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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