IEO Independent Evaluation Office
GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY

SIXTH COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION OF THE GEF

THE GEF IN THE CHANGING ENVIRONMENTAL FINANCE LANDSCAPE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Background

Replenishments of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) are informed by a thorough, independent evaluation and assessment of GEF results and performance. This sixth comprehensive evaluation of the GEF (OPS6) aims to provide solid evaluative evidence to inform the negotiations for the seventh replenishment of the GEF. The objective of OPS6 is to evaluate the extent to which the GEF is achieving the objectives set out in GEF-6 (2014–18), and to identify potential improvements going into GEF-7. This report also assesses the relevance of the GEF in today's changing landscape for environmental finance.

OPS6 is based on the findings of 29 evaluations and studies, conducted by the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the GEF over the past three years. The evaluations employ a variety of qualitative and quantitative approaches, including geospatial analyses and field visits to 43 countries across all GEF regions. OPS6 also draws on the terminal evaluation reviews of 1,184 completed GEF projects and covers the full GEF portfolio of 4,433 approved projects from the pilot phase through the end of June 2017. Formative evaluations assessing design and process were implemented for recently approved programs and projects, such as the integrated approach pilots (IAPs).

QUALITY ASSURANCE

Quality assurance for OPS6 has been provided by a team of five senior independent evaluation advisers: Hans Bruyninckx, Holly Dublin, Osvaldo Feinstein, Sunita Narain, and Kazuhiko Takemoto. They have evaluated the quality of the report, and the extent to which the conclusions and recommendations are based on the evaluative evidence. Quality assurance of the individual component evaluations was ensured through peer review processes. The IEO remains fully responsible for any remaining errors.

OVERVIEW OF THE GEF PORTFOLIO

The GEF Trust Fund is the primary source for grants made by the GEF. The GEF also administers the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF), the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF), the Nagoya Protocol Implementation Fund, and—as of September 2016—the Capacity-Building

Initiative for Transparency Trust Fund. As of June 30, 2017, the GEF had provided total funding of $17.17 billion through these trust funds. Overall, 4,047 projects, accounting for $15.47 billion in GEF grants, had been funded as of June 30, 2017, from the GEF Trust Fund. Utilization in the GEF-6 period is 63 percent as of June 30, 2017 ($2.42 billion for 444 projects) of the total GEF-6 allocation of $3.86 billion.

The revised replenishment allocation shares for GEF-6 are 24 percent and 26 percent for the biodiversity and climate change focal areas, respectively; and 13, 10, and 9 percent for the chemicals and waste, international waters, and land degradation focal areas, respectively. The share of multifocal area projects in the GEF portfolio—those addressing more than one focal area—has been growing, rising from 29 percent in GEF-5 to 52 percent in GEF-6 until June 30, 2017. Full-size projects continued to be the main funding modality in GEF-6, accounting for 53 percent of GEF funding. The Small Grants Programme (SGP) portfolio share was 7 percent in GEF-6, a slight increase from 6 percent in GEF-5; the share for programmatic approaches and the IAPs was 31 percent in GEF-6, an increase of 19 percent over GEF-5. Since GEF-5, the United Nations Development Programme has accounted for the largest share of GEF funding, at over 30 percent; the World Bank's share dropped to 21 percent in GEF-6 from 32 percent in GEF-4. The United Nations Environment Programme has a 13 percent share of GEF funding; the other 15 Agencies account for the remaining 32 percent. In terms of regional distribution, the GEF Trust Fund shares for Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean stayed steady at 26 and 23 percent, respectively since GEF-5. The shares for the Asia and the Europe and Central Asia regions dropped substantially from GEF-5 funding levels to 24 and 7 percent respectively. The share of regional/global programs doubled from 10 to 20 percent during the GEF-6 period.

Findings and conclusions

THE GEF'S RELEVANCE IN THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT

With its broad focus and as a financial mechanism for environmental conventions, the GEF occupies a unique space in the global environmental financing architecture. Despite limited funding, the GEF is the only public international institution that addresses global environmental issues beyond climate change alone. The GEF is the principal financial mechanism for the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and the Minamata Convention on Mercury. Its focal area strategies have responded appropriately to the evolving needs of these conventions. The GEF also funds projects in international waters and sustainable forest management that support the implementation of a number of global and regional multilateral environmental agreements. As the financial mechanism for the CBD, the GEF is seen as a significant and reliable resource for funding for biodiversity, which attracts relatively few other funds. For its other focal areas—including international waters, land degradation, and chemicals and waste—the GEF is the only global financial mechanism.

In addition to the focal area strategies, the GEF implements multifocal area projects and programmatic approaches in recipient countries to help them meet commitments to more than one global convention or thematic area by tackling underlying drivers of environmental degradation. These programs and projects are designed to promote complementarities and synergies in seeking multiple environmental benefits, while avoiding trade-offs between competing objectives.

The GEF focal area strategies have been responsive to convention guidance. The GEF's Biodiversity Focal Area Strategy closely reflects CBD guidance, notably identifying the Aichi Biodiversity Targets; the GEF Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change has been highly relevant to conference of the parties (COP) guidance related to the LDCF/SCCF. While not serving a specific international agreement, the international waters focal area's portfolio interventions support the interlinked provisions of various conventions, treaties, and guidance. The GEF's land degradation focal area has responded to UNCCD guidance in GEF-6 by increasing the emphasis on projects focused on achieving land degradation neutrality. The chemicals and waste focal area has been coherent with the guidance of the conventions for which it is the financial mechanism, as well as supportive of the goals of related multilateral environmental agreements such as the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, the Basel and Rotterdam Conventions, and the Montreal Protocol. In response to UNFCCC COP 21, the GEF established the Capacity-Building Initiative for Transparency in November 2016. Two other recent responses to the conventions include the establishment of the Nagoya Protocol Implementation Fund in response to the Nagoya Protocol under the CBD, and the adoption of the Minamata Convention to reduce and eliminate mercury pollution.

The GEF focal area strategies are also responsive to other major international environmental and development initiatives such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The GEF's interventions directly relate to SDG Goals 2, 6, 11, 13, 14, and 15—on zero hunger, clean water and sanitation, sustainable cities and communities, climate action, life below water, and life on land. The GEF's responses to the SDGs are mainly through its support to the conventions.

The GEF distinguishes itself from other environmental financial mechanisms in its ability to work through multiple Agencies in more than 140 recipient countries. Through the System for Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR) mechanism, and through programs and set-asides, these countries have access to GEF resources to address environmental issues of national priority. The expansion of the GEF partnership to 18 Agencies has increased GEF relevance in countries through greater access and focal area coverage. GEF focal area interventions are strongly aligned with country priorities, and have often been instrumental in setting national priorities in the environmental sector. The GEF also provides unique and critical support for countries in meeting their obligations under the various conventions.

GEF support to least developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing states (SIDS) has increased; however, support to middle-income countries remains critical. Compared to GEF-5 funding, support to LDCs has risen from 14 to 19 percent of total GEF funding; support to SIDS has increased from 8 percent to 9 percent. These increases are noteworthy, considering that they occurred during a zero-growth replenishment. Moreover, despite the funding shortfall in GEF-6 caused by exchange rate volatility, the GEF insulated LDCs and SIDS from the effects of the shortfall. Traditionally, the large middle-income countries have accounted for allocation of a large share of GEF funding on several grounds. Two-thirds of the rural poor live in large middle-income countries such as Brazil, China, India, and Indonesia. These countries also have significant biodiversity and substantial greenhouse gas emissions, and therefore much potential for achieving global environmental benefits. These countries also have a greater capacity for innovative financing involving the private sector, and are necessary partners in regional projects. The shift toward greater resources for LDCs and SIDS is appropriate because of limited alternative sources of funding; however, GEF support to the middle-income countries should continue for the reasons stated above, with a consideration for higher cofinancing.

PERFORMANCE AND IMPACT

The GEF has a strong track record in delivering overall good project performance; likely sustainability of outcomes remains the greatest challenge. Seventy-nine percent of the OPS6 project cohort had satisfactory outcomes. Focal area performance ranged from 73 percent in international waters to 83 percent in biodiversity projects. Project design—including objectives, institutional arrangements with government, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) design—quality of implementation, quality of execution, and level of materialized cofinancing are the strongest drivers of performance. The commitments mobilized for GEF-6 approvals indicate cofinancing at 8.8:1.0, which exceeds the portfolio target, although the extent to which these commitments will materialize remains to be seen. Quality of implementation was rated as satisfactory in 79 percent of projects. Sustainability of outcomes is a challenge: only 63 percent of the OPS6 project cohort was rated as having outcomes that were likely to be sustained, primarily due to weak financial sustainability. Country context, quality of implementation, and quality of execution influence project sustainability ratings. Comparable to findings in the multilateral development banks, projects in Africa have comparatively lower ratings for outcomes and sustainability than other regions, with limited institutional capacity the greatest issue to be addressed.

GEF interventions have contributed to reducing environmental stress. Environmental stress reduction refers to biophysical changes that reflect reduction of threats emanating from human actions. Fifty-nine percent of completed GEF projects achieved stress reduction and/or environmental status change. Projects' ability to achieve environmental stress reduction at completion is affected by the environmental concern they tackle. For example, 80 percent of projects that focus on chemicals and waste, and 69 percent of those that focus on climate change, achieve stress reduction by implementation completion. In comparison, only 35 percent of the projects that address international waters–related concerns achieve stress reduction, largely because these projects focus more on strengthening the intergovernmental arrangements put in place to address issues; further, there is a time lag before these efforts lead to actual stress reduction and/or environmental status change on the ground. Country circumstances also play a role, as stress reduction and/or environmental status change was achieved in 73 percent of the projects implemented in the five countries with the largest GEF portfolios, but only in 52 percent of those implemented in SIDS.

The GEF is on track to meet its GEF-5 replenishment targets for most of the indicators, and to exceed a majority of GEF-6 targets. The GEF is projected to exceed targets for 8 of the 13 tracked indicators. For GEF-6, the Corporate Scorecard prepared by the Secretariat shows that the aggregated results from approved project identification forms (PIFs) exceed GEF-6 targets for 6 out of 10 environmental results indicators. The only indicator for which there was no uptake relates to ozone-depleting substances phaseout, where GEF involvement has been declining. Promised results on other indicators was at least commensurate with the level of funds allocated, although it is yet to be seen whether and how these results are actually achieved on the ground.

The GEF has played a catalytic role and supported transformational change primarily through mainstreaming. The GEF has played a catalytic role in more than half of the OPS6 cohort projects and supported transformational change primarily through mainstreaming and replication. Analysis shows that transformational change occurs where projects aspire to drive change; market barriers are addressed through sound policy, legal, and regulatory reforms; private sector engagement is encouraged through targeted capacity building and financial incentives; and mechanisms are put in place for future financial sustainability through the market, government budgets, or both.

With their emphasis on integration, programmatic approaches and multifocal area projects are relevant in addressing drivers of environmental degradation; however, complex program designs have implications for outcomes, efficiency, and management. The GEF has appropriately chosen to focus on integrated programming through technically coherent multifocal programs, along with single focal area projects. Multifocal area projects are best suited when the environmental issue affects multiple focal areas, is caused by drivers linked to multiple focal areas, and when issues linked to multiple focal areas occur within the same geographical unit. Findings from evaluation of programmatic approaches suggest that child projects under programs perform somewhat better than standalone projects, but that outcome performance can decline with increased program complexity. Multifocal area projects and complex programs are associated with increasing cost inefficiencies, unless they are well managed and executed with commensurate on-the-ground implementation capacity.

The IAPs are relevant to environmental issues and the countries/cities they serve, and have been designed for long-term sustainability. Additionality needs to be demonstrated and process issues require attention. The design of the IAPs demonstrate attention to coordination, coherence in objectives between the program framework and child projects, innovative knowledge components, relevant selection of countries and cities, Agency selection based on comparative advantage, and well-designed M&E frameworks. The inclusion of these elements reflects lessons learned from previous programmatic interventions. A few shortcomings in IAP design have been observed, however. Targets need to be better specified and measured, and program additionality over a set of discrete focal area projects needs to be demonstrated. There have been some inefficiencies caused by delays in designing and launching the IAPs, in part because the GEF project cycle policy has not been explicit regarding the application of standards to child projects. Finally, the selection process of countries and Agencies has not always been clear, transparent, or communicated effectively. It is too early to assess the performance of these pilots, as they are in early stages of implementation. Findings from earlier programmatic approaches indicate the importance of good implementation and effective management of complexity.

FINANCING, GOVERNANCE, POLICIES, AND INTERNAL SYSTEMS

Over the years, the GEF has undergone several changes in its structure, governance, and partnership framework. Importantly, there has been a gradual and significant increase in its number of Agencies, from the initial three—the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme, and the World Bank—to 10 and then to 18 Agencies today. This growth has had implications for the governance and administration of the partnership.

GEF financing has been constrained by exchange rate volatility, fragmentation in donor funding, and impediments to scaling-up nongrant instruments. Although donors have delivered on funding commitments, during GEF-6, the GEF encountered about a 15 percent shortfall in available financial resources due to foreign exchange volatility. The GEF has no financial mechanism available to it, such as hedging, to manage these risks. This lack has had detrimental effects on the amount of funding available for GEF-6 projects; some project proposals could not proceed due to the funding shortage, which particularly affected a number of countries' STAR allocations. On average, this shortfall led to a decline of 19 percent in funding provided for STAR country allocations, with varied effects on recipient countries.

Uncertainty and fragmentation in donor funding due to competing demands places additional pressure on the GEF going into the next replenishment, necessitating a focus on innovative approaches. The nongrant pilot established in GEF-6 enables GEF financing to be used in products and mechanisms that have the potential to generate financial returns. It has been routinely used by partner multilateral development banks to raise financing for their projects. For nongrant instruments to be scaled up in the GEF Secretariat will require in-house capital markets expertise to originate/structure such instruments and sufficiently large transactions to make their use attractive, particularly to the multilateral development banks.

Operational restrictions and lack of awareness of the GEF have resulted in limiting or not fully realizing the potential for successful engagement with the private sector. While there is general agreement across the partnership that the GEF needs to raise private sector investment and financing, only about 43 percent of respondents to an IEO survey on financing and governance agree that the GEF's ability to engage the private sector is its comparative advantage. Operational restrictions—including the GEF project cycle, processes, timelines, staff capacity, and required documentation—are not fully aligned with private sector expectations and approaches, thereby constraining the GEF's ability to engage with it. There is a misperception in the partnership about the role of the private sector as a source of financing rather than as a partner in promoting environmental sustainability more broadly. GEF country recipients have varying degrees of knowledge of the role of the private sector in green finance, in accessing funds beyond the usual GEF grant instruments, or of opportunities for engaging in areas beyond finance. Interviews reveal that private sector respondents expect more clarity to help them better prepare for cooperation with the GEF, and that they see a distinct role for the GEF through its long-term regulatory and policy interventions—particularly where conditions are not yet ripe for investment.

Overall, the GEF partnership is well governed; concerns continue to exist on matters related to representation, efficiency, accountability, and transparency. Seventy-three percent of respondents to an IEO survey on GEF governance note that the GEF is effectively governed overall, and representatives of all stakeholder groups indicate that the governance structure has served the GEF reasonably well. Council members are engaged; and there is a high level of trust and goodwill, and a sense of common purpose. However, the GEF Instrument and current rules of procedure do not fully and accurately reflect the way in which the partnership is actually functioning.

There is no clarity on the participation of observers and Agencies at Council meetings. The GEF–Civil Society Organization Network continues to be relevant and contributes to policies at Council meetings, but there are no guidelines to manage the risks about potential conflict of interest situations associated with having several civil society organizations serve simultaneously as GEF Agencies and network members—often with field offices that are also members. The GEF Council has enabled good regional balance, but—unlike other partnerships—has not delegated decision making to committees.

With the expansion in the number of Agencies and the growth of the Secretariat, the relationship between the Agencies and the Secretariat is less clear. There are also overlaps between governance and management functions—for instance, with the Council, in accordance with provisions of the GEF Instrument, continues to have a role in reviewing individual project documents. A major difference between the governance of the GEF and that of six comparator organizations is the absence of an independent chair.

The GEF continues to be a transparent organization in terms of its governance, but is less so in terms of its management. Only half of stakeholder respondents to a survey on GEF governance believe that the operational decision making is appropriately transparent. While acknowledging the practical difficulties entailed in explaining all Secretariat decisions within an expanded partnership, concern was expressed by all groups of stakeholders on inadequate clarity and communication of programming decisions, project review criteria, project selection, the initial preparation of the IAPs in GEF-6 and the early stages of development of the GEF-7 Impact Programs. During interviews, concerns were raised on the communication of Agency selection by country operational focal points, with projects being awarded to Agencies based on their country presence and not necessarily based on their comparative advantage.

The GEF Gender Mainstreaming Policy has advanced the GEF's efforts to strengthen gender mainstreaming in GEF programming and operations in a more systematic manner; there is further room for improvement in implementation. Since implementation of the policy, gender consideration in project documentation at the point of Chief Executive Officer project endorsement/approval rose from about 57 percent to almost 98 percent. The GEF Gender Partnership is slowly developing into an effective platform on which to build a wider constituency on gender and the environment, providing a forum for leveraging the broad range of member skills and experiences on gender equality and women's empowerment. The policy stops short of providing a compelling rationale for why gender matters in environment-focused interventions. It also does not provide a rationale as to how the inclusion of gender equality in environmental projects would generate benefits beyond effectiveness and efficiency. Moreover, the policy does not reference the gender-related mandates or decisions of the five conventions the GEF serves. Even though gender performance has improved since the introduction of the policy, only about 14 percent of projects at entry included a gender analysis, which is integral to mainstreaming.

The GEF policies and guidance on safeguards and indigenous peoples have advanced the GEF's efforts in these areas; gaps exist in the policy frameworks relative to good practice in partner Agencies and in implementation. The adoption of the GEF Policy on Agency Minimum Standards on Environmental and Social Safeguards has prompted several Agencies to develop or revise their own safeguard systems. By design, these improvements have occurred principally during the accreditation process for new Agencies and compliance review for existing Agencies. Gaps exist in the framework in relation to recent updates made in GEF partner Agencies, and there is no guidance regarding ongoing reporting or monitoring on safeguard-related issues during project implementation. In general, GEF Agencies comply with the obligations specified under GEF Minimum Standard 4: Indigenous Peoples. The GEF "Principles and Guidelines for Engagement with Indigenous Peoples" reinforce GEF policies toward indigenous peoples, but lack practical guidance on project design and indicators, or a list of requirements that could aid in operationalizing the minimum standard and other relevant GEF policies.

Some progress has been made with regard to the GEF's Project Management Information System (PMIS), results-based management system, and knowledge management; the availability and quality of information in these systems needs further improvement. As pointed out in several evaluations by the IEO, the availability and quality of information provided by the PMIS is an area of major concern, which primarily stems from information being manually entered and not updated with any regularity. The upgrade of the system planned prior to the launch of GEF-7 should help address the need for accurate and up-to-date information.

The GEF's results-based management system has played a strong role in supporting accountability, reporting, and communications. It provides information for two instruments of regular reporting to the Council: the Annual Portfolio Monitoring Report and the Corporate Scorecard. Nonetheless, the GEF is still tracking too much information, with little focus on impacts. As designed, the system does not provide useful feedback on Agency performance or enable the articulation of lessons drawn from good practices. An important issue is the limited availability of M&E evidence that demonstrates the value added or additionality of a program over a set of projects.

During GEF-6, an increased emphasis has been placed on knowledge management, and an action plan has been developed for implementation. The knowledge generated and shared by GEF projects is useful, but it is inconsistently integrated in repositories—thereby limiting accessibility. Two-thirds of surveyed stakeholders reported having used knowledge produced by the GEF, particularly in technical and strategy documents, as an input into the design of their own environmental programs and projects; for awareness raising; or in the formulation of national environmental policies, strategies, laws, and regulations. But access to information has been difficult. Compared to similar partnership organizations, the GEF has placed less emphasis on developing technical solutions to manage knowledge; developing a systematic approach to its knowledge management products; or linking creators of knowledge with users through facilitating access, transfer, and sharing.

SUMMARY

The changing landscape for environmental finance presents an opportunity for the GEF to build on its comparative advantage and make strategic choices. The establishment of new funding sources such as the Climate Investment Funds, the Green Climate Fund, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, and the New Development Bank is an opportunity for the GEF to expand its presence in focal areas other than climate change that are not covered extensively or at all by other funds and/or where the GEF has a comparative advantage. In the climate change focal area, external analyses have identified potential niches for the GEF in addition to continuing support for convention obligations; these include focusing on upstream activities to develop supportive conditions for broader climate investment through capacity building, technical assistance, and policy and regulatory reform to accelerate market development. Sources of comparative advantage for the GEF include its mandate to serve the conventions; its strong record of performance over 26 years; and its ability to address interlinkages and synergies across focal areas, implement policy and regulatory reforms in countries to create an enabling environment that attracts investment, deliver innovative financing models and risk-sharing approaches, and support LDCs and SIDS.

Recommendations

The recommendations for the 29 individual evaluations that were used in the preparation of this report are included in the individual evaluation reports and have been presented for adoption at GEF Council meetings. The recommendations that follow are at a strategic level and are intended to inform future directions for the GEF.

1. **Strategic positioning.** The GEF is operating in a changing world and should build on its position in addressing drivers of environmental degradation. It should enhance its efforts in the biodiversity, international waters, chemicals and waste, and land degradation focal areas, where there are limited sources of financing and few players with the GEF's depth of knowledge and experience. Within climate change, the GEF needs to sharpen its focus. Based on its comparative advantage and experience, the GEF should place continued emphasis on its work with the enabling environment and legal, policy, and regulatory measures to support market transformation. The GEF should also continue to emphasize innovative projects in its climate change mitigation, LDCF, and SCCF portfolios; and in piloting and demonstrating technologies and financial approaches that could be scaled up by other actors. The GEF should explore its potential to be an incubator for countries to test and refine their approaches prior to seeking large-scale finance through other partners.
2. **Promoting transformational change.** To drive transformational change in any focal area, the GEF will need to further its efforts in designing for transformation through adoption of systems approaches and addressing drivers of environmental degradation, and in promoting

policy and regulatory reform and building institutional capacity in recipient countries. It would also require working with financial institutions to derisk investment, develop structured finance deals, and demonstrate how to engage markets. Ex ante assessments of the potential for transformation based on clear criteria should be completed for projects at the design stage.

3. **Continuing focus on integration based on additionality.** The GEF should continue pursuing an integrative principle in its programming based on scientific and technical merits. A strong, cogent rationale for designing integrated programs and multifocal area projects—based on demonstrated additionality, GEF experience, GEF comparative advantage, innovative contributions, environmental need, and national relevance—must be the basis for such interventions.

4. **Improving financial risk management.** To complement its financial resources, and to implement recent mandates including the Paris Agreement, the Minamata Convention on Mercury, and the Nagoya Protocol, the GEF should consider expanding the number and variety of donors from both Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries and middle-income countries, including subnational states/provinces, that have not previously contributed and are increasingly in a position to do so. To secure its existing financing, the GEF should implement foreign exchange risk management within the parameters of the GEF Instrument, and/or as otherwise legally allowed to manage volatility.

5. **Engaging the private sector.** The GEF will need to adapt its strategy to improve its engagement with the private sector. Specifically, the private sector should be viewed more broadly than just as a source of financing. There are various opportunities to engage the private sector in areas other than finance. For example, the GEF can affect industry practices by facilitating certifications and research, as well as changing sourcing and production practices along the supply chain. Where conditions are not ripe for investment, such as in biodiversity conservation, long-term regulatory and policy intervention by the GEF can help to catalyze private sector investment.

6. **Promoting gender equality.** In revising the Policy on Gender Mainstreaming, the GEF Secretariat needs to align the policy more closely with international gender mainstreaming good practice standards. The new policy should include a comprehensive results or accountability framework, with requirements for the GEF Secretariat to track and assess progress against any performance targets or benchmarks. Roles should be clearly assigned to oversee progress and to report on obligations to senior management.

7. **Reviewing and revising safeguard policies.** The policy on safeguards and rules of engagement with indigenous peoples should be reviewed for gaps against good practices

and updated accordingly. Implementation of these by the GEF Agencies, and subsequent monitoring, will be required to assess gaps in compliance and the need for follow-up actions by the GEF.

8. **Strengthening operational governance.** Operational governance must be strengthened across the partnership. Ground rules for cooperation among Agencies must be established to support the implementation of multifocal area efforts and the expansion of programs. The GEF Secretariat should develop and clearly communicate the criteria for program selection and design. Similarly, the selection of Agencies by country governments should be based on clear criteria and comparative advantage. Addressing the potential for conflicts of interest arising from the overlapping roles between implementing and executing Agencies—including for international civil society organization partner Agencies—is imperative.

9. **Improving systems for data, monitoring, and knowledge.** GEF systems for project management information, results, and knowledge must be further strengthened to enable the GEF to demonstrate its results and serve the needs of the partnership for learning. The PMIS should be able to provide timely and accurate project information, the M&E system should capture good quantitative data on performance indicators with a focus on impacts, and the knowledge management system should provide a good repository of information to draw on in improving project design, implementation, and monitoring.

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