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# Evaluation of GEF Engagement in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations

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Final Approach Paper  
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## Contents

I.	Introduction.....	1
II.	Problem Description.....	2
III.	Methodology.....	10
a.	Key Questions.....	11
b.	Approach.....	12
c.	Literature and Secondary Data Research .....	16
d.	Interviews.....	17
e.	Report Compilation and Review Process.....	18
IV.	Proposed Outline of the Report .....	19
V.	Proposed Timeline.....	21
VI.	Team and skills.....	22

## List of Acronyms

AfDB	African Development Bank	IEO	Independent Evaluation Office of the GEF
APR	Annual Performance Report	IISD	International Institute for Sustainable Development
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity	IMF	International Monetary Fund
CI	Conservation International	LDC	Least developed country
COP	Conference of the Parties	LDCF	Least Developed Countries Fund
CPE	Country portfolio evaluation	M&E	monitoring and evaluation
CRFA	Country Resilience and Fragility Assessment	NPIF	Nagoya Protocol Implementation Fund
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)	ODA	Official development assistance
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo	OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
ELI	Environmental Law Institute	PIF	project identification form
FCV	Fragility, Conflict, and Violence	RRA	Risk and Resilience Assessment
GEBs	Global Environmental Benefits	SCCF	Special Climate Change Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility	SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development	SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
IDA	International Development Association	STAP	Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (of the GEF)
IEG	Independent Evaluation Group of the World Bank		

STAR	System for Transparent Allocation of Resources
TER	Terminal Evaluation Report
ToC	Theory of Change
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
WBG	World Bank Group

## I. Introduction

1. Natural resources and conflict are often intertwined, and attention to these linkages and their implications for peace and economic development is essential to effective programming. Environmental organizations have increasingly recognized how their projects are often affected by peace and conflict dynamics, and vice versa. Since its inception, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) has funded numerous interventions in areas that have been or are currently affected by armed conflict. Over US\$4 billion accounting for more than one-third of GEF's global portfolio has been invested in countries affected by armed conflict, and more than one-third of "GEF members (64 countries) proposed and implemented GEF projects while major armed conflict was ongoing."<sup>1</sup>
2. Despite the GEF's substantial investment in programming in conflict-affected situations, the GEF does not yet have a definition, policy, or procedures for designing and implementing projects in fragile and conflict-affected situations.<sup>2</sup> A 2018 report produced by the GEF Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) concluded that the organization "does not appear to have addressed environmental security in an integrated manner across its program areas."<sup>3</sup> As a result, interventions that take place in fragile and conflict-affected areas may be exposed to a variety of risks that are not adequately taken into account or mitigated.
3. In the absence of a formal definition, policy, and procedures, individual projects have started – on an ad hoc basis – to account for the conflict context in their design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in innovative ways. As the GEF continues to support interventions in a range of fragile and conflict-affected situations, the organization can and should learn from current and past approaches to implementing projects and programs in fragile and conflict-affected areas and identify ways to better manage the particular risks in these areas.
4. The GEF's Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) is collaborating with the Environmental Law Institute (ELI) to assess GEF projects and programs in fragile and conflict-affected situations – in short, to determine whether and how GEF interventions are conflict-sensitive, and the implications thereof. This study will examine the design, implementation, and M&E of GEF-funded projects and programs, focusing on interventions since 2002 (the start of GEF-3) in six conflict-affected situations; assess the implications of projects and programs' degree of conflict sensitivity by considering how the performance

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<sup>1</sup> Nathan Morrow, "Armed Conflict and Environmental Protection; Global Environment Facility Insights for Security and Sustainability," Unpublished Report (2018). These statistics include projects supported by the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) and the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF).

<sup>2</sup> GEF IEO, "Strategic Country Cluster Evaluation (SCCE): Sahel and Sudan-Guinea Savanna Biomes" (2018).

<sup>3</sup> Blake D. Ratner, "Environmental Security: Dimensions and Priorities," GEF Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (2018).

and outcomes may have been influenced by the conflict context; survey the guidance from relevant Conferences of the Parties (COPs) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with respect to conflict; and, with reference to international best practice, identify recommendations for improving future GEF interventions in conflict-affected situations.

5. This Approach Paper sets out the contours of conflict sensitivity in environmental programming, the lines of inquiry to be pursued in this study, the proposed methodology for answering the questions, and a planned outline of the final report.

## II. Problem Description

6. There is a large and growing body of academic and practitioner literature that establishes the diverse connections between the environment and peace, conflict, and security.<sup>4</sup> This literature addresses the relationship across the conflict life cycle, including the environmental causes of conflict, environmental impacts of armed conflict, financing and other environmental drivers of conflict, environmental factors in the negotiation and conclusion of peace agreements ending conflict, and environmental dimensions of post-conflict peacebuilding.<sup>5</sup> It also addresses the potential for the conflict context to affect the successful realization of environmental initiatives.<sup>6</sup>
7. The services, goods, and other benefits provided by ecosystems play a fundamental role in supporting livelihoods and societal well-being. Changes in the availability, accessibility, or provision of such services can increase the risk of conflict. Natural resources are frequently the subject of conflict, and environmental quality often suffers directly and indirectly during periods of insecurity or violence. As such, conflict and the risk of conflict often threatens the viability and effectiveness of environmental investments.
8. International bodies and policies are beginning to acknowledge these linkages. For example, SDG 16 (which cuts across all other SDGs) recognizes the central importance of peace to sustainable development.<sup>7</sup> A growing number of multilateral and bilateral organizations, as well as nongovernmental organizations, have developed guidance for conflict-sensitive project design and implementation generally and for conflict sensitivity in environmental projects specifically. According to the UN, “conflict sensitivity refers to the

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Carl Bruch, David Jensen, Mikiyasu Nakayama, and Jon Unruh, “The Changing Nature of Conflict, Peacebuilding, and Environmental Cooperation,” *Environmental Law Reporter* 49(2): 10134-10154 (2019).

<sup>7</sup> UN Department of Global Communications, “Sustainable Development Goals” (2019).

[https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/SDG\\_Guidelines\\_AUG\\_2019\\_Final.pdf](https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/SDG_Guidelines_AUG_2019_Final.pdf).

capacity of an organization to: (i) understand the context in which it operates; (ii) understand the interaction between the organization's interventions and the context; and (iii) act upon these understandings to avoid negative impacts (do no harm) and maximize positive impacts.”<sup>8</sup> Conflict-sensitive conservation improves the quality and sustainability of environmental outcomes in conflict-affected areas.<sup>9</sup> Well-planned environmental projects and programs that account for cooperation, equity, and institution building can improve conflict management, prevention, and recovery. They also build public support and cohesion, rather than provide a flashpoint for conflict.

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<sup>8</sup> UN Interagency Framework Team for Preventive Action, “UN Conflict Sensitivity Advanced E-Course”. <https://agora.unicef.org/course/info.php?id=1288>.

<sup>9</sup> See, e.g., examples of conservation activities that help address conflict in Anne Hammill et al., *Conflict-Sensitive Conservation: Practitioners’ Manual* (2009) at 8-9.

9. Guidance on conflict-sensitive programming variously address “conflict-affected,” “fragile,” and “violent” “situations” and “countries.” There are

### **Box 1. Definitions of Key Terms**

For purposes of this analysis, we use the following definitions unless otherwise indicated:

**Conflict-affected** refers to situations that are experiencing or have experienced **armed conflict**, which is a “contested incompatibility with the use of organized armed force between two or more parties.” (World Bank)

**Major armed conflict** is an armed conflict in which there is at least 1,000 battle-related deaths. (UN)

**Social conflict** is a process of contentious interaction between social actors and institutions which mobilize with different levels of organization and act collectively in order to improve conditions, defend existing situations, or advance new alternative social projects. (UNDP)

**Fragility** is “the combination of exposure to risk and insufficient coping capacity of the state, system and/or communities to manage, absorb or mitigate those risks. Fragility can lead to negative outcomes including violence, the breakdown of institutions, displacement, humanitarian crises or other emergencies.” (OECD)

**Conflict sensitivity** refers to “the capacity of an organization to (i) understand the context in which it operates; (ii) understand the interaction between the organization's interventions and the context; and (iii) act upon these understandings to avoid negative impacts (do no harm) and maximize positive impacts.” (UN)

**State** refers to a UN Member State.

**Situation** refers to a location, and may include a State, a subnational area, an area that includes portions of two or more States, or an area that includes multiple States.

many dimensions to conflict-affected and fragile situations, and there are diverse articulations of conflict and fragility. This evaluation will follow well-established framings and definitions for the key terms (see box 1).

10. The World Bank Group has a set of diagnostic tools such as the Risk and Resilience Assessments (RRAs) to assess the fragility, conflict, and violence (FCV) context in a country or region, and which help to inform its strategy, programming, and enhance its engagements in those situations.<sup>10</sup> The African

<sup>10</sup> World Bank Brief, “Managing Fragility Risks and Forced Displacement in Middle-Income Countries: A Focus on Prevention to Build Resilience and Stability”.

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/fragilityconflictviolence/brief/managing-fragility-risks-and-forced-displacement-in-middle-income-countries-a-focus-on-prevention-to-build-resilience-and-stability>.



Development Bank (AfDB) has adopted two strategies that guide programming in fragile situations, including a flagship report related to natural resources.<sup>11</sup> Through these strategies, the AfDB has systematized the application of the “fragility lens” and a Country Resilience and Fragility Assessment (CRFA) tool to integrate considerations of fragility into Country Strategy Papers and Bank operations.<sup>12</sup> The U.S. Agency for International Development’s (USAID’s) Conflict Assessment Framework, updated in 2012, guides USAID staff, contractors, and other international development practitioners in analyzing and responding to the dynamics of violent conflict.<sup>13</sup> The Trócaire Conflict Sensitivity Toolkit (2011) aims to increase awareness of the organization’s staff regarding conflict dynamics in conflict-affected settings and ensure that Trócaire’s programs do not negatively affect those situations.<sup>14</sup> The UK Department for International Development (DfID) produced *Back to Basics: A Compilation of Best Practices in Design, Monitoring & Evaluation in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Environments* to highlight best practices throughout a development program’s cycle.<sup>15</sup>

11. Leading conservation organizations have developed manuals providing guidance on conflict-sensitive conservation. *Conflict-Sensitive Conservation Practitioners’ Manual* (2009), by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), synthesizes lessons for environmental practitioners operating in conflict-affected settings.<sup>16</sup> Conservation International’s (CI’s) *Environmental Peacebuilding Training Manual* (2017) outlines best practices in modules on peace and conservation, stakeholder engagement, conflict

<sup>11</sup> African Development Fund, “Strategy for Engagement in Fragile States” (2008).

<https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Policy-Documents/30736191-EN-STRATEGY-FOR-ENHANCED-ENGAGEMENT-IN-FRAGILES-STATES.PDF>; African Development Bank Group, “Addressing Fragility and Building Resilience in Africa” (2014). [https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Policy-Documents/Addressing\\_Fragility\\_and\\_Building\\_Resilience\\_in\\_Africa-The\\_AfDB\\_Group\\_Strategy\\_2014%E2%80%932019.pdf](https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Policy-Documents/Addressing_Fragility_and_Building_Resilience_in_Africa-The_AfDB_Group_Strategy_2014%E2%80%932019.pdf); AfDB, “From Fragility to Resilience: Managing Natural Resources in Fragile Situations in Africa” (2016).

<sup>12</sup> AfDB, “African Development Bank releases new tool to assess resilience and fragility in countries” (2018). <https://www.afdb.org/en/news-and-events/african-development-bank-releases-new-tool-to-assess-resilience-and-fragility-in-countries-18476>

<sup>13</sup> USAID, “Conflict Assessment Framework Version 2.0” (2012). [https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/pnady739.pdf](https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pnady739.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> Patty Abozaglo, “Conflict Sensitivity Toolkit: A Resource for Trócaire Staff,” Trócaire (2011). [https://www.trocaire.org/sites/default/files/resources/policy/conflict\\_sensitivity\\_toolkit\\_final\\_version\\_oct\\_2011\\_1.pdf](https://www.trocaire.org/sites/default/files/resources/policy/conflict_sensitivity_toolkit_final_version_oct_2011_1.pdf).

<sup>15</sup> Vanessa Corlazzoli and Jonathan White, “Back to the Basics: A Compilation of Best Practices in Design, Monitoring & Evaluation in Fragile and Conflict-affected Environments,” UK Department of International Development (2013). <http://www.coordinationtoolkit.org/wp-content/uploads/DFID-Back-to-Basics.pdf>.

<sup>16</sup> Hammill et al. (2009).

analysis, conflict sensitivity, and consensus building.<sup>17</sup> Both manuals are designed to apply directly to the practice of conservation, improving environmental outcomes through conflict-sensitive design and implementation.

12. For decades, the GEF has supported programming in situations where past and ongoing armed conflict present imminent and latent risks. The 2018 STAP report on environmental security noted that 77 countries, accounting for over-half of GEF recipients, had experienced armed conflict since 1991.<sup>18</sup> Over one-third of GEF project recipients have implemented projects during a period of conflict in their country. As such, a substantial portion of the GEF portfolio is exposed to conflict-related risks. Moreover, conflict risks intersect with all of the GEF focal areas in diverse and varying ways:

- (a) In the **Biodiversity** focal area, projects are designed to mainstream biodiversity and address drivers that threaten habitats and species. Highly biodiverse areas have a substantial overlap with conflict hot spots.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, several of the national child projects of the GEF-funded Global Wildlife Program (Phase 1 and Phase 2) are in FCV situations identified on the World Bank harmonized list. Conservation schemes can exacerbate violence in surrounding communities, especially when communities are excluded from protected areas and when enforcement agents are militarized. Tensions can also escalate when conservation activities compete with natural resource use on which peoples' livelihoods depend. For example, such tensions were observed throughout the course of "Developing an Integrated Protected Area System for the Cardamom Mountains" (GEF ID 1086) in Cambodia. The project took place in a former Khmer Rouge zone with existing conflicts over land appropriations, corruption, and illegal resource extraction. The project's Terminal Evaluation Report noted that linkages were "not sufficiently addressed."<sup>20</sup> The subsequent rivalry and lack of coordination between different enforcement authorities and gangs caused regular conflicts

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<sup>17</sup> Brittany Ajroud, Nathalie Al-Zyoud, Lydia Cardona, Janet Edmond, Danny Pavitt, and Amanda Woomer, "Environmental Peacebuilding Training Manual," Conservation International (2017). <https://drive.google.com/file/d/12TvqonWxMvtI302oYsAX6dnSny4CK50/view>.

<sup>18</sup> Ratner, "Environmental Security: Dimensions and Priorities," GEF Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (2018).

<sup>19</sup> Thor Hanson, Thomas M. Brooks, Gustavo A.B. Da Fonseca, Michael Hoffmann, John F. Lamoreux, Gary Machlis, Cristina G. Mittermeier, Russell A. Mittermeier, and John D. Pilgrim, "Warfare in Biodiversity Hotspots," *Conservation Biology* 23(3):578 (2009).

<sup>20</sup> UNDP Cambodia, "Final Evaluation of the Cardamom Mountains Protected Forest and Wildlife Sanctuaries Project" (2007). <https://www.thegef.org/project/developing-integrated-protected-area-system-cardamom-mountains>.

at the site, leading to several project delays, activity cancellations, and the deaths of two park rangers.

- (b) **Forest** based interventions have been a major focus of GEF strategy and programming most recently through the **Sustainable Forest Management Impact Program** and the **Food, Land Use and Restoration Impact Program**, particularly with the GEF's geographic foci in the Amazon, drylands, the Congo Basin and tropical forests – as both aim to reduce forest loss and land degradation. The programs within it are particularly vulnerable to conflict-related risks. Forest and forest resources are frequently a source of social conflict that can escalate to violence, can offer refuge to guerrilla groups, are often intentional targets and collateral damage during conflict, and provide assets for livelihoods and economic growth in post-conflict recovery. Additionally, timber can serve as a source of financing for rebels. The many interactions between forests and conflict can complicate the design and implementation of forest-related interventions in conflict-affected situations.
- (c) Interventions in the **International Waters** focal area aim to establish and strengthen transboundary relationships and cooperation. Many international basins – including the Lake Chad, Jordan River, Nile River, Mano River, and Sava River – span multiple countries affected by conflict or that are experiencing tension with one another. Experiences in these basins shows, though, that international waters can also be a source for cooperation and peacebuilding. The GEF also supports work in international marine waters that are affected by tensions and conflict. For example, GEF evaluations of the South China Sea identified conflict as a challenge to project implementation.<sup>21</sup>
- (d) Efforts to address **Climate Change** encompass both adaptation and mitigation measures that can result in “winners” and “losers.” As such, interventions may inadvertently lead to disputes over access to benefits (such as technology transfer) and burdens (such as large-scale land acquisitions necessary for biofuels). For example, a non-GEF REDD+ project in Uganda that created carbon offsets through forestry plantation projects sparked violent conflicts over land and resource use rights. The land acquisition led to the eviction of indigenous communities that had relied on the land for their livelihoods and for which they were not compensated adequately.<sup>22</sup> Their opposition to the project was met with violence by the

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<sup>21</sup> GEF IEO, “The GEF in the South China Sea (SCS) and Adjacent Areas” (2012).

<http://www.gefio.org/evaluations/gef-south-china-sea-scs-and-adjacent-areas>.

<sup>22</sup> Michael Wambi, “Uganda: Carbon Trading Scheme Pushing People off Their Land” (2009).

<http://www.ipsnews.net/2009/09/uganda-carbon-trading-scheme-pushing-people-off-their-land/>.

police and security forces.<sup>23</sup> In another example, a Clean Development Mechanism-registered hydroelectric dam project in Alta Verapaz, Guatemala, was at the center of a series of violent conflicts between 2010 and 2017.<sup>24</sup> The project, which took place in and near Mayan communities that had been historically subject to state violence and involved in the civil war of the 1980s, did not include adequate community consultation and led to evictions and livelihood disruption for various communities. Police forces responded to community opposition with tear gas and occupation of the area. There were seven related deaths between 2010 and 2017, and the project developer was eventually forced to halt construction of the dam.<sup>25</sup> There is also evidence that climate change may amplify the effects of conflict. Somalia, for example, experiences a “double exposure” to both climate-induced environmental impacts and protracted conflict, which together have caused the displacement of over 2.6 million people within the country.<sup>26</sup>

- (e) Interventions relating to **Chemicals and Waste** management may exacerbate existing inequalities if patterns of environmental discrimination are not taken into account. Small-scale gold mining, which represents the bulk of Minamata Convention-related GEF interventions, often occurs in contexts of extended social conflict, as well as in countries affected by major armed conflict, such as Colombia and Sudan. Conflict and backlash can result when waste disposal sites and stockpiles of oil, chemicals, or nuclear hazards overlap with human-inhabited zones in a post-conflict situation. In the Niger Delta, for instance, what began as peaceful protests against the impacts of Shell’s polluting oil-extraction turned to violent conflicts with the military.<sup>27</sup> In addition to violence, the protests taken by Ogoni communities severely delayed the projects and led to international outcry by environmental advocacy groups.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Kristen Lyons, Carol Richards, and Peter Westoby, “The Darker Side of Green: Plantation Forestry and Carbon Violence in Uganda” (2014).

[https://www.oaklandinstitute.org/sites/oaklandinstitute.org/files/Report\\_DarkerSideofGreen\\_hirez.pdf](https://www.oaklandinstitute.org/sites/oaklandinstitute.org/files/Report_DarkerSideofGreen_hirez.pdf).

<sup>24</sup> Arthur Neslen, “‘Green’ Dam Linked to Killings of Six Indigenous People in Guatemala” (2015).

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/mar/26/santa-rita-green-dam-killings-indigenous-people-guatemala>.

<sup>25</sup> Eva Filzmoser and Pierre-Jean Brasier, “Closing a (Violent) Chapter: Santa Rita Hydro Dam Project Officially Cancelled” (2017). <https://carbonmarketwatch.org/2017/11/30/closing-violent-chapter-santa-rita-hydro-dam-project-officially-cancelled/>.

<sup>26</sup> D. F. Krampe, *Climate Change, Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace*. 3. (2019).

<sup>27</sup> David Smith, “Shell Accused of Fuelling Violence in Nigeria by Paying Rival Militant Gangs” (2011).

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/oct/03/shell-accused-of-fuelling-nigeria-conflict>.

<sup>28</sup> Factbook, “Livelihood Conflicts in the Niger Delta, Nigeria”. <https://factbook.ecc-platform.org/conflicts/livelihood-conflicts-niger-delta-nigeria>.

- (f) The projects and programs that address **Land Degradation and combat desertification** often occur in marginal areas in which access is contested between user groups, such as agricultural and pastoral communities. As such, interventions that advance alternative land use schemes can contribute to heightened tensions in areas where resources are already scarce or disputed.<sup>29</sup> The sustainability of such projects may also be jeopardized by nearby conflict. Conflict between the Tuareg ethnic group and the government of Niger erupted while the GEF-funded “Sustainable Co-Management of the Natural Resources of the Air-Ténéré Complex” project was -under implementation. Although land commissions had been put in place to improve governance and management of localized land-based tensions, no safeguards were in place to handle larger scale armed conflict.<sup>30</sup> As a result, project costs increased substantially, causing the project activities to be scaled back, weakening coordination between project stakeholders, and reducing profits for local cooperatives as a result of free food distribution. Ultimately, questions were raised about the sustainability of project outcomes in an area affected by weak institutions and conflict.<sup>31</sup>
13. Because of the GEF’s mandate to improve global environmental benefits (GEBs), the design, implementation, and M&E of its interventions primarily focus on the environmental dimensions; in many cases, the conflict context may not be considered, let alone addressed. Experience with diverse conservation organizations suggests that managing conflict-related risks would make GEF interventions more effective in meeting their objectives.<sup>32</sup>
14. The GEF’s General Theory of Change (ToC), which guides the ToCs for each focal area, lays out the chain of causation linking GEF interventions to GEBs, connects GEF activities to other activities and actors, and “identif[ies] constraints on further GEF contributions to progress towards GEBs”.<sup>33</sup> Conflict can interact with projects both (1) through the impacts that the conflict context have on the project’s implementation, and (2) through the effects that the project may have on the conflict context. While the GEF recognizes that it is

<sup>29</sup> GEF IEO, “Land Degradation Focal Area (LDFA) Study” (2017). <http://www.gefio.org/evaluations/land-degradation-focal-area-ldfa-study-2017>.

<sup>30</sup> Juliette Biao Koudenoukpo and Pierre Nignon, “Final Report of the Terminal Evaluation of the Niger COGERAT project PIMS 2294 Sustainable Co-Management of the Natural Resources of the Air-Ténéré Complex (2013). [https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/project\\_documents/2380\\_UNDP\\_TE\\_2294\\_Niger\\_TE.pdf](https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/project_documents/2380_UNDP_TE_2294_Niger_TE.pdf).

<sup>31</sup> Morrow (2018), supra n 1.

<sup>32</sup> See Ajroud et al. (2017); Hammill et al. (2009); see also UNICEF, “Conflict Sensitivity and Peacebuilding Programming Guide” (2016).

<sup>33</sup> GEF IEO, “Evaluation of the GEF Focal Area Strategies” (2012). [https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/GEF.ME\\_C.43.Inf\\_01\\_Evaluation\\_of\\_the\\_GEF\\_Focal\\_Area\\_Strategies\\_5.pdf](https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/GEF.ME_C.43.Inf_01_Evaluation_of_the_GEF_Focal_Area_Strategies_5.pdf)



not possible to control all contextual factors such as conflict, the GEF ToC provides that programs are intentionally selected and “designed to support fundamental changes” and cause “a large-scale and sustainable impact, subject to the quality of implementation/execution and supportive contextual conditions.”<sup>34</sup> This analysis explores whether GEF interventions in conflict-affected and fragile situations can achieve fundamental changes and large-scale and sustainable impacts if the design and implementation of those interventions fails to manage the risks posed by the conflict context.

15. When conflict-related risks are not explicitly or deliberately managed, environmental projects can spark tension or conflict, creating risks to outcomes, outputs, and impacts of a given project.<sup>35</sup> As a counterpoint to each of the examples above, the very same projects and programs also have the potential to create spaces in which to strengthen trust, communication, and cooperation among involved parties, generating additional long-term benefits. A conflict-sensitive lens can help ensure that opportunities to avoid conflict and the impacts of conflict (and, where appropriate, to build peace) are incorporated across the project cycle, including M&E. A conflict-sensitive program cycle helps manage the associated risks, enabling GEF interventions to fulfill their mandate of delivering global environmental benefits and effect sustainable long-term change.

### III. Methodology

16. The relationship between environment and conflict encompasses both the effects of conflict on environmental dynamics and goals, and the impacts of environmental actions on conflict dynamics. Environmental projects can be deeply impacted by their conflict context, and projects and programs that address the environment can in turn serve as drivers of conflict or as building blocks toward peace.
17. This analysis will focus primarily on the effects of conflict and fragility on the ability of GEF interventions to fulfil their stated goals of providing global environmental benefits. **The study hypothesizes that those projects and programs in the GEF portfolio that have accounted for the conflict context in the planning phase, embedded these considerations into the design, and oriented the intervention to addressing conflict dynamics throughout its**

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<sup>34</sup> The GEF IEO, “Review of GEF Support for Transformational Change” (2017).

[https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/EN\\_GEF.ME\\_C.52\\_Inf.06\\_Transf\\_Change\\_May\\_2017.pdf](https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/EN_GEF.ME_C.52_Inf.06_Transf_Change_May_2017.pdf)

<sup>35</sup> Geoffrey D. Dabelko, Lauren Herzer, Schuyler Null, Meaghan Parker, and Russell Sticklor, eds. “Backdraft: The Conflict Potential of Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation,” (2013) Environmental Change and Security Program Report, vol. 14, no. 2, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/backdraft-the-conflict-potential-climate-change-adaptation-and-mitigation>; Morrow (2018) (noting GEF projects in conflict areas with problems ranging from severe delays to deaths of project stakeholders).

**implementation will have – on balance – improved outcomes relative to those projects and programs that have not integrated conflict sensitivity.**

Given that areas that have experienced internal armed conflict are at higher risk for relapsing into conflict, this effect is likely be more pronounced in areas with histories of conflict and thus a more sustained period of fragility and conflict.<sup>36</sup>

18. The impacts of conflict and peace dynamics on project success will be considered at all stages of the project and program development process. The report will be structured around the key stages of the implementation cycle, including M&E, with different elements of conflict and peace dynamics interwoven as cross-cutting issues.
19. There are many ways that GEF-supported projects could be affected by conflict dynamics, particularly regarding issues that might generate social grievances and conflict, which can rapidly escalate to violence in conflict-affected situations. The relationship between environment and conflict encompasses both the effects of conflict on environmental dynamics and goals and the impacts of environmental actions on conflict dynamics. Environmental projects can be deeply impacted by their conflict context, and projects and programs that address the environment can in turn serve as drivers of conflict or as building blocks toward peace.

a. Key Questions

20. The evaluation will seek to understand how conflict sensitivity or lack thereof affects the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, results, and sustainability of GEF-supported projects and programs. The situation profiles of this evaluation (mentioned above) will utilize a series of lines of inquiry. Many of these questions will be relevant to more than one of the five core evaluation criteria, and will highlight cross-cutting issues relevant across the project life cycle:
  - I. Throughout project cycle, including M&E, to what extent are conflict dynamics considered and addressed?
    - a. Is there any correlation between the degree of conflict sensitivity and certain project characteristics, e.g. GEF focal area, region, or Implementing Agency?
    - b. Are there any particular conflict-related considerations toward which GEF programming appears to be more sensitive?
    - c. Are there any phases of project development in which conflict risks are more likely to be considered? Why?

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<sup>36</sup> Barbara F. Walter, "Conflict Relapse and the Sustainability of Post-Conflict Peace," *World Development Report 2011* (2010).

- d. Which methods of integrating conflict sensitivity are most often employed? Why?
    - e. How do the interventions reflect the national priorities considering the conflict or post conflict situation?
  - II. In what way does conflict sensitivity (or lack thereof) help explain project and program outcomes and their sustainability?
    - a. How, if at all, did armed or social conflict affect the project, particularly the outcomes?
    - b. To what extent were projects and programs discontinued, cancelled, delayed, or altered due to the conflict-related dynamics? Were the dynamics foreseeable?
    - c. To what extent were conflict-related factors limitations to achieving the desired global environmental benefits, transformational change, or other according to the Focal Area's Theory of Change?
  - III. What conflict-sensitive measures could the GEF adopt to improve performance and outcomes of its initiatives?
    - a. How do SDGs, multilateral environmental agreements, their COPs, and related policies address conflict and conflict sensitivity?
    - b. What dimensions of conflict sensitivity are specifically relevant to GEF initiatives?
    - c. How do GEF Implementing Agencies manage risks associated with conflict and violence? Do any GEF Agencies have guidance on conflict-sensitive programming?
    - d. What conflict-sensitive measures have been implemented by other relevant institutions?
- b. Approach
21. The evaluation will adopt a mixed methods approach combining desk research, portfolio analysis, literature review, field verifications, online surveys and interviews with experts and stakeholders with case studies and geospatial analysis to address the questions outlined above. In conclusion, four different levels will be further developed in the analysis:
- (1) an aggregate analysis of all GEF interventions, from GEF 1 through GEF 7, comparing projects and programs in countries affected by major armed conflict and those in -non-conflict countries. This analysis will focus on country-level projects, and may also consider – depending on the available data – regional and global projects.
  - (2) analyses of all projects at least six conflict-affected and fragile situations. These situations may be countries, regions with more than one country, or areas spanning portions of more than one country. The analysis for each



- situation will generate a profile that includes textual analysis of project documents for every project in that situation.
- (3) in-depth analyses of 8-10 projects in each situation, drawing upon project documents, desk review, and interviews and field verifications with stakeholders (for projects in at least two situations).
  - (4) literature review of both the academic and gray literature covering approaches and experiences from other organizations (including GEF Agencies, and others), as well as mandates and statements from multilateral environmental agreements and interviews with key informants.
22. The bulk of the research will center on six situations identified below (to be validated, confirmed, and built upon as necessary). The report will also include anecdotes from other contexts, as applicable.

#### *Portfolio Review and Situation Selection*

23. GEF portfolios containing project details and terminal evaluation information were used as the source of information on project objectives, status, and evaluations.
24. The selection began by filtering the GEF's project database to countries that have experienced major armed conflicts (i.e., armed conflicts with more than 1,000 battle deaths) since 1989, based on data from the UCDP/PRIO database.<sup>37</sup> This yielded 60 countries.
25. Using quantitative metrics included in the GEF datasets, including project delays, cancellation rates, and evaluation scores, projects in these 60 countries were then compared to projects in countries not affected by conflict, as recorded in the dataset. This broader comparison seeks to identify general trends that may exist in conflict-affected situations in which the GEF operates, relative to non-conflict affected situations.
26. The initial filtering also provided the starting point for selecting a set of representative cases for which deeper analyses will be conducted. Six conflict-affected situations were selected for in-depth research. Projects in those countries were then filtered by decade (before 2000, 2000-2010, 2011-2018, and open). The designation "open" included ongoing projects, as well as projects for which an actual end date was not specified.
27. Countries were then examined in light of the following core selection criteria:
  - **Regional diversity** (across continents).
  - The country/situation **experienced major armed conflict** (armed conflicts with >1,000 battle deaths) since 1989 (end of Cold War).

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<sup>37</sup> Produced jointly by the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) and the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset is a global dataset of armed conflicts from 1946 to present, including both international armed conflict and various non-international armed conflicts. It is the most comprehensive such dataset in existence, and is well-regarded and widely utilized. It includes all GEF countries in which there has been armed conflict since 1946.

- In addition, consideration will be given to inclusion on the Harmonized List of Fragile Situations.
  - **Geographic scope of the conflict:** The conflict affected a substantial portion of the country (or selection focused on subnational area affected by conflict).
  - **Temporal aspects of the conflict:** To the extent that a conflict was a relatively recent outbreak, the design and implementation of most GEF projects to date may not be said to have been in a context affected by conflict. Similarly, if a conflict was relatively far in the past, the country may have been on a sustainable development footing more recently.
  - **Number of GEF projects and amount of GEF support** (aiming for countries/situations with a greater number).
  - **Diversity of GEF projects** (how many different projects in different GEF Focal Areas are represented, in order to ascertain whether and to what extent different categories of projects consider the conflict context).
  - Consideration of the **GEF-7 Impact Programs** (including Food, Land Use and Restoration Impact Program; Sustainable Cities; and Sustainable Forest Management (SFM), especially in the Amazon, Congo Basin, and Drylands)
  - **Diversity of situation scales** (subnational, national, regional)
28. Based on the above criteria, the following six situations were *initially* selected as the focus of this research:
- **Albertine Rift** (Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, Tanzania, and Zambia): Most countries within the Albertine Rift have experienced major armed conflict and all of the countries have high fragility index scores, making the region a compelling choice for this research. The DRC, Burundi, Uganda, Rwanda, and Tanzania ranked 6<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, 34<sup>th</sup>, and 64<sup>th</sup>, respectively, out of 178 countries included in the 2018 Fragile States Index. 220 GEF projects have taken place in the first three countries since 2000. These projects represent all GEF focal areas, with the greatest number relating to climate change, biodiversity, and multiple focal areas. This region is also relevant to GEF-7 Impact Areas, particularly the Sustainable Forest Management Impact Program in the Congo Basin.<sup>38</sup>
  - **Balkans** (Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia): The Balkan region contains the greatest number of GEF projects in Europe (105 since 2000), which makes it the geography with the largest GEF presence in Europe. Some of these projects are national,

<sup>38</sup> It is expected that the 220 projects will be reduced when the list of projects is filtered to those that took place in the Albertine Rift and not in the countries of which the Albertine Rift is a part.

some are transboundary, and some are subnational. Moreover, this situation highlights the relevance of the analysis to both developing and developed contexts. Although the Balkan countries rank in the bottom half of the 2018 Fragile States Index, the time frame of the research from 2000 to present covers the aftermath of the Yugoslav Wars.

- **Cambodia:** Since 2000, 60 GEF projects have been developed in the country. Of those, 20 are in the climate change focal area, 12 relate to biodiversity, and 9 are in multiple focal areas. Cambodia is proposed as a focal country instead of Asian countries where GEF has had a larger presence – namely Indonesia, the Philippines, India, and Thailand – because the conflicts in those countries tend to be localized (e.g., Aceh and Mindanao). When looking at Mindanao, for example, there are very few GEF projects. Cambodia currently ranks 53<sup>rd</sup> out of the 178 countries in the 2018 Fragile States Index, but it previously was ranked much higher, especially as it was more recently emerged from conflict.
- **Colombia:** Since 2000, there have been 84 GEF projects in Colombia, which places it second after Peru for GEF presence of the Latin American states affected by major armed conflict. Colombia is proposed as a focus situation instead of Peru because of the broader geographic and temporal scope of the Colombian conflict relative to the guerrilla war carried out by the Shining Path in Peru, which effectively ended in 1992. The majority of GEF projects in Colombia relate to the biodiversity and climate change focal areas. This aligns with the concentration among focal areas of GEF projects globally, as about a third each of all GEF projects relate to the biodiversity and climate change focal areas.
- **Lebanon:** Out of the 178 countries included in the 2018 Fragile States Index, Lebanon ranked 44<sup>th</sup>. The country is proposed for inclusion in this research because 45 GEF projects have been implemented there, which is among the largest GEF presences in the MENA region.<sup>39</sup> GEF projects in Lebanon center around biodiversity, climate change, and land degradation.
- **Mali:** In the 2018 Fragile States Index, Mali ranked 27<sup>th</sup> out of 178 countries. Of the countries in Africa affected by major armed conflict, Mali is tied at 80 for the second-highest number of GEF projects since 2000. Senegal, which has had 87 GEF projects in that time period, is not proposed as a country of focus because of the more limited geographic extent of the Casamance conflict. The majority of the GEF projects in Mali have been related to climate change, but there are also a substantial number related to biodiversity and multiple focal areas.

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<sup>39</sup> More projects have been implemented in Iran, but the country has not been affected as substantially by armed conflict as Lebanon since 2000.

29. Together, this selection of situations:

- Has regional diversity: 2 in Asia (including Southeast Asia and West Asia), 1 in Latin America, 2 in Africa (Central/East Africa and West Africa), and 1 in Europe.
  - Represents situations having experienced major armed conflict since 1989, some relatively recently (Mali and Colombia).
  - Has relevant geographic and temporal scope of the conflict to ensure its relevance to consider in GEF projects in the countries/situations.
  - Contains the countries with among the greatest numbers of GEF projects in the region.
  - Represents a diversity of GEF projects across Focal Areas in each country/situation and collectively.
  - Represents a diversity of situations: one regional, one transnational (geographic region, if not political region), and national, with subnational projects included.
  - Considers the GEF-7 Impact Programs, especially Congo Basin, but also Amazon (portion of Colombia), Drylands (Mali), and the Food Security, Land Use and Restoration Impact Program.
30. It should be noted that this selection countries and situations is provisional and subject to consultation to ensure that the final selection is representative of conflict sensitivity within the GEF portfolio. Other potential situations being considered are Afghanistan, Nepal, Haiti, Myanmar, the Okavango Delta, and parts of Kenya. Additional analysis and consideration may be made using, among other criteria, normalization of battle deaths by the country's population (micromorts). The list will be finalized based on a review of terminal evaluations, program and project documentation, and feedback from GEF stakeholders (Secretariat, Country Focal Points, Agencies, others) to ensure that the list of situations is representative.

c. [Literature and Secondary Data Research](#)

31. To complement the analyses of project documents for the selected interventions, the evaluation will review external coverage from news outlets, the project implementers, and other sources. This will include a qualitative review of local and international news sources, in which researchers will look for mentions of the project or program to understand how external parties perceived the intervention, and its relationship to the conflict context.
32. In addition to the situation-specific profiles, the evaluation methods will review the literature to assess the state of knowledge and best practices regarding conflict sensitivity in environmental programming. This research will characterize the scope, trends, and patterns of conflict-sensitive programming, especially in the environmental context. It will also review initiatives undertaken by other international bodies of relevance to the GEF's

mandate, including environmental organizations, GEF Implementing Agencies, and Convention guidance and policies. Those organizations and individuals included in this comparative review will be selected based on their relevance to the GEF operations and mandate, as well as to reflect examples of best practice in this area. The analysis will also seek to draw upon experiences from M&E in environmental contexts and M&E in peacebuilding contexts. This knowledge will inform the evaluation of the design, implementation, outcomes, impact, and sustainability of GEF-funded initiatives in conflict-affected contexts.

33. In the literature and portfolio reviews, the evaluation team will also identify other case studies or projects carried out either by the GEF and by other organizations that highlight the broader relevance of the findings or illustrate examples of best practice. These may include projects that engage in conflict-affected contexts, as defined here, as well as ones that have encountered social conflicts. This information will help draw links between common challenges in environmental project implementation in conflict-prone contexts (broadly defined), and provide examples of effective approaches.

#### d. Interviews

34. After most of the desk research and portfolio analysis has been completed, the evaluation team will conduct interviews with experts, stakeholders, and other key informants to assess qualitative aspects of conflict-sensitive programming in the six situations. This will supplement the review of project documents by exploring aspects that may not have been fully elaborated in project documents. Individuals in the following groups will be interviewed:
  - Staff internal to GEF-funded projects, including in program offices and project evaluation personnel;
  - Individuals involved in the various in-depth projects from the implementing and executing agencies organizations, as available, and in-country partners; and country-focal points; and
  - Individuals from communities, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders working with or affected by the GEF projects.
35. In addition, the team will conduct site visits for two of the six situations to conduct interviews. The sites of the two missions will be confirmed following consultation with the IEO and relevant stakeholders.
36. To support the identification of international best practices on conflict-sensitive environmental programming, the evaluation anticipates interviewing individuals working on conflict sensitivity, including those who have contributed to the development of toolkits and other guidance documents, for example from the World Bank, AfDB, UNDP, USAID, IISD, and Conservation International.

37. The interview questions will be tailored to the particular interviewee:

- i. For interviewees involved in internal GEF processes, questions will be designed to gain a broad understanding of attitudes toward and perceptions of conflict sensitivity in the organization's process of setting project objectives, working with Implementing Agencies as they design and implement projects, and evaluating the success of projects.
- ii. For those who were involved in a GEF-funded project on the ground, questions will explore how projects were designed (and the appropriateness of the design), how they were implemented in practice, and relations between different actors involved in the project. The interviews will seek to verify and clarify (correct or fill in) conclusions and analysis in the project documentation. Illustrative questions may include:
  - Could you characterize awareness of the project team during project selection, design, and implementation? Did this awareness influence how the project was selected, designed, or implemented?
  - What was the conflict and security context at, and near, the project site before the beginning of the project?
  - Throughout the implementation of the project, can you recall any instances of tension or conflict between or among project-affiliated parties? Between or among parties not affiliated with the project? How were these addressed?
  - In hindsight, how well do you think the implementation accounted for the possibility of conflict related to this project? What could or should have been done differently?
- iii. For stakeholders and experts working on this field in different organizations, the project team will attempt to gain a broader understanding of the state of practice, approaches for mainstreaming conflict-sensitivity into programming, motivations for doing so (especially for conservation and development organizations), and determine how GEF's approach aligns with or departs from general trends.

**e. Report Compilation and Review Process**

38. Based on the above situation-specific project analyses, the research team will create profiles of each of the six selected situations. These profiles will provide background information on the conflict context and an overview of GEF projects and activities there. Profiles will summarize the information gathered in the initial review phases, including the number of GEF projects, the number of GEF projects in each of the different GEF focal areas, the success of the projects in meeting their stated objectives, any co-benefits achieved and trade-



offs encountered in the projects, and conclusions regarding the extent to which projects addressed the conflict context and the implications of addressing (or failing to address) the conflict context. It is anticipated that each situation profile will be produced as an informational document to accompany the full report.

39. The final project report will synthesize the findings of the situation profiles, selected examples from GEF projects in other countries, the review of international best practices, and interviews.
40. Consistent with GEF IEO's quality assurance practice, two quality assurance measures will be adopted for this evaluation. The first is a Reference Group, composed of representatives from the GEF Secretariat, GEF Agencies, and STAP who will provide feedback and inputs throughout the evaluation process, and facilitate access to information and appropriate contacts. The second is a Peer Review Panel, consisting of selected evaluators, from GEF Agency Evaluation Offices, evaluation organizations, and recognized experts who will provide feedback on the draft report.

#### IV. Proposed Outline of the Report

41. Following is the proposed outline of the final report that synthesizes the broad review of GEF projects in conflict-affected countries, the situation profiles, the review of international best practices, and interviews:

## Executive Summary (5 pages)

### 1. Introduction

- a. Background on Conflict Sensitivity in Environmental Programming (inc. definitions of key terms, literature review, and best practices)
- b. Conflict in the GEF Context (include programming strategy, focal area objectives, Convention guidance, SDGs, national priorities, GEF partnership)
- c. Methodology

### 2. GEF Interventions in Conflict-Affected Situations

- a. Project and Program Objectives, Activities, and Intervention Types (aggregate from situations identified)
- b. Geographic Distribution of the Interventions
  - i. Box with Geospatial Analysis
- c. Project Results to Date (drawing from APR data, Terminal Evaluation Reports (TERs), additional sources)

### 3. Findings: Analysis of GEF Interventions in Conflict-Affected Situations

(This section will be synthesized from the findings of the in-depth analysis of the six situations/country profiles and other findings as applicable; will include illustrative case studies in boxes)

- a. Overall Findings
  - i. Relevance
  - ii. Coherence
  - iii. Effectiveness
  - iv. Efficiency
  - v. Results (through the conflict lens -- if the conflict situation had any effect)
  - vi. Sustainability
- b. By Stage of Intervention
  - i. Design
  - ii. Implementation
  - iii. M&E
- c. Cross-Cutting Issues
  - i. Gender
  - ii. Marginalized Populations
  - iii. Additional Issues (as relevant)

### 4. Conclusions and Way Forward

#### Appendices

- I. Works Cited
- II. Situation Profiles
- III. List of Interview Subjects and Questions

Not counting the appendices, it is anticipated that the main body of the report will be 40-60 pages in length.



## V. Proposed Timeline

Task	Year	2019											2020								
	Month	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	
Approach paper																					
Background research and reviewing the Portfolio		●																			
Preliminary design & scope of the assessment, questions, timeline, portfolio			●																		
Approach paper draft				●																	
Approach paper					●																
Data Collection and Analysis																					
Document review						●	●	●	●												
Consultation with key informants and stakeholders						●	●	●	●												
Review and analysis of targeted projects in the six countries and situations						●	●	●	●	●	●										
Conduct interviews											●	●	●	●	●						
Preliminary Findings																					
Draft country and situation profiles								●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●						
Internal reviews, identifying gaps, revisions and preliminary findings													●	●	●						
Report Writing																					
Progress report to the Council																					
Outlining the key findings for the Report																●					
Feedback and revisions																●					
Draft Full report																	●				
Due diligence and feedback																	●	●			
Final report																					
Presentation to Council in the SAER in Dec																				-->	
Edited report																				-->	
Dissemination and outreach																				-->	

## VI. Team and skills

42. The evaluation will be conducted by the core team comprising of Geeta Batra, Chief Evaluation Officer; Anupam Anand, Evaluation Officer; and Malac Kabir, Research Analyst from the IEO; and Carl Bruch, Director of International Programs; Sierra Killian, Research Associate; Avital Li, Research Associate; from the Environmental Law Institute (ELI). The combination of skills required to conduct this evaluation includes evaluation experience and knowledge of IEO's methods and practices; familiarity with the policies, procedures and operations of GEF and its Agencies; knowledge of the Conventions and its guidance; knowledge of the GEF and external information sources; and practical, policy, and/or academic expertise in key GEF focal areas. In addition, specific expertise and inputs in the area of conflict, conflict resolution, environmental law, governance and peacebuilding will be provided by the ELI experts.