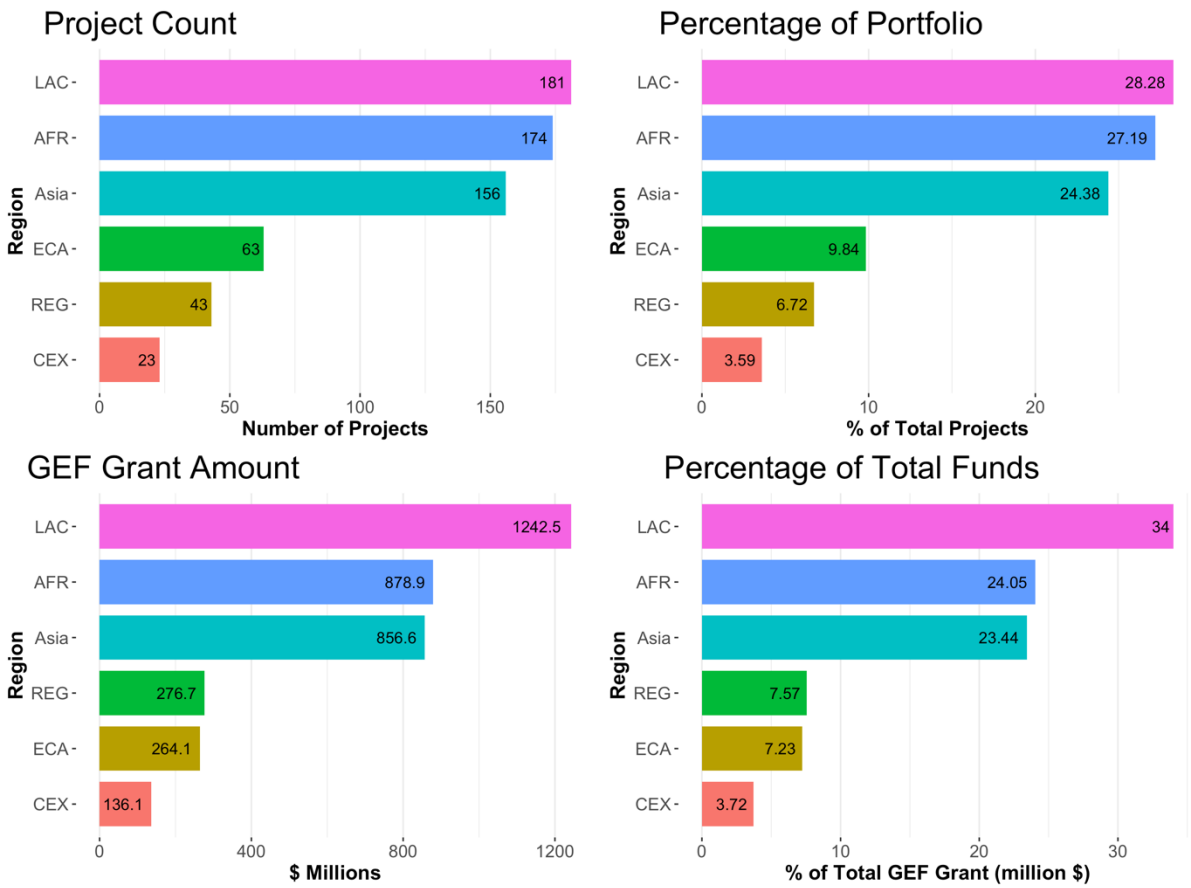

Figure 6: Distribution of SFM projects and grants across regions

Top 10 country recipients of SFM projects and GEF grants from the Pilot until GEF-7*:* Table 4 shows the 10 countries with largest number of SFM projects and grants. Between them, they have 145 projects (23 percent of all SFM projects).

Country	Count	% of SFM portfolio
Brazil	22	3.44%
Colombia	18	2.81%
Indonesia	17	2.66%
Mexico	17	2.66%
Peru	16	2.50%
China	14	2.19%

Viet Nam	13	2.03%
Kenya	12	1.88%
Tanzania	12	1.88%
Philippines	11	1.72%

Table 4: Countries with the largest number of SFM projects[4]

8 out of the top 10 countries with most SFM projects (i.e., all but Viet Nam and Kenya) are also among the top 10 biggest funds recipients, with the additions of India and Ecuador. The overall contributions made to the top 10 recipient country total *$1.221 billion*, 34 percent of the overall portfolio expenditure. Figure 7 presents the top 10 countries in terms of both projects and funds.

Country	**GEF grant (million $)**	**% of SFM portfolio**
Brazil	302.5	8.28%
Mexico	188.2	5.15%
Colombia	131.9	3.61%
India	116	3.17%
Peru	110.8	3.03%
Indonesia	105	2.87%
China	99.7	2.73%
Tanzania	65.7	1.80%
Ecuador	50.8	1.39%
Philippines	50.5	1.38%

Table 5: Countries with the highest amount of GEF funding[5]

[4] Percentage of SFM portfolio was calculated using the total number of SFM projects in the portfolio (*n=640).*

[5] Percentage of SFM portfolio funds were calculated using the sum total of all grants in the SFM portfolio.

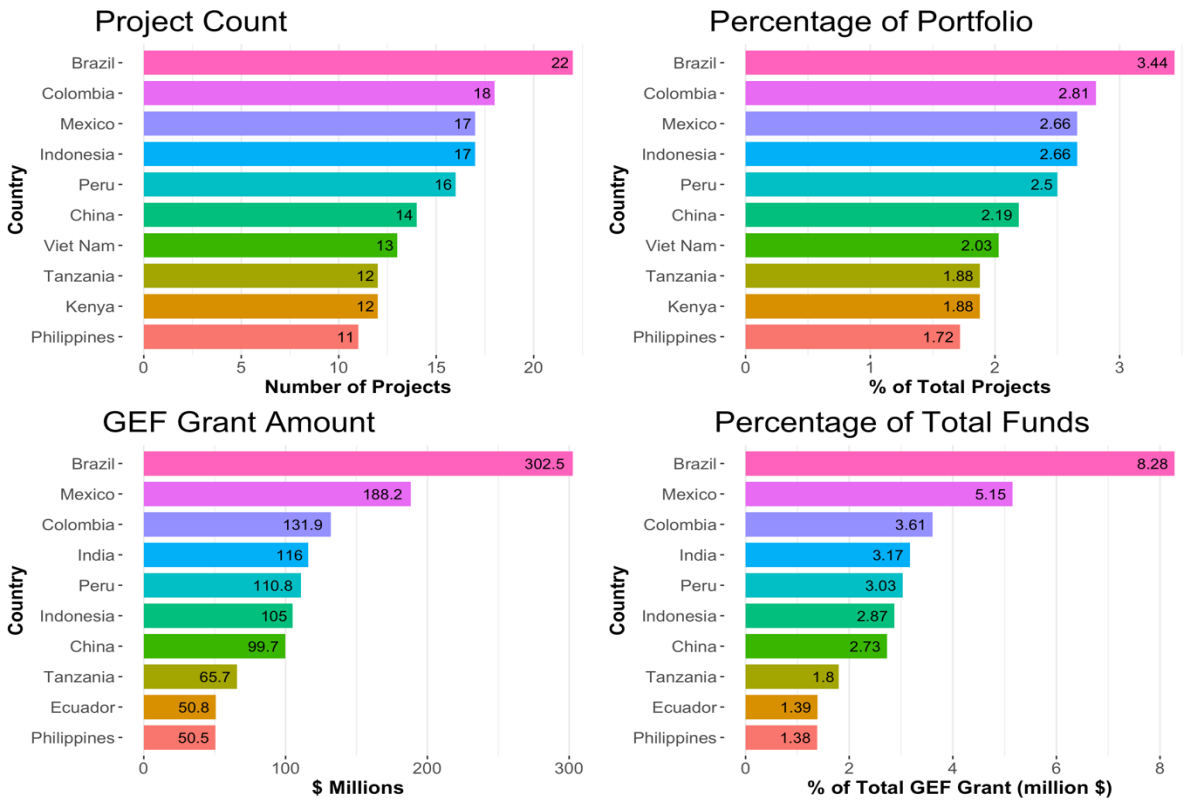

Figure 7: Top 10 recipients – project count and GEF grants

Distribution of SFM projects and GEF grants by Agency from the Pilot until GEF-6: The majority of the SFM projects (72 percent) were implemented by the three original GEF Agencies—UNDP, the World Bank, and UNEP, amounting to 70 percent of total SFM funding (figure 8). UNDP has managed the largest share of SFM projects (34 percent) and the World Bank has the largest grant amount (35 percent). For the projects with joint Agencies, the most common agency combination is UNDP and the World Bank. The only significant regional institutions implementing SFM projects are the regional development banks.

Agency	SFM Grants		SFM Projects	
	GEF Grant (million $)	% of SFM Funds	Count	% of SFM portfolio
World Bank	1270.8	35%	179	28%
UNDP	1032.3	28%	218	34%
FAO	385.3	11%	77	12%
Joint	319.3	9%	32	5%
UNEP	250.9	7%	62	10%

IFAD	83.8	2%	22	3%
IADB	95.1	3%	9	1%
CI	55	2%	6	1%
AfDB	49.5	1%	9	1%
IUCN	42.4	1%	9	1%
ADB	39.8	1%	10	2%
WWF-US	20.2	1%	6	1%
CAF	10.3	0%	1	0%

Table 6: Distribution of SFM projects and grants across GEF Agencies

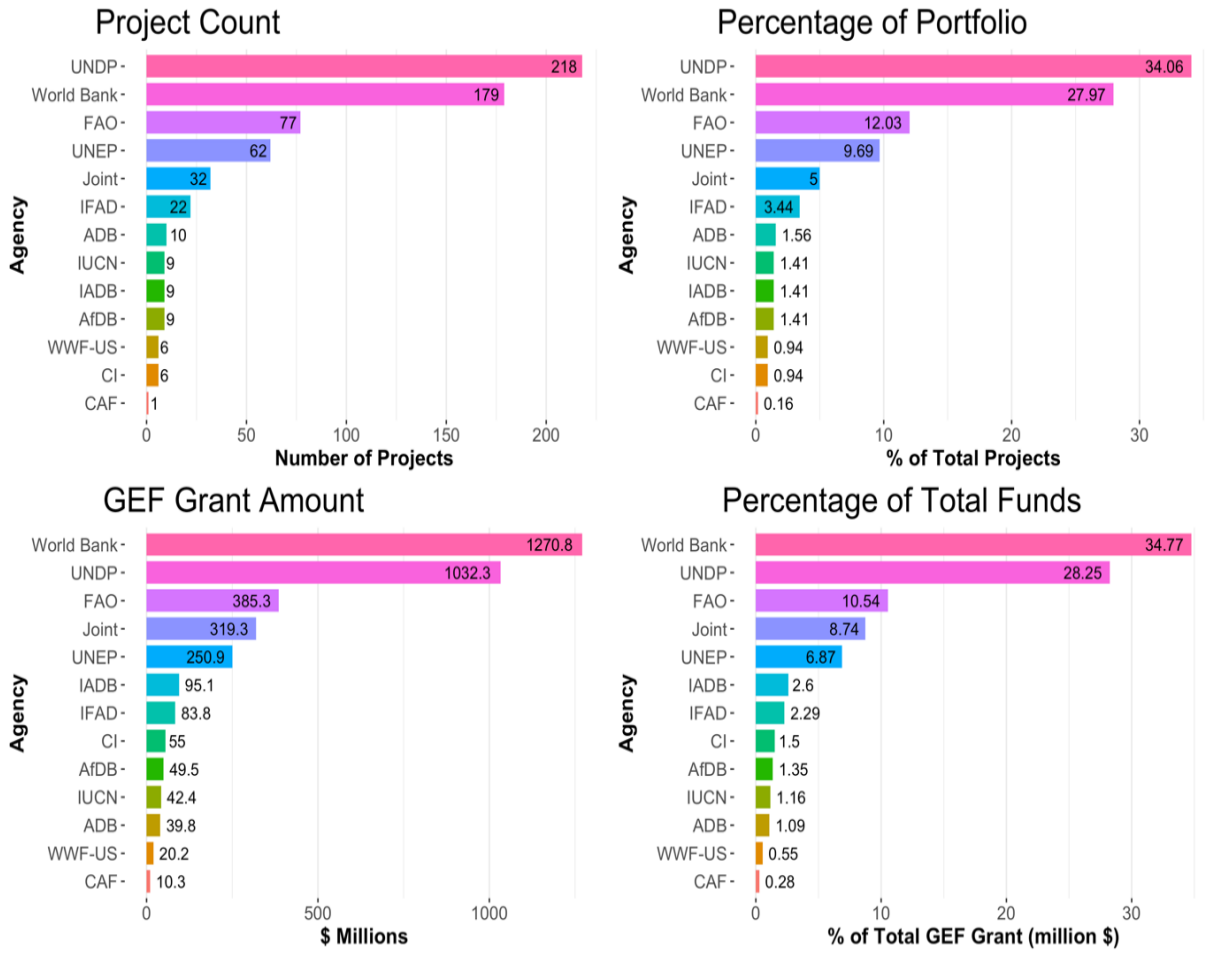

Figure 8: Distribution of SFM projects and grants across GEF Agencies

Focal Area	SFM Grants		SFM Projects	
	GEF Grant (million $)	% of SFM Funds	Count	% of SFM portfolio
Multi Focal Area	2153.8	59%	313	49%
Biodiversity	1317.7	36%	281	44%
Land Degradation	110.1	3%	30	5%
Climate Change	40.6	1%	11	2%
International Waters	32.8	1%	5	1%

Table 7: Distribution of SFM projects and grants by focal area

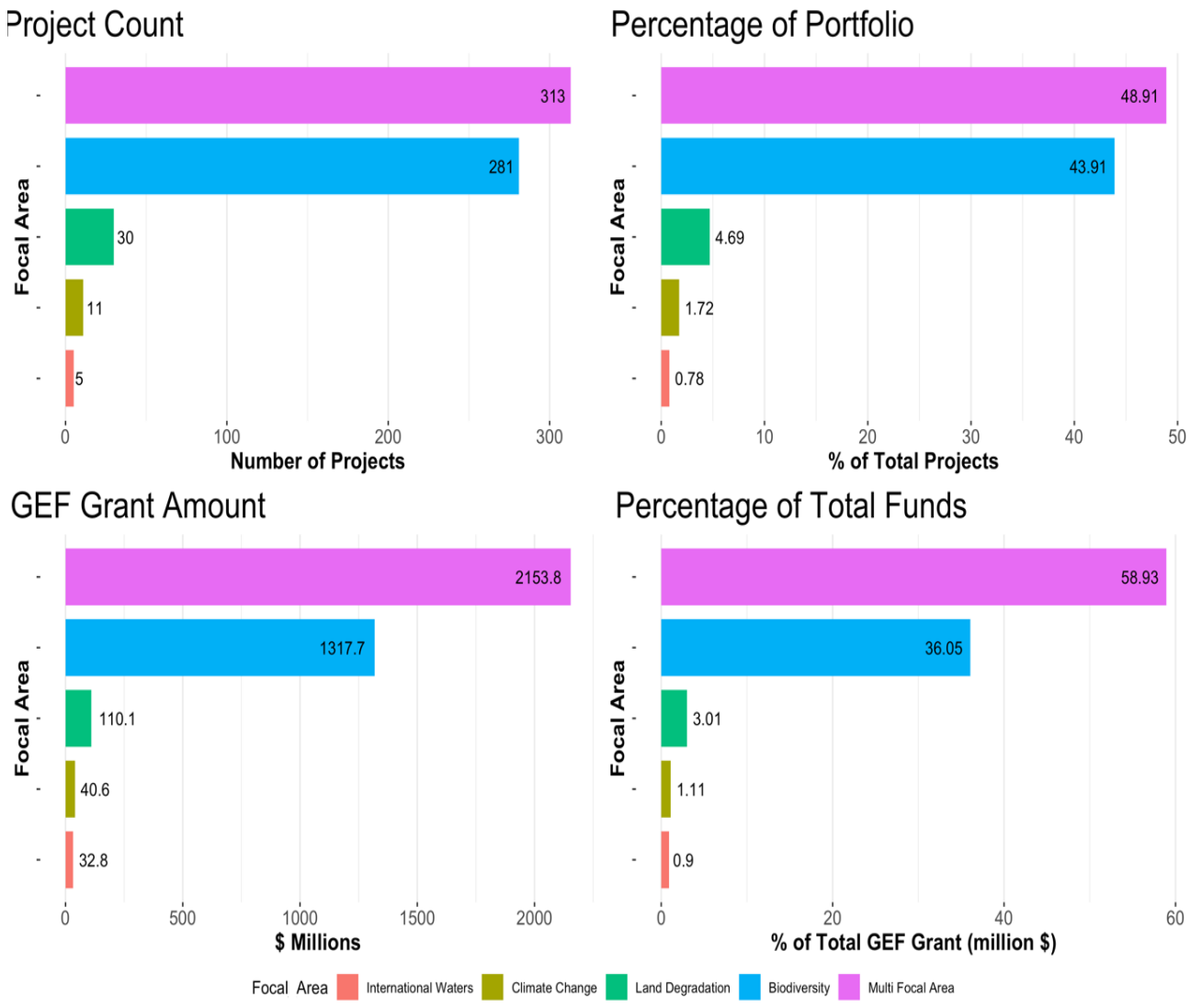

Figure 9: Distribution of SFM projects and grants by focal area

2.2 Evolution of the portfolio

This section looks at the evolution of the SFM portfolio over successive GEF replenishment periods in terms of funding, objectives, and engagement of countries and stakeholders. In the Approach Paper we had assumed a greater integration of approaches accompanied by increasing engagement of countries and stakeholders. Although the portfolio review has confirmed greater complexity of SFM approaches and funding, it has also found that multi-country projects represent only one third of the portfolio, and they have only been substantially funded during GEF-7. Apart from that, all other trends can be considered evolutionary since the SFM portfolio—which was originally dominated by biodiversity objectives—has become more integrated, addressing more multifocal areas, steadily increasing grant cofinancing over GEF replenishment periods, and notably improving the proportion of projects and funds that are managed by different lead Agencies during the last four GEF replenishment periods.

2.2.1 Evolution of SFM funding

Less variability of funding over time: After an initial adjustment period, the GEF has finally found a clear configuration of funding during the last three replenishment periods. As shown in figure 10, funding disbursed during the pilot and the first two replenishment periods were characterised by notable variability, which reached its peak in GEF-2, while GEF-3 and GEF-4 were characterised by grants of lower funding amount on average; the last three replenishment periods have stabilised at a slightly higher grant's funding average and show much lower variability than some of the previous replenishment periods.

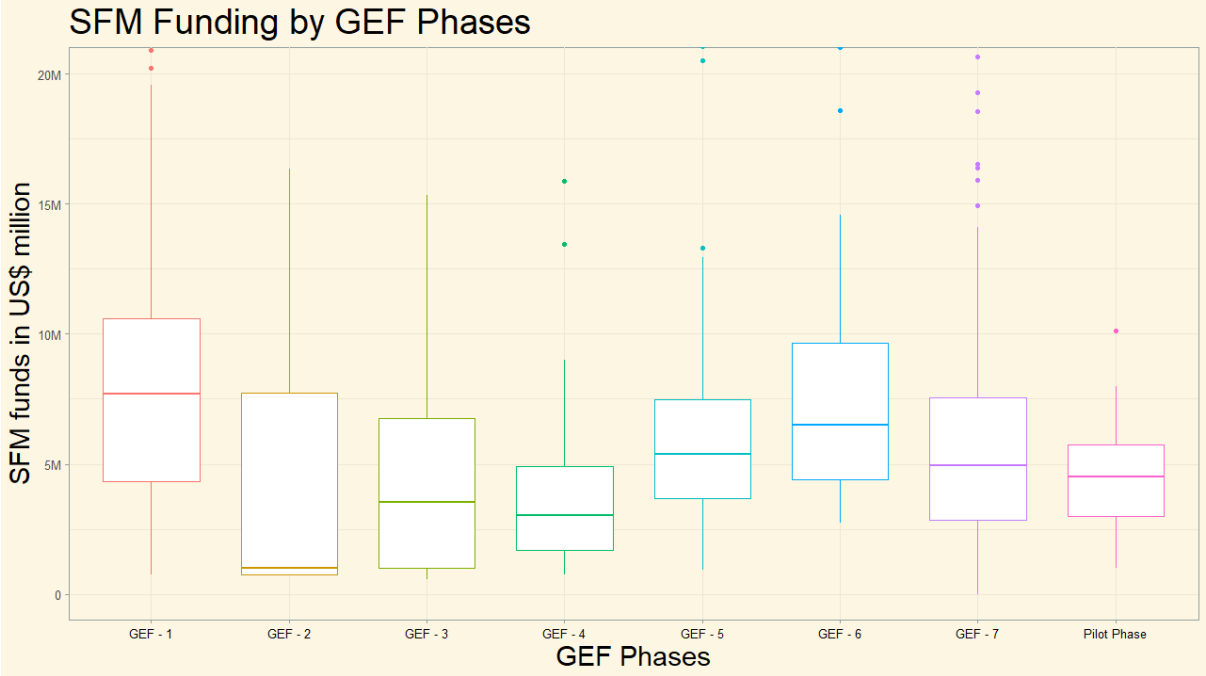

Figure 10: Distribution of GEF funding across replenishment periods[6]

Evolution of funding to multi-country projects: The GEF SFM portfolio has provided funding to 191 multi-country projects (30 percent) for a total of *$1.18billion* (32 percent of total SFM funding). These grants are divided into:

[6] Outliers in figure 1 above $20 million were removed (n= 17).

- 43 regional grants (7 percent of SFM portfolio), total value: $276.74 million (7 percent of total SFM funding);
- 23 global grants (3 percent of SFM portfolio), total value: *$136 million* (4 percent of total SFM funding); and
- 125 one-country projects associated with multi-country parent projects (19 percent of SFM portfolio), total value: *$770 million* (21 percent of total SFM funding).

As shown in table 7 and figure 11 there is no notable trend over time in terms of increased funding to multi-country grants. However, the investment in multi-country projects has clearly increased during GEF-7 and, for the first time, has become greater than the investment in single countries. Another interesting trend is the variability of SFM funding to multi-country projects, which is substantially higher than for single-country grants in GEF-1, GEF-3, GEF-6, and GEF-7 (as shown in figure 11).

GEF Replenishment period	*Multi-Country*	*Multi %*	*Single-Country*	*Single %*
Pilot	$4,500,000	5%	$78,171,130	95%
GEF - 1	$43,216,500	18%	$191,242,840	82%
GEF - 2	$1,750,000	1%	$29,3850,709	99%
GEF - 3	$56,972,965	16%	$301,062,342	84%
GEF - 4	$201,751,155	44%	$253,819,952.1	56%
GEF - 5	$229,491,878.6	33%	$470,110,099	67%
GEF – 6	$147,838,210	25%	$438,033,335	75%
GEF - 7	$497,397,711	53%	$445,690,429	47%

Table 8: GEF funding by country type across replenishment periods

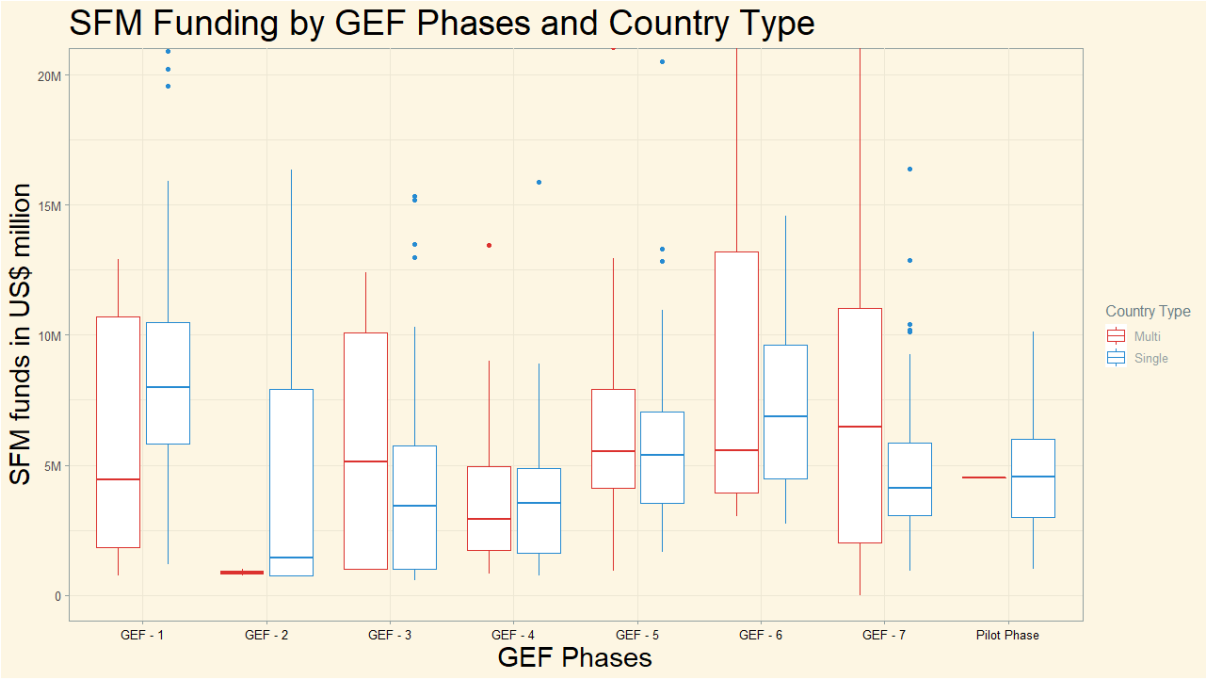

Figure 11: GEF funding by country type across replenishment periods[7]

To triangulate the funding data with the number of projects funded in each replenishment period, we have performed a chi-squared test to examine the relation between GEF replenishment periods and the type of country projects. The association between these variables is significant[8] but it does not have an evolutionary trend because multi-country projects are only positively associated with GEF-4 and GEF-7[9] (as shown in figure 12 below).

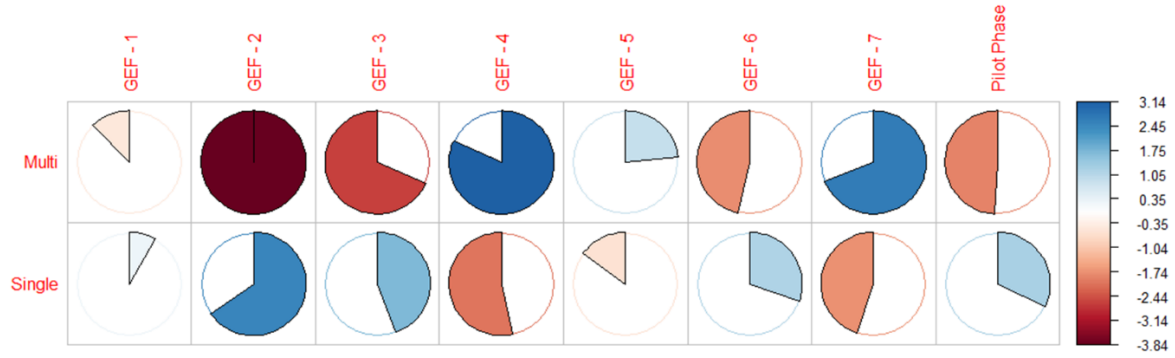

Figure 12: Project country types by GEF replenishment periods

Greater cofinancing over time: Figure 13 clearly shows that the GEF SFM portfolio has achieved greater cofinancing over time. The increase is steady and consistent over the seven replenishment periods, with a first demarcating difference between GEF-2 and GEF-3 (1.69 difference in ratio) and a second jump in ratio between GEF-4 and GEF-5 (1.5 difference in ratio). It is interesting to note that GEF-5 introduced a systemic *SFM/REDD+ financial incentive* encouraging countries to invest portions of their GEF funds for BD, CC, and LD in fully integrated, multifocal area SFM projects and programs.

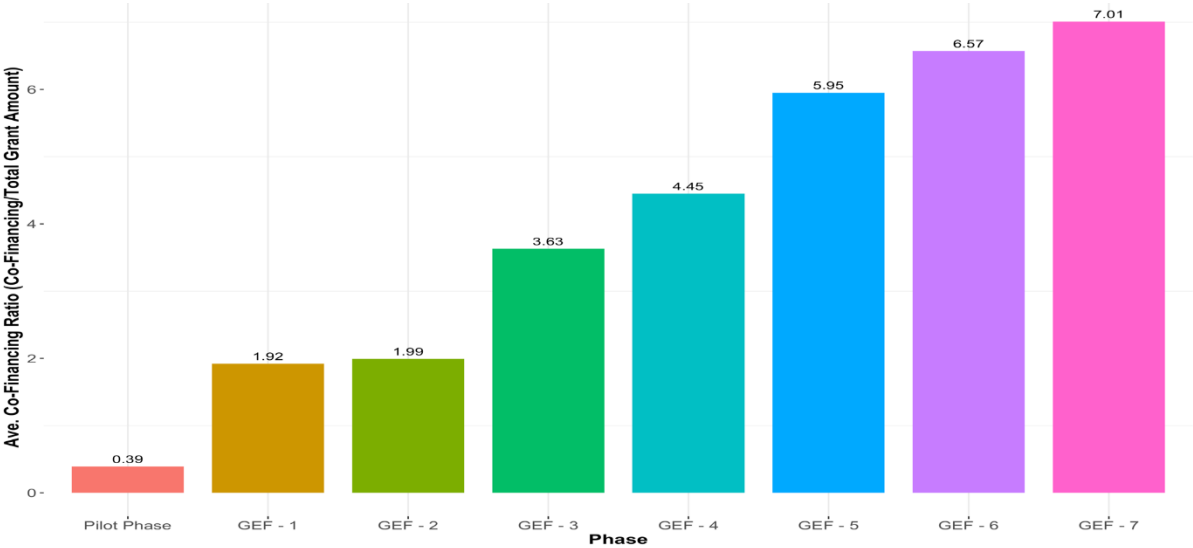

Figure 13: Promised cofinancing ratio by GEF replenishment period[10]

[7] Outliers in Figure 1 above $20 million (USD) were removed (n= 17).
[8] X^2 (7, N = 640) = 65.9, p = 9.84e-12
[9] GEF-4 and Multi-country= 3.1430252; GEF-7 and Multi-country = 2.6508669
[10] Promised cofinancing ratio was calculated as CEO cofinancing per dollar of GEF Grant amount. When CEO cofinancing was not available (*n=161*), PIF cofinancing was used. Of the 640 projects being analyzed, 19 did not have CEO or PIF cofinancing data available. These 19 were not included in promised cofinancing ratio

2.2.2 Evolution of integrated approaches over GEF replenishment periods

Figure 14 shows that the portfolio has become more complex over time, with a greater number of projects addressing multiple environmental and socioeconomic aims in GEF-5, GEF-6, and GEF-7.

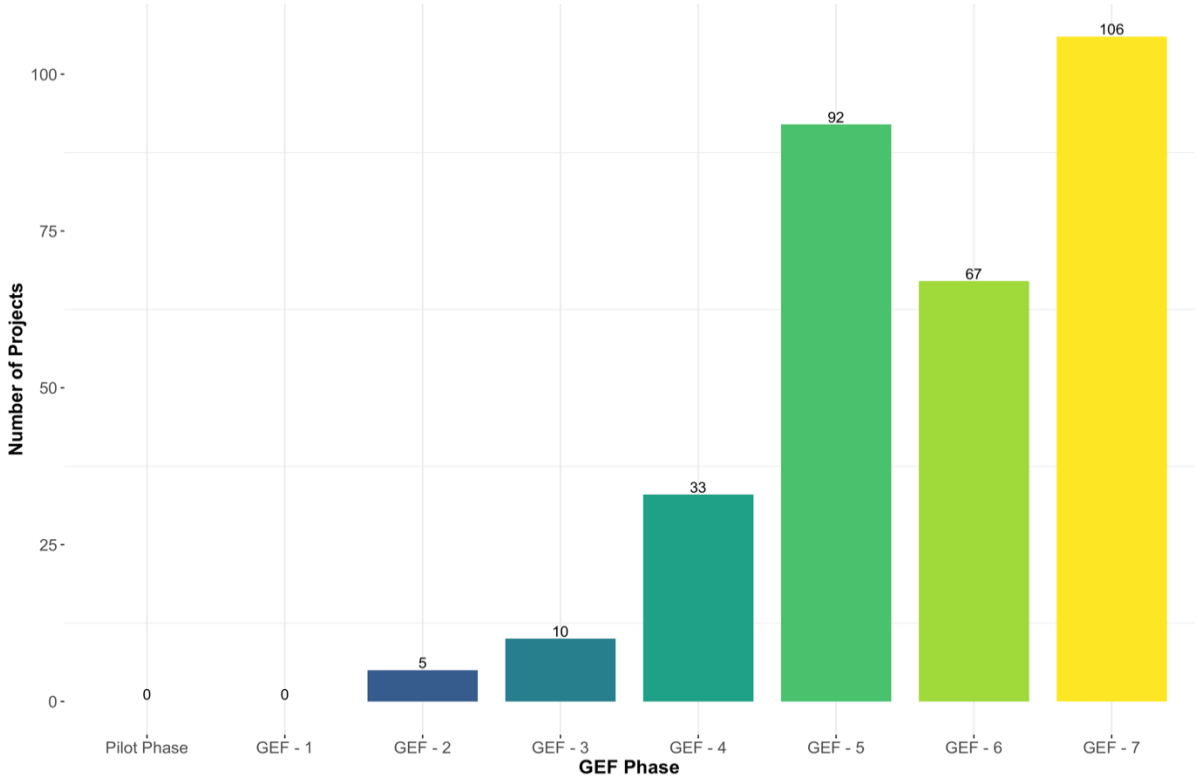

Figure 14: Multifocal area projects by replenishment period

Greater number of implementing Agencies: As assumed in the approach paper, the number of grants managed by implementing Agencies has increased over time. The three founding Agencies UNDP, UNEP, and WB have managed almost all GEF SFM grants from the Pilot until GEF-4 (included). From GEF-5 onwards, their share of the portfolio has steadily decreased and in GEF-7 the number of lead Agencies has become ten. Also to be noted is the decreasing share of grants managed by the World Bank, which had managed 50 percent or more projects from pilot to GEF-4 and now manages only 10 percent of the projects in GEF-7. Conversely, the share of grants managed by the FAO has had a notable increase during the last three replenishment periods, passing from 5 percent in GEF-4 to 16 percent in GEF-5, 12 percent in GEF-6, and 33 percent in GEF-7. The FAO has now the largest share of projects in GEF-7. Table 9 below shows in the green cells the share of the top three lead Agencies per number of grants received, and in yellow the remaining share managed by other Agencies. Note that there is a positive trend in terms of grants managed by regional organizations and NGOs during the last three replenishment periods.

	ADB	AfDB	CAF	CI	FAO	IADB	IFAD	IUCN	UNDP	UNEP	WB	WWF
Pilot	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0f	0%	44%	0%	56 %	0%

calculations. In summary: *Cofinancing ratio= CEO Cofinancing (or PIF Cofinancing)/Total Grant Amount*. As with total grant amount, cofinancing ratio outliers were confirmed with the online GEF database.

GEF-1	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	32%	4%	64 %	0%
GEF-2	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	27%	2%	71 %	0%
GEF-3	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	39%	11%	49 %	0%
GEF-4	5%	0%	0%	0%	5%	4%	9%	0%	49%	10%	18 %	0%
GEF-5	2%	5%	0%	0%	16 %	3%	3%	1%	26%	16%	28 %	0%
GEF-6	1%	6%	0%	2%	12 %	0%	3%	3%	43%	10%	18 %	2%
GEF-7	1%	0%	1%	4%	33 %	1%	3%	4%	27%	12%	10 %	4%

Table 9: Proportion of grants managed by lead Agencies per GEF replenishment periods.

The proportions of project funding going to lead Agencies in each GEF replenishment period (table 9) mirror the proportions of projects presented in the table above with a few notable exceptions for the World Bank, which tends to manage more funding despite a decreasing number of projects, especially in the last three GEF replenishment periods. Thus, in GEF-5, the World Bank manages 28 percent of the projects resulting in 36 percent of the funds, in GEF-6, 18 percent of projects resulting in 29 percent of the funds, and 12 percent of projects resulting in 18 percent of funds in GEF-7. Thus, despite its decreasing role in terms of project numbers, the World Bank tends to manage the largest grants.

	ADB	AfDB	CAF	CI	FAO	IADB	IFAD	IUCN	UNDP	UNEP	WB	WWF
Pilot	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	42%	0%	58%	0%
GEF-1	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	23%	0%	77%	0%
GEF-2	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	27%	0%	73%	0%
GEF-3	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	25%	5%	68%	0%
GEF-4	5%	0%	0%	0%	5%	4%	8%	0%	45%	11%	23%	0%
GEF-5	1%	4%	0%	0%	12%	10%	2%	1%	22%	13%	36%	0%
GEF-6	1%	4%	0%	1%	14%	0%	3%	1%	40%	7%	29%	1%
GEF-7	1%	0%	1%	8%	28%	1%	2%	3%	26%	10%	18%	2%

Table 10: Proportions of funding managed by lead Agencies per GEF replenishment period.

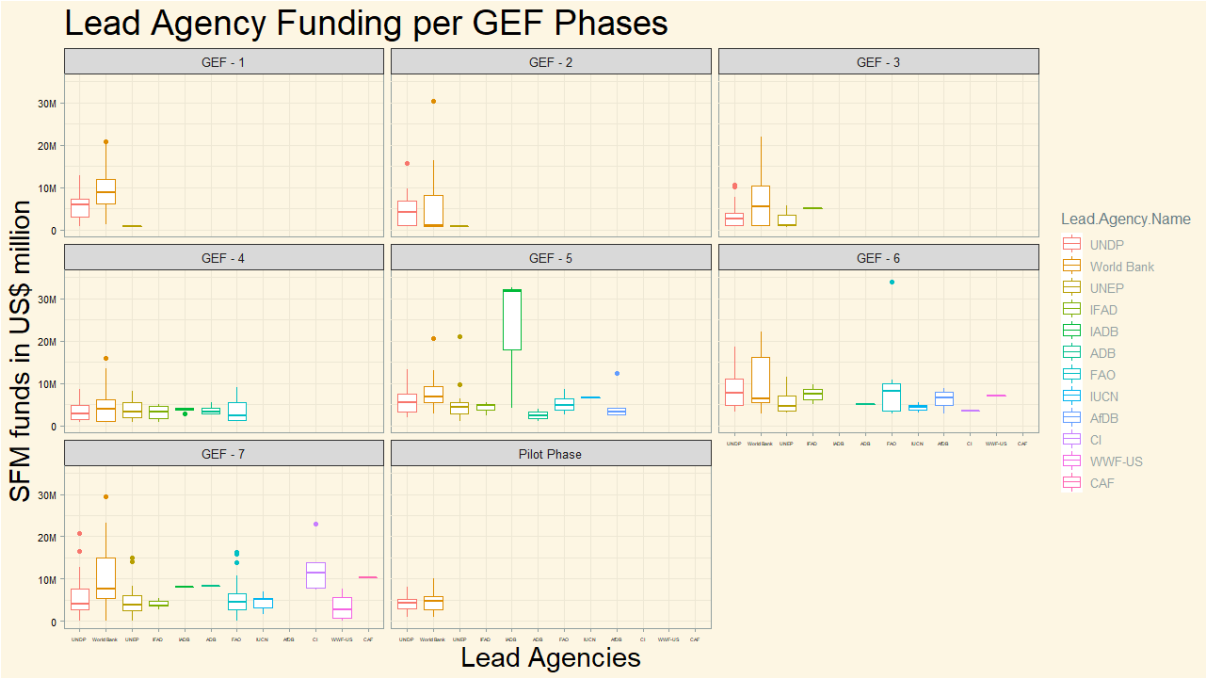

Figure 15: Distributions of SFM funding to lead Agencies by GEF replenishment period

Evolution of stakeholder engagement in implementation: To look at the evolution of stakeholder engagement of five key groups (i.e., private sector, indigenous people, NGOs, academia, and local communities), we used the data gathered during the portfolio impact review (n=243), which included terminal evaluations from the Pilot until GEF-5. We have not found a notable evolutionary trend. As shown by table 10, almost all groups are strongly positively associated with all replenishment periods. The only cells associated with no-engagement are related to indigenous people during the earlier replenishment periods: Pilot, GEF-1, and GEF-4. This finding has been more closely looked at in the case studies, since these data can be affected by geographic characteristics of the projects funded in those replenishment periods. Since results of this analysis are well explained by descriptive statistics, we have decided that a further statistical test was redundant.

Private sector engagement						
	Pilot	GEF - 1	GEF - 2	GEF – 3	GEF - 4	GEF - 5
No	0%	60%	0%	15%	23%	0%
Yes	100%	40%	100%	85%	77%	100%
Indigenous people engagement						
	Pilot	GEF - 1	GEF - 2	GEF - 3	GEF - 4	GEF - 5
No	67%	50%	0%	23%	64%	17%
Yes	33%	50%	100%	77%	36%	83%
NGO engagement						
	Pilot	GEF - 1	GEF - 2	GEF - 3	GEF - 4	GEF - 5

No	0%	10%	0%	11%	13%	0%
Yes	100%	90%	100%	89%	87%	100%
Academia engagement						
	Pilot	GEF - 1	GEF - 2	GEF - 3	GEF - 4	GEF - 5
No	0%	10%	0%	18%	29%	10%
Yes	100%	90%	100%	82%	71%	90%
Local community engagement						
	Pilot	GEF - 1	GEF - 2	GEF - 3	GEF - 4	GEF - 5
No	0%	10%	0%	3%	13%	0%
Yes	100%	90%	100%	97%	87%	100%

Table 11: Distribution of SFM funding to Lead Agencies by GEF replenishment period

3. Evaluation Questions

3.1 Relevance

This section looks at the geographic and political relevance of the SFM portfolio and provides an assessment of the key factors affecting stakeholders' engagement to deliver both socioeconomic and environmental benefits. It draws on the terminal evaluations of the 243 SFM projects that have had such evaluations. On the one hand, the spread of SFM grants is only partially geographically relevant because it seems to underfund a considerable number of "forest hotspot" countries, and among them are some countries with vast forest areas that are suffering from high deforestation rates such as Congo DR, Angola, and Cambodia. On the other hand, the majority of projects assessed during the impact portfolio review were aligned (75 percent) or partially aligned (11 percent) with relevant government priorities. In terms of stakeholders' engagement, we found that the top three positive factors affecting participation were: 1) monitoring, evaluation, and learning system; 2) multiple stakeholder analysis and active stakeholder engagement; and 3) project design based on lessons learnt from previous initiatives.

3.1.1 Geographic relevance

To assess the geographic relevance of the SFM portfolio we have compared the amount of funding against the net loss of forest of different countries between 2010 and 2020. We have used -0.22 percent annual change in net forest loss as a cut-off point for high deforestation countries as recommended by da Fonseca et al (2007).[11] The hotspots quadrant below (figure 16) shows how some countries suffering from high deforestation rates have received the same amount of funding as low deforestation countries. Among the deforestation hotspots underfunded by the GEF are: Angola, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Chad, Comoros, Gambia, Guinea, Malawi, Mauritania, Niger,

[11] da Fonseca GAB, Rodriguez CM, Midgley G, Busch J, Hannah L, Mittermeier RA (2007) No Forest Left Behind. PLoS Biol 5(8): e216. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pbio.0050216

Paraguay, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, and Uganda in Africa; Nicaragua, Paraguay, Haiti, Antigua and Barbuda, and Belize in Latin America; and Cambodia and Myanmar in Asia. Clearly the regional split of SFM funds is strongly leaning toward Latin American and Asian countries, while African hotspots are not sufficiently covered.

In the high-funding/low deforestation quadrant we found China, India, Peru, the Philippines, Russia and Madagascar. Some of these countries have a very high area of forest cover, and this may be the reason justifying the funding, i.e., to protect this forest. However, others have the same forest area of countries which are in the low-funding/high deforestation quadrant. Since funding data are historical data covering 26 years of GEF funding, some of these countries may have received the greatest proportion of funds during the first GEF replenishment periods. Also, it is interesting to note that Brazil has received almost three times the amount of funding (*$302.58 million*) than Indonesia (*$104.95 million*), which is a country with high forest cover and high deforestation rate. Although Brazil has a much bigger forest area than Indonesia (*496 million ha* compared to *92 million ha*), its deforestation rate is much lower -0.30 against -0.81. Similarly, by looking at GEF funding in comparison to both forest area and deforestation rates, we discover that Congo DR has *126.15 million ha* of forest cover and a high deforestation rate of -0.87. Nevertheless, Congo DR has only received $30.7million of GEF funding, which is approximately 10 percent of the funds received by Brazil. Also accounting for regional grants to the Congo Basin, (*$76.66 million*), the level of investment in Congo DR seems insufficient considering the importance of the region and the level of deforestation in that area.

Overall, the spread of SFM grants is only partially geographically relevant because it seems to underfund a considerable number of hotspot countries, among them are some key countries such as Congo DR.

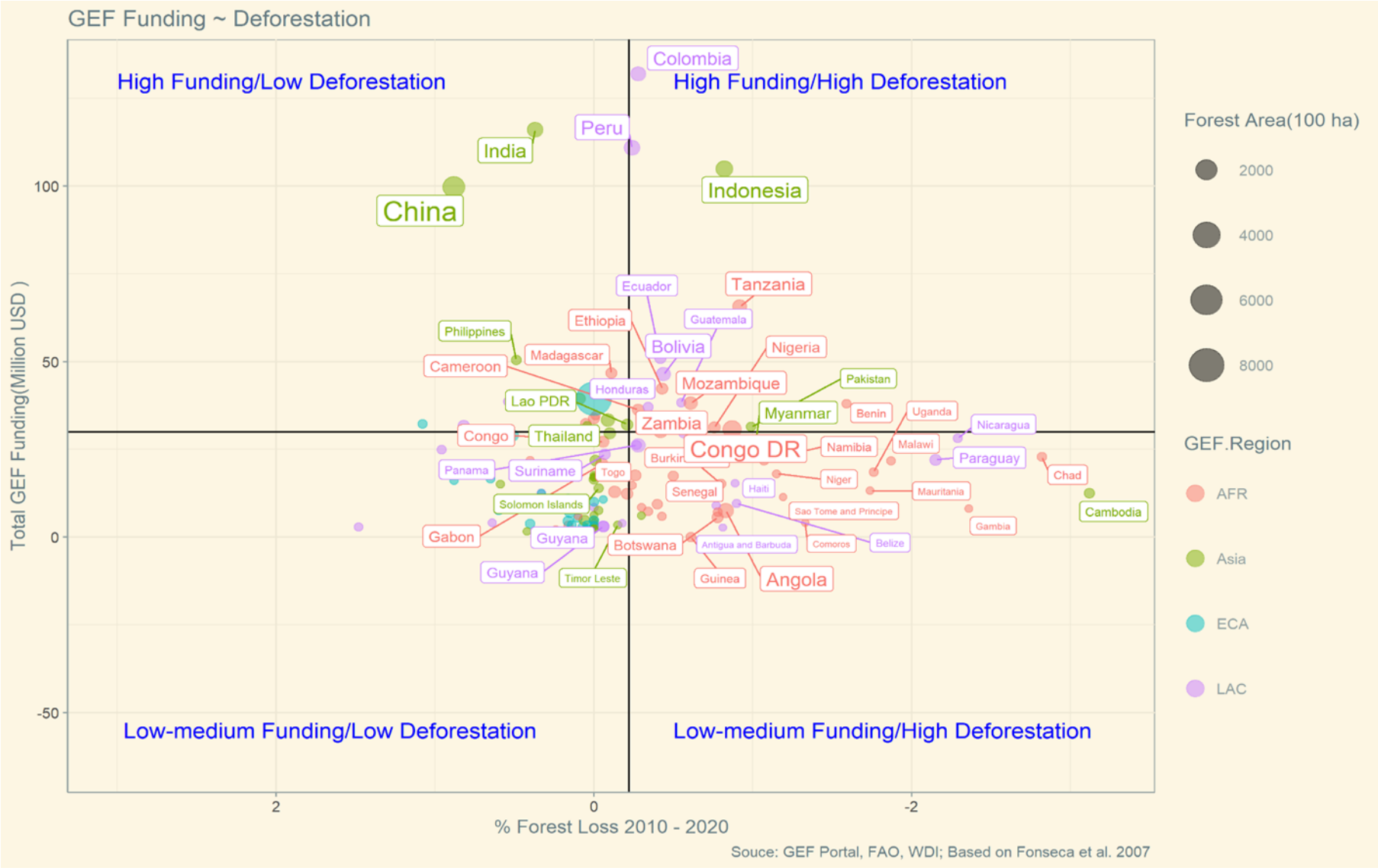

Figure 16: Forest hotspots quadrant – GEF funding vs deforestation

3.1.2 Political relevance

As seen in figure 17, the majority of projects in all regions addressed in the GEF portfolio aligned with relevant government priorities. Overall, 182 terminal evaluations reviewed (75 percent) mentioned projects' alignment with national priorities, 27 partial alignment (11 percent), and 34 no alignment (14 percent).

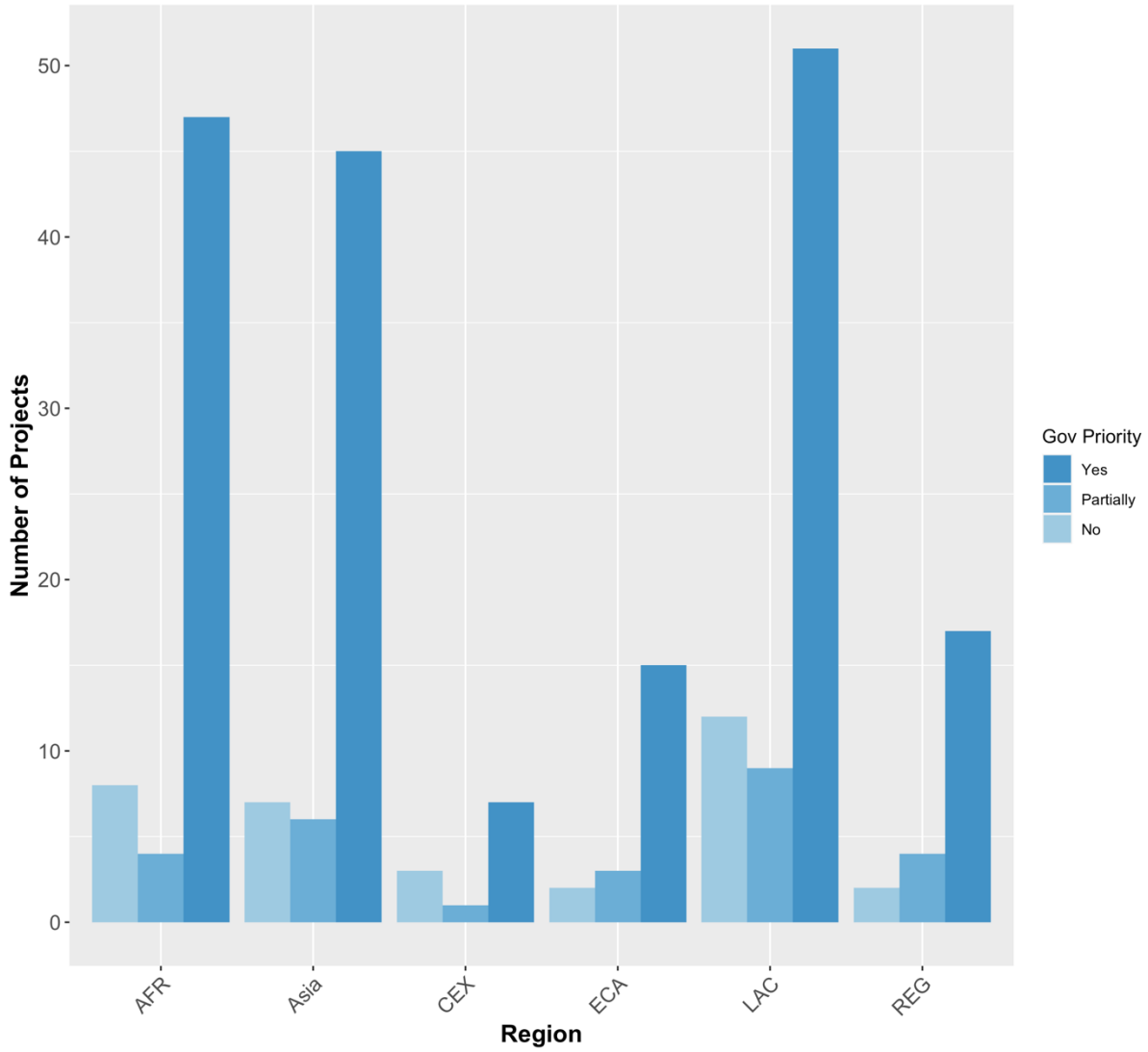

Figure 17: Alignment with government priorities across regions

When tested against grant size, a significant association between the two variables[12] emerged, especially in relation to low funding-grants which are significantly positively associated with no mentions of government priorities[13] (as shown in figure 18 below).

[12] X^2 (4, N = 243)=29.7, p = 0.00000569

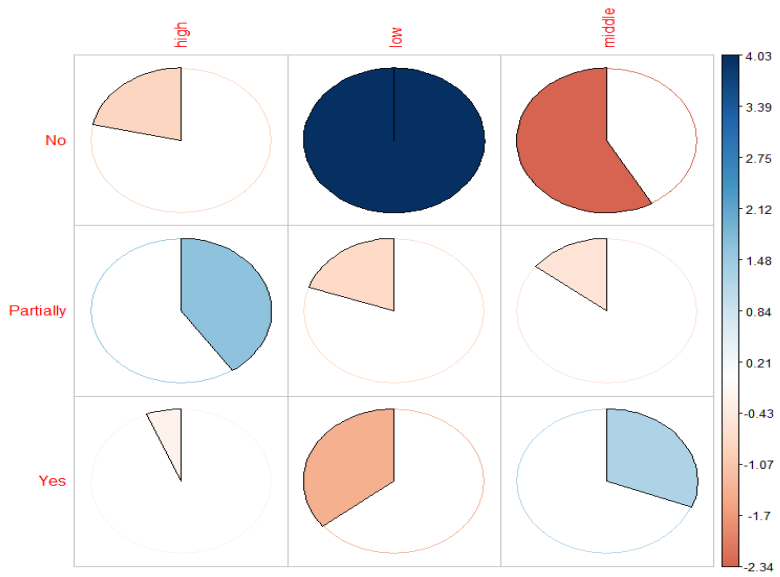

Figure 18: Chi squared test - residuals of government priorities vs size of grants

We have also cross-tabulated policy and governance issues with several variables gathered during the impact portfolio review but the conditions for a statistical test were never met. Nevertheless, it is interesting to report that the large majority of transformative projects are also projects that meet government priorities (table 12), which suggests a high degree of trust and collaboration between governments and the GEF.

	Non Transformative	Transformative
No government priority	31	3
Partially	27	0
Yes	133	49

Table 12: Table cross tabulation alignment with government priorities vs transformative grants

3.1.3 Stakeholder engagement

In the portfolio impact review (n=243) we have found that 73 percent of SFM projects have engaged between 2 to 4 categories of stakeholder, 16 percent between 0 and 1, and 11 percent has engaged 5.

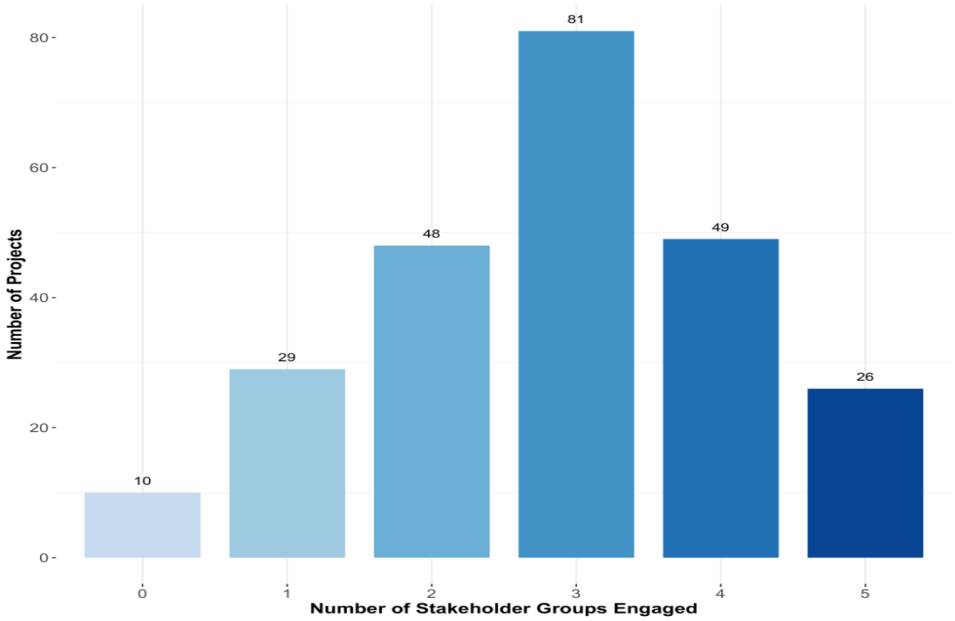

Figure 19: Number of categories of stakeholders engaged by each project

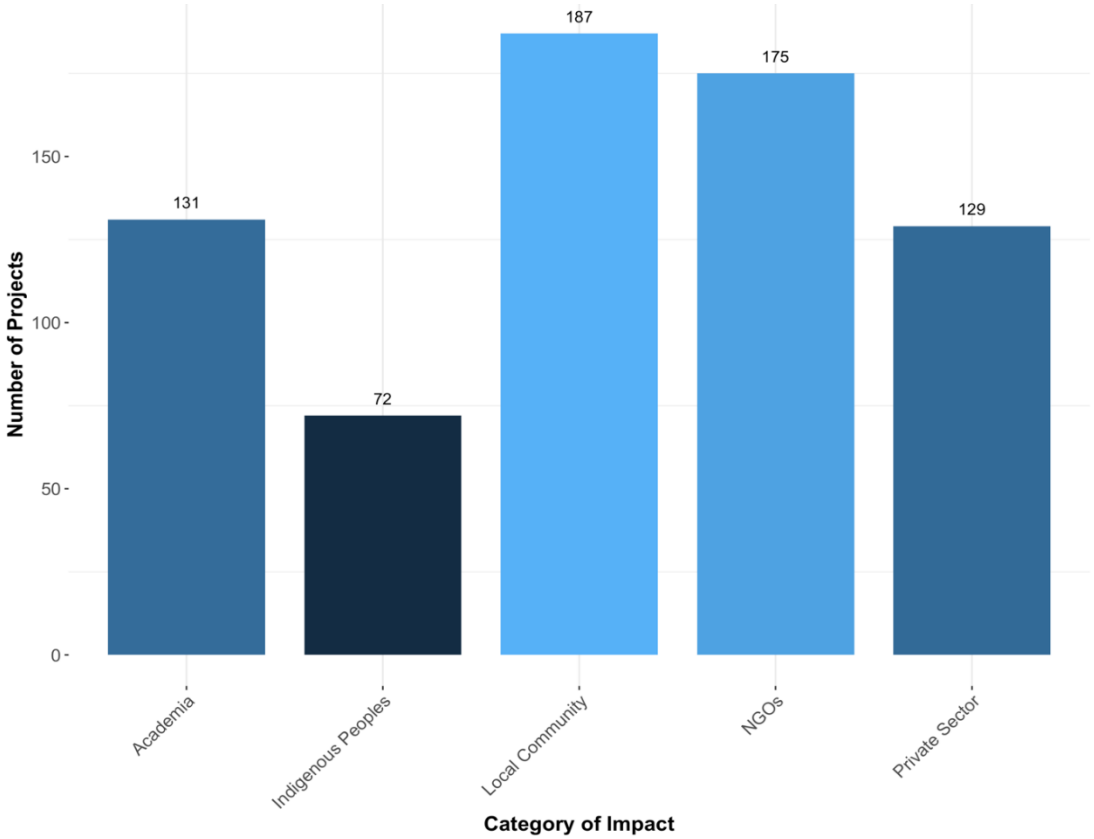

Figure 20: Stakeholder categories engaged by portfolio projects

The top three factors positively affecting stakeholder engagement were: 1) strong monitoring evaluation and learning system and development of projects' logic/outcome hierarchies; 2) multiple stakeholder analysis and active stakeholder engagement; and 3) project design based on lessons learnt from previous initiatives (table 13).

	Private sector engagement	Indigenous people	Academia & Research	NGOs
Strong MEL system and development of project logic	36 of 128 projects	14 of 71 projects	36 of 131 projects	44 of 175 projects
Multiple stakeholder analysis and/or active stakeholder engagement	29 of 128 projects	16 of 71 projects	31 of 131 projects	41 of 175 projects
Project design based on lessons learnt from previous initiatives	18 of 128 projects	10 of 71 projects	16 of 131 projects	23 of 175 projects

Table 13: Top three factors positively affecting the achievement of the outcomes

Monitoring evaluation and learning has been especially important in helping to create greater project ownership by different stakeholder groups. Participatory MEL has been beneficial in clarifying the project design, increasing ownerships of project's objectives, and ensuring collaboration during project implementation. For example, community forest monitoring is usually associated with projects' effectiveness and sustainability. Generally, MEL capacity building is often mentioned as a precondition for effective participation of local stakeholders in the project cycle. When MEL systems are successfully established, they generate important information for a range of different stakeholders, including farmers, forest managers, and local and national authorities.

Illustrative quotes from the terminal evaluations on stakeholder engagement
Innovative instruments, called "radars", used to monitor and evaluate processes and activities involve local stakeholders in management, coordinate with regional and local governments, and resolve conflicts (GEF3-1101)
The training provided to the local communities and through building public awareness in support of the long terms objectives of the project has ensured a certain sustainability of the monitoring activities, in all the areas covered by the project, both in Lebanon and abroad. The different awareness raising and training activities undertaken at the local level and in schools have increased the sense of ownership. A striking example is that of young boys and girls waiting for the expert (Dr. Nabil Nemer) to visit the reserve with him, to show him their findings and to ask him questions related to the forest. The project has managed to create a sense of ownership at the level of the younger generation in the Tannourine village, which ensures the continuity and sustainability of the commitment of the local community." (GEF3-1707)

In addition to the detailed MIS, both Gramya I and SLEM complemented output and outcome monitoring by the innovative participatory monitoring and evaluation *(PME, detailed in Section 3.5 as a social accountability tool) and third-party impact evaluation. (GEF4-3471).*
The Project made significant contributions to offer new technologies and working methods for the DAPMAs (Protected Areas and Environment Department). It applied SIG (geographical information system) methods in ArcView, satellite images, aerial photography, telemetry and photo interpretation techniques. Also, DAPMAs' staff has been trained for the use and application of these techniques and tools. (GEF3-1733)
The project supported community monitoring approaches which will now be extended to other nature reserves in Guangxi; The watershed management models have been developed and demonstrated to similar areas in Guangxi as well as in China. (GEF3-2634)
In cooperation with partners, two important tools were developed and updated. Some forest resources Information System (SamFRIS) was updated with climate information improving the monitoring and evaluation system of the project. Climate Early Warning System (CLEWS), another important technical tool was adapted for forestry management use. CLEWS is important technical tool was adapted for forestry management. It provided information to both farmers and forest manager. It tracked severe weather events such as cyclones, as well as rainfall. It also provided fire index that provide information on the level of forest fire hazard. These two important technical tools are available for future use by new projects and other initiatives. (GEF4- 4216)

A proactive effort to engage a diverse set of stakeholders is often quoted in the terminal evaluations as a necessary condition to enable participation of different project's partners, intended beneficiaries, and key projects' players. This approach often leads to the creation of new entities or initiatives, or to the development of capacities that are essential for outcomes' achievement.

Illustrative quotes
The project's work on developing shade coffee certification included extensive consultations and workshops with other coffee organizations and certifying agencies in Mexico. Out of this surfaced the idea of establishing a new organization that would promote sustainable coffee production in Mexico based in part on the experiences and work of the El Triunfo GEF Coffee Project. The "Consejo" was established in 2001 and embraces 16 organizations (cooperatives, NGOs, certifiers, academics) in five states and representing about 30 000 producers. (GEF-2 #644)
Increased institutional capacity has allowed SEAMAIEMA to establish important partnerships with the private sector and the NGO community thus expanding its capacity to deliver on program implementation and its leadership role in the Pact for the Restoration of the Atlantic Rainforest. (GEF-4 #2765)
The creation of a forum of NGOs and CBOs focused on the Northern Albertine Rift region – the Northern Albertine Rift Conservation Group (NARCG). This was not a directly expected project outcome but arose out of meetings and discussions between key stakeholders and others to try to minimize 'contamination' of the GEF Project by other on-going conservation and development initiatives in the target area (ensuring the controls were as 'clean' as possible), which was major issue for the Project's research team during the design stage. (GEF-4 #3682)

The agreements signed by the project and FN to achieve the expected results more effectively and creating synergies include various projects such as partnerships – Carbon Discolsure PRoject; VCS, Gold Standard and Plan Vivo Foundation to disseminate their standards on forest carbon and create tools to build local capacities; ICONTEC, to develop activities to train experts in carbon forest and potential auditors for validation and verification purposes; INVEMAR, to generate information on mangrove forests in the Caribbean and Pacific Oceans amongst others as well as agreements with ECOPETROL and GIZ. (GEF-4 #4135)

Clear definition of stakeholders' role at project design has produced several benefits and eased interactions and engagement with intended beneficiaries. Successful practices include strengthening of local and indigenous organizations, and coordination with existing local networks, agencies, and organizations.

Illustrative quotes
Planned identification of stakeholders' roles: A series of responsibilities has been provided for all stakeholders aiming to their effective participation in the project implementation. (GEF-3 #1095)
The strengthening of indigenous organizations, the exchange of experiences, and the existence of networks of partners and adapted mechanisms for promotion, such as micro- and small projects were success factors that facilitated the sustainability of measures; an efficient collaboration among the majority of partners, including the NGOs and the governmental agencies. (GEF-4 #2934)
The Project defined at design did not include cash transfers directly to beneficiaries but the establishment of agreements with local and regional agencies, cooperatives and NGOS which lead the implementation of subprojects together with the beneficiaries and promoted local ownership and pride among a broad range of stakeholders which was ruled by detailed agreements and definitions of institutional roles, responsibilities, and objectives. (GEF-4 #2690).
The project and local actors have laid the foundations by generating a series of alliances to guarantee technical assistance to agroforestry systems. (GEF3-1446)

Conversely the top two factors negatively influencing stakeholder engagement are: 1) poor project design, lack of coordination, and overambitious objectives; and 2) poor monitoring, evaluation, and learning systems (table 14).

	Private sector	**Indigenous people**	**Academia & Research**	**NGOs**
Poor project design, lack of coordination and overambitious objectives	28 of 128 projects	16 of 71 projects	27 of 131 projects	34 of 175 projects
Poor MEL systems				

	20 of 128 projects	10 of 71 projects	23 of 131 projects	29 of 175 projects

Table 14: Top two factors negatively affecting the achievement of the outcomes

Generally, projects failing to engage stakeholders suffer from poor project design and lack of agreement/ coordination between implementing and executive agencies. Also, poor project coordination among various stakeholders is another key factor hampering stakeholders' engagement.

Illustrative quotes
Increase transparency and collaboration among all actors implementing the project. The Task and Portfolio Managers of Global Environment Fund-funded projects should carefully assess and verify the information presented in Project Implementation Reviews (PIRs) and maintain close communication with the executing partners to be able to form a realistic picture of the project progress and to be able to take corrective measures. (GEF-4 #3822)
The lack of agreement between the executive and implementing agencies led to the temporary suspension of the Grant fund, which resulted in the producers' expectations not being met (they were awaiting receipt of funds for projects which had already been formulated); the other practice which should be avoided is the paralysis in project implementation caused by problems in communication between the implementing and executing agencies or difficulties in the administrative/financial management of the project. (GEF-3 #2120)
The ASEC, RPEA and IFAD learned that to avoid delays during inception, clearly defined and close supervision and backstopping was needed to ensure that any bottlenecks and issues were addressed in a timely manner. Sound coordination was necessary between the participating countries, ASEC, RPEA and IFAD project operation and disbursement units to account for the complex national and local procedures and regulations relating to project administration, financial management and procurement, and to avoid unnecessary implementation delays. (GEF-4 #2751)

It is interesting also that poor MEL systems affect negatively stakeholders' participation. This may be due to the functional role of MEL in engaging stakeholders during the different replenishment periods of the project cycle.

Illustrative quotes
Highly decentralized SLM projects require a well-designed M&E system. Careful thought must be given to presenting M&E Results Framework, theory of change, and key learning questions to be addressed—ensuring that this system will be focused on results-based measurements instead of activity-based M&E. In addition to identifying indicators to be measured, detailed indicator protocols need to be developed that provide specific procedures and frequency for indicator data collection. The M&E plan needs to include clearly defined plans for baseline data collection efforts and evaluation and learning efforts. (GEF-5 #5220)

3.2 Coherence and integration

In the Approach Paper we had indicated that the SFM portfolio was evolving toward more integrated approaches—seeking benefits across all domains of sustainable development, including social and economic goals, and not only MEA goals. Integrated approaches necessarily also include understanding and tracking synergies and trade-offs between the different objectives, the resulting benefits, and their enabling conditions. The portfolio descriptive review has found positive evidence to validate the greater integration of multi-environmental aims. Furthermore, the portfolio impact review has also validated the increased focus on socioeconomic benefits.

In terms of multiple environmental objectives, despite an initial strong focus on biodiversity, the GEF SFM portfolio has progressively transitioned toward multifocal area projects (n=282), which now constitute 44 percent of the SFM portfolio. The remaining 56 percent of the portfolio is addressing single-focal areas, and it is unevenly balanced toward biodiversity (n=288, 45 percent), with a minority of projects addressing land degradation (n=32, 5 percent), climate change (n=12, 2 percent) and international waters (n=5). Amongst the multifocal area projects, the most numerous combinations was biodiversity and land degradation (n=114). Figure 21[14] visualises the interconnections of the portfolio focal areas.

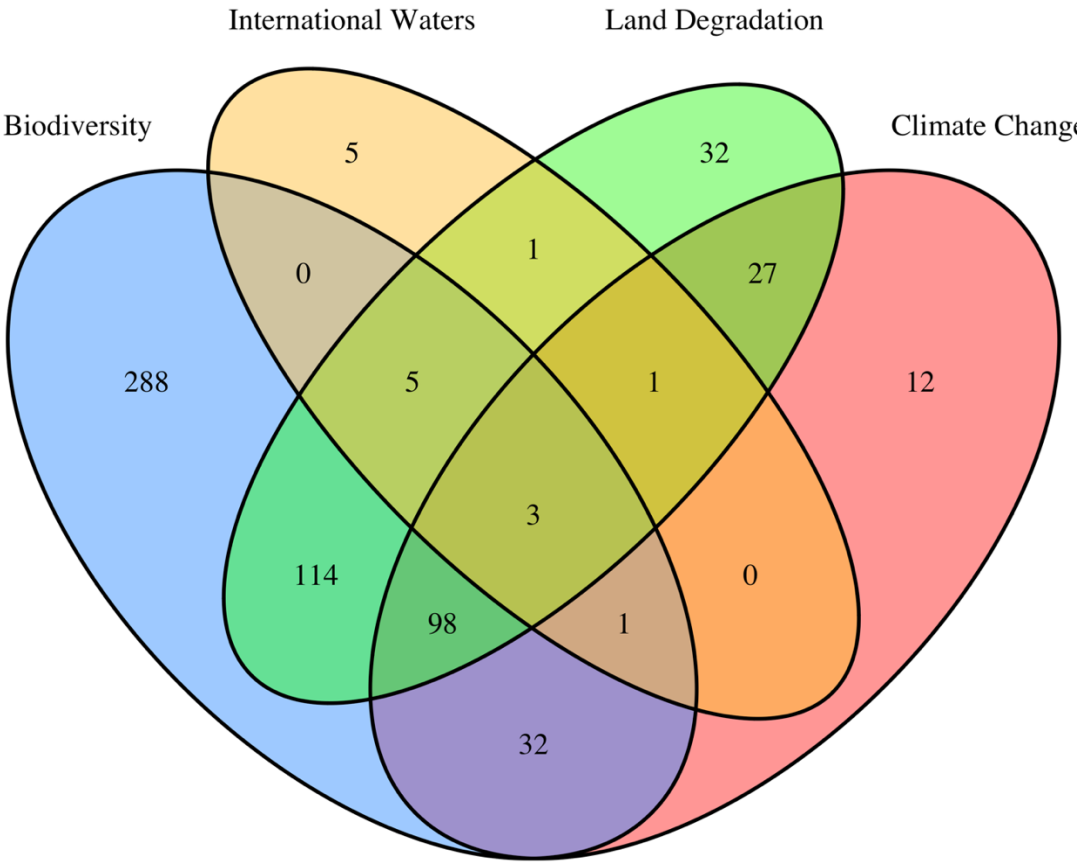

Figure 21: Multifocal area project overlap

[14] The fifth SFM focal area, chemical waste, was not included, as it was only represented in two multifocal projects. In cases where the project was listed as multifocal but only one focal area was identified, it was counted as a single focal area project under the area specified.

On integration of socio and environmental aims during SFM project implementation, overall 75 percent of projects (n=182) analyzed during the portfolio impact review were shown to have addressed both environmental and social outcome areas. Of the remaining 25 percent that did not address both domains (n= 61), 6 percent did not achieve any outcome (n=15), 11 percent achieved only social outcomes (n=27), and 8 percent achieved only environmental outcomes (n=19). Thus, overall, the SFM portfolio has performed well in terms of integration of diverse social and environmental aims during project implementation (figure 22).

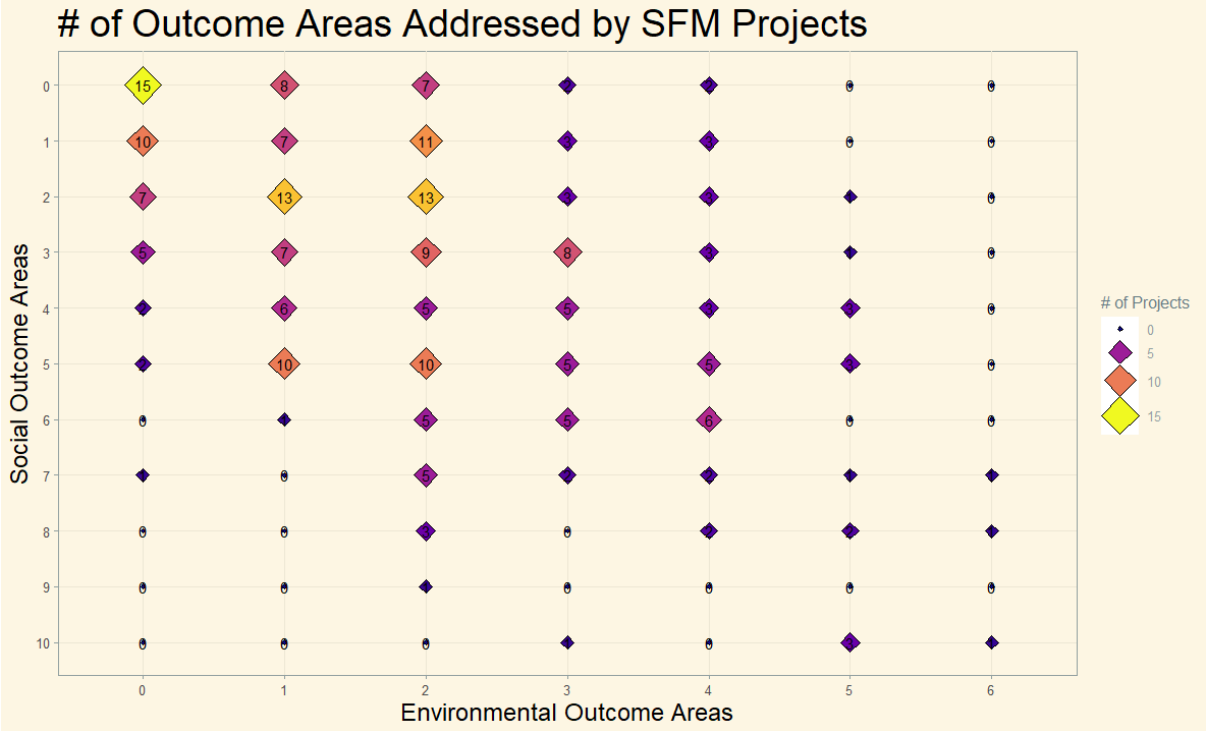

Figure 22: Number of outcome areas addressed by SFM projects, social ~ environmental

The portfolio impact review has identified 52 projects where terminal evaluations note that they have put in place proactive measures to mitigate trade-offs and create synergies. These include addressing the livelihoods needs of local communities through the establishment of new employment opportunities; the diversification of existing ones and the provision of new job skills; and the establishment of agreements and partnerships between organizations working in different thematic areas. Stakeholder engagement and building on existing locally owned initiatives were the key drivers of successful synergetic actions. We have also found a limited number of projects (n=27) affected by unresolved trade-offs. These were related to activities putting in danger the livelihoods of local communities which have in some cases led to social divisions and conflicts. Issues leading to poor management of trade-offs were: the lack of compensation mechanisms and mitigation plans; poor sustainability of land management systems; and the undertaking of activities which undermined biodiversity conservation efforts. Conversely to what was found in successful examples of trade-off mitigation, where stakeholder engagement contributed to success, the lack of engagement and consultation of local communities has also brought about the negative unintended consequences.

3.2.1 Trade-offs mitigated

In most projects where **mitigation measures for local communities** were put in place, these included the creation of **new employment** opportunities and/or **diversification** of existing ones and roll out of **training** in environmental education or **alternative employment**. These measures helped to counteract in some cases the loss of jobs arising from illegal activities that would have had a detrimental effect on the ecosystems or else prevent the negative effects (e.g., social tensions) caused by migration/relocation of the local population.

Illustrative quotes
Increased income and improved livelihoods as supported by the PARC project have helped to mitigate the effects of social unrest that in other countries are known to arise from migration and relocation of local people and from the loss of opportunities from hunting, gathering, and shifting cultivation in forest land. Environmental education has contributed strongly to the peoples' acceptance of protection measures. In summary, the economic improvements triggered by the PARC project have more than offset the loss of opportunities caused by the stricter park protection and farmers are now much more busy with their new farming and livestock operations, reducing the possibilities and necessity to go hunting and collecting in the protected forests. (GEF-1 #209)
Mitigation Plan and their implementation for people who might otherwise have been adversely affected by park establishment. Social mitigation costs included training for alternative employment, employment in park management activities, and improved housing and living conditions for the people who would continue to live in the parks. (GEF-1 #92)

Stakeholder consultation was also used as an effective **mitigation strategy** built in the project design in an attempt to avoid the potential limited access of the local population to natural resources or to traditional knowledge.

Illustrative quotes
They were also conscious of the controversial aspects of attempting to restrict and regulate access to traditional knowledge and indigenous plant materials and develop an intellectual property rights regime and made provision in project preparation and design to attempt to mitigate the risks. The Team and GOSL were particularly attentive to conducting stakeholder consultations among agencies and stakeholders, and to reach out to beneficiaries at the village level during this process. (GEF-1 #95)
An Access Restriction Process Framework (ARPF) guided the participatory resource management schemes to mitigate potential limited access restrictions of local people to natural resources. In addition, a social safeguards review conducted in April 2013 concluded that project activities are consistent with the project ARPF. (GEF-3 #2354)

3.2.2 Synergies created

A few terminal evaluations mentioned that a number of agreements and partnerships arose as a result of projects promoting synergies at different levels.

Illustrative quotes

The agreements signed by the project and FN to achieve the expected results more effectively and creating synergies include various projects such as partnerships – Carbon Discolsure Project; VCS, Goldstandard and Plan Vivo Foundation to disseminate their standards on forest carbon and create tools to build local capacities; ICONTEC, to develop activities to train experts in carbon forest and potential auditors for validation and verification purposes; INVEMAR, to generate information on mangrove forests in the Caribbean and Pacific Oceans amongst others as well as agreements with ECOPETROL and GIZ. (GEF-4 #4135)
The management boards subscribed an agreement of cooperation on tourism development and biodiversity conservation, based on a technical report commissioned by the project and discussed with tour operators in a project supported workshop. The agreement is expected to create synergies and use funds more efficiently by cooperating in tourism promotion. (GEF-4 #3603)
A major achievement of the project, and a major milestone for an improved institutional and planning framework for the NTFCA, was the signing in 2015 by the two presidents of Malawi and Zambia of the Malawi- Zambia TFCA Treaty. This critical document creates the conditions to allow the two countries to continue coordinating with each other on transboundary conservation. For example, it promotes sharing intelligence information on poachers, joint law enforcement across the borders of the two countries, joint patrols, as well as harmonized policies for officers working in the protected areas of the two countries. (GEF-4 #3618)

In some cases, extensive stakeholder consultation or increased institutional capacity were the drivers to the creation of a new partnership organizations.

Illustrative quotes
The project's work on developing shade coffee certification included extensive consultations and workshops with other coffee organizations and certifying agencies in Mexico. Out of this surfaced the idea of establishing a new organization that would promote sustainable coffee production in Mexico based in part on the experiences and work of the El Triunfo GEF Coffee Project. The "Consejo" was established in 2001 and embraces 16 organizations (cooperatives, NGOs, certifiers, academics) in five states and representing about 30 000 producers. (Gef-2 #644)
The creation of a forum of NGOs and CBOs focused on the Northern Albertine Rift region – the Northern Albertine Rift Conservation Group (NARCG). This was not a directly expected project outcome but arose out of meetings and discussions between key stakeholders and others to try to minimize 'contamination' of the GEF Project by other on-going conservation and development initiatives in the target area (ensuring the controls were as 'clean' as possible), which was major issue for the Project's research team during the design stage. (GEF-4 #3682)
Increased institutional capacity which has allowed SEAMAIEMA to establish important partnerships with the private sector and the NGO community thus expanding its capacity to deliver on program implementation and its leadership role in the Pact for the Restoration of the Atlantic Rainforest. (GEF-4 #2765)

In other cases, project activities were attuned to other initiatives or projects already established in the area which enabled further synergy creation and potential spillover in other social or environmental benefits.

Illustrative quotes

During implementation, the project established linkages with other projects supporting community conservation and have helped to build capacity of CFAs by exchanging experiences and learning lessons; Close links were established with Nandi Ecosystem with the Lake Victoria Environment Management Project. (GEF-4 #3693)
NFI synergy with other national agendas, the diversity of interactions and potential NFI contributions to other existing initiatives (MMA, MCTIC, ICMBio, IBGE, universities, states, and FRA) are recognized. (GEF-4 #3767)
Shade coffee is known to support biodiversity conservation by replicating a natural forest ecosystem. Moreover, certified shade coffee can bring better prices for coffee sold and the increased income can spill over in other social benefits and positive externalities. These are possible synergies created that are yet to be measured. (GEF-4 #3753)

3.2.3 Trade-offs unmitigated

In total 27 terminal evaluations report negative trade-offs. Some reported that the implementation of project activities was at a detriment to the livelihoods of the local population and in (only) two instances they generated social divisions and conflicts within some communities. For those same projects, compensation mechanisms such as mitigation plans or strategies for those communities were not devised and/or implemented, and this worsened their living conditions.

Illustrative quotes
There were a number of unintended negative consequence of the PES scheme that generated a certain amount of conflict locally and threatened the wider uptake (and sustainability) of the scheme. One of these was the exclusion of non-PFOs from land held by PFOs in the treatment group in some villages, particularly over the collection of fuelwood and water from land that prior to the Project had been essentially 'open access.' This created social divisions and conflicts between PFOs and non-PFOs and increased tensions in some villages. (GEF-4 #3682)
Social tensions around the repression carried out by community agents on illegal acts, which are denounced and then exonerated for insufficient charges. Community workers are subjected to threats and violence (verbal and / or physical) and do not receive sufficient support from the forest administration and regional authorities. (GEF-4 #3687)
Decrease in access to resources for riparian communities without the compensation mechanisms in place making it possible to fully mitigate this negative effect. (GEF-4 #3687)
Increasing disparity in female income generation between household heads and non-heads. It has decreased from US $67 to $11 per month during the project period for those females who head the household; and increased from US $74 to $95 for non-head household females. (GEF-4 #3635)
Women from the refugee camp at Ghaza complained that they were now prevented from collecting dead wood from the forest and this had caused them some hardship. (GEF-3 #1438)

In other cases, the evaluators deemed project activities to be a potential threat to the sustainability of land management systems or undermining biodiversity conservation efforts.

Illustrative quotes
Although this Project opted for an economic alternative that seems to be interesting, such as the agroforestry systems with perennial crops for the market, the predominance given to this activity is not enough and could led to negative effects as it is based on almost exclusively one specie. The diversity of crops and forestal and fruit trees could give more flexibility and security to the sustainability of the same agroforestry system. (GEF-3 #1446)
In West Chindwara, one beneficiary planted Eucalyptus on nearly 2.5 ha for commercial purposes (will be sold for pulp) having been granted Rs. 60,000 by the project. This is unfortunate in a GEF biodiversity project as the chance of adding biodiversity benefits is lost, and the water consumption of many Eucalyptus varieties is known to be considerable and to affect surrounding land. (GEF-4 #3472)
Although many communities still depend on fuel wood, a traditional use zone was not created. As a result, illegal use is unavoidable and will be counterproductive to biodiversity conservation. (GEF-3 #1535)

Finally, in some instances it was reported that projects did not sufficiently consult or engage those communities the project was supposed to benefit, and this caused unintended negative consequences.

Illustrative quotes
The Project's design had a strong scientific perspective to address degradation of natural resources (land and water) and paid little attention to on-the-ground expectations by farmers. For instance, a block-wise approach met scientific requirements to standardize data but was not aligned with either community structure or ecological boundaries. The Project experienced some elite capture where individuals were able to acquire external funding support for their own purposes under the pretext of community development. (GEF-3 #1362)
One negative socioeconomic impact that has been reported in relation to the interventions of this project is that of guava collectors who came every year in large numbers to harvest these fruits in areas where these shrubs were eventually cleared. No signs informing them of the ongoing restoration work had been installed so that some ventured further to find their fruits and accidents occurred. (GEF-4 #3526)

3.3 Impact

From the portfolio impact review, we have identified the following tangible contributions of the GEF's work which can be aggregated at portfolio level: ***78 million ha* of forests under new protected areas (PAs) or improved PA management**, ***1.9 million ha* of forests restored**, and ***139 thousand* of jobs** created. The figures reported in this section should be considered a minimum because most evaluations barely touch on some of the likely impact areas.

3.3.1 Environmental impact

The GEF SFM portfolio has contributed to **protect at least 77,896,892 ha of forest**, which was either included in new protected areas, or benefited from improved protected area management as a result of projects funded by the GEF. The portfolio has also contributed **to restore at least 1,924,433 ha of forest**. Grants funded in Latin America (*42 million ha*) are the ones reporting bigger areas of forest protected, followed by Asian grants which have reported about half than the hectares reported by LAC projects (*23million ha*). Instead, regional, European and African grants reported between *3–4 million ha* of forest protected. Unsurprisingly, global projects are reporting less than all other region, but they are also the smallest portion of the portfolio in terms of number of projects and funds.

Forest Protected	
Region	**Hectares**
Latin America (LAC)	42,454,392
Asia	23,518,962
Regional (REG)	3,861,389
Europe (ECA)	3,295,201
Africa (AFR)	3,240,588
Global (CEX)	1,526,360

Table 15: Forest protected by region in ha

Forest Restored	
Region	**Hectares**
Africa (AFR)	1,584,804
Asia	173,052
Latin America (LAC)	97,902
Europe (ECA)	51,933.5
Regional (REG)	13,457
Global (CEX)	3,283

Table 16: Forest restored by region in ha

In terms of forest restored, African countries have reported the biggest area with *1,584,804 ha* of forest. Africa is by far the most successful region to this regard since all others are far from the one-million mark. However, these numbers should be considered carefully since they may be heavily affected by different monitoring evaluation capacities of the implementing Agencies and their partners. On average between the six regions only 44 percent of funding category reported hectares of forest protected, and 15 percent of total grants reported about hectares of forest restored, although we cannot conclude that other grants did not also contribute, especially given low levels of monitoring.

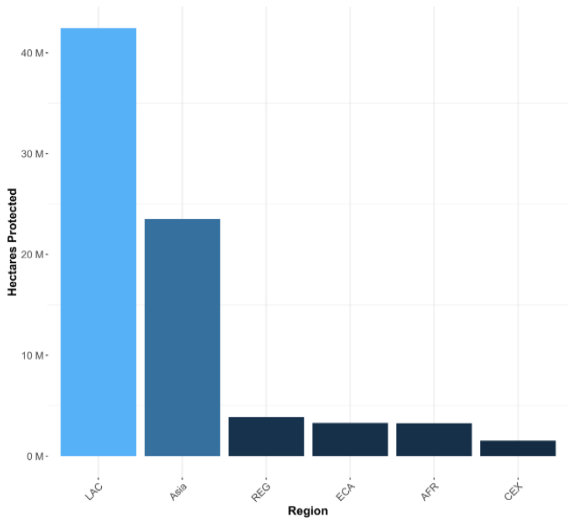

Figure 23: Hectares of forest protected by project region

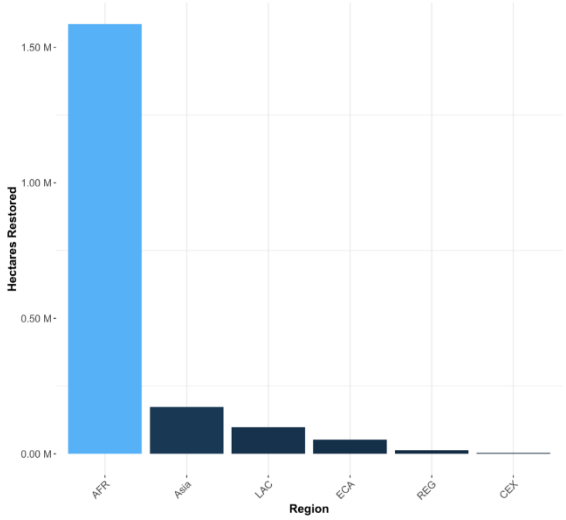

Figure 24: Hectares of forest restored by project region

Figures 25 and 26 show the ratio of hectares of forest protected and restored per project broken down into the type of stakeholders engaged.[15] The graph shows that projects engaging indigenous people, academia, NGOs, and the private sector reported higher hectares of forest protected, while projects engaging local communities reported higher ratio of hectares of forest restored.

[15] Hectares of protected and restored per project was calculated as the sum of the relevant impact variable by projects engaging the group, divided by the total number of projects that engaged the group. The same ratio was calculated for projects that *did not* engage those groups.

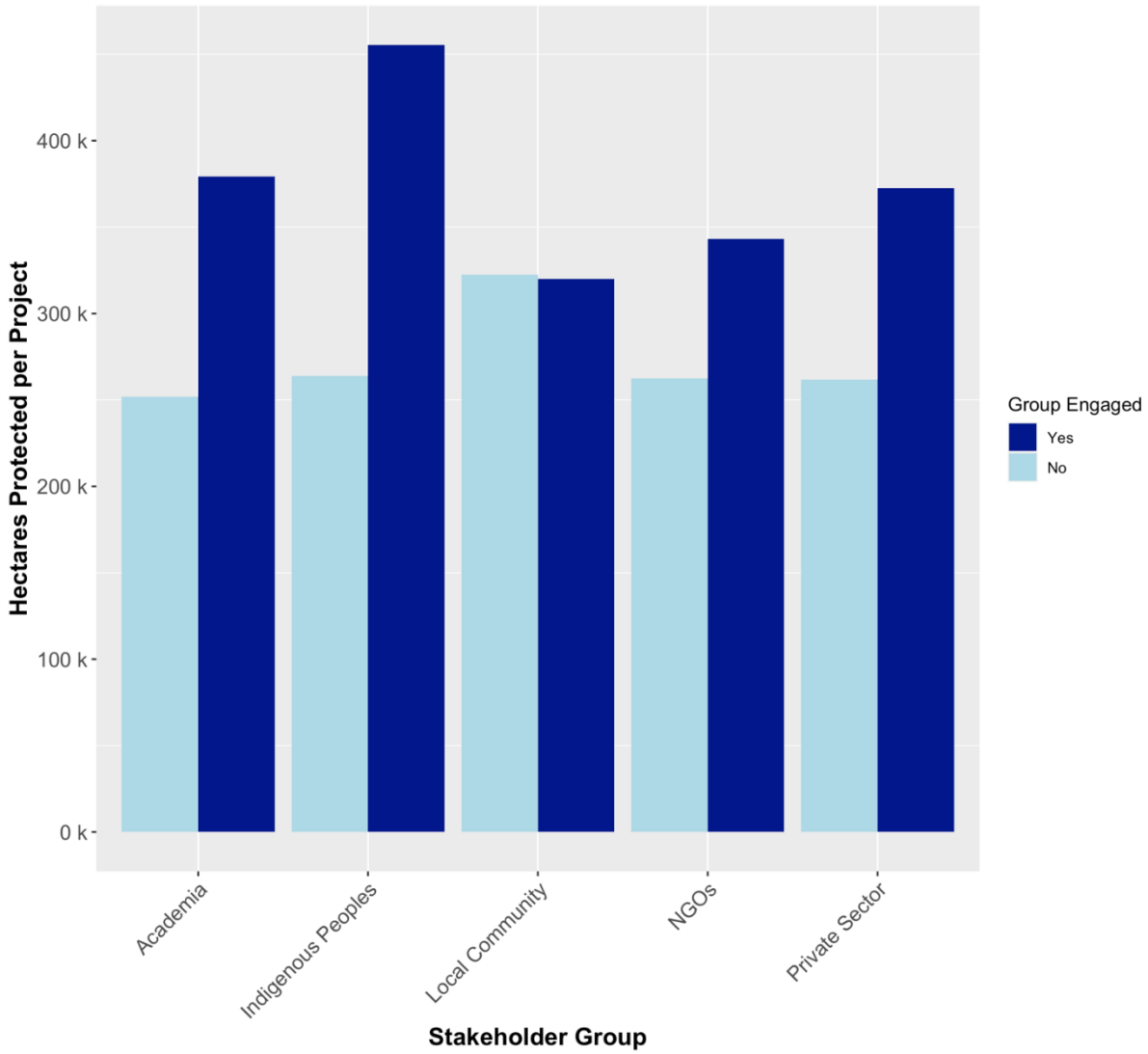

Figure 25: Ratio of hectares of forest protected by stakeholder category

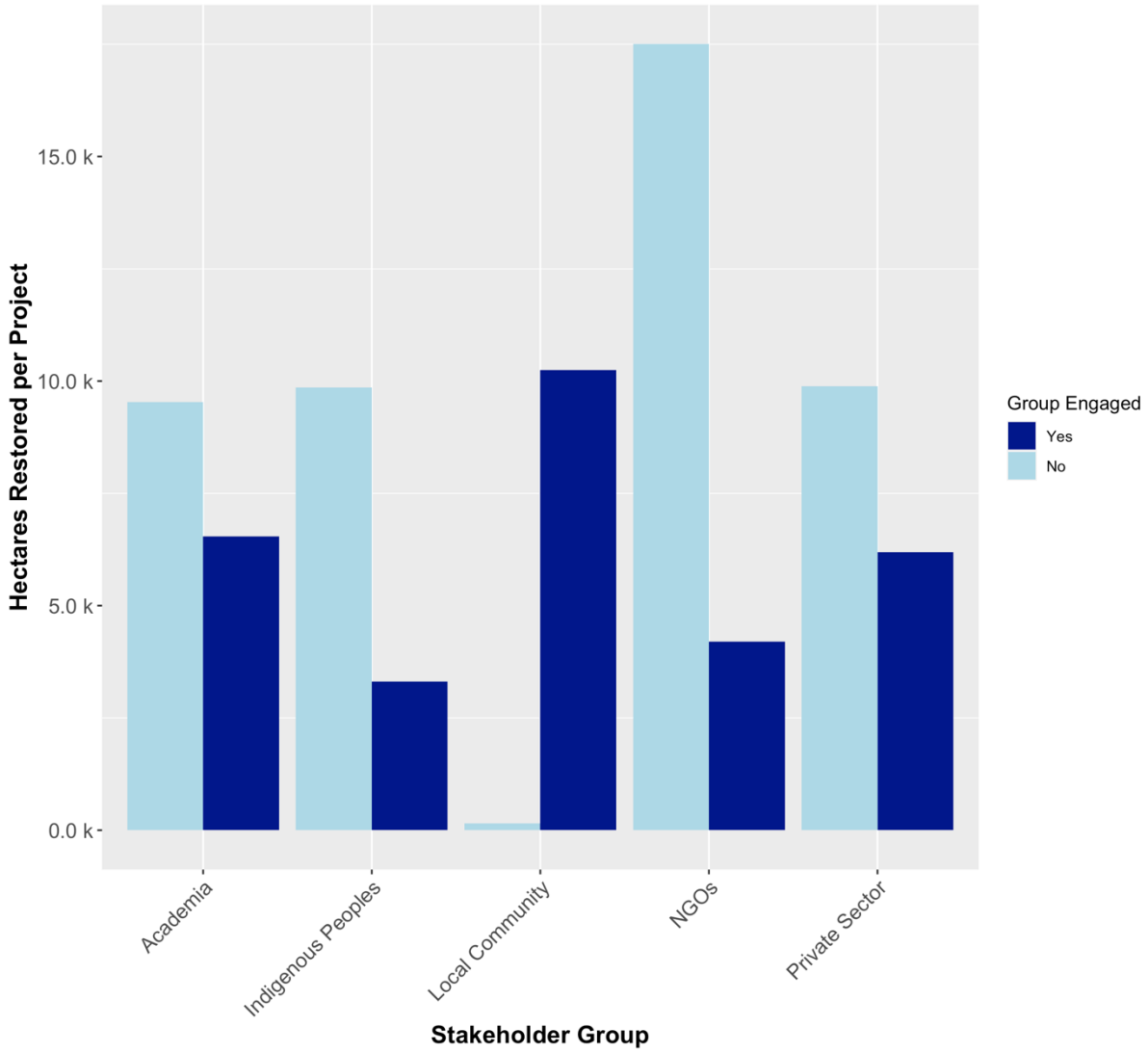

Figure 26: Ratio of hectares of forest restored by stakeholder category

3.3.2 Social Impact

The GEF SFM portfolio has contributed to the creation of at least *139,336 jobs*. Africa and Asia report the greatest number of jobs (*66k* and *54k*, respectively), followed by Europe and Latin America (*16K* and *3k*, respectively). Regional and global grants instead have reported almost no jobs created. On average between the six regions, only 9 percent of projects reported job figures that could be aggregated at the portfolio level, so these numbers are purely indicative and could be much higher.

Jobs created	
Region	Jobs

Africa (AFR)	66,478
Asia	53,672
Europe (ECA)	16,552
Latin America (LAC)	2,609
Regional (REG)	25
Global (CEX)	0

Table 17: Jobs created by project region

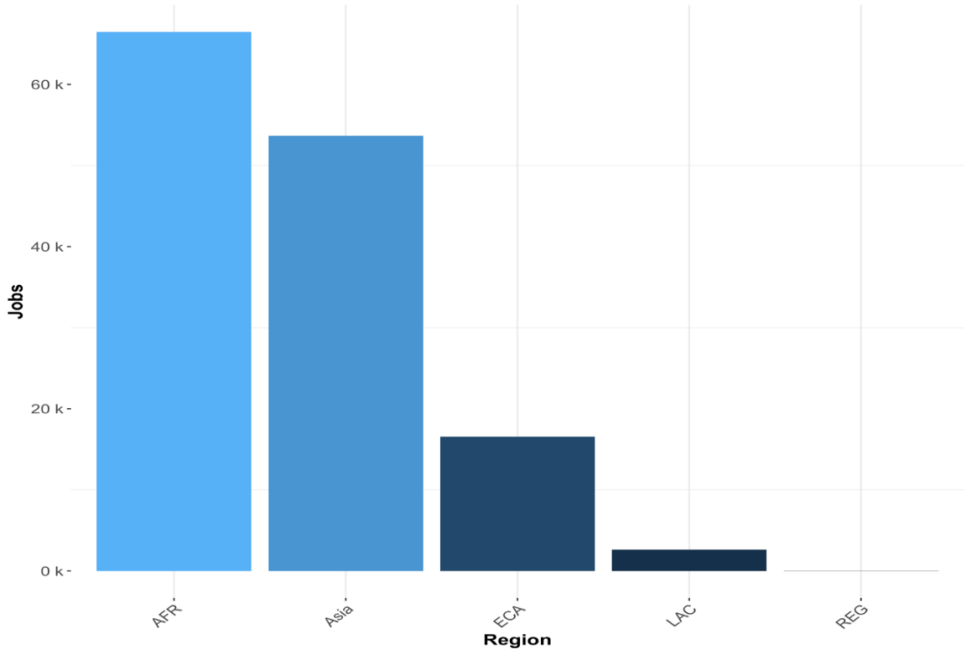

Figure 27: Jobs created by project region

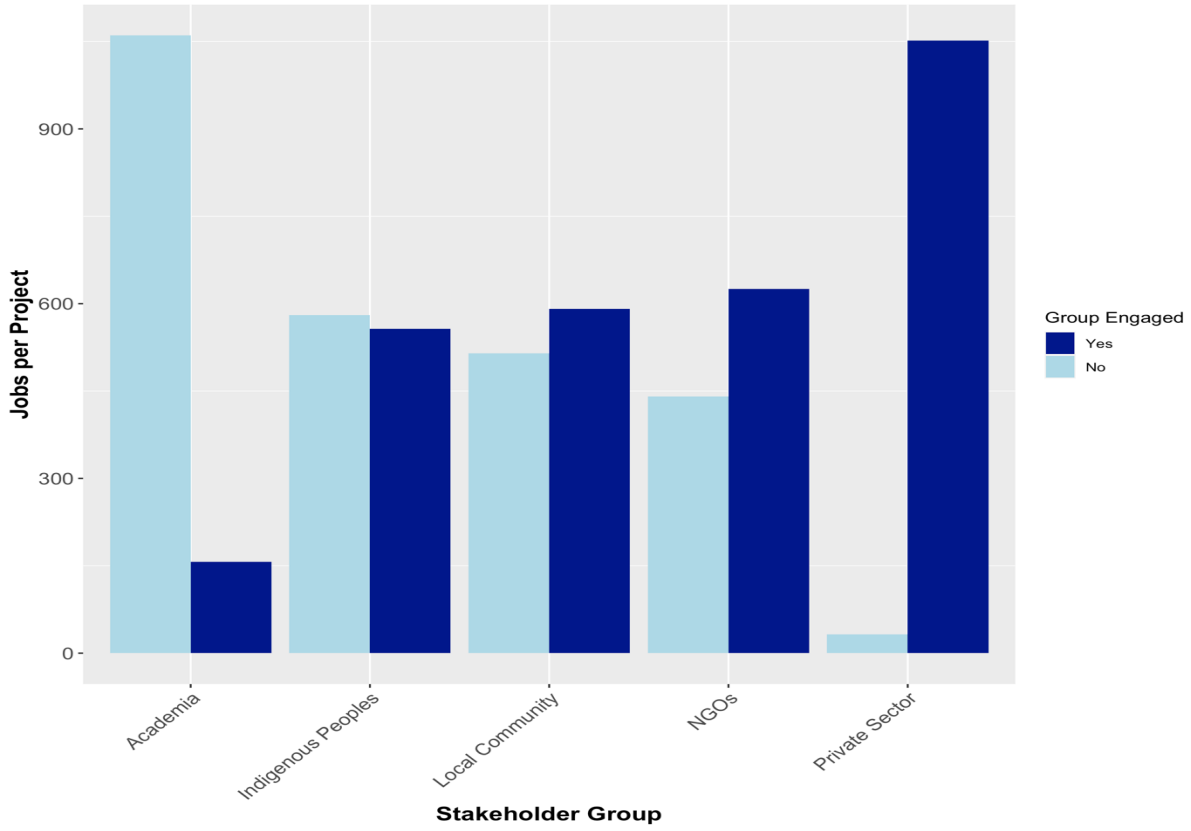

Figure 28: Ratio of jobs created by stakeholder category

3.3.3 Transformative Change

Overall, **52 of 243 projects (21.4 percent)** were evaluated as having achieved transformative change. Figure 18 illustrates the *percentage* of transformative projects in each GEF replenishment period. Surprisingly, these are the greater proportion of GEF-1 grants, however this finding may be affected by sampling bias since only 10 evaluations from GEF-1 were selected for the portfolio impact review and, given GEF-1 was a new global programme, its novel nature might have led evaluators to assess GEF-1 in terms of innovation. The proportion of projects being transformative in GEF-3, GEF-4, and GEF-5 are instead more reliable since we have reviewed all terminal evaluations produced in those replenishment periods. From GEF-3 onwards we have observed that the number of transformative projects is usually in the range of 10 percent to 25 percent of each GEF replenishment period.

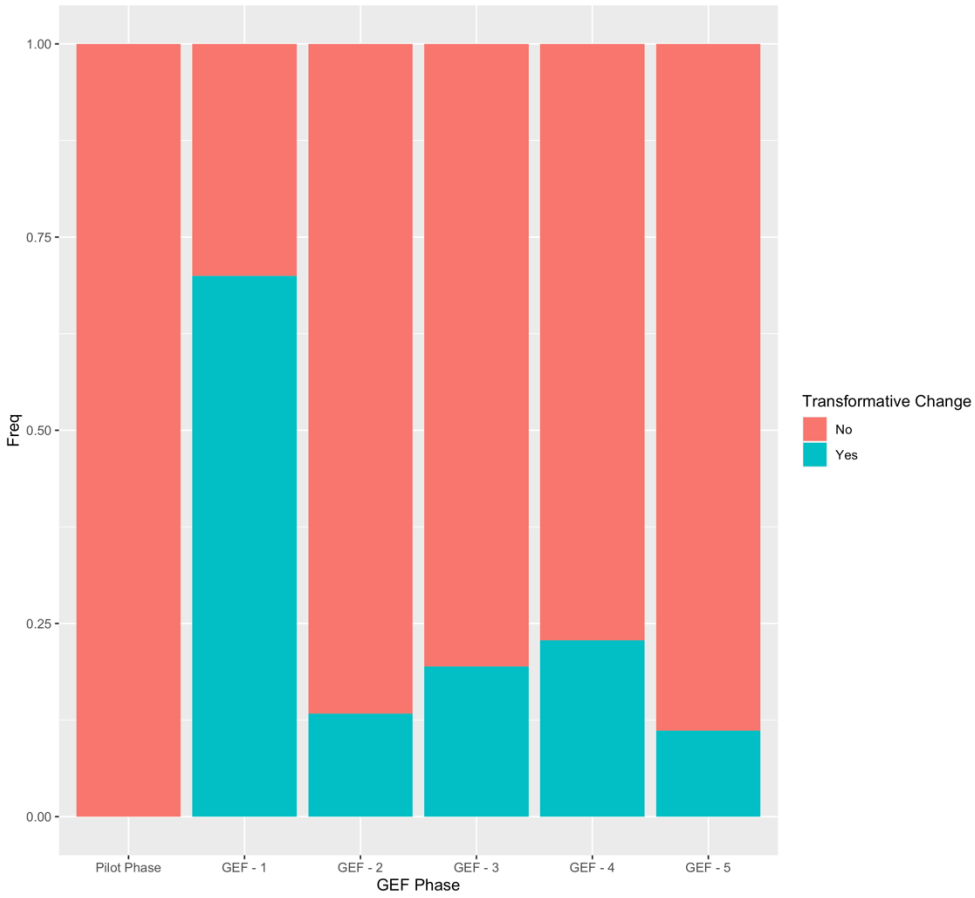

Figure 29: Transformative change across GEF replenishment periods

3.3.4 GEF additionality

In addition to environmental gains discussed above, elements of GEF additionality identified in terminal evaluations included socioeconomic benefits produced by innovative approaches and institutional improvements. The latter were achieved through capacity development activities, increased financial flows for project activities, and replication strategies enabling the achievement of greater environmental impacts.

The socioeconomic gains benefiting from GEF unique contribution were related to the introduction of new technologies and tools.

Illustrative quotes
SLM innovation: SLM technologies piloted during the project (e.g., permaculture, rooftop rainwater harvesting tanks, indigenous poultry rearing, beekeeping and hay-making) ***(GEF4- 3390)***
The project also produced a successful and popular tool: The Participatory Three Dimensional model

(P3D). It helped the communities visualize their village and the surrounding area's topography and vegetation enhancing their participation in community based management plans. ***(GEF4-4216).***

Institutional achievements were also enabled by the reformulation of implementation plans, the introduction of new tools and technologies, and by capacity development initiatives. These have often led to the removal of structural institutional barriers and increased capacities of local and national governments.

Illustrative quotes
The SINAC institutional framework was strengthened. Acquired tools and technologies strengthen governance (GEF4-2773)
What has been accomplished seems to be serious advances at the policy level, in capacity of counterparts, in awareness raising, and in production of some key tools (conservation zoning, forest fire strategy. (GEF3-1296)
The GEF Project strengthened the management of the Maya Biosphere Reserve by formulating the following PA master management plans: Maya Biosphere Reserve, Yaxha-Nakum-Naranjo National Park and Cahui. (GEF4-2687).
The GEF grant by intervening at a specific stage of the construction process, was designed to help remove some barriers and mitigate impacts, especially institutional barriers specific to a 3-province protected area, to NEPL itself and to the Lao PDR context. (GEF4-3873)

A few projects have also highlighted the role of GEF funding in fostering innovative practices, enabling innovative partnerships and unlocking new opportunities.

Illustrative quotes
In cooperation with partners, two important tools were developed and updated. Some forest resources Information System (SamFRIS) was updated with climate information improving the monitoring and evaluation system of the project. Climate Early Warning System (CLEWS), another important technical tool was adapted for forestry management use. CLEWS is important technical tool was adapted for forestry management. It provided information to both farmers and forest manager. It tracked severe weather events such as cyclones, as well as rainfall. It also provided fire index that provide information on the level of forest fire hazard. These two important technical tools are available for future use by new projects and other initiatives. (GEF4- 4216)
Inclusion of the new and innovative approaches_to address natural resource rehabilitation and management on a watershed basis, funded by the GEF, would not only improve soil and water resources in the project area but also help to initiate critical work towards meeting obligations under the EU Nitrates and Water Framework Directives. (GEF2-1074).

The GEF grant by intervening at a specific stage of the construction process, was designed to help remove some barriers and mitigate impacts, especially institutional barriers specific to a 3-province protected area, to NEPL itself and to the Lao PDR context. (GEF4-3873)

GEF funding were often instrumental for leveraging additional resources through fundraising and international cooperation; and in supporting key activities during the early life of new projects.

Illustrative quotes
GEF funds were instrumental in leveraging other support from other donors. (GEF3-1836).
GEF funds have significantly contributed to smooth functioning of the key institutions in solving some of the LWC and community conservation problems, as well as opening new opportunities for further support. (GEF2- 18).
GEF's funding was fundamental to support activities that were critical to the project's success, such as the development of a national methodology, training of teams and data analysis (including botanic identification, analysis of soil biomass, stocks, vegetation cover, socioenvironmental data, etc). (GEF4-3767)

Finally, GEF funds have also been instrumental in implementing replication strategies that have facilitated the adoption of successful approaches at greater scale.

Illustrative quotes
The project gets credit for the successful and well tested agro--forestry plots established in 26 villages. This model brought benefits to the farmers. The project supplied vegetable seeds and fruit saplings, and training enabling the farmer to establish his farm. At the same time the farmer planted forest trees thus contributing into the rehabilitation of affected forest areas. This is a model that can be replicated elsewhere in the country to contribute to poverty alleviation, improving livelihoods and enhance food security. (GEF4-4216).
An added benefit of the GEF funding has been the replication effect in other biomes within South Africa and elsewhere. (GEF1-134)
The GEF Alternative would enable the GOP to undertake a more ambitious program generating global, national and local benefits especially in terms of biodiversity conservation. (GEF3-2102)

3.4 Effectiveness

The impact portfolio review identified 5 main environmental and 11 main socioeconomic outcome areas of GEF SFM grants where terminal evaluations had reported tangible results.

3.4.1 Environmental outcomes

During the impact portfolio review we have identified 5 main environmental outcome areas addressed by GEF SFM grants which reported tangible results related (figure 30):

- Forest protection and improved forest management in 63 percent of projects (n = 154);
- Biodiversity gains of many types identified for 41 percent of projects (n = 100);
- Soil and water and other protective functions identified for 25 percent of projects (n = 60);
- Forest restoration, 19 percent of projects (n = 46); and
- CO_2 emissions mitigated 15 percent of projects, (n = 37).

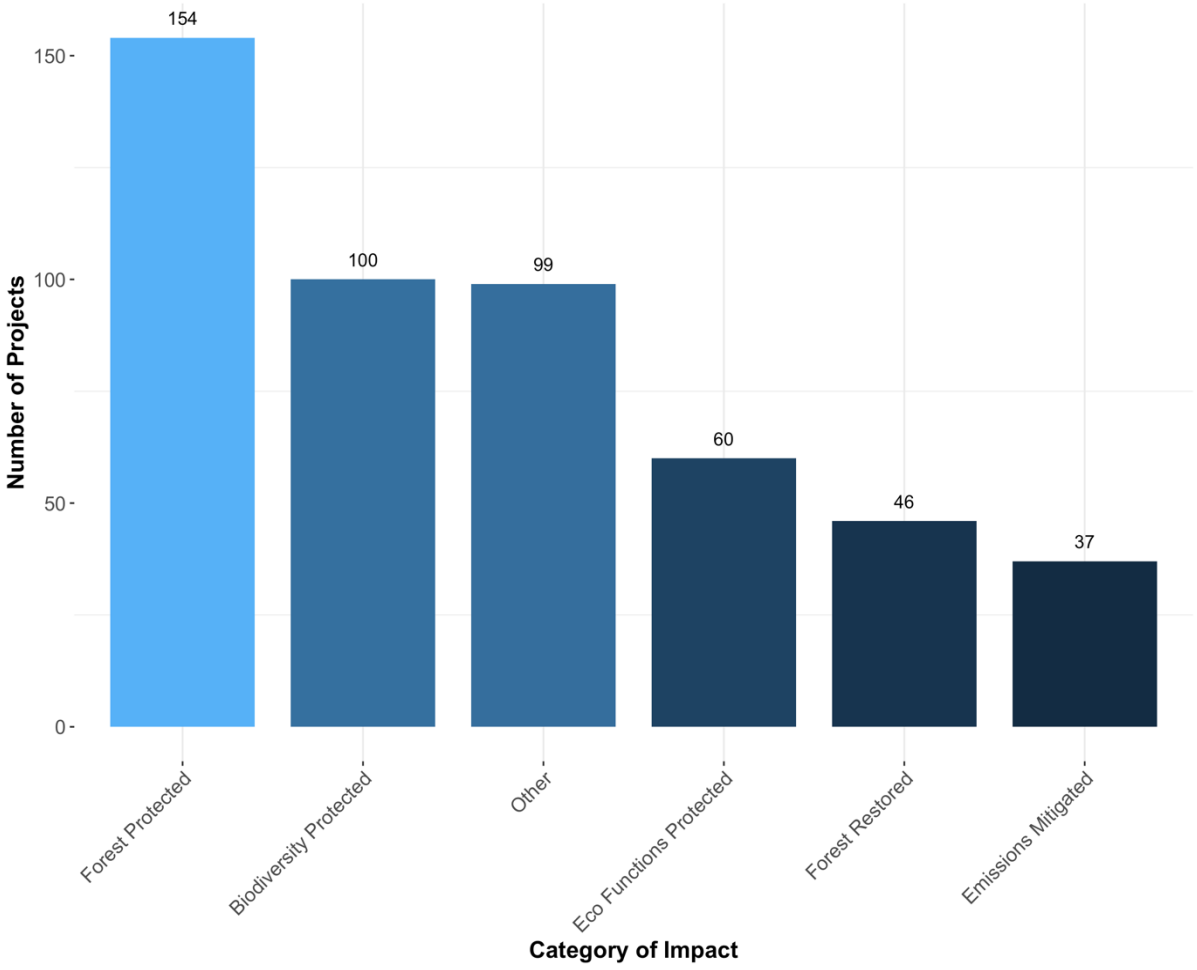

Figure 30: Areas of environmental impact of the portfolio

Figure 31 presents the regional breakdown of environmental outcome areas reported by projects. Latin America had the majority of grants reporting results in relation to forest protection, biodiversity gains, and protection of eco-system functions. Instead, African grants had the greatest number of projects

addressing forest restoration, while the number of projects reporting about climate mitigation was similar across Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Europe.

Figure 31: Number of projects addressing each environmental impact category in the six project regions

3.4.2 Social and economic outcomes

The impact portfolio review identified 11 main social and economic outcome areas of GEF SFM grants where terminal evaluations had reported tangible results (figure 32). The top five are:

- Increased income in 55 percent of projects (n = 133);
- Community empowerment in 52 percent of projects (n = 127);
- Gender equality in 37 percent of projects (n = 89);
- Reduced conflict in 28 percent of projects (n = 68); and
- Indigenous empowerment in 25 percent of projects (n = 60).

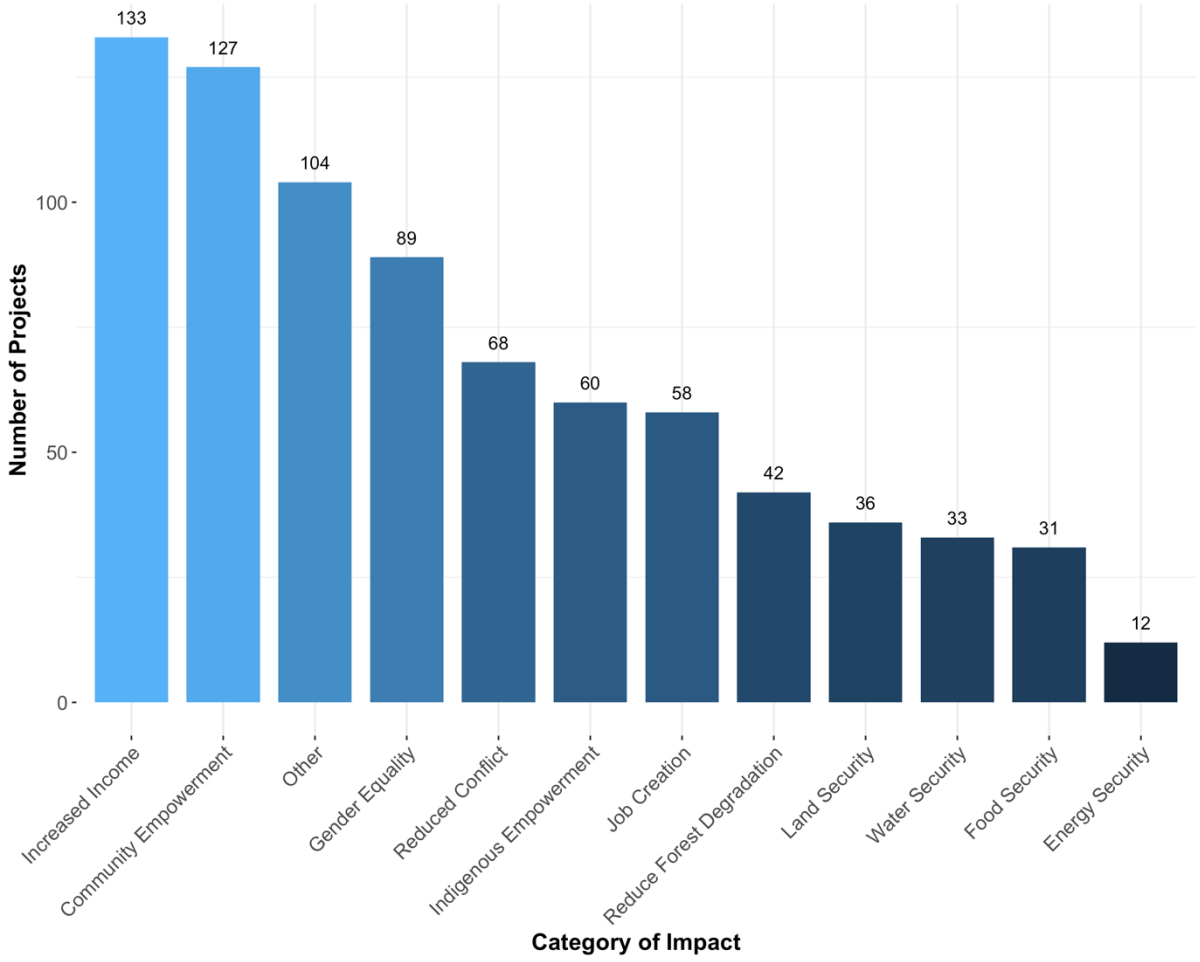

Figure 32: Areas of social or economic impact of the portfolio

Figure 33 presents the regional breakdown of socioeconomic outcome areas reported by projects. African and Asian grants had the greatest number of projects reporting about income, followed closely by Latin America. Community empowerment is a key results' area for Latin America, Asia and Africa. Latin American grants stand out also for their focus on indigenous community, where they have a sensibly higher number of projects than other regions, and gender. Projects reporting results about the latter are also numerous in Africa and Asia. Energy work concentrated in Africa and Asia, while grants reporting positive results related to conflict are mostly present in Latin America, with some in Asia and Africa.

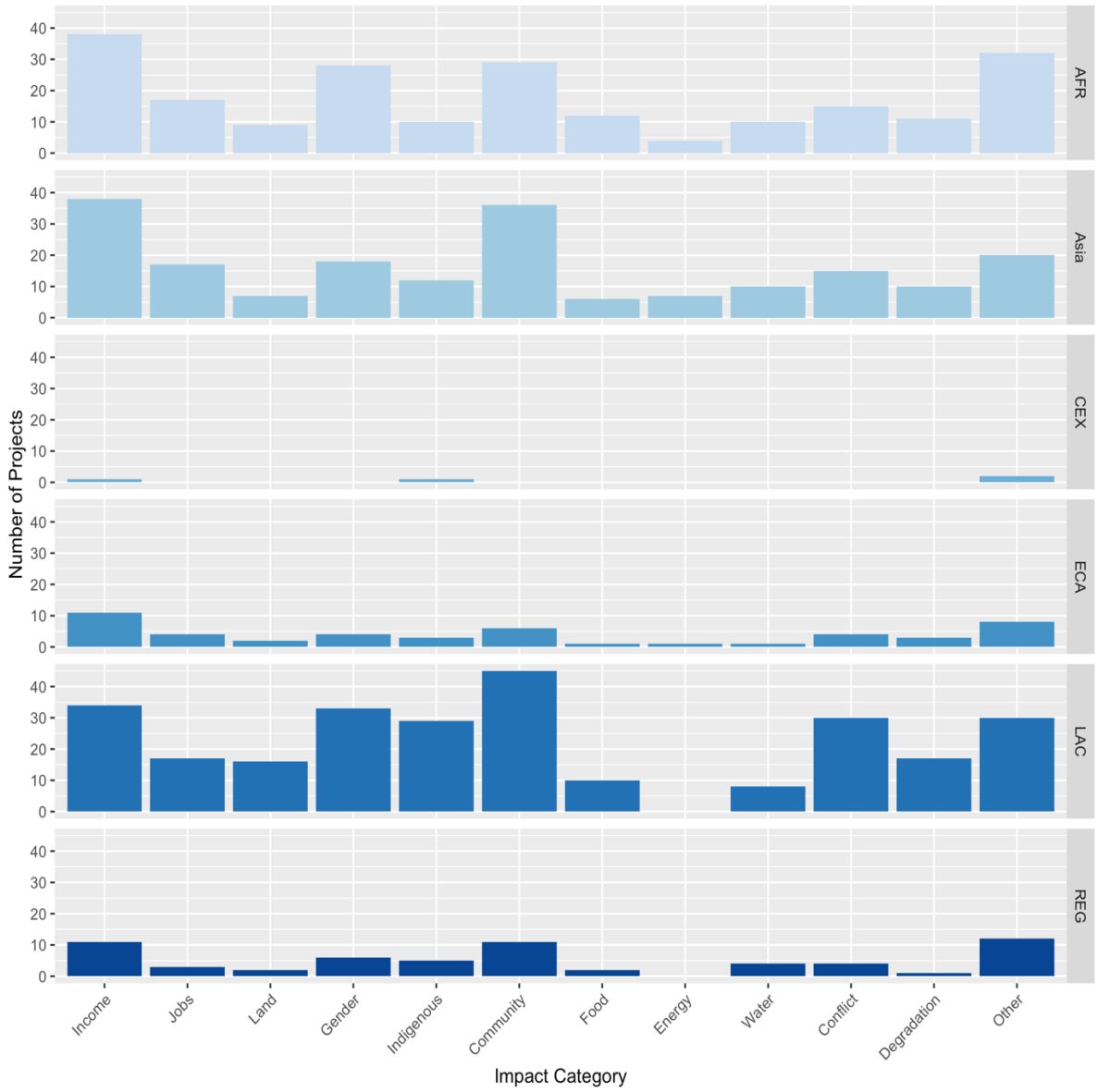

Figure 33: Areas of social Impact of the portfolio by region

3.4.3 Project characteristics that enable effectiveness

Project characteristics that have positively affected effectiveness are: well-designed monitoring and evaluation systems; stakeholder engagement fostering local ownership; integration of lessons learnt from previous projects, mid-term reviews and needs assessment; adaptive management; positive role played by the implementing agency and strong project teams.

Strong MEL systems: In 52 projects the elements of a well-designed monitoring and evaluation system were seen to positively affect achievement of project outcomes. The elements cited by the terminal evaluations include: establishing a strong logical framework with baseline data for indicators that followed SMART guidelines; good data collection; a strong M&E plan linking activities to results; good reporting; using monitoring data to make decision for the project; and clear budget allocation for M&E

activities. In some instances, the use of satellite imagery using Global Information System Technology for monitoring activities has positively affected project outcomes.

Illustrative quotes
M&E implementation has been of a very high standard, with excellent progress monitoring and strong internal activity monitoring. The impact monitoring, normally the weak point of any project's M&E, is particularly noteworthy for its quality and effectiveness and has been used to influence management decisions. (GEF-3 #1043). Monitoring played a central role in the management of the project and results from monitoring activities prompted action by the management unit and governance bodies.
The LogFrame defines a major goal that is well expressed. The expected outcomes are clear and have guided the management. There are SMART and coherent indicators. The project design included a detail M&E Plan sufficiently articulated to monitor the results and the progress towards the objectives that allows adaptive management. (GEF-4 #3637)
Adequate procedures and M&E plan have been designed and included the establishment of a GIS linked to an environmental and socioeconomic database to track the indicators of the logical framework and the targets set by the project. (GEF-3 #2511)

Stakeholder engagement and relationship building: Terminal evaluations of 50 projects stakeholders' engagement and relationships building were found to be key for the achievement of the outcomes. Effective stakeholders' engagement strategies include: conducting a stakeholder analysis at the beginning of the project; regularly communicating with key stakeholders (especially in their local language); holding stakeholder workshops; clearly identifying roles and responsibilities of project partners; and using a participatory approach with local communities. Among them are projects that have proactively tried to engage indigenous people, local communities and people living in poverty and exclusion, including women. Terminal evaluations of 19 projects have created a strong sense of local ownership which enables sustainability.

Illustrative quotes
Once the project commenced, a re- inception workshop was carried out with stakeholder groups to present the project to new staff members of stakeholder organizations. (GEF-3 #2068)
The Project Manager had an email list of some 500 people and these stakeholders were regularly consulted regarding a number of decisions and informed of project progress. Such a degree of inclusiveness is to be applauded. (GEF-4 #2035)
A working group was established involving government agencies and the participation of indigenous representatives from the five regions of the country. (GEF-4 #2934)
-Gender considerations have been taken into account in the various activities, and efforts have been made to disseminate information on the project, particularly among local communities. (GEF-4 #3687)

The production of the Strategic Plan with a focus on the Northern Albertine Rift forests – was completed and approved in June 2012. It was a participative process, thus there is a strong sense of ownership of the plan. (GEF-3 #1175)
The Project Manager prepared additional annual reports, in Russian, and disseminated them with project partners including the regional coordinators, the members of the PSC, this proved an efficient tool to keep all parties informed, engaged and committed. (GEF-4 #3909)
Coupled with the "partnerships", the project worked to increase corporate social responsibility among the private sector organisations within the Komi Republic, including developing a five-year action plan to increase social and environmental responsibility among these organisations. (GEF4-2035)
Partnerships with tourist operators were developed and strengthened and reception infrastructures were created. (GEF4-3687).
Coupled with the "partnerships", the project worked to increase corporate social responsibility among the private sector organisations within the Komi Republic, including developing a five-year action plan to increase social and environmental responsibility among these organisations. (GEF4-2035)
Trans-boundary cooperation has increased significantly in all three Biosphere Reserves. (GEF3-1994)

Project learning: In 28 projects, lessons learned from previous projects were incorporated into the design of the current projects to positively affect the outcomes, while 16 projects have successfully incorporated recommendations from mid-term reviews that have had a positive impact on project's performance. In 10 projects, an assortment of studies conducted at the preliminary stages of the project were seen to provide insights into key issues the project could address.

Illustrative quotes
Significant effort was made during the project design to incorporate lessons from previous and other relevant projects, ensuring that the project design is sensible, logical and practical, and which has assisted greatly in the successful implementation of the Project. (GEF-5 #4811)
The post-mid-term evaluation adaptative management report identified key issues for the project to focus on during its final year based on the findings of the mid-term evaluation. This was an excellent innovation that could be replicated in other GEF projects. (GEF-3 #1034)
The project design process was based on a relevant and in-depth analysis of the context. The project document also presents an in-depth analysis of the different obstacles + threats + context. (GEF-4 #3687)

Adaptive management: In 20 projects, the use of adaptive management enabled the project team to flexibly address any needs or deal with issues faced by the project.

Illustrative quotes

The project used adaptive management extensively to provide flexibility in the project's approach working with partners and related government institutions. As a result, the project was seen as a response to national needs and with a good ownership and stakeholders were engaged on all project activities. (GEF-4 #3417)

Strong implementing Agencies, teams, and managers: In eight projects, terminal evaluations noted it was critical to have a strong implementing agency that supported both technically and administratively when required, to resolve any operational challenges quickly. In seven projects, strong project teams and especially a strong project manager was found to positively affect outcomes by enabling corrective action to be implemented.

Illustrative quotes
UNDP was very effective in monitoring and periodically evaluating the performance of the project including through field visits and interaction with project implementers and beneficiaries. (GEF-4 #2848)
The Evaluators see the PMU as a good professional team, cohesive, helpful, supportive, with team members clear about their roles. (GEF-3 #1036)
the PM did extremely well to deliver as much as he has during the three+ years of the Project, and he deserves credit for his commitment to its delivery under very difficult circumstances and what has been an innovative project (trying to deliver a process). It would certainly not have been delivered to the extent it has without the extra effort on his part. (GEF-4 #4235)

3.4.4 Project characteristics that hinder effectiveness

The most widespread deficiencies that terminal evaluations noted were encountered by SFM projects related to MEL and over-ambitious project design which led to poor implementation and tracking of results and lessons learnt. Delays have also been an issue for some projects; these were either due to poor capacity of implementing Agencies or to procurement processes and procedures to disburse funds. Financial management and cofinancing is the fourth most recurring issue which has hampered project implementation. Other less prevalent challenges include: poor capacities of lead Agencies, lack of stakeholder engagement from project design; lack of communication; lack of capacities of project's and government staff; and high turnover of government and project staff.

Poor MEL systems: In 60 projects poor monitoring and evaluation systems negatively affected project implementation. Among the hindering practices that we have found: indicators were absent or not tracked; lack of baseline data; indicators were too broad and difficult to measure; indicators were too narrow to be meaningful; indicators were overlapping or not measurable; targets were overambitious; lack of MEL capacities in implementing Agencies and partners; poor MEL plan and budget. In 5 projects recommendations of the mid-term review were not incorporated into the project, which negatively impacted outcomes.

Illustrative quotes
Indicators in Logical Framework bear little or no coherent relationship with the project outputs. Thus, evaluation of outputs lacks quantifiable measures. *Some indicators are poorly defined […]; others insufficiently SMART. (GEF-4 #3469)*
A weakness of the results framework is that there are no specific indicators at outcome and objective level - the output level indicators were used for the progress towards outcomes and the objective. (GEF-5 #4750)
Lack of a functioning M&E system (including issues surrounding the baseline) led to difficulty in assessing impact and conveying results. (GEF-4 #3367)
Key recommendations of the MTR were not taken up and this has impact on the overall achievement of the project towards the end. (GEF-4 #3445)

Overambitious project design: In 51 cases, terminal evaluations assessed project design as having been overambitious, given the time frame for project implementation. This resulted in activities being incomplete.

Illustrative quotes
The design, however, was ambitious in attempting to achieve some of the outcomes and objectives within the planned timeframe. For instance, the legislative process usually takes a longer time than it was expected and some targets established were not achievable within the implementation period. (GEF-5 #4744)

Delays: In 30 projects, delays have negatively affected the initial phases of projects resulting in challenges related to hiring key project staff; and hindering smooth working relation of project partners. In 20 projects, there were delays in the project implementation due to poor project management, especially due to slow procurement of goods and consultancy services.

Illustrative quotes
The project suffered considerable delays in its initial phase on the hiring the project staff process as well as the organization of the inception workshop. (GEF-4 #3575)
Similarly in Ethiopia the delay in start-up was caused by difficulties in defining partnership arrangements and agreeing roles and responsibilities of the different actors. (GEF-3 #2140)
The project experienced implementation delays of nearly 2 years due to setbacks in procurement at the central level due to time-consuming GOV approval procedures. (GEF-3 #1356)

Poor financial management, delays in disbursing funds, and cofinancing: 22 projects were reported as having suffered from poor financial management including: delayed disbursements; poor internal

controls; late reporting; and poor tracking of cofinancing funds, weak financial management capacities. 15 projects were affected by delays in disbursement of funds which negatively impacted the programme. 8 projects underbudgeted their project activities, especially in relation to MEL. In 8 projects Cofinancing was considerably less than originally pledged as government's and other cofinancing organizations were unable to hold up initial commitments.

Illustrative quotes
Financial management weaknesses noted during project implementation included (a) delays in preparation and dissemination of approved budgets, (b) the manual accounting system applied at the woreda level, (c) weak internal controls over project fixed assets, (d) limited involvement of internal auditors, and (e) timeliness and quality of financial reporting. (GEF-5 #5220)
An assessment undertaken at project appraisal concluded that FM arrangements within the Ministry needed to be improved before grant effectiveness to satisfy the World Bank's minimum requirements. While the project team made every effort to mitigate those risk through tailored training and capacity building plans for MINFOF and the new PIU to be established, considerable challenges arose regarding FM, which may have impacted the efficiency of the project. (GEF-4 #4084) *Transfer of resources has been delayed being executed by the PDN. This led to a loss of credibility from the population. (GEF-4 #3933)*
The amount allocated for the mid-term evaluation appears to be insufficient, especially as they had recruited an international consultant. Also, no budget had been allocated for technical monitoring by the Scientific and Technical Committee although it had an important role to play in advising the technical aspects of project interventions. (GEF-3 #2511)
The fact that anticipated cofinancing of about US$2.7 million (Policy and Human Resources Development (PHRD) Fund as well as the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)) did not materialize required changes to the Project design. (GEF-3 #1362)

Poor support of implementing Agencies: terminal evaluations identified 16 projects as having suffered from lack of support and supervision from the implementing agency advisor; complicated or unclear processes and procedures especially in relation to fund management resulted in inefficiencies in the project.

Illustrative quotes
There is a broadly-held perception that the UNDP-Country Office is so fixated on its own systems that it is not allowing itself to take a broader view, and that it is more interested in compliance than results. While this is something that could be viewed as applying close attention to all the details, if one is being magnanimous, all too often it is interpreted by those involved as interference or lack of trust. This was even noted in the Project Board where there was a tendency for UNDP inputs and requirements to overshadow those of government institutions. (GEF-3 #1043)

due to an institutional misunderstanding over respective responsibilities regarding the financial management "whether the funds should be directly managed by the UNDP or by the MMDE/Government through the national treasury." (GEF-4 #2472)

Lack of stakeholder engagement: For 14 projects, their terminal evaluations identified poor stakeholder engagement with government, communities and private sector. A lack of participatory approach was especially noted at the design stage.

Illustrative quotes
During interviews members of the Project team stated that trying to communicate such a large, complex and disparate set of activities to local stakeholders had been particularly difficult. (GEF-3 #1042)
Insufficient stakeholder analysis and involvement before and during project Implementation. (GEF-3 #1848)
Côte d'Ivoire, key stakeholders reported no involvement in the project, specifically the Direction Régionale des Eaux et Forêts, the government stakeholder in charge of fauna and human-wildlife conflicts (HWC). SODEFOR indicated that following the end of the Ivorian crisis, it was deemed necessary to accept the project despite design flaws given the advanced stage of the GEF approval process. (GEF-4 #3984)
*Institution-wide ownership was less evident, especially among the federal institutions and there is little evidence of national uptake of the project results. (*GEF-4 #3816)

Lack of communication: Twelve projects have experienced ineffective communications between the project's partners. Notably some projects did not have a communications strategy or communications plan. In five projects, evaluators observed language barriers due to limited English proficiency.

Illustrative quotes
The project geographic coverage is extremely large involving three districts plagued by poor communications while still requiring a strong presence in the capital of Kathmandu. (GEF-3 #1107)
*Lack of a Communications and Awareness Campaigning Plan (*GEF-4 #3981)
There was also a formidable language barrier to overcome during discussions, negotiations, and reporting. (GEF-4 #3484)

Lack of capacities: Twelve terminal evaluations mentioned limited capacity of both project and government staff for key functions within the project team.

Illustrative quotes

Project implementation was slower than expected, mainly due to the executing agency's limited capacity to implement the project. (GEF-4 #2765)
*The project did not adapt to the difficulties encountered during implementation. The team gave the impression that it lacked a real strategic vision to document problems and find more or less adequate solutions. (*GEF-4 #4083)

High staff and government turnover: Seven terminal evaluations highlighted high project staff turnover that delayed activities, while five other evaluations mentioned high government staff turnover which had negative impacts especially with the inclusion of government in key project meetings.

Illustrative quotes
*As a result of the high turnover of senior DNP staff, commitment to the project by the DNP was highly variable throughout the implementation period. This resulted in long periods of inaction during some phases of the Project. (*GEF-4 #3517)
During implementation, efficiency was hampered by a fairly high level of staff turnover in the ministries and agencies charged with implementing the project through participation in the Project Steering Committee. This was mainly due to delayed appointments of open leaderships posts and replacement of retiring staff. (GEF-5 #5270)

3.4.5 Innovative approaches

In 30 projects, market change mechanisms were deployed to encourage sustainable production and use, including certification mechanisms. These include: capacity building; market expansion strategy; identifying niche market strategy; market value-chain approaches; and the development and replication of new business models.

Illustrative quotes
Promoting organic environmentally friendly grain production, paying for organic certification to get farmers premium rates (GEF3-1034)
One additional effect was the increased empowerment of local communities through capacity building and training; examples included technical assistance for increased knowledge of the communities' legal rights, better community organization, the development of community-based small-scale enterprises, and an overall improvement of conservation inclusive income generated by activities in targeted areas. (GEF4-2693)
The project initiated in 2015 the Bio Certification of 15 MAP products that ensures a better positioning of the products on the market. (GEF4-3919)

Their functions have expanded to include the management of small credit operations of their members, production and processing, marketing of medicinal plants, and they are being given legal status as non-profit organizations; finally, the treasury may also expect some benefits as greater reliability and availability of locally grown materials reduces the pressure to import, and as royalties and duties increase through a more carefully monitored export and licensed market. (GEF1-95)
Commodities like coffee and cocoa, which in the past have gone through boom-bust cycles, are progressively being re-adopted oriented organic and high quality niche markets. (GEF2-775).
The project was also very strategic in testing a new business model based on nature conservation and providing excellent lessons that will be captured in a subsequent knowledge management exercise and put to use for future IFC clients that need advisory services in protected areas management. (GEF3-1061)
The project managed to introduce market agriculture systems such as the plantation of cacao and coffee in the traditional systems of Ashaninka agriculture. This represents an important step and a positive reaction from these communities to innovative practices which was not possible before. (GEF3-1446)
The business and alternative livelihoods models that were developed through this project and linked to village conservation contracts were innovative, bottom-up driven and successful, and could be replicated elsewhere. (GEF3-2077)

In 26 projects technological forest management innovation is achieved through small-scale projects implementation; innovative systems, methods, approaches, methods, and methodologies adoption.

Illustrative quotes
The project made excellent use of modern information technologies. The most significant use was in the development of the html-based GIS-enabled biodiversity monitoring database system which was developed entirely under the auspices of the project not only does the database itself make use of innovative technical approaches. The methods of recoding biodiversity monitoring data in the field for upload to the database are also impressive. (GEF3- 1034).
The project helped in building a foundation for understanding the need for watershed protection as well as for knowledge and capital investment in appropriate SLM technology: Development of GIS-based analytical tools, tracking SLM, identifying land degradation hot-spots and prioritizing SLM investments: the GIS section within the National Soil Services Centre was strengthened with well-trained personnel and latest technology in terms of equipment and tools. (GEF3-2358)
The project known as Mukoko Pamoja (mangroves together) has been developed under the Plan Vivostandard. The Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute (FMFRI) is implementing this innovative, small-scale carbon project aimed at enhancing mangrove forest productivity and integrity, by carrying out activities that benefit local communities and that could be eligible for attracting carbon investment. (GEF4-2848)

A prototype GIS-based system for collecting and processing the available inventory data on forests and pastures in the project area was prepared. The Project also funded procurement of IT equipment for the Agency of Inventory and Transfer of Immovable Property. The Project supported the development of a computerized monitoring and evaluation system that tracks indicators and target values in line with the Project design and its results framework. The Project supported the preparation of a baseline study and a follow up social assessment study. (GEF3-2669)
The Project made significant contributions to offer new technologies and working methods for the DAPMAs (Protected Areas and Environment Department). It applied SIG (geographical information system) methods in ArcView, satellite images, aerial photography, telemetry and photo interpretation techniques. Also, DAPMAs' staff has been trained for the use and application of these techniques and tools. (GEF3-1733)
Two useful tools to favor monitoring (such as the follow-up and Monitoring Mechanism in the activities prescribed in the Management and Operational Forest Plans and the Standards for Evaluation and Monitoring of the Community Forestry) were developed. (GEF4-3996)
Training courses and models in ecological monitoring were developed following project plan. However, that is a model and methodology only, so the results are not sufficiently comprehensive to be used for robust decision making; Satellite images of the corridor were purchased and used in the development of the action plan. (GEF3-1030)

In 25 cases, innovation was specifically related to project design, management and implementation. In most of the innovative practice was the involvement of local communities during the project cycle. In 12 projects MEL innovation is achieved through M&E utilization; M&E system effectiveness enhancing; innovative M&E instruments ; and innovative M&E approaches.

Illustrative quotes
The GEF technical reviewer found the project to be innovative both in terms of its' sincere effort to move from failed blueprint approaches toward supporting participation of beneficiaries in a rolling (sic) design, and because it incorporates a regional multi-country corridor concept.' (GEF1-133)
The project successfully developed an innovative local management regime to conserve the existing biodiversity. (GEF3-2077)
It was one of the early fore runner of process oriented project designs in the bank; another exciting innovation within the project was the involvement of local communities in forest stewardship. (GEF1-84)
The project provided a new model of partnership between for-profit ventures and not for profit entities that share the same natural social asset as basis for their activities (GEF3-1061)
The project supported innovative practices and market mechanisms for local sustainable biomass energy technology development and promotion such as utilising sawdust through Biomass Energy Technology (BET) applications. (GEF4-3844)

ENEL's PEU (iii) designed and implemented an innovative computerized system for monitoring, evaluation, and reporting; and (iv) ensured compliance with IDB's fiduciary policies, to which the project adhered and fulfilled all the roles assigned to it (GEF-4-3981).

In 49 projects other innovative practices are achieved through partnership establishment; new techniques, approaches and methods adoption; considerable investment in research; local activities co-development; data valuation; innovative management; innovative projects, sub-projects and programs; and capacity building.

Illustrative quotes
The new technique proposed, based on the recovery of bigger seedlings for planting at high densities, allowed rapid tree growth and thus instant credibility at every level. (GEF2-774)
Visualisation and transforming environmental (and other) data into 'information' accessible to non-specialists (GEF3-1353)
Socio-environmental information, which portrays the reality of rural dwellers and their relationship with forests, is important and innovative, differentiating NFI from other countries' inventories. (GEF4-3767)
Suite of tools (Reef React, Food-Web, Coastal Protection, and MPA toolkit) developed under project are innovative with specific regard to the valuation of mangrove, seagrass and coral reef ecosystem services marine planning tools, they have two principal innovations. Their primary innovation is that they enable a multidimensional assessment that captures the value of marine, coastal and fishery resources and allows for decision making for marine conservation in a dynamic context based on that value (coastal erosion, local fishing levels, MPA sizing and location). A further innovation is that a subset of the marine planning macro models allow for alternative scenarios to be assessed, providing a counterfactual from a 'no conservation' effort to what different levels of conservation effort would imply. (GEF5-4690).

3.4.6 Comparison of annual performance ratings: SFM vs overall GEF portfolio

Overall, the SFM portfolio's performance, in terms of the routinely produced project annual performance rating (APR), is very similar to the overall GEF portfolio, with the only significant difference being the sustainability rating in GEF-3.

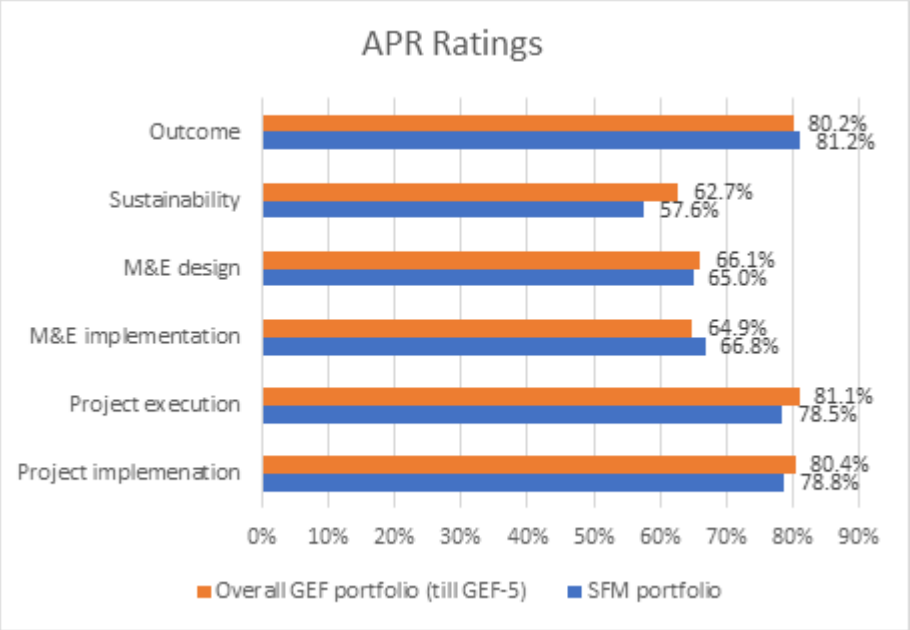

Figure 34: Annual performance ratings[16]

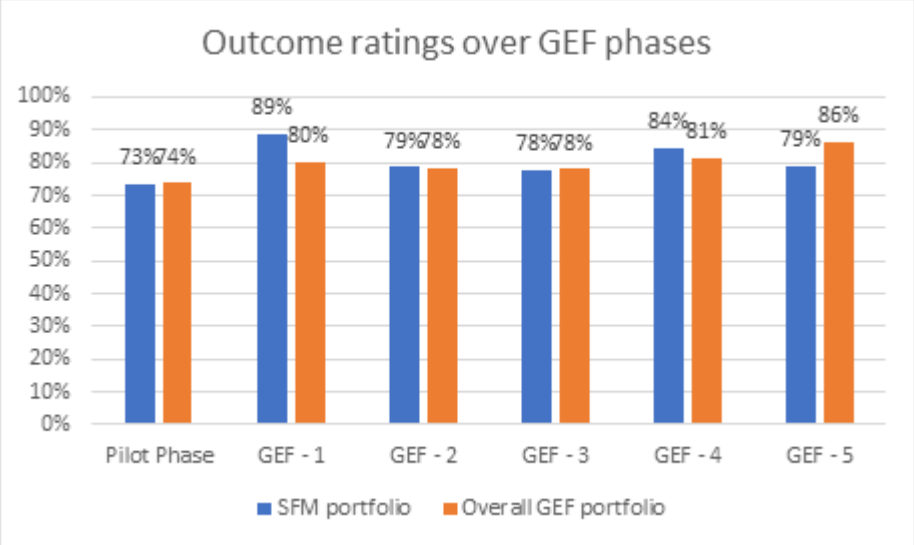

Figure 35: Outcome rating comparison over GEF replenishment periods[17]

[16] For SFM portfolio, n = 298 (outcomes), n = 271 (sustainability), n = 280 (M&E design), n = 262 (M&E implementation), n = 246 (project execution), and n = 260 (project implementation). For the overall GEF portfolio, n = 1786 (outcomes), n = 1672 (sustainability), n = 1691 (M&E design), n = 1575 (M&E implementation), n = 1516 (project execution), and n = 1554 (project implementation).

[17] For SFM portfolio, n = 15 (pilot phase), n = 27 (GEF-1), n = 56 (GEF-2), n = 72 (GEF-3), n = 109 (GEF-4), and n = 19 (GEF-5). For the overall GEF portfolio, n = 76 (pilot phase), n = 112 (GEF-1), n = 296 (GEF-2), n = 482 (GEF-3), n = 598 (GEF-4), and n = 214 (GEF-5).

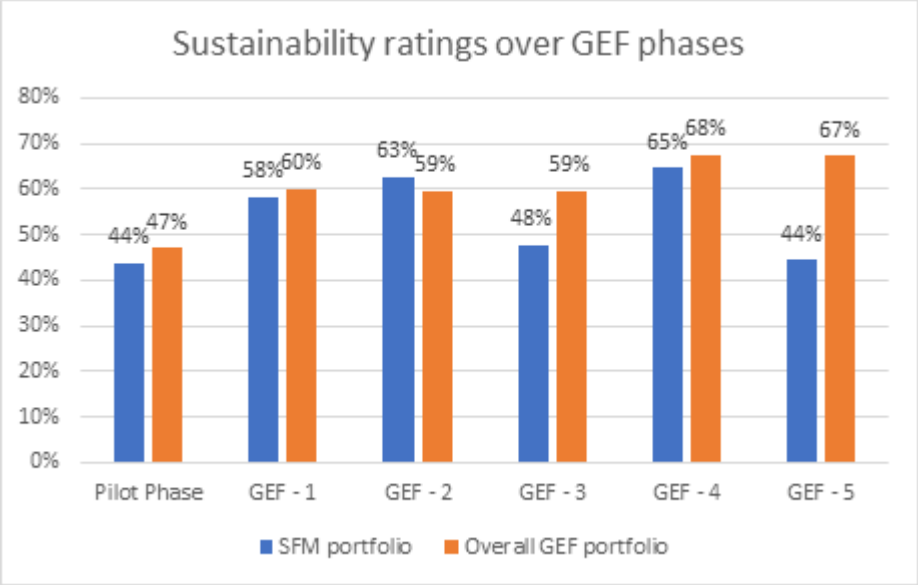

Figure 36: Sustainability rating comparison over GEF replenishment periods[18]

[18] Note: for SFM portfolio, n = 16 (pilot phase), n = 24 (GEF-1), n = 51 (GEF-2), n = 69 (GEF-3), n = 102 (GEF-4), and n = 9 (GEF-5). For the overall GEF portfolio, n = 70 (pilot phase), n = 105 (GEF-1), n = 279 (GEF-2), n = 464 (GEF-3), n = 560 (GEF-4), and n = 187 (GEF-5).

3.5 Efficiency and cost effectiveness

The types of data available from terminal evaluations did not allow us to calculate a valid cost-benefit analysis (CBA) because it was not possible to estimate figures related to the outcomes achieved by each project.

However, we have developed an indicative, top-level CBA by comparing the three main impact aggregated figures with the size of funds spent in grants of low, medium, and high size.[19] Hectares and jobs per $ million were calculated by dividing the respective impact variable by the total investment within the relevant funding category (in $ million). This analysis is presented in table 18 and figures 37, 38, and 39 below. It shows that:

- *Lower-size* grants had a return of investment (ROI) of *64K ha* of forest protected per $ million, *65.5ha* of forest restored per $ million, and *618 jobs* per $ million.
- *Medium-size* grants had an ROI of *88.97K* ha of forest protected per $ million, *3,486ha* of forest restored per $ million, and *110 jobs* per $ million.
- *Higher-size* grants had an ROI of *59.44K* ha of forest protected per $ million, *687ha* of forest restored per $ million, and *92 jobs* per $ million.

Overall, we can infer that lower-size grants were very effective in securing new jobs, and did comparatively well in forest protection, while the best investment for forest protection and restoration was made with medium-size grants. Surprisingly, the high-size grants did not excel in either of the three impact aggregated figures. This finding may simply reflect the different types of work funded through these types of grants, which may have focused more on less tangible changes such as policy and governance changes. It could also be caused by the lack of capacities in monitoring evaluation and learning or to a combination of both type of work and MEL capacities which led to difficulties in tracking the results of high-funding grants. Either way, given the level of investment in these grants, it would be advisable for the GEF to require them to invest in their abilities to monitor and evaluate the effects of their operations.

Funding ***Projects Total Funding***	**Hectares Protected**		**Hectares Restored**		**Jobs**	
	Hectares	**Ha/Million USD**	**Hectares**	**Ha/Million USD**	**Jobs**	**Jobs/ Million USD**
Low (n=64)	3,763,894	64,597.5	3,813.5	65.5	36,000	617.9

[19] To conduct this exercise, we have divided GEF SFM grants into three different spending category which were based on the actual funding distribution of the projects sampled for the impact portfolio review. The three categories were: 1st quartile (from $555k to $1m) = Low; 1st to 3rd quartile (from $1m to $5.75m) = medium; above 3rd quartile (from $5.75m to $39.51m) = High. In calculating the three categories, we have made sure that there were no overlapping grants.

$58.3 M						
Medium (n= 118) $432.7 M	38,499,362	88,978.2	1,508,631.6	3486.7	47,674	110.2
High (n=61) $599.4 M	35,633,635	59,447.0	411,987.5	687.3	55,662	92.9

Table 18: Impact results by funding size

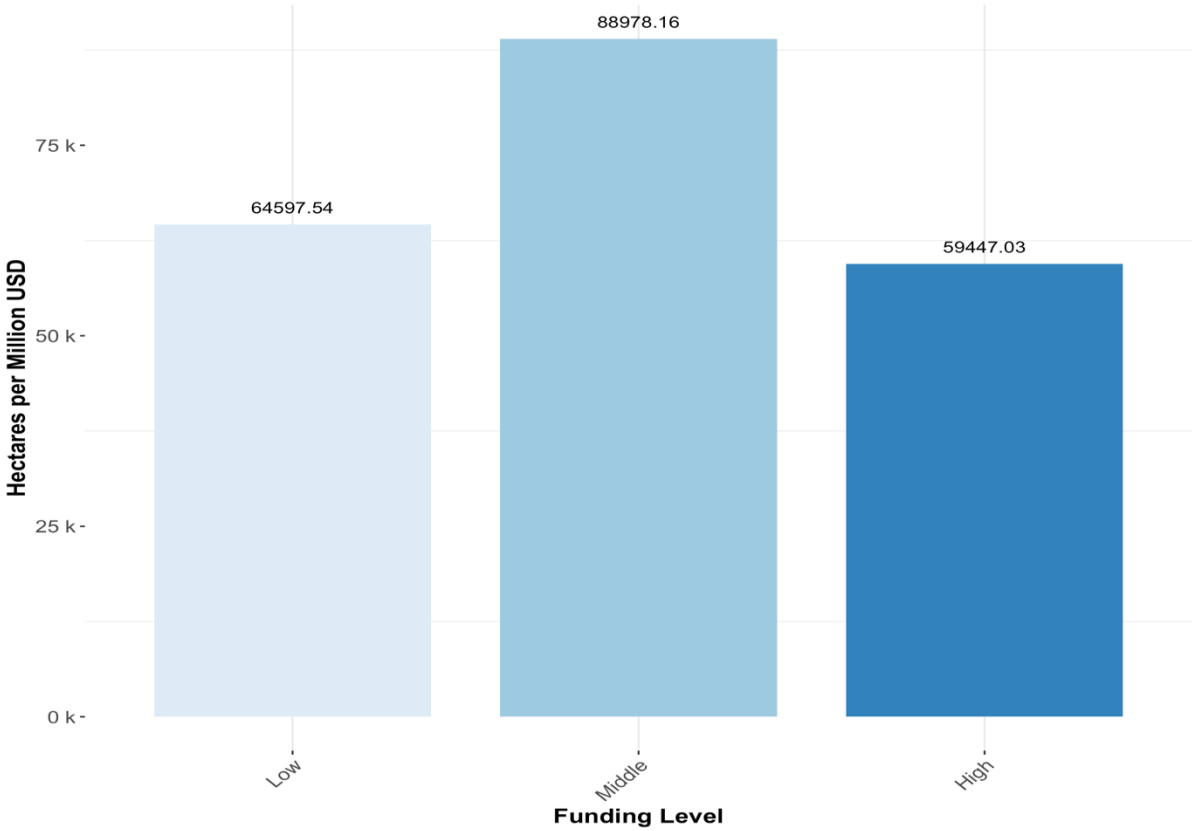

Figure 37: Ratio of hectares of forest protected to funding received

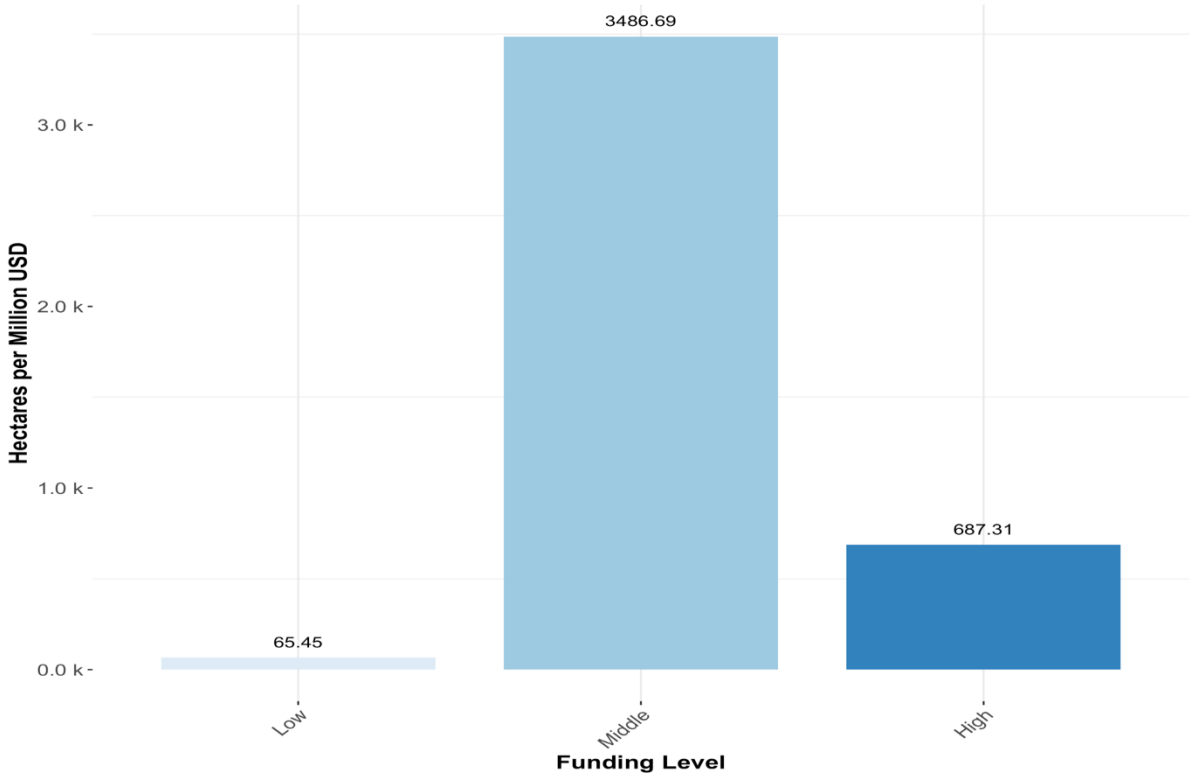

Figure 38: Ratio of hectares of forest restored to funding received

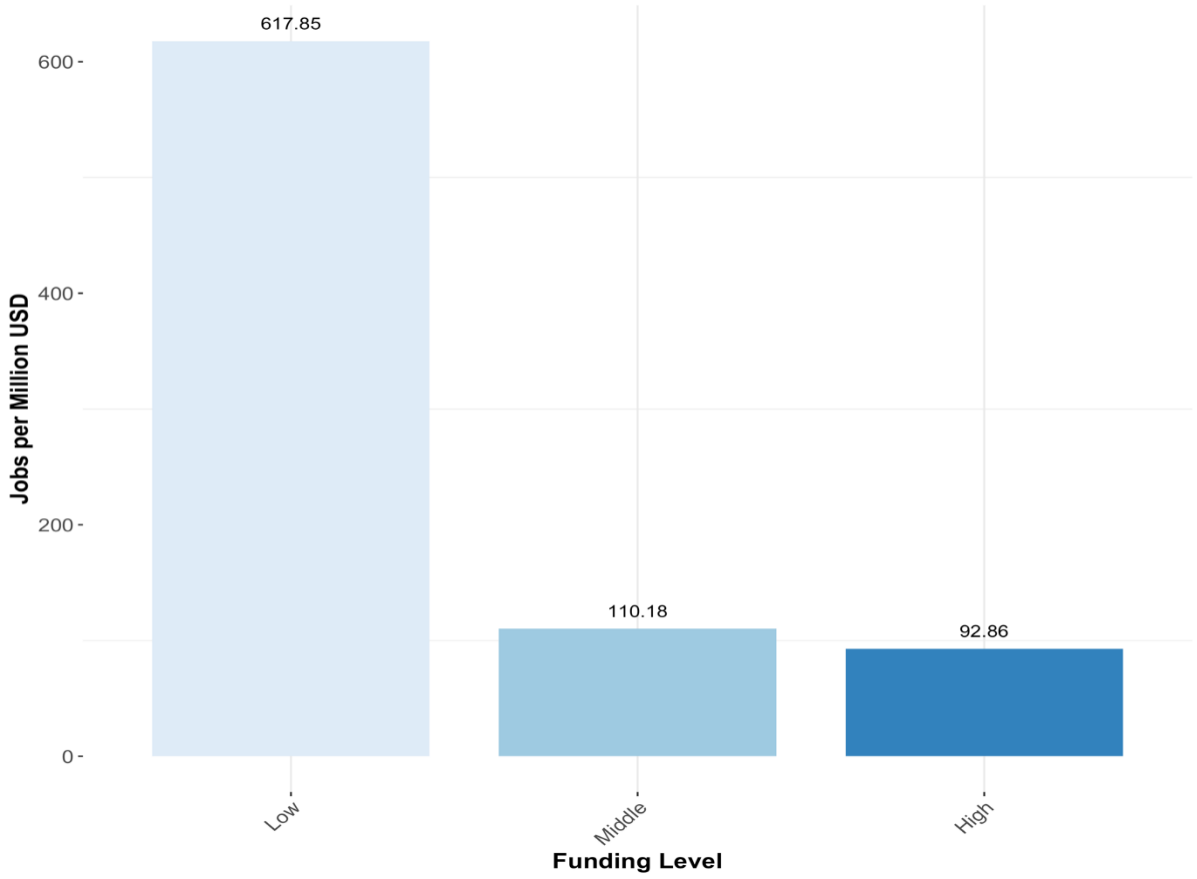

Figure 39: Ratio of jobs created to funding received

We also conducted a similar top-level cost-benefit analysis for grants which were considered transformative by terminal evaluations by looking at their proportions over the number of grants made in each funding category, and calculating their ratio over the amount of money spent in grants of different sizes. Overall, we have found that the proportion of money spent in transformative grants is higher in high-size grants in comparison to the other two funding categories (see figure 40). However, small-size grants provide a much better return on investment (see table 19). This means that generally it was more likely to achieve transformative change with high-funding grants but small grants provided greater value for money.

Funding and projects total	**Hectares Protected**	
	# of Transformative Grants	**Transformative/Million USD Ratio**
Low, (n=64), $58.3 M	8	0.13
Medium, (n= 118), $432.7 M	25	0.06
High, (n=61), $599.4 M	19	0.03

Table 19: Ratio of transformative grants to funding received

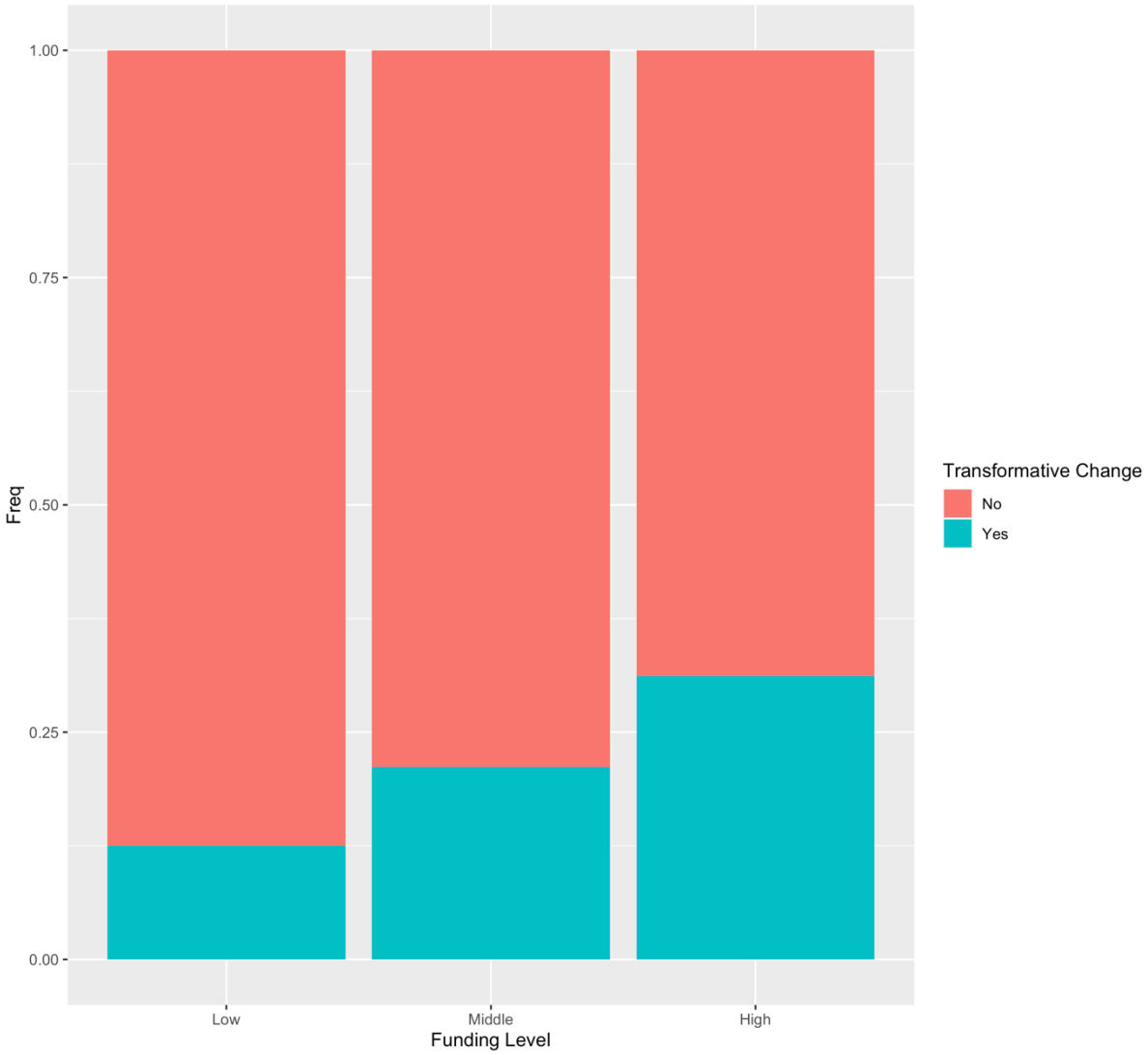

Figure 40: Transformative change by funding (by percentage of funding)

3.5.1 Time efficiency

Time difference between PIF approval and first disbursement date: By comparing the dates of PIF approval against the first disbursement date of SFM grants we discovered that on average it took 2 years, 3 months, and 29 days for SFM projects to go through the approval process and receive the GEF funds. 25 percent of the projects got the first disbursement within 1 year, 7 months, and 10 days from PIF approval; another 50 percent between 1 year, 7 months, 10 days and 3 years, 2 months and 1 day; and the last quarter between 3 years, 2 months and 7 years, 5 months[20] (as shown in table 21).

[20] Excluded from the analysis one grant with time difference below zero and 269 NAs

Min	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	NA's
8 days	587days	849 days	894 days	1,156 days	2,717 days	269
8d	1Y/7m/10d	2Y/3m/29d	2Y/5m/13d	3Y/2m/1d	7Y/5m/9d	

Table 21: Time difference between PIF approval and first disbursement date

The longer process is between PIF approval and CEO endorsement/approval which takes on average one year, six months and thirty days to be completed. In contrast, the two subsequent stages are faster: they took on average about four months before the first grant was disbursed (table 22).

Process	Average Time (median)
PIF approval to CEO approval/endorsement[21]	1 year, 6 months, 30 days
CEO approval/endorsement to Start date[22]	3 months, 21 days
Start date to first disbursement[23]	4 months, 16 days

Table 22: Time difference of SFM grants approval processes

Figure 41 below shows the average lifespan of each step of a GEF SFM proposal from PIF approval to the first disbursement date.

[21] Excluded from the analysis 63 grants with time difference below zero and 158 NAs.
[22] Excluded from the analysis four grants with time difference below zero and 212 NAs.
[23] Excluded from the analysis 285 NAs.

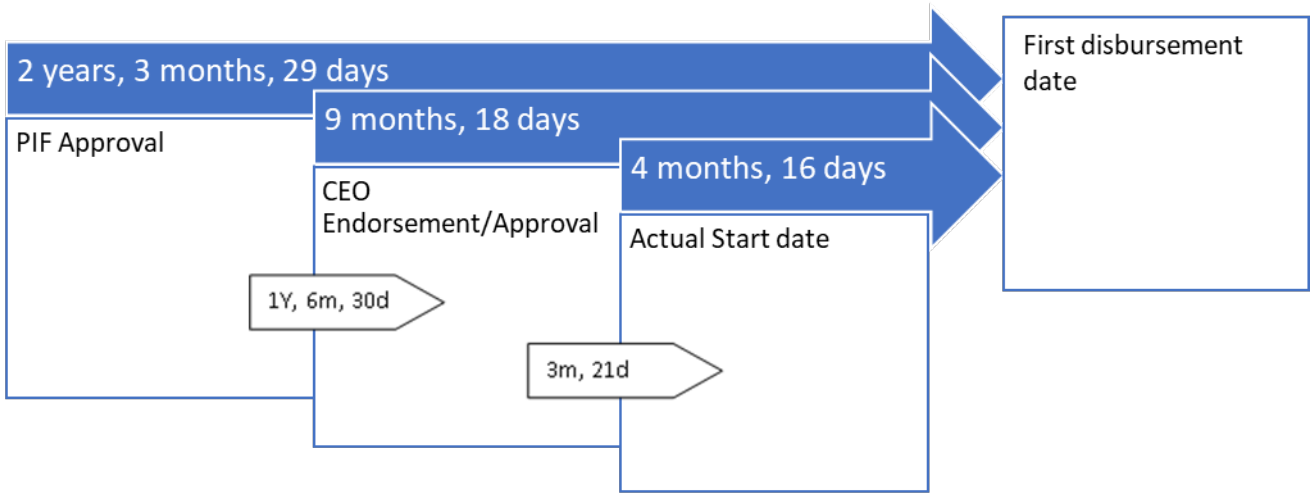

Figure 41: Life of SFM grants approval – time analysis

Time difference between expected and actual project end: To analyze the time difference between expected and actual project end, we divided the data set into projects which have finished on time or after the expected date, and projects that finished earlier.

The set of projects analyzed ended on time or after the expected date were 198[24] (as shown in table 23), on average projects have been granted 1 year and 29 days extensions, with 25 percent of projects finishing either on time or 5 months and 27 days after the expected date; 50 percent finishing between approximately 6 months and 2 years later than expected; and another 25 percent of projects finishing between 2 years and approximately 8 years, 10 months after the planned end-date. Thus, we can say that grant extension was granted to the wide majority of grants.

Min	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	NA's
0 days	178 days	394 days	522 days	730 days	3218 days	398
0	5m/27d	1Y/29d	1Y/5m/6d	2Y	8Y/9m/23d	

Table 23: Time difference between expected and actual project end date, on time and extended projects

On the contrary, 44 projects terminated their grants before the expected date. On average, these projects have finished 4 months and 21 days before the expected end-date, as shown in table 24 below. Nevertheless, it is important to say that these data are indicative since we have excluded approximately 60 percent of grants from this analysis because of lack of data.

Min	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	NA's

[24] Excluded from this analysis the 44 projects ended before the expected dates, and 398 NAs.

-2471 days	-342 days	-141 days	-244 days	-64 days	-1 days	398
6Y/9m/7d	11m/8d	4m/21d	8m/1d	2m/5d	1d	

Table 24: Time difference between expected and actual project end date, earlier termination projects

3.6 Sustainability

48 percent of terminal evaluations (n=116) mentioned that the projects' activities were able to create the conditions to sustain themselves past the life of the project in terms of economic, social, institutional, and/or environmental sustainability.

Illustrative quotes
WCS estimate that it will require US§ 400-500,000 per year to maintain activities to a level necessary to ensure the project's gains are not lost and indicated that such levels of funding, although high, were achievable. The TET understands that significant contributions to such finding has been promised to them from the Cargill and MacArthur Foundations and through the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund, while the US Fish and Wildlife Service had agreed to continue to fund the wildlife monitoring system. (GEF3-1043)
Partnerships and the strong links created: The project has succeeded in creating and enforcing an institutional collaborative partnership between an academic institution (AUB), a governmental stakeholder (MOE), local NGOs, scientific community, conservation stakeholders and local community groups (Municipalities). This collaborative engagement has led to the generation of trust and respect. The best example was the change of attitude of the Head of the Tannourine Municipality towards the project and the TCFNR committee. He was very negative when he first took office, but, gradually became more positive when he understood that the primary goal of the project and the reserve was to benefit the local community. (GEF3-1707)
As discussed in the effectiveness section, the project effectively created awareness and improve capacities to strengthen sustainability. This has improved awareness among stakeholders at state level and commitment to integrate BD and ES considerations. Capacities were created at the level of professional (field) technicians and local authorities, which are considered key stakeholders to generate change and consolidate GAP and GNRMP. (GEF4-3813)

3.6.1 Transformative and sustainable changes in national and local governance and institutions

41 percent of terminal evaluations (n = 100) mentioned significant changes in national and local institutions enabling the establishment of good natural resources management practices and facilitating the adoption of sustainable livelihood strategies. Changes achieved at the local level were often augmented by demonstration and replication mechanisms or by other means of scaling-up good practices to the district and national levels.

Illustrative quotes
The project has demonstrated that technically viable models exist, and that hill closure partnerships with villagers, whereby household enjoy limited harvesting rights to forest produce, is a feasible approach to restoring ecological balance in critical watersheds. (GEF3- 2634)

It brought benefits for farmers involved providing vegetable seeds, fruit saplings and training satisfying the poverty alleviation UNDP priority. About 82% of Samoa land is customary ownership. The project worked with these communities in their land providing it services to them. These communities benefited while preserving their rights to their land and management of their resources in agreement with improving governance as a UNDP priority area. (GEF4-4216)
The second important accomplishment consisted of the design and implementation of the strategic development plans of both Autonomous Regions. These regional plans included the municipal development plans. The former was incorporated in Nicaragua's 10-year National Development Plan. (GEF1-117)
Training in regional land use, planning processes and use of environmental determinant could be considered as a contribution to governance processes if it is taken into account that a sustainable community development gets easier when the development is based on clear rules and long-term community benefit. (GEF4-4111)
Replication is already underway (the Oasis Project in Apucarana in the State of Parana) and Sao Paulo is using the lessons of its pilot project in Joanopolis and Nazare Paulista (developed by the GEF) as the bases for the design of a much larger project, the Mina de Agua Project (to be developed under the Micro-catchment II Project. 90% of farmers understood the Project as the Demonstration Projects, i.e., SMA had not conveyed directly/effectively to farmers, the Project as precursor of a large-scale, future restoration program. (GEF3-2356)
The project facilitated the formation of 42 Charcoal Producer Associations with 800 members (40% women), who all received training on sustainable charcoal production, reforestation and afforestation with both indigenous and exotic growing tree species. (GEF5-4644).
The project has had an excellent demonstration/spill-over effect. Communities, both within and outside the project area, participated in the training and demonstration programs, and visited MCs where project results were visible to learn first-hand the economic and ecological benefits of activities accruing to the beneficiaries, generating interest and support for project investments and underscores the high potential for project replication. (GEF2-1074)

For 100 projects, the terminal evaluations mentioned knowledge creation and dissemination as intermediate outcomes to achieve policy and institutional changes. These included web portals, guidelines, research papers, workshop series, and public awareness and education.

Illustrative quotes
Because of the existence of these guidelines, the Ministry of Environment included these species in the National Program for the Promotion of Socio-biodiversity Products Chain Value. (GEF3-1343)
The project also developed a web portal to provide information publicly to national and international audiences. This website has garnered over 34,500 visits since 2013 and can be viewed at http://www.paraguaybio.com.py/ (GEF4-2690)

In addition to the above, the Project financed an impressive body of good quality research studies, papers, diagnoses and guidance notes supporting field practices, monitoring methodologies and policy formulation. (GEF3-2356).
Exchange workshops were held between demonstration project participants in Argentina. Support was given to the design of a proposal for replicating SLM/SFM practices in Monteagudo, Yacuiba and Villamontes in Bolivia, with proposed funding form the Plan Nacional de Cuencas among other sources. (GEF2-2505)
Beginning to fill the data and information gaps that were impeding informed decision making about management of the ANPs (GEF3-1101)
Increase quantity, relevance, and dissemination of research activities on Biodiversity; These protected area management activities had to be supported public education and awareness programs to build a local and national constituency in support of conservation. (GEF1-110).
Tool developed for the costs captured for water treatment, if it is possible to get figures from water treatment plants in a single state, will contribute to overall understanding of the cost of sedimentation related to different types of land use (GEF3-1176)

32 terminal evaluations explicitly mentioned catalysing as a successful approach to support the scaling-up of project's activities; the implementation of new projects and programs; network building; effective implementation of MEL approach; securing new funds; and setting up certification systems.

Illustrative quotes
The project has succeeded in developing a close working relationship with its institutional partner in the Green Corridor – the Thua Thien Hue Forest Protection Department, and so there are prospects for the project catalysing changes and approaches in the mainstream working of FPD. (GEF3-1296).
PRONANP, the follow-on bank-supported operation which began in November 2010 and which is cofinanced by German Financial Cooperation Agency (KFW), is scaling-up the project's successful approach to strengthen biodiversity protection and conservation by increasing participation of civil society and the private sector in the management of ANPs. Private non-profit organizations have already submitted six next bids for Administration Contracts for periods of 20 years and four have already been signed. (GEF3-1101)
Policy gaps in relation to SFM have been identified and these have formed the basis of the four policy briefs on Livestock, Agriculture, Forestry, and Wildlife that have been prepared and submitted to respective Ministries for consideration; 13 villages by-laws have been approved & 8 are in the process of being approved at district level. (GEF4-3000).

23 terminal evaluations praised the policy and institutional changes resulting from SFM projects as innovative. They indicated that these results were achieved through sharing lessons learned, enhancing and supporting the legal and institutional framework, proposing innovative institutional products, and structural innovation—issues that our key informant interviews and case studies pick up.

Illustrative quotes
The project strongly influenced evolving GoSA policy on biodiversity and conservation management. Draft biodiversity and protected areas legislation, in the pipeline at effectiveness; was significantly enhanced by innovations and lessons of the project. In particular, the CAPE strategy presented a first serious attempt to apply the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) ecosystem approach to conservation, and catalysed shift from species-based and ' in-park ' conservation management approaches to landscape-level conservation strategies and activities across the country. (GEF1-134.
The project put in place an innovative bottom up methodology to enhance management of biodiversity (IUCN toolkit for mainstreaming Biodiversity in Jordan). (GEF4-3932)
The BD Environmental National Strategy, the Protected Areas National System Plan 2014-2020, the Resolution 120 about Biological Safety, the Plant Health System and Instruction 5/2011 about ballast water control are national innovations. (GEF4-3955)

3.6.2 Barriers to changes in policies and institutions

Despite efforts of implementing Agencies and their partners, conditions were often not favourable to changes in policies and institutions. 41 projects encountered challenges in promoting law and policies enforcement and failed to address policy gaps. In these cases, the projects' intended processes for achieving change were negatively affected by legal failures and delays, lack of political support, failure of agreements, and conflicts.

Illustrative quotes
The legal framework was updated to allow a joint protected area. The implementing agencies drafted the tripartite agreement, but Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the three countries have not yet agreed on a final text of the agreement. (110)
Sixteen resolutions of support from local government leaders and the religious sector were gathered and submitted to the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources (in both Houses) in support of the SINP Bill in the new Congress. Despite all these efforts, however, Congress failed to pass the SINP Bill. Steps are currently underway for another island-wide rally/caravan similar to the 2003 'save Samar Caravan' to push for approval of the SINP Legislation in the 15th Congress) (UNDP clarisse GEF-2).
Within the R1, the project developed draft legal reforms for the implementation of environmental incentives as proposed targets set in the LF, but due to lack of political support to implement them, the project changed the scope of the goals and instead focused on providing support at the local level; ii) Support guides were generated for local entities such as the property tax exemption for municipalities in Hato Corozal and Yopal; and iii)The project reported having taken part in open consultations promoted by CORPORINOQUIA (the Regional Conservation Agency) for its process to issue a resolution for the establishment of the Environmental Determinants , and to have succeeded in influencing to

officially consider the RNSC as protected areas within the category of environmental protection. (GEF4-4111)
The agreement between the project and the INRENA did not consolidate, which limited the actions within the protected areas. Nevertheless, the project supported the creation of the execution contract to manage the communal reserve and the Management Committees of the National Park Otishi and the Communal Reserve Ashaninka. (GEF3-1446)

Terminal evaluations of nine projects reported several blockages to the intended work in capacity development of national and local government officials. These mostly related to the high turnover of government staff, the lack of appropriate legal frameworks, and fiscal constraints to guarantee institutional sustainability.

Illustrative quotes
Workshops conducted to increase awareness of parliamentarians: the project did conduct several trainings and financed the GOEG participation in two COPs (21 and 22) and facilitated three technicians' training on CO2 baselines. Nevertheless, the capacity to properly administer the NSPA is still limited (GEF4-3757)
Staff of FPD (Forestry Protection Department), DoF (Department of Forestry), Pas (Protected Area), SFC (State Forest Company) and leaders of communes participated in workshops, training courses in relevant fields. However, the legal frameworks are not in place, particularly for the FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certification; Some technical courses in relation to FSC and sustainable forest management were carried out by TFT (Tropical Forest Trust) and project staff. However, due to the lack of principles and policies, this activity remained focussed on sharing information and techniques. (GEF3-1030)
104 park rangers and NGO personnel were trained for monitoring. Unfortunately, 90% of these rangers contracts were not renewed because of fiscal constraints. (GEF1-121)
The project was successful at organizing an experience-sharing tour attended by 5 people including 2 Project Coordination Unit staff who are also Government officers, to learn from a successful PES experience in Kenya. However, it was not possible to assess the new abilities, skills, knowledge developed through these tours and the result of 2 Government officers trained is far from the target of 60 to 100% of relevant central government staff. (GEF4-3761)

3.6.3 Financial sustainability

25 terminal evaluations mentioned that financial sustainability was achieved through innovative solutions such as the adoption of new funding sources; new financial partnerships; and innovative financing mechanisms.

Illustrative quotes
New partnership with the Adaptation Fund (AF) and pursuit of innovative financing with RGoB (Royal Government of Bhutan) agencies and international partners. (GEF5-4579)
The Agropark was loaned a total of MNT 23 million (c. US$ 18,500), the LPO introduced the idea of 20% grant and 80% interest-free loan and the money paid back has been re-invested into the Buffer Zone Community Trust Funds (BZCTF) in the aimag. The LPO should be highly praised for their innovation. (GEF3-1100)
This project allowed a non-for-profit NGO to create a sustainable source of funding to protect a private reserve and work with the neighbouring communities. (GEF3-1061)

17 projects were able to leverage additional cofinancing, which helped projects to complete activities or widen their operations. In 15 cases, project extension was seen a key element to ensure the achievement of the planned activities. For six projects, terminal evaluations singled out financial planning and management as being very good, contributing to overall cost effectiveness and/or to leverage cofinancing.

Illustrative quotes
The PMU estimates that the Project has helped raise around Euro 3,284,000 in Western Rhodope and Euro 3,379,000 in Eastern Rhodope, which is a considerable achievement, and again, is one of the reasons the project is held in such high regard by local stakeholders in the region. (GEF-3 #1042)
The Project was extended by three years, but the extension allowed for better use of resources and for the adaptation to a dynamic environment, which led to an effective achievement of planned goals. (GEF-4 #3767)
Strong financial control procedures contributing to overall cost-effectiveness; Government cofinancing exceeded committed sums by approximately 25%. (GEF-4 #3864)

3.7 Equity

The GEF gender response is characterized by four key moments: adoption of the Policy on Gender Mainstreaming between 2011 and 2012; adoption of the Gender Equality Action Plan in 2014; Adoption of the Policy on Gender Equality in 2017 (as shown by figure 42) and adoption of guidelines on core and sub indicators (including gender-related ones) in 2019. During the impact portfolio review, we have found significant association between GEF replenishment periods and SFM grants conducting a gender analysis, confirming that grants approved from GEF-5 onwards were more likely to conduct one. Gender action plans do not have any significant association with GEF replenishment periods.

3.7.1 Evolution of GEF Gender Response

On May 2012 the GEF approved a Policy on Gender Mainstreaming[25] to promote gender equality through its operations. It was mainly targeting the GEF partner Agencies, at their corporate levels, and it required them to establish a policy or policies (including relevant laws, regulations, and guidelines), a strategy, or an action to design and implement projects in such a way that both women and men (a) receive culturally compatible social and economic benefits; (b) do not suffer adverse effects during the development process; and that (c) fosters full respect for their dignity and human rights.

It included emphasis on developing MEL systems at project level, including the use of gender disaggregated monitoring indicators. It also required conducting social assessment, including gender analysis, though it was optional to use to inform project formulation, implementation and monitoring and evaluation, and required identification of measures to avoid, minimize and/or mitigate adverse gender impacts. Having been mentioned twice in the document, the definition of gender analysis was implied.

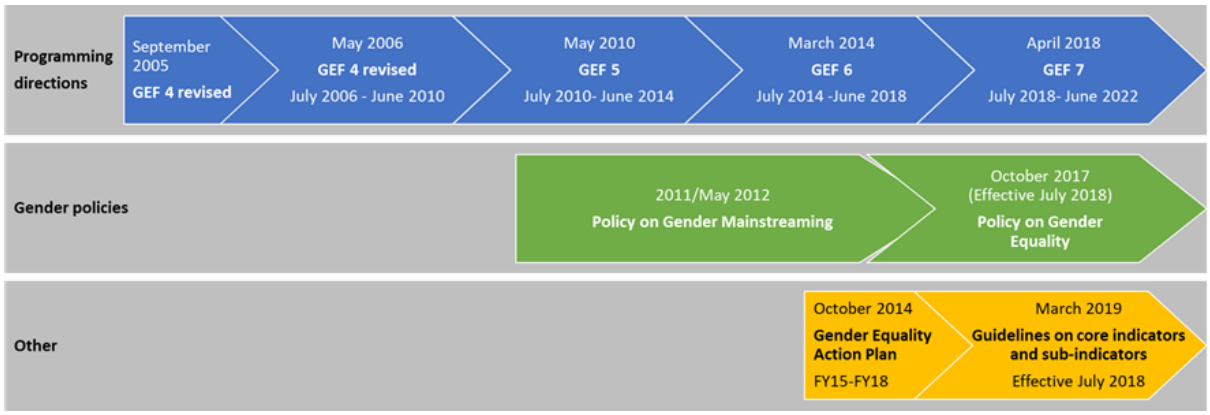

Figure 42: Evolution of GEF gender responses

The Gender Equality Action Plan 2014[26] included a work plan specifying actions and responsibilities, key elements of the plan and associated guidance covered five main domains: 1) project cycle; 2) programme/Policy; 3) knowledge management; 4) results-based management; and 5) capacity development. To strengthen mainstreaming across all programs and projects, the plan proposed five

[25] SD/PL/02 https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/Gender_Mainstreaming_Policy-2012_0.pdf
[26] GEF/C.47/09.Rev.01 https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/25_EN_GEF.C.47.09.Rev_.01_Gender_Equality_Action_Plan_1.pdf

core gender indicators to be monitored and aggregated at the focal area and corporate levels. It also introduced three gender-specific outcomes related to project design, implementation, and M&E, gender-responsive indicators, and sex-disaggregated data.

Definitions of gender analysis across GEF Gender Policies, Action plan and related guidance		
Policy on gender mainstreaming **May 2012**	**Gender equality action plan 2014**	**Policy on gender equality** **2017**
The Agency is required to undertake social assessment, including gender analysis, or to use similar methods to assess the potential roles, benefits, impacts and risks for women and men of different ages, ethnicities, and social structure and status. These studies may be used, along with other types of studies to inform project formulation, implementation and monitoring and evaluation.	It is the collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated information. Men and women both perform different roles. This leads to women and men having different experience, knowledge, skills and needs. Gender analysis explores these differences so policies, programs and projects can identify and meet the different needs of men and women. Gender analysis also facilitates the strategic use of distinct knowledge and skills possessed by women and men.	Means 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 gaps and inequalities relevant to the activity.

Table 25: Definitions of gender analysis across GEF Gender Policies, Action plan, and related guidance

In 2017, the GEF approved a new Policy on Gender Equality,[27] coming into force in July 2018, which superseded the 2012 Policy on Gender Mainstreaming. The new policy set out the guiding principles and mandatory requirements for mainstreaming gender across the GEF's governance and operations with a view to promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in support of the GEF's mandate to achieve global environmental benefits. It applied to all GEF projects and programs submitted on or after July 2018, and to all annual project implementation reports as well as mid-term reviews and terminal evaluations submitted after one year of the policy coming into force.

The policy had a much stronger emphasis on 1) not exacerbating existing gender-based inequalities; 2) inclusive and gender-responsive stakeholder engagement and analysis; 3) greater consultation of women's organizations; and 4) The use of a Gender-Responsive Approach throughout the project cycle.

[27] GEF/C.53/04 https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/EN_GEF.C.53.04_Gender_Policy.pdf

It introduced mandatory requirements in four areas: Project and program cycle; monitoring, learning and capacity development; agency's policies, procedures and capabilities; and compliance. It was also more explicit about the definition used for gender analysis, compared to the more implied definition used in the previous policy and built on that in the gender action plan. **In December 2018 guidance to advance gender equality** in GEF projects and programs were developed to support implementation of the policy on gender equality.

Finally in March 2019, the GEF has adopted new Guidelines on core and sub indicators,[28] which set out their technical definitions and offer methodological guidance to gather and analyze them consistently and systematically across all GEF projects and programs. Among them was a core indicator for tracking the number of direct beneficiaries as co-benefit of GEF investment, for which it was mandatory to report disaggregated by gender.

3.7.2 Application of gender policies

22 percent of projects analyzed during the portfolio impact review had a gender and inclusion analysis (n= 53), although 15 percent (n=35) only partial and 7 percent (n=18) the full exercise. The remaining 78 percent (n=190) did not have any gender analysis. Results are even lower for the gender action plan, where only the 8 percent of projects had one, and 88 percent did not.

To assess the effectiveness of the Gender Mainstreaming Policy adopted in May 2012 we have tested association of projects granted before and after the adoption of the policy with projects which have conducted a gender analysis. Since the GEF policy came into force between GEF-5 and GEF-6, in those projects we should expect a significant increase of gender policies from previous replenishment periods. We found indeed a significant association between the grants awarded after the adoption of the gender policy,[29] and those with a gender policy. Nevertheless, the stronger association is with those that had only partially conducted gender analysis (see figure 43).

[28]Guidelines: ME/GN/02: https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/Results_Guidelines.pdf
[29] X^2 (2, N = 243)= 6.3877, p = 0.04101

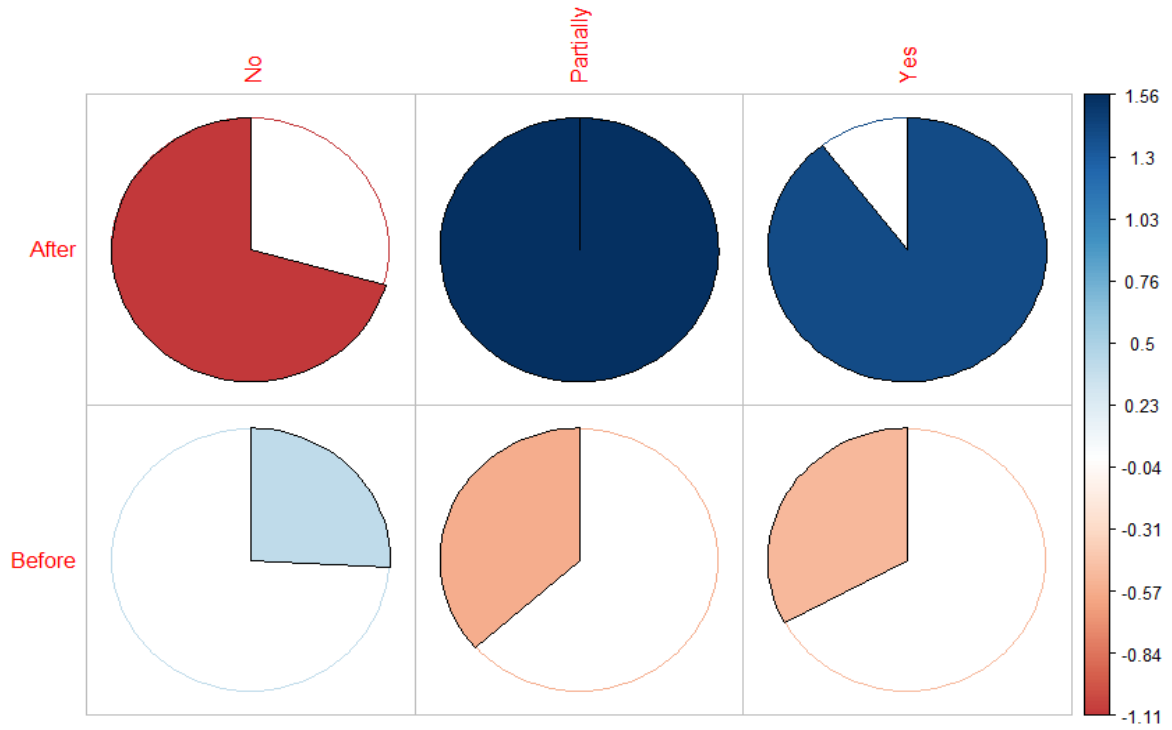

Figure 43: Chi squared residuals before and after gender policy adoption vs gender analysis

We have also looked at projects adopting a gender action plan but the data did not meet the conditions to conduct a statistical test on categorical data. However, as shown by table 26, by cross tabulating projects with an action plan and those approved before and after the adoption of the mainstreaming policy, it seems clear that the policy has not played a notable role in fostering their adoption. Projects approved after the policy adoption are only 15 percent (n=3) of all projects with an action plan.

	After policy adoption	Before policy adoption
Without a gender action plan	24	182
With a gender action plan	3	17

Table 26: Projects adopted before/after the gender policy vs projects with/without a gender action plan

In terms of gender outcomes, we have found a significant association[30] between projects with a gender analysis and those that were found to be successful in gender equality by terminal evaluations, as presented in figure 44 (the blue pie charts representing positive associations, the red pie charts representing negative associations).

[30] X^2 (2, N = 243)= 7.76, p = 0.0207

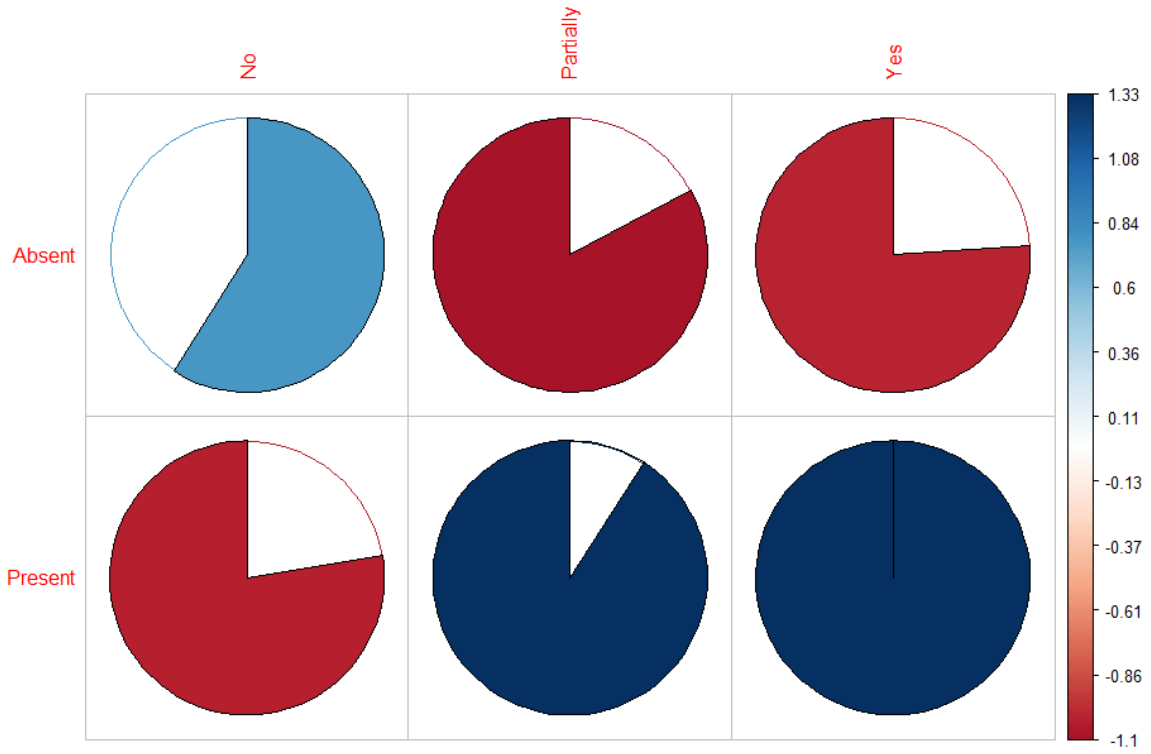

Figure 44: Projects addressing gender equality outcomes vs projects with/without a gender analysis

The data did not meet the conditions for a test on categorical data on the associations between projects with a gender action plan and the proportions of projects having addressed gender equality outcomes. However, as shown in table 27 there seems to be a clear association between the two since 85 percent of the projects with a gender action plan have also achieved gender equality outcomes.

	Gender equality absent	Gender equality present
Without a gender action plan	148	72
With a gender action plan	3	17

Table 27: Projects addressing gender equality outcomes vs projects with/without action plan

The Independent Evaluation Office of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) was established by the GEF Council in July 2003. The Office is independent from GEF policy making and its delivery and management of assistance.

The Office undertakes independent evaluations that involve a set of projects and programs implemented by more than one GEF Agency. These evaluations are typically at the strategic level, on focal areas, or on cross-cutting themes. We also undertake institutional evaluations, such as assessing the GEF resource allocation mechanism or GEF governance.

Within the GEF, the Office facilitates cooperation on evaluation issues with professional evaluation networks; this includes adopting evaluation guidelines and processes consistent with international good practices. We also collaborate with the broader global environmental community to ensure that we stay on the cutting edge of emerging and innovative methodologies.

To date, the Office has produced over 100 evaluation reports; explore these on our website: www.gefieo.org/evaluations.

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