



Semi-Annual Evaluation Report of the GEF IEO: June 2015

Prepared by the GEF Independent
Evaluation Office

48th GEF Council Meeting
Agenda Item 13
2 June 2015

Introduction

- The purpose of the SAER is to
 - Streamline reporting from the IEO
 - Collect proposed Council decisions in one document
 - Facilitate follow-up and monitoring of reporting
- The SAER replaces four previous annual reports
 - Annual Impact Report
 - Annual Country Portfolio Evaluation Report
 - Annual Thematic Evaluation Report
 - Annual Progress Report from the IEO Director
- Full evaluation reports will be presented as information documents, including The Annual Performance Report (APR)
- First SAER (June 2015) reports on
 - Evaluation work in progress and other initiatives
 - APR 2014
 - Joint GEF-UNDP Small Grants Programme Evaluation
 - Evaluation of the Accreditation Process for Expansion of the GEF Partnership

Evaluation Work in Progress

- **Impact Evaluation of GEF Support to Protected Areas and Protected Area Systems**
- **Good Practice Study on Principles for Indicator Development, Selection and Use in Climate Change Adaptation Monitoring and Evaluation**
- **Country Portfolio Evaluations**
- **LDCF/SCCF Annual Evaluation Report 2014**

Crosscutting Initiatives

- **Tools and Guidance**
- **Knowledge Management**
- **Climate-Eval and International Conference**

Gender

- IEO striving to include gender dimensions in evaluations, policies and guidelines
- SGP evaluations mainstreamed gender in methodology and conclusions
- LDCF/SCCF Annual Evaluation Report 2014 has a section on gender
- Guidance Document on M&E in the LDCF/SCCF includes a section on gender

Annual Performance Report 2014

- Covers 918 completed projects
 - GEF grant \$4.1 billion
 - Realized co-financing \$19.1 billion +
- Including 267 projects reported on for the first time
 - 156 recently completed projects (\$804 m)
 - 111 projects completed before 2005 (\$567 m)
 - Pre 2005 projects facilitate reporting by replenishment period
- Synthesis of the lessons from 603 Terminal Evaluations
- Management Action Record (MAR) tracks 22 separate GEF Council decisions and reports on adoption of 18 of these decisions

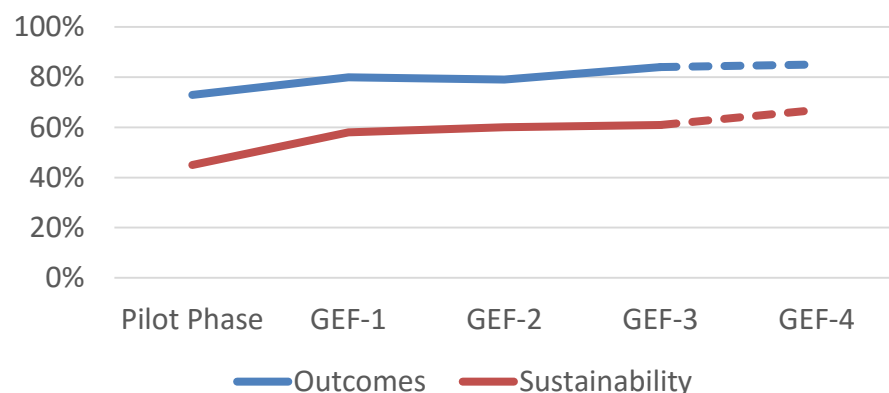
Annual Performance Report 2014

Methodology

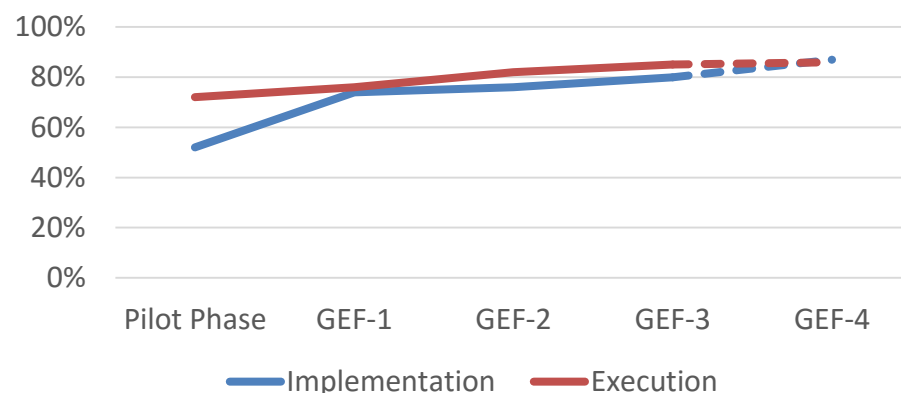
- Reporting on completed projects on a cumulative basis
 - Based on evidence presented in terminal evaluations
 - Independent desk review of the terminal evaluations by either the Agency evaluation offices or the GEF IEO
- Review of quality of terminal evaluation
 - Quality reviewed by the Agency EO and/or GEF IEO
- Synthesis of lessons
 - Survey of 603 terminal evaluations
 - Lessons that were generic, guide actions, and based on a given project's experience, were classified to explore causal relationships

Annual Performance Report 2014

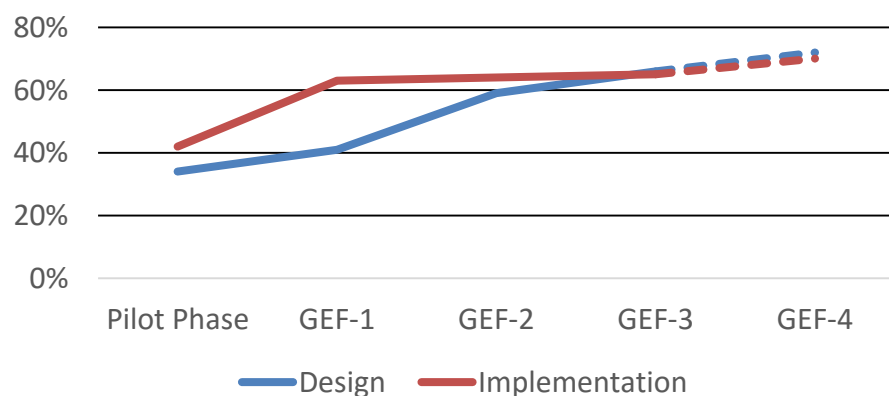
Trends in Outcome (MS+) and Sustainability (ML+) Ratings



Trends in Quality of Implementation and Execution Ratings (MS+)



Trends in M&E Design and Implementation Ratings (MS+)



- Substantial improvements in most parameters from Pilot Phase and GEF-1, and there after an increasing trend. Strong improvements in M&E design ratings for GEF-2 projects.
- Lower performance of projects in Africa, SIDS, and those that are jointly implemented.

Annual Performance Report 2014

- **Cofinancing**

- Commitments met or exceeded for 60% of all completed projects
- \$5.5 was realized vis-a-vis \$4.2 per dollar of GEF grant
- From Pilot Phase to GEF-4 the median ratio increased from 30 cents to \$2.1 per dollar

- **Lessons**

- Key design weaknesses: weaknesses in M&E design, overly ambitious project objectives, and weaknesses in intervention strategy
- Key design strengths: ownership through stakeholder participation and utilization of existing institutional structures; and, flexibility in design for adaptive management
- Management and oversight related factors driving performance: timely supervision, motivated and skilled managerial staff, field presence, continuity of key staff and adaptive management

Evaluation of the Accreditation Process for Expansion of the GEF Partnership

Background

- Accreditation process starts: November 2011
- October 2015: four applicants had been included
- Evaluation started in December 2014

Methodology

- Sources of information
 - Interviews (47), review of policies and procedures, survey of relevant publications, applications and panel review reports
- Consultations with stakeholders
 - Approach paper
 - Draft report

Evaluation of the Accreditation Process for Expansion of the GEF Partnership

Conclusions

- **Conclusion 1: on emerging results**
 - Project Agencies have expanded the choices
 - Project Agencies have gained from the accreditation process
 - Inclusion of Project Agencies has put additional demands on the Secretariat, but these are expected to decline in future
- **Conclusion 2: accreditation process design**
 - The accreditation process design helps in identifying agencies that meet the GEF fiduciary standards, ESS and gender mainstreaming policy.
 - Representation of national agencies and regions.
 - The premise that several targeted agencies were already in compliance with or were close to compliance with GEF requirements was unrealistic.
 - Approach to cost recovery, inclusion of Value-added review, and lack of familiarity with ESS concepts, also delayed the process

Evaluation of the Accreditation Process for Expansion of the GEF Partnership

- **Conclusion 3: on independence of Accreditation Process**
 - Arrangements in place to ensure functional and behavioral independence adding to the credibility of the process
 - Room for further strengthening of the checks and balances
- **Conclusion 4: on delays**
 - Slower than expected primarily because of the high level of accreditation standards and lack of commensurate readiness among applicants
 - Other reasons include:
 - Lack of opportunity for upfront face to face interaction among the applicants and Accreditation Panel members
 - Accreditation criteria on ESS weren't clear to the applicants
 - Approach to cost recovery

Evaluation of the Accreditation Process for Expansion of the GEF Partnership

- **Conclusion 5: on transparency and fairness**
 - Seen as having been designed and implemented transparently
 - Largely fair, but some applicants perceived a few aspects to be unfair:
 - Restrictions on communications with the Accreditation Panel
 - Lack of forum to contest the Panels decision
 - Document translations required from some applicants
- **Conclusion 6: on cost of accreditation**
 - Process has been costlier than expected for GEF and applicants
 - Applicants incurred higher costs than GEF
 - Accreditation fees only about 15% of applicant costs
 - Cost incurred by the GEF has been substantially higher than that recovered through fees

Evaluation of the Accreditation Process for Expansion of the GEF Partnership

Points for consideration

- Calibration to take into account the characteristics of the applicant organizations, without compromising GEF requirements
- Better definition and articulation of the criteria and questions for accreditation, and specification of the expected performance thresholds for ratings
- Rethinking the approach to recovery of accreditation costs
- More attention to upfront face-to-face interaction between the Accreditation Panel and applicants.

Joint GEF-UNDP Small Grants Programme Evaluation

Background

- Joint GEF and UNDP's IEOs effort
- Follow up on the 2008 evaluation (including on upgrading)
- SGP's effectiveness in achieving GEBs while addressing livelihoods, poverty, gender
- Broader adoption of grant level results
- M&E

Joint GEF-UNDP Small Grants Programme Evaluation

- Data collection
 - Country Studies (12 countries, 144 projects field verified)
 - Global online survey of program country stakeholders (48% response rate; 1170 people in 124 countries)
 - Literature review
 - Meta-analysis of 50 evaluations
 - Desk review of 30 Country Program Strategies
 - Portfolio review
 - Key stakeholder interviews
- Data analysis
 - Triangulation, verification, gap analysis

SGP - Conclusions

Conclusion 1: SGP projects are effective, efficient and relevant in achieving global environmental benefits while addressing livelihoods and promoting gender. Replication, scaling up and mainstreaming is happening.

Conclusion 2: The Upgrading Policy helped the SGP to evolve. Current criteria for selecting countries for upgrading are not optimal.

SGP - Conclusions

Conclusion 3: The SGP has remained coherent whilst being flexible. However, different perspectives and changing contexts create tensions. The global or long-term vision of the SGP has not been updated.

SGP - Conclusions

Conclusion 4: The SGP governance and management structures have been adequate, but are strained by rapidly changing context. The GEF corporate nature of the SGP and the value added of UNDP are not clearly articulated.

Conclusion 5: Despite progress, M&E does not adequately support decision-making and remains too complex.

SGP - Recommendations

To the GEF: Revitalize the SGP Steering Committee to support high-level strategic thinking in developing a long term vision for the SGP, to foster dialogue between UNDP and the GEF, and to advise the Council as appropriate on strategic decision making.

To the GEF and UNDP: Continue upgrading, building on strengths while addressing the weaknesses identified. The criteria for selection of countries for upgrading should be revisited.

SGP - Recommendations

To UNDP: Ensure that the SGP is implemented under a single, coherent global programme framework

To UNDP and CPMT: Continue efforts to improve M&E, designing more streamlined and useful M&E tools and activities that balance the need to measure with the need to provide support to local communities in tackling environmental issues.

Recommended Council Decisions

Regarding the Evaluation of the Accreditation Process for Expansion of the GEF Partnership

The Council acknowledges the emerging lessons from the accreditation pilot and requests that the Secretariat takes these into account in preparing proposals regarding possible directions on accreditation in the context of the evolving GEF business model, as a basis for discussion at the 49th meeting of the Council in October 2015.

Recommended Council Decisions

Regarding the Joint GEF-UNDP Small Grants Programme Evaluation

The Council, having reviewed GEF/ME/C.48/02 “Semi-Annual Evaluation Report of the GEF Independent Evaluation Office: June 2015,” section on the Joint GEF-UNDP Small Grants Programme Evaluation, and GEF/ME/C.48/03, “Management Response to the Semi-Annual Evaluation Report of the GEF Independent Evaluation Office: June 2015,” section on the Joint GEF-UNDP Small Grants Programme Evaluation, requests the Secretariat to:

- 1) Revitalize the global SGP Steering Committee to support high-level strategic thinking in developing a long-term vision for the SGP, to foster dialogue between UNDP and the GEF on the SGP, and to advise the Council as appropriate on strategic decision making concerning the SGP.

The Council requests the Secretariat and UNDP to:

- 2) Continue upgrading the SGP Country Program, building on strengths while addressing the weaknesses identified by the evaluation. The criteria for selection of countries for upgrading should be revisited.

The Council takes note of Recommendations 3 and 4 addressed to UNDP and the CPMT.

A photograph of a vast landscape featuring rolling hills and mountains. The hills are covered in a mix of green vegetation and brown, eroded soil, creating a textured appearance. The sky is filled with large, white and grey clouds. In the foreground, there are tall, dry grasses and some green plants. The text "Thank you" is overlaid in the center of the image.

Thank you

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