

Third Professional Peer Review of the GEF Independent Evaluation Function

**GEF Council, 58th session, June 2020
United Nations Evaluation Group /
Evaluation Cooperation Group**

Purpose

- **Objective**
 - To enhance the evaluation function in the GEF partnership, by reviewing IEO's mandate, role and performance
 - To clearly identify IEO's main strengths and those areas where improvement is necessary

Methodology

- **How**
 - Panel of three UN and ECG evaluation function heads, one senior advisor
 - Normative framework, three core criteria - Independence, Credibility, Utility - and five main topics
 - Extensive desk review, interviews with 92 informants, e-survey questionnaire to 434 key stakeholders, 22.3% rate of response

Conclusions on the three core criteria

- IEO is a fully independent office from the GEF secretariat, *although* the Office's behavioural independence is at some risk of loss of trust;
- **The credibility of IEO is high**; IEO evaluation reports are respected and referred to by most stakeholders, *but* there is room for improving the conduct of evaluations;
- **Most GEF Partners rate the utility of OPS as high**; each stakeholder group rates differently the utility of other IEO evaluations; *but* the needs for evaluative evidence of Recipient Countries and GEF Agencies are not adequately met.

Conclusions and recommendations on five main topics - 1

- **Governance of the evaluation function**
 - IEO operates independently in an enabling environment with adequate safeguards;
 - *But* some features of the governance system affect the utility of the function and threaten its independence;
 - **Recommendation 1** to the GEF Council, IEO and Secretariat, proposes how to address the corporate mechanism for the follow-up to evaluations;

Conclusions and recommendations on five main topics - 2

- **GEF evaluation policy**
 - The 2019 GEF Evaluation policy is broadly in line with international standards,
 - ***But*** there are gaps that need to be addressed
 - **Recommendation 2** to the GEF Council, IEO and Secretariat proposes topics for revision and inclusion.

Conclusions and recommendations on five main topics - 3

- **Positioning and performance of IEO within the GEF evaluation function**
 - IEO perceives itself and performs, at an adequate level, as the evaluation unit of the GEF Secretariat. *However*, the Office only partially fulfils its normative function for the Partnership.
 - **Recommendation 3** to IEO proposes measures to shift IEO's role and mandate towards those of the core unit of a Partnership-wide evaluation function.

Conclusions and recommendations on five main topics - 4

- **Relevance, effectiveness and quality of IEO's evaluation work**
 - Several IEO evaluations meet these criteria at a satisfactory level; ***But*** several others and some IEO's Knowledge Products underperform in these respects.
 - **Recommendation 4** to IEO proposes measures to ensure that all IEO evaluations reports meet established standards of quality.

Conclusions and recommendations on five main topics - 5

- **IEO efficiency and organization**
 - IEO is a productive office with solid skills and competences in conducting evaluations of great complexity; current IEO leadership has been innovative on new approaches to evaluation and office management.
 - *But* there is significant room for improving the internal modus-operandi of IEO.
 - **Recommendation 5** proposes measures in this regard.

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